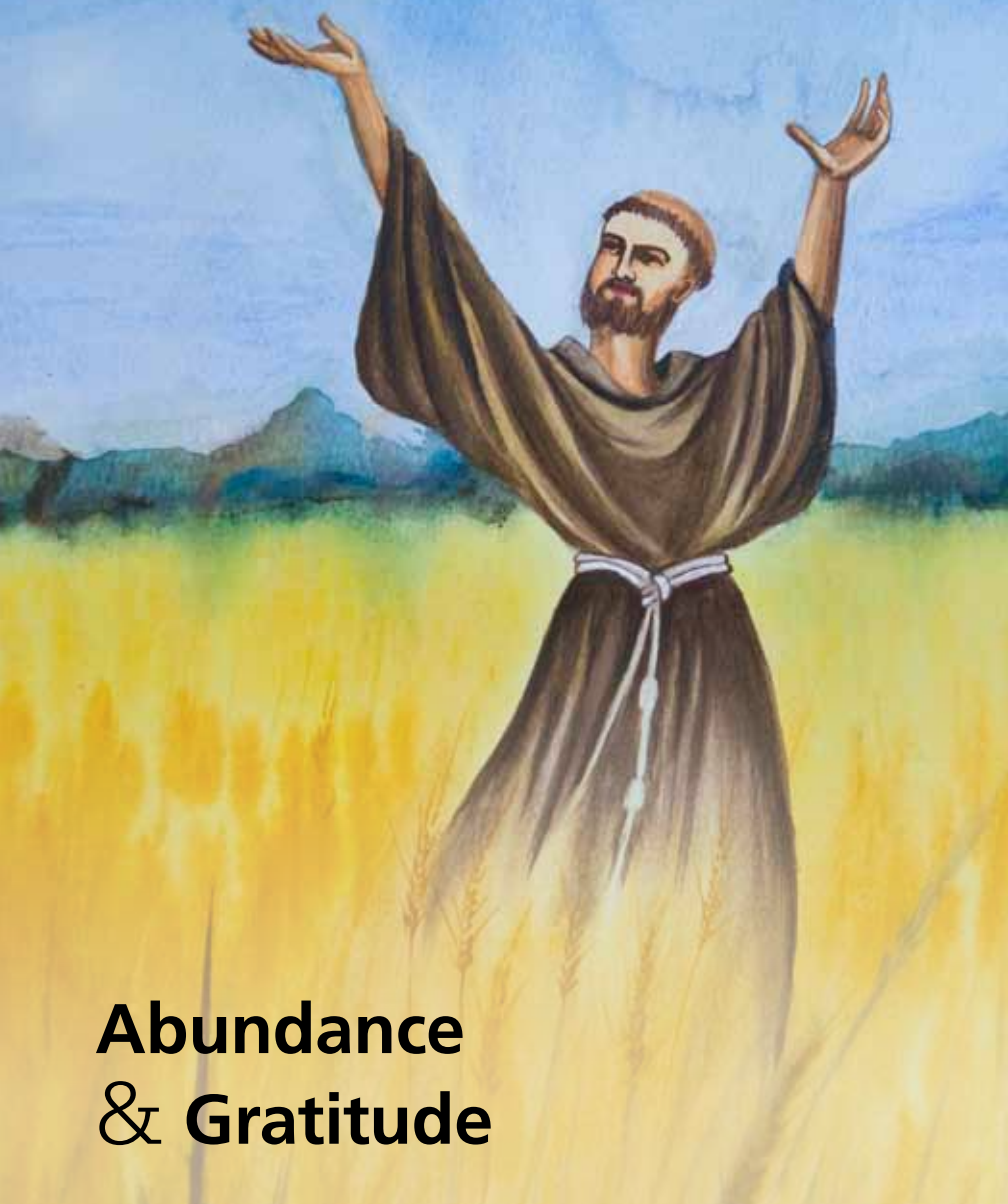


AUTUMN 2014 • VOL. 20, NO. 1

The Way of St. Francis



Abundance & Gratitude

THE FRANCISCAN FRIARS PROVINCE OF SAINT BARBARA

The Way of Saint Francis

AUTUMN 2014 VOL. 20, NO. 1

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Prayer, Fraternity, Joy, Service



The Franciscan Friars of the Province of Saint Barbara are members of a Roman Catholic religious order, from a diversity of backgrounds and cultures, dedicated to serving the poor and promoting justice, peace, care of creation, and reconciliation in the joyful and prophetic spirit of St. Francis of Assisi.

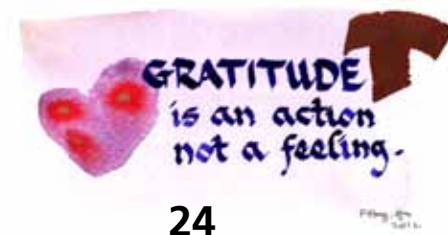


www.sbfranciscans.org



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Editor's Note



Dear Friends,

On January 29, 1955, Father David Temple, OFM wrote a letter to the friars of the St. Barbara Province urging them to promote *The Way of St. Francis* magazine. He summed up the purpose of the magazine in these words: "To teach Christ and every day Christianity in a Franciscan way. To help good Catholics become better Catholics." As Provincial Minister of the St. Barbara friars, Father David was shepherding what we would call today a new "communication strategy".

Simple and direct, Father David's words have been a touchstone for me over the last few months, as my colleagues have reminded me not to "over-think" our efforts to relaunch *The Way*. Father David had great faith in the abundance of God's generosity. That faith—a distinctly Franciscan lens—allowed him to see and affirm incremental change—the good becoming better, with no change coming all at once.

When I was a student at the Franciscan School of Theology in Berkeley, Father Joe Chinnici, OFM introduced me to a communication strategy very similar to Father David's: "Always affirm, never deny; always expand, never restrict the scope of a conversation." I hope this new edition of *The Way* reflects the vision shared by both of these great friars. We aim to expand a conversation about everyday Christianity in a way that helps good disciples of Christ become better disciples of Christ.

We affirm the goodness of you, our readers. Your encouragement has come to us in many ways over the past few months as a sign of the abundance and generosity of God. "Teaching Christ"—Father David's phrase—is really a matter of learning together. As pilgrims, we journey step by step toward a hope-filled future. Thank you for walking with us so faithfully.

Fr. Dan Lackie, OFM
Editor

What I'm Grateful For

- Generous and patient colleagues
- Wise and learned mentors
- The education and spiritual formation offered by the Franciscan School of Theology
- The opportunity to participate in a living tradition that offers a wholesome perspective on life
- This morning's nutritious breakfast (and donuts, too!)

Have a comment or suggestion?
Let us know by sending an email
to TheWay@sbofm.org

By The Way

October 3, 2014

Transitus of St. Francis

Each year, Franciscans all over the world solemnly gather to commemorate a touching event in the life of St. Francis. It's called the TRANSITUS—that is, his passage from earthly life to everlasting life. On the evening of October 3rd, just as the brothers were singing the verse from his Canticle of Brother Sun, "Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Bodily Death, from whom no living person can escape", Francis died.



October 4, 2014

Feast Day of St. Francis of Assisi: Grand Opening of the New St. Anthony's Dining Hall
Join us for the grand opening of the new St. Anthony's. Guest speakers, ribbon cutting and entertainment begin at 9:30 a.m. . Then at 10:30 a.m. St. Anthony's will serve meals to their guests. St. Anthony Foundation, Golden Gate Ave, San Francisco, CA.

October 25, 2014

Día de los Muertos

The Day of the Dead is a festive and multicultural event for the entire family, featuring traditional altars, vendors, artisans, dancers, musicians and a special classic car show put on by the Por Siempre Car Club. Last Sunday in October from 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. . Free admission, parking \$5 per car and free shuttle buses available. Mission San Luis Rey de Francia, Oceanside, CA

November 22, 2014

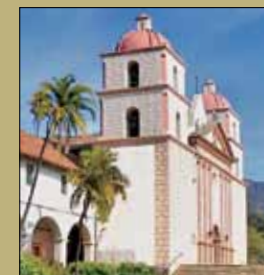
Blessing of the Animals

Bring your pets for their annual blessings. Inside the green area at The Casa in Rose Court, the friars will be available to bless the animals from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. . Look for the giant statue of Saint Francis. We hope to see you there! The Casa - Franciscan Renewal Center, Scottsdale, AZ

December 5–13, 2014

Centennial Celebration Events
On December 5 we begin a year-long celebration of 100 years of the Saint Barbara Province with an opening ceremony at Old Mission Santa Barbara. Local celebrations at

parishes, friaries and ministries throughout the province will follow during the first weeks of December. There will also be events throughout 2015 to celebrate our history and tradition and give gratitude to God and our Franciscan family. More information about events in each local area as they are planned can be found at our website, www.sbfranciscan.org.



December 12–14, 2014

A Place in the Stable: Advent Retreat

On this weekend we will take a reflective journey and share the incarnational story and our place and response to this story. By the end of the retreat, we will discover what gifts we desire to bring to the Christ Child and the gifts we receive. Call (925) 837-9141 for more information. San Damiano Retreat Center, San Damiano, CA.

Snapshot

Sunday, June 22, 2014

Fr. Christian Mondor, OFM, joined community leaders in Huntington Beach, California for the 100th Anniversary Pier Commemoration Ceremony, celebrating the opening of the city's first concrete municipal pier. Fr. Christian participated by giving a "Blessing of the Pier" prayer in both English and Hawaiian, with doves being released at the end of his prayer.

Fr. Christian Mondor has been serving at Sts. Simon & Jude Catholic Church in Huntington Beach since 1990. His desire for community service has resulted in his participation and leadership in many local community-based organizations. Fr. Christian served as president of the Greater Huntington Beach Interfaith Council, as well as a member of the Advisory Board for the Huntington Beach Council on Aging and the planning committee for the city's Centennial Celebration. Fr. Christian is currently involved in organizing the annual interfaith Blessing of the Waves at the Huntington Beach pier. Recipient of the Interfaith Council's annual Peacemaker Award, Fr. Christian was recognized for his work in promoting better understanding and mutual respect for cultural and religious diversity. ❖





Help Wanted:

"Silence is the language of God." In the extreme, our strong inclination can be simply to give up on this God-thing and go it alone.

Matthew: 15:21–28

by Fr. Warren Rouse, OFM



Fr. Warren Rouse, OFM, holds advanced degrees in music and liturgical studies. He has

written close to 200 articles for The Way articles. A former pastor, teacher and retreat director, he edits the Province newsletter, WestFriars, and is the author of Words of Wisdom. He lives at Serra Retreat in Malibu, CA. FrWarren@serraretreat.com

A contemporary American slogan: "If at first you don't succeed—forget it!" This may well apply to the world of business, but our own and the lives of uncountable others deny its validity.

There's a marvelous but homey example of persistence in Matthew's gospel. Jesus has crossed the borders into gentile territory despite his operating principle that his mission is only and exclusively to the Jewish people. And moreover, in the culture of his time, women are definitely second class. When Jesus meets (a) a pagan who is (b) a woman, Timothy Radcliffe, O.P., writes this overview:

"This incident is part of a slow transformation in the mission of Jesus ... So what is happening in this conversation between Jesus and the Canaanite woman is not that he makes an exception. It is a moment in a gradual turning of Jesus to the Gentiles."

But to the incident itself:

How dare this pagan woman shamelessly violate all protocol and yell out: "Have pity on me, Lord, Son of David! My daughter is tormented by a demon. But Jesus did not say a word in answer to her, "Silence".

We may more than once sympathize with this determined woman. Surely she has consulted doctors and spiritual advisers and whomever, and nothing has cured her daughter. Jesus is her last resort, but he simply remains silent. As Radcliffe has it: "This silence is not a rebuff. He is silent because he is listening to her. It is rooted in his silent listening to his Father ... It is the silence in which something new is germinating."

And this silence—hasn't this sometimes been our experience? Prayers, rosaries, novenas, daily Mass, and so on for ourselves or a good cause: nothing happens. Just silence. (As a young seminarian I remember making many a nine-day novena and basically saying at the last day: "It's been nine days and I'd like to see some action here!")

In a word, bluntly, our pious props have failed us and we, with the pagan woman, sadly realize the painful truth that "silence is the language of God." In the extreme, our strong inclination can be simply to give up on this God-thing and go it alone.

But not so the determined Canaanite who gives it another try: "(She) came and did Jesus homage, saying, 'Lord, help me.'" Note carefully how the petition has changed! The first time, the emphasis was on her child: "My daughter is tormented by a demon." Now—and perhaps this is understandably the heart of the matter—she only says: "Lord, help me!"

The focus has clearly moved from the daughter to the mother herself. She, too, is hurting and needs healing just as much as does her daughter. After all her efforts, she has "hit bottom" with nowhere to turn. She feels abandoned. This may be our own situation at some point in our own lives.

But Simone Weil, the Jewish mystic, instructs and encourages us: "There should be nothing which distracts us from being alone at the foot of the Cross."

Eventually, after some verbal give and take, Jesus capitulates: "O woman ('My lady' is the better translation), great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." Without knowing it, her unspoken prayer in faith was: "Thy will be done."

How often in our private and public places we have sung, mumbled or thoughtlessly parroted, "Thy will be done!" In contrast, the Canaanite lady even now echoes the words of Mary's faith: "Be it done to me according to your Word."

What shouldn't be overlooked in this Gospel episode is that Jesus beautifully reaches out to the place, the role, the gift of all women. In our day, Pope St. John Paul II echoes the teaching of Jesus (*A Letter to Women*) written "to every woman, for all that they represent in the life of humanity." And he poignantly adds: "Thank you, every woman, for the simple fact of being a woman! Through the insight which is so much a part of your womanhood you enrich the world's understanding and help to make human relations more honest". ♦

Franciscan Thoughts



Do Not Let Your Hearts Be Troubled: The Blessing Continues

By Jenna Nielsen

“DO NOT LET YOUR HEARTS BE TROUBLED.” In a way, I feel as if I could just repeat those words a couple of times to you and sit down and that would be enough. “Do not let your hearts be troubled.” But sometimes it’s not enough. Sometimes commands are difficult because we feel so incapable of doing what’s asked of us: my heart is troubled; how am I supposed to untrouble it? Sometimes we need other people’s words, the examples of their lives in order to help us and to be a blessing to us.

I doubt that there is anyone in the room this evening who is not troubled by something, however joyful we might be at the accomplishments of the students who will be graduating tomorrow. I know that at least some of the graduates themselves are at least a little bit worried about their futures. Certainly their loved ones are, on their behalf. Faculty, staff, regents, and trustees are worried about the future of the school, how to ensure that it thrives in its new home, as it has done here. Alums and others are saddened by the moving of the school. The GTU and member schools are troubled by what Holy Hill will look like without FST. And then, in addition, some of us have money or health concerns. And we are deeply troubled about the girls in Nigeria who were kidnapped, the fighting in Ukraine and



Jenna Nielsen (left) at the 2014 graduation ceremonies.

The following reflection was presented on May 16, 2014 in the chapel of the Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley, California to the community and friends of the Franciscan School of Theology (FST). The final graduation ceremony at FST’s Berkeley location was held the next day. After 46 years in Berkeley the school is now located at Old Mission San Luis Rey, Oceanside CA (see p. 29

Venezuela, the fact that more and more of the rest of the world doesn’t have sufficient resources to survive, let alone flourish.

And Jesus himself was troubled. The reading we heard tonight occurs during the Last Supper after Jesus has washed the disciples’ feet. Chapter 13, vs 21 begins, “Jesus was troubled in spirit, and declared, ‘Very truly, I tell you, one of you will betray me.’ Not long after he identifies Judas as the betrayer, and Judas has left, he makes this statement: “I give you a new commandment, that you love one another ... By this everyone will know you are my disciples.” Jesus answers his own troubled heart and Judas’ betrayal with love. He insists that love will have the last word, that the disciples will be recognized not by this betrayal but by their love. Then in response to Peter’s

declaration of willingness to follow Jesus anywhere, Jesus predicts his denial. And it is just after this, the very next line, in which Jesus says, "Do not let your hearts be troubled." Betrayal this time is met with compassion. Death and betrayal are encircled, embraced and overcome by service, love and compassion. Jesus washes their feet, he admonishes them to love one another, and he tells them not to worry.

During Francis's life, when he was troubled, there were two women to whom he sometimes turned for comfort and advice: Clare and Jacoba. With both of these women, I associate a word which has been helpful to me in trying to learn to act despite a troubled heart.

With Clare, the word is: to hold. Tomorrow we will listen to her words to Agnes: "What you hold, may you always hold; what you do may you do and never abandon." There are lots of examples of holding in Clare's life: she held to her right to the Privilege of Poverty and to her desire for her own Rule; she held to her right and her sister Agnes' right to be followers of Francis, even in the face of physical harm from their family; she held to Francis even when the Franciscans denied her. And she held on to Jesus when the Saracen soldiers came over the wall. Even during times that must have troubled her greatly, she remained steadfast in her vision of what it meant for her to follow Jesus.

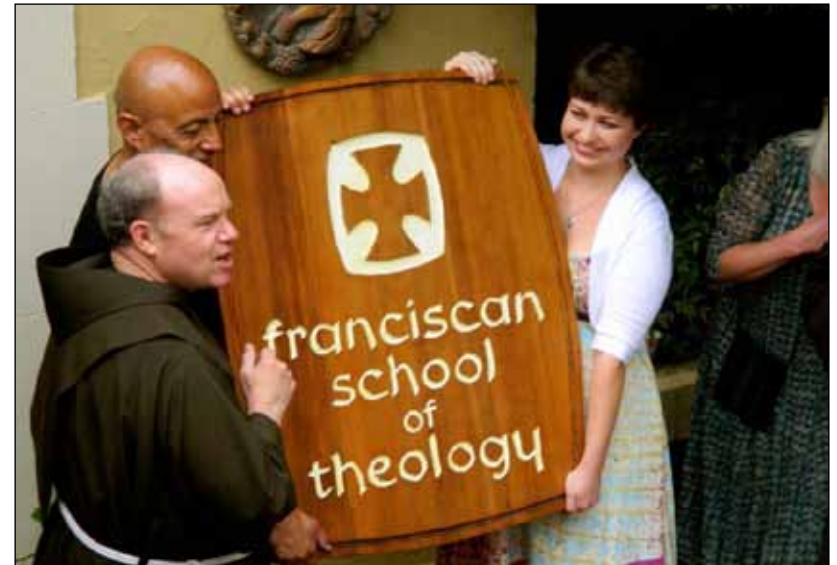
Now, one could use this word hold for the Lady Jacoba as well. This powerful, wealthy laywoman who was a friend of Francis whom he had called to his side when he knew he was dying literally held Francis' body in her arms during and after

his death. But I'd like to focus on a different word which comes from a story in the third life of St. Francis by Thomas of Celano. After Francis died, the friars brought his body to Jacoba and, the text says, she wept "hot tears" over it. Then she "loosened the veil so that she could see him unhindered." It was then that she discovered that which he had attempted to hide: the stigmata.

Loosening the veil, removing that which impedes our sight, which keeps us from seeing something that has been hidden, something strange, perhaps, or beautiful. Maybe we are prevented from seeing our way through the darkness of a difficult situation. Perhaps we're asked to let go of a truth we've held about how the world works or where we find God. Sometimes, we are asked not to hold, but to let go. Jacoba pulled away her veil in order to look more closely at Francis and then, after preparing his body for burial, she let him go.

Holding and loosening. Being steadfast and unclenching our fists. The lives of Jacoba and Clare can offer us, as they did Francis, wisdom, advice, support and blessing. Their lives provide us with examples which say clearly: Do not let your hearts be troubled: love will have the last word.

I'd like to tell you a story about Bill Moore who died in 2010 from esophageal cancer. He was the Franciscan School of Theology handyman, caretaker, IT person, artist, and a miracle worker: a squirreler-away of all kinds of things that the rest of us thought were junk but which he would pull out as needed and out of which he would cobble together the solution to a problem. The story I want to tell



This sign which graced the Berkeley location since 1968 has found a new home in its Oceanside location. Br. Bill Short, academic dean of the school gladly takes possession of the sign as it moves to its new home

tonight is one in which love has the final word.

It was during the rainy season and Bill was undergoing chemo treatments and dealing with the side effects. One day I was up on the roof in the rain trying awkwardly to unblock the gutters and keep the water from collecting. The roof is uneven and there's one place where the water is prevented from flowing by a low wall. And, of course, the closest drains are on the other side of that wall. So very clumsily I was trying to sweep the water across the roof and down toward the drains that were located further away. After I had struggled awhile with this, quite ineffectually, I went inside and emailed Bill and asked him how he had dealt with this in the past. I didn't hear back right away but a few days later he came in and went up to the roof and drilled several

holes in the wall, small holes, 4 or 5 of them, through which the water can now pass and reach the drains. It took him a long time and he got totally exhausted doing it, but he was so pleased that he had thought up a solution and was able to carry it out. Those of you who knew Bill know that smile he would get on his face when he had done something that was of use to someone else. Even as his body lost strength and let go, he continued to hold on to the pleasure he took in helping others.

Service, love and compassion. These are not, obviously, attributes found only at FST or in the Franciscan family or among Christians. They are human attributes, as are their opposites. But I do think that FST has been one of those places in which these things have collected in great abundance—this community

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26

Friar Profile

Fr. John Vaughn, OFM

Date of Birth:

June 3, 1928

Entered Novitiate:

July 11, 1948

Solemn Vows:

July 12, 1952

Ordination:

December 17, 1955

**Provincial Minister,
Province of Saint Barbara**
1976–1979

**116th Minister General
Order of Friars Minor**
1979–1991

Wine with St. Francis

By Brother Ryan Thornton, OFM

THERE IS A BEST KEPT SECRET in the Province of St. Barbara. It happens every evening regularly around 8:00 p.m. at Old Mission Santa Barbara. In a small room off the old library, a friar sits, sipping wine and taking chocolate, gladly offering the same to anyone who should stop by and pass the time. The friar acts as if the honor is his to host, but it is the guest who is honored by the reception. For that friar is Fr. John Vaughn, OFM, and one's host the 116th successor to St. Francis of Assisi.

For a summer, I had the privilege of being that guest, and what follows is but a brief vignette of what I learned from and about Fr. John, sometimes from what he said and sometimes from what he left unsaid, sometimes from what others said about him and sometimes from what I discovered for myself. Indeed, one of the things that must be understood about Fr. John is that he is extraordinarily humble, liable to leave out some detail or neglect some point if it would emphasize his role or importance in an event. Moreover, he is never one to speak ill of another, even when they have done him wrong. It is impossible to say whether these qualities were the reasons why he was selected to be the Minister General of the Franciscans or whether these were what he acquired as the successor to St. Francis; whether God molded him to the office or had the office mold him, there is no doubt of the resemblance between the two.

New Wineskins for New Wine

When Fr. John Vaughn, OFM was elected Minister General on June 2nd, 1979, the Order and the Church were facing a significant challenge. In the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s, clergy and religious had been leaving. In some friaries, the times were so tumultuous that friars used to wonder whether their confreres at dinner would be around for breakfast. But this sociological shift had already taken place well before Fr. John was elected. Like an earthquake in the night, the seismic forces of society had already moved, and it was now the morning to go out and look at the lay of the land. And the demographic reality was clear: it was not that change was a-coming; change was already here.

It was apparent that the numbers of the Order were not merely decreasing, but had decreased significantly. Every year since 1967 the Order had declined in numbers. From a high of approximately 27,000 friars in 1963, that number was just over 21,000 by 1979 when Fr. John took office. In fact,

FRIAR QUOTES:

"That is the genius of the friars—they can individualize, pick out a problem, and see how they can help it."

"The goal or work of the Minister General is what St. Francis says in his Rule: that the Minister General should visit and correct his brothers, which would be another way of saying that he should encourage them in their vocation."



"The Minister General is supposed to be the servant of his brothers. And sometimes he will be reminded of that by the brothers themselves, which is good. But from my experience, it was just a wonderful, wonderful experience because you got to see how good the friars were and what wonderful work they did, but—more than that—their generosity, their humility, their desire to be authentic followers of Francis. And problems? Problems are to be expected whenever you try to do good."

from the years 1967-1978, the number of Franciscans in the world had decreased by 20%. And yet, during that same period of time, the number of parishes that the Franciscans were

to work in the vineyard of the Lord is what it is to be a Franciscan. And the friars still wanted to be friars, even if their number was simply less.

From a practical viewpoint, it was clear that the old ways could no longer be preserved, past commitments were becoming over-commitments, and legacy had to give way to reality. From a spiritual viewpoint, it was clear that the Franciscan charism—beneath the buildings and beyond provincial borders—would endure. What Fr. John did was to see both while looking to their ultimate horizon. Understanding that a Friar Minor seeks above all to live the Gospel wherever he is, Fr. John had the ability to ask that if the old would no longer work, where would the new be? Having reaped the Lord's produce in one place, where would be the next? Knowing where we have gone, where have we yet to go? That is how he turned the attention of the Order to Africa.

Over the first few years of his time as Minister General, Fr. John worked to encourage the friars who had already started evangelizing ventures in Africa. It was not as if he created something out of nothing, but that he could see—and in his position of Minister General could help effect—the buds of life that were blossoming in the garden of God. He created the "Africa Project," which was not so much a spear-heading, but a uniting of what was already happening within the Order. At his best, a Minister General inspires and unites other brothers in what they are doing; he visits them, cares for them,



Br. Jeff Durham asks Fr. John Vaughn, OFM about the Order of Friars Minor.

and encourages them to do the work that God has shown each one of them to do. That is what the first Minister General did; it is also what the 116th did as well. Fr. John made the time to visit the various communities that were working in Africa, supporting them and reminding them of their connectedness to all friars everywhere through the Franciscan charism. He did so firstly and morally by his example and additionally and practically by allowing one friar in one area of Africa to transfer easily and directly to another. In this way, Fr. John was able to keep all of the institutes, endeavors, and players working together in Africa, thus preserving a unity of mission within a diversity of ministry.

Writing in 1986, Fr. John described the formal decision for co-operation among all the institutions and friars working in Africa as "a real breakthrough not only for Africa, but for the whole Order." He proceeded to reflect on it further, saying that

"exaggerated provincialism has been one of our greatest problems for the last hundred years. If we had worked more as an Order in China, for instance, we might have many more Chinese vocations there today." Indeed, the work and the cooperation of countless friars has now made Africa one of the foremost areas of growth within the Order. In many ways, it has proved an example of how Franciscans throughout the world can understand themselves and work together for that Kingdom which they all desire. Yet, this understanding ultimately came from someone who had a vision, a vision of what could be, in fact a vision of what was already happening if one would but let it in by letting other things go. Put very simply, Fr. John found a way of bringing people together, uniting many in the midst of decline to show that there was still more, reminding the friars that their vocation was not to guard a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28



Fr. John Vaughn, OFM talks to the birds, just like his long ago predecessor St. Francis of Assisi did.

responsible for had increased by over 13%. To put it another way, the friars were trying to make more wine with fewer grapes. And as a wine enthusiast, Fr. John would be the first to tell you that this just doesn't work.

Substantially, there was a fundamental choice for the Franciscans: to try to hold on to these types of parochial and institutional commitments for as long as possible by over-tapping the limited personnel resources or to let them go so that something new could come instead. The question was whether it was time for new wine-skins or whether the old wine-skins would still be used? And yet, there was never any question that they still wanted to make wine. For

Community Connection



Justice is the action of making relationships right.

It Is Right And Just?

By Brother Mark Schroeder, OFM

I WAKE UP EARLY TO GO TO MASS with my family, because I had the role as altar boy. In the sacristy, I try on a long black cassock. The vestment fits. I put on a white wash-and-wear surplice; the lace surplices are only for holy days. I walk with my partner to where the priest is vesting. When he says, “It is time,” we process through the sacristy door into the sanctuary. It’s my turn to pull the cord on the golden bell at the doorway, and the people rise. A sea of faces staring at us. The priest kisses the altar, and begins with a prayer in Latin. The congregation and altar boys respond in Latin.

Fast forward to the present day. Thanks be to God we no longer use Latin. Latin sounded holy and mystical, yet most people never understood what the words meant. I know it isn’t right to brag, but I was getting A after A on my high school Latin tests, yet even I never comprehended what I was praying.

Does this sound familiar?

Presider: The Lord be with you.

People: And with your spirit.

Presider: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up to the Lord.

Presider: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right and just.

I am asking you to consider one short prayer response we now use at Mass: *It is right and just*. Let’s see

what you comprehend from these five words, and better yet—discover any deeper holy and mystical meanings that flow from *It is right and just*.

So let us begin with what might be the most complicated word in this sentence: *It*. What is the *It* that is right and just? I took my question to a friar who has spent many years in parish and retreat ministry in Arizona and California. I asked Anthony Garibaldi, OFM, what the *It* in this prayer meant to him. He said the *It* is the worship, because we have prayed that we lift up our hearts to God. Anthony said the Preface that starts with these prayers is like a pep rally. The Preface sets a tone for the Eucharistic Prayer that follows. This prayer is trying to excite the people into giving thanks to God for what God has done for us.

The *It* then suggests that the word is all about thanksgiving. The *is* denotes present tense. Yes, an attitude of gratitude—in the present tense, this instant, now!

But attitude isn't enough. We must live this out. How? Well, you pray the words every Mass: you are called to live a life of righteousness and justice.

In my opening remembrance, I said it isn't right to brag. You realize that bragging isn't right. You also are aware of many, many things that are not right—and you know, as well—many, many things that are right. We must live out this thanksgiving attitude. We must do the right thing.

I have learned about challenging politicians and corporate VIPs in the use of the phrase, “Do the right thing,” through my training in community organizing and with many years supporting unions that reach out to farm workers. This is a way to get someone out of the narrowness of profit-mode and apathy and into using one's conscience and making heart-decisions. *By doing what is right.*

I took a question to friar Finian McGinn, OFM, a man who has held leadership positions with Franciscans in the St. Barbara Province and worldwide; he has dedicated much of his life to upholding the dignity of immigrants. He responded to ‘What does *right* mean to you in this prayer?’ by going to the Spanish translation: *Es justo y necesario*. It is just and necessary. Finian said that it is necessary for us to give glory to God. It is important that we be a grateful people; it is necessary that we look at everything—everything!—as a gift.

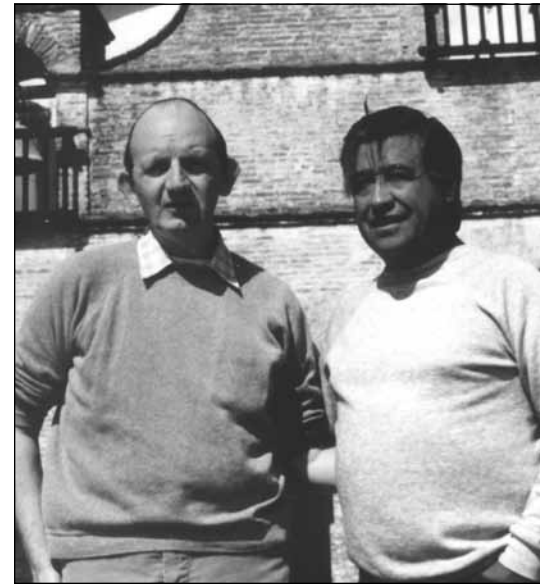
Finian described *just* as “giving every person what is due that

person.” He summarized it with one word: dignity. He told me that this dignity comes from the fact that the same Creator creates us all. Finian told about a life-long friendship he has with a poor family in Stockton (where he began as a young priest) and how they showed him the definition of *just*: “They accepted me as a brother.” He knew they had little financial resources, yet he said they would never take gifts from the friars or the parish. One day, the friars had received a donation of a huge box of cherries. Finian decided to visit the family and bring a big bag of those cherries to them. When he handed the bag to the children he spotted cherry stains on their hands; they, along with their parents, had been laboring in the fields. The parents accepted the cherries with gratitude, yet Finian marveled at their overlooking his error—after they had worked so hard in the hot sun and dust, paid a very minimal wage. ‘I am sure that they didn't want to see another cherry. Yet they took the bag. I felt it was impossible that they could offend me nor I offend them. I still have a special relationship with them.’

Justice is the action of making relationships right. With that present tense attitude of gratitude we can improve every relationship. Day in and day out.

“*It is right and just*” is the heart of each Eucharist. This prayer is written in the plural, which makes the Body of Christ—in righteousness and justice—huge!

And I asked Larry Bernard, OFM, a friar who has ministered in Latin America and at present is with the Pueblo peoples in New Mexico, about this little prayer. He said, ‘The first thing that pops into my mind



Br Timothy Arthur, OFM alongside Cesar Chavez, labor leader and long time friend of the Franciscans.

about justice is that ‘If you pay me the ten dollars an hour you agreed to, I will cut and trim the grass in your yard’. That is fair and just. However, to get right down to it, the word *just* brings more to mind: all mutually respectful relationships. If something is just there is a mutual respect among the people involved. In the context of the Mass, is to be in a just relation with God which includes but does not exhaust the idea of constant thankfulness. With the attitude of such thankfulness we will always seek to care for the world situation into which the Lord has placed us. Since the Lord has given us everything, it is just, it is proper, it is right, to care for what God has given us. To be just means to not allow family relations to wither nor to be careless about caring for the well-being of our planet.”

All the Eucharistic celebrations pulls us into the reality that we live

in a world of violence and injustices—with hope that our actions can make a difference. To be active members of the Body of Christ means there is equality; an even playing field of the haves and the have-nots, of the oppressor and the oppressed, of allies and enemies.

Allow me to end with the words of our Catholic brother, Cesar Chavez, who helped found the United Farm Workers:

“It is not good enough to know why we are oppressed and by whom. We must join the struggle for what is right and

just. Jesus does not promise it will be an easy way to live life and His own life certainly points in a hard direction; but *it* does promise that we will be *satisfied* (not stuffed; but satisfied). He promises that by giving life we will find life—full, meaningful life as God meant it.” ❖



Brother Mark Schroeder, OFM, has dedicated most of his Franciscan life to ministry in areas of social justice, peace advocacy and service to the poor and marginalized. He was recently named animator of justice, peace and integrity of creation (JPIC) for two Franciscan provinces: the Our Lady of Guadalupe Province and the St. Barbara Province. A member of the St. Barbara Province, he is a part of the Franciscan friar community in Sacramento, California. Please check out his Facebook page, *FranciscansForJustice*. Email him brothermark@att.net.

Donor Profile

Rita Banfi: deep, caring soul

Fr. David Gaa, OFM

I had the pleasure of getting to know Rita Banfi after the passing of her husband when she moved from upstate New York to Arizona in 1998. She settled in Tucson and read in the local Catholic paper about the Franciscans at Mission San Xavier Del Bac, located just south of Tucson

on the reservation land of the Tohono O'odham Nation. As a former primary teacher she was particularly interested in the Mission's parish school that served the native children in the local village of Wak. Soon after reading that article she called up the school and began volunteering as an

aide to help children with their reading skills. Her very first contact with the friars was when I met her after a morning Mass that she had started to attend daily. Within a year, having fallen in love with the Native children, she was volunteering full time as their first grade teacher.

I was made pastor of Mission San Xavier del Bac parish shortly after Rita arrived and I started to get to know her since, as pastor, I was directly involved in the life of the parish school. At that time in Tucson there were seven friars living in the friary. I was blessed to be among a couple of older retired friars who had spent their entire ministry working among the Native Americans. We also had a couple of younger friars who were students at the local university getting their undergraduate degrees; and, finally, we had two other friars—one who

worked in the parish school and another who worked in the parish.

Over time Rita got to know all of these friars. She saw how we see our work as well as the way we work with others. She grew to become a friend to all of us. She was funny, generous. What I remember most about her was how open she was to see things with new insights. While she could be cantankerous at times, she always came from a good heart. She was just a wonderful person to be around.

After a few years I volunteered to work in the Russia Franciscan Project and went off to Kazakhstan in Central Asia. Rita and I kept in touch. Sometimes she would have the first grade students send me a card or letter; from my missionary outpost, I treasured those notes. Being of an adventurous spirit, one year Rita flew out to Kazakhstan to see the new church we were building. It's the same church to which she had so generously donated to help construct.

Around 2010 I came back to the States and was assigned to Old Mission San Luis Rey in Oceanside, CA. In the depth of a very hot Tucson summer I invited her out to Oceanside to enjoy our milder, more temperate climate. She came for a short visit, visited again a year later, and simply fell in love with San Diego County.

Shortly after Rita relocated to Oceanside she was stricken with a terminal form of cancer. As her physical condition deteriorated, there were a number of us from Old Mission San Luis Rey who would visit her—priests, brothers, lay collaborators. Rita remained feisty until



Mission San Xavier Del Bac, where Rita Banfi volunteered.

the end. Over her life she had given so much to the friars—her time, talent and treasure. It was my brothers' and my great privilege to be with her at the end of her earthly journey. She was always in relationship with so many of us. She taught and reinforced to me and my brothers many things: the importance of perseverance in the face of physical or emotional adversity, of staying in relationship. Yet most of all, she was an inspiration to us with her generosity, her witness and her profound faith in God's abiding goodness.

Rita Banfi passed away on September 10, 2013. May her soul and all the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace. ❖

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Fr. David Gaa, OFM is Pastor and Executive Director of Old Mission San Luis Rey, Oceanside, California.

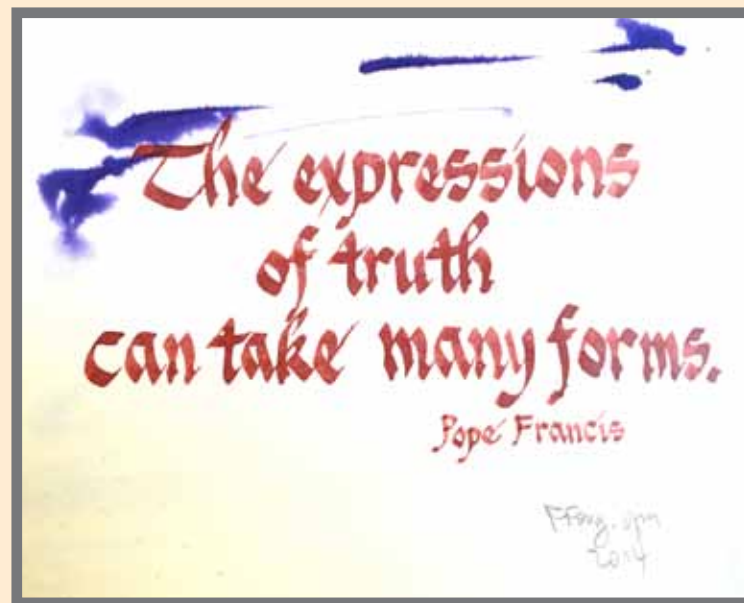
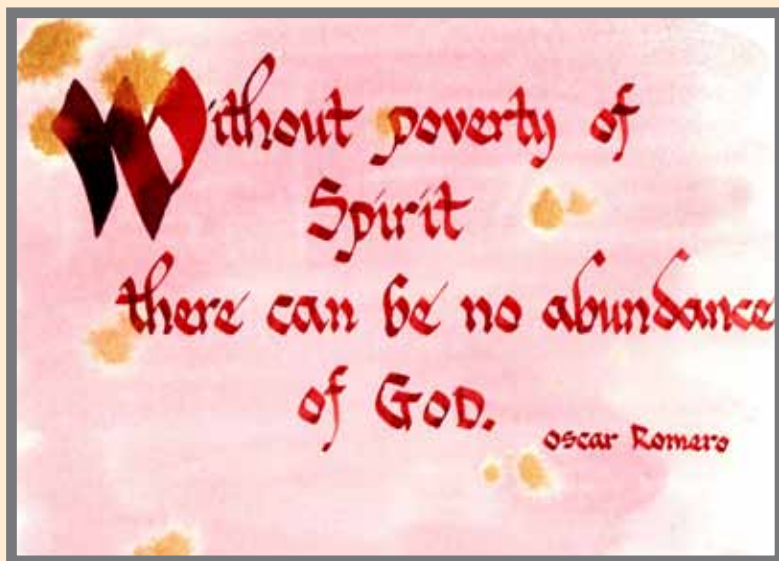
The friars are very grateful to Rita Banfi for her generous Legacy Gift to help ensure that our work will continue and flourish long beyond her life. For more information about making a Legacy Gift to the Franciscan Friars, St. Barbara Province, please contact Fr. Dan Lackie at 714-392-5622 or dlackie@sbofm.org.



Father David Gaa, OFM with Rita Banfi at Mission San Xavier del Bac where Rita taught and volunteered for 10 years.

Creative Spirit

Celebrating creativity in all of its forms, this section of The Way of St. Francis celebrates the artistic work of friars in the province; be it visual, written, musical or something else all together.



About the Artist



Fr. Franklin Fong, OFM

Fr. Franklin is a plant physiologist. He did his doctoral studies at the University of California, Riverside. He also holds a Master's degree in Theological Studies from the Franciscan School of Theology in Berkeley. He has published widely in the areas of plant hormones and environmental physiology. He is currently the Associate Director of Development & Online Programs at the FST.

has been flooded with acts of service, inundated with love, and overflowing with com-

and Florida, out over the Pacific Ocean to the Philippines and Vietnam and China.



Graduating Students from FST receive a final blessing from the congregation at the Chapel of the Great Commission.

passion. It has been blessed with an ocean of examples of people trying to live as Jesus did, as Francis and Jacoba and Clare did, sometimes awkwardly, sometimes gracefully, loosening and holding as we can

With the graduating of our students and the closing of this building, the water, of necessity, must flow elsewhere: we must not only let it go but be the agents of its progress: down to Oceanside and across the border into Mexico, up the coast to Oregon, across to the Midwest

Wherever we go we both hold and release this blessing of love and compassion, each in our own individual, quirky, less than perfect and yet also absolutely perfect and beautiful ways.

I would like to end these reflections with the blessing attributed to St. Clare. These are the words with which she blessed her sisters and with which she blesses us tonight:

"I bless you during my life and after my death, as I am able, out of all the blessings with which the

Father of Mercies has blessed and will bless His sons and daughters in heaven and on earth and a spiritual father and mother have blessed and will bless their spiritual sons and daughters. "Always be lovers of your souls and those of all your sisters and brothers. And may you always be eager to observe what you have promised the Lord.

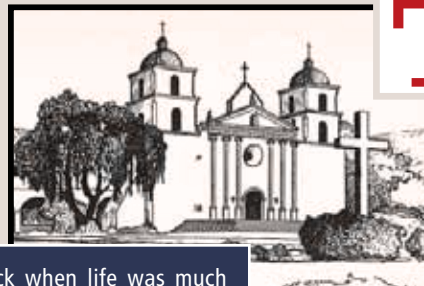
"May God always be with you and may you always be with God. Amen." ❖



Jenna Nielsen has an MA in Religion and Religious Education from Fordham University and an MA in Creative Writing from San Francisco State University. For nine years she worked as the receptionist and registrar at the Franciscan School of Theology in Berkeley and is currently employed by the Jesuits. She is a published poet and hopes to have a final draft of a manuscript of poems related to the life of St. Clare completed by the end of the year.

It Was Written ...

These stories are taken from *Santa Barbara Fioretti: Stories from the Friary* (GEC Press, Santa Barbara, CA). This work was compiled by Brother Timothy Arthur, OFM, retired archivist at Mission Santa Barbara. Brother Timothy currently resides at Mission San Luis Rey in Oceanside, CA.



Back when life was much more simple, some friars made it even more so. Br. Dominic, for example. In the mornings when the friars in Santa Barbara were preparing to come down to the chapel, Brother would walk across the Sacred Garden, stop a second at the fish pond, douse himself with a splash and dry off with a large blue handkerchief.

The people of Lakeport noticed a strange looking man in a brown robe and sandals (no socks) roaming around their town. He was arrested and appeared before a sympathetic judge. Fortunately, just before a month

in jail was pronounced, someone explained that Fr. Pius was a friar. "Are you crazy?" the judge asked. "That is for your honor to decide." Scratching his head, the judge indicated that the prisoner could go. And that is how Fr. Pius Nierman began his mission and work with the Pomo Indians.

In 1897, an immigrant from Germany, Br. Hippolytus bought a bag full of fruit called bananas for five cents. "Ah, I will have a banana and appear more sophisticated when I eat with the friars." After taking a big bite of one, he threw the bag out the window of the train. A few nights later the friars were served bananas for dessert. He watched. "Like a flash," Br. Hippolytus explained years later, "it came to me. One cannot eat the skin of all the fruits."



In 1873, the students found the broad jump their favorite. One day Fr. Pacificus was in the group. He watched quietly as the very young, strong boys tried to outdo the record of 20 feet. "Your turn, Father," called one of the boys. Quickly Father, in habit and sandals, went flying, sprang into the air and jumped. His record still stands: 22 feet.



museum, but to cultivate a flourishing garden of life, showing the Order and the Church that though the laborers be few, the harvest is yet plentiful and the vintage all the richer for it.

Food and Room Enough

While one might be reminded by the above of the 8th Minister General, Bonaventure, whose vision kept the Order together when it might otherwise have fallen apart, there is no less of a resemblance between Fr. John and the first Minister General, Francis. The ways are, in fact, too many to count. Still, there is one story in particular that connects the two quite emblematically.

One night, Fr. John was traveling with another friar near Bologna when it began to snow. It quickly became too difficult to keep driving on the Italian roads, so they decided to stop for the night at a nearby friary. When they arrived, it was already late, and the gates were locked. They knocked at the door for a long while until a friar finally opened a window and

asked what they wanted. Fr. John explained that they were friars from Rome and needed a place to stay for the night. And after some persuasion, the friar begrudgingly came outside in the cold to open the gate. Walking in, the friar then inquired somewhat sharply if they would be wanting something to eat as well. Fr. John asked if they might have something warm, and the friar took them to a corner of the refectory while he went to the kitchen. When he came back, he put the food in front of them and as he looked up, he chanced to see the picture of the Minister General hung there in the refectory. Suddenly, his eyes became big, and he glanced back and forth between the picture and the person, realizing who it was who had asked for hospitality. His mouth dropped open, and before he could speak, Fr. John said, "Thank you, but it's late and you probably want to go to sleep. We can find our rooms by ourselves. But I'm glad to know that there is always food and room enough amongst the friars."

Seeing the story of True and Perfect Joy now realized in his person, the friar sheepishly made his way out of the refectory, recalling how St. Francis once told his companion, Br. Leo, that perfect joy would not be in the smartest or the wealthiest men entering the Order, nor one converting all non-believers or healing thousands by the grace of God, but that perfect joy would consist in coming to a friary where he asks for hospitality and receives none despite the cold, the snow, and the icicles hanging from his habit and all the while still not becoming upset. For the words of Fr. John ring ever true, "there is always food and room enough amongst the friars." ♦



Br. Ryan Thornton recently finished his M.A. and MDiv. degrees at FST. Prior to joining the Franciscan Order, Br. Ryan worked in Ukraine and studied at Harvard University where he specialized in the works of Franciscan theologian John Duns Scotus. He is currently stationed at SS. Simon & Jude in Huntington Beach California.

Franciscan Theology for Our World

♦ Study & Practice ♦ Faith & Action ♦ Head & Heart ♦



The Franciscan School of Theology is an accredited graduate theological school and seminary that prepares women and men for professional ministry and careers in theological education in church and society.

Vision: At FST, Franciscan theology is integrated with a practical and contemporary Franciscan social vision touching civic life, economics, politics and leadership in Church and society. FST occupies a unique position as one of two Franciscan seminary and graduate schools of theology in the English speaking world. Our students, both priest candidates and the majority of our laity, go on to serve in all sectors of society throughout the world—social service agencies, prisons, shelters, hospitals and churches—bringing hope, dignity and compassion to those in need.

Values: The Franciscan tradition stresses humble service and mutual relationships grounded in the love of God from whom all blessings flow, with a special regard for the poor, for those at the margins of Church and society, and for justice. FST is committed to applying this Franciscan approach to theological study, fostering engagement, service and leadership in the Church and the nonprofit community. FST's programs address both head and heart by integrating academic and experiential dimensions, solid scholarship and authentic field work, private prayer and public liturgies, immersion opportunities and theological reflection, knowledge of social and political realities and engagement with the needs of underserved communities.

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For more information, please contact us:

Fr. Joseph Chinnici, OFM President and Rector or
Ph: 760-547-1800
www.fst.edu



At Last

1961



1982



2011



Off to a new start

By Very Reverend John Hardin, OFM, Provincial Minister, Province of Saint Barbara

BY THE TIME YOU READ THIS you will have had a chance to enjoy this edition of *The Way* magazine. *The Way* seeks to bear witness to our rich Franciscan heritage by highlighting articles and stories which I hope you will find both interesting and inspiring.

We plan to produce three issues per year roughly coinciding with seasonal and liturgical calendars. In addition to articles on scripture and spirituality, we hope you will find interesting our profiles of Franciscans whose lives and ministries have served as a constant source of inspiration to me over my thirty years as a friar. We will also profile the lives of some of our donors—those who have given of their time, talent and treasure in ways both large and small. The key here is to highlight what it is about the Franciscan charism that led them to collaborate and join us on our journey.

In my January letter to readers, I shared that we have decided not to charge for subscriptions, though we certainly appreciate any support that you might provide to help offset our costs. We trust that God's great generosity finds a path through your kind hearts and hands, as it has so often in the past!

It is fortuitous for us to be able to publish this new edition of *The Way* now, at the advent of the centennial celebration of the Province of St. Barbara. Over the next year our volumes will try to manifest our deep Franciscan gratitude for God's blessings— for the varied works and ministries that friars do every day. This debt of gratitude is also owed to all of you, without whom we simply could not do what we do. You walk with us on our journey. You make us better than we could possibly be ourselves. For that I thank you.

Finally, let me extend one final word of thanks to my brother friars who have helped with this edition. To the writers and contributors, the editors, and the production people who have put such hard work into this publication—to them I offer my deepest thanks.

We will continue to pray in gratitude for your support and kindness. Peace and all good! ♦

Be aware that I am prepared to
provide for all your needs, because the blessed
God has given me an overflowing abundance
of everything necessary; and so for love of Him
I gladly spend it on the poor and needy.

The Deeds of Blessed Francis and His Companions

Franciscan Friars of California, Inc.
Province of Saint Barbara
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