

December, 2020

Dear Friend of Saint Francis Retreat House,

Pax et Bonum! (Peace and Good), is a common Franciscan greeting. We wish you much “peace and good” in your life. Over the years you have supported St. Francis Retreat House. We are grateful for you and your kindness and generosity to us.

**“Survive and Thrive!”** Given all that has been going on since last March, the beginning of COVID 19, this is the new motto for the retreat house. It seems to fit where we have been, are at, and the hope of where we want to go. We invite you to be part of and support this new and exciting venture we are undertaking.

As you are well aware, we had to close for six months due to the virus and groups cancelling their retreats and programs. Slowly we are opening with limited size of groups, social distancing and tons of regulations to follow. In the meantime, we discovered there was a need for people to “get away” for quiet and prayer. We often say that SFRH is *a place* where we create *a space* for people to pray and seek God. Thus, the **DayStay** and **StayOver** retreat programs were started.

**DayStay** guests arrive in the morning, are given a comfortable room, provided lunch, spend the day and leave in the afternoon. **StayOver** guests arrive for multiple days, given a comfortable room, provided three full meals, access to our library and chapels enjoy and extended time of prayer, peace, and quiet.

One of our guests, L.G., was with us for five days in early November. As she was preparing to leave, she wrote us a short note of gratitude:

*I wanted to take a moment to reflect on what has been and incredible experience. I originally came with what I thought were answers to some personal and pressing questions, sure that I could just relax with that hubris of knowledge. I was wrong. In between the prayers, the walks, the quiet, the readings, the laughter... yes, quiet retreats do incorporate moments of laughter...I found new answers and purpose. I felt God taking each step I took and His sitting right next to me in prayer.*

*As a cancer survivor, I often prayed for a sign as to what God wanted. I mean, He saved me for something...some work He wants here on earth. But, as still as I tried to hear Him, that message wasn't getting through. I never reached that “aha” moment. And then I met Carroll and Ginny, two other private retreatants, who both urged me to explore a little deeper. They provided new tools and methods to hear. And there it was, the “aha” moment and a sigh of relief. My being here has been an incredible, super blessed experience.”*

**“Survive and Thrive!”** L.G.’s visit here had a profound effect on her life. Now, we want others to have “An incredible, super blessed experience.” We want to create 5 special **Interior Hermitage** suites. We are asking for your financial support to make this happen. Your support will help create the space, experience God’s grace and make SFRH a special, blessed place.

The **Interior Hermitages** will be constructed on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the East Wing, by reconfiguring our “Jack and Jill” bedrooms. Each interior hermitage will have a sitting room with a desk, a loveseat, and a kitchenette. The second room will have a full or queen bed, a chest of drawers, a vanity with sink, and a chair for reading. Each suite will have a full bathroom. The rooms will be soundproofed and have new lighting fixtures as well as new windows, too! We want these rooms to be very versatile. Not only will they provide solitude for those seeking a hermitage style of private retreat, they will also be useable for our couple’s retreats. You will recall last year’s appeal raised funds for the mini-loveseats. One great feature of these is that they open into a twin sized bed which will make these rooms useable for double occupancy if and when COVID restrictions allow for this type of sharing.

**“Survive and Thrive!”** We realize that when “we thrive” more people will be coming to SFRH. That means more work and work means more laundry. Another (great) need we have is for a new commercial washer and dryer to handle bedspreads and other large items. We must continue to be a ‘safe place’ for our guests to come. Bedspreads and other heavy items need to be washed more regularly. If you can help us obtain these “Stocking Stuffers” we would be very grateful.

Thank you for your support of St. Francis Retreat House. We wish you, and all those whom you hold dear, a Blessed Christmas and a Peace-Filled New Year. God Bless You.

Brother Mark, OFM	Sister Regina, OSF	Anne Houston	Brother Scott, OFM
<i>Administrative Team</i>	<i>Administrative Team</i>	<i>Development/Marketing</i>	<i>Development/Marketing</i>

**P.S. Dear Santa, all I want for Christmas is a new washer and dryer.**

[Donate to our Annual Appeal](#)