



Franciscan Retreats

SPRING 2008

HELP NEEDED

Anyone who spends time here on retreat, takes great delight in our lovely grounds. In the past, we have had many beautiful flowers planted and maintained by staff members and volunteers. Regrettably, Bro. Bob is not blessed with a green thumb (he has been known to make silk flowers wilt) and so we could use some help with maintaining the flower beds and planters around the retreat house. If anyone is interested in giving some time to this work on a regular basis please contact Bro. Bob at 952-447-2182. We now have an underground sprinkler system which should make things a bit easier to maintain.



Welcome to Fr. Jim Van Dorn, OFM Conv.

Fr. Jim Van Dorn, OFM Conv., will be returning to Franciscan Retreats to serve on the preaching staff in early 2009. Fr. Jim has spent the last thirteen years preaching parish missions or leading preached retreats throughout the United States.



Fr. Jim is no stranger to Franciscan Retreats; having served here during the 1970's and 1980's. Fr. Steve McMichael, Guardian of St. Joseph Cupertino Friary (the friary connected to the Retreat House) remembers Fr. Jim as being one of the staff on his first retreat at Franciscan Retreats in 1973. Fr. Jim even remembers seeing Fr. Steve coming to the door, though Fr. Steve's appearance has changed considerably in the intervening years.

Some of our retreatants may remember Fr. Jim from his work with us last year during some of our April and September retreats. It was a pleasant surprise for several retreatants to see him as they came for their retreat.

Fr. Jim hopes to move to Minnesota in late August. He has a number of commitments through the end of 2008 and one Parish Mission in 2009 that he needs to honor. He plans to begin full-time service to the retreat ministry here at Franciscan Retreats in January, 2009.

Fr. Jim has served in a variety of ministries in the province: parish ministry, preached retreat ministry, initial formation ministry, vocation outreach, and parish mission ministry. Bro. Bob and Fr. Jim both ministered at Mt. St. Francis Retreat Center from 1992 to 1995. He brings a wealth of experience and wisdom to Franciscan Retreats and we are thrilled to have Fr. Jim join our community and our preaching staff.

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Franciscan Retreats will be CLOSED from July 1 to July 13, 2008.
This includes the Bookstore. The offices will re-open on July 14, 2008. Thank-you.

"May the Lord give you peace!" St. Francis of Assisi

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Welcome Home...

by Bro. Bob Roddy, OFM Conv., Director

I recently spoke with a man around my age who had a long history with Franciscan Retreats. For the sake of his privacy, I will call him Josh. Josh and I had been brought together by Fr. Steve, and by Josh's willingness to offer some professional help to us. Josh had made his first retreat here when he was in high school, and later assisted on retreat teams for youth and on music ministry. Josh recalled, with great fondness, how he and other young people would come out to the Retreat House, help the friars with whatever needed to be done, or just "hang out" with the friars.

Youth retreats ended here, and with that the need for a youth retreat team. Several years ago, Josh was told that he was no longer needed as a music minister. He felt no rancor nor bitterness about this; he was (and still is) a busy person with plenty of opportunities to channel his energies. Today, the two of us were sitting and sharing our associations with the Retreat House; Josh's associations being many and varied, and spanned over thirty years; my associations and history with the Retreat House were not as extensive as Josh's, but they held a common thread with his. Both of us felt a great affection for Franciscan Retreats; both of us see many opportunities for this special place. I described to Josh what types of programs we were doing at the Retreat House, and where we hoped to go. Later, Josh said that one of the reasons that prompted him to offer his services to us was that he missed his involvement with the Retreat House. "I consider Franciscan Retreats my spiritual home," he said with a smile, "And I would like to come home."

What a beautiful expression, "coming home." In its ideal sense, home is the place where one is safe, where one is loved and is accorded an opportunity to grow and to blossom in his or her unique way. When we are "home," in its best and truest sense, we are in the right place. I remember thirty years ago, when I first spent an evening with the friars at St. Bonaventure Friary in St. Louis, that I had found my home; I had found the right group of men with whom to share life, community and ministry.

Many people consider Franciscan Retreats their second home. They feel enveloped in peace and comfort as they

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Bro. Bob Roddy, OFM Conv.



make their way through the arcade of trees that line the entrance. Yet, sadly, there are some whose associations with Franciscan Retreats are not so pleasant or comforting. I periodically hear stories of people who have told others that they will never come back to Franciscan Retreats. Their reasons are many and varied: some did not feel welcome; some felt they were not treated in a respectful manner; some found a conference or a homily opening an old wound or "rubbing salt" into a current wound. This saddens me that so many people who loved this place now feel uncomfortable returning here. I would hazzard to guess that some of these people feel like they have lost their home.

Which leads me to the point of my article; I would like to invite these people to come back to Franciscan Retreats so that they can see and experience some healing; so that they can experience the changes that have been made. I would like to find a way to reach out to them, to listen to their stories, and, if needed to ask for their forgiveness. But, I am limited in my ability to reach out to many, if not most of them. Many have asked that their names be removed from our mailing list, and some have been indignant when a Retreat Captain or Helper called to invite them on a retreat. I am new to the area, but many of you may know of someone in this situation, and I need your help to extend to them an invitation to return to Franciscan Retreats and to experience again, the peace, the healing, and the comfort of this special place.

All of us long to be a part of a place where we feel welcome, where we feel safe and cared for; a place where we can "come as we are." We may come joyful, sad, hurting, frustrated, elated, or contemplative, or any of the many hues of the human temperament, but we are welcome to come, nonetheless, as we are. Please, spread the word, please share this invitation, with those who have been away from us for whatever reason, that all of us at Franciscan Retreats would welcome them home.

Guest Preachers at Franciscan Retreats

We have been blessed by the presence of two priest-friars who have assisted us in the past few months.

Fr. Ivan Rohloff, OFM Conv., who currently serves in initial formation ministry in St. Petersburg, Russia, helped us during the month of January. Fr. John Koziol, OFM Conv., of St. Anthony Province, who serves as director of the pre-novitiate program in Washington, DC, assisted us with the very large Women's Weekend, April 18-20.



Fr. Ivan has served in pastoral ministry and initial formation ministry in the United States, Honduras, Uzbekistan and Russia. During the retreats in January Fr. Ivan shared the story of how he had to take a train for eleven hours to a remote part of Uzbekistan, in order to celebrate Mass for a small Roman Catholic Community there. After Mass, he was approached by a man and asked if he

would anoint and give Holy Communion to an elderly woman who lived in an apartment building nearby. Fr. Ivan went to see this woman, who was quite old and not well. After he prayed with her, anointed her and gave her the Eucharist, she told him, "Father, when I was a little girl we used to have a priest here. But when the Revolution happened, they murdered our priest and took our church from us. I don't remember much of my faith, but I do remember the Our Father. I have prayed the Our Father, every day for all these years and asked God to allow me to see a priest before I die. Now, my prayers have been answered." Fr. Ivan later heard that this faithful woman died a few days after he had visited her.

Fr. John Koziol and Bro. Bob lived together at St. Bonaventure Friary in Washington, DC, and Bro. Bob thought that Fr. John would be a good addition to a weekend retreat. The weekend went beautifully; so much so that a retreatant of thirty-five years stood up during the Stewardship portion of the retreat and said that "This was the best retreat I have ever made at Franciscan Retreats." At the closing liturgy, Fr. John remarked that he "could not wait to return to his province and spread the news about Franciscan Retreats. It's the best kept secret in the U.S."



We are very grateful to Fathers Ivan and John for generously coming here and helping us out. Both have said that they would love to return and help!

Over 300 friends of Franciscan Retreats gathered on May 8, 2008, for the 50th Franciscan International Award Dinner

Recently-retired, Archbishop Harry J. Flynn of the diocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, was the recipient of the award. Friars from Indiana, Texas, Ohio, Washington, DC and Zambia, Africa were present as well as the friars from St. Bonaventure Friary, Bloomington.



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Archbishop Harry J. Flynn

In accepting the award from Fr. Jim Kent, OFM Conv., Archbishop Flynn told the audience that "like a golden thread through all the Gospels, appears this phrase, 'Jesus withdrew to a remote place to pray.'" He thanked the friars and supporters of Franciscan Retreats for providing a place where people today "could withdraw to the desert to pray and grow closer to their God."

Progress Report....

Father John Deere Council #4914 (Prior Lake and Savage) of the **Knights of Columbus** have generously agreed to underwrite the cost of new carpet and its installation in the retreat bedrooms. This much-needed project will be undertaken during the summer. We will need assistance from July 1-12 in removing the old carpet and moving the furniture from the rooms at this time. If anyone would like to volunteer for this task, please contact **Val Zweber**, our Facilities Manager, at 952-447-2182.



Franciscan Retreats was the generous recipient of a large donation from the estate of the late **Mr. Frank St. Martin**. Mr. St. Martin's nephew, **Fr. Bob St. Martin, OFM Conv.**, is associate pastor at St. Bonaventure parish in Bloomington. Fr. Bob's aunt noticed the "Retreat Center Wish List," in the last issue of the newsletter and suggested that the estate make a contribution to Franciscan Retreats. Please remember Frank St. Martin in your prayers.

Thanks to local Eagle Scout candidate, **Brian Sebalaskey**, who completed four planters for the Retreat House as part of his Eagle Scout project.

The new chairs for the retreat bedrooms should be in the rooms by the time of the August Retreats. Thanks for your generosity and patience in this project.

Profile...Chuck Kelly

Chuck Kelley is the kind of man whose warm smile and friendly demeanor puts anyone at ease. Besides being a devoted husband, father, and grandfather, Chuck is an active member of St. Michael's parish in Prior Lake and a member of the 4th Degree of the Knights of Columbus. He volunteers at numerous places, and we are grateful that he volunteers here at Franciscan Retreats to help us with retreat check in.



A faithful retreatant himself, Chuck enjoys meeting the retreatants, and helping them get their retreat folder and name tag. "Have a good retreat!" is his enthusiastic response to one and all. Thanks, Chuck!

Transitions

by Terri Mifek,
Franciscan Retreats



After a very long winter and a spring that was as reluctant to arrive as our first child, the landscape is once again alive with vibrant color. I have to admit that this year's wearisome passage from one season to another sorely tested my patience and made me deeply aware of how much energy I can waste combating the things I cannot control. After listening to my relentless whining my husband can attest to my complete inability to simply "go with the flow" when faced with relentless April snowstorms.

If we are listening, and a retreat
is a great place to do this,
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the indwelling spirit urge us to
stop trying to force things to happen.

Terri Mifek

Looking back I recognize how much I added to my misery by refusing to accept what I could not change. The unwillingness to surrender what is beyond our control is something we struggle with in all the transitions we face in life. Whether we are sending a child off to kindergarten or college, saying goodbye to a loved one or a job or simply dealing with the challenges of aging we can either say yes to life as it is and respond with faith, hope and love or we can torture ourselves by resisting what life is presenting us with at this time.

If we are listening, and a retreat is a great place to do this, sooner or later we may also hear the indwelling spirit urge us to stop trying to force things to happen. We will discover that many of the situations that cause us so much suffering are out of our hands and that peace comes only when we honestly acknowledge our feelings, admit our powerlessness and breathe.

Upcoming Retreats 2008

2008

Please pray for these retreats, and think about joining us.

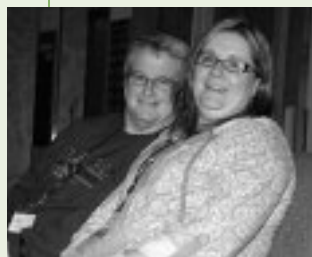
WEEKEND RETREATS

- Aug 15-17 Quiet Weekend
(for Men and Women)
- Aug 22-24 Women's Weekend

- Sept 12-14 Women's Weekend
- Sept 19-21 Married Couples

- Oct 3-5 Women's Weekend
- Oct 10-12 Women's Weekend
- Oct 17-19 Women's Weekend
- Oct 31-Nov 2 Friends of Francis Weekend
(for Secular Franciscans,
and all friends of Francis
[men and women])

- Nov 7-9 Women's Weekend
- Nov 14-16 Quiet Weekend
(for Men and Women)
- Dec 5-7 Serenity AA & Al-Anon
- Dec 12-14 Men's Weekend
- Dec 19-21 Family Weekend



MIDWEEK RETREATS

- Sept 9-11 Women's Midweek
- Sept 23-25 Women's Midweek
- Sept 30-Oct 2 Women's Midweek

- Oct 7-9 Women's Midweek

- Dec. 5-7 Serenity Retreat
(for those in AA and Al-Anon)

Please consult the website:
www.FranciscanRetreats.net
for announcements about future programs





Franciscan Retreats

16385 St. Francis Lane
Prior Lake, MN 55372-2220
952-447-2182
952-447-2170 Fax

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The Apostles League

As I say in the Stewardship Talk, our actual expense for a retreatant at Franciscan Retreats is \$240.00, but we only ask retreatants to give \$140.00. Those who can, often do give more, and some are very generous, but there are some retreatants who cannot afford the full \$140.00.

How are we able to keep our doors open? Mostly through the good stewardship of our predecessors and through the donations of other people. One steady source of income for us is **The Apostles League**, an organization of retreatants who support Franciscan Retreats in three ways: 1) by praying for retreats and retreatants; 2) by promoting retreats and encouraging others to come and make a retreat, and 3) by making a regular financial pledge to the retreat house on a monthly or quarterly basis. (e.g., \$5.00 a week or \$80.00 a quarter) We have noticed a decline in donations to the Apostles League in the past year and hope that we can reverse that trend. If you have not become a member, please consider doing so today.

Thanks to all members of the
Apostles League whose generosity and sacrifices
are greatly appreciated by all of us.



Visit us on the web at www.FranciscanRetreats.net