



Conventual Franciscan Friars Saint Anthony's Newsletter

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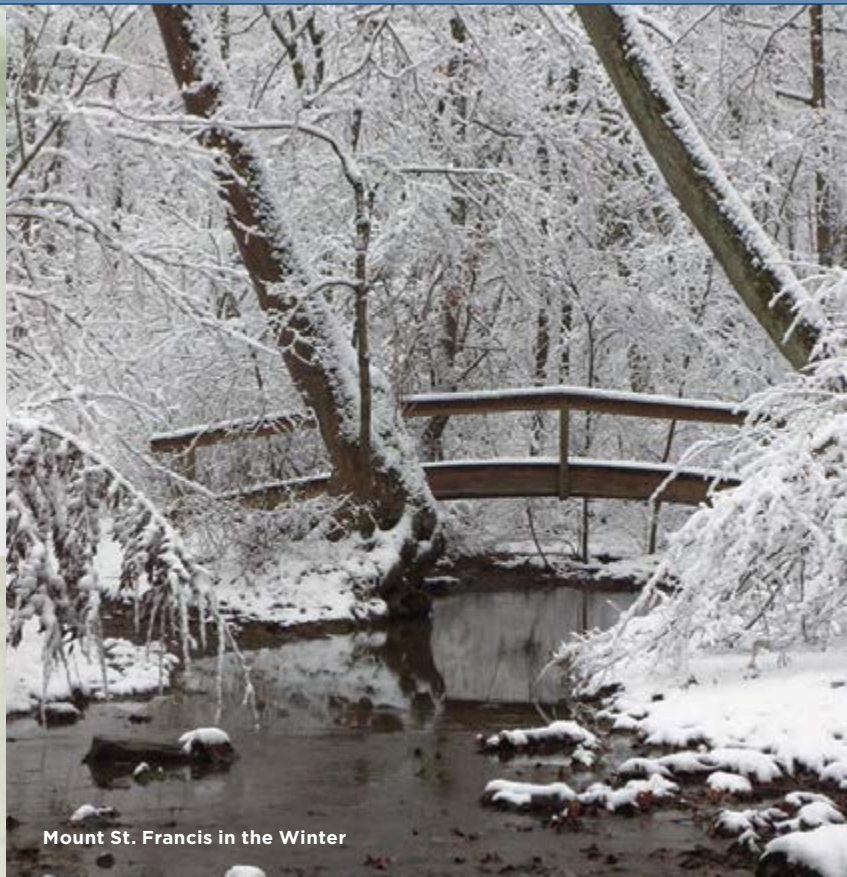
Franciscan Earth Care Initiative

Being Good Stewards of All We Receive

*"Praise be You, my Lord, through our
Sister Mother Earth, who sustains and
governs us, and who produces various fruit
with colored flowers and herbs."*

St. Francis of Assisi
The Canticle of the Creatures

In November 2018, the Conventual Franciscan Friars of Our Lady of Consolation Province launched an exciting initiative celebrating the Franciscan tradition of honoring nature, the environment, and our planet. The **Franciscan Earth Care Initiative** is a public and spiritual commitment to model the Franciscan vision of environmental stewardship and sustainability. Uniting technology, theology, ecology, and economics, the goals of the initiative are to share with and involve the community through "green" projects, educational programs, volunteering, and partnerships.



Mount St. Francis in the Winter

As the Patron Saint of ecology, animals, and nature, St. Francis of Assisi praised all creatures as brothers and sisters under God. Franciscans' care for the earth is now more than ever a top priority. Amidst an ever-changing planet and climate, protecting the environment for future generations while demonstrating sustainability are necessary critical activities for all individuals and communities.

Pope Francis focused the world's attention on these issues in his 2015 encyclical *Laudato Si* (Praised be You...). Then in July 2018, during the International Conference *Saving our Common Home and the Future of Life on Earth*, the Pope said:

"Here we can think back on the call that Francis of Assisi received from the Lord in the little church of San Damiano: 'Go and repair my house, which, as you can see, lies in ruins.' Today, the 'common home' of our planet also needs urgently to be repaired and secured for a sustainable future."



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Dear Friends,

Sometimes we forget to look, don't we? We become so busy with duties and tasks and appointments, running from one place to the next without noticing.

What are we missing? Creation – God's gift to us. From the changing greens of Spring and Summer, to the bursts of red and orange in Autumn, to Winter's bare branches and snowflakes; and that's just the trees.

But St. Francis of Assisi noticed. In fact, he was so overtaken by the splendor of God's handiwork that he wrote the famous song of praise *Canticle of the Creatures*, which may be the first poem written in Italian.

Several of the verses begin with the words *Laudato Si*, which means *Praised be You, My Lord*. From the sun, moon, and stars, to things of the earth such as wind, water, and fire, St. Francis takes time to sing his appreciation of the gifts we all share.

As followers of St. Francis, we feel a particular duty to revere and safeguard God's Creation. And as members of the Province of Our Lady of Consolation, we are rededicating ourselves to being faithful stewards of all we receive and using wisely the things we share with the rest of the world – water, electricity, and the air we breathe. In this issue we share with you some of our efforts.

As our friends and benefactors, your gifts make possible the ministries and services of our Friars. We feel the same responsibility toward those gifts, to be good stewards and make the best use of them. In fact, we are certain these initiatives will have the added benefit of lowering our cost of living.

We give thanks for you, and always remember you and your intentions in our Masses and other times of prayer. And let us always pray together the end of the Canticle:

*Praise and bless my Lord and give Him thanks
And serve Him with great humility.*

Peace and all Good Things,

Fr. John Elmer OFM Conv.
Spiritual Director



Fr. John Elmer OFM Conv.



ST. ANTHONY'S CORNER

St. Francis was a poet of Creation, while St. Anthony of Padua was an analyst. But both outlooks lead to the contemplation of the Creator. St. Anthony's scientific approach showed how all creation serves as a ladder leading to God. For example, trees:

*We beg you, Abba, Father!
That you make us into a sound tree,
that you enable us to produce worthy fruits of penance.
Liberated from eternal fire and rooted in humility,
may we merit to gain the fruits of eternal life,
with Your help,
Who are blessed throughout all ages. Amen.*

St. Anthony Novena of Masses Upcoming Dates

Novena of Masses

January 15th through the 23rd

Triduum of Masses

January 22nd, 23rd, 24th

Special 13 Tuesdays of Masses

February 12th through May 7th

Please visit franciscansusa.org to view the full schedule.

In Thanksgiving

Dear Fr. John,

I am thankful that my daughter, Jennifer, does not have uterine cancer and that my son, Geoffrey, recovered from a horrendous skiing accident.

J.J.

Dear Fr. John,

I am thankful for our 47th wedding anniversary and for my St. Francis Fraternity of OFS.

P.A. & J.A.

Although there is still much to be done within the *Franciscan Earth Care Initiative*, caring steps have been taken to ensure greater sustainability and protect and highlight the natural world:

- Adjacent to Mount St. Francis Friary and Retreat Center in Mount St. Francis, Indiana, almost 400 acres of hiking trails, woodlands, meadows, and a lake have been held in trust and preserved as a nature sanctuary. Our Lady of Consolation Province wanted to ensure their gift to the community was available for generations to come.
- Recently, Hermitage, a quiet place for spiritual rest and healing, was blessed at Holy Cross Friary and Retreat Center in Mesilla Park, New Mexico. Preservation of the landscape has provided a place of prayer and solitude with a wonderful view of the Organ Mountains.
- San Damiano Friary in San Antonio, Texas has embraced solar power with a rooftop solar installation.
- At Franciscan Retreats and Spirituality Center in Prior Lake, Minnesota, 60 acres of wooded and grassy areas are available for viewing nature and wildlife.

Currently, the Province is exploring options for solar installations at several locations while future building renovations will include using recycled and sustainable materials. Natural areas within the Province properties provide great opportunities to educate walkers, hikers, and community members about the environment and how they can help. Educational programs incorporating nature and spirituality will bring greater awareness of the importance of respecting and protecting the environment and how the friars and the community can work together to protect the future earth.

Stay tuned as the *Franciscan Earth Care Initiative* evolves! You can find out more about our efforts on Facebook at *Franciscan Earth Care Initiative*.



At Mount St. Francis we are blessed with many examples of the beauty of God's Creation.



Once we start to think about the kind of world we are leaving to future generations, we look at things differently; we realize that the world is a gift we have freely received and must share with others. Since the world has been given to us, we can no longer view reality in a purely utilitarian way, in which efficiency and productivity are entirely geared to our individual benefit...

If we approach nature and the environment without this openness to awe and wonder, if we no longer speak the language of fraternity and beauty in our relationship with the world, our attitude will be that of masters, consumers, ruthless exploiters, unable to set limits on their immediate needs...

Pope Francis

From the Encyclical *Laudato Si*



Stewardship Begins at Home

Greening the Mount! – an environmental campaign at Mount St. Francis Friary and Retreat Center in Southern Indiana – aims to push forward the goals of Our Lady of Consolation Province’s *Franciscan Earth Care Initiative*, involving the friars and community in activities that will serve as a role model to others. Through “green” projects, educational programs, volunteering, and partnerships, we will continue building on the outdoor resources that have been a part of our history.

In 1885, Mary Anderson, an internationally-famous stage performer, donated 400 acres of land to the Conventual Franciscan Friars in memory of her uncle, Fr. Anthony Mueller. Today, the land includes the Friary and Retreat Center adjacent to the Sanctuary, which holds the majority of the original land in trust and provides a wildlife sanctuary complete with trails, woods, meadows, and a beautiful lake. Carefully maintained, the Sanctuary is open to the public and provides a place of refuge and solace to all who seek the natural world.

Future activities within *Greening the Mount!* include a proposed geothermal installation for a portion of the chapel, along with bathroom renovations in the Retreat Center that will feature the latest in “green” materials and energy and water saving devices. Mount St. Francis is one of the locations in consideration for a large solar installation, while a recent rewiring project helped to pave the way for other “green” considerations.

The highly-used trails and outdoor spaces are slated for educational signage that will bring greater awareness about our relationship to the environment and provide information about volunteering and potential partnerships. Other future ideas include featuring the connection between nature and art through enhanced opportunities at the Mary Anderson Center, founded in 1989 to provide time and space for artists to work.

Find out more about *Greening the Mount!* on Facebook at *Franciscan Earth Care Initiative* or contact d.nichols@franciscansusa.org.

Come Away to a Deserted Place...

Mark 6:31

The Hermitage at Holy Cross Retreat Center

The desire to find a quiet place for prayer, often in the desert, has a long tradition. Moses went up Mount Sinai, Elijah heard the voice of God in the silence of a mountain cave, John the Baptist and Jesus both went to the desert to pray. St. Francis of Assisi often took extended times of prayer alone, seeking God’s guidance for his active ministry.

The Hermitage at Holy Cross Retreat Center, in Mesilla Park, New Mexico provides a place of quiet and some isolation in the desert, with a view of the Organ Mountains. Individuals come to listen to the voice of God, to relax and help discern the direction of their lives, and to nurture the inner call to solitude. Some also come for meditation or to develop creative expression. Occasionally a couple will spend time together to deepen their shared faith.

Recently, Friar Mark Weaver OFM Conv. spent some time at the Hermitage.

“Desert and mountains are special places of encounter with the Lord,” he said. “Holy Cross Retreats brings you to the doorstep of both in their marvelous Hermitage.”



The view from the front porch of the Hermitage

FRANCISCAN VOICE

The Podcast of the Province of Our Lady of Consolation

Hear Friars Vince Petersen, Jaime Zaragoza, and others talk about the Franciscan commitment to care for Creation on our podcast, Franciscan Voice.



Available on
iTunes and
Soundcloud

iTunes



A Shrine for St. Kateri

Many Working Hands Hold Many Blessings

Friar John Bamman OFM Conv.

St. Kateri Tekakwitha is a fitting saint for Franciscans to celebrate, especially since she is now, with St. Francis of Assisi, a co-patron saint of ecology and the environment. In October, at Mount St. Francis in southern Indiana, we installed and blessed a new prayer shrine in her honor. A towering A-frame in the woods along a lakeshore marks the site, reminiscent of her habit of placing small wooden crosses in the woods.

Her story is a difficult one. When Kateri converted to Christianity at 19 years old, she became cut off from her people and her family. Christ visited her and affirmed her call to lead people to faith in Him. She was always in danger, for her conversion created great opposition among the Mohawks. On the advice of a priest, Kateri stole away one night and began a 200-mile walk from her home in New York to a Christian Iroquois village at Sault St. Louis, near Montreal. She found solace living in a strong community of Christians and Native American converts.

Her example of accepting life's struggles as an opportunity to bring others to Christ is a powerful model for evangelizing others. Her holy actions and virtuous living inspired many others to follow Christ. The line in the peace prayer that embodies Franciscan values, "Where there is hatred let me sow love," aligns perfectly with this heroic saint and her life's work.

We are grateful for the helping hands who worked diligently to build this prayer shrine to St. Kateri, especially the teenagers who did the heavy lifting during July's humid heat. They banded together to move mountains of earth, floated building supplies across the lake, cleared trails, and supported their comrades who fell ill from the heat.

Mount St. Francis Sanctuary members brought their skilled hands to execute an impressive building plan, complete with prayer benches and signs. Benefactors made this project a reality through generous gifts of time, talent, prayers, and treasure.

Brother Bob Baxter OFM Conv., who lived at Mount St. Francis and passed away in March 2017, was an advocate for bringing young people into the outdoors to experience God's



Top: Some of the helping hands enjoy the fruits of their labor.

Left: Fr. Vince Petersen blesses the new Shrine

Right: Friends and Friars gathered for the dedication of the Shrine.

grandeur. He would have been proud of this cooperative project and, as a native of Brooklyn, approved of this Shrine to one of his home state's Native Americans.

St. Kateri valued the Christian community around her as the perfect place to practice holiness. For her, holiness was not reserved for people isolated from the busyness of life, but rather to be found in the hustle and bustle around her. Yet she always found peace and consolation in God's glorious creation.

Please join us in praying to St. Kateri next time you visit Mount Saint Francis.

Continuing your support with an IRA Charitable Rollover Gift



If you are 70½ or older, the **IRA charitable rollover** provision of the Internal Revenue Code allows you to transfer directly from your Individual Retirement Account (IRA) any amount up to \$100,000 in the aggregate annually to all qualified charities, including **The Province of Our Lady of Consolation.**

This gift counts against your required minimum distribution amount and is not subject to federal tax.



Thank you to all who support our ministries and services to God's people.

How do I make an IRA Charitable Rollover Gift to the Province of Our Lady of Consolation?

- Contact your IRA custodian to obtain the appropriate form to make an IRA charitable rollover. The form may refer to the rollover by its technical name, "qualified charitable distribution," or QCD. If your IRA custodian requires you to submit your request by letter, please contact Becki Romans or b.romans@franciscansusa.org for a sample.
- On the form, specify the amount to be transferred to the Province of Our Lady of Consolation to receive and include our tax ID no. (35-6019627), if asked.
- The IRA plan custodian should make the check payable to The Province of Our Lady of Consolation and mail it to:

The Province of Our Lady of Consolation
Mission Advancement Office – Attn: Becki Romans
103 St. Francis Blvd
Mount St. Francis, IN 47146

- Please instruct the IRA plan custodian to reference your name and address on the check; otherwise, it may be difficult to identify that you are the donor when the check arrives.
- If the IRA plan custodian makes the check payable to the Province of Our Lady of Consolation but mails the check to you, please mail the check with a cover letter to The Province of Our Lady of Consolation, Mission Advancement Office – Attn: Becki Romans, 103 St. Francis Blvd, Mount St. Francis, IN 47146.

Please let us know! Contact Becki Romans, at 812-923-5250 or b.romans@franciscansusa.org

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

Mr. Angelo Baccala
Mrs. Eileen Baran
Ms Pam Brooks
Debbie Campbell
Mr. Graziano M Canini
Mr Donald Cheatham
Joyce Chism
Ms. Anne Deaven
Mr. and Mrs. David Duggins Sr.

Mr. and Mrs. Sam Eckart
Mr. and Mrs. Joe Edwards
Georgette S. George
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Mr. William E Gerard
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Mildred Wuebbe
Ms. Margaret Klempa
The Klempa Family
Frank and Angie Sartor



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

www.franciscansusa.org

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