

one day we would all be together again. As children, we were being guided by our parents into a faith vision of life and death. We were being “catechized” not to fear the great questions of life!

The gift of faith enables us to see life as a pilgrimage that leads us “home.” It enables us not to fear “letting go,” because ultimately, whether we like it or not, life is all about “letting go.” We let go of our childhood, our youth, our family members and loved ones, our health, and yes, our lives. A pilgrimage demands that we let go of the present moment and the present place if we are to reach our true destination. A pilgrimage has a purpose and a destination. It is not an aimless wandering with no end, purpose, or reason. The precious gift of faith, and most importantly the precious gift of knowing Jesus, enables us to live the gift of life with gratitude and to live life to the full everyday. When this happens, we do not have to be afraid to “let go.” With faith we are assured that the final “letting go” is not a fall into nothingness, but rather into the arms of a loving God.

Paul Claudel (1868-1955), a French Catholic poet and writer, captured the Catholic vision of life and death with images that are most powerful and beautiful:

“Christians are instructed to desire heaven, and this desire, like any other, should involve not only the mind but the whole person, which is made up of the soul together with the body. We must desire God whom the Pater Noster tells us is in heaven, and accordingly we must also desire heaven, which is his dwelling place, a cer-

tain sphere common to us both. ‘Where I am,’ says Saint John, ‘there also shall my servant be.’ But how can we truly desire from the bottom of our hearts and bowels, even with the help of grace, which does not contradict nature but brings it to perfection, something of which we cannot form an idea, let alone a concrete image? This was the motive of Eternal Wisdom that, having itself become flesh, has spoken to us only in parables, not availing itself of reason, but teaching us the language of those things around us that from the day of their creation have never ceased to speak.”

Little Teresa already understood so well that Jesus comes to lead us to His Father’s House. His many parables speak so often of the Kingdom of Heaven. I like the image our Lord

gives of Heaven as a wedding feast, a banquet, a family celebration! “Blessed are those who are invited to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.” (Rev. 19: 9) What a beautiful image of Heaven!

“Weep for wonder! Weep for shame! Weep for joy! Weep for God! Weep for His mercy, weep for His power! Weep, weep, my beloved son! Weep for love, weep for joy!” (Claudel) *✠*

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

Convento San Antonio
011-505-2-772-2757
Apartado 283
Matagalpa, Nicaragua, CA

Convento San Serafin
011-504-2-772-7998
Colonia Francisco Morazan,
Apartado 331
Comayagua, Honduras, CA

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
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St. Columba Friary
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6 Victoria Place
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Northern Ireland

St. Crispin Friary
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420 East 156 Street,
Bronx, NY 10455

St. Felix Friary
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Yonkers, New York 10701

St. Fidelis Friary
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190 Butler Street
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64 Delmege Park,
Moyross, Limerick City, Ireland

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

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505-764-3034
404 San Mateo Blvd. NE,
Albuquerque, NM 87108

YOUTH 2000 RETREATS WINTER/SPRING 2012

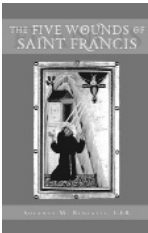
Feb. 10 - 12Charlotte, NC
Feb. 24 - 26Beaumont, TX
March 9 - 11Owensboro, KY
March 16 - 18Buffalo, NY
March 23 - 25Birmingham, AL
April 13 - 15Fort Worth, TX

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



Fr. Solanus Benfatti, CFR, explores the significance of the stigmata in Saint Francis' life. He establishes the historicity of the event and draws surprising and inspiring conclusions, leaving the reader with a fresh understanding of Saint Francis's spiritual experience. www.tanbooks.com

NEW!

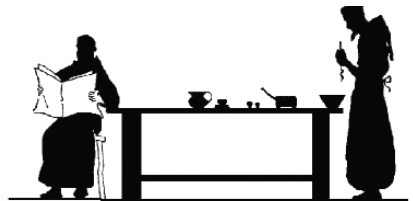
“Seraphic Wanderer” is a marked departure from Fr. Stan's previous works and showcases a mélange of musical styles he has experienced throughout his travels. It explores his musical roots and highlights some significant moments in his life. www.francescoproductions.com



Join Fr. Stan Fortuna CFR in the footsteps of Blessed John Paul II for the **7th Annual JPPII Poland-Rome Study Pilgrimage** from October 15th to 29th, 2012. For more information, please email us at jp2@francescoproductions.com or call 718-401-1589.

HELP NEEDED!

Your financial contributions for our life and work are greatly needed and deeply appreciated. Donations to “Franciscan Friars of the Renewal” may be sent to the Community Office at Our Lady of the Angels Friary and are tax-deductible. Please visit our website if you would like to make a donation on-line using PayPal.



www.franciscanfriars.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 Sr. 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.

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.

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



Franciscan Friars of the Renewal

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A WONDERFUL PILGRIMAGE

By Fr. Mariusz Casimir Koch, CFR

Little Teresa sat in a specially made wheelchair that was able to support her fragile body. She was now thirteen years old, and the necessary operation that could possibly save her life was only a few days away. Although Teresa had suffered since her birth with a condition that left her unable to walk, afflicted with stunted growth and frequent pain, the little girl I met that day in the Bronx was joyful, articulate beyond her age, and very beautiful. I was invited to Teresa's home to pray with her and her family and to give her the Anointing of the Sick in preparation for her big surgery. The surgery was very dangerous, having only a 50% chance of saving her life. After the Anointing of the Sick, I spoke with her parents, a young Italian immigrant couple who sat together on their living room couch holding hands. “Father, Teresa told us today that she is not afraid to die, but that she is afraid of leaving us behind,” her Father shared with me with tears in his eyes. “I told her that she did not have to worry about us, and that if Jesus comes to her during the operation, take Him by the hand and go with Him; just wait for us and we will be together again one day!” My eyes were now also filled with tears, but they were tears from a mixture of emotions. Yes, I shared a deep pain with their family,

but I also felt privileged to share in the deep faith of a wonderful Catholic family who reminded me of how precious is the gift of faith, especially faith in Christ and His promise of eternal life!



Fr. Emmanuel Mansford walked part of the ancient “Camino” of St. James before the World Youth Day in Spain. These pilgrimages have helped many to understand more deeply the meaning of their lives.

Is it possible that our contemporary culture is so noisy, distracted, and busy because we now live in a culture with so little faith? We live in a culture that needs to distract itself from facing the great questions of life and the reality of death. We live in a culture that needs to spend itself in being constantly entertained because it wants to avoid thinking about what happens after this life. For us Christians, we should not be afraid of death. Saint Francis called death “Sister Death.” For in coming to know Jesus, he knew that “death had lost its sting,” that it was now the doorway to life everlasting!

In looking through some old family photo albums, I sometimes smile to see so many old photographs taken with our family in their “Sunday

best” around tombstones in the cemetery! It was then taken for granted that we would frequently take a Sunday drive to the cemetery to pray for the dead at the graves of our deceased relatives. Without realizing it, this was also an expression of our confident faith that

(continued in center)



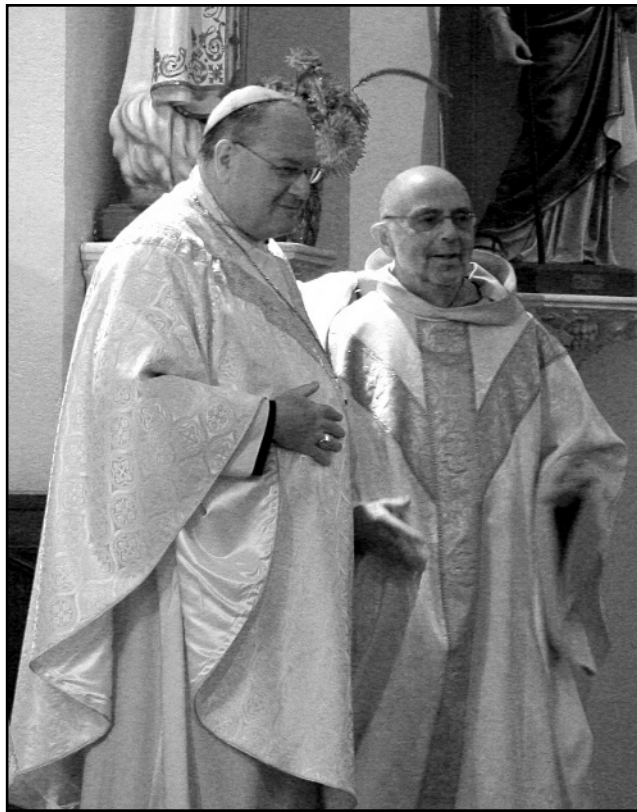
◀ Everybody's coming to the block party - even the Lord Jesus Himself! The joy of the Lord was present in many ways throughout the day - in the fellowship, food, music, games - even the water balloons - but above all at the end of the day when Fr. Louis led a Eucharistic procession and benediction of the block (accompanied by kids on scooters!). Next year will mark the 25th anniversary of the CFR's beginnings in the South Bronx at this site. The neighborhood and the Community have changed over the years but one thing remains the same - the Presence of Christ among us.



◀ You may have felt like you were signing your life away if you took out a mortgage, but that's the reality taking place as (l-r) Bros. John-Mary Johannssen, Giles Maria Barrie, Pius Marie Gagne, and Francesco Mary Gavazzi sign the documents of their final vows on the altar of Our Lady of Good Counsel Church in Manhattan. They signed on to live "without property" for the rest of their lives, to become the Lord's "property" through vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. Appropriately on this altar they are making a "Eucharist" of their lives, a grateful return to the Lord who is never outdone in generosity.



◀ A sleight of hand and "presto!" - the novice becomes a professed sister. Actually there's no magic involved - only the continued response to the grace of the Lord's call. The veil symbolizes being a bride of Christ, being "chosen before the foundation of the world" (Eph 1:4) to belong to Him, a sign in this world of the spousal relationship that God desires to have with every soul in the brightness of eternity. Sr. Kelly Francis Oslin and Sr. Guadalupe Gonzalez (receiving veil) made their first vows on the feast of the Stigmata of Saint Francis.



◀ Archbishop Timothy Dolan of New York honored us with a recent visit to celebrate Mass and give a conference to the Friars and Sisters. He gave a very personal and insightful reflection on the Rosary, the Incarnation and the Church, wrapping them all together with his characteristic warmth and humor. We are deeply grateful for his friendship and leadership. Fr. Mariusz Koch (right), our Community Servant, welcomed him at the Mass saying "how good it is to be loved," and how clearly Archbishop Dolan reveals God's love to us.

▼ The gang's all here (almost) after the General Chapter of 2011 at Holy Apostle's Seminary in Cromwell, CT. The General Chapter is a week-long meeting of all of the finally professed friars which takes place every 3 years. As we expand to other areas of the globe the experience of the General Chapter is more like a big family reunion! This year our Chapter began on Pentecost and the Holy Spirit was very present among us.



◀ Bishop Michael Sheehan of Albuquerque, NM graciously blessed our new friary there. Fr. Mariusz (left) was present for the occasion, along with Fr. Joseph Deane and many others. The friars lived in 3 temporary locations over a number of years, until the transformation of this office building into a friary and also a soup kitchen/hospitality center for the poor in an area commonly referred to as "the war zone." Many generous friends made it clear that they wanted the friars to remain in Albuquerque, and we are grateful for all those who have helped with materials, labor, etc. There is still work to be done on the building, but the Friars have the essentials to move in and realize that, like Saint Francis, we never stop "rebuilding the house."

► "Friars Minor" or "Lesser Brother" is the title that Saint Francis wanted us to have and to show forth in our lives. This sense of minority helps us to have a sense of solidarity with our brothers and sisters who are poor or left on the fringe of society. Here Br. Seamus Mary Laracy shares a "brother-to-brother" moment during a "Jesus Run" at the Port Authority Terminal in Manhattan. Our Lay Associates also enjoy this opportunity with us to meet Jesus face-to-face in the poor and homeless. The call to brotherhood will always be an essential part of the Franciscan "charism" (gift) to the Church.



◀ Back in "da' hood" this hand gesture signifies someone from the Bronx - so what about in Nebraska? Apparently it also works for St. Pius X Parish where Fr. Luke (right) and Br. Pius recently led a parish mission. The Friars don't run their own parishes so that they are more available to preach missions and retreats at other parishes. This parish and school gave two friars to the CFR's - Br. Innocent and Br. Angelus Montgomery. Are you praying that your parish will "tithe" consecrated persons or priests back to the Church? (If it isn't a "pius tenth," at least 1 in 100!)