

# *Franciscan Season of Giving*

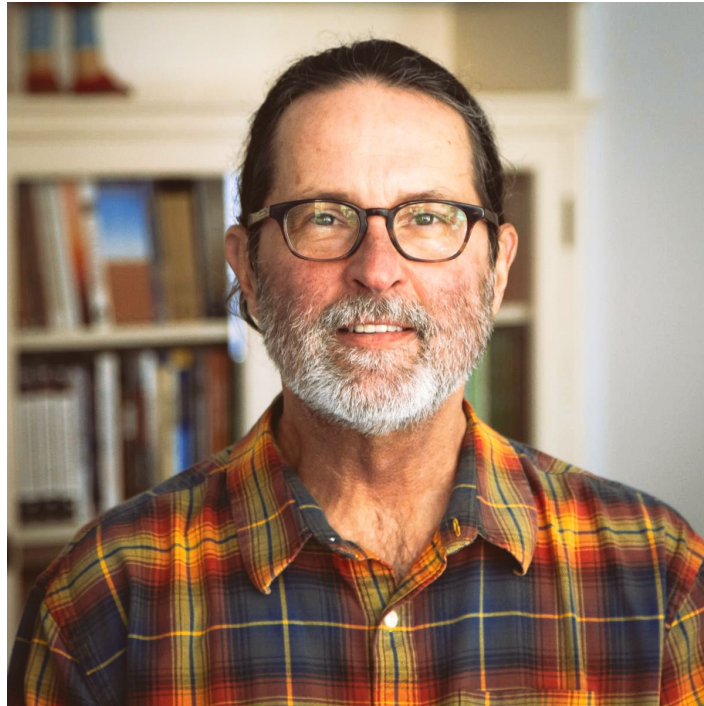
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## a word from Mark

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Between the feast days of St Clare and St Francis (August 11 and October 4), we ask for your support in raising funds to meet our obligations and dream about the future.

In this season of prayer, discernment, and reflecting on the gifts of community, we share some of the voices of the Franciscan Spiritual Center. Our aim is to name what happens in this community and how we perceive its value. We hope it engages you and motivates you to support us. We hope it encourages you to pay attention to what is sacred in your life.



A dear friend recently loaned me a new book by New York Times columnist David Brooks. It came as I was looking forward to the beginning of autumn programs at the Franciscan Spiritual Center. After a bit of a summer break, I was reflecting upon the beautiful things that happen in Group Spiritual Direction. I am eager for these groups to gather again and new ones to form.

Brooks' book is called "How to Know a Person. The Art of Seeing Others Deeply and Being Deeply Seen." In it the author refers to this deep seeing of another person as "beholding" them. He writes, "When you're beholding someone, you're seeing the richness of this particular human consciousness, the full symphony—how they perceive and create their life." Therapist and author Mary Pipher once told Brooks, "To be able to understand people and be

present for them in their experience—that’s the most important thing in the world.”

I’m guessing that the deep seeing that Brooks refers to includes deep hearing and deep feeling. To me that conglomeration of one’s intimate awareness of another’s realities can be summed up in the phrase, “I’m vibing with you.” While that might sound like a shallow “woo woo” phrase to some, I mean it in the way that Jesus encouraged those with the eyes to see and the ears to hear. It is a description of what happens when two or more are gathered in the high spiritual vibration of what Christians refer to as “Christ consciousness.” In Group Spiritual Direction we learn how to enter into and become the loving power of Christ Consciousness together! We learn that it can be safe and deeply enriching to release our need for expressing opinions and giving advice and instead share from the heart. We learn that joys and sorrows are part of our wholeness so we can be deeply present to ourselves and others without looking for a quick fix to relieve temporary discomfort.

As for the potential of Group Spiritual Direction, imagine the impact of growing numbers of people engaging in such intimate processes where we learn how to “understand people and be present for them in their experience.” So many of the complaints we hear (and have) during election years seems to boil down to cries of people who do not feel seen, heard, and felt. Imagine becoming more inwardly available through learning “the art of seeing others deeply and being deeply seen,” and bringing that out into a world where people feel isolated and misunderstood. In Franciscan terminology, imagine becoming more and more a channel of God’s peace!

I serve in the ministry of the Franciscan Spiritual Center because we get to do these kinds of things. I get to be a part of this promise and this reality in gathering with others.

During our annual Season of Giving, consider supporting us and consider joining us. We will welcome you into community.

With gratitude,

Mark Lesniewski  
Spiritual Director, Supervisor, Program Facilitator

Click [HERE](#) to read the stories in the *Season of Franciscan Giving* series.  
Email your own stories to [cnaylor@francisspctr.com](mailto:cnaylor@francisspctr.com).

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