



Community of Franciscan Friars of the Renewal

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STATEMENT ON THE DEATH OF FATHER BENEDICT J. GROESCHEL

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The Catholic Church and the Franciscan family lost a giant today. This moment is one that finds the Community of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal (CFR) with mixed emotions, as we are deeply saddened by the loss of Fr. Benedict but also relieved that God has set him free from the physical and mental suffering he has experienced over the past decade.

The world knew Father Benedict as a priest, teacher, evangelist, retreat master, and a steadfast defender of and advocate for the Catholic Church that he loved so much. The members of his religious family saw all these things in him, too. But even more, we were also blessed to know him as a father who cared for each of us, a father who was always accessible when we needed him and always glad to see us when we came to visit.

The words of a fellow Franciscan, Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa, describing St. Francis, characterize Fr. Benedict well, “His intuition of a universal brotherhood, extending to every creature, accompanied by his choice of minority, turn him and his followers into the brothers of every person, the enemies of none, and the companions of the least ones.”

Fr. Benedict was a brother and a father to everyone he encountered. In a world often overwhelmed with darkness, he was a man filled with hope, a hope that he shared with both the rich and poor alike. His love for others and deep desire to serve, sent him among poor families who were in need of assistance, young people trying to find their way, bishops faced with challenging decisions, priests and religious in need of an encouraging word, and the stranger who was far from God. Fr. Benedict was at home in every circumstance and every encounter. “The providence of God,” he would say, “was the mystery of God reaching out at every moment and revealing his love and presence to us all.”

It is not an exaggeration to say that Fr. Benedict was selfless. Those who knew him well understood that it was simply his nature to be so. He poured himself out for others no matter what the cost—and sometimes the cost to him was very great. To have known him was to have been helped by him and even loved by him. Our CFR Family and everyone who knew him received an enormous amount from Fr. Benedict—probably more than we were ever able to give back. It was not simply his wealth of wisdom and knowledge from which many benefited. It was his profound faith and equally profound love, two gifts that he never failed to share generously.

Join with us in praying for the repose of the soul of Fr. Benedict, for his family and Community, and also in thanksgiving for the legacy of renewal within the Church and Franciscan family that Fr. Benedict championed.

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