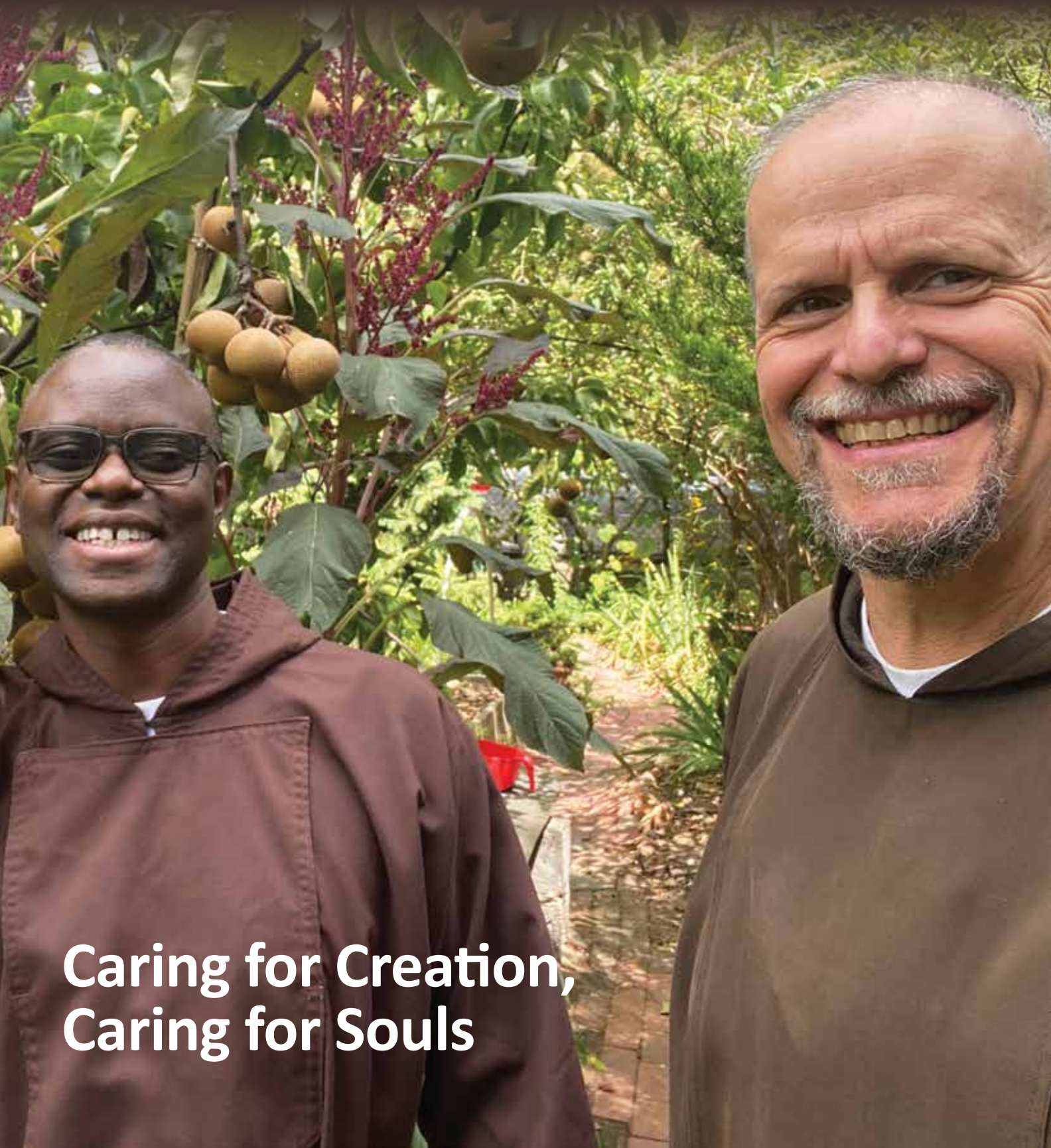


# the Capuchin Journey

ISSUE 2 · 2023



**Caring for Creation,  
Caring for Souls**

## Province Mission

The needs of the poor and the demands of justice shape our every ministerial endeavor. We attempt to promote the equality of all people within our fraternity, in the churches dedicated to the gospel of Christ, and in the larger world. Capuchin friars minister in a wide variety of settings. Service to people of a variety of cultures in North America and around the globe have allowed us to witness God at work in countless ways.

Here in the Northeast United States, the Province of St. Mary serves through any number of institutions dedicated to the service of real human needs and the proclamation of God's love. Urban, suburban, and rural; poor, blue collar, and middle class; Latino, Asian, and English-speaking—the friars can be found living amid all these diverse circumstances.

## Capuchin Charisms

**FRATERNITY** of the friars joins them in their common goals and taps into their unique talents to most efficiently operate their own community as well as the communities they serve.

**MINORITY** has enabled them to walk with the people they serve and be accepted as one of their own.

**CONTEMPLATION** requires they set aside time to reflect upon the progress and direction of their mission and to listen to God's guidance in their mission.

**MINISTRY** has led the Capuchins to appeal to and often allay the hunger, despair, and loneliness of those among whom Christ would have walked.

**JUSTICE, PEACE, AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION** are uniquely Capuchin because an essential part of the mission of St. Francis was to strive for all of God's creation to live in peace and harmony.



CAPUCHIN FRANCISCANS  
PROVINCE OF ST. MARY



## From Our Provincial

When I was in elementary school, there was a large, lovely print on the wall in my bedroom with a poem titled “Children Learn What They Live” by Dorothy Law Nolte. I read it over many, many times. Each line had great meaning for me, but as I come to the end of my six-year term as provincial minister, I find myself remembering the end of the poem:

“If children live with security, they learn to have faith in themselves and others.”

I have to say that I grew up with plenty of security. I am so grateful to my parents for providing a home and appropriate rules and customs that kept out the chaos. The most profound structures were the ones supplied by our Catholic faith—Sunday Mass, grace before meals, the recitation of the rosary on any car rides that lasted more than half an hour. These were the boundaries that kept my siblings and me feeling secure.

The life of a Capuchin is filled with similar margins. Our entire community is built around a daily prayer schedule and is grounded by the Gospel of Jesus Christ. These are like the walls and floors that give us a place to move around in confidence. The roof is simply an open sky through which we see the face of God. The only way for Christians

to maintain faith in themselves and in one another is to place our faith firstly in the Lord. As it says in the second book of Samuel: “The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer” (2 Samuel 22:2).

The Lord most readily supplies this support through the wonderful people in our lives. As I finish my term, I am so grateful for the many brothers who assisted me in the work of governance, not the least of which are my four provincial councilors: Fr. Robert Abbatiello, Br. Lake Herman, Br. John Shento, and Fr. John Gallagher, pictured above. As you may have heard, Father Bob succeeds me in this role. I know the brothers of the Province will assist him as they did me. Finally, I am incredibly grateful for the support of all of you. How blessed the friars are to have you in our lives, working alongside of us to build God's Kingdom. Although I do not know what my next assignment will be, please know that I will never be too far to stay connected to you in God's love and the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi.

Peace and gratitude,

*Fr. Michael J. Greco, OFM Cap.*

Fr. Michael J. Greco, O.F.M. Cap.  
Provincial Minister



*The Capuchin Journey* is our way of letting you know how the Province of St. Mary fulfills its mission. You, as part of our community, share this vision of service to those in need. Through this publication, we want you to see how we use the resources you so generously provide to us. We hope the contents of *The Capuchin Journey* will convey a sense of the work we do and how valuable your contributions are to this work.

#### **Publisher**

Fr. Robert J. Abbatiello, O.F.M. Cap.

#### **Editors**

Bruce Crilly

Br. Anthony Zuba, O.F.M. Cap.

#### **Design/Art Direction**

Bruce Crilly

Joann Giambalvo/Letter Concepts

Br. Anthony Zuba, O.F.M. Cap.

#### **Editorial Office**

110 Shonnard Place

Yonkers, NY 10703

212-564-0759

© 2023 Capuchin Mission & Development Office

[www.capuchin.org](http://www.capuchin.org)

**Cover:** Fr. Thomas McNamara (right), a seasoned gardener and pastor of Our Lady of Sorrows Parish, New York City, with Fr. Benedict Ayodi in the parish garden, June 6.

**Opposite:** Fr. Michael Greco, lower left, with his provincial council: clockwise, Br. John Shento, Br. Lake Herman, Fr. John Gallagher, and Fr. Robert Abbatiello.

## Features

**10** Caring for Creation, Caring for Souls  
Cultivating Capuchin Life and Plant Life

**13** Friars Lean Into Ecological Conversion

**14** The Ecological Legacy of Pope Benedict XVI

**18** Profession of Vows: You're Invited!

## Departments

**4** Around the Province

**19** Directory

# Around the Province

## Friars Pursue Renewal at Provincial Chapter



Fraternal renewal, foreign mission, and collaboration with friars from other regions of the world were the key topics of conversation for the 83 friars who gathered for their provincial chapter May 22-25.

Every three years, all the friars of a province who are able to do so assemble in accordance with the Capuchin *Constitutions* to reflect on the state of their life and mission, to make decisions, and to elect leadership.

The friars at chapter approved two proposals.

One proposal called for the Province to accompany the Custody of Our Lady of Hope, covering El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, as it seeks to become a province in its own right. Custodies are usually attached to a founding province, but at present Our Lady of Hope is a general custody, under the direct oversight of the Order

from Rome. In approving this proposal, the Province showed a willingness to assume temporary care of the custody until it develops to the point where it can function autonomously as a province. This would be a renewal of our commitment to Central America; for decades, Capuchins from our Province served the region, from Bluefields, Nicaragua, on the Atlantic to Guatemala City toward the Pacific. In recent years, friars in initial formation have spent summers in Guatemala and Honduras for culture and language immersion. The opportunities for a robust fraternal exchange are rife.

The other proposal would commit the Province to a process of building stronger fraternity relationships over the next three years. This process has already begun at the level of local fraternities, with guidance from the

Province on how to foster healthy communication and to encourage deeper sharing of our spiritual lives with one another. To that end, during chapter sessions the friars broke into small groups where they could practice sharing their vocation stories—why they became Capuchins, and why they have stayed. A few friars also gave witness talks during the plenary sessions.

The friars heard reports from its custodies in Guam and Japan. Because of the decreasing number of friars in these circumscriptions, these custodies are in the process of becoming delegations of the Province, and therefore under more direct administration by the provincial minister and the provincial council. The friars also heard a report from the friars of Holy Trinity Province, Karnataka, India, who have been sending friars to the Custody of Japan since 1999

Provincial portrait of the friars at the Seminary of the Immaculate Conception, Lloyd Harbor, N.Y., May 25.

to serve in parishes; and directly to our Province since 2013 to work as hospital chaplains. Fr. John Alwyn Dias, provincial minister of Karnataka, described how the Province of St. Mary's financial support has promoted the growth of many apostolates throughout Holy Trinity Province. All the friars expressed gratitude for this fraternal collaboration and looked forward with hope to more extensive collaboration in the years to come.

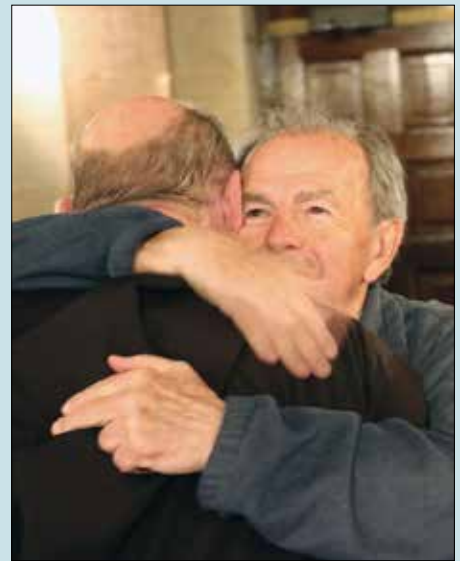
On the final day, the chapter held elections for the provincial council. For provincial minister, the friars elected **Fr. Robert Abbatiello**, who was the vicar provincial minister for the last six years and most recently has served as pastor at Sacred Heart Parish in Yonkers, N.Y. For provincial councilor, the friars elected **Br. Lake**

**Herman**, co-director of the interprovincial postulancy program in Milwaukee, to a fourth term; and they also elected **Fr. Thomas McNamara**, pastor at Our Lady of Sorrows Parish, New York City; **Fr. Michael Ramos**, pastor at Holy Cross-St. John the Baptist Parish, New York City; and **Br. James Donegan**, who has served the Order in the mission in Guatemala and also in Rome in the Capuchin Curia. At the recommendation of the provincial minister-elect, Father Michael was elected to the position of vicar provincial minister.

We thank all the friars who organized the provincial chapter, from content and elections to liturgies and hospitality. We thank the Seminary of the Immaculate Conception, Lloyd Harbor, N.Y., for hosting us.



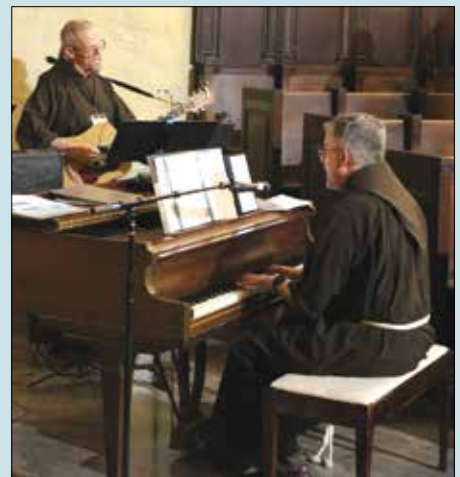
The new provincial council: Br. James Donegan, Br. Lake Herman, Fr. Robert Abbatiello, Fr. Thomas McNamara, Fr. Michael Ramos.



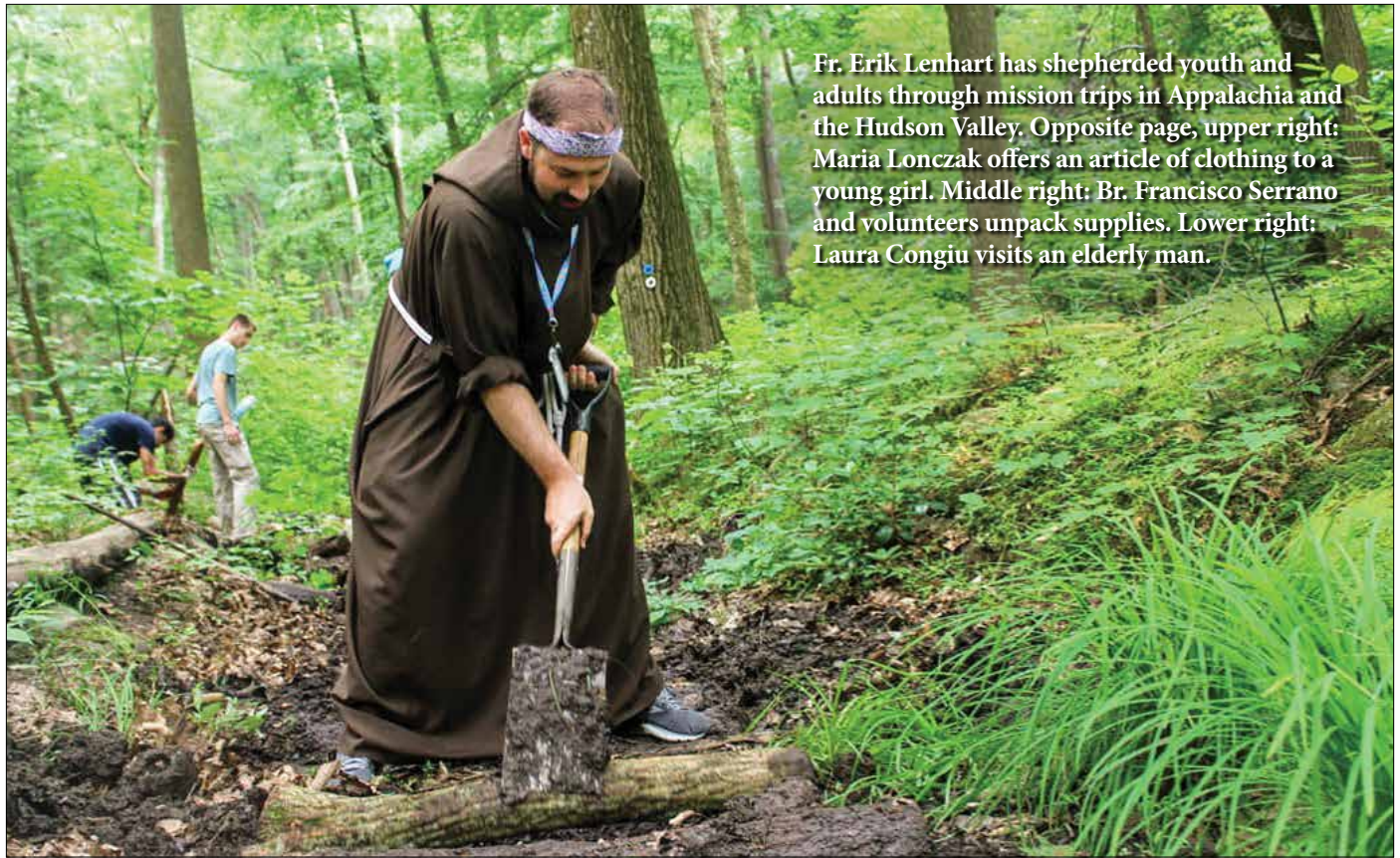
Fr. Michael Connolly and Fr. Joseph Kubiak embrace.



Fr. Royson Menolickal, Fr. John Alwyn Dias, and Fr. Henry Vas.



Fr. Tom McNamara and Br. Jim Donegan make music at worship.



Fr. Erik Lenhart has shepherded youth and adults through mission trips in Appalachia and the Hudson Valley. Opposite page, upper right: Maria Lonczak offers an article of clothing to a young girl. Middle right: Br. Francisco Serrano and volunteers unpack supplies. Lower right: Laura Congiu visits an elderly man.

## Appalachian Mission Reaches Milestone

August 1991 might have been like any other summer month for the people of Harlan, Ky. That is, until the day when the caravans arrived from up north, laden with supplies.

They were the volunteers of the first Capuchin Appalachian Mission. They came to perform the works of Christ.

Each year since then, with a brief pause because of Covid restrictions, Capuchin Youth & Family Ministries has taken teams of teens and adults to Harlan County to serve the underserved. This year, July 8–16, CYFM marks a special milestone as they embark on their 30th Capuchin Appalachian Mission.

Nestled in the southeastern corner of Kentucky, Harlan is among the most economically challenged areas of the United States. For 100 years, the economy of Harlan County and other counties in eastern Kentucky was based on coal mining. The decline of the coal industry in the late 20th century led to high unemployment and widespread poverty. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2019 Harlan showed an individual poverty rate of almost 30 percent—about three times the national average. The median household income in the county was \$31,000, while the U.S. median income was \$69,000.

Our missionaries are sensitive to these realities. They tend to the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of the community.

In the months leading up to the mission, the friars and volunteers conduct food and clothing drives at local parishes. They gather and transport supplies to Harlan to be distributed among those most in need.

They also lead a home construction program to make critical repairs and improvements for rural residents. With guidance from home construction experts, teens and adults work side by side on Habitat-type projects.

Volunteers visit with the elderly and infirm to relieve their feelings of isolation and loneliness. They also conduct a Vacation Bible School for the children, providing catechesis and free meals.

“Serving others has been a main focus of the Capuchins for over 500 years,” Fr. Michael Greco, outgoing provincial minister, told *The Capuchin Journey*.

“Along with our wonderful volunteers, we are proud to continue this ministry today for the good people of Harlan in Kentucky.”



## Hudson Valley Mission, Too

Closer to home in the Hudson Valley, and in the same spirit as the Appalachian mission, the Province leads five days of evangelization and service during Summer Outreach Week (SOW).

“SOW offers high school students an opportunity to work in the service of others while learning about and increasing their faith,” said **Fr. Erik Lenhart**. The volunteers engage in prayer, worship, and theological reflection on their days of service. Their ministry activities include building beds for families with young children, visiting nursing home residents, encountering the homeless, or working with children at the popular Vacation Bible School. To volunteer for the Capuchin Appalachian Mission and Summer Outreach Week, go to <https://www.capuchin.org/cyfm/summer-programs/>. To make a donation, go to <https://www.capuchin.org/cyfm-donate/>.



Volunteer Amelia Montiero works on a home construction project. She looks forward to going on the Capuchin Appalachian Mission this summer with her family.





Fr. Samuel Gomes

**Fr. Samuel Gomes**, our Capuchin missionary brother who ministered to his fellow Cape Verdeans at home and abroad, died on April 14 at the age of 53.

Father Samuel was born on Brava, one of the islands of Cape Verde. He entered the Capuchin order on Sept. 8, 1991. After his solemn profession of vows, he was ordained a priest on Oct. 11, 1998.

## Fr. Samuel Gomes, Cape Verdean Missionary, Dies at 53

Father Samuel's early assignments were on the various islands of Cape Verde. He worked in the parishes of the island of São Nicolau for several years. He was celebrated for giving it his all in the service of God, the Church, and the poor. He also worked in the parish of São Lourenço on the island of Fogo. He collaborated with the parishes of the island of São Vicente as a member of the local fraternity. Father Samuel also served for over three years as a counselor of the Custody of Cape Verde.

He spent three years in Italy in the fraternity of Fossano, where he formed a family ministry and also made his contribution in pastoral services.

In 2016, imbued with a missionary spirit, Father Samuel volunteered to establish a Capuchin mission in São Tomé and Príncipe.

He remained there for little over a year before ill health required him to leave.

Father Samuel came to the Province of St. Mary in 2018. He was sent to Massachusetts to minister to the Cape Verdean diaspora community. He served across Eastern Massachusetts but was stationed with his confrere **Fr. Claudino Teixeira Vieira** at St. Patrick Parish in Roxbury. Father Samuel always gave the best of himself wherever he went, and he was highly esteemed and valued by all.

Hundreds of people gathered for the funeral held at St. Peter Church in Dorchester, Mass., on April 21. Father Samuel is survived by his mother and nine siblings, including a twin brother. He also leaves behind his many Capuchin confreres and all the faithful souls he befriended wherever he went.



Fr. José Villagomez

**Fr. José Villagomez**, who followed the call to Capuchin life to Guam, was called by Christ to eternal life

## Fr. José Villagomez, Our Brother in Guam, Dies at 78

on May 20. He was 78 years old.

He was born on Saipan on Sept. 30, 1944, and was one of ten siblings. An encounter with a Capuchin, Fr. Arnold Bendowske, inspired the young José to move to Guam and finish his high school education at the Capuchin minor seminary, Father Dueñas Memorial School.

He sought to join the Order immediately after high school, but the Province did not accept applicants from Saipan at the time. By 1966 that had changed, and he

was invested with the Capuchin habit on Aug. 31. He was ordained to the priesthood on May 30, 1974, in Saipan.

Father José carried out his priestly ministries throughout the Mariana Islands. He would serve in all the churches of Saipan at various times. In 1988, Father José became pastor of two Guam parishes, San Dimas in Merizo and San Dionisio in Umatac. From there he moved to other Guam parishes: in 1997 to Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Agat; in 2005 to Our Lady of Guadalupe,



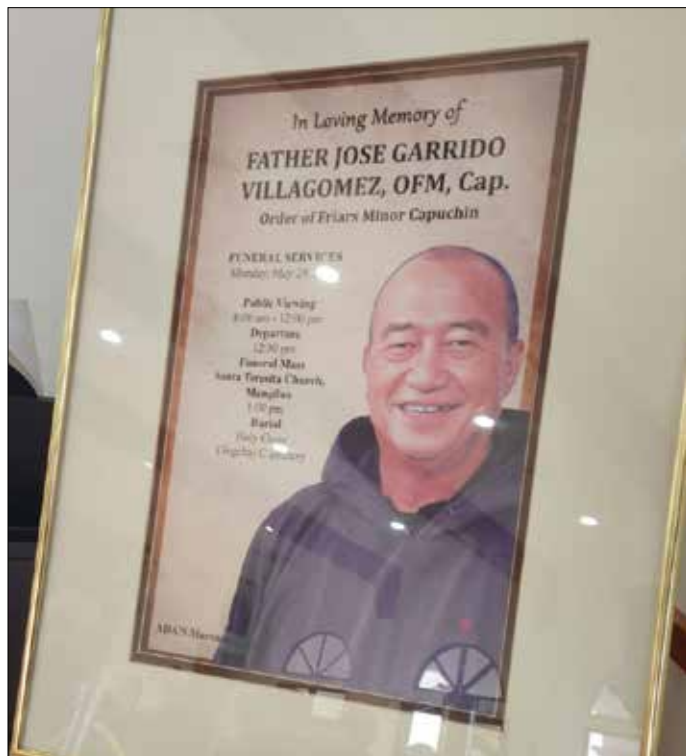
Santa Rita; and in 2008 to Saint Francis, Yoña. He also taught various subjects in Catholic schools, including his alma mater, Mount Carmel School in Saipan, and Bishop Baumgartner Junior High School in Guam.

From 2015 he resided at Saint Fidelis Friary, Guam, as a senior friar.

Father José sat on the boards of various civic agencies. A first-language, fluent speaker of the Chamorro language, he helped prepare a Chamorro translation of the first Constitution of the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas. On Guam, he served on the Chamorro Language Commission.

Father José was fond of making spontaneous jokes and often entertained people by singing and playing the guitar. Once he even performed live from Guam on the Jerry Lewis MDA Labor Day Telethon.

Father José accepted his declining health cheerfully and with deep prayerfulness. He was laid to rest on May 29 after a week of vigils, a viewing, and the funeral. He is survived by two sisters, his sisters-in-law, and numerous nephews and nieces.



Friars distribute communion at the funeral Mass for Fr. Jose Villagomez in Guam on May 29.

# CARING FOR CREATION, CARING FOR SOULS

## Cultivating Capuchin Life and Plant Life

by Fr. Thomas McNamara



I was about 7 years old when my mom found a shriveled potato that had sprouted from under the kitchen sink. She told me, “Put this in a bucket with some dirt from the garden and see what happens.” I soon followed suit with a carrot top and an avocado seed. Eventually, I helped my elementary school teachers take care of seedlings in the classroom windows. I would go on to plant my own flower and vegetable gardens, and with my brother and sisters I would reforest a pasture with a few thousand pine tree seedlings. I was smitten with a love of making things grow.

I later studied agriculture and would find myself landscaping with crews of Mexican immigrants in Chicagoland during the 1980s. An astute priest on the South Side of Chicago noticed that I was “planting much more than trees.” I would go on to teach high school agriculture, during which time I noticed an overwhelming sense that the Lord was calling me to serve Him, not only on nights and weekends, but also with my whole life.

*Who plants a seed beneath  
the sod and waits to see  
believes in God.*



This would lead me to St. Francis Catholic Worker Farm in Lacona, N.Y., where we would cultivate and build with the rural poor in the northern reaches of Appalachia. It also led me to join a group of postulants at St. Michael Friary in East New York, Brooklyn, to discern the Capuchin way of life. In Brooklyn, then in the novitiate at Mt. Calvary, Wis., and then later in Jamaica Plain, Mass., at the house of studies, I contributed to the ecology of Capuchin life, tending the gardens designed and maintained by the friars over the years.



All along the way, I have helped to create the conditions necessary for making things grow. As in the spiritual life, the preparation for the reception of the seed is essential for future growth. The friars of Our Lady of Sorrows, New York City, established a garden in the 1980s on an adjacent building lot. That garden has offered me and several families of the Lower East Side a chance to plant and harvest in the inner city. The beauty of the night-blooming moonflowers enchants any passer-by, and





the fragrance of the lilac takes an immigrant back to their childhood homesteads. We enjoy the figs of a tree planted by a grateful parishioner who was married here in 1945. It's a microcosm of the integration of justice, peace, and ecology.

The epistle of James puts it this way: "And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for those who cultivate peace" (James 3:18). Creating those necessary conditions is the goal of the human heart on our way to the very heart of God. I am glad to be part of it as a human being and a Capuchin friar.





## Friars Lean Into Ecological Conversion

**F**aith is a journey, and conversion is a process. The friars of the Province of St. Mary, like everyone in the Church, are taking initial steps into the ecological conversion called for by popes John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and Francis.

At their provincial chapter in November 2021, the friars committed to the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform, a seven-year program from the Holy See meant to spur all sectors of the Church and society into taking urgently needed measures to better care for creation. The friars see the platform as an opportunity to practice solidarity with all earth life, to participate in macro-level change through thoughtful use of their collective resources, and to engage in an ongoing formation of ecological consciousness at the local level. It is also an opportunity for friars to have a personal encounter with the Christ of creation; and, in imitation of Saint Francis of Assisi, to make their lives a song of praise to our Creator.

The friars were practicing care for creation long before they adopted the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform. Years before the City of Boston added food waste collection to its trash and recycling services, the brothers at San Lorenzo Friary were saving their food scraps for compost. In 2016, Fr. Thomas Houle installed solar panels at St. Peter Parish in Rutland, Vt., making the parish the first in the Diocese of Burlington to do so. He also did a weatherization of the rectory and converted the facilities to LED lights to conserve energy and funds. Other parishes around the province also undertook similar weatherization projects.

At St. Pius X Parish in Middletown, Conn., the church made efforts under pastor Fr. John Gallagher in the 2010s to make parish events more eco-friendly. Fr. Samuel Fuller, who was also on staff at St. Pius, involved himself in local solidarity, helping to organize the Hartford Earth Festival

through the Interreligious Eco-Justice Network, on whose board of directors he served.

Not long after Pope Francis issued *Laudato Si'*, his encyclical letter on ecology, our parishes began to conduct study groups on the document. In New York City, Holy Cross-St. John the Baptist Parish participated in a study group in 2016-17, as did Good Shepherd Parish in 2018. At both Holy Cross-St. John and Good Shepherd, some of the parishioners went on to form a care for creation ministry and became trained to be *Laudato Si'* animators. Last year, Fr. Erik Lenhart presented *Laudato Si'* at a Theology on Tap event. Fr. Jack Rathschmidt preaches frequently about care for creation. More recently, Our Lady of Sorrows Parish in Manhattan screened *The Letter*, a documentary that chronicles Pope Francis' dialogue with climate activists brought to Rome from around the world for an exclusive audience. *The Letter* was also screened at the recent provincial chapter on May 23.

The provincial Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation Commission organized a committee, chaired by Br. James Donegan, to begin implementation of the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform. The committee formed subgroups to examine the use of properties, investments, and finances; to shape best practices in the local fraternities and in the ministries; to guide formation of the friars around ecological concerns; to establish communications about integral ecology; and to connect care for creation to our Franciscan spirituality.

Going forward, the Province aims to conduct an energy audit of all the local fraternities; to increase our participation in environmental, social, and governance (ESG) goals in our investments; to reduce the number of motor vehicles we use—and study the feasibility of procuring and using electric vehicles; and to reduce our water and energy consumption in the friaries.

# The Ecological Legacy of Pope Benedict XVI

by Br. James Donegan



Issued by Pope Francis in May 2015, *Laudato Si'* (On Care for Our Common Home) is the first major teaching document of the Church to center the urgency of our ecological challenges and to call humanity to shape the future of Earth responsibly.

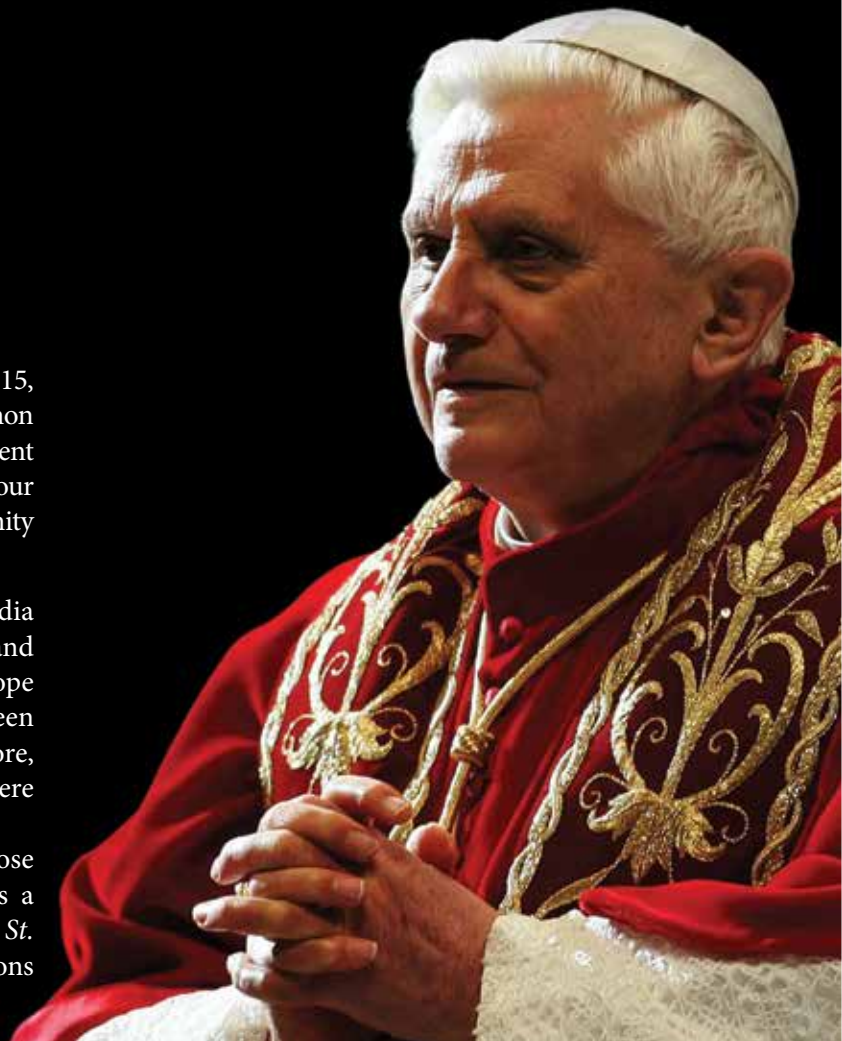
With the publication of *Laudato Si'*, secular media widely identified Francis with the care of creation and environmental concerns. However, his predecessor, Pope Benedict XVI, was himself often referred to as the “Green Pope,” having written extensively on ecology. Furthermore, it was during his papacy that the first solar panels were installed in Vatican City.

Benedict’s green legacy comes as no surprise to those familiar with his research in Franciscan theology. As a young theologian, he published *Theology in History in St. Bonaventure*, which gave him the necessary qualifications for a professorship in the German academic system.

After Benedict died on Dec. 31, Br. James Donegan wrote several short essays examining his writings on care for creation. He drew parallels between Benedict and the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform, the Vatican’s initiative to promote ecological conversion in the Church and the world. Each article takes as its theme one of the seven goals of the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform:

- Response to the Cry of the Earth
- Response to the Cry of the Poor
- Ecological Economics
- Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles
- Ecological Education
- Ecological Spirituality
- Community Resilience and Empowerment

We have excerpted Brother James’ essays here. We offer them as points of reflection. May Benedict’s contributions to Church teaching on integral ecology lead all of us to a deeper ecological conversion.



## Response to the Cry of the Earth

In his message at the forty-first World Day of Peace in 2008, Pope Benedict spoke of all humanity as “one great family.” “The family needs a home,” he said, “a fit environment in which to develop its proper relationships. For the human family, this home is the earth, the environment that God the Creator has given us to inhabit with creativity and responsibility. We need to care for the environment: it has been entrusted to men and women to be protected and cultivated with responsible freedom, with the good of all as a constant guiding criterion.” He went on to say that appropriate actions need to be taken “in dialogue with experts and people of wisdom... above all with the aim of reaching agreement on a model of sustainable development capable of ensuring the well-being of all while respecting environmental balances.”

Thus, Benedict called for a more serious consideration of what he referred to as “the energy problem,” stating, “The technologically advanced societies can and must lower their domestic energy consumption, either through an evolution in manufacturing methods or through greater ecological sensitivity among their citizens.” He further called for

research into “the immense potential of solar energy... the worldwide problem of water and to the global water cycle system... suitable strategies for rural development centered on small farmers and their families... the implementation of appropriate policies for the management of forests... [and] waste disposal.”

Benedict indicated the need for such action at all levels of society, especially at the national and international levels, so that our technologies might be used for our ends, and also “to reinforce the covenant between human beings and the environment, a covenant that should mirror God’s creative love.” In striving for “authentic world-wide solidarity inspired by the values of charity, justice and the common good,” we may be able to work toward the fullness of this first *Laudato Si’* Goal.

### Response to the Cry of the Poor

In *Caritas in Veritate*, Benedict linked natural ecology and what he called “human ecology,” observing, “The Church has a responsibility towards creation and she must assert this responsibility in the public sphere. In so doing, she must defend not only earth, water and air as gifts of creation that belong to everyone. She must above all protect mankind from self-destruction. There is need for what might be called a human ecology, correctly understood. The deterioration of nature is in fact closely connected to the culture that shapes human coexistence: when ‘human ecology’ is respected within society, environmental ecology also benefits.”

Two years earlier, in his message for the fortieth World Day of Peace, Benedict further elaborated on this link between human ecology and environmental ecology. “Experience shows that disregard for the environment always harms human coexistence, and vice versa. It becomes more and more evident that there is an inseparable link between peace with creation and peace among men. Both of these presuppose peace with God. The poem-prayer of Saint Francis, known as ‘the Canticle of Brother Sun,’ is a wonderful and ever timely example of this multifaceted ecology of peace.”

Benedict further identified the link between the protection of Creation and integral human development. In *Caritas in Veritate*, he identified food shortages and hunger as major challenges to integral human development, stating that these challenges must be taken seriously: “The right to food, like the right to water, has an important place within the pursuit of other rights, beginning with the fundamental right to life.”

### Ecological Economics

Relationship between the economy and humanity was a highlight of Benedict’s encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*. “Human costs,” he wrote, “always include economic costs, and economic dysfunctions always involve human costs.” He elaborated on this, in his message for the forty-third World Day of Peace. “Future generations cannot be saddled with the cost of our use of common environmental resources.... Natural resources should be used in such a way that immediate



benefits do not have a negative impact on living creatures, human and not, present and future... that human activity does not compromise the fruitfulness of the earth, for the benefit of people now and in the future.”

This concern was further expressed in his letter to the Seventh Symposium of the Religion, Science, and the Environment Movement. “No nation or business sector can ignore the ethical implications present in all economic and social development,” he wrote. “The consequences of disregard for the environment cannot be limited to an immediate area or populace because they always harm human coexistence, and thus betray human dignity and violate the rights of citizens who desire to live in a safe environment.”

Benedict called upon all peoples to take this aspect seriously, enjoining industrialized nations to be more responsible in their care of the environment, but also that they “share ‘clean technologies’ and ensure that their own markets do not sustain demand for goods whose very production contributes to the proliferation of pollution.” He further elaborated, “If the protection of the environment involves costs, they should be justly distributed, taking due account of the different levels of development of various countries and the need for solidarity with future generations.” Ecological economics, therefore, strives toward a conversion of both the environmental ecology and the human ecology.

### Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles

Benedict’s predecessor, John Paul II, first coined the term “ecological conversion” during a general audience in 2001, declaring: “Man, especially in our time, has without hesitation devastated wooded plains and valleys, polluted waters, disfigured the earth’s habitat, made the air unbreathable, disturbed the hydrogeological and atmospheric systems, turned luxuriant areas into deserts and undertaken forms of unrestrained industrialization, degrading... the earth, our dwelling-place. We must therefore encourage and support the ‘ecological conversion’ which in recent decades has made humanity more sensitive to the catastrophe to which it has been heading.”

A response to this reality requires a set of intentional decisions, practical choices such as reducing waste, recycling, and opting for modes of transportation and dietary choices that have a lower carbon footprint. As

Benedict wrote in *Caritas in Veritate*, “Human beings legitimately exercise a responsible stewardship over nature, in order to protect it, to enjoy its fruits and to cultivate it in new ways... we must recognize our grave duty to hand the earth on to future generations in such a condition that they too can worthily inhabit it and continue to cultivate it.”

As Benedict declared, “Our present crises—be they economic, food-related, environmental or social—are ultimately also moral crises, and all of them are interrelated. They require us to rethink the path which we are travelling together. Specifically, they call for a lifestyle marked by sobriety and solidarity.”

### Ecological Education

In addressing current crises, Benedict declared, “Humanity needs a profound cultural renewal; it needs to rediscover those values which can serve as the solid basis for building a brighter future for all.” In 2013, he identified “the need to propose and promote a pedagogy of peace.” The call to promote an “education for peace” challenges all parts of society. Through the participation of all, a proper response can be made to a world which today “needs to be sustained by fresh thinking and a new cultural synthesis so as to overcome purely technical approaches and to harmonize the various political currents with a view to the common good.”

For the forty-third World Day of Peace, Benedict selected the theme *If You Want to Cultivate Peace, Protect Creation*. He explained: “Respect for creation is of immense consequence ... and its preservation has now become essential for the pacific coexistence of mankind. Man’s inhumanity to man has given rise to numerous threats to peace and to authentic and integral human development... Yet no less troubling are the threats arising from the neglect—if not downright misuse—of the earth and the natural goods that God has given us. For this reason, it is imperative that mankind renew and strengthen ‘that covenant between human beings and the environment, which should mirror the creative love of God, from whom we come and towards whom we are journeying.’”

According to Benedict, there exists a serious responsibility for education and reflection on our lives and how we relate to God’s creation. In quoting John Paul II, he





emphasized the necessity “to create lifestyles in which the quest for truth, beauty, goodness and communion with others for the sake of common growth are the factors which determine consumer choices, savings and investments.” He then elaborated further: “Education for peace must increasingly begin with far-reaching decisions on the part of individuals, families, communities and states. We are all responsible for the protection and care of the environment.”

## Ecological Spirituality

For Benedict, there is an inseparable bond between creation and redemption. In 2007, he stated, “The Redeemer is the Creator... This is why, for me, the renewal of the doctrine of creation and a new understanding of the inseparability of creation and redemption are of supreme importance. We must recognize anew: He is the Creator Spiritus... If we recognize this it will obviously follow that the Redemption, being Christian, and simply Christian faith, also means responsibility always and everywhere with regard to creation.”

This connection between the Creator-Redeemer and creation has its foundations in a loving relationship. As Benedict wrote in *Deus Caritas Est*, “the universe in which we live has its source in God and was created by him... the whole world comes into existence by the power of his creative Word. Consequently, his creation is dear to him, for it was willed by him and ‘made’ by him.” Thus as he stated in 2008, “We need the gift of the Earth, the gift of water, we need the Creator. The Creator reappears in his creation.”

We are then called to experience God through His creation. As Pope Benedict stated in 2007: “The beauty of creation is one of the sources where we can truly touch God’s beauty, we can see that the Creator exists and is good, which is true, as Sacred Scripture says in the Creation Narrative, that is, that God conceived of this world and made it with his heart, his will and his reason, and he found it good. We too must be good in order to have an open heart and to perceive God’s true presence.” Thus, efforts to preserve the environment must be rooted in an appreciation for God’s presence in creation. As Benedict posited in 2008, “true and effective initiatives to prevent the waste and destruction of creation can be implemented and developed, understood and lived only where creation is considered as beginning

with God; where life is considered as beginning with God and has greater dimensions—in responsibility before God—and one day will be given to us by God in fullness and never taken away from us: in giving life we receive it.”

## Community Resilience and Empowerment

As Benedict stated in 2010, “We are all responsible for the protection and care of the environment. This responsibility knows no boundaries... it is important for everyone to be committed at his or her proper level, working to overcome the prevalence of particular interests.”

Part of the responsibility for ecological conversion sits with the state. Benedict included protection of the environment among his list of responsibilities of the United Nations. But the states cannot be the only actors in this endeavor. As Benedict wrote in *Deus Caritas Est*, the state must be one “which, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, generously acknowledges and supports initiatives arising from the different social forces and combines spontaneity with closeness to those in need.”

In this way, all contribute in their particular locations in society, toward the same goal of protecting the environment. As Benedict stated in 2010, “A special role in raising awareness and in formation belongs to the different groups present in civil society and to the non-governmental organizations which work with determination and generosity for the spread of ecological responsibility... The media also have a responsibility in this regard to offer positive and inspiring models. In a word, concern for the environment calls for a broad global vision of the world; a responsible common effort to move beyond approaches based on selfish nationalistic interests towards a vision constantly open to the needs of all peoples.”

Finally, the Church has its own important part in the process of ecological conversion. As Benedict stated, “The Church has a responsibility towards creation, and she considers it her duty to exercise that responsibility in public life, in order to protect earth, water and air as gifts of God the Creator meant for everyone, and above all to save mankind from the danger of self-destruction.”

As we continue to strive toward ecological conversion, may we proclaim God’s love for all creation in everything that we do.



*With praise and gratitude  
to the Most High God  
and with great joy  
the Capuchin Franciscan Friars  
of the Province of St. Mary  
announce the upcoming  
simple profession of vows  
of our brother  
José Leonardo Rojas Gonzalez,  
O.F.M. Cap.*



*The Twenty-second day of July  
Two Thousand and Twenty-Three  
11:00 a.m.*

*The Monastery Church  
of the Sacred Heart  
110 Shonnard Place  
Yonkers, NY 10703*

*The profession will be livestreamed on  
[www.facebook.com/stmarycapuchins/](http://www.facebook.com/stmarycapuchins/)*



# Province Directory

## California

### San Lorenzo Seminary

1802 Sky Drive; PO Box 247  
Santa Ynez, CA 93460  
Phone: 805-688-5630

## Connecticut

### St. Pius X Friary & Parish

310 Westfield Street  
Middletown, CT 06457  
Phone: 860-347-4441

## Maine

### Holy Martyrs Residence

12 Johnson Road  
Falmouth, ME 04105

## Massachusetts

### Capuchin Vocation Office

46 Brookside Avenue  
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130  
Phone: 617-522-6469

### San Lorenzo Friary

15 Montebello Road  
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130  
Phone: 617-983-1919

### St. Francis of Assisi Friary

46 Brookside Avenue  
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130  
Phone: 617-522-6469

## New York

### St. Lawrence Friary

180 Sargent Avenue  
Beacon, NY 12508  
Phone: 845-831-0394

### St. Michael Friary & Parish

282 Warwick Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11207  
Phone: 718-827-6990

### St. Fidelis Friary

7790 County Road 153  
Interlaken, NY 14847  
Phone: 607-532-4423

### St. Joseph Friary & Parish

34 South Chestnut Street  
New Paltz, NY 12561  
Phone: 845-255-5635

### Good Shepherd Friary & Parish

608 Isham Street  
New York, NY 10034  
Phone: 212-567-1300

### Holy Cross Residence & Parish

329 West 42nd Street  
New York, NY 10036  
Phone: 212-246-4732

### St. John the Baptist Residence

213 West 30th Street  
New York, NY 10001  
Phone: 212-564-9070

### Our Lady of Sorrows Friary & Parish

213 Stanton Street  
New York, NY 10002  
Phone: 212-673-0900

### Infant Jesus Residence

110 Myrtle Avenue  
Port Jefferson, NY 11777

### St. Conrad Friary & Provincialate

30 Gedney Park Drive  
White Plains, NY 10605  
Phone: 914-761-3008

### Capuchin Development Office

110 Shonnard Place  
Yonkers, NY 10703  
Phone: 212-564-0759

### Sacred Heart Friary & Parish

110 Shonnard Place  
Yonkers, NY 10703  
Phone: 914-375-8230

### St. Clare Friary

110 Shonnard Place  
Yonkers, NY 10703  
Phone: 914-423-2392

## Vermont

### St. Peter Friary & Parish

134 Convent Avenue  
Rutland, VT 05701  
Phone: 802-775-1994

## Wisconsin

### St. Francis Community

1927 North Vel Phillips Avenue  
Milwaukee, WI 53212

## Custody of the Star of the Sea

### St. Fidelis Friary

135 Chalan Kapuchino  
Agaña Heights, Guam 96910  
Phone: 671-472-6339

## Custody of Japan

### St. Francis Friary & Parish

1 Aza Oroku  
Naha City, Okinawa  
Japan 901-0152  
Phone: 011-81-98-857-3795



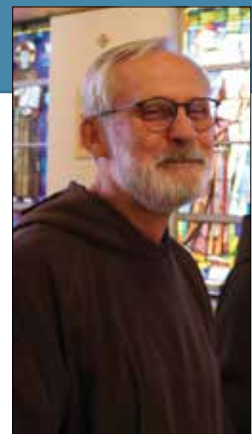
San Lorenzo Seminary



**CAPUCHIN FRANCISCANS**  
PROVINCE OF ST. MARY

Mission Association & Development Office  
110 Shonnard Pl, Yonkers, NY 10703-2226  
[www.capuchin.org](http://www.capuchin.org)

NON PROFIT  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
MAILED FROM  
ZIP CODE 61764  
PERMIT NO. 454



## Capuchin Mission & Development Office

The goal of the Capuchin Development Office is to fund the domestic and international mission of the Province of St. Mary. That mission ranges from supporting our own provincial members ministering here in the United States to providing assistance to Capuchins serving worldwide. The Province of St. Mary is a leader in generating support for the works of justice and mercy undertaken by Capuchin friars across the globe.

**If you are interested in supporting our mission, please contact George Vogel at (212) 564-0759 ext. 284 or [gvogel@capuchin.org](mailto:gvogel@capuchin.org) or visit our website at [www.capuchin.org](http://www.capuchin.org).**