

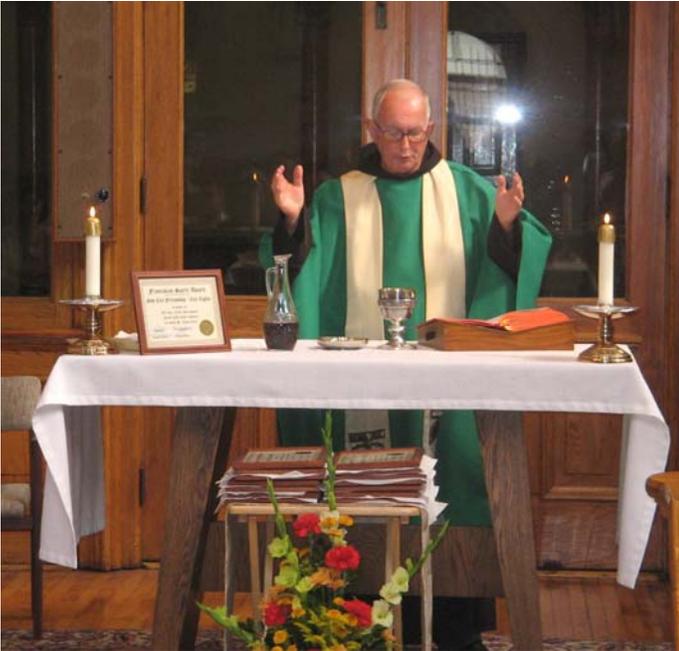
AROUND THE PROVINCE

OCT. 27, 2005 • WEEKLY NEWSLETTER OF THE PROVINCE OF THE SACRED HEART • 02:17

The Franciscan Spirit Is Alive and Well in St. Louis

Donald Lachowicz OFM

On Sunday, October 2, 2005, the friars at the **Franciscan Connection** honored some of their



Nathan McNally OFM presiding at the Eucharist

long-time friends, volunteers, and benefactors with the agency's first *Franciscan Spirit Awards*.

It was standing room only in the friars' choir at St. Anthony of Padua Friary in St. Louis where everyone gathered for a celebration of the Eucharist.

Nathan McNally OFM, a member of the Stone-by-Stone Project Board, presided, reflecting on how the awardees live out the Peace Prayer's call that "it is in giving that we receive."

After Communion, **Leo Geurts OFM**, executive director, and **Donald Lachowicz OFM**, home maintenance coordinator, called each honoree up to receive a token of appreciation.

Among the honorees was the province's current web master, **Jack Hardesty OFM**, who helped develop the Franciscan Connection webpage on the province site: www.thefriars.org/connection.

Also honored were the Secular Franciscans of St. Anthony Fraternity who regularly help with bulk mailings and adopting a family for Christmas.

Mickey Hughes, a 1983 Quincy University alumna, was acknowledged for involving her husband and two kids in several of the home repair projects.

Likewise, the QU Alumni Association was honored for their active support of the Franciscan Connection and for their help organizing an annual *QU Alumni Day of Service* in St. Louis.

Friend-Raising Committee member, Mike Dietrich, QU '98, accepted the award on behalf of the university.

Other awardees included: Nelda Devine, Marie Mergel, and Mary Jane Kubik, long-time clerical volunteers recruited way back by **Tom**



Donald Lachowicz OFM presenting the *Franciscan Spirit Award* to Jack Hardesty OFM

Shaughnessy OFM and Gratian Nosal OFM.

Benefactors acknowledged were Sister Patricia Paczosa OSF, who was honored for her years of work at St. Blaise School, “pinching pennies for the poor,” and Assumption Church for its regular tithing contributions.

The Stone-by-Stone Project also recognized some of its supporters: Retirees Wally Feld (of St. Francis of Assisi Parish) and Marty Grade were honored for sharing their talents out on weekly repair projects. Similarly, College Hauling & Disposal, Ron Oberkrom & Son Plumbing, and New City Fellowship Church were recognized for their help with Brother Donald’s bigger home renovation endeavors.

Provincial Minister **John Doctor OFM** concluded the ceremony with words of appreciation for the many ways that the Connection’s friends, coworkers, volunteers and benefactors inspire us friars by the Franciscan witness they give to the world.

The celebration continued in the friars’ dining room where Food Service Consultants’ Kim Douglas prepared a delicious feast of snacks and goodies.

Many of the guests stayed into the evening for a celebration of the Transitus and spaghetti dinner organized by the St. Anthony Fraternity of Secular Franciscans. It truly was a day of Franciscan Spirit!

The Franciscan Connection is a small, storefront outreach center which provides emergency assistance (i.e. utilities, shoe vouchers, school supplies, etc.) and minor home repairs for low-income families in South St. Louis.

It was established by the Franciscan Friars of Sacred Heart Province in 1991 to respond to the growing needs of the neighborhood surrounding St. Anthony of Padua Parish, friary, and provincial headquarters.



The Staff of Franciscan Connection (L to R): Don Lachowicz OFM (Home Maintenance Coordinator), Gregory Bumm OFM (Associate Director), Leo Geurts OFM (Executive Director), and Annie McCance (Home Maintenance Assistant)

QUINCY FRIARY MAKES PLANS FOR ALL SOULS OBSERVANCE

Ed Arambasich OFM

Holy Cross Friary in Quincy is sponsoring a special evening of prayer on November 2.

The friars, the QU students, and members of the Quincy Fire Department will take part.

The observance begins with supper at the friary for friars and firefighters.

At 6:00pm Vespers will be celebrated in the Quincy University Chapel.

Following evening prayer there will be an auto procession to St. Boniface Cemetery.

Upon arrival the prayer will be continued with a walking procession into the cemetery to remember the OFM friars, the SSND sisters, and the 12 children of the 1899 St. Francis School tragedy.

Afterwards the group will proceed to Quincy’s Central Fire House to honor firefighters who died in the line of duty.

A reception will follow.

PLEASE PRAY FOR...

☀️ ...**Bob Benhen OFM**, who suffered a serious stroke on Tuesday, October 18, after experiencing a few mini-strokes;

† ...**Gilbert McEvoy**, 91, of Holy Name Province – serving the Church and the Order for 68 years as a cook around the province and as guestmaster at St. Anthony Shrine in Boston from 1966 to 1994 – who died on October 18, 2005, at Holy Name Friary, Ringwood, NJ;

† ...**James Mulhern OFM**, 94, of Holy Name Province – a friar priest serving the Church and the Order for 66 years mainly in New York City – who died on October 24 in St. Petersburg, FL.

DID YOU KNOW?

▶ The province’s web site – www.thefriars.org – posts the “*Around the Province*” every week; it is available to be read and, if desired, to be printed out.

▶ **Bob Pawell OFM** will be presenting an “*Advent Morning of Reflection*” on Saturday, December 10, from 9:00am to 1:00pm at Our Lady of Sorrows Basilica in Chicago for members of secular orders throughout the Chicago area. The topic will be “Mary in Advent.”

SURVIVING THE RAVAGES OF HURRICANE KATRINA

The SFO in Mississippi

Patty Palmer SFO

Knowing full well I am so blessed in this miserable situation, still I am devastated and exhausted.

Perhaps, more of the second part.

My husband Bob is healing nicely now after a dreadful fall from a ladder, trying to repair the roof after the storm; he broke an ankle and some ribs.

Our farm is down to "the studs" in many parts of the house. There is mold – ugly mold, the toxic kind -- everywhere.

Let me start at the beginning.

On the Saturday before Katrina, Bob and I flew home from Anchorage, Alaska, after two weeks with his brothers and wives in Alaska and the inland passage.

It was in the New Orleans airport that Saturday we heard about the storm.

By Sunday morning, some of our grandchildren with their parents had evacuated to Alabama and Arkansas.

We were never under mandatory evacuation here in Poplarville (MS); the city, though, was totally trashed.

The city of Pearlinton is gone. The town of Waveland is gone. The Francis House is gone. Bay St. Louis is destroyed.

Even the bridges connecting towns are gone.

Fellow Secular Franciscans either were flooded to the roofs or have a pile of rubble where they once lived.

It's like a war zone complete with troops bearing ice and water, and yes, good will. *(continued on page 4)*

Project Lazarus

Ralph Parthie OFM

The primary goal of Susan Banks, the director at Lazarus House, is to get the place together and up and running again.

The fund that was established in the wake of Hurricane Katrina is dedicated to assist the reopening of Project Lazarus, a residence for homeless persons with AIDS, and the assistance of employees of Lazarus, many of whom lost everything in the flood and hurricane.

All of those who were residents at the time of the hurricane have been accounted for except for two, both of whom were street people when they arrived at Lazarus and weren't used to giving their real names in any situations. Residents have been found in shelters as far away as Utah.

Project Lazarus has been a community of wonderful, loving people in a place dedicated to those on the edges of society and the churches.

Many of the men and women who work there have worked there for years for minimal pay. They have helped sick people who have often been rejected, ignored, and avoided by individuals, social agencies and churches.

I hope that we can find ways to be of assistance to these generous folks as well, *(continued on page 4)*

The Poor Clares

Charlene Toups OSC

Having put Hurricane Rita behind us, the Brenham Monastery tours of "Monastery Miniatures" reopened following closure for the hurricane.

The New Orleans sisters, meanwhile, began to look forward to the possibility of returning home.

Several people got the recommended shots in preparation for our return to New Orleans.

First, though, Sr. Eileen-Clare left for Mobile, Alabama, to prepare for hip replacement surgery, which had been postponed because of the hurricanes.

Since surgery is not possible in New Orleans at this time, she will stay with her family for surgery preparation through rehab. She is hoping that she will return to New Orleans when all is complete.

As the month of October began, a group representing both communities attended the anniversary Mass of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish nearby. It is the oldest African American congregation in Texas (over 150 years). They were among the first to offer us help when we arrived in Brenham.

The New Jersey Clares surprised the New Orleans and Brenham Clares with gift bags for each sister for the feast of St. Francis.

It was yet another tangible sign of the unity and support we have felt with all our Clare sisters around the country and the world as we make this journey.

A community decision is made to return to New Orleans on October 13 in a one-day journey. *(continued on page 4)*

SFO, continued:

What you hear and see is no dramatization. It is probably worse.

I suppose we are all in some form of shock, for some I know, loved ones, even died in their arms.

Another fellow lost his entire upper floor of his house.

On and on the stories go. No one is untouched.

For us, we stayed at the farm through it all.

The winds here were clocked at 135 with gusts up to 160, and tornados spawned by this.

What as awful experience!

Lazarus, continued:

for many of them have lost their homes and possessions.

Those who have helped need help now.

I want to publicly thank the Dignity/Chicago Community (an organization of gay, lesbian, transgendered Catholics and their families and friends) who donated over \$1100 to the Lazarus Relief Fund.

I also want to publicly thank the members of Quincy Cursillo 229 who collected \$900.00 to give to this relief effort.

Generous Catholics come in many forms and colors, and I am grateful to them all.

I spoke to Sister Ann Roddy SSND (an affiliate of our Province) at Tau House on October 11th. She and Sister Margaret Mary have returned to Tau House.

Last Sunday the members of the community who have returned to the city gathered for Mass with Father Bill.

Sister Margaret's job at the high school is not certain. Several high schools are going to try to open as one in January. As of yet they haven't decided about who will be hired. Many teachers and students have not yet returned to the city and many will probably not return at all.

Ann's ministry at Jackson Square to the artist community and her income as an artist do not exist at this time any more. At this time there is no retreat ministry to persons with AIDS.

In the French Quarter there is electricity and water (which is not yet safe to drink). So at this point the sisters have little or no income from the usual places.

They will try to remain available as a place of welcome for those who return to the city.

Ann isn't sure what the future holds, but they will try to continue to hold the community together as a beacon of hope for others.

One regular community member (Patrick) has not yet been located.

Everyone else has been found.

For more information contact

<http://relief@lazarushouse.net>

Poor Clares, continued:

But first, we focused on helping the Brenham sisters prepare for their Autumn Fest.

We were mindful all during this period of the suffering in Central America from Hurricane Stan and the flooding which followed, as well as the devastating earthquake in Pakistan/India. Then, too, there was all the flooding along the East coast following Tropical Storm Tammy and the heavy rains. The

need for a praying presence in the midst of God's people was all too apparent.

Packing and cleaning now began in earnest. In the midst of departure preparations the Brenham sisters hosted a farewell supper.

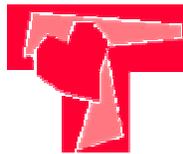
When Sr. Angela put on a tape of "When the Saints Go Marching In," the New Orleans sisters spontaneously broke into a "second line," complete with a borrowed umbrella and white tissues waving as they danced through the refectory/community room.

Our final dinner prepared by Sr. Joseph was a "real Texas dinner."

On October 13 we departed Brenham after Mass, receiving a formal blessing by Father Curt OFM and being sent off by the Brenham community and some of the friends we had made during our stay.

It was only after we received Sr. Angela's message after we returned home that we realized that our sojourn had been for the biblical 40 days!

Our little caravan headed east,



seeing evidence of Hurricane Rita as we neared Beaumont, passing through Orange and Lake Charles.

At Lafayette we took a detour onto US 90, complete with an unplanned tour of Cajun back country.

As we neared New Orleans we began to see signs of the two hurricanes, although we were passing through the less damaged and unflooded portions of Jefferson and New Orleans.

The 'Blue-Roof' was the décor of choice on many buildings in the gathering dusk.

Upon arriving at our dark house, lit with vigil lights down the hall and a large sign "WELCOME HOME, SISTERS," we arrived at the refectory where David, his girlfriend Shelley and her adopted child Sasha awaited us.



David said that since we left by candlelight, we should return by candlelight. Then, with the electricity turned on, they served us a delicious pasta salad with wine to toast our homecoming and a cake baked by Shelley's Mom.

Hurricane stories were swapped into the evening.

When supper was over David formally turned the house back over to us with the ringing of the monastery prayer bell, which he

had rung every morning while he was living there. Sasha "helped."

Our evacuee friends that traveled with us returned to check their homes and/or businesses.

We unpacked and began to get the monastery back in order from 'hurricane mode.'

A team went about de-molding the refrigerator and freezers.

We began to hear from friends and neighbors that had returned from their own journeys as part of the *diaspora* and of others who would not be returning.

Over the last days we have celebrated many "firsts" – first mail (picked up general delivery style), first delivery of a newspaper, etc., each event marking a little step of the city coming back to life.

We still await our first Mass at the monastery, as we must still go out to parish church for the Eucharist.

We have also begun to receive requests for housing from sisters whose convent is not habitable, also from a former community member, Veronica Stevenson, whose home was badly damaged.

It is two months since we heard of the formation of a new storm called Katrina. We end as we began, for all through this week we have been monitoring Wilma, and praying for the people of the Caribbean, the Yucatan and now Cuba and Florida, where the storm is expected to strike tonight.

"There and Back Again" – being a minor tale in the far larger tale of two hurricanes.

St. Peter's in the Loop

Bill Spencer OFM

One of the ways we celebrated the Feast of St Francis here at St. Peter's was to become a blessing to four



Franciscan ministries in

New Orleans which experienced the ravages of Hurricane Katrina.

The congregation's generous response to their need enabled this Church to send donations totaling \$5,170 to these brothers and sisters.

Project Lazarus, a house for indigent people with HIV/AIDS, received \$1000.

Another \$1000 was sent to St. Mary of the Angels Church, a Franciscan parish [of St. John Baptist Province] in one of the poorest areas of New Orleans.

Tau House, a ministry to those outside of the ordinary care of the Church, received \$1170.

And because we believed that their lifestyle meant they would have the least access to financial assistance, we sent the cloistered Poor Clares a contribution of \$2000.

In the name of all those who have benefited from the generosity of the people at St. Peter's and in the name of Franciscans everywhere, I extend my thanks for the gifts given and for the good will and good spirit that have made them possible.

UPDATING YOUR DIRECTORY:

Email Addresses:

1. **Vincent Elsen OFM** has canceled his email address.
2. **Bob Dentzman OFM** has a new email address: friarbob@netzero.net.

"Around the Province" is the weekly newsletter of the Franciscan Province of the Sacred Heart, edited by Benet A. Fonck OFM from the Office of Communications, 422 North Dixon Avenue, Joliet IL 60435-7050, fonckbenet@aol.com or bfonck@thefrarians.org.