

# FRANCISCAN FOCUS

NEWS FROM THE FRANCISCAN DEVELOPMENT OFFICE OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST PROVINCE • SUMMER 2007 • VOLUME 16, NUMBER 2

## Dear Friends,

Summer 2007



As noted in recent mailings, the Franciscan Development Office (FDO) and the Franciscan Missionary Union (FMU) will merge fundraising efforts into one office: **Friar Works/Franciscan Ministry and Mission** beginning July 1.

This is the last issue of *Franciscan Focus*. Beginning in September, we will publish a newsletter that will replace *FriarWorks* (FMU) and *Franciscan Focus* (FDO) to continue to inform you about our ministries and missions.

Appeals for support of the missions and ministries will continue to come from me but will look different. FMU director, Br. Scott, will be the Mission Office director. We will work together to see that our missions and ministries are well cared for.

Several personnel changes are also taking place. Provincial treasurer, Fr. Kenan, and St. Anthony Messenger Press publisher and CEO, Fr. Jeremy, will be retiring in June.

Read more in this issue.

We have been to the Shrine to represent you every Tuesday during the Solemn Novena to St. Anthony. I am presiding at the Feast Day Mass on June 13 and promise that you will be in my prayers – wonderful prayers of thanksgiving for you.

Sincerely,

Fr. James Bok, O.F.M., Director

## A Major Transition

Fr. Dan Kroger, O.F.M. ministered in the Philippines since 1979 except for a four-year break while earning a doctorate at Notre Dame. He will become the CEO of St. Anthony Messenger Press on June 1, 2007. This is an edited version of a letter from Fr. Dan.

### Good-byes are part of life for missionaries whose calling takes them far from home.

Last October 27, after bidding farewell to friends and colleagues, I returned to Cincinnati after 22 years in the Philippines. The transition began when my Franciscan brothers asked me to consider a new ministry – becoming CEO of St. Anthony Messenger Press.

Teaching theology at De La Salle University in the Philippines was exciting. I enjoyed working with graduate students, as well as the research, writing and consultation with secular and religious professionals. Asked to consider becoming CEO/publisher of SAMP, I needed time to gain some understanding of the new ministry. After some discernment, I plunged into my new work on November 1, 2006 preparing to take the helm in June.

My experience in the Philippines began in August 1979. After a couple months of language study, I was assigned to pastoral work in the rural province of Biliran. It was quite a transition from teaching high school students in

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Fr. Dan

photo by Jack Wintz, O.F.M.

## Our Flagship Ministry Says Goodbye to Fr. Jeremy



Fr. Jeremy

Provincial Fr. Fred Link, O.F.M. often refers to St. Anthony Messenger Press (SAMP) as our province's flagship ministry. Fr. Jeremy Harrington, O.F.M., has given 33 years of his life to SAMP's storied history. He retires on June 1. Here's what St. Anthony Messenger editor, Fr. Pat McCloskey, O.F.M., wrote:

"Mere words cannot do justice to what Father Jeremy Harrington, O.F.M. has given us and you! He has served as assistant editor, editor and publisher/ chief executive officer of St. Anthony Messenger Press. He leaves shoes difficult to fill.

"Under his smiling leadership we have expanded onto the Internet and radio, developed a wide variety of newsletters and begun producing video-tapes (now DVDs). We have increased our staff, opened two teleministry calling centers, acquired three companies and a book imprint, constructed a new building and renovated the old one.

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As noted in previous communications, the Franciscan Missionary Union and the Franciscan Development Office will merge into a new office: **Friar Works/Franciscan Ministry and Mission** beginning July 1. Look for our new design in the future.

# FRIARWORKS

## FRANCISCAN MINISTRY & MISSION

photo by Phillips Robinette, O.F.M.

# A Provincial First



Fr. Kenan and David

For the first time in our provincial history a lay person will be the Chief Financial Officer. The following is an edited version of an article by Toni Cashnelli published in the provincial newsletter.

**At the age of 40, David O'Brien is a financial consultant with an impressive string of degrees and professional designations.**

But talk to David for five minutes, and it's obvious where his heart is – it's with his faith and his family. Along with sports, which he dearly loves, one of his favorite activities is prayer. It is this mixture of secular skills and spiritual priorities that brought David to his new post as Chief Financial Officer for St. John the Baptist Province.

On April 2, he began working in Cincinnati alongside the friar he replaces, Fr. Kenan Freson. "It's going to be an exciting time for us," says David, who's in the process of relocating from Burlington, N.J., with wife Michelle and three sons: Michael, 9, Davis, 7 and Nicholas, 4.

"My wife and I feel comfortable coming to the Cincinnati area, and we think our kids will as well," even though they'll be leaving most of their extended family in Greater Philadelphia, where David was raised. When the opportunity to work with the province presented itself, "It seemed fitting to me it was Franciscan, since the Franciscan saints were present in what we do in the prayer life of our family." It also gives him a chance "to work with so many people who are giving themselves for such an admirable cause." David considers the work of the friars "the ultimate mission. Everyone wants to be relevant," he says. "Nothing is more relevant than being a representative of Christ."

Welcome to our provincial staff, David. We wish you every blessing.

## CHECK US OUT ON THE INTERNET

- The Province: [www.franciscan.org](http://www.franciscan.org)
- Prayer requests at St. Anthony Shrine: [www.stanthony.org](http://www.stanthony.org)
- E-cards: [www.catholicgreetings.org](http://www.catholicgreetings.org)
- Shop at St. Francis Bookshop: [www.stfrancisonline.com](http://www.stfrancisonline.com)
- Catholic inspiration: [www.americancatholic.org](http://www.americancatholic.org) or [www.franciscanradio.org](http://www.franciscanradio.org)

## FOCUS ON ANTHONY



photo by Jack Wintz, O.F.M.

**June 13 is the Feast of St. Anthony of Padua. This month we honor this revered and popular Franciscan.**

"When a crystal is touched or struck by the rays of the sun, it gives forth brilliant sparks of light. When the man or woman of faith is touched by the light of God's grace, they too must give forth sparks of light through their good words and deeds, and so bring God's light to others" – St. Anthony

"The avaricious man is really not rich, but poor. He does not control his money, but is controlled by it. He does not possess his wealth, but is possessed by it. He may have many things, yet for him he has all too little." – St. Anthony

## Thanks for the Memories – and Dedicated Ministry



After 25 years as Treasurer and Chief Financial Officer of our province, Fr. Kenan Freson, O.F.M. has asked to be relieved of his duties. During his tenure, Fr. Kenan has had the responsibility of overseeing all financial matters of the province. He has seen to the funding for the care of our senior and infirm friars and men in formation.

Fr. Kenan has implemented policies and procedures that assure good and ethical stewardship of the gifts entrusted to us over the years. Fr. Kenan's impact on the financial accountability and well-being of our province has been monumental.

We are grateful for his dedicated and caring service and wish him well as he looks forward to a sabbatical year. On a personal note we, in the FDO, owe Fr. Kenan a huge thank you. He has functioned as the treasurer of our office and has made our work much easier. Colleen, Shirley, Patti, Jim and Fr. Jim wish him our very best.



photo by Toni Cashnelli

Vicar provincial, Fr. Jeff Scheeler, presents Patti with her 20 year certificate.

### MANY THANKS, PATTI

Patti Giesting was honored on April 13 for 20 years of service to the province. For the last 17 years Patti has been on the FDO front lines receiving your mail. She lovingly accepts your gifts and notes your intentions for prayer. Patti is a blessing to our office and we congratulate her!

# Brotherly Love

**On April 29, eight volunteer friars headed to St. Mary of the Angels in New Orleans' Ninth Ward.**



L to R, first row: Friars Norbert, Jeff; 2nd row: Friars John, Ed, Bart, Carl; 3rd row: Friars Humbert, Pat, Mark, E.J.

The entire group joined Bart on a tour through the Ninth Ward and other areas including a stop at St. Philip Catholic Church which is being merged with St. Mary of the Angels. Everyone was moved by what remains to be done. An encouraging sign near the parish was the row of recently built, brightly colored Habitat for Humanity houses.

Although a great deal of work is still ahead, these friars were happy to play a part in the recovery of St. Mary of the Angels.

Their mission: help renovate the friary and church that were victims of Hurricane Katrina. Friars Jeff Scheeler, Carl Hawver, Humbert Moster, John Turnbull, Ed Gura, E.J. Stein, Norbert Bertram and Pat McCloskey were warmly welcomed by Pastor Fr. Bart Pax and Br. Mark Gehret.

Jobs included cleaning, painting, window washing, miscellaneous repairs and more. The friars went to bed tired each evening. The work day began with Morning Prayer and Mass and ended with Evening Prayer. Carl prepared the meals each day.



L to R: Jim Bok, O.F.M., Bill Schulte, O.F.M., Ali Packard, Bruce Michalek, O.F.M., Chris Duckett, Madeline Bonnici, Colleen Cushard, Tom Cole, O.F.M., John Piccione, O.F.M., Rich Grace, Moises Gutierrez, O.F.M., John Quigley, O.F.M.

**“Never Be Ashamed to Go Begging...”**

– Sr. Francis of Assisi



On April 15 development officers from the seven OFM Franciscan provinces in the States gathered for a two day meeting, hosted by Fr. John Quigley, O.F.M., of Franciscans International in Geneva.

In addition to our Cincinnati province, provinces are headquartered in St. Louis, Franklin (WI), Albuquerque, Oakland (CA), and two in New York City. The development offices are charged with generating charitable gifts to support the friars and ministries in each province. Each local office furthers the work of the Franciscan Order. This annual meeting allows them to share ideas.

Franciscans International is a United Nations Non-Governmental Organization. Br. Moises Gutierrez, O.F.M., director of development at the Franciscan Curia in Rome, was in attendance also. Of special interest this year was enhancing understanding of the international dimension of our Franciscan work. Br. Moises and Fr. John spoke of the needs of the Order around the world. While each province has its own needs, each also assists the Order's work, especially in poor countries.

At these gatherings we are always mindful of the wonderful people who make our work possible – our benefactors. We prayed for you every day.

## Franciscans Join Cardinal in Support of Immigrants

Friars Henry Beck, Francis Wendling, Frank Probst, Joe Nelson and Juan Montoya celebrated with Cardinal Roger Mahony, Archbishop of Los Angeles, April 14, during an outdoor Mass at Annunciation House, in support of immigrants' rights. Fr. Henry, Catholic Chaplain at the University of Texas



L to R: Friars Joe, Henry, Francis and Frank with Cardinal Roger Mahony, third from left

at El Paso (UTEP), quoted the Cardinal as saying, “There are not two bodies of Christ – the body of Christ with papers and the body of Christ without documents. We are one body of Christ.” He also explained, Henry says, “that immigration has emerged partly because the U.S. in essence has placed a ‘help wanted’ sign along the border beckoning immigrants to the United States. These immigrants have helped create a vibrant economy in the United States. Lawmakers need to recognize this by passing comprehensive immigration reform.” The Cardinal received the 2007 Voice of the Voiceless award from Annunciation House, a faith community that provides hospitality to immigrants in El Paso.

Subscribe to Fr. Jim's e-newsletter, St. Anthony's Breadbasket, at [www.stanthony.org/donate/newsletter.asp](http://www.stanthony.org/donate/newsletter.asp)

# How About Italy?

Join Fr. Jim on a pilgrimage to Southern Italy. Visit Naples, Pompeii, the Amalfi Coast and Sicily from October 1-11, 2007. For a detailed itinerary return the form below to 1615 Vine Street, Cincinnati, OH 45202, call 513-721-4700 or email us at [sjbfd@franciscan.org](mailto:sjbfd@franciscan.org).

Dear Fr. Jim,

Please send more information about your pilgrimage!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

area code \_\_\_\_\_ number \_\_\_\_\_

Have you previously inquired about one of our pilgrimages?  Yes  No

## Continued from front page: A MAJOR TRANSITION

Cincinnati! I was shocked by the poverty. Seeing people suffer with or die from tuberculosis, gastroenteritis and massive infections on the island of Maripipi awakened in me a new sense of what "solidarity with the poor" means.

Politically, martial law under President Ferdinand Marcos had sparked a culture of governmental corruption, and a security state resulting in the denial of basic human rights. I was heartened to see the church become the voice of the poor and oppressed. This struggle for justice continues today.

In 1986 I came home for knee surgery. While here I was asked to obtain a doctorate in theology at Notre Dame University. I then returned to the Philippines and taught Christian ethics until now.

Family and friends often ask how I find the U.S. What strikes me, of course, is the abundance of food. The main thing I feel is the political and religious polarization in this country. The war in Afghanistan and Iraq has split the political world into two divergent camps. Most Americans seem disillusioned with the war as shown in the last elections. I think Catholics need to become a peaceable people. In imitation of Jesus and early Christians we must stand with the poor and oppressed in this era of globalization.

In my new ministry, I hope to deepen the faith and love of Christians, while encouraging people of all faiths and cultures to promote and protect the human rights of the world's poor – beginning with those close to home.



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## Continued from front page GOODBYE TO FR. JEREMY

Through it all, Fr. Jeremy encouraged and challenged staff to give their best efforts to our ministry of spreading the Word that is Jesus Christ. Nearly impossible tasks seemed easy because he encouraged us, "You'll be great!"... We will all miss him greatly."

When asked about his work at SAMP, Fr. Jeremy said, "I see Catholic media as a bridge within the Church, facilitating information, promoting dialogue between authorities and members, between traditionalists and progressives, old and young. We need a bridge between polarized groups so that we live as the one Body of Christ."

# F O C U S O N G I V I N G

## Charitable Giving

You can help the Franciscan Friars in many ways with your support.

Leave a legacy through your will, life insurance, retirement plan, charitable remainder trust and other vehicles. These can be wonderful ways to provide a substantial gift, and estate tax savings for your heirs.

**Gifts of stocks, bonds and mutual funds** that have increased in value are good gifts. You can deduct the entire value from your taxable income and avoid the capital gains tax. Such gifts are good for you and for us.

**Gifts of cash, and by check or credit card** are the most popular ways of making charitable gifts. Such gifts are tax deductible.

**A charitable gift annuity** is a gift of cash, stock or some other security. In return for the gift the Franciscans pay you a fixed annual amount of money for the remainder of your life.

## CANDLES

Due to increased costs we must increase the stipend to \$5.00 per candle. We are sorry for any inconvenience.

Dear Fr. Jim,

Please light \_\_\_\_\_ candle(s) at the National Shrine of St. Anthony for me.

I have enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_.  
(The normal donation is \$5.00 per candle, but any donation will be accepted.)

My intention is \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

area code \_\_\_\_\_ number \_\_\_\_\_