



August 2020

# Holy Cross Retreat Center Newsletter

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*With over 60 years of Retreat Ministry!*

## A DIFFERENT KIND OF ART FESTIVAL...

We normally have the **Franciscan Festival of Fine Arts** on Labor Day weekend. As with so many other aspects of life, things have changed due to the threat of spreading the corona virus. This year we will be sending our raffle tickets as usual. However, since we can't sell them during the festival we ask if you could add an extra donation or try to sell tickets to other people. We can provide as many as you need. Losing at least six months of income and yet continuing to pay salaries of our staff has been a strain, though we believe it is important.

**We are designing an online festival format. We encourage you after Sept. 5th to go to [www.FranciscanArtFestival](http://www.FranciscanArtFestival) to view the work of the artists and consider purchasing something to support both the artists and the retreat center.**

*As part of our prayer walk you can visit this statue near the west porch.*

St. Maximilian Kolbe



Mary, Mother of the Church, I come before you in the spirit of St. Maximilian Kolbe, who consecrated his Franciscan life and work to you without reserve. You accepted Maximilian's self-offering; accept me. You led Maximilian to Christ; lead me. You formed Maximilian into a mirror of Christ; form me. Your union with Maximilian provided the backdrop for his works of evangelization and heroic acts of charity. Please grant, through the intercession of St. Maximilian, that I might fully collaborate with you and the Holy Spirit as an instrument for the upbuilding of Christ's Church. Amen.

**HCRC wants all who come here to be safe and comfortable. All guests will have a single room.**

**Serving meals will be done by our staff. Areas will be cleaned and disinfected throughout each day. We will position people at a distance and insist that masks be used when with others. With your cooperation we minimize risk and enjoy time together.**

### UPCOMING FRANCISCAN RETREATS

*You can attend each of these retreats in person, as a commuter, or online—whichever is your preference, though out of state people need to check first about staying in NM.*



**August 7-9 The Healing Power of Forgiveness?** A practical and personal approach to Reconciliation in our lives. Are we able to confidently say, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us"? Have I forgiven myself? God? Fr. Tom will lead it.

**Sept. 5-6 The Art Festival has been cancelled because groups are not able to gather in this time of COVID-19. Please consider buying raffle tickets and making an extra donation when they arrive. Your support is vital.**

**Sept. 18-20 Grieving Retreat:** This is a prayerful time for those who have experienced loss personally and spiritually. Find hope and compassion.



**Sept. 25-27 Recovering Alcoholics/Alanon Retreat, led by Fr. Tom Weston SJ** Register early since the spring retreat was cancelled, and Fr. Tom is very popular. He will be presenting virtually, but we can welcome a certain number to stay overnight or commute as well

**Oct. 23-25 Women's Healing Retreat, led by Sr. Helen Santamaria and Sr. Elisa.** Their experience and prayer is directed especially to women who have experienced loss of respect, love, and safety among others.



**Nov. 13-15 Men's Spirituality Retreat** based on the book Sacred Fire by Ronald Rolheiser. Delve into the stages of life, how to give your life away, and die gracefully.

Please call 575 524-3688 for more information, to verify the status of the retreat, and to register. You can see a full brochure at [www.holycrossretreat.org](http://www.holycrossretreat.org), under "register for retreats."

## A NEW RETREAT FORMAT

With the need to minimize the spread of COVID-19, we have developed a new type of retreat, or at least new to us. We have used video conferencing to provide prayerful reflections, promote dialogue between participants, and set a stage for spiritual growth. It is not the same as being here in person, but the format has been well received.

May 15-16 online retreat on *Laudato Si!* Attracted 29 people and went well. A person volunteered to help with the technical dimensions and is still doing so.

June 5-6 was an online retreat on Spirituality and Ministry during the Pandemic, with 14 online participants.

June 26-28 we developed a combination in person and online retreat on the book Sacred Fire by Ronald Rolheiser. 38 people stayed overnight or came as a commuter at the retreat center, and 24 were online. In spite of some struggles the hybrid approach was well worthwhile and allowed many to participate.



Distance maintained at meals and talks

July 3-4 Tom led a retreat for pastors online.

Our hope is to return to all in person retreats, but the online experience may offer more possibilities as well.

### Upcoming Retreats

**Sept. 7-11** Retreat for the friars of the Province of Our Lady of Consolation.

### Outreach to Others in Need

Since the Retreat Center was not accepting groups we considered other options to help people as part of our Franciscan hospitality. Patty O'Donnell was here Mar 24 till April 10, 2020. She had been homeless but reached out to a non profit called Family Services to find stability in her life. We were asked if she could stay for 2 or 3 weeks till she had enough money

for a deposit, and rent. Patty was searching for God and for peace in her life. We talked and prayed together. She asked to borrow a Bible, I gave her a Good News Bible to keep. She thanked me three times, and again through Debby. I also heard that she has spoken of the good impact on her stability and her faith to others after she left here. This is a positive impact of the pandemic in leading us to justice and service. Fr. Tom Smith OFM Conv.



### PROFESSION CEREMONY FOR FRANCISCANS

On July 15, the three friars in the back row professed simple vows to the life as a Franciscan. Alberto Bravo, in the front, extended his vows until next year. Both Roberto Macias (center) and Alberto are from the El Paso area, and we are proud of all of them!

### “Come and See” Weekend

**Men who are considering the Franciscan life or some other form of religious life are welcome to a Vocation weekend called “Come and See” October 16-18th at Holy Cross.** You will have the chance to learn about St. Francis, speak with other young adults who are in formation as well as other active friars. There will be time to pray and discern where the Lord is leading you. There is no cost for the weekend. For more info, contact Friar Mario Serrano OFM Conv. at 210 643 8157 or [friarmarioserrano@gmail.com](mailto:friarmarioserrano@gmail.com) to consider joining the fraternity of the Franciscan friars.

If you know someone who might make a good friar, please encourage them to attend!



### Comments from recent retreats...

After the Sacred Fire retreat: Food was excellent, accommodations were excellent, Safety was adequate, no issues, Spirituality factor was excellent!

Very obvious that our safety during COVID-19 was a priority and was implemented well.

I liked the innovative approach of including the online participants, though I prefer personal presence.

As expected, I thoroughly enjoyed my stay! The Hermitage is lovely! And the whole Holy Cross environment is so conducive to precious times with the Lord and learning from Him! I'm already pondering when I can plan a return visit.