



# Provincial PORTER

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## 54 Years of Capuchin Presence

# Shepherd Reflects on Mission Activity in Papua New Guinea

by Bishop Steve Reichert, O.F.M.Cap. – Bishop of Mendi, Papua New Guinea

From the beginning, missionary work has been an important ministry and charism of the Franciscan family. The example was set by St. Francis of Assisi himself. Franciscans went forth in all directions during St. Francis' lifetime and Francis himself made multiple missionary journeys. One of the 12 chapters of his *Rule of Life* is specifically devoted to the work of missionaries.



In 2005, Capuchin Bishop of Mendi Steve Reichert and Huli tribesmen and women celebrated the 50th Jubilee of the coming of the first Catholic missionaries to the Southern Highlands of Papua New Guinea.

The Capuchin mission of evangelization in the Southern Highlands of Papua New Guinea (PNG) began in February 1955 when Capuchin Fr. Victor Green, Provincial Minister of the St. Augustine Province based in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, accepted an urgent request by the Church to send friars into this newly opened mission field. By that November, six friars had been sent to the mountainous region inhabited by people who had, only a few years before, come into contact with the outside world for the first time.

Much has happened since the original six Capuchin missionaries set foot on Papua New Guinean soil. Today the

Capuchin Mission of Mendi has become the Diocese of Mendi, a local church established in 1966 and guided for over 30 years by Bishop Firmin Schmidt of our own Province of Mid-America. Bishop Firmin retired in 1995 and was succeeded by myself. The Capuchin presence in PNG has grown and spread to various centers over the years and is known today as the Vice Province of St. Michael the Archangel, with many local friars who already outnumber the missionary friars from overseas. The Diocese of Mendi has four Papua New Guinean diocesan priests and two deacons who will be ordained later this year. The number of native Capuchin priests stands at three, with both the Order and the Diocese blessed with a good number of seminarians.

Bishop Firmin founded a diocesan congregation of religious women more than 30 years ago, the Franciscan Sisters of Mary (FSM), which today has about 30 members. The great contribution made by congregations of religious women in the PNG mission, some of which are Franciscan, such as the Order of St. Francis of Oldenburg (Indiana) and the Franciscan Sisters of Divine Providence of Baldegg (Switzerland), is a wonderful story, but too long to include here.



Taken in PNG in 1993, Fr. Peter Meis, Bishop Firmin Schmidt, Fr. Charles Polifka and Fr. Malachy McBride of the Capuchin Province of Mid-America share a smile for the camera. Fr. Peter still works in PNG, Fr. Charles is the Province's current Provincial Minister and Bishop Firmin and Fr. Malachy have joined the Province's Eternity Fraternity.

Including myself, three friars of the Province of Mid-America still work in PNG. Fr. Don Debes and Fr. Peter Meis are parish priests performing

traditional missionary pastoral work, basic evangelization and building the faith of the Church in their pastoral areas – St. Conrad Parish in Pureni and St. Felix Parish in Pangia. In addition to being a Capuchin parish, Pangia is the site of the novitiate programs of the Capuchin friars and the FSM.

Frs. Peter and Don work hard to encourage the local laity to play a keen role in the Christian community as witnesses of Jesus Christ and His Good News to the world. Unlike the Church in most non-missionary dioceses of the world, parishes in PNG are groupings of communities that consist of a main center with many satellite outstations or village church communities. Fr. Peter cares for 12 of these communities and Fr. Don shepherds 15. Additionally, both men have been instrumental in training new missionaries as well as diocesan and religious priests from the United States, Poland, India and Korea.

Often missionaries, local clergy and religious in PNG do not have an established group or organization, or a ready-made



Fr. Matthew Gross in 1970 with the local people of Komo, a town in PNG. Fr. Matthew served many parishes during his 28 years in PNG.

solution to help address needs within the local communities. To assist, Fr. Don is involved in HIV/AIDS ministry where he lives. He personally counsels, tests, supplies medication and walks with people living with the virus. Within his parish, Fr. Peter oversees a large Catholic primary school and several clinics. Imagination, initiative, flexibility and an ability to inspire teamwork is required to work in the missions of PNG! This daily challenge makes mission life interesting.

Capuchins in PNG, whether from the United States, India, England or homegrown in PNG, are also engaged in ministries other than traditional missionary evangelization. Building and strengthening the Church and the Capuchin Order are important works that require excellent formation programs. The Capuchins direct St. Fidelis Seminary in Madang where Capuchin candidates and diocesan seminarians prepare for entrance into philosophy studies.

Capuchin priests and brothers also work at Capuchin Franciscan College in Port Moresby, the capital city of PNG. Capuchin College is one of many religious houses situated on the campus of the Catholic Theological Institute and Holy Spirit Seminary, where both religious and diocesan seminarians complete philosophy and theology studies in preparation for ordination to the priesthood. Almost from its beginning, Capuchin professors have taught at this regional major seminary.

Capuchin lay brothers are essential in the effort to establish the Church and the Order in a mission territory. They

offer a variety of gifts and skills for the benefit of the Church and community as they work side-by-side with their priest brothers. Lay brothers bring the example of their Capuchin religious life, but also their pastoral skills in catechetics, youth ministry, and caring for and counseling drug addicts, people living with HIV/AIDS and other marginalized persons. The practical skills of lay brothers in fields such as carpentry, mechanics, plumbing, welding, transportation, cooking, and tailoring are utilized in collaboration with local lay people to build and maintain the necessary infrastructure of a mission, its churches, community centers, schools and health facilities. Some lay brothers also contribute to the expansion of the Order by contributing to the formation of members. The services and time offered by Capuchin lay brothers has been invaluable to the growth and success of the PNG mission.

Lay missionaries from mission organizations located in various countries have also made great contributions to the mission effort in PNG. In recent years, volunteers from Capuchin Corps of the St. Augustine Province have assisted the Capuchin friars at St. Fidelis Seminary, and, a year ago, Capuchin Corps sent two lay men to work in the Diocese of Mendi at St. Joseph Secondary School in Tari.

The Capuchin Order in PNG hosts its spiritual formation programs at several places throughout the country. Of course, many Capuchin friars in PNG, both brothers and priests, are involved in the promotion and recruitment of vocations as well as in the various formation programs. Although there are ups and downs along the way, the Order is witnessing growth in the Vice Province. Nevertheless, there is still a great need for foreign Capuchin missionaries.

Perhaps one day a few more friars from the Mid-America Province will be inspired to serve in the PNG mission. Even if a missionary's commitment to leave home and serve people of another, faraway culture is only for a few years, such an experience benefits not only the Church and Order in PNG, but also the missionary himself, the Province of Mid-America, and the Church to which he returns.



In 2007, Fr. Myron Flax returned to PNG for the ordination of Neil Blue, O.F.M.Cap. and to visit longtime friends and parishioners. Fr. Myron spent 39 years as a missionary in PNG.

# Farewell to Mexico - A Reflection

by Fr. Bill Kraus, O.F.M.Cap.

## Paz y Bien.

“Brother Porter” asked me to write something about my 11 years in Mexico. I’m happy to do so, and will reflect on my mission experience by expressing four-fold thanks.

**THANKS BE TO GOD.** After 30 good and full years as a Capuchin in Mid-America, I was gifted with the missionary call, and God led me on an unexpected path to Mexico. When I received my mission cross at the Provincial Chapter meeting in 1998, I hoped to go to Cuba, but that door was closed thanks to strained political relations between the United States and Cuba. So, I went

*“The spirit of St. Francis lives in the words and actions of our brother, Bill! Whether he was ministering to people in remote ‘ranchitos’ of the Sierra Madre or to friars-in-formation in Monterrey, he was truly an ‘instrument of the Lord’s peace!’.”*

Fr. Matthew Elshoff, O.F.M.Cap.  
Provincial Minister, Our Lady of the Angels Province, California

to Mexico instead, never having visited the mission. Eleven years later, Abraham continues to be a guide and I am deeply grateful for God’s wisdom and blessings in my missionary vocation and life.

**THANKS TO MY PROVINCES.** I felt truly sent to Mexico by Fr. David Gottschalk, my Provincial Minister, and by my Mid-American brothers. It was our mission, not just my mission, and the Provincial Ministers that followed – Frs. Michael Scully and Charles Polifka – encouraged and supported me fully in my life and ministry. The California Province was most kind and gracious in receiving me and providing me with all I needed in northern Mexico. Capuchin collaboration and the solidarity of personnel in the Order rewarded me richly as a son of Mid-America and an adopted son of California. Thanks, brothers.



**THANKS TO MY FELLOW MISSIONARIES.** A wonderful group of brothers share the mission: from California, Mid-America, New Jersey, Brazil and India! They taught me, corrected me, consoled me. We trudged mountain roads

together, built chapels together, preached, baptized and celebrated Eucharist together, wrote strategic plans and formation plans together, laughed, cried and prayed together. Their faith, generosity and patient confidence in God encouraged and strengthened me in moments of weakness and darkness.

**THANKS TO MY MEXICAN CAPUCHIN BROTHERS.** The majority of my missionary work in Mexico was in “formation,” that is educating and accompanying the young Mexican men who were joining the Order and future Province there. I truly enjoyed my ministry of formation, and the ongoing conversion and formation the brothers provided for me. These brothers were in many ways my teachers, not only in language



In Tres Ojitos and other Mexican towns, missionary Fr. Bill Kraus celebrated the sacraments and special occasions with the local people for 11 years. Above, Fr. Bill hears confession and blesses a man on retreat. At left, Fr. Bill with one of the many boys and girls he baptized during his time in Mexico.

and culture but also in dimensions of the Catholic faith and Franciscan life that are very different from our experience in the United States.

Of the many gifts and blessings I have received from my Mexican brothers and sisters, I’d like to highlight three: the popular religiosity and public expression of faith and prayer; the hospitality that shares home (mi casa es tu casa) and food and time with others, even in the midst of other plans and responsibilities; the affectivity of human relations, where a tender touch and warm embrace are daily expressions of family, friendship and fraternity.

As you read these words of thanksgiving, I sincerely ask your prayers for two intentions: for the Mexican people and our Mexican Capuchin brothers at this very difficult and violent time in their history, their society and their Church. And, for myself in my new ministry with the postulants in Denver, Colorado, that I can live and share our Capuchin life, enriched by many cultures and experiences, for the good and growth of these young men in formation for our Province.

Un abrazo y una oración para todos.

# Missionary Malachy McBride Made Many Memories

by Fr. Blaine Burkey, O.F.M.Cap.

Recently at supper at St. Francis Friary in Denver, missionary Bishop Steve Reichert of the Diocese of Mendi in Papua New Guinea (PNG) mentioned that the hospital in Tari, a heavily populated area of his diocese, had closed. Had tribal fighting closed the hospital? Or, lack of personnel? “Neither,” the Bishop said, “the hospital closed because it had no medicine!” Thoughts immediately turned to Fr. Malachy McBride, who sent many shipments of donated medicines to PNG after returning to the United States following his decades of mission service. Fr. Malachy’s shipments were not enough to operate a hospital, but they were a huge expression of the missionary spirit which he took with him to heaven. The shortage of medicine is just one way in which Malachy is remembered.

In May, Queen of Peace Catholic Church in Aurora, Colorado, where Malachy served as parochial vicar from 1995-2009, had a Year’s Mind Mass to remember Malachy – and they surely remembered him. The huge church was filled with parishioners and friends, each of whom had reason to remember Malachy. Very few people have so many come to their funeral, but this throng was reassembled a full year later. The service that night lasted for several hours as their pastor, Fr. Marty Lally, asked if anyone wished to share a memory – the response was overpowering!

Malachy completed his training for the priesthood in 1963 and spent the next 31 years performing heroic work in sev-



In Papua New Guinea, basic evangelization ministry was needed in order to teach the sacraments to the local people. Fr. Malachy McBride focused on evangelization and education while serving in this island country.

eral areas of the Southern Highlands in PNG among people who were in the process of being introduced to Christ. He returned to the United States in 1994, largely the result of an assault he suffered three years earlier by a gang of PNG bandits which left him with-

out a right eye. Soon after his return, he was also faced with his first cancer diagnosis.

Once in Colorado, Malachy threw his boundless energy into the life of Queen of Peace parish, at the same time remember-



As Parochial Vicar at Queen of Peace Catholic Church, Fr. Malachy McBride embraced the many cultures of its parishioners, celebrating the sacraments with them, and blessing family pets in honor of the Feast of St. Francis.

ing and working to help his former parishioners in PNG. A memorial of this loving care is the impressive shrine, with a nearly life-sized statue, that he helped erect at Queen of Peace to Blessed Peter

To Rot, Papua New Guinean catechist and martyr.

Fr. Peter Meis, another missionary on leave from PNG, shared some of the many ways Malachy is still remembered in the South Pacific. In Purení parish, where Malachy labored from 1978-1984, there is a hilltop outstation called Taguanote. One day, coming down the dirt road from Taguanote on a huge motorbike, Malachy literally flew off the hill into Mburá Creek. Surprisingly uninjured he pulled the bike out of the stream and went on his way. The people planted a flowering bush there that they still point out to visitors, saying: “This is the place where Fr. Malachy flew off the mountain. Let us pray.”

In the beginning of May 2008, Fr. Peter and another friar were riding along a road outside the town of Det, another of Malachy’s former parishes, when a man waved them down and told them the road ahead had caved in. Peter asked the man if he knew Malachy had just died, and the man said, “Yes, and this is the place where Fr. Malachy was attacked.” The cave-in took place at the very time when Malachy joined the Province’s Eternity Fraternity on May 1, 2008. The cave-in has not been repaired. Fifteen months later, passersby still have to go off the road and circle around the crater. Quite possibly another flowering bush will be planted there, and locals will say, “This is the place where Fr. Malachy was attacked. Let us pray.”

Yet another PNG memorial to Malachy is in the works in the form of a massive reprinting of a popular Huli-language prayer book that Malachy himself helped write. Many of Malachy’s friends in Denver and elsewhere in the United States have contributed funds towards this memorial that will help Malachy’s people in the Tari Valley remember, “This is the book that Fr. Malachy helped write. Let us pray.”

# Fr. Joseph Schreck's Mission to the Church

by Fr. Blaine Burkey, O.F.M.Cap.

In 2008, well over 1,000 people attended the funeral of 80-year old Fr. Joseph Schreck in Utuado, Puerto Rico. There were over 100 diocesan priests, 30 Capuchin Franciscans, and

*"...I was there, seeing grace work, helping a bit. What a privilege! What a joy!..."*

Fr. Joseph Schreck, O.F.M.Cap.  
Missionary in Puerto Rico

eight bishops, including Cardinal Luis Aponte Martinez, Archbishop Emeritus of San Juan, in attendance. T-shirts with Joseph's portrait emblazoned on them were sold and worn in the streets, and by decree of the civil

authorities, flags were flown at half mast. Later, thousands more lined portions of the streets and roads as the funeral procession moved Joseph's body 60 miles to Porta Coeli Cemetery in Bayamon.

Since Joseph's death on February 9, 2008, the Mid-American Province no longer hosts a missionary in Puerto Rico. This may have been a sad thing, but because of Joseph's foresight, it is something to be thankful for, something to celebrate.

Joseph went to Puerto Rico as soon as he had completed his studies for the priesthood in 1956, and he spent 51 happy years there. During that time he ministered for two years in country chapels, two more years in a mobile chapel, 12 years as associate pastor and 20 years as pastor of large parishes in



Fr. Joseph Schreck (left) with longtime friend, classmate, and brother Fr. Didacus Dunn.

San Juan, Ponce, Utuado and Rio Piedras. He also directed large combination grade and high schools for 26 years, was spiri-

tual director of various Secular Franciscan Order fraternities for 25 years, and was chaplain for one year at a tuberculosis sanatorium.

Bishops in three different dioceses also engaged Joseph in close collaboration for 23 years. At various times, Joseph's titles included Archbishop's Secretary, Prosynodal Judge, Dean, Episcopal Vicar for Pastoral Affairs, Defender of the Bond, Member of the Presbyteral Council, and for his final 13 years, Chancellor and Diocesan Consultor.

It was not positions or titles that moved Joseph. At his golden jubilee celebration in 2005, he said that what he really treasured were his opportunities to "connect souls to God."

"I've had some great moments of 'connecting,'" he said, "an older man, never gone to church, dying of cancer; a still



Fr. Joseph Schreck served as a missionary in Puerto Rico for 51 years. In that time, he ministered to thousands and made it his goal to increase the number of Puerto Rican friars on the island.

youngish woman who had lived on the 'far side' most of her life; a young man with TB afraid to leave his wife and newborn son; a hooker who had quite a time getting her act together. I was there, seeing grace work, helping a bit. What a privilege! What a joy! I imagine they were something like a fireman who pulled someone from a collapsing building; a diver who shared his air with one whose tank is empty; a

broker who made an exceptionally good investment for his client. These moments have been precious! Unforgettable!"

Our brother Joseph also helped his fellow missionaries connect. He served 15 years as minister of local fraternities, three years as First Councilor of the Vice Province and, from 1978-1984, he was minister of the entire Vice Province.

When Joseph first arrived in Puerto Rico in 1956, there was one Puerto Rican friar among the 30 friars there. When Joseph became Vice Provincial Minister 22 years later, seven of the 26 Capuchins had been born in Puerto Rico. Today, Fr. Mario Mastrangelo is the only one of the 25 friars on the island who was born elsewhere. This turnaround began in earnest in Joseph's time as Vice Provincial. He made it the goal of his administration and committed sufficient manpower to vocational discernment and religious formation on the island. Today the Vice Province is a Puerto Rican one, and not one of foreign missionaries, thanks in large part to Joseph.

Since that is one of the principal goals of foreign missionaries, to make themselves unnecessary by helping the local clergy rise up, Mid-America's absence in Puerto Rico is really something to celebrate! Thank you Fr. Joseph.

# Porter glimpses

## St. Fidelis Friary, Victoria

St. Fidelis Parish made headlines again! The installation of a new roof on the Church required a gigantic crane. People were talking about the project for miles around the county and surrounding area. Also, the 27th annual Herzogfest took place in August. Fr. Mike Scully celebrated an outdoor Mass at the festival. One of the most popular spots was the parish booth that served authentic German food.

## St. Conrad Friary, Lawrence

Each summer, Fr. Jim Moster enjoys adding a creative touch to the friary's patio. This season, Fr. Jim obtained hanging tomato planters to experiment with producing vegetables. He harvested several tomatoes with that special "homegrown" flavor. Fr. Jim also positioned a new fountain; the St. Francis statue is surrounded by several varieties of flowers. The patio is a peaceful haven for the local friars.



Fr. Jim Moster shows off the tomatoes he grew for the friars of St. Conrad's Friary.

Fr. Duane Reinert received word from the *Journal of Family Violence* that his research article, "Childhood Physical and Verbal Mistreatment, Psychological Symptoms, and Substance Use: Sex Differences and the Moderating Role of Attachment" was accepted for publication and will appear in the November issue. The article was co-authored by Dr. Carla E. Edwards of Northwest Missouri State University.

Fr. Mike Scully, pastor in Victoria, Kansas, and Fr. John Schmeidler exchanged pulpits over the July 4th weekend. Fr. Mike travelled to St. John's to preach about the Capuchins' foreign missions and make an appeal for support, while Fr. John celebrated the weekend Masses in Victoria.

## St. Joseph Friary, Hays

The friars celebrated Fr. Canice Froehlich's 89th birthday on August 19. Fr. Canice is the oldest friar in the Province and still assists Fr. Gilmery Tallman at St. Joseph's Church with sacramental ministry. Fr. Canice also spends much time corresponding with family and friends.

The 2009-2010 school year began at Thomas More Prep-Marian High School in August. The opening Mass was celebrated by Fr. Earl Befort who begins his 40th year of ministering at the school. Those who are familiar with the "old" look of the school and chapel are invited to visit and view the many changes that have taken place over the past decade.

## Our Lady of the Angels Friary, Colorado Springs

Following a summer of vacations and special assignments, all the friars have returned and Our Lady of the Angels Friary feels "lived in" again.

Fr. Frank Grinko spent the summer in Victoria, Kansas assisting with the pre-novitiate program. Fr. John Toepfer spent time on retreat, vacation and visiting distant family. Bro. Felix Shinsky spent the summer maintaining the grounds and buildings of the 20-acre property. Fr. Jeff Ernst, the newest addition to the friary, settled in and then departed for a well-earned vacation following his six-year stint as a co-director of novitiate programs in Allison Park, Pennsylvania and Burlington, Wisconsin.



Fr. John Toepfer offers evidence of a summer hailstorm that dropped marble-sized hail on the hilltop friary.

## Solanus Casey Friary, Colorado Springs

During July and August, Fr. Martin Bernard, a Capuchin from India who is currently a student in Rome, assisted with the Province's ministry at The Catholic Center in the Citadel Mall.

## San Damiano Friary, Denver

The student friars who were away for the summer have returned to San Damiano Friary and began their theological studies at St. John Vianney Seminary.

The friary's newest addition, Br. Augustine Rohde, transferred to the friary this summer and continues his health care ministries at Denver's Sacred Heart Parish and Samaritan House.

## Fraternidad San Antonio, Denver

In September, Fraternidad San Antonio welcomed five postulants to the Province's formation program: Brandon Berg, Keith Gray, John Mrozek, Donald "Digger" Rank and Justin Rojas.



Friars and postulants of Fraternidad San Antonio: Brandon Berg, Fr. Bill Kraus, Fr. Francisco Ramirez, Donald "Digger" Rank, Fr. Gene Emrisek, John Mrozek, Justin Rojas and Keith Gray.

## Porterglimpses *(continued)*

Several times a month, after Sunday Masses at Annunciation Church, Pastor Fr. Francisco Ramirez visits and celebrates Mass at a migrant laborers' camp in Gilcrest, Colorado. No doubt Fr. Francisco's new ministry pleases our late brother, Fr. Thomas More Janeck, who worked in the migrant camps for 22 years.



Fr. Francisco Ramirez, assisted by Deacon Modesto Garcia, distributes Communion to approximately 40 migrant laborers and an equal number of parishioners from Annunciation Church.

Fr. Bill Kraus will present and facilitate at the guardian's meeting and Provincial Assembly of the Province of Our Lady of the Angels in California. The theme is minority, one of the Province's values chosen for reflection in this triennium.

### St. Francis of Assisi Friary, Denver

The friars welcomed Br. Benignus Scarry to St. Francis Friary in August. Br. Benignus tends to property maintenance and upkeep for St. Francis Friary and Fraternidad San Antonio.

In August, Fr. Simeon Gallagher retreated from his preaching ministry to look after a parish in Cape Cod, Massachusetts.

In July, Fr. Blaine Burkey travelled to Wisconsin to join in the



Fr. Blaine Burkey (left) and Fr. Harvey Dinkel celebrate Sr. Lois Karlin's (seated) 75th Jubilee with Sr. Paul Ann Dinkel (left) and Sr. Francis Rose Dinkel.

celebration of Agnesian Sr. Lois Karlin's 75th Jubilee of Religious Profession. Sr. Lois and Fr. Blaine worked together for many years at Thomas More Prep-Marian High School in Hays, Kansas. Sr. Lois is the sister of our deceased brother, Fr. Paulinus Karlin.

### Rome, Italy

In July, Fr. David Songy lived with the Capuchin friars in Paris and studied the French language to fulfill a requirement for his degree in spiritual theology. In August, he traveled to Papua New Guinea to conduct psychological examinations for Capuchin postulants and diocesan seminary candidates. Once back in Rome, Fr. David assisted with the orientation program for new seminarians at the Pontifical North American College. The seminarians attended the Angelus with Pope Benedict XVI at Castel Gandolfo and toured the papal gardens. They also spent time in Assisi as an introduction to the hometown of St. Francis.

## Preparing for 2010 Chapter

by Fr. Duane Reinert, O.F.M.Cap.

The Capuchin Province of Mid-America hosts its annual assembly in Victoria, Kansas during Easter Week. At this year's assembly, many topics arose for discussion and focus at the triennial Chapter of 2010. The Chapter Steering Committee is comprised of five brothers elected to guide the preparation process. They are Brs. Joseph Mary Elder, Jeff Ernst, John Lager, John Toepfer, and Duane Reinert, Chair. They summarize their task in this way:

*The Steering Committee understands from the 2009 assembly that the Province wants the 2010 Chapter to focus on our core Capuchin values and identity. The purpose is to clarify and contextualize those values in our lived experience, that is, "where the rubber meets the road."*

As followers of Christ after the manner of St. Francis, Capuchins understand that living our core values faithfully is the way of life we have embraced. Therefore, we choose to continually challenge ourselves to grow and not become complacent.

The Steering Committee quickly realized that the focus for the Chapter would need to be more specific. Upon reviewing our Capuchin Constitutions (the written guide for our way of life), the Committee identified 12 values that could be considered 'core values' shaping our identity and way of life.

From there, the Committee defined two tasks. The first requested that each brother of the Province choose three of the 12 values that he would like to see as the focus for Chapter discussion. The second task was to rank the same set of values according to which values generate the most discussion or debate concerning their implementation.

At the next Steering Committee meeting, the Committee found the values that generated the most interest were 1) the priority of contemplative prayer, 2) fraternal Gospel life, and 3) interior conversion. The values that seemed to spark the most debate were 1) radical poverty, 2) austerity, and 3) fraternal Gospel life.

The Steering Committee then designed a set of questions for house chapter discussions. The goal was to identify what the Province perceives are its strengths in living these values and what it perceives are areas for growth. The Committee sought responses from each of the friaries from group discussions as well as from each brother individually.

When the Steering Committee meets again, the hope is that the brothers' conversations will move us to seriously consider what the Holy Spirit is asking of us at this moment in our Capuchin history. As the brothers seek to respond to the Holy Spirit's invitation to deepen our core values and to live them more faithfully, we count on the prayers of our friends and companions.



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The *Provincial Porter* is a quarterly publication of the Capuchin Province of Mid-America. The *Provincial Porter* is named for St. Conrad of Parzham (1818-1894), a Capuchin lay brother who spent most of his life as the friary's porter, or doorkeeper, in Altoetting, Bavaria. As the porter, St. Conrad welcomed people into the friary, received supplies and generously prepared and offered food to Altoetting's poor who would come to the friary door daily. Similar to St. Francis, he treated everyone with love, patience and a kind heart.

In many different ways, the Capuchin Province of Mid-America serves as a "porter"—welcoming everyone and providing for those in need. The *Provincial Porter* strives to keep our relatives and friends informed about the lives of the Mid-American friars.

## Capuchin Companions Support Province

The Capuchin Province of Mid-America depends on the generosity of many friends to sustain the Capuchin friars, including the cost of forming and educating future Capuchin priests and brothers, support for its foreign missionaries in Papua New Guinea, tending to the financial needs of the friars' health and retirement, and helping sustain programs and ministries.

Benefactors share their financial support in a variety of ways including checks made payable to: Capuchin Province of Mid-America, monthly credit card debits, ACH processing, and online gifts made through the Province's website using Paypal. Some donors have also selected the Province as their choice charity when donating vehicles. Others make gifts of stock. If you are interested in learning more about ways to help the Capuchin Province of Mid-America, contact:

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