

“What if” St. Francis ran away from his dreams? “What if” St. Francis closed his ears to the voice of Christ beckoning, “Francis, Francis, rebuild my church for it is falling into ruin?” “What if” St. Francis gave into his fears and doubts? Would we have ever heard of him? Would there be a St. Clare? A St. Bonaventure? A St. Anthony? A St. Maximilian Kolbe or Fr. Solanus Casey?

If St. Francis ran away from his dreams would St. Clare have recognized hers? Would there be any “Poor Clares” or Mother Angelica, or EWTN or “Sunday Night Live: with Fr. Benedict Groeschel?

Would we ever have experienced the beauty of Giotto’s frescoes? Would there be any Franciscan Missions in California? Would there be any Christmas nativity scenes in our homes - can you even imagine Christmas without them? Would we have the Stations of the Cross in our Churches?

Would Assisi be the mystical city of pilgrimage that it is today? Would there be a San Francisco, CA or a San Antonio, TX or a St. Augustine, FL or even a Franciscan University of Steubenville?

What would have happened to the hundreds of thousands of followers of St. Francis throughout the centuries who found the dream in their heart after they came to know St. Francis and his dreams? Obviously, we can go on and on! If St. Francis didn’t follow his dream, where would you be? Where would I be?

Thank God that Francis was a dreamer and, more importantly, that he followed his dream; that he listened to the voice of God deep in his heart. For, deep in his heart he met Christ and came to discover that what was deep in his heart was Christ’s dream for him.

“Francis, Francis, rebuild my church for it is falling into ruin.” His deepest desire, his deepest dream was Christ’s dream for him! And so it is with us!

Jesus says, “I come that my joy may be yours and your joy may be complete” (John 15:11; 17:13). His dream for us brings us joy! Jesus also says, “Peace is my gift to you” (John 14:27). His dream for us brings us true peace - a peace that the world cannot take away.

I believe that Christ’s dream for St. Francis included all the saints, the beauty, the music, and the art that would come to be because of St. Francis’ “yes!” St. Francis’ listening to the dream deep in his heart - to the whisper of God - has produced amazing repercussions down through the centuries. His “yes” has

touched you and me as well.

What is your dream? What is Christ’s dream for you? How does Christ want you to “live life to the fullest?” Whose lives will be changed for the good, perhaps forever, because of your “yes” to Christ?

Someday, in His kingdom, it will all make sense. We will see clearly how the lives of other people who were faithful to Christ touched our lives, and we shall also see how our “yes” to the “whisper” of God in our hearts has changed the course of history. We must find time to dream, find time in the silence of our hearts to listen to the gentle voice of God, find time in this world filled with distractions and noise to recognize the “restlessness” in our hearts that can only be filled by God, by His love, by His dreams for each of us, His children. ☩



Let us introduce this year’s postulant class: (l-r) Ben Novak (Minnesota); Jake Smith (South Carolina); Nick Doherty (Illinois); Christopher Blashock (Pennsylvania); Christopher Larkin (Scotland). Not pictured: Carlos Encinas (Argentina), Pieter Hermans (England)

CFR FRIARIES (Kindly call between 9 AM-5 PM and 7 PM-9 PM)

Convento San Antonio
011-505-2-772-2757
Apartado 283
Matagalpa, Matagalpa
Nicaragua, C.A

Convento San Serafin
011-504-772-7998
Colonia Francisco Morazan,
Apartado 331
Comayagua, Honduras, C.A

Most Blessed Sacrament Friary
973-622-6622
375 - 13th Avenue,
Newark, NJ 07103

Our Lady of the Angels Friary
718-993-3405
427 East 155 Street,
Bronx, NY 10455

Sacred Heart of Jesus Friary
817-332-2435
1003 E. Terrell Ave.,
Fort Worth, TX 76104

St. Columba Friary
011-44-287-126-0390
6 Victoria Place
Derry BT48 6TM
Northern Ireland

St. Crispin Friary
718-665-2441
420 East 156 Street,
Bronx, NY 10455

St. Felix Friary
914-476-7279
15 Trinity Plaza,
Yonkers, New York 10701

St. Fidelis Friary
011-44-207-474-0766
Killip Close,
London, E161LX, England

St. Joseph Friary
212-234-9089
523 West 142 Street,
New York, NY 10031

St. Leopold Friary
914-965-8143
259 Nepperhan Avenue,
Yonkers, NY 10701

St. Michael Friary
973-345-7082
190 Butler Street
Paterson, NJ 07524

St. Patrick Friary
011-353-61-458-071
64 Delmege Park,
Moynoss, Limerick City, Ireland

St. Pio Friary
011-44-1274-721-989
Sedgfield Terrace,
Westgate, Bradford, BD12RU, England

San Juan Diego Friary
505-764-3034
820 Broadway Blvd. S.E.,
Albuquerque, NM 87102

YOUTH 2000 RETREATS WINTER/SPRING 2011

Jan. 14 - 16Island Park, NY
Jan. 21 - 23Auburn, CA
Jan. 28 - 30San Angelo, TX
Feb. 11 - 13Charlotte, NC
Feb. 25 - 27Beaumont, TX
March 11 - 13Owensboro, KY
March 18 - 20TBA, NY
April 1 - 3Denver, CO
April 8 - 10Fort Worth, TX
June 3 - 5Buffalo, NY

For more information on Youth 2000, call
214-361-2581. For Youth 2000 retreats in the
New York area, call 718-349-1157

For information on the Franciscan Sisters of
the Renewal, contact:

Sr. Lucille Cutrone, CFR
Convent of San Damiano
1661 Haight Avenue, Bronx, NY 10461
718-829-9466

www.franciscansisterscfr.com



FRIARS’ BOOKS, TAPES AND MUSIC

Fr. Benedict Groeschel, CFR
Spiritual Books
Box 55, Larchmont, NY 10538
www.franciscanfriars.com

Fr. Andrew Apostoli, CFR
Delight of All Saints
PO Box 111825, Naples, FL 34108
(239) 390-2435
www.franciscanfriars.com

Fr. Stan Fortuna, CFR
Francesco Productions
718-401-7349
www.francescoproductions.com

ETC.

Young men and women interested in discerning their call to our way of life may contact Fr. Gabriel Mary at St. Joseph Friary at 212-281-4355 or St. Francis at Our Lady Queen of Angels Convent at 212-831-3322.

Information about the life and apostolates of the friars, and upcoming CFR events including the “Catholic Underground,” can be found on our website.

Inspirational messages written by the friars and sisters can be found by clicking on “e-letter” from the homepage:
www.franciscanfriars.com.

Traditional and Contemporary Music by the friars: Sacred Chant and Praise and Worship CD’s are available through Francesco Productions.
www.francescoproductions.com

Lay persons who are interested in participating in the work and spirituality of the friars as a Lay Associate should contact Fr. Louis in the Bronx at 718-665-2441 or Fr. Glenn in Newark at 973-622-6622.

The Friars and Sisters rely on donated cars to get us where the Lord wants us to go. If you are thinking of passing along your car (tax-deductibly) and it isn’t yet terminally ill, please contact us at any friary or convent.

...awaiting your visit!



www.franciscanfriars.com



Franciscan Friars of the Renewal

Issue 43, Winter 2010

PROVIDENTIAL LOVE

By Fr. Mariusz Casimir Koch, CFR

As a young boy growing up in the 1950s, I was somewhat of a “dreamer.” For example, my vivid imagination could take me to a world of my own making, as my Lionel train set eventually filled my entire bedroom with paper mountains and glass lakes, small plastic villages, tunnels and bridges, forests and a farm. During the summers, there were tree houses to climb into and forts made of cardboard boxes and secret club houses in the basement where my friends and I would meet. My “Lone Ranger saddle ring,” which I ordered with Rice Krispie Box Tops, along with my cowboy hat and cap gun enabled me to be an authentic Cowboy (even in Jersey City). I was prepared to ward off any possible attack of the Apaches.



However, sometimes being a dreamer got me into trouble. In the 6th grade, my mom was told at a PTA meeting that my otherwise good report card was marred by a “U” (unsatisfactory) in the category of attentiveness. “Your son is a dreamer,” Sister informed my mom with a tone of serious concern.

But, at 16, I really began to dream. I attended a Vocation Rally sponsored by the Archdiocese of Newark and various Religious Orders at Seton Hall University in South Orange, New Jersey. At the rally, I received a number of different postcards from various religious orders, which I sent in requesting more information.

Most of these orders responded by sending some catalogue or flyer, but not the Franciscans! One evening, while I was doing my homework at the kitchen table, someone knocked at the door. It was a Franciscan priest who came to talk to me about my vocation!

I turned beet red! I certainly was not expecting his visit and was somewhat taken aback when he asked my dad to leave the room while he talked to me! However, before he left, he gave me a copy of Jorgensen’s *Life of St. Francis*, which I began to read daily after school. In fact, I soon found myself rushing home from school so I could run up the stairs to my room where I would dream along with St. Francis. Chapter after chapter resonated with my dreams as a young man.

Thinking about that experience, I realize that St. Francis was a dreamer as well. As a young man he dreamed of becoming a noble knight riding triumphantly into battle. He was a romantic troubadour in love with his “beautiful Lady Poverty.” He was a poet whose heart was filled with praise and song and deep, Italian passion. He was a lover of God whose heart exploded with joy in God’s creation, but also cried when “love was not loved!” St. Francis was certainly a “dreamer.”

Permit me to invite you, dear reader, to dream along with me. I’d like to ask you to ask the question “What if?”

(continued in center)

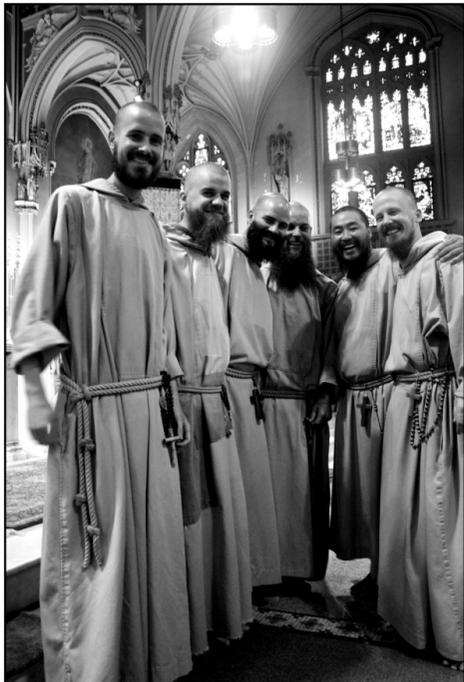


▲ Many hands - big and small - get the job done every Associates Day held monthly at Most Blessed Sacrament Friary. While our Lay Associates say they receive much spiritual support from the friars, the friars believe they too are blessed in the material support they receive! Here's a great Grayfriar photo - Lay Associate John Braica and his grandson Donald helping the friars put their tired garden to sleep for the winter.



▲ Fr. Richard receives a well-deserved sign of appreciation from friars and residents of the St. Anthony Shelter before he heads south to Honduras. Thanks to his capable leadership and hard work, the friar's residence for homeless men has now become a faith-based therapeutic community. Since the absence of a healthy and happy home in childhood is often at the core of adult problems, providing an environment of support and acceptance is often the solution. Those who live and serve at St. Anthony Shelter for Renewal are very grateful for Fr. Richard's selfless efforts in creating a home which is both holy and healing. While individual friars must come and go, the work of God remains, yet not without that "special something" each friar like Fr. Richard leaves behind as a gift.

► As the Bible tells us, "To everything there is a season" - and so it is in the novitiate! While much of the novice's time is ordered and close to home in Newark, attending and even entertaining at a youth conference in Vermont is not contrary to the goals for proper religious formation. Indeed, Church documents concerning religious life speak of "balancing and blending" various elements and activities to create a healthy and effective formation program for young religious. No doubt, the quality and perhaps even the quantity of young people attracted to the friars and other growing communities are the fruit of a simple attentiveness and obedience in applying the wise and time-tested directives of the Church.



◀ The majestic music and inspiring medieval decor of the church could only be surpassed by one thing - the tangible joy of those who filled the pews! This year six friars made their perpetual profession of vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience in Good Counsel Church located on the East Side of Manhattan. Final profession of vows represents the end of the phase of initial formation and discernment, yet also marks the beginning of a friar accepting greater responsibilities and facing formidable challenges in the future. Please pray for both courage and perseverance for these young men who have made their lives an offering to God and His Church. They are (l-r) Br. Felice Maria Gavazzi, Br. Dismas Marie Kline, Br. Justin Jesúsmarie Alarcón, Br. Gabriel Joseph Kyte, Br. Ignatius Mary Shin, and Br. Nicholas Maria White.



► The sunny Central American atmosphere of Casa Juan Diego holds many memories for Br. Philip Maria, who volunteered as a layman when the center opened ten years ago. The storefront, located just down the street from St. Felix Friary in Yonkers, is dedicated to providing material and spiritual support for many working men who are now far away from home. It is through the generosity of benefactors and volunteers that wonderful works like Casa Juan Diego can do so much good for so many. As the friars celebrate Casa's decade of devoted service, we beg God's blessings upon all who have helped and who continue to help. To all our friends - Gracias!



◀ Not every seminarian can boast of calling their ordaining bishop a personal friend - but Br. Columba can! Bishop Manuel Cruz, auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Newark, was simply "Father Manny" before Br. Columba began his studies for the priesthood. In his homily Bishop Manny told the congregation that he was more excited than the four friars he was ordaining - and for him personally, it was a "special privilege and pleasure." No doubt Bishop Manny is looking forward to May when he will have a front row seat in the sanctuary when Br. Columba, together with Br. Giuseppe, Br. Sebastian and Br. Jeremiah, will be ordained to the holy priesthood by Archbishop Timothy Dolan in St. Patrick's Cathedral located in the heart of New York City.



◀ For young people entering into religious life today, solid instruction in the Catholic faith is not simply nice, but necessary. Today, many fine candidates for the priesthood and religious life - the so-called "John Paul II Generation" - are evidently devoted, yet, in some cases, deficient in basic catechesis. This is where capable instructors like Fr. Robert Quarato come to the rescue and "fill in the gaps" making the truths of the Faith not only understandable, but applicable. Each week postulants of both the friars and sisters meet with Fr. Quarato for instruction on the Catechism. Thanks to dedicated priests like Fr. Quarato, the "JP II generation" will not only be fervent and faithful, but also very well formed.



▲ Crowned with roses as a sign of their betrothal to Christ, Sr. Chiara Rose and Sr. John Paul share their joy at the reception following their first profession of vows. Those who carefully observe and study religious trends all agree that there is a fresh breeze blowing in the Church. It appears the post 60's age of experimentation in religious life is over - and not without its evident accidents. Yet today we witness communities bold and new returning to the foundations upon which consecrated life is built: an unworldly way of life, common prayer and apostolate, and the wearing of a religious habit. Here the words of Christ prove themselves true: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life... If you will remain in Me, you will bear abundant fruit."



▲ "Austere beauty" is the best way to describe the newly constructed friary on a scenic mountainside overlooking the city of Matagalpa, Nicaragua. Designed by the friars, yet owned by the diocese, the new friary, placed under the patronage of St. Anthony, is the second friary established in Central America. The simple and spacious chapel with other common areas has proved to be more than adequate for visitors and special fraternal gatherings. In this photo, where you see the distinctive Spanish-American facade of the buildings, we see the friars from Texas and Honduras who came to join their brothers in Nicaragua for an annual retreat.