

ST. FRANCIS RETREAT

A ministry of the Franciscan Friars of the Province of Santa Barbara.

549 MISSION VINEYARD ROAD • P.O. BOX 970 • SAN JUAN BAUTISTA, CALIFORNIA 95045 • (831) 623-4234 • DECEMBER 2019

Dear Friends,

The reminders of Advent and Christmas seasons are coming at us from many directions. Unfortunately, Christmas is more prominent than Advent. Advent is overlooked outside of the Church world with the exception of the "Tiffany Advent Calendar" that one can purchase for a mere \$112,000. So much for a time of patient Advent hope-filled waiting; our hearts and spirits filled with anticipation that the fullness of love and light make itself know in the world. We live in a time where there is only a shadow of hope and anticipation of new life and holiness. I don't think a \$112,000 calendar of "goodies" is going to provide what we long for in Advent 2019.

The word of the Prophet Isaiah during the four Sundays of Advent provide a different vision for what we hope for today; a transformation of all creation, a transformation of the human heart to be instruments of Good News that encourage us to aid in fulfilling the promise of God's Word in the prophetic scriptures of Advent Season.

Advent ends with the proclamation of the Birth of Jesus through his ancestors who have prepared the way for the incarnation, some saints and some sinners, according to Matthew's gospel. Luke reminds us that Jesus was in the line of the great Shephard King, David, as Mary and Joseph travel to the city of Bethlehem for a census of David's line. Luke's manifestation of the birth of Jesus tells us something about God's intention for the mission of Jesus beginning with his birth. John reminds us an important theological statement of Jesus' pre-existence with God and the Holy Spirit even prior to creation. Jesus is placed in the Trinity of a loving relationship.

St. Francis' understanding of the Birth of Jesus is a compilation of the three narratives of Matthew, Luke and John. St. Francis took the incarnation very serious and to this day Franciscan spirituality views the incarnation, the Birth of Jesus, as an event just as important, if not more so, than the Death and Resurrection of Jesus.

As the great Franciscan author, Murray Bodo OFM states, "Christmas is the event where the infant Christ is born again in human hearts. It was clear to St. Francis that God came to earth as a baby so that we would have someone for whom to care. Christmas, for St. Francis means that God was now one of us. God was a child we could approach without fear. We could be silly and uninhibited as we sought to make Him laugh. We could be totally ourselves because a child accepts us just as we are and screams with delight at our little performances in his behalf."

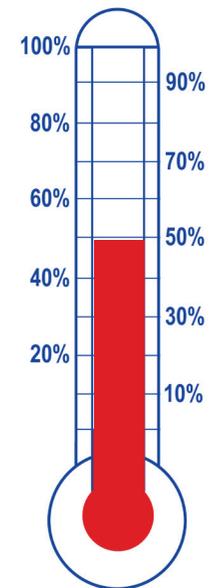
During the Christmas midnight Mass on the side of a mountain in Greccio, Italy the Christ child appeared to Francis alive and smiling on a cold rock. St. Francis took the child into his arms and held it to his heart. St. Francis had no child but Jesus Himself. For those present at that Christmas Mass, the child Jesus became their child as well. With this child, in the midnight darkness, their entire worlds were on fire with love, and this love lighted up the entire countryside.

Might we gaze into the creches whose paths we will cross this Christmas Season and see the Word Made Flesh inviting us to pick him up and hold him close to our breasts to offer, but more so to receive the warmth of love that a child brings us.

Advent and Christmas Blessings from the Franciscan Friars & Staff of St. Francis Retreat

Capital CAMPAIGN

**OUR GOAL
\$608,000**



**Funds Raised
\$300,959**

DATES To Remember

**Men's Annual
72nd Retreat**

**January
17-19, 2020
*Being A Man of
Faith Today.
It's Not Easy!***

**Women's
Annual Retreat**

**June 5 - 7,
2020**

GIFT SHOW ITEMS - ST. FRANCIS RETREAT



Want a Unique Gift for Yourself or A Loved One?

Come to SFR's Gift Shop

**Monday - Friday 9 am - 4 pm
or Saturdays around Noon**



72nd ANNUAL MEN'S RETREAT

**January 17-19, 2020
Fr. Ken Laverone OFM**

Being a Man of Faith Today. It's Not Easy!

A weekend with men of faith to explore the stirring of God in our lives. Where and how is God present today? How does my faith give me hope in time of crisis? What does it take to become more in tune with God's loving presence?

Rates: Single \$290,
Double \$240, Commuter \$130

Online registration:
www.stfrancisretreat.com

Or mail to:

PO Box 970, San Juan Bautista, CA 95045

A number of Quilting Guilds and Clubs visit St. Francis Retreat throughout the year. Some of the longest running quilting retreats are led by Janet Locey who lives near by. She had the thought of asking each of the groups to donate a couple quilts to the retreat so that our guests could enjoy the comfort of a warm quilt during their stay. The fruits of her thoughtfulness and efforts of our quilters are beginning to show up. *Perhaps your bed will have one of these special quilts on your next overnight visit to St. Francis Retreat.*



Janet Locey, leads quilting retreats and presents a quilt to Fr. Ken.

QUILT BY:
Valley Heritage Quilt Guild



KEEP THESE SPIRITUAL DATES OPEN

DAYS OF RECOLLECTION 2019

ADVENT

- Dec. 4 Am I Ready for God to Do Something New and Different in My Life?
Fr. Ken Laverone OFM
- Dec. 11 Prophets are Necessary but They Are A Real Pain
Fr. Ken Laverone OFM
- Dec. 18 God Speaks in Dreams: How Does God Speak to Me?
Fr. Paul Botenhagen OFM

2020 DAYS OF RECOLLECTION

- Jan. 3 It's A New Year: Is It Time to Live A Simpler Life?
Fr. Ken Laverone OFM
- Feb. 7 It Is Tough to Be a Christian in Today's Social and Political World
Fr. Paul Botenhagen OFM

LENT

- Feb. 26 ASH WEDNESDAY
A Time to Spiritually Mature
Fr. Ken Laverone OFM
- Mar. 4 What Leads Me into Temptation? How Do I Respond?
Fr. Ken Laverone OFM
- Mar. 11 Where Is God Leading Me Today? Am I Willing To Go?
Fr. Paul Botenhagen OFM
- Mar. 18 Is Grumbling Against God A Sin?
Fr. Ken Laverone OFM
- Mar. 25 Do I See as God Sees or Does God See as I See?
Fr. Ken Laverone OFM
- Apr. 1 Dead or Alive: This Seems To Be the Question?
Fr. Paul Botenhagen OFM
- May 1 The Maternal Face of God
Fr. Ken Laverone OFM
- June 5 The Prayer That Jesus Taught Us: Something to Think About During the Summer
Fr. Paul Botenhagen OFM



SFR MEMORIAL BRICKS

Order a brick to memorialize your visit at SFR, to remember a love one or as a unique gift.

Order your bricks on line by going to: www.stfrancisretreat.com and select the "Support" tab. Proceeds from the brick sales go toward the capital improvement projects at St. Francis Retreat.

Buy a Brick and Build Your Legacy at St. Francis Retreat.

Women's Retreat June 5-7, 2020 On Sisterhood, The Sacred Friendship of Women

Retreat Director: Beth Jordan

For most of us, our friendships with women fill our lives with meaning and keep us grounded. Throughout Biblical times women have been called by God to model holy lives and be witnesses of God's grace. Come join us as we celebrate our sacred friendships and discover the gifts of our foremothers.

RESERVATIONS REQUIRED

\$290 per person (single occupancy)

\$240 per person (double occupancy)

www.stfrancisretreat.com

CONTINUED BLESSINGS TO YOU AND YOURS



The painting represents the joy that St. Francis felt when the Infant Jesus appeared to him in Greccio. Our hope and prayer for you is that you encounter that same joy in this season of Love. "Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year" from all of us here at St. Francis Retreat.

Considering A Private Retreat?

Did you know that we have three cottages set aside for individuals and couples to use for private retreats?

Each has a fully furnished kitchen if you choose to do your own cooking. Two have two bedrooms and one is just a single. If our kitchen is open, meals can be purchased. Fr. Paul and Fr. Ken are both available for private conferences & spiritual direction. (831) 623-4234 to check availability.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

St. Francis Retreat, a ministry of the Franciscan Friars of the St. Barbara Province, located in historic San Juan Bautista, California, provides a peaceful and contemplative environment conducive for renewal of mind, body and soul. In the Spirit of St. Francis of Assisi, the Center's staff commits itself to stewardship of the earth by honoring and preserving the Center's natural surroundings while extending hospitality and spiritual support to peoples of all faiths.

www.stfrancisretreat.com



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P.O. BOX 970
SAN JUAN BAUTISTA, CA 95045

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



*MV=Mission Vineyard

(831) 623-4234

WWW.STFRANCISRETREAT.COM