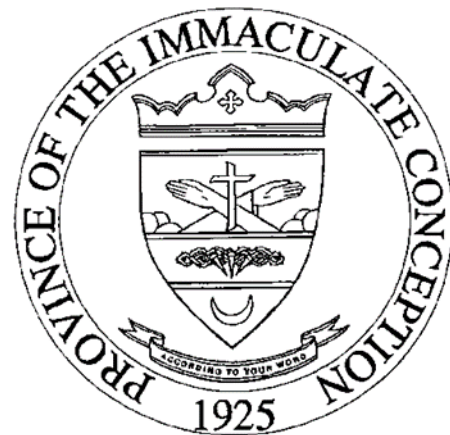


Franciscan Friars Third Order Regular

Immaculate Conception Province, USA
December 2013



“A missionary heart makes itself ‘weak with the weak... everything for everyone’ (1 Cor 9:22). It never closes itself off, never retreats into its own security, never opts for rigidity and defensiveness. It realizes that it has to grow in its own understanding of the Gospel and in discerning the paths of the Spirit, and so it always does what good it can, even if in the process, its shoes get soiled by the mud of the street.”

Pope Francis I, *Evangelii Gaudium*, #45



Peace and Justice



Above: Members of the fasting group at the Capitol pose with Richard Cordray, Director of the Consumer Financial Protection Agency. To the right of Br. John is Rudy Lopez, on his 14th day of fasting.

Dear friars,

May God give you peace.

I recently returned from the Mall in our nation's Capitol where I spent one day in solidarity with those fasting for immigration reform. I was amazed at God's power working in my/our weakness during that 24 hours. Many, including Dolores Huerta, who worked with Cesar Chavez and the United Farmworkers years ago, members of Congress, and various reporters visited the group of a dozen fasters.

With each visit when I introduced myself I said I represented my Franciscan province in Holidaysburg, Pennsylvania, who began as a community of immigrants years ago and support immigration reform along with the Catholic Church.

The fasters represented all ages, geographic areas, and nationalities. A few were older than me and most younger. All were passionate that this “fast4families” is the only way to change the hearts of Congress. One of the highlights for me was being asked by the director of the Franciscan Action Network to give Communion to Rudy Lopez, who was on his 14th day of fasting on water only. As I broke the half host to offer the tiny piece of the body of Christ I thought this is truly the bread of life for him. We prayed together. He continues to fast until his body gives out. (Four initial fasters were urged to stop on the day I began because of their precarious health after 22 days.)

With each new person that visited us throughout the day we also listened to their stories. We asked four things of them: to join us in fasting, even if only for one meal; to act in some way to invite a representative or friend who is not supportive to visit the tent; to pray with us; and to have their picture taken with us. I ask that you also, may offer up some food in solidarity with them; write or call a member of Congress who does not support the Church’s position on immigration reform; and to pray with and for the fasters for a just immigration policy that keeps families together.

One faster after another spoke of hope from the support they were receiving from so many. In this Advent Season, when we hope for the deep presence of Christ entering our lives, share that hope with others.

Your brother,

John, TOR



Members of the Congressional Black Caucus pose with fasters.

**THANKSGIVING DAY OBSERVANCE AT
OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL PARISH, ALTOONA, PA**



Fr. Frank A. Scornaienchi, Pastor of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church:

Our annual Thanksgiving Liturgy includes the blessing of bread, which we distribute at the end of Mass. As families move from the Table of the Eucharist to their own tables and Thanksgiving meals, they are united in the breaking of the blessed bread.

More Photos →



ANNIVERSARIES FOR FR. ANTHONY AND ST. BRIDGET’S PARISH

On Sunday, December 8, Fr. Anthony M. Criscitelli, TOR, pastor of Saint Bridget Church in Minneapolis, celebrated both the Immaculate Conception Province feast day and the 33rd anniversary of his ordination. The Parish of Saint Bridget is itself looking forward to the 100th anniversary of its founding.

Fr. Anthony: “Beginning in January, the Parish Pastoral Council will begin planning events to mark the 100th anniversary of the parish. We are hoping that friars who served and/or lived here in the past will be able to participate in some of those events. We are also participating in a planning process that will—hopefully—give us direction as we move into the future as a merged community with the former St. Austin parish members.”

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100th ANNIVERSARY OF ST. PETER PARISH IN DELANO, MN

From Fr. Brad C. Baldwin, TOR, pastor of St. Gerard Parish in Brooklyn Park, MN:

On Sunday, November 10, the Church of St. Peter in Delano, Minnesota, celebrated its 100th anniversary as a parish community in the Archdiocese of Saint Paul-Minneapolis.

I was invited to represent our province that day, for we served at St. Peter’s Church from 1974-1989. I felt honored to be a part of their celebration. Bishop Lee Piche, auxiliary bishop for the archdiocese, presided at the liturgy, and I was greeted afterwards by many parishioners who were very complimentary of the friars and grateful for their years of ministry. The friars who served here were Fathers Bernardine, Reginald, Rodney, and Cyprian. When I was asked to say a few words, I told the people of my many travels to Delano in 1988, to visit Father Cyprian, who was my spiritual director that year.

As for me, I told them that Delano was always a place for retreat and prayer, as well as the home of my first experiences with tornado sirens and snowdrifts. The people seemed to enjoy these stories. All in all, it was a day to share good memories, good food, and an affirmation for me and I hope for all of us, that the good work of the province has not been forgotten.

I pray that we can continue to look with gratitude on our rich history, which has touched many lives, and helped strengthen our church over these many years. The friars tell wonderful stories of fraternity, ministry, and evangelization at our former parishes in Delano, Saint Peter and Saint Joseph. May we continue to share these same gifts, in our current and future ministries. God's blessings and peace to you all, throughout the Advent and Christmas Seasons. -Fr. Brad



Fr. Brad in front of St. Peter Church in Delano, MN.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!!!

PROVINCE CHAPTER

**MAY 5-9 AT SAN PEDRO SPIRITUAL LIFE CENTER,
WINTER PARK, FLORIDA**

**CHAPTER BEGINS WITH VESPERS ON MAY 5 AND CONCLUDES ON MAY 9
WITH THE CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHARIST.**

PROVINCE VISITATION DATES

February 4-5	Washington, D.C.	<i>Ambrose, Didacus</i>
February 6-9	Florida	<i>Local friars, Raphael & the Snowbird(s)</i>
February 10-12	Minnesota	<i>Anthony, Edward & Brad</i>
February 13-?	Pennsylvania	<i>Local friars, Bill, Donald</i>

PROVINCE ELECTION

**BALLOTS FOR THE PROVINCE ELECTION FOR
PROVINCIAL MINISTER AND MEMBERS OF THE
PROVINCIAL COUNCIL WILL BE MAILED IN JANUARY.**