



THE FRANCISCAN FRIARS OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE PROVINCE

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FRANCISCANS FOR JUSTICE

Promoting justice, peace, and care for creation.

Every Sunday morning virtual friends and followers of the Southwest Franciscans are delighted with moving reflections by Mark Schroeder, OFM. The reflections creatively blend the day's Scripture readings with relevant social justice topics and often conclude with a call to action. The blending of faith and social justice is very natural to Br. Mark, who is the 'JPIC Animator' for both Our Lady of Guadalupe and Santa Barbara Province. 'JPIC' is an acronym among religious communities that stands for justice, peace, and integrity of creation. The 'JPIC Animator' is responsible for generating spiritual movement and growth with justice, peace, and integrity of creation.

One way that Br. Mark works to promote justice and peace is by maintaining FranciscansForJustice.org, a dedicated website to Catholic social teaching from a Franciscan perspective. This is a joint project between the two provinces that provides resources for both lay and religious alike.



Some helpful resources available on FranciscansForJustice.org include weekly bulletin announcements, tool-kits, letters to political leaders, and action alerts. Topics like immigration, restorative justice, human trafficking, the death penalty, gun control, nuclear energy and care for creation are emphasized on the website. Br. Mark works diligently to provide updated and timely news on these important topics.



FRANCISCANS FOR JUSTICE

JUSTICE, PEACE, AND THE INTEGRITY OF CREATION



When asked what he finds most enjoyable about his ministry he jokingly answered, "Knowing I have job security with the ongoing actions of the current U.S. government." Although Br. Mark is very busy trying to raise awareness, he can find great comfort that he is not doing this important work alone.

On March 16th-18th there will be a national "Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation" gathering for religious and laity in Las Cruces, New Mexico. This gathering will focus on building a national network for strategic collaborative action. We ask you to please keep these community leaders in your prayers.

BR. BRUCE IN VIETNAM

Home Away from Home

When describing his arrival to Vietnam, Bruce Michalek, OFM, wrote, "It was such a warm feeling to be in familiar surroundings and with people that I love and who love me. Thanks be to God." Br. Bruce is on his eleventh mission trip to Vietnam where he teaches English to Franciscan seminarians. Each week Br. Bruce sends a riveting letter about his experiences and sights. These letters are posted online at swfranciscans.org and shared across social media channels.

As Br. Bruce embarks on the fifth week of his trip, he has already shared many memorable experiences including his celebration of Tet, the Lunar New Year, and visiting local ministries. A constant theme in Br. Bruce's letters is his fondness for the Vietnamese culture, especially how it impacts the Franciscan friars' experience of religious life. Br. Bruce wrote about the prayer life of the Franciscans novices saying, "They spend



upwards of five hours a day in prayer...On top of that, they have at least one hour per day spent in Scripture reflection, praying the Rosary, or devotions to St Joseph...I see examples of the primacy of Prayer and Community Life among the Vietnamese friars. There is a strong sense of mindfulness for each other and it is expressed regularly in how they genuinely enjoy each other's company." To hear more of his journey, keep an eye out for Br. Bruce's next letter!

#GET OUTSIDE

Outside Encounters by Fr. Charles McCarthy

One thing is true about Charles McCarthy, OFM Conv., he is very active! It seems as though every day he is on an adventure and exploring new sights, often outdoors. To the pleasure of his brothers, family, and friends, he captures these adventures through photography and shares them with others. Fr. Charles has even taken his spiritual direction appointments outdoors! He often uses the hashtag #GetOutside on his social media to add his adventurous photos to his ever-growing digital collection. Fr. Charles shared the following reflection to explain what motives him to #GetOutside!

The theme of being “outside” and encountering God is rather frequent in the Bible. Have you heard of these? The Creation Story – 1st or 2nd; the Garden; the Flood; Abraham, Isaac and the ram; Joseph (patriarch) dropped in the Well; Jacob wrestling with the angel (AKA God); Elijah heading off to Mount Horeb to hear “the gentle breeze;” Moses snatched up from the River Nile bulrushes; burning bush; Moses parting the Red Sea; Moses on the mountain to get the Ten Commandments; marching around the city of Jericho until the walls crumbled; David’s anointing as king while tending sheep; where did the Levites lose the Ark of the Covenant(?). The examples don’t stop there: Magi following a star; shepherds and angels in a field at night; sermon on the mount; Good Samaritan story; let’s go fishing; Jesus and the woman at the well; lepers along the road; fig tree; calming of the storm on the sea; “Peter! Get out of the boat!;” the Transfiguration; disciples plucking heads of grain in a field; crucifixion; Mary’s encounter with the Gardener; brothers on the way to Emmaus; the Ascension. There is a whole mess more where those came from.

While not all God encounters happened outside, it sure seems like the idea of ‘Outside Encounters’ was central to the biblical storytellers. Remember the conversation between God and David through the prophet Samuel (2 Samuel 7): “And what kind of building do you think you can build for me?” or what Isaiah writes for us: “Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool; what is the house which you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest?” (66:1). Even when we want to build a temple for God it doesn’t really have the capacity to “house” God!! “Temples, churches and mosques” are more likely gathering places for us: places of secure gathering for the community. But to encounter God? Go on! #GetOutside!

Being Franciscans, we are taught, and some of us pass on, that the First Book of Theology is “Creation.” Once I mentioned Creation being the first Book in a homily. Afterwards, a person who heard the comment asked, “You mentioned the first book is ‘Creation.’ Who wrote that? I don’t think I’ve heard of that.” After being more than a little incredulous, I looked at my fellow Franciscan, who also happened to be the parish Faith Formation Director, and said, “Really?!?” “Oh! **That** Creation!”

Theology is how we come to understand God and attempt to express our experience. Understanding and expressing relies on so much more than words! Words can be poor to express the inner life. Pictures can encapsulate our Vision. “Son of Man! What do you see?” (Daniel 7:13-14; Jeremiah 1:11, Revelation 21:2; John 1:29-34, 1:47-50; John 20:1-18).

#GET OUTSIDE CONTINUED

So here is your first #getoutside challenge. First: go online and tag #getoutside and see the thousands of images already out there!! Second: #GetOutside! Go on! #GETOUTSIDE for a sunrise, a sunset, a moonrise, for a walk in nature or just sit on a street corner, a front porch/balcony and observe. Stroll the neighborhood and look for a mural or some graffiti! Pope Francis offers us this light: “The universe unfolds in God, who fills it completely. Hence, there is a mystical meaning to be found in a leaf, in a mountain trail, in a dewdrop, in a poor person’s face” (Laudato Si 233).

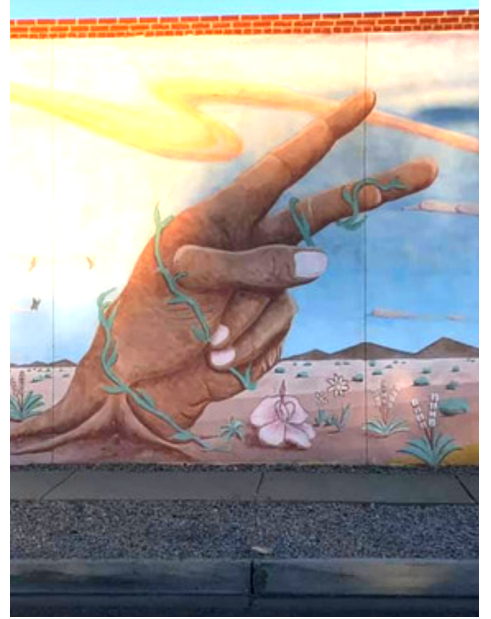
#GETOUTSIDE with your “God-Eye-Filter” on your iPhone/smartphone or camera (I use an iPhone8) and see what you might see. Remember when Jesus did a mind-job on some anti-listeners? In effect he said, “You say that you see, but you remain in your sin (out of balance, out of touch, blind),” because you do not see with “my eye!” This exercise might help realize that God is in your backyard and on your corner – wanting to be seen – and seeing through your eye. That is a way to live Theology.

JOIN FR. CHARLES ON THE #GETOUTSIDE CHALLENGE!



#GET OUTSIDE CONTINUED

Photos by Fr. Charles McCarthy



LOOKING INTO OUR TRADITIONS

A monthly reflection on our Franciscan Heritage by Jack Clark Robinson, OFM

In 1680, times were hard in New Mexico. There had been nearly a decade of poor crops due to a climate change which saw the usual small amount of rainfall dry up and the flow of the Rio Grande cease. But throughout these bad times, the colonial government in New Mexico continued to try to meet undiminished demands of distant overlords for taxes. The Spanish arrival in 1598 had brought not only the Franciscans with Catholicism, but had also imposed a new form of central government on peoples who for hundreds of years had acknowledged no governmental authority beyond their own village. The result was a disaster all the way around.

On August 10th, 1680, Pueblo Indians revolted against Spanish rule. Twenty-one of the thirty-three Franciscan friars in the colony were killed, along with many others on both sides. Don Antonio de Otermín, the colonial governor, fled to El Paso del Norte with the remaining Spanish colonists, Piro and other Pueblo Indians who chose to go with the Spanish rather than join the Revolt, and the remaining friars. Twelve years later, Spanish settlers and some friars returned to northern New Mexico to reestablish the colony, this time with a much different attitude toward all things Native American. From the return of the Spanish, Pueblos and Spanish fought together against raiders who attempted to “gather” their crops and livestock.



Native dances became part of the Catholic saints' day celebration in every Pueblo. Things were different in New Mexico.

But some of the Pueblo Indians from northern New Mexico did not return. They stayed just south of the Rio Grande in a new village of Socorro, where in 1691 they built their first Mission Purisima Concepcion, the home of the pictured statue of San Antonio de Padua with the Christ Child and a Hungry Man. That original mission was destroyed in a great flood of the Rio Grande in 1829; a flood which also changed the course of the Rio Grande from north of Socorro to south of the village. In 1848, eight years after the current Mission was completed, when the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo established the Rio Grande as the border between Mexico and the United States, Socorro ended up in Texas, rather than Mexico.

LOOKING INTO OUR TRADITIONS CONTINUED

The border indeed crossed the people. Franciscans continued to serve the Mission without interruption until the 1850s, and they returned for a brief time a few years ago when our own Joe Nelson was part of an inter provincial Franciscan effort there at the Mission.

I do not know the origin or the age of this statue of San Antonio, the Christ Child, and the Hungry Man, but it has a lot to say to us. First, the placement of the statue in the Socorro Mission is a reminder of the deep connection of Franciscans and the people of the Southwest, on both sides of the border, which goes back hundreds of years. Second, the very existence of this Mission is a reminder that the migration of peoples is nothing new, and that unfortunately, that migration is too often caused by economic hardship, brought on in the 1670s by climate change, and that economic hardship in turn led to violence.

But the statue also says in a powerful way, that the place of a Franciscan friar is to be present, to share the bounty that Christ has to offer with the hungry. That bounty is truly life-sustaining Bread.

As we enter into reflection about a border ministry for friars of the Province, we must admit that we will not have all of the answers, and that indeed we may also be crossed and double-crossed in our efforts by demands of distant governmental powers which make no sense to us, by economic, environmental and other factors far beyond our control. But when we look into our tradition as followers of Francis of Assisi, we can have faith that somehow, in the midst of chaos, stress, struggles, and strains, God is ALWAYS present, and we must help make that Presence known.

THE POWER OF STORYTELLING *Going Viral!*

Last month, The Padres' Trail featured a special reflection by Alex Rich, Director of Communications, and Father Chris Kersteins titled, 'Creating God Moments.' In addition to The Padres' Trail, the article was published by Catholic Exchange on February 12, 2020. Catholic Exchange is a non-profit media organization with hundreds of thousands of readers. This platform allowed for the story to reach thousands of readers and

Catholic organizations. The National Association for Lay Ministry, Franciscans Ireland, the Dominican Sister', and many Catholic parishes were moved to share the reflection. Needless to say, it went 'viral' in the Catholic community! One reader wrote, "This is a must-read article for anyone wanting to plunge themselves in any ministry." We are honored and thankful for the overwhelming support.



ALEX RICH

The Experience of Life
Changing God
Moments

LENTEN REFLECTIONS

Lent with the Saints

With insightful reflections, Fr. Greg Friedman, OFM, offers daily inspiration during this season of repentance, forgiveness, and hope. Connect and pray with the Church's most beloved saints and holy people—Thomas Merton, Francis, Clare, Damien of Molokai, Teresa of Calcutta, and Gianna Molla, to name a few! The journey begins Ash Wednesday, February 26.



Sign up at
FranciscanMedia.org

CONGRATULATIONS JESUS!

New American Citizen

Our Lady of Guadalupe Province would like to congratulate our novice brother, Jesus Osornio, for becoming an American citizen on January 22, 2020. Jesus celebrated his naturalization ceremony with his Franciscan family by his side. Provincial Minister, Fr. Jack Clark Robinson, and Novice Director, Fr. Jeff Macnab, proudly represented his friar family. Thank you, Freddy Lopez and Jeff Macnab for the joyous photos.



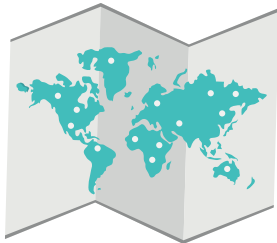
BLESSINGS FOR THE ROAD



Saying Thank You and Farewell

Friars and friends of the province said goodbye to a familiar face this month. Dr. Gary Lombardo has been a Franciscan Partner staying at Casa Guadalupe for the past several months. During this time he spent countless hours praying daily with the friars in their chapel under the San Damiano Crucifix. As a small token of appreciation and parting gift, Provincial Minister, Fr. Jack Clark Robinson, presented Dr. Lombardo with a small replica of the San Damiano cross to take with him on his next chapter. Thank you for your service, Dr. Lombardo!

JACK'S JOURNEYS



- February 29th
 - 300th Anniversary of Mission San Jose
- March 7th-14th
 - Siena College History Tour of the Southwest
- March 17th
 - Regional Meeting at the Franciscan Studio

BIRTHDAY WISHES



Larry Barnard, OFM	February 2nd
Bruce Michalek, OFM	February 6th
Jose Luis Peralta	February 14th
Ronald Walters, OFM	February 25th

Heavenly Father,

Years ago this month, you blessed the world with Larry, Bruce, Jose, and Ronald . Thank you for the gift of their life. We ask you to bless them during their birthday month and to keep them in Your care, now and in the coming year. Amen.



THE PADRES' TRAIL IS A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTED BY OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE PROVINCE.

www.swfranciscans.org

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