



Conventual Franciscan Life

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Spring 2017



Above Photo: One of the newly installed stained glass windows in the Chapel at Holy Cross Retreat Center, Mesilla Park, New Mexico. This window displays the image of the Transfigured Risen Christ. See inside for more about the Retreat Center's 60th anniversary celebration.



A World of Unity
and Love



Fr. Paul Faroh:
a 'Serving-First' Spirit

Spring Growth by Friar John Bamman, OFM Conv.

There is an appointed time for everything, and a time for every affair under the heavens... (Ecclesiastes 3)

Spring is the season for new growth exploding across the landscape, and a reminder to open ourselves to discern where God is calling us to grow. That's often not so easy to do. The urban jungle does not always foster spiritual growth in the garden. Through the cacophony of competing sounds vying for our attention, it is difficult to listen for that gentle call of God.

Franciscans find the creative handiwork of God all around us and we pray with the Psalmist: "LORD, my God, you are great indeed! You are clothed with majesty and splendor." (Ps 104) We find the fingers of God painting creation all around us: blossoming spring flowers, lingering sunsets, and dramatic thunderstorms. We find His fingerprints on every living thing. God continues to call forward new growth from creation each and every springtime.

How about new growth in the heart of the person? Do we allow the fertile conditions of spring to launch us into a burst of new spiritual growth?

Many discerning seekers, searching for God's direction, speak of reaching a breaking point. Witnessing the power of God all around, the seeker can no

longer dally and watch as a spectator. One discerning man shared: "I couldn't live another day not knowing if God was calling me!" The call of God at some point must be tested. This is a "no turning back" moment when the seeker can't ignore the higher calling, and must act to resolve the question.

In a nutshell the question is: "God, who are You calling me to be?" No delay, distraction, or procrastination will suffice; the seeker's life is sent into a tailspin, grappling with this worthy question, trying to find an answer. Usually this is "the appointed time" when the seeker reaches out to a friar or visits the vocation director.

Every year we organize five "Come and See" retreats to help seekers discern where God is calling them to be. It is a holy journey and an exciting question worthy of reflection, quiet, and prayer. No payment is required for these weekend retreats, no references needed to attend, or a sales pitch to endure. All that is required is an open heart willing to be led by God.

Open and cultivated ground receives the new seeds of spring each year, and by the creative hand of God, a colorful canvas explodes in growth. So what are you cultivating in your spiritual garden this spring? Maybe you know a discerning man asking the bigger questions about God's plan for his life. Encourage him to speak to a nearby friar or come visit with a Vocation Director like Friar Andy or Friar John.



Friar John Bamman and Friar Andy Martinez are the Vocation Directors for the Province. They are always happy to talk with people discerning their call in life.



Know someone who would make a great friar?

Interested in learning more about *Franciscan life*?
www.Franciscans.org

Upcoming Come and See Retreats:

July 15 to 16 - Prior Lake, Minnesota
September 22-24 - Carey, Ohio
October 20 to 22 - Mesilla Park, New Mexico

Pray with the Friars at Mount St. Francis, Indiana
September 29 - Feast of the Archangels

www.FranciscansUSA.org

Nurtured by the Eucharist

by Friar Mario Serrano, OFM Conv.



The year 2017 marks the centennial anniversary of the birth of Blessed Archbishop Oscar Romero, who was beatified by Pope Francis in 2015. However, the people of El Salvador have called him a saint for decades.

I first heard of “Saint” Romero as a young friar in formation in 2004. One of my formators had gone to the missions in Central America to minister and was now back sharing his passion for the people with us, “who were in training.” I quickly became a fan of Oscar Romero as well. I came to discover that Romero had a deep spirituality that focused on the Eucharist.

He was nurtured, and in turn nurtured the people, by the Eucharist, the Word and Sacrament, and it was through this Sacrament that Romero was able to speak in defense of human dignity. Blessed Oscar Romero came to feel the sufferings of the community and acknowledge that this great suffering was also the Body of Christ suffering. In 2005, while still in formation I would go with the encouragement of my formator to live with our friars and the people of Central America. It would be during this summer that I would make the effort to visit the tomb of a holy man, Oscar Romero, and see first-hand where the Salvadoran archbishop was celebrating the Eucharist and was assassinated while preparing the gifts at the altar.

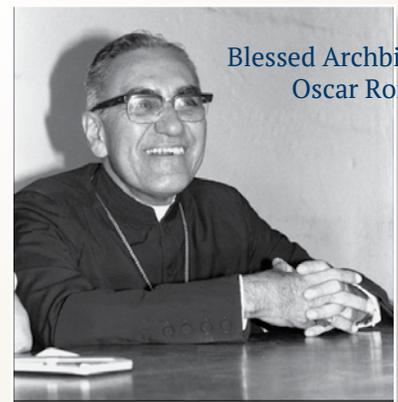
As a young friar standing in front of Oscar Romero’s tomb I was struck with his words: “I do not believe in a death without resurrection. If am killed, I shall rise again in the Salvadoran people.”

Only God knew that I would have the opportunity to return to El Salvador as a Franciscan priest in January 2017, with my former formator. We both are currently on our province Mission Commission and were headed back to Central America to prepare the logistics for a gathering in September 2017. We friars, who are an international community, will gather in El Salvador and Honduras. Friars from India, Zambia, and the U.S. will make their way to Central America to celebrate the gift of our intercultural, intergenerational brotherhood and to hear from two of our most recent friars whom Pope Francis has asked to become bishops.

While in El Salvador, we not only worked out logistics, but I was also able to prepare the gifts on an altar with the Salvadoran people where “Saint” Romero truly lives. As I begin my sacramental ministry, this moment lent itself well to reflect and ponder on the profound sacrifice of the Eucharist

and of Oscar Romero. It was here that I listened to the words within me echo: “Today, Mario, I am not asking you to only offer the bread and wine. Today I am inviting you to become like Romero, an advocate for the poor and for human dignity.”

“I do not believe in a death without resurrection. If I am killed, I shall arise again in the Salvadoran people.”



Blessed Archbishop Oscar Romero

Fr. Mario is an associate pastor at St. Joseph University Parish in Terre Haute, Indiana, where he also serves in campus ministry. The Parish celebrated his ordination to the priesthood in November 2016.



Friar Paul Faroh

Continuing to Serve God's People (and Tasty Treats)

It would seem that someone would be content to take it a little easier at age 87. But Fr. Paul Faroh, OFM Conv. doesn't seem to be slowing down at all.

While continuing his normal ministry serving at the Basilica and National Shrine of Our Lady of Consolation in Carey, Ohio, Fr. Paul has always kept up his passions – cooking, baking, candy making – as a way of bringing in extra money for the Shrine. But now he and a team of local volunteers have set their sights abroad.

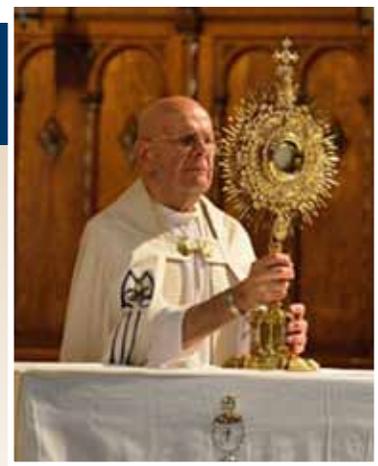
“Saying Mass, hearing confessions, he's a great help with the Shrine and the pilgrims who visit, especially last year during the Year of Mercy,” said Fr. Ray Mallet, OFM Conv., Rector of the Basilica. “But what I find incredible is that in addition to all that, he's raising funds for needed projects at the Shrine, then raised \$50,000 to care for the refugees in Syria.”

Of course, Fr. Paul shares the credit with the volunteers he calls “Super Senior Citizens.” Working about half a day, they bake pies to sell locally to raise the money for the Near Eastern Christian refugees.

“We started with just a few, but now it's about 22,” said Fr. Paul. “It's like a family has been created. We've gotten to know each other and find it a pleasant gathering. All of them are retired, several are over 80, and a few are over 85.

“Often it's a challenge to be productive when you get older. But they have something to offer and this gives them a situation to join in on. They'll do anything I ask. There's a social aspect to it, of course, but they love to be helping others.”

Fr. Paul served for many years as a Conventual Franciscan Brother, and was ordained a priest at age 55.



“He's always had that 'serving-first' spirit of a Brother,” Fr. Ray said. “He's doing an enormous amount of good, and that's a great message to those who are getting older. It shows what good you can still do.”



Above: Fr. Paul preparing to make some homemade bread. On Left: Fr. Paul with a pilgrim family visiting the Shrine for a reunion and to celebrate a 90th birthday!



Welcoming a World of Unity and Love

by Friar Paul Schloemer, OFM Conv.

Not long ago, when we as a Province spoke of “interculturality” we were talking about the relationship between our Hispanic and our Anglo communities. Here in San Antonio at San Damiano Friary, beyond infusing the “Tex-Mex” culture into our daily life, we had one day a week where the language of the house was Spanish, and all prayer and interaction during the day was supposed to be in that language.

That’s no longer possible. Today in the house we have speakers of English, Spanish, Dutch, Vietnamese, Korean, and French-Creole. Most are members of US Provinces, but some are international students

and will eventually return to their home Provinces. This has meant that our previous emphasis on Spanish, and the learning of Spanish, has been diminished. But our vision of our Order, and the world, has been greatly enhanced – and we have no desire to turn back the clock.

The Friars from around the world will take this broadened vision and international experience back to their home Provinces. The US Friars are made aware that there is a world beyond North America, and how it is important for them to learn from the Brothers they will be working with for the rest of their lives. Interestingly, the diversifying of

language in the house has emphasized the need for language study and increased the self-motivation of our students to acquire a facility in language, particularly still in Spanish.

Whatever the challenges of globalization may be, it is a sacred fact that God calls all his children into a world of unity and love. We praise God for the opportunity to be a member of a brotherhood that, often counter to the current political winds, witnesses to that sacred fact. As willingly as we have sent our missionaries out into the wider world, we open our arms to welcome our international brothers to the United States!

Far Right: Fr. Paul leads a procession on Palm Sunday in Honduras. To Right: Fr. Phil (on left) and Friar Jaime (center) with two Friars visiting from Central America - Eric and Arturo



The Friars at San Damiano Friary - Left to Right: Friars Joseph Martin Hoang-Tran, Jacob Minjarez, Jaime Zaragoza, Ivan Rohloff, Roberson Lubin, Marco Antonio Didden, Hyeong-geun (Peter) Lee (Friars not pictured: Tim Unser, Phil Ley, Bryan Hajovsky, and Paul Schloemer)

Jesus said to them: *Come and Eat*

So when they had landed, they saw a fire ready and a fish laid upon it, and bread and so a banquet had been prepared to which he was inviting them. Not only did he prepare this meal miraculously, but also this preparation was done by means of Peter's ministry at the divine command. *Jesus said to them: Bring here some of the fish which you have just now caught.* So the text continues: *Jesus said to them: Come and eat.*

He is inviting the disciples to breakfast, but in the future resurrection He will invite them to a feast, according to what Revelation 19:9 says: "Blessed are those who have been invited to the marriage feast of the Lamb." He is inviting them now to bodily food, in order to intimate that he is inviting them to spiritual food. The Song of Songs 5:1 states: "Eat my friends, and drink and become intoxicated, my dearly beloved."

This is now the third time that Jesus was manifested to his disciples after he had risen from the dead. Acts 10:40-41 states: "God caused him to be plainly seen, not by all people, but by witnesses designated beforehand by God, that is by us, who ate and drank with him after he had been raised from the dead."

Scripture: Jn 21: 9 & 14.

St. Bonaventure, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, tr. Robert Karris in *Works of St. Bonaventure*, vol.XI (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications), 2016, pp. 998-1002.



James Tissot (French, 1836-1902). *Meal of Our Lord and the Apostles* (*Repas de Notre-Seigneur et des apôtres*), 1886-1894. Opaque watercolor over graphite on gray woven paper, Brooklyn Museum.

Celebration of 60th Anniversary by Friar Tom Smith, OFM Conv.

The Franciscans hosted the first retreat at Holy Cross Retreat Center in September 1957. After 60 years this Center is active and improving each year. There are one or two retreats each month with a Franciscan as the leader. The themes include Franciscan spirituality, contemplative prayer, Peace, justice, and respect for creation, the Spirituality of Marriage, and Desert and Mountains in the Bible. The center sponsors other retreats such as one for Alcoholics Anonymous, a Women's Healing retreat, Border Issues, and Franciscan vocations.



One of the renovated bathrooms at Holy Cross.

There is a labyrinth and a Rosary walk for those who like to pray outside.

The past year almost 8,000 people came for a retreat or other activity at Holy Cross. Many times we have three, four, or even five groups during a weekend, and various groups from the University or other organizations during the week. We also we have an Art Festival in September to celebrate art and food. We offer charitable activities for those who need it. Cancer patients and refugees from Central America have come free of charge. We give discounts to groups who can't afford the full price, and invite other persons for retreats even if they can't make the normal donation.

If you would like more information you can go to our website at www.holycrossretreat.org
Holy Cross Retreat Center is an oasis in the desert!



Holy Cross holds an art Festival in September.



Holy Cross Retreat has confessions at 6:00 p.m. and Mass at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday evenings in the new Chapel.

Check our calendar page for retreat opportunities, special events, classes, and more happenings across the Province.

www.FranciscansUSA.org

(The Calendar is on a tab on the right side of the screen if you are viewing from a laptop. On a phone or other smaller device it may appear as a tab at the bottom of the home page.)

Gifts Come Full Circle

In the 1940s, at a turning point in Demain Macey's life, a retreat with the Conventual Franciscan Friars at Mount St. Francis in southern Indiana helped clarify his path. He returned to his home in eastern Illinois and invested in the business that became his life's work. He also began supporting the Friars who helped him find his way.

More than 50 years later, his widow, Gertrude, was being treated in Union Hospital in Terre Haute, Indiana. The chaplain, Conventual Friar Fr. Ken Gering, was a source of support for her and her family – even making a couple of home visits to Mrs. Macey. Continuing her husband's loyal support, Mrs. Macey became a monthly donor to the Friars.

Today, their son Damian continues to support the Conventual Friars, and has purchased a gift annuity to promote, as he says, "future benefits for the people they serve."

"When my father was deciding what to do, the retreat at Mount St. Francis was there," Damian said. "He came back excited, knowing that buying in was what he should do. He always remembered the beautiful grounds and tranquil setting of the Mount."

Though he himself has never visited the Mount, over the years Damian has spoken with Fr. Juniper, Fr. David, and other members of the Province family. He has seen first-hand how the



Fr. Ken Gering continues to work several days a week at a nursing home in southern Indiana. He is like the energizer bunny, always on the go. In his free time he rakes leaves, sweeps the sidewalks, and pitches in wherever else he sees need. And, he is always praying for you.



One of the many trails at Mount St. Francis.

ministries of the Friars can lead people on the right path, comfort them in times of need, and bring them closer to God.

Damian and his wife have also visited Assisi, Italy, and experienced the peace of St. Francis's hometown.

"We will continue to contribute to the Province and Mount St. Francis," he said. "We're loyal to St. Francis. If time and circumstances permit, we're considering doing another annuity."

For more information about gift annuities, or if you would like to remember the Friars and their ministries in your will or other estate plans, please fill out the form below, or contact the Development Office at (812) 923-5250. We would be happy to help you find opportunities to benefit the Friars and your own family at the same time.



Dear Friars,

I would like to learn more about gifts that could enhance my financial plan.

Please send me the complimentary booklet(s),

May you know the joy of your generosity in helping others

GIVING SECURITIES BETTER ESTATE PLANNING GIVING THROUGH GIFT ANNUITIES

I would like a confidential proposal for a charitable gift annuity to see how it works with my retirement plan.

I am considering a gift of: \$5,000 \$1,500 (minimum) \$10,000 other: _____

One-Life - Date of Birth: ____ / ____ / ____ (you) Two-Life - Complete both: ____ / ____ / ____ (spouse)

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