

It is almost unbelievable. And yet the Friars and Sisters of the Renewal experience this joy almost daily among our less fortunate brothers and sisters. This is not to deny the hardships or overlook the suffering, but it is to acknowledge that there is more to life than possessions.

I experienced this personally in a most profound way shortly after high school graduation. Instead of going directly to college, I determined to take a year off and give some time in service to the needy of Appalachia. I had been privileged to attend a fine Catholic boarding school. My father, an Irish immigrant who studied hard to become a lawyer, wanted the best possible education for his sons. After graduation I wanted to take some time to serve those who were less privileged.

I traveled to the mountains of Kentucky to work with a Catholic relief organization. I was assigned to build a front porch for an elderly man who lived about eight miles back from a dirt road. When I arrived at the work site, I was astonished to find that my task was a porch. This man needed a house! He had no electricity or running water, and you could look into his home, not through an open door or window, but through large cracks in the siding of what was really a shack. He was in need of much more than I was offering, but he simply wanted a porch.

I began my labors and found that the more I did, the more frustrated I got. It wasn't a question of being dissatisfied with my craftsmanship, but my frustration increased as I saw more and more what needed to be done. What made things worse was that I was miserable in my tasks and the elderly fellow seemed quite happy. In fact he kept smiling at me, which only made my frustration worse. I had everything; he had nothing. I was miserable; he was happy. And to top it off, he smiled and had no teeth!

I couldn't bear his joy and my misery. Finally I boldly asked him, "Why are you so happy?" To this day I will never forget his piercing eyes and his almost immediate response. With a heavy mountain drawl he said, "'Cause I know Jesus." I thought to myself, "I know Jesus." I had had twelve years of the best Catholic education. I felt I knew Jesus. And so I retorted, "I know Jesus!"

This old mountain man, with nothing but a newly refurbished porch and a shadow of a house, looked deep into my eyes and replied, "Naw, you know *about* Him. You don't *know* Him. 'Cause if you really knew Him, you'd be happy too!"

I remember going back to the cabin where I was staying that night and thinking about the old man's words. It was probably the first time in my seventeen years of life that I really prayed. And my prayer was earnest: "Lord, I don't want to know *about* you, I want to *know you!*" It was perhaps the most profound cry a seventeen-year-old kid from Connecticut ever prayed. And I meant it!

The Friars and the Sisters of the Renewal are privileged to work with our less fortunate brothers and sisters. We don't want to patronize their poverty or overlook their distress, but we see so clearly that when you have Jesus, you have everything. Jesus is our all! Unfortunately, things so often get in the way.

When the original friars began our little community, they wanted to live an intentionally Franciscan lifestyle. They desired a genuine expression of the vow of poverty that would not be a source of scandal or envy to those we are called to serve. Although provision for our needs is made through the hands of so many generous benefactors, we want to live simply with as little material property as possible.

Shortly after the Second Vatican Council, Pope Paul VI wrote an apostolic exhortation to consecrated religious, *Evangelica Testificatio* (June 1971), in which he stated:

"In a civilization and a world marked by a prodigious movement of almost indefinite material growth, what witness would be offered by a religious who let himself be carried away by an uncurbed seeking for his own ease, and who considered it normal to allow himself without discernment or restraint everything that is offered him? At a time when there is an increased danger for many of being enticed by the alluring security of possessions, knowledge and power, the call of God places [religious] at the pinnacle of the Christian conscience."

Our work in the barrios of Honduras, the rough neighborhoods of New York, the East End of London, or wherever the Lord may take us is certainly intended to facilitate hands-on service to those most in need. We long to alleviate some of the challenges and difficulties associated with poverty. But our decision to live with the poor reminds us that we are all a people dependent on the Lord's provision. Whether rich or poor, our joy will come because we know Jesus. In Him is our all. In Him is our security in life. In Him is our daily provision. And in Him is our joy!

As society experiences unprecedented wealth and craving for security, as so many people are striving for true peace and fulfillment in their lives, we Franciscans of the Renewal long to bear witness to the truth that security and joy are found in Jesus. Although we can still become discouraged and sometimes distracted by our needs, all we need to do is look beyond our front doors and see so many who have so little and yet experience such joy.

In serving those less fortunate, we are so often blessed beyond measure as we find the Lord's gracious provision in the smiling faces of those most in need who know Him.

"I can't believe it. I really can't believe it!" But it is true. Their smiles radiate the presence of God among His people!

Friars' Books, Tapes, and Music

Fr. Benedict Groeschel, CFR
write: Spiritual Books, Box 2003, Larchmont, NY 10538
www.franciscanfriars.com

Fr. Andrew Apostoli, CFR
contact: Delight of All Saints, PO Box 111825,
Naples, FL 34108
Phone: (239) 390-2435
www.franciscanfriars.com

Fr. Stan Fortuna, CFR
call Francesco Productions: 718-401-7349
or visit www.francescoproductions.com

**"Sunday Night Live
with Father Benedict Groeschel"**

Tune in Sunday evenings at 7 PM (Eastern Standard Time) to EWTN's live call-in show where Father Benedict takes calls, answers questions, and shares experiences with viewers.

Convento San Serafin	011-504-772-7998
<i>Colonia Francisco Morazan, Comayagua, Honduras, CA</i>	
Most Blessed Sacrament Friary	973-622-6622
<i>375 - 13th Avenue, Newark, NJ 07103</i>	
Our Lady of the Angels Friary	718-993-3405
<i>427 East 155 Street, Bronx, NY 10455</i>	
Sacred Heart of Jesus Friary	
<i>1003 E. Terrell Ave., Fort Worth, TX 76104</i>	
St. Crispin Friary	718-665-2441
<i>420 East 156 Street, Bronx, NY 10455</i>	
St. Felix Friary	914-476-7279
<i>15 Trinity Plaza, Yonkers, New York 10701</i>	
St. Fidelis Friary	011-44-207-474-0766
<i>Killip Close, London, E161LX, England</i>	
St. Joseph Friary	212-234-9089
<i>523 West 142 Street, New York, NY 10031</i>	
St. Leopold Friary	914-965-8143
<i>259 Nepperhan Avenue, Yonkers, NY 10701</i>	
St. Patrick Friary	
<i>Delmege Park, Moyross, Limerick City, Ireland</i>	
St. Pio Friary	011-44-1274-721-989
<i>Sedgefield Terrace, Westgate, Bradford, BD12RU, England</i>	
San Juan Diego Residence	505-764-3034
<i>820 Broadway Blvd. S.E., Albuquerque, NM 87102</i>	
Convent of Our Lady of Guadalupe	718-547-9840
<i>3537 Bainbridge Avenue, Bronx, NY 10467</i>	
Convent of San Damiano	718-829-9466
<i>1661 Haight Avenue, Bronx, NY 10461</i>	

(Kindly call between 9 AM - 5 PM and 7 PM - 9 PM)



2nd Annual JP II Study Pilgrimage to Poland & Rome
with Fr. Stan Fortuna, CFR
October 16 - 30, 2007
for info contact: Sylvia Munoz (310) 291-4465
or SylMunoz@roadrunner.com
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YOUTH 2000 Retreats - 2007

July 20 - 22Major Event - Long Island, NY
Sept. 7 - 9 Red Hook, NY
Sept. 14 - 16 McAllen, TX
Sept. 28 - 30 Ossining, NY
Oct. 5 - 7 Modesto, CA
Oct. 19 - 21 Brainerd, MN
Nov. 9 - 11 Oshkosh, WI
Nov. 16 - 18 Kailua, HI
Nov. 30 - Dec. 2 Covington, KY

For more information on Youth 2000 in the New York area, call 718-349-1157. For all other Youth 2000 Retreats, call 214-361-2581.

CFR Parish Mission Schedule - 2007

Sept. 15 - 20	Resurrection	Rye, NY
Oct. 13 - 18	Immaculate Conception	Annandale, NJ
Nov. 3 - 8	Holy Family	Fairfield, CT
Dec. 1 - 6	St. Cecilia	Monmouth Jct., NJ

For more information, contact the mission office at 973-623-3307.

ETC.

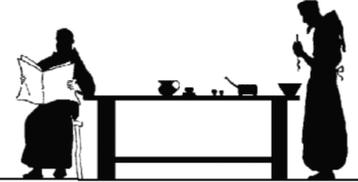
Young men and women interested in discerning their call to our way of life may contact Fr. Luke Mary Fletcher at St. Joseph Friary at 212-281-4355 or Sr. Clare Matthiass at Our Lady of Guadalupe Convent at 718-547-9840.

For Information about the life and apostolates of the friars, and upcoming CFR events including the "Catholic Underground," visit our website: www.franciscanfriars.com.

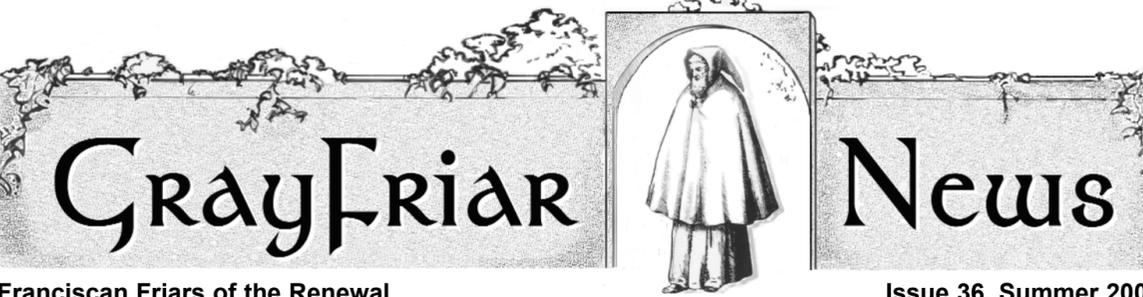
Daily inspirational messages written by the friars and sisters can be found by clicking on "eletter" from the homepage of our website: www.franciscanfriars.com.

Oratory of Divine Love: Fr. Benedict provides a weekly meditation on the internet for these meetings which are both instructional and prayerful. Visit the website at www.oratorydl.org.

...awaiting your visit!



www.franciscanfriars.com



Franciscan Friars of the Renewal

Issue 36, Summer 2007

THE LORD OF THE SMILE

By Fr. Bernard Murphy, CFR

This past December the friars in New York brought a group of friends and Associates to our mission in Honduras. The occasion was the blessing of our new outreach center for the poor in Comayagua. "Casa Guadalupe," as it is known, is an evangelization center and outreach facility for the poor in the neighborhood of the friary, San Serafin. The complex will help meet some of the material as well as spiritual needs of our less fortunate brothers and sisters.

First-time visitors to the mission are often overwhelmed by the material poverty that surrounds the friary. Everywhere one looks there are adobe huts with dirt floors, children shabbily clad in secondhand American clothes, and young mothers (and some not so young) washing their clothes on the bank of the river. Open fires burn day and night as the locals attempt to cook a meager meal of rice and tortillas or boil a little water for bathing.

On Sundays in Comayagua many of the friars visit local orphanages, one for boys and another for young girls. The facilities, which are immaculately kept, are filled to capacity with children. Young mothers, who find themselves without means to care for their little offspring, entrust them to the care of others. Older children working with younger children under the careful supervision of dedicated laborers are raised in a "family" of hundreds. No one is without, but the supplies are often quite scarce.

Some of the Associates visited a few of the many families with whom the friars work. Situated in the mountain *aldeas*, or small villages, and housed in a structure of leftover wood,

families struggle to survive. Everyone must be busy. Everyone must work. Every member of the family has his or her role to play for the survival of all. Some will tend to the coffee-bean grove. Others collect potable water from the distant streams. Some are assigned to care for the few chickens and, if they are lucky, the goat. No one takes care of the innumerable dogs; they seem to take care of themselves.



Fr. Bernard Murphy, our Community Servant, witnessed the contagious joy of children in Honduras, as his article explains.

"I can't believe it. I really can't believe it!" This constant refrain could be heard from our guests from the States throughout their eight-day excursion to Central America. Whether it was during the long and winding road trip from Tegucigalpa airport, or the mountainous treks to the outer villages; whether it was in the midst of the overactivity of preparing the Casa for its festivities, or the hyperactivity of children at play in the orphanages, the same cry was heard.

But this refrain was not for the spectacular beauty of the Honduran countryside, nor was it given for the task of preparing a construction site (Casa Guadalupe) for its Solemn Blessing by the local Ordinary. The expressions of disbelief, moreover, were not even a response to the unspeakable poverty of so many. Rather, the guests were reacting to the overwhelming joy on the faces of so many, especially the young. Everywhere our little entourage moved, hordes of young faces, along with wizened old men and women, smiled from ear to ear. Toothless grins and half hidden childish smirks greeted the American guests at every moment. Despite the overwhelming poverty and almost crushing hardships of life, the people are joyful, really joyful!

(continued in center)



The Friars and Sisters were blessed by a recent visit by the preacher of the papal household, Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa. Fr. Raniero continues a long tradition of Capuchins preaching to the pope and his curia, during retreats and at other times, during all of John Paul II's papacy and under our current Holy Father, Benedict XVI. He gave us an inspiring talk in the Bronx on the subject of prayer. He also appeared as a guest on Fr. Benedict's weekly Sunday program for EWTN. Fr. Raniero has his own weekly program in Italy on Saturday evenings, watched by millions of viewers, and has written many books translated into English. His visit was significant for us also because of the connection with our Capuchin roots and our affection for the Holy Father in Rome. This photo shows Fr. Benedict (left) and Fr. Raniero exchanging blessings after his talk at St. Adalbert's Church in the Bronx.



This year yielded the largest harvest yet of CFR friars ordained to the priesthood. Seven "hoods" were equally balanced by seven "men in black," their classmates at St. Joseph Seminary in Yonkers, ordained for the Archdiocese of New York. This photo shows all 14 newly ordained at the liturgy at St. Patrick's Cathedral. These new priests forever are (l-r) Fr. Louis Joseph Cottolengo Anderson; Fr. Gilberto Francisco Angel-Neri; Fr. Gabriel Mary Bakkar, CFR; Fr. Justin Francis Cinnante; Fr. Augustine Mary Conner, CFR; Fr. Douglas John Crawford; Fr. Brendan Thomas Gormley; Fr. Pio Maria Hoffmann, CFR; Fr. Kevin Peter Malick; Fr. Emmanuel Mary Mansford, CFR; Fr. Lawrence Joseph Schroedel, CFR; Fr. Jean-Paul Dominic Savio Soler; Fr. Juan Diego Sutherland, CFR; Fr. Paulus Maria Tautz, CFR.



Such smiling faces may seem incongruous with a crown of thorns, unless one understands that the occasion was the final profession of vows of Sr. Francis Teresa O'Donnell (left). At first vows the Sisters receive a crown of flowers. At final vows they receive a crown of thorns and a ring symbolizing their spousal relationship with Christ, the Bridegroom of the Church, who gave His life for His bride. The reality of the Cross doesn't remove the joy and freedom that comes from a generous gift of oneself to the Lord. St. Francis of Assisi spoke of perfect joy only coming from love and solidarity with the Crucified Christ. Sr. Lucille Cutrone (right), the founding member and Community Servant of the CFR Sisters, evidently shares in that joy.



Looking joyfully themselves is this gang of ten who recently made their first profession of vows. They are: (top row, l-r) Br. Gabriel Joseph Kyte, Br. Felice Maria Gavazzzi, Br. Paolo Maria Kim, Br. Justin Jesusmarie Alarcón; (center row) Br. Juanmaria Arroyo-Acevedo (standing at left), Br. Stephen Joseph Long, Br. Barnabas Joseph Leonard, Br. Nicholas Maria White, Br. John-Mary Johannsen; and (seated in front) Br. Ignatius Mary Shin. These capable young friars testify that God is still calling young people to make a generous gift of themselves in poverty, chastity, and obedience.



Br. Crispin Rinaldi, along with most of the CFR Friars and Sisters, invited our neighbors to join in our celebration of Palm Sunday in the South Bronx. This annual outdoor procession at the beginning of Holy Week is a favorite of many Friars, Sisters, and Associates because of the diverse mix of people who are proclaiming the Gospel together in the street with music and loud cries of "Hosanna!" It is a great opportunity to proclaim the kingship of Christ and the salvation which people of all ages and backgrounds are longing for. There are a number of young people in the South Bronx who have grown up with "the hoods in the hood," and who now come to a weekly Holy Hour just to pray with the Friars.



The Franciscan Friars of the Renewal were privileged and grateful for a Mass and visit at St. Crispin Friary by Edward Cardinal Egan, Archbishop of New York, to celebrate the 20th anniversary of our Community. The Friars recalled with much gratitude all those who have helped us along the way, including our Associates and many friends among the clergy, other religious and faithful laity. Cardinal Egan has been a great support to us, as was his predecessor, John Cardinal O'Connor, under whom our community began in April, 1987.



This photo shows the occasion Fr. Bernard writes of in his article, the blessing of the Casa Guadalupe by Bishop Camilleri of Comayagua, Honduras (third from left). The others with him are (l-r) Fr. John Anthony Boughton, the Local Servant at St. Serafin Friary; Fr. Bernard, Community Servant; Fr. Herald Brock, who initiated and oversaw the construction of Casa Guadalupe; Fr. Brian Eilers, a friend from Texas; and Fr. Christopher Metzger, who directs the Lay Associates in the Bronx. This multi-purpose facility features an easily expandable chapel area for large and small retreats, accommodations for visiting retreatants and volunteers, laundry and shower facilities for neighbors who would otherwise have to use the nearby stream, and meeting rooms and recreational areas for the youth program. Our Casa is not just your Casa; it is evidently everyone's Casa.



Regular recipients of the Grayfriar News will notice that the list of friaries and convents on the back page continues to grow. This summer the friars will open St. Patrick Friary in Limerick, Ireland and Sacred Heart Friary in Fort Worth, Texas. The friars in this photo received the customary "Mission Cross" for those who are assigned overseas. They are (l-r) Fr. Augustine Conner (England), Fr. Emmanuel Mansford (England), Fr. Juan Diego Sutherland (Honduras), Br. Dominic Bormans (England), and Fr. Paulus Tautz (Ireland). Br. Seraphim Roycourt, not pictured here, is also being sent to Limerick, along with three friars who are currently living in England. Four friar pioneers will begin the friary in Fort Worth. In our time it is difficult to say which countries are more "mission lands" in terms of preaching the Gospel, but no matter where it is, a new friary means many challenges and many graces.



Providing food for the poor is a normal part of life at every CFR friary or convent, by way of soup kitchens, homeless shelters, or provisions of groceries or sandwiches at the door. There is something universal about this way of sharing the Lord's generosity to us. In this photo, Br. Felice Gavazzzi (right) from Australia, and Br. Emmanuel Baku, a Volta Friar from Ghana, assist one of our "abuelas" at St. Crispin Friary in the Bronx. Although benefactors seem especially mindful of donating food during the holidays, these food distributions in all of their forms continue throughout the year. The Friars and Sisters also gratefully receive their food directly from benefactors. Whether in giving or receiving, one joyful truth is clear - God is never outdone in generosity!