



# Franciscan Friars Third Order Regular

## From Fr. Anthony Criscitelli, T.O.R. Minister Provincial

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### Peace and Good Things!

Since he has been living at the Friary attached to the parish, St. Bridget's has had the good fortune to have Br. David Liedl take responsibility for the crèche in the church each Christmas. As many of you know, David has a keen interest in the arts and how they may be of service to the Church. In the course of the last several years, the people of St. Bridget's and the wider community have enjoyed the annual crib display and look forward to see what each year will bring.

In keeping with the spirit of the *Presepio* tradition, David came to me in early November and asked me to reflect on how I see Christ breaking into the world today; specifically, what that might mean for the people in North Minneapolis. Those of you who have lived here—and those of you who have visited in the last 10 or 15 years—know that St. Bridget's is no longer in the midst of a mostly white, middle class neighborhood. Within the past two weeks alone, there have been as many shootings in the immediate vicinity of the church, resulting in the deaths of two young people and a host of other ruined lives. Consequently, we—the friars and the parish community—strive to be a sign of the peace and presence of God in the midst of a neighborhood beleaguered by violence and crime.

As I reflected on David's question, the one notion that kept coming to me was nothing new or earth shattering: the in-breaking of God we celebrate at Christmas needs to be a sign of hope for the people of this community; something to help them know that in the midst of it all, God has not forgotten or abandoned them and that, like the shepherds and other forgotten people to whom the angels carried the "glad tidings of great joy", they, too, have a place at the stable...they, too, have a reason to be hopeful.

That's something we all need to know and be reminded of from time to time. With the stock market in constant flux, once-thriving industries on the brink of collapse, wars being fought in so many places, and an environment that is eroding day by day, it is easy for us to throw our hands up and wonder when and how it's all going to end. Closer to our own lives, we read about and experience increasing polarization in the Church, continue to feel and deal with the effects of the clergy abuse scandal, worry about our blood pressure and cholesterol levels, and wring our hands wondering whether we have become obsolete and what our future will hold. It's difficult to remain hopeful—never mind be a sign of hope to others—in the midst of all that.

During these days of Advent, I have been trying to heed the summons of the prophets to be alert to the signs of God's presence and life among us; to be more aware

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of the promises and fidelity of God. Although I have heard these Scriptures for many years, I am striving to listen with fresh ears and become especially attuned to the ways God comes to us and the hope that is held out to us in Jesus Christ. I have found if you listen and look for them, they are there and they instill in us a sense of hope...for the present and for the future. In the face of dire economic conditions, we can remind ourselves and others of God's promise to provide for our needs; in the face of war and terrorism, we are encouraged by God's promise spoken by Isaiah to turn "swords into ploughshares and spears into pruning hooks"; in the face of division and conflict within the Church, we are challenged by the example of Francis to be men of peace, men of the Church. If we strive to do these things, we will know the in-breaking of God in our lives and be for others the sign of hope we are called to be.

I'm not sure what our crèche will look like this year. I am certain that it will be beautiful and I pray it will instill in all who gaze upon it the assurance that no matter what they may be dealing with, they have not been forgotten by God and that they have good reason to be hopeful. That is my wish for each of you. Blessed Christmas to you and those you love!

Fraternally in Saint Francis,

Anthony, TOR

(Very Reverend) Anthony M. Criscitelli, TOR

Minister Provincial

## Around The Province

### FLORIDA REGION

On Monday, November 24th, the friars of the Florida region gathered in New Smyrna Beach for an Advent Day of Reflection. The day began with a delicious lunch of lasagna prepared by Fr. Emile, T.O.R. Fighting the temptation to nap, the friars began discussing and reflecting on an article by Timothy Radcliffe, O.P., concerning the future of religious life. The topic seemed appropriate for Advent, especially as the Province comes out of its long-term planning process. There was also time for enjoying the beach before we concluded with Evening Prayer and dinner at a local restaurant. Even though it is sometimes difficult to find the time, the friars find value in spending time together in spiritual reflection and fraternal joy.

### MINNESOTA REGION

Each year the faith communities on the Northside of Minneapolis come together for a time of prayer on the evening before Thanksgiving. The service, comprised of hymns, Scripture, and reflection, is followed by a time of fellowship and each year one of the local pastors is invited to preach. This year Fr. Anthony was the homilist and he reflected on the need for gratitude and that we all have a place at God's Table.



[Dorothea Jane Lovett](#),

the mother of Fr. Robert Juroszek, T.O.R. passed away on November 15th, at the age of 83. Fr. Robert and his sister, Theresa was with her when she passed away.

[May she rest in peace.](#)

**THANK YOU** received from [Mary McDaniel](#), Camp Director at San Pedro Center, Winter Park, FL for the donation from the Province to be utilized as seed money for scholarships to the Summer Scripture Camp at San Pedro.

**THANK YOU:** Many of you will remember the name Joe Szulwach. Joe was a non-ordained member of our Province until the early 80's when he left us to pursue ordination in the then-newly formed diocese of Metuchen, NJ. Father Szulwach has lived with severe diabetes for many years and is now very ill. However, even in his frail health he has not forgotten the community that nurtured his vocation. He has recently made a gift of \$19,565.00 to the Province. We thank Joe for his kind and generous gift and promise him a place in our prayers as he continues to deal with frail health.



## Vocation Office Update Fr. Patrick Foley, T.O.R.

Peace and good! I hope everyone enjoyed the feast day and that our personal and communal spirits were renewed by the honoring of Mary's Immaculate Conception. Speaking of renewal, there is a good bit of that going on in the vocation office at present! To begin with, the filming of the vocation promotion DVD wrapped up at our Province retreat in August and is now going into the editing phase. The release of the DVD is slated for January 2009. However, you don't have to wait to view some of the great work that New Group Media has already done for our community. Three video clips of Anthony, Christopher, and myself have been added to the new Province website which will hopefully be launched by the time you read this. These clips make the website more dynamic, interactive, and personal.

With regard to all the great photos

that Billy Rob McFarland took at our province retreat, they have been posted at facebook.com and can be viewed or downloaded at your pleasure. Simply go to [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) and enter the email address "icprovince" and the password "StFrancis" (one word, with capitals "S" and "F"). These photos are also being used to craft new promotional literature. It is my hope that the literature will be done by December or January. Once I have this in hand along with the DVD, I will arrange to visit all of our apostolates and friaries in order to discuss how to best use these resources and create a "vocation promotion and discernment environment" at each of our apostolates/friaries. I see the vocation office as a mobile one and I look forward to

spending time out east in Pennsylvania and West Virginia! With regard to vocation prospects, I am currently in dialogue with six persons who have expressed serious interest. Their names are Corey Smoot (who will be joining us in January as an affiliate), Bob Haw, Daniel Akins, Tim Roucher, Pierre Julian and Stephen McGinnis. We also have another person, Mark Goley, who expressed interest in our community as a result of the "Come and See" weekend that our community hosted jointly with the Orlando Diocese at San Pedro Center at the beginning of November. He plans to start visiting the friars at San Pedro beginning in January. Please keep each of these persons in prayer. Thanks for all your prayerful support, friars, and may God continue to bless and keep you during this season of Advent and beyond!

## Province Welcomes A New Development Director

The Franciscan Friars Third Order Regular of the Immaculate Conception Province welcome Tim Beresnyak as the new director of development. Tim brings nine years of not-for-profit fundraising experience in development strategies for local and national non profits in direct mail and email marketing. He has also worked on a capital campaign, planned giving and major gift programs. In his new position Tim will focus on restructuring and growing direct mail and e-commerce activities and expanding fundraising initiatives to support the work of the Immaculate Conception Province. "I am honored to be selected as the director of development for the Franciscan Friars TOR in Hollidaysburg.," said Tim, "I look forward to working with the friars to grow and expand their fundraising initiatives."

Please make the following correction to the [Provincial Directory](#) on page 2:

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## Justice, Peace & Care of Creation Corner

### Br. John Kerr, T.O.R.

I was fortunate to go recently to Washington, D.C. with an inter-faith group of concerned Minnesotans. Although I didn't need to take the 22-hour bus trip to know that families are suffering in our country, being where so many important decisions are made struck me with the enormous challenges of racial and economic justice we face.

We know what hardship the economic crisis has done already. Many people have lost their jobs. Some must decide between food and health care. Our goal was to see what we as social justice advocates could do to focus our national priorities on those most in need.

One of the main culprits of putting profits over people is United Health Care, whose headquarters in Washington disguises from the outside what is happening on the inside. When 400 of us entered the lobby at 9 a.m. we prayed with a casket of injustice that the company's unfair practices would be buried. We prayed for all those in our health care industry who work so hard to take care of our sick while United overcharges the government billions of dollars and denies claims and delays payments to thousands of patients and hospitals. It has used misleading, fraudulent, and abusive sales techniques to get senior citizens to sign up for its healthcare plans.

From the corporate headquarters of United we went to the halls of power at the Capitol. Outside on that brisk Dec. morning we listened to the story of an immigrant whose wife was taken from their home in the middle of the night in front of their children and not heard from for days afterward. We know the wife is undocumented and yet there must be a better way to solve the dilemma of the 12 million immigrants in the U.S. The U.S. Bishops have called for the rights of our immigrants to be honored and yet families continue to be torn asunder and live in fear.

It was a short walk from there to the offices of Congress where we were able to share about these situations with 172 public officials from 32 states. Our message was simple: We speak on behalf of our suffering brothers and sisters whose voices we are called to raise up. We briefly addressed the issues of health care, jobs, immigration and our transit systems. The latter is also important for low-income people without cars and without public transportation to the metro areas where so many jobs have gone.

I hope these and other issues of the poor are important to you, especially at this time of year when we recall the message of our Savior who was born in the humble manger. God bless us everyone!

## Saint Anthony of Padua Church, Windber, PA celebrating 100 years as a Parish

On October 22nd, the blessing of Memorial Bricks in St. Anthony's Courtyard marked the beginning of this celebration of 100 years as a parish. The parish was originally under the guidance of Diocesan priests. Since 1925, the friars of the Immaculate Conception Province has served the parish. Many monthly activities are being planned, such as pot-luck dinners, pancake breakfasts, children's Christmas Party, May Crowning, a breakfast for graduating seniors, 100th anniversary golf tournament, observance of the feast days of St. Anthony of Padua and St. Francis of Assisi. The friars and parishioners of the parish will be thanking God with a Solemn Mass of Thanksgiving on June 14, 2009. The parish was built out of faith and heritage; and we look forward to another 100 years of commitment to God, family, and community.

The deadline for the next Provincial Newsletter is March 10, 2009. Send materials to:

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