

Volume 32 ❖ Number 10 ❖ October 2018
Official Newsletter of Our Lady of Guadalupe Province, Order of Friars Minor, Albuquerque NM
Bruce Michalek, ofm ❖ Editor Pro-tem ❖ bruceofm@aol.com

Juntos Como Hermanos 2018

— Ed Shea OFM (SHP)

From September 17th-20th Friars from 6 of the 7 US Provinces gathered together in Washington DC for the 6th Annual “Juntos Como Hermanos gathering”. With special thanks to Edgardo (“Lalo”) Jara and the other Friars from the Holy Name Province and the Inter-Provincial Postulancy House, we had another fruitful and inspiring fraternal experience.



Lay Collaboration in the Ministry of the Church

Part One

The “*theme*” for this year was the importance of working with the laity and to that end we had some input from Carmen Nanko Fernandez who has had years of experience working and teaching in the Church, most recently for many years at CTU in Chicago. Carmen challenged us,

especially in light of the renewed clergy abuse scandal, to be rigorously honest about naming the reality in which we find ourselves and to not be afraid to move forward together “*latinamente*.”



She spoke to us about the history and development of the 2005 document called “*Co-Workers in the Vineyard*” which tries to address the question of cooperation and collaboration of laity in the Church, especially dealing with issues of the hierarchy and power struggles which still exist. Carmen suggests three “*movements*” that have happened in this regard:

P Laity as “Object” of Ministry — when laity were encouraged to basically “*pray, pay and obey*” and there was really no sense of accompaniment on the

part of the clerics who served them. At the same time, there was a sense of the “*Priesthood of the Faithful*” that was already taking shape as people found ways to pray that didn’t need clergy to be leaders, e.g., rosary devotions.

P Laity “in” Ministry — the idea that lay people have a key role to play in their own “*world*” of the law office or the hospital or the bakery or the factory. The focus here is on the secular world. With Vatican II came the development of the laity as “*full, active participants*” in the ministry of the Church. This eventually led to the notion of LEM (“*Lay Ecclesial Ministers*”) working alongside the clergy. Especially among Hispanics however, there has been (and still is) a deep sense of people being under-representation, under-studied and not really welcomed as co-workers. At the same time, there were various local grass-roots movements that started and have continued under the direction of lay people, e.g., Cursillo,

Jornadas, Encuentro, etc.

P With Laity in Mission

— a developing sense of shared stewardship along with a sense of lessons that we can and are still learning, e.g., being intentional, understanding particular contexts, “*acompañamiento*”, OFM itinerancy, popular piety, “*conjunto*” (not speaking for them), etc.



Carmen concluded her reflections by suggesting that perhaps we could use a new metaphor when we speak of our co-ministry, that of “*Fiesta*”, which includes the need for various “*Padrinos*” to take care of different aspects of our work together. Lay Collaboration in the Ministry of the Church

Part Two

After the more academic approach of Carmen Nanko Fernandez, we heard from Gino Correa OFM about a more pastoral approach to this question of working with the laity, especially in light of our recent vote to become one national province. Quoting our General Minister Michael Perry OFM, Gino encouraged us to allow God to renew us as individuals and as a province, to re-ignite the fire, to seek a “*New Jerusalem*”, etc. Gino also challenged us to be aware of the choice between “*engagement*” and “*disengagement*” and called us to a new “*metanoia*”, to go “*beyond the mind.*”



Seven Priorities of the 2018 Plenary Council

Gino next presented us with the results of the recent Plenary Council which took place in Africa this year. Looking at these seven priorities, we spent some time beginning to apply them to our own context of Friars in Hispanic Ministry. It really was the beginning of a much longer conversation, but here are some of the reflections:

1. Global Crisis of migrants and refugees — our response and responsibility as lesser brothers and men of the Gospel — this should be our #1 priority, touches the roots of our Order — we need to unify our voices on this issue, not only here in the United States but also with people in Mexico and Central America



— we need to move beyond words to actions

— awareness of this issue needs to happen at the level of formation

— we can financially support his work more

2. The lived reality of youth in the Church and the World. The shaping of a Franciscan culture of hospitality.

— this should be a priority, but working with young people is a

challenge

— need to focus on second and third generation of Latinos, who often don't speak Spanish.

— create “*encuentro*” experiences for young people, even outside of “*Church*” settings, go to where they are and don't wait for them to come to us

3. Becoming Fraternities in Mission. Promoting an ecclesiology of inclusiveness, especially as it relates to the relationship between our lay and clerical brethren.

— elect lay brothers as Provincials/Vicars and see what happens

- be a model of equality and justice among ourselves as Friars
- include our lay brothers in more ministries
- as we move toward becoming one province, we should take on a poor, inner-city, bi-lingual mission — where we've never been before — perhaps in the city where the new provincial motherhouse will be.

4. Evangelization in the Spirit of Laudato Si. Developing a new ecological vision with a fraternal lifestyle to back it up.

- start this in our own houses first, or re-start it
- simplicity of life is key
- there really is as sense of urgency here

5. Being Franciscan in a world of constant change and transformation. To be engaged and to make the changes we need to make. — call to a new discernment, to go beyond our comfort zones

- look for people who really need us, get rid of “sacred cows”
- this priority really speaks to all the rest, needs the most emphasis

6. Being visible signs and instruments of peace in the face of contemporary violence in the midst of all that divides and disfigures us.

- work with victims of domestic violence, also with gangs
- fundamental Franciscan work of reconciliation, instruments of peace
- this can be applied to all of the priorities

7. Embracing the vision of Pope Francis for a renewed understanding of religious life grounded in authentic discipleship and mission.

- really a call to transparency and authenticity in our Franciscan life
- always involves risks and dangers
- call to be baptized people of God, i.e., authentic disciples
- need to develop a pastoral plan according to our reality



Check-In

The last part of our meeting was dedicated to a kind of “check-in” in terms of what is happening in each of our provinces as well as what we might see as some future possibilities. We spent some time sharing our realities and dreaming of some possibilities. What is clear is that there is plenty of very good and creative work being done by many friars in the area of Hispanic Ministry, only some of which is represented here in our gatherings. It is our hope to be part of the future discernment on the level of the US Provincials, especially the “US 6” as we move toward becoming one province. We would like to be pro-active in this conversation.

In that regard, for our meeting next year we would like to invite one or more provincials to be present with us as we look to our future with hope. We will also try to engage Dominic Perry to help us in this process, as he has already been involved with friars for some time. In preparation for that, a representative of each province will send a “picture of Hispanic Ministry of the Province” to Efrén Quintero OFM (our convener).

Next Gathering — October 14-17, 2019

We will gather again next year, from October 14-17, *at one of the retreat houses of the St. Barbara Province.*

Fraternal Visit to Mexico

— Gerry Steinmetz, OFM

Jorge Hernandez and Gerry Steinmetz went to visit the Casa Migrante 72 from September 5th till 17th in Tenosique, Mexico. They encountered over 350 migrants mostly from Honduras. The men, women and children, *(many of them unaccompanied teens)* walked sometimes 3 days arriving with blisters on their feet which Jorge learned to treat when they arrived. Dr.



Hernandez worked also with other medical needs and clothing which sometimes was available. Gerry stayed 5 days and together met Fray Tomas and his latest project of 23 Hectares for a ecological farm as a response to *Pope Francis and his Laudato Si encyclical* on the care for our common home of *Mother Earth*.

We also met the other Friars and post novitiate Friars. Gerry then traveled on to Izamal and visited with a group of Poor Clare nuns who were building their new monastery slowly and prayerfully. They sleep in hammocks in a community room and are joyful and



they very much enjoyed our visit. Jorge then traveled to visit his Priest brother working with native people in a jungle setting. We heard many stories of WHY people are migrating to Mexico and hopefully to the USA to find asylum and protection from violence and deaths. It was a deeply emotional experience and Franciscan ministry connection.

50th Jubilee Celebration with Cloistered Dominican Nuns



Bruce Michalek, OFM recently traveled to Farmington Hills MI to celebrate his Golden Jubilee of Profession with Sr Mary Thomas, OP who is his sister. She is third from the left in the picture.



Gordon Boykin, OFM with family members and Secular Franciscans.

Congratulations to All of the Jubilarians!



Our Lady of Guadalupe Province honors the gifts that the friars have brought through their lives and ministries to the other friars of the Province and the people of God. The friars commemorating anniversaries of their religious life are:

Emeric Nordmeyer OFM – 70 Years of Profession
Paul Juniet OFM – 60 Years of Profession
Lawrence Bernard OFM – 60 Years of Profession
Gordon Boykin OFM – 50 Years of Profession
George Ward OFM – 50 Years of Profession
Bruce Michalek OFM – 50 Years of Profession
Congratulations to our brothers!

Into Our Tradition

A monthly Reflection from Our Franciscan Heritage #27 • October 2018

— Jack Clark-Robinson, ofm —



As I was preparing a short homily for the Feast of Francis, I realized that at this point in my life, I do not have as much to say about Francis as I have a desire to hear Francis, to recall, to be renewed, to be refreshed by what Francis has to say to us and to me. So I went back to one of my favorite little pieces by Francis, the Testament Written in Sienna, which he did not actually write, but dictated. It was about six months before Francis was to die in Assisi, while he was critically ill in Siena, that the friars asked Francis for some final advice. No one knew that he would be able to return to Assisi and write the longer Testament there with which we are more familiar. But according to the notes in the Armstrong/Brady Francis and Clare: The Complete Works (Paulist Press, 1982, page 164) The Legend of Perugia records Francis saying the following:

Write that I bless all my brothers, [those] who are in the Order, and [those] who will come until the end of the world. ... Since because of my weakness and the pain of my sickness I am not strong enough to speak, I make known my will to my brothers briefly in these three phrases, namely: as a sign that they remember my blessing and my testament, let them always love one another, let them always love and be faithful to our Lady Holy Poverty, and let them always be faithful and subject to the prelates and all clerics of Holy Mother Church.

If we listen, Francis is still giving us his vision of how we are to follow the inspiration that led him to such holiness of life and such an impact on the world around him.

First, “love one another,” in other words Francis recalls the oft repeated words of Christ whose commandment was to love one another, and whose greatest commandment, after love of God, which Francis will also echo, came the commandment to love your neighbor as yourself. Second, Francis told his brothers “be faithful to our Lady Holy Poverty.” In other words, live a life without appropriation and without accumulation, be humble, be lesser ones going through the world. And third, go through the world as a Catholic, “be faithful and subject to the prelates and all clerics of Holy Mother Church.” For it is the prelates and clerics who bring us the fullness of the Sacraments, clerics who at their best incline us toward God and who, even at their worst, provide a direct means of touching God in the flesh. Those three phrases can almost be summed up in one phrase, be friars (brother) minor (without appropriation, poor) faithful and subject to the very human Church (prelates and clerics).

We live in a time when the very human aspect of the Church and its human leadership can almost lead us to doubt and despair, but Francis lived in such times as well. He was a reformer of a Church which had grown rich at the top while poorly serving those at the bottom. The Church of his time, as well as in ours, seemed all too often to be about the appearance of perfection, rather than attaining the perfection found in love. Francis saw through pretense and posturing to know that the Reign of God is built not on power structures, but on loving relationships. To seek to attain perfection requires a desire for relationships of love. The friars

and every Christian is first of all related to God as Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifying Spirit, relationships of love as close as the best of mothers and fathers and spouses, all terms that Francis used to describe our relationship with God. Those relationships subsume power in love, so that we may do for love alone what we know God wants us to do. If we remember our call to do what is right with regard to all of our sisters and brothers: the great and the small, the powerful and the weak, human beings, creatures and Mother Earth herself, then we will remember the blessing of Francis and his legacy, his testament. We can make great sacrifices to do what is right because of love; sacrifices that we would not otherwise make. Fear of God, fear of power of any sort leads us to do the minimum that we can in order to get by. Love for each other and love for the God Who has made each of us leads us to do great things, not minimal or half-hearted things.

Arrogance never attracts anyone and never inspires. Humility both inspires and attracts others. It is a sin to boast of poverty, as much as it is a sin to boast of wealth or power. The love of our Lady Holy Poverty opens our hearts to see that God alone is the giver of the gifts that I have to share with others. Francis mentioned once that the only thing which we take with us when we die are our sins. That can be a frightening thought, until we realize that in the embrace of God's love once we die, those sins will be obliterated. They will be gone from history and from eternity forever, if we humbly seek and accept God's forgiveness, if we embrace and hold on to our own poverty, our own powerlessness. Taking our sins with us when we die is a means of getting them out of the world, out of the way of others, of transforming them so that they will not be transmitted to another generation. But the only way that we can take them with us is by acknowledging them, not arrogantly hiding them behind pride and the appearance of perfection. To open ourselves to the scrutiny of others, so that they can see us warts and all, requires great trust --- and great love. In that love, in the gifts of love that we give to others during this lifetime are found the things that we leave behind. We cannot take our acts of kindness, our acts of charity, or even our acts of courage with us. They only become acts of kindness, charity and courage when we give them away.

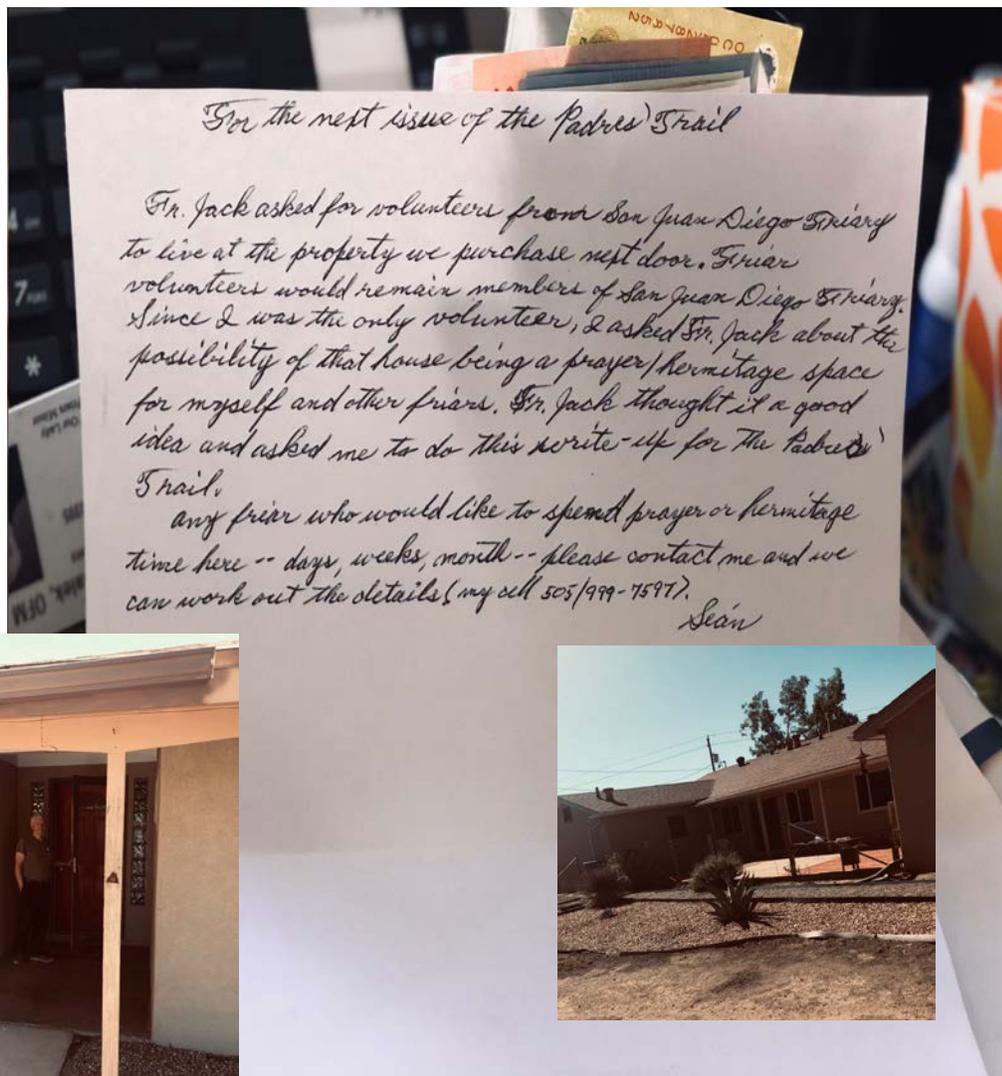
“Let them always love one another.” What Francis had to say has come full circle. Francis called us first, last and always to love one another as brothers, and as brothers to love others as sisters, too. Friars Minor in the Church – always brothers first, humbly second, and always in the Church. Francis still has so very much to say to us!

Welcome Home . . .



Diego Mazon, OFM and Larry Schreiber, OFM are both very happy to be back home in our Franciscan *Casa San Juan Diego Friary* in Albuquerque NM. They were recently transferred from the Felician Sisters facility in Rio Rancho NM.





Feast of St. Francis, 2018

Dear Brothers,

In Chapter XVI of his *First Life of Saint Francis*, Thomas of Celano wrote that Francis had one brother confront the Emperor with a reminder that earthly glory is transitory, while the other brothers and Francis avoided the allure of worldly power and remained in prayer in a hut by the road as the Emperor passed by.

Upon his return from Damietta, Francis himself wrote *A Letter to the Rulers of Peoples* entreating them to put prayer and attention to the God's commandments at the heart of all that they do.

Prophecy and prayer marked the beginning of our Franciscan movement. Prayer and the prophetic telling forth of God's truth remain at the heart of our proclamation of the Gospel we profess.

The attached "Franciscan Plea for the Soul of America," on the part of your Ministers, attempts to continue our eight hundred year tradition of proclaiming the Gospel. We ask you to reflect upon it and to share it widely as a means of marking the Feast of St. Francis this year, and we pray that you will be truly blessed in your celebration of the Feast and in your living of the Gospel.

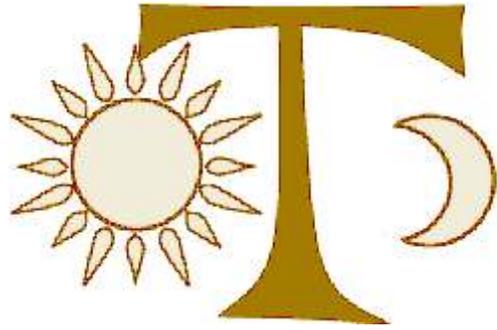
Fraternally,

(Collectively signed by the Ministers Provincial of the six OFM USA Provinces)

David Gaa, O.F.M. — St Barbara Province; James Gannon, O.F.M. — ABVM Province;

Kevin Mullen, O.F.M. — Holy Name Province; Thomas Nairn, O.F.M. — Sacred Heart Province;

Jack Clark Robinson, O.F.M. — OLG Province; and Mark Soehner, O.F.M. — St. John the Baptist Province



Franciscan Plea for the Soul of America

The Franciscan Friars (OFM) of the U.S. On the Feast of St. Francis, October 4, 2018

Justice for the poor, respectful care for the environment and courageous peacemaking have been the hallmarks of the Franciscan Movement since its beginning 800 years ago.



St. Francis of Assisi freely chose to live a radically simple lifestyle among and with the poor; called himself a brother to all creatures and to the earth itself; and crossed religious and cultural frontiers to dialogue with a Muslim leader in an attempt to prevent another bloody war. St. Francis rejected the societal-economic shift of his time that valued financial success over human dignity.

Today these values continue to inspire and guide Franciscans. They also inspire millions of people in the U.S. and beyond—people of faith and other people of good will. They demand action in promoting a consistent ethic of life that embodies a Common Good built on the foundation of full respect for all stages and types of life, and without a false ranking of these stages of life.

The current direction of the United States is diametrically opposed to these values. Impoverished people are dismissed from our public discourse. People of color continue to experience a system of racial oppression. Refugees seeking haven in this country are refused a fair hearing, are separated from their children, and are confined in jails or cages before being sent away. Modest steps to heal our suffering planet

are dismissed or undercut by short-sighted public policies. The warnings of science regarding air, land and water, and the very survival of humans as part of the earth community are ignored. And constant belligerent rhetoric, including threats of nuclear devastation, issue forth from current U.S. American politicians.

Equally ominous is the gradual but purposeful dismantling of U.S. political values. Freedom of speech and an independent media are vilified; judicial processes are ridiculed; and respectful public discourse is a lost art. Some public leaders would rather provoke outrage than provide accurate information. It is more common to dehumanize, demonize and marginalize the most vulnerable of our world rather than to address difficult and complex issues. A seemingly-successful economy for some people is perched on the vast and growing disparity of wealth in the U.S. and wider world, and on total disregard for ecological sustainability. We are witnessing an untenable situation where all political sides find it impossible to dialogue with civility, reach workable compromise and move a public agenda forward to address the challenges of our day. For the Common Good to be realized, change is needed across the political spectrum.

As Franciscan friars living and working in the United States at this moment in history, we feel obliged to reject—and to speak out loudly and clearly against—all such policies and practices that so flagrantly violate our Franciscan values and the basic principles of Catholic social teaching. We feel compelled to live out our Franciscan charism of repentance in response to the profoundly unjust and destructive public policies our country is adopting. This will require soul searching and the contemplative discomfort that leads to transformative action. We, who love the United States of America, must act against an all-encompassing threat to the very soul of our beloved country. We will increase our work for justice in the public arena, including in the electoral process, clearly setting ourselves at the side of those who are excluded—namely, immigrants, women, people of color, the earth community and impoverished people—and supporting their full engagement in the public discourse.

We pledge anew to live the Gospel boldly, so as to ensure public and private respect for the dignity of every person and the integrity of creation. In the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi, where there is hatred, we will attempt to sow love; where there is injury, healing, where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is injustice, reform; and where there is sadness, joy.

And the Lord Gave Me Brothers . . .

2019 Inter-Provincial Retreat

January 14-18, 2019 Scottsdale AZ

February 04-08, 2019 Winter Park FL

Franciscan Renewal Center ❖ San Pedro Retreat Center

These retreats are jointly sponsored by the USA OFM Franciscan Retreat Committee.

Friars from any OFM province are welcome to attend.

Call Bruce Michalek, OFM AT (505) 980-9409 if you need another registration form.

Jack's Journeys

- October** 06-13 US6/ESC Ministers — hosted by Sacred Heart Province
15-16 Regional Meetings (SMM/ABQ)
21-24 Canadian Chapter of Union, Edmonton, Alberta CANADA
25-28 Academy of American Franciscan History, St Augustine
29-30 Definitorium Meeting
-



Miguel Alcantar October 24

Joe Nelson November 2

Gino Correa November 5

Paul O'Brien November 7

Andres Hernandez November 10

Gerald Grantner November 11

Erasmus Romero November 12

Diego Mazon November 20

Perhaps a “Conversion” in the Making ? . . .



Michael Demkovich, OP honored us with his presence at our St Francis Feast Day meal at the Provincial House in Albuquerque NM. He is a friend of Bruce’s as well as his sister, *Sr Mary Thomas, OP* who is a Cloistered Dominican Nun in Farmington Hills MI. Michael is currently serving the Archdiocese of Santa Fe as it’s resident Theologian.

