

8/23/2020

2-399b

Hi All, Certainly strange times. In addition to everything else, I've noted an almost biblical invasion of critters in my gardens, decimating many vegetables. Neighbors tell me similar stories. Pretty scary as I contemplate the havoc the Corona hysteria has already caused agriculture in general. I hope I'm wrong but I foresee some pretty big problems with the food supply & distribution system! But I hope for a turnaround, and health & happiness to all.

Love, Ken

Dear Family,

September 11, 2020 2-400

Perhaps it's fitting that today is the anniversary of 9-11. We thought the world was coming to an end on that day and sadly it did for so many still suffering loss. Seems like that was only the beginning of the downward spiral our world is engulfed in. It's useless to give opinions regarding how we've sunk to this level of evil in our world because everyone has one, consequently believing that they are "right". I simply want to invite us all to find our Catholic roots and search out the truth...and you ain't going to find it on the evening news (sorry Joe). How about starting with the Catechism if it's what we claim to believe as Catholics. Sorry, I had to go there. It's that dire.

On to "lighter" topics. John was furloughed April and May but went back to work for the summer. Thank God he's in maintenance and even though there was no camp, the buildings still need to be maintained. If things continue as they appear, he's quite sure he will be furloughed again in January.

Arianna continues with New Horizons. During the height of the "pandemic" she was moved into a home setting, but is now back to the day-hab. The protocols she's required to follow leave no real room for anything close to what she was originally hired for. At present, Arianna is a single mom living alone with Isaac, so I get to babysit him every day from 7:30 to 4:30. It's a good thing Isaac really loves my mom. Your Aunt Claire is an amazing woman (90 on Dec. 26th) because her spunk and love is still there even though it's veiled in this horrific disease of advanced stage Alzheimer's. In short, mom LOVES Isaac and he LOVES her! It's an amazing and beautiful relationship and allows me to see God through all the pain.

Kaylin is back at Cobleskill for the time being at least. She finally got an RA position so she gets a "free" dorm room. However, again, with all the restrictions (that she now has to impose) it's barely visible as the college experience it should be. Her 2 labs are in person and her 2 lecture classes are online. Let's face it, the online classes are providing minimal learning at best. Forget class discussions about bio-ethics and environmental law in an institution of higher learning where there should be discussions and ideas explored. No. For the big money, she's looking up case studies and summarizing them. Could do that for free at the local library.

Matthew, Mark and Luke go "back" to school Monday the 14th. They will be virtual Monday and Tuesday, and in school Thursday and Friday with Wednesday being a teacher office-hours day.

This is VERY necessary because you know that Covid 19 is REALLY rampant up here in the country...NOT! I'm very proud of them, because at 15, besides being in demand doing tons of work for neighbors, Matthew and Mark have become certified Red Cross lifeguards and started this summer at the local town pool. Luke, being Isaac's favorite, is the designated babysitter.

My life has become crazier than ever which leads me to an apology for taking so long with this letter. Besides my already extremely busy family, Mom has been living here over 4 years now and I have Isaac full time. People ask how I have such a healthy appetite yet stay so slim. That's a joke right? Please pray for me.

On a happy note, tomorrow, Matthew, Mark and Luke will be altar serving for Cardinal Dolan who will be celebrating Mass up here at Immaculate Conception church in Woodbourne. While this is not our church, they've gotten quite the name for themselves as being very experienced altar servers and were invited to participate. They have done more in their 15 years for the church than most people in an entire lifetime. They can serve the Novus Ordo Mass, Low and High Latin Mass, funerals, confirmations, processions, weddings, Easter week, Adoration...you ask it and they've done it! We have the most awesome, very traditional pastor, you could ask for. If every Catholic church had a priest like Father Ken, we would not be in this crisis in the Church where we find ourselves. He truly serves his flock and our church in little old Ellenville is expanding instead of contracting. People are drawn to the truth.

Yours in love and lots of prayers,

All are welcome to the Catkills ANY time!

Souain, John, Arianna, Kaylin, Matthew, Mark & Luke

XXXXXX

9/28/20

Greetings May Family! Hope that all are coping safely with life in the Covid Twilight Zone. Who knew we could spend 6+ months in it with no end in sight. We continue to be spared the actual infection here, but we know we can't let our guard down as autumn and winter come. Right now with NY in a lower transmission mode we have been able to do a few more "normal" things with caution. On Sept 19 we Clines siblings gathered together for the first time since Christmas - outdoors at Bunny's. We celebrated Frank's 70th and Joe and Mary Jo's 60th birthdays simply and gratefully. Great weather was a bonus.

As NY emerged from its direst moments we have been cautiously able to see the grandkids a number of times. We even reverted to driving to NJ at first, but lately have trained on nearly empty LIRR and NJ Transit trains. The kids came to us for 3 stayovers. Nate (4) goes to YMCA daycare all week. Claire (6) is doing 2nd grade virtually for now. She also goes to the Y 3 days a week for shared experience. Matt, Carolyn and Ian work from home. Kate has joined our merry band as well and works remotely from here. She arrived from Mexico in mid-June and did her 14 day quarantine in a hotel suite.

Just as Kate was finishing her quarantine I got sick - and that delayed her arrival at home a few more days. I had a fever and headaches at beginning of July. Got a Covid test (negative) so that I could return to work. Then I got 2 strange rashes. Turns out I had Lyme disease! When and where the deer tick got me is unknown, but probably in the state park woods behind our house. I never got the tell-tale "target" rash, but my trusty library book displayed 12 other possible indicator rashes to consider - and bingo on 2 of them. I've had two cycles of meds - just to make sure I'm beating the bacteria. I feel good, but it is a tricky disease that will require future monitoring. Not the kind of "distraction" one wants to deal with in Covid or any other times.

I've been working in the library (with mask) since mid-June. We are slowly opening up to the public. We don't allow anyone to sit, study, congregate - just pick up books and AV items. No gatherings either - all programs are virtual. It is so much better for us to be in the building to get work done. Fingers crossed we don't get shut down again by a Covid spike! I'm inching closer to retirement ... probably in 2021. I'll help out part-time after that. George lost his spring track coaching gig and winter track is not looking promising either [hundreds of runners indoors together - NOT!].

Our vegetable garden has helped keep us sane and positive. Farmer George has put lettuce, squash, tomatoes, basil, pea pods and such on our table for months. We recommend yellow and "black cherry" cherry tomatoes and "Lemon Boy" regular-sized yellow tomatoes - all are still yielding fruit.

Thinking of you all and praying as we each deal with our own challenges amidst the pandemic. FAMILY is one sure blessing as we hope for normal times to return. Be safe. Be well. Love to all!

Barbara & Posie

10/17/20

To our wonderful May family,

First of all, I would like to congratulate Kristen & Josh on their wedding. The ceremony is the most important part of a wedding; you will have plenty of time to PARTY when COVID takes its leave. Hopefully Emily & Andrew are able to work through their plans. I was also happy to hear of the love and smiles Aunt Claire is experiencing with little Isaac. We may not know what is going on in her head but it shows what is happening in her heart.

We are doing well here in NC. Fortunately all of our kids are still working. Some of the grandkids are starting to go back into the schools and are happy to be with their friends again. Masks have become a part of life for all of us. We have had many "driveway" dinners over the summer with the kids and grandkids. It not only lightens my spirits but gets the cousins together once in a while.

I am doing well with the treatments; we are just trying to work out how to treat the side effects. I am feeling really well and start my days with a 30 minute walk in my neighborhood saying my rosary and other prayers and include every one of you by name. I feel very comfortable knowing I am in God's hands and that He will see me through it all.

My love, thoughts and prayers are with you all.

Love Ronnie & Angie

10/23

Hi from 'spiking' Wisconsin ←

Fortunately, Milwaukee's corner of the state isn't one of the major hot spots. And anyway, hardly a day occurs when I get near more than a handful of people...

My sanity was preserved in the summer when my apartment complex was able to open our pool with excellent 'distancing' rules. Ninety-plus consecutive days of lap-swimming was all I needed... And now that Marquette is letting alumni back in the campus pool - oh joy!

More joy in September in finally seeing loved ones for the first time in eight months. And it'll be back to the East Coast at Christmas, one way or another...
Continued good fortune to all! Frank

October 20, 2020

Dear Family,

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the whole family (six of us) have gotten together, yet apart, three times: for Mothers' Day, Fathers' Day and again in July (to celebrate multiple birthdays). In each case, we picked up some to-go food, and met at a picnic area. The outdoor gatherings are driven by Chris & Kristy, who are being very cautious in their efforts to stay clear of the coronavirus. Meanwhile, Danie & I continue to have more-or-less weekly 'family nights' with Claudine & Laughton, at either their house or ours. Since we all refrain from particularly risky behaviors, we are not overly concerned about catching the virus from each-other.

As noted previously, our May cruise was scrubbed, as was the plan to visit Danie's friend in Colorado. The cruise out of Montreal in September was also cancelled, and we took an offer from Royal Caribbean to move our reservations to the same week in 2021. We did get away for a week in July, however our initial plan; to visit Gatlinburg / Pigeon Forge, was soured when we made use of a webcam that is mounted on the Space Needle in downtown Gatlinburg. Users of the website are able to take control of the camera, and it gave us the opportunity to scan the main street through town. Doing so revealed that there were simply too many people, most not wearing masks, and apparently making no attempt to keep themselves distant from others. So instead, we headed for a week in the Pennsylvania Dutch Country, where 'attractions' are spread out, and attracting tourists has been a challenge for the local tourist industry, even before the pandemic. Then, in September, we took a week to explore West Virginia by car; again staying clear of crowded areas. We have gone to Colonial Williamsburg and the Botanical Gardens several times.

For the future, we're looking for some mid-week trips that we can take to take in the Fall foliage. We're still waiting to see how Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas will play out this year. Then there's the cruise we have booked for February out of San Juan. We'll see about that one (Cruise lines are restarting in the US on December 1).

While St. Michael Church continues to stream Sunday Mass at 9:15 AM, we have attended most of the in-person Masses at 5 PM on Saturdays since of June. The church established a conservative attendance limit of 150 people, and set up a pre-registration and lottery to limit the attendance. Attendance has been slowly increasing, however, the limit has not been hit, although on October 24, we did reach 146. A third Mass, on Sunday evening at 5 PM, was added in September, and currently, they are gauging interest in a second Sunday morning Mass.

Danie started early making facemasks just for the family and then a few close friends. But the circle of friends became bigger, so she has been working on them steadily. She has made about 60 of them to date; and is now working on holiday themed masks. She has returned to taking multiple quilting classes, most of them via computer from home, but some at local quilt shops, with limited attendance.

Danie had an antibody test performed in June, as we are certain that she had the COVID-19 disease last December. *What?* During our river cruise in November, she had a long conversation with a couple from Arizona. Weeks before the cruise, the husband was working as a contractor at a pharmaceutical company in Wuhan, China, when he was abruptly sent back home. After arriving home, he became very ill, but after several weeks, felt well enough to partake in the cruise (besides, they would not be refunded the air/cruise fare if they didn't go). Near the end of the cruise, the wife became very ill and we believe she was taken to the hospital on the day we were supposed to fly back. Danie became ill about 1½ weeks later, with symptoms that are commonly cited for COVID-19. However, by the time the antibody test was administered, the concentration of antibodies likely dropped sufficiently to produce a negative result. She had hoped to be able to donate plasma for injection into newly infected patients, but alas, it was not to be.

In October, during a visit to the local botanical gardens on a particularly beautiful day, Danie was gazing at the last of the season's roses, and did not see the edge of the sidewalk and a drop-off of just a few inches, lost her balance and fell. After picking herself up, she felt pain in her arm, although she just assumed it was going to be a bruise. Instead, it turned out to be a broken elbow. The doc-in-a-box she initially saw put her in a temporary cast, but the orthopedic doctor she saw three days later removed it and sent her home to finish healing without one.

Claudine & Laughton: Claudine rapidly completed her orientation training with her new employer, Scott Insurance, at home, and studied and passed certification testing as a Benefits Analyst. After working for the company for six weeks, she finally went into the office, found a work space and began working with the few others who need to work from the office. Most workers are expected to return to the office in November. Laughton will continue to work from home through at least the first of 2021. Because of the incredible offers auto manufacturers were making, Claudine could not pass up the opportunity to buy a new car at the end of May. She is now the owner of a 2020 Mazda CX-30. Not bad for someone who was laid off just two months prior!

Chris (42) & Kristy: Kristy had 'stepped back' from her position (unpaid leave) to take pressure off her company and to be able to have time to make their new townhouse a home. However, after 2 weeks, another senior coworker had to take leave in order to care for remote family members, so she returned to work. They finally closed on their second contract for their vacated condo (first buyer's financing fell through), in mid-July. As noted above, C&K behave very conservatively with regard to the COVID-19 pandemic. I have not seen them other than outdoors (Danie did make it inside the foyer of their new townhouse to deliver masks). They both continue to work from home. Since they are not out and about much, Chris dropped off his 2003 Ford Focus for 1½ weeks, for me to address numerous repair / maintenance items. He had planned to give the car to a needy family when buying a newer used car, but when he actually purchased a 2018 Subaru Crosstrek, instead of giving up his 2003 Focus, which looks ratty, but is now working great, they turned in their 2013 Focus, as its transmission was showing signs of imminent failure.

Me: I coordinated a successful additional blood drive at St. Michael in May, then, our scheduled quarterly blood drives in June and September. All were very successful (34 Units collected in May, 44 collected in June and 29 in September), primarily because blood drives in general have been minimized due to the closure of office buildings. Meanwhile, I increased the frequency of donating platelets (testing negative for SARS-CoV-2 antibodies at each donation) and I've been working on the new Food Pantry that was started by our conference of St. Vincent de Paul. Our K of C meetings, that were all-virtual since March, have transitioned to hybrid physical / virtual meetings, and we've restarted some small social activities. I did re-start the monthly gatherings of the Nuclear Engineering Retirees group in August, (outdoors at the St. Michael Church picnic area) however, only 10 showed up for the first one, 14 at the second, and 9 at today's. With colder weather setting in, we may not have any after October.

We hope everyone manages to stay clear of the virus, and that our lives return to something close to 'normal' (whatever the heck that is) soon!

Eric & Danie

Dear Family,

Nov. 27

Happy Thanksgiving!! Probably most families have had strange ones with the pandemic, and ours was also. June wasn't going to cook since our plans were to go to Nicole's, but then June felt sick so I went for an abbreviated visit. All our kids are well and working, Tim in Jersey, Bill in Manhattan, Nicole teaching in Queens, and Megan selling insurance from home in Queens. We're healthy and doing the best we can to maintain sanity. Bill moved to his own apartment so June and I are now 'empty nesters'! June teaches a mix of remote and in-person, but just this week went to full remote. I also do a blend of Home/in-office, still at Montefiore but looking at retirement at the end of next year. Health and Happiness to all, and a Blessed Christmas!!

Love,

Steve, June

Nicole
Bill
Megan
Tim

12/4/2020

Dear Family,

As I read through the RR since I last had it in early May, I saw reflected how we had first gone through a very difficult time with the virus, then saw things get somewhat better for a while. Unfortunately, we are now dealing with the worst statistics country-wide yet, and the scientists are predicting a very difficult time in the next few months, until the vaccines can be widely distributed. Time for us to "hunker down" again, and pray for continued good health and strength to see this through - especially for the first-responders!

We Zirkels are all well, and had three happy occurrences despite the pandemic. As Eileen reported, on May 30th Kristen & Josh got married; the date was especially important to Kristen, as it was my mother (Aunt Helen's) birthday! Secondly, after spending a lot of time & incurring many disappointments, they were able to buy a house last month, near where they both teach in Westchester County. Thirdly, also in late May, Bill drove to the Amish country in PA and brought home our new family pet - a tri-color sheltie who was the runt of her litter, and so "teeny-tiny" that we called her "Tia". Everyone loves Tia, and she brings a lot of joy to our mostly "stuck-at-home" family.

On the down side, whereas we spent several months of 2019 trying to help Bill's father before he passed away, now as of mid-September we have been trying to help his mother. At this point she is in a rehab facility, and we cannot even visit her because of the virus. (We do get to see her on "zoom" visits.) She will never be able to live on her own again, so we are monitoring her progress, and trying to decide what is the best next step for her care.

I also should do a reciprocal favor for Eileen - since she first reported on my Kristen, I will report that her Emily and Emily's fiance Andrew have postponed their wedding till October 1, 2021. Emily is now on the front line again with this new, even greater, influx of covid patients, so she and other brave first-responders are always in our prayers. Today happens to be Emily's 29th birthday! Happy Birthday, Emily! And Happy 90th Birthday in advance to Aunt Claire!! Wishing a happy & blessed Christmas & holiday season to all - especially to those members of our family who are facing extra personal challenges. I'm afraid we won't all be able to see our extended families for the holidays this year, but we'll be together in spirit - and on Zoom!

Love to all, Bernadette, Bill & family

Dear All,

1/4/21

Sorry about the delay. Christmas is such a busy time for us!

Glad you are all well. Joemie and I keep you in our prayers and hope this year will be blessed and safe for you - God Bless, Theresa

GREETINGS FROM MALVERNE, L.I.!

2/7/20

(2-405)

IT'S A SNOWY SUPER BOWL SUNDAY & I HAVE TO ADMIT WE ARE ALL STARTING TO GET CABIN FEVER. FOR 11 MONTHS, I'VE BEEN WAITING ABOUT ALL THE CRAZY THINGS GOING ON IN THE WORLD, FROM VIRTUAL CONVENTIONS, THE ELECTION, INSURRECTION, IMPEACHMENT & INAUGURATION -- ALL FROM THE ISOLATION OF MY BASEMENT.

FORTUNATELY, WE ARE ALL WELL. JOEY IS IN BROOKLYN, HAVING HAD COVID IN THE EARLY WEEKS OF THE PANDEMIC. TERENCE HAS MOVED TO INDIANA, WHERE HIS GIRLFRIEND IS FROM. KIRA IS WORKING REMOTELY ON ANIMATION PROJECTS. MARYLO HAS BEEN TEACHING - IMPERSONA - SINCE SEPTEMBER. AS OF THIS WRITING, SHE HAS TWICE HAD HER COVID SHOT POSTPONED, DUE TO WEATHER.

SINCE MARCH, I'VE ONLY BEEN TO OUR NEWSROOM FOR A SHORT STINT AROUND ELECTION DAY. I HAVE TO SAY IT'S VERY SAD TO SEE A VERY EMPTY MANHATTAN - ESPECIALLY TIMES SQUARE - WITH ALL THE VIDEO BOARDS GOING 24/7 BUT WITH NO ONE ON THE STREET. WITH ANY LUCK, WE WILL HAVE ENOUGH VACCINES BY APRIL TO PROTECT THE VAST MAJORITY OF PEOPLE. MAYBE THIS AUTUMN WILL SEE US RETURN TO SOMETHING APPROACHING NORMAL.

Keep the Faith
Joe Joe Clemens

2/18/21

Dear Family,

Time goes by quickly, no matter if things are good or bad. Glad that we're all grinding it out as best we can. I've had a couple more roommates since last letter. A recent one had funniest name so far - Breshay Wigglesworth. A bright spot was a successful actual Nun Run 5K in Sept. Our little sisters home has been Covid-free since the early days when they were decimated! My weekends at the Farm help keep me sane, since I get out from my routine of watching news nightly. Right after I last wrote, we had fun July 4 party there and Mom's recent 90th Bday celebration was also a blast! I'm still recovering from a strained calf (running injury) that had me in a boot for several weeks + getting PT at my nearby VA hospital. A bigger headache just a few weeks ago when 100 of my client websites were down a few days due to hosting issue. Darn technology!! To make it more fun, I had plumbing issues at the same time. Darn life!! (This letter is our safe place to share our troubles, right?) I help usher at Sat. 5pm Mass, where we usually get 140 people. A couple weeks ago we had a crowd of 230 due to weather. All safe!

Take care!
Ray

Dear Family

(2-406)

March 12, 2021

Sorry Ray but your letter made me laugh - hope all your problems are gone now.

My sister Bonnie is doing real well + still so positive Thank God. -

The last general cousin on my moms side, one my best friend when I was growing up. We received 1st Communion, Confirmation + even graduated grammar school together. Ray helped our family when Alice died + Tommy was in California 2 mos after my dad died. Then after that he drove us out to the Island to help w/ the 4 Grace kids who were 1, 2, 3 + 4 years old. He was wonderful.

Living in Florida we were able to be outside for Thanksgiving + Christmas to celebrate with our grand kids, but we miss seeing them as often naturally.

I had a goofy thing happen to me in February after a stress test showed shadows behind my heart. They predicted I'd need so many stents that bypass surgery was likely. After catheterization they found only minor problems + sent me home after 5 days in the hospital! I had people praying for me in NY, NJ, Colorado, NC + Fla. I truly believe that gave me the good outcome. I'm glad you're doing well Maria + had a successful procedure.

That was scary to hear Barb got Lyme disease. All these health issues plus Covid yikes!

It was uplifting to hear of Aunt Claire + baby Isaac.

Well Easter is only weeks away - I wish all of you a happy Spring + Easter Season.

Love

Madeline + Ralph

27 March 2021

Dear Family,

Hard to believe that we have been living with the pandemic for a little over a year. Sometimes it feels like multiple years, and other times it feels like one never-ending month. As I write, we are at an inflection point, because vaccinations are increasing, but so are the cases. Hopefully we will move back in the right direction before there's another surge. We have been hunkered down here in PA, not doing much, because I am pretty cautious about Covid and Joe is very cautious. We're glad to be having some spring weather and seeing the world green up. Our winter wasn't super cold, but we had a crazy amount of snow! Five snowstorms in February, and snow on the ground continuously from the last day of January well into March, which I've never seen before in southeastern PA.

Our kids are all OK and handling the current challenges as best they can. Our oldest wants a new job. Our daughter Emily, the ICU nurse, has made it through the winter surge with less stress than the spring surge. By the winter, Mass General had best practices worked out, and the staff was not stretched as thin as they had been in the spring. Of interest, Emily told me there were a low number of flu patients this winter, but a high number of patients with complications of alcohol/substance abuse. The former shows that social distancing does reduce infections, and the latter shows how hard it has been for some of us to cope with social isolation, job loss and all the rest. Colin, our youngest, did start graduate school in Chicago. It has been a difficult first year for him, as he has had to take all of his own classes on Zoom as well as perform his TA (Teaching Assistant) duties online. He has been allowed to work in labs (he's in Chemistry) but has had very little in-person interaction with other students. Next year should be better.

Bernadette reported for me that Emily and her fiancé Andrew postponed their wedding, but she got their new date slightly wrong. It will be Saturday October 2nd 2021, not October 1st. My own anniversary is 10/01 and that's probably what Bunny was thinking of. A&E didn't have many choices for a date, given the availability of the venue and all of the rescheduled weddings they will be attending! They decided to proceed with house hunting this year, according to their original plan. It has been a difficult year to be a first-time house hunter in the Boston metro area, but they finally succeeded in getting a bid accepted.

I wish a Happy Easter to all and a safe and beautiful spring!

Eileen

Easter, 2021

It has been busy these last few months.

On the real estate front, we were involved in three transactions:

1. We sold our Poconos house in November. I had long felt that we did not belong there, as it is a somewhat exclusive club with a lot of rules, and a lot of amenities of which we didn't take advantage. It was definitely underutilized by us. And as long as we owned the house, I felt that we should not consider vacationing anywhere else, especially since we had stopped renting the place. We took 2 trips moving stuff to Yonkers.
1. We sold the house of a friend from Sacred Heart in December. Tom has no family and has been in declining health. Now he is in a nursing home. We got him home after hospitalizations for 1 night, and he wound up back in the hospital the next day. He never went back to the house: he went straight to the nursing home. Now he is slipping into dementia and doesn't know his house is sold. He had dreamed of returning home, but we knew it would never happen. Overall, a sad story. Cleaning out the house was the worst ordeal we have been through, and we have cleaned out a few houses. A bit of his stuff ended up here as well.
2. In February, I sold the vacant Church attached to the parish where I work. It is a sad business to be involved with, but at this point, it is the right thing. Once closed in 2015, there was no bringing it back to life. Parishioners had already largely abandoned it, and it made little impact on the life of the neighborhood. Watching all Catholic trappings of the Church being removed as Rome requires - including the stained glass, the altars, statues, etc. - was a difficult sight to watch. During the week prior to the sale, when it was in the 20s, a heating pipe buried deep in a concrete wall and under stairs broke, requiring about 40 feet of pipe to be excavated and replaced. Great way to

end our relationship! We still own a convent (used as a residence for severely handicapped adults) and a dilapidated house (used by the K of C), and the 3 buildings of the current parish. The huge burdens of maintaining the sold properties are off of my shoulders, leading me to wonder how much longer I should remain on staff.

While trying to get away last summer, we were faced with limited options. We couldn't go to the Poconos, since PA in August was having a surge of cases. We thought of going to VT to visit our friend, Fr. Moe, but VT was not happy with NY's numbers and we'd have to quarantine. So, we opted instead to go to Lake George (thus staying in NY), and Fr Moe came over to join us for a few hours. We took the cruise around the lake, which was relaxing (other than the squall that came out of nowhere.) That has been the extent of our vacation time. And that's probably as close as we're coming to a cruise anytime soon

We had 2 women in RCIA 2019-20, and they finally celebrated their sacraments in October. Happily, the 2 men in the program this year celebrated at the Vigil. What a joy to see everything as it is meant to be! Aside from the spiritual aspects, which are immense, it was just good to have a sense of normalcy for once! We're already working with a few men for next year as well!

Deanne & Gillian both got their vaccinations in early Feb. I got mine in March. Will got #1 today. Shannon was set to get hers next Tuesday, but today she was at Walgreens when they announced that they had one excess vaccine available. So, she got it! Before Covid was a thing, I got my flu shot, pneumonia vaccine and first shingles dose. In a few weeks, I'll go back and finish the second shingles dose (before 6 months elapse).

Will keeps working at home with no likelihood of returning to the office. He got his Covid vaccine at the Javits Center, and took the opportunity to visit his office. No one was there. He has gotten the windows replaced on his house, and his patio stones reset: both projects were on the to do list. He and the girls have "sibling night" each Wednesday and he comes over one or two other days of the week. Alysha is up in Albany, having sponsored a candidate for RCIA at the Vigil, and taking care of other things. Gill continues to assist with her little ones at Sacred Heart. Shannon is working full time plus at Magnificat. Deanne continues to work 7 days a week at Sacred Heart. Sacraments are coming up again, so it will be more intense. After settling the sale of the other Church, I am now focused on repairing the rotting wood of St Mary's Church and then painting it to preserve it. At the same time, a lot of other deferred maintenance is getting done. We have a good contractor, so that makes the nightmare a little easier.

In these odd times, let us hold fast to our Faith, and also to the fact that the whole family is out there supporting us.

with love,
 Alan Deane, Will, Gillian & Shannon (+Alysha)

Dear Family,

Sorry for delay in getting this off.

The RR arrived a day before I left for the visit to see about a possible relocate. 2 days after arrival I contracted Covid and was laid up for 2 wks - Doing OK now but must end this now as I am busy with the move - will write more later

Love Maria