



Conventual Franciscan Friars

Saint Anthony's

Newsletter

July 2019

Published by the Friars of the Province of Our Lady of Consolation

Deepening Our Friendship with Jesus

Religious Formation from Cradle to Grave

By Friar Robert Showers OFM Conv.

Forty-five years ago this summer, Msgr. Francis D. Kelly from Worcester, Massachusetts, proposed a vision for Catholic religious education. He taught that each Catholic, as a disciple of Christ, was called ever to grow in faith and love, from infancy to old age – to be a *'student'* forever.

At baptism, each of us was anointed with the oil of *catechumens*, which is just a fancy Greek word for *'students'*, which is, in turn, a fancy Latin word for *'learners'*. At baptism, Msgr. Kelly reminded us, we were enrolled in "the school of life which is forever in session." We vowed to learn until the moment we enter heaven. We do not suddenly graduate at the age of 14 or 21; we may never stop growing.

Kelly's proposal became a draft text for the national catechetical directory, *Sharing the Light of Faith*, published by the U.S. Bishops' Conference in 1979. It was revised in 2005 under the title *National Directory for Catechesis*. Still, Kelly was not optimistic. Catholics will take their own baptism seriously, he opined, when the Chicago Cubs win the World Series.

In 1974, when the good Monsignor made his dire prediction, the Cubs ended the summer in dead last place. It had been decades since they had won the World Series. In fact, the last time the Cubs were even in the Series, Pope Pius XII was leading the Church out of WWII; the last time they won a World Series, St. Pius X wore the papal tiara.

And then it happened – in 2016, after 107 years of waiting – the Cubs of Chicago beat the Cleveland Indians to take the title.



Fr. Bob Showers OFM Conv. chairs the Friars' Commission for Ongoing Formation.



Conventual Franciscan Postulants attend a lecture by the Sisters while visiting a convent near their residence.



Lifelong learning includes practical lessons such as how to form the perfect 'hospital corner' when making up a bed.

Miracles happen! And so I dare to say, in the spirit of Msgr. Kelly, if the Cubs can win a World Series, Catholics can learn how to teach Catholicism!



A few years ago, Pope Francis said: "Catechesis, as a component of the process of evangelization, needs to go beyond simply the scholastic sphere to educate believers, from childhood through old age, to meet Christ, living and working in his church. ... It is not about *information*, but about *formation*." (General Audience, May 29, 2015)

As a Franciscan friar, I have learned to take this vision seriously. Every Province of the Order has a continuing formation commission because it is part of our lives – we are constantly learning more and more how to follow in the footsteps of Jesus in the way of St. Francis. We never have it completely figured out. Our friendship with Jesus can always grow deeper.



Dear Friends,

“Lord, teach us to pray.”

The Apostles had observed Jesus praying and one of them put forward this simple, yet powerful, request. Perhaps they could feel the peace and love of Jesus' interaction with the Father. Maybe they had an inkling of the working of the Holy Spirit. Whatever it was, they wanted to learn.

As I'm writing this, we have just celebrated Pentecost, God's gift of the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus promised would teach and guide His followers in all things. The Spirit desires to come and live in our hearts and souls. But we need to do our part, preparing ourselves to receive this gift.

In this issue, we read about lifelong learning and how important it is to us as Franciscans. We prepare ourselves for the gifts of the Holy Spirit by learning how to pray better, by growing in our faith, and by strengthening our commitment to our vocations.

That is also the challenge for each of you. God invites you to come nearer, to receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit that flow from a deeper relationship with Jesus, your Savior and Brother. You can do this through your own program of lifelong learning. And your life will be better for it.

We are grateful for your support of our Friars as they move through the different phases of their ongoing formation. From the postulants and novices who are beginning their journey in Franciscan life, to those who are active in ministry yet still find time to learn, to our senior Friars who share their wisdom with us while deepening their own prayer lives.

And we will pray for you, that the Holy Spirit will open your hearts and fill your lives with the gifts and graces that flow from the eternal, overwhelming love of the Trinity. We cannot comprehend the depths of God's love for each of us, individually; but that love is always there, supporting us and leading us back to Him.

Thank you once again for your prayerful support of our ministries and our lives. Let us continue to pray for one another as we learn the ways of the Lord, and follow His path.

Peace and all Good Things,

Fr. John Elmer OFM Conv.
Spiritual Director



Fr. John Elmer OFM Conv.



ST. ANTHONY'S CORNER

Even though he was a great speaker and teacher, St. Anthony of Padua knew that words were less important than deeds. He wrote: “A person filled with the Holy Spirit speaks various languages – different ways of witnessing to Christ – by humility, poverty, patience, and obedience. We speak these languages when we practice these virtues. When deeds speak, words are vibrant with life.”

And he prayed:

Let us therefore speak as the Holy Spirit prompts us, humbly and devoutly praying that He pour His grace upon us, that we be filled with a strong spirit of contrition, and become inflamed with the tongues of the fire of confession.

Thus inflamed and enlightened may we merit to see the one and Triune God amid the glory of the saints.

May He who is the one and Triune God, blessed for all ages, grant us these things.

In Thanksgiving

Dear Fr. John,

I am thankful for all of my blessings, especially my family, for the Church, and our faith. Also, for St. Anthony answering a lot of my favors.

D.S.

Dear Fr. John,

I am thankful for having food on our table and for our health.

M.L.

Dear Fr. John,

I am thankful for the Lord saving my life, for the Franciscan Friars' prayers. Thank God for our Catholic faith. With love.

C.E.

The Gift of Sabbatical

Preparing for the Next Stage of Ministry

By Friar Jim Kent OFM Conv.

After serving ten years as Minister Provincial, I was given a sabbatical that is soon coming to an end. It was funded in large part by many of you as a surprise gift for my years of service. Thank you! The last year has been such a blessing. It has allowed me to get away from the demands of ministry, giving me rest and time to ponder and grow. It enabled me to travel and visit family, friends, and friars, near and far.

A sabbatical is also an opportunity to become renewed and retooled in preparation for ministry. This “working” part has included listening to scores of lectures on Scripture and preaching, including topics like the Gospels, Paul's Letters, Difficult Scripture Passages, and the Parables.

I have also spent time writing short stories. I have completed ten and have three others in process. One of them, “King of Salvage,”



Fr. Jim Kent celebrates with Minister Provincial Wayne Hellmann at this year's San Damiano Legacy Luncheon.



During his sabbatical, Fr. Jim Kent (on right) visited with his friends Mike Foss and Bishop John Stowe.

was published in the May issue of the *Messenger of St. Anthony*, and others are being considered by various journals. If you would like to read one of these stories, “Everything Happens for a Reason” has been posted on the Province website. It's about a widow in her 90s and the college student who lives upstairs. Simply go to www.franciscansusa.org and click on 'Fr. Jim's Story.'

Finally, I am excited to add later in the summer I will move to Prior Lake, Minnesota, to minister with the team at Franciscan Retreats. My sabbatical has left me well-prepared for such an assignment. Thank you again for the support you've given me – and the Friars – in so many ways. God bless you!

A Closer Walk with St. Francis of Assisi

Leading Pilgrims While Learning a Language

By Friar Don Bassana OFM Conv.

It's hard to believe I've been here for nearly a year, but time flies in the Lord's vineyard. And that's what Assisi feels like to me – living in God's own backyard.

Here I welcome pilgrims from all over the world as a religious/spiritual guide for the Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi. It's estimated that as many as five million visitors make their way to Assisi every year. Some are just tourists, curious about a little town that produced such a famous person. But many travel as true pilgrims, seeking to deepen their relationship with God by following in the footsteps of St. Francis.

I first visited Assisi in 2003 and had a powerful spiritual experience. Today, many pilgrims I speak with also express the same emotions. As one pilgrim said to me: you don't have to go into a church to feel God's presence here; it's perceptible all throughout the city. Assisi's motto, after all, is “*La Città della Pace*” or *The City of Peace*.

And here I have to express a sincere and heartfelt thanks to the Friars I live with and those with whom I study at the Franciscanum. They have welcomed me as a brother, and have been patient with me as I've struggled to learn Italian.

FRANCISCAN EARTH CARE INITIATIVE

Working Together to Protect the Earth



We are *Greening the Mount!* at Mount St. Francis Friary and Center for Spirituality in Southern Indiana. As a pilot program within the Franciscan Earth Care Initiative, *Greening the Mount!* is a first step in advancing the goals of the initiative. The Friars and people from the local community have joined together in activities that will serve as a role model to others around the country. Through diverse “green” projects, educational programs, volunteer activities, and partnerships, we are conserving and using wisely the outdoor resources that have been part of our history.



A big thank you to Tim Moberly for constructing lovely cedar planters, and also to the volunteers who selected and planted the flowers.

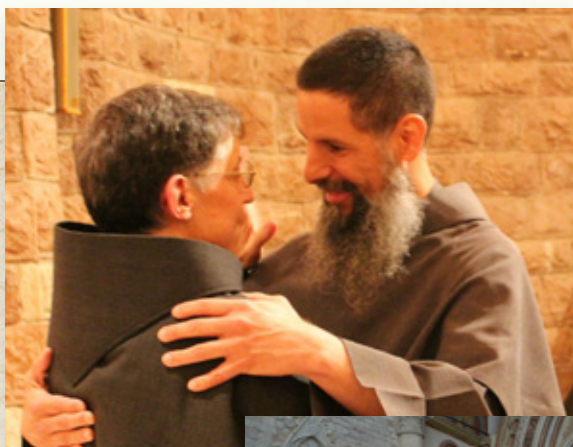
Exciting News for Greening the Mount!

- Our solar panel array through a collaboration with Catholic Energies is under final review, and the installation process should begin at the end of summer!
- Also, at the end of summer 2019, we will be installing a destination dual EV charging station on campus for electric vehicles.
- Fund raising for a geothermal heating and cooling system for our Chapel has almost reached the half-way point, thanks to more than a hundred individual donors and a \$20,000 challenge grant from the Donald. D. Lynch Family Foundation. To help us reach our \$100,000 goal, donate online at franciscansusa.org
- A new garden club at Mount St. Francis – Genesis Garden Club – is busy recruiting volunteers to help with plantings and landscaping; the Club recently partnered with Purdue Extension Floyd County to host a community workshop titled “Native and Invasive Plants.”
- Representing diverse perspectives, a local Greening the Mount! Advisory Committee had a successful first meeting, sharing great energy, ideas, and suggestions.

We provide a ministry of presence to those pilgrims who are more inclined to remain within themselves and their own personal experience. We walk alongside and share with those who come seeking directions or answers in their lives. We join our prayers with those who need healing or help with specific needs, as well as others seeking Divine favors for themselves or their loved ones.

As Franciscans, our lives revolve around relationships. No matter where we are, our focus is on relationships with people and all of God’s creation. Ours is a privileged life simply because we serve others and through our service, we share God’s love and encounter God’s love in one another in all His creatures and creation.

Pace e Bene! (Peace and All Good Things!)



Br. Don Bassana (on right) greets the new Minister General, Friar Carlos Trovarelli of Argentina. On May 25, 2019, the Ordinary Chapter of the Friars Minor Conventual elected Fr. Trovarelli as the 120th successor to St. Francis.

While on pilgrimage, Fr. John Elmer points the way to the Basilica of St. Francis.





Mother Lilato (guitar) and Sister Lodovingo of St. Clare Monastery in Lusaka, Zambia.

Fr. Wayne Hellmann visited Nairobi, Kenya, where he led a series of conferences for the leaders of the African Poor Clare Nuns.

Contemplative Voices from Africa

Collaboration in the Spirit of Saints Francis and Clare

By Friar Wayne Hellmann OFM Conv.



After St. Francis died at St. Mary of the Portiuncula, a small chapel below Assisi, the friars carried his body to St. Clare and her sisters. Then they moved on to Assisi. St. Anthony, who died on June 13, 1230, spent his last hours on this earth with the Poor Sisters of St. Clare at their monastery near Padua. The friars were carrying him to Padua, but they realized he would not make it. So they brought him to the sisters who cared for him as he died. Later his body was carried to their small church in Padua for funeral and burial. The small church was later incorporated into the grand Basilica built some years later.

Francis had inspired Clare in the origins of her vocation. He continued to encourage her, even to one of his very last writings – his final blessing for her. Clare, who died some twenty-five years after Francis in 1253, always encouraged her sisters to stay close to the friars and to the spiritual teachings of St. Francis. Such encouragement became a part of the *Rule of Life* she left her sisters.

Even today this same encouragement is written into the legislation of both Orders, that of the friars and that of the Poor Clares. This reality is particularly true among the newer

monasteries across the African continent. It is the reason I accepted the invitation to meet in early May 2019 with thirty English-speaking Poor Clares at their federation meeting in Nairobi, Kenya. There, abbesses and delegates from fourteen monasteries from the same number of different African countries came together for ten days of prayer and study of the writings of their Mother St. Clare.

The sisters wished to respond to Pope Francis' request that contemplative enclosed women communities review their monastic customs and practices in view of their ongoing formation in their human and spiritual development. For the sisters and for me this was a joyful occasion, a reunion of old friendships.

In the early 1980s and periodically in subsequent years, when I regularly taught summer courses in Zambia and other African countries, I taught many of the abbesses who were at the meeting in Nairobi when they were novices. The African Poor Clares even today remain ever grateful for the friendship and assistance of our OLC friars who have worked in Africa, especially for Frs. Juniper Cummings and Donald Halpin who likewise were faithful to them over many years. The sisters told me that Saints Francis and Anthony would both be proud.

The San Damiano Legacy Society

Be a part of a distinctive legacy, strengthening the future of the friars

The *San Damiano Legacy Society* of the Province of Our Lady of Consolation is a diverse group of our friends who ensure the Friars will have resources for ministry and missions far into the future. Our friends give generously through bequests, charitable gift annuities, securities (appreciated stock), life insurance, trusts, retirement funds and real estate.

The Friars, in thanksgiving, recognize each San Damiano Member through:

- Daily prayers and Masses of the friars
- Monthly Benefactors' Mass
- Annual listing in the St. Anthony's Newsletter
- Invitation to the annual Legacy Society Dinner
- Members transition to Forever Members upon death and are enrolled in the Franciscan Mission Association to receive these spiritual benefits in perpetuity



Br. Paul Clark with Judy Wheatley



Fr. David Lenz with Dr. O. J. Ignacio



Fr. Don Halpin with Louise Becht

Br. Ian Bremer with Dr. Chris
and Mrs. Gloria Nunier

A gift in your will or living trust offers considerable flexibility. You can leave the friars a specific gift amount, a percentage of your estate or property that remains after you provide for your loved ones. Throughout your lifetime, you can change this gift arrangement if your needs change.

When honoring the friars with your legacy, please utilize this language: **"I hereby give, devise and bequeath to: Province of Our Lady of Consolation, Inc."** When you let the friars know about your intended bequest or other planned gift, you are invited to enjoy the benefits of membership in the *San Damiano Legacy Society*.

If you have not done so already, we invite you to be a part of the *San Damiano Legacy Society*. For more information you may contact Shaunna Graf, Director of Major Gifts and Planned Giving at s.graf@franciscansusa.org or (812) 923-5250.

Please pray for the intentions of those here, and for all your Franciscan family:

Alvina Seng
David and Rita Kulik
Julia Hanlon
Lazaro and Leila Morera
Mr Carl A Lekan
Mr James H. Anders
Mr Milton J Kaelin
Mr Robert K Moeller
Mr. and Mrs. Carl Striepe
Mr. and Mrs. James Keneavy
Mr. and Mrs. Joe Edwards

Mr. James J. Hubner
Mr. John Mitros
Mr. Joseph Greene III
Mrs. Margaret M. Beyer
Ms. Florence Sabia
Alan L Amann
Arlene A. Iler
Dr & Mrs. Dale G Halter
Gerry L Sudan
James and Delores Knase
Losia Giliana

Maude Bigford
Michael and Kristina Raymond
Mr Abelardo B Joves
Mr and Mrs Bill Naville
Mr Cornelius J Schouten
Mr Donald J Hiebel
Mr Janusz Gibes
Mr Richard P Wancho
Mr Robert Weiner
Mr Thomas Brannon
Mr. and Mrs. Ed Hellmann

Mr. and Mrs. Michael Pelekanos
Mr. and Mrs. Robert C. Corona
Mr. Donald J. Kelly
Mr. Jeremiah O'Hanlon
Mr. José Gallegos
Mr. Phillip D. McCullough
Mr. Wayne M. Mausser
Mrs. Ann Kilroy
Mrs. Colleen Vrska
Mrs. Willette L Hammond
Mrs. Yvonne Schulte

Ms Antonina Todaro
Ms Patricia Delbene
Ms Rosemary T Costabile
Ms. Barbara Weber
Ms. Elise M. Striegel
Ms. Joann C. Welch
Stephen Hooley
Ms. Margaret Klempa
The Klempa Family
Frank and Angie Sartor



**Province of Our Lady of Consolation, Inc.
Conventual Franciscan Friars**

www.franciscansusa.org

Legal Title of the Conventual Franciscan Friars:
Province of Our Lady of Consolation, Inc.

Mission Advancement Office
103 St. Francis Blvd.
Mount St. Francis, IN 47146
812-923-5250

E-mail us at: frjohnelmer@franciscansusa.org