

(Kindly call between 9 AM – 5 PM and 7 PM – 9 PM)

CFR FRIARIES

Convento San Antonio
011-505-2-772-2757
Apartado 283
Matagalpa, Matagalpa
Nicaragua, CA

Convento San Serafin
011-504-2-772-7998
Colonia Francisco Morazan
Apartado 331
Comayagua, Honduras, CA

Most Blessed Sacrament Friary
973-622-6622
375 - 13th Avenue
Newark, NJ 07103

Our Lady of the Angels Friary
718-993-3405
427 East 155th Street
Bronx, NY 10455

St. Columba Friary
011-44-2871-419-980
Fairview Road
Derry BT48 8NU
Northern Ireland

St. Crispin Friary
718-665-2441
420 East 156th Street
Bronx, NY 10455

St. Fidelis Friary
011-44-20-7474-0766
Killip Close
London, E161LX, England

St. Joseph Friary
212-234-9089
523 West 142nd Street
New York, NY 10031

St. Leopold Friary
914-965-8143
259 Nepperhan Avenue
Yonkers, NY 10701

St. Mary of the Assumption Friary
914-963-0250
180 South Street
Newburgh, NY 12550

St. Michael Friary
973-345-7082
190 Butler Street
Paterson, NJ 07524

St. Patrick Friary
011-353-61-458-071
64 Delmege Park
Moyross, Limerick City, Ireland

St. Pio Friary
011-44-1274-721-989
Sedgefield Terrace
Westgate, Bradford, BD12RU
England

San Juan Diego Friary
505-990-3001
404 San Mateo Blvd., NE
Albuquerque, NM 87108

San Junipero Serra Friary
1631 62nd Avenue
Oakland, CA 94621



The Friar's Sack

Dear friends,

May the Lord give you his peace! Please be assured that we have continued to hold you, the Church, and the world in our prayers during this uniquely difficult time. While we deeply resonate with your struggles, of which we share in many ways, we nonetheless stay anchored in our hope of God's goodness, presence, and work in all things. One particular fruit of God's grace from this past year is the generous

invitation we have received from Bishop Michael Barber to open a friary in his diocese, the Diocese of Oakland, California. Our new friary will be named after the Franciscan Missionary of California, San Junipero Serra.

The Diocese has been generous as well in providing us with a former convent and through kindly offering financial assistance to make the necessary renovations including new electrical wiring, heating system, and other repairs and adjustments to make it suitable for a friary. We are, however, responsible for a significant contribution to the various projects.

We would invite you to prayerfully consider reviewing and supporting our renovations to San Junipero Serra Friary by visiting our begging campaign at: www.wonderwe.com/mtd88b5 or by searching "WonderWe Oakland Friary."

We thank you again for your ongoing support and assure you of our ongoing prayers for your needs and those of your loved ones.

Christ's peace,
Br. Peter Westall, CFR
General Steward

For information on the Franciscan Sisters
of the Renewal, contact:

Mother Clare Matthiass, CFR
Our Lady Queen of Angels Convent
232 East 113th St., New York, NY 10029

Preaching requests: 718-863-8040
Vocation line: 718-828-4104
www.franciscansisterscfr.com



In an effort to provide
spiritual accompaniment
through the CFR charism,
we've created a new weekly
podcast called, "The Poco a
Poco Podcast." The podcast
can be found on all major
podcast platforms including
Apple Podcasts and Spotify.

"Contemplation 2020 - One Hour" by Fr. Stan Fortuna, CFR

For quite a while I had a persisting desire to record some kind of "one hour" project to help inspire prayer for a stretch of one hour. Initially this desire was ignited by a challenge put forth by Jesus in Matthew 26:40, "Could you not watch with me for one hour?" I intended to call the project "Contemplation" and I started developing melodies and arrangements in the beginning of 2018.

In light of the events of 2020, amongst many other things, I was afforded extended periods of time to be able to complete the project and rename it: Contemplation 2020 - One Hour. With 2020 posturing itself - finally - in the rear view mirror, contemplative moments will prove themselves to be not only beneficial, but maybe even necessary as we enter 2021 and beyond. I hope that there's at least a moment hidden somewhere in the 11 movements of music that will ignite and kindle contemplative fire.

For Vocational Interest:

Fr. Angelus Montgomery, CFR • vocation line: 212-281-4355

St. Joseph Friary, 523 W 142nd Street, New York, NY 10031

To Send Donations:

Fr. Mark-Mary Ames, CFR • 718-402-8255 • CFR Office, PO Box 912, Bronx, NY 10455-0912

(checks for the poor should be made payable to Franciscan Renewal Ministries, all other checks to Franciscan Friars of the Renewal)

General Servant (Superior):

Fr. John Paul Ouellette, CFR • 347-374-5112 • CFR Office, 421 East 155th Street, Bronx, NY 10455

www.franciscanfriars.com



Be Alert and Not Alarmed

By Fr. John Paul Ouellette, CFR

On a very brisk Saturday morning this past November I found myself aboard a vintage red firetruck in Chicago. On board as well was our newly ordained Bishop Bob, who was bestowing blessings upon his West Humboldt Park community. It was an appropriate place to be—His first episcopal homily was fiery! He adamantly exhorted us to pay attention to the dangers of fear and complacency. "Even though we see our country and Church in crisis", he exclaimed, "we are not going to call 911. Do not be alarmed, rather 'Be Alert' and respond to the inspiration and fire of the Holy Spirit. Each one of us has a definitive role to play in the betterment of our current world conditions."

These are words of someone who has had the foresight to challenge and reform negative circumstances no matter what he faced, and while he is an extraordinarily gifted force for change, Bishop Bob's words are indicative of the grain of faith we must all cling to in these crucial times. While we may not be assigned to preach and lead large flocks, like this gifted man, it does not diminish our obligation to be alert to what the Spirit is saying.

As Bishop Bob is a native of Stamford, Connecticut I can only imagine the culture shock he must have endured when first assigned to a then characteristically turbulent area of the South Bronx. But what is truly encouraging about this man is that, like ourselves, he was also facing the uncertainties of a social climate filled with a sense of fear, loss and civil unrest. But rather than allow the harshness of the bleak situation he faced to be a deterrent, Father Bob held on to the conviction that with God all things were, in truth, very possible. And so, with seven other determined brothers in faith, he helped establish our little CFR community as well as Padre Pio Men's Shelter in 1987.


Father Bob is renowned for his tireless efforts to console those in hopeless states, heal the bruised and broken, and restore places which have been deprived and destroyed. A perfect example would be St. Anthony's Residence, which he established in 1994, turning a burned out six floor tenement into a home for 65 formerly homeless men. Then responding to an invitation by Francis Cardinal George in 2005, he went to an area in Chicago that, like the South Bronx, was in need of rejuvenation. Again, he demonstrated sure-fire resolve and quickly got to work to serve the poor and needy. Along with various corporal works of mercy, he also founded a religious order, the Franciscans of the Eucharist of Chicago, to teach the Catholic Faith in schools. He's a man of vision who gets things done, inspiring others to trust in God.

On the evening of his Mass of Thanksgiving, Bishop Bob reminded each one of us that, "you have someone to call upon." It is his strongest conviction that, if we as a body of believers rustle up the courage to simply pray, wait, and open our "ears to hear," God will

guide us by his Holy Spirit in the midst of this and every storm. When we allow fears or doubts to govern our thoughts, we will inevitably miss out on the lessons to be learned in each of our particular problems. In the midst of a global upheaval of enormous proportion, I am acutely aware of the nature of our problems. But more so, I am encouraged by the timing of the promotion to auxiliary bishop of this resilient man of God. It speaks to me of Providence, as well as stability and growth, which are always possible no matter what we may be forced to endure.

On my return to the Bronx, while recalling these events and my thoughts to a friend at St Anthony's, Ross Anderson, he reminded me of the alarming situation I encountered when I first arrived there in 1995. My first visit to the friars was to Our Lady of Guadalupe Friary at the north end of the number 4 train. When the subway train came out of the underground tracks onto the elevated rails, my mind and heart began racing. I witnessed NYC graffiti, razor wire, and metal gates securing each of the store fronts. I had never seen razor wire on homes before. In my hometown of Reno, Nevada you only see it around penitentiaries. Yet, it was in the Bronx, in need of rejuvenation, that I found the Franciscan Friars whom I would eventually join in September, 1996.

In my time with the friars I have witnessed that not only are we not without hope, but we are clear on the fact that we have a place and mission in these our times. If we can embrace all things with a spirit of gratitude, God will guide us to the solutions to our problems. "Devote yourselves to prayer keeping alert in it with thanksgiving" (Col. 4:2). Using our "eyes to see" and our "ears to hear" then, this is truly and fundamentally paradoxical. It implies that all things are amiss, and that there are, or will be, causes for concern in day-to-day living and unexpected events. But if we use Godly discernment with even the smallest seed of faith, we are never forsaken in Christ.

In the midst of these arduous times, may we fully rely upon the Lamb of God who, born in a manger, beaten, bloodied, hung on a cross, and rose, has bestowed hope upon our hearts that cannot be deterred or defeated. If we hold dearly to the promise of our salvation and the inherent Presence of Him who lives now and forevermore, we will pass through the suffering places we are facing, all the while knowing that He will sustain us, until we are united with Him in endless joy. 





▲Please join us in praying for these ten young men (our first double digit class in over a decade!) as they begin to share our way of life as postulants. (From l/r: Zach Indovino, NY; Joe Young, OH; Gaetano Carvelli, PA; Esteban Carchi Mora, Ecuador; Jay Danos, LA; Michael Kearney, MA; Aidan Jones, MN; Gunnar Davison, CA; James Buresh, NE; Brennan Roche, NE)

▼With praise to God, we celebrate Christ’s victory in the hearts of these young men who have joined our Community as novices, truly seeking, like Saint Francis, the Lord’s will for their lives. (From l/r: Fr. Innocent, Postulant Director; Br. Mariano of Sao Salvador; Br. Séamus Mary of Westford; Br. Nathanael Marie of Nokesville; Fr. John Paul, General Servant; Br. Juanmaría of San Pedro Sula; Br. Phillip John of Tarpon Springs; Br. Simeon Miriam of Hazleton; Br. John Francis of Appleton; Fr. Francis Mary, Novice Master)



Our mission could not come to fulfillment without the generous support, encouragement, and hands-on help we receive from countless friends and volunteers. As we journey together we truly become one big family. For us, the difficulty of this past year has been punctuated by the loss of two members of our extended friar-family, Murray Ellman (far left, above) and Maria Joe (far left, below). Both passed away from COVID-19 this year. Please join us in praying for these two souls so dear to our community and all others who have passed away or lost loved ones this year.



While the way we accompany the poor has had to be adjusted because of the pandemic, the friars have nonetheless, prayerfully and carefully, been able to serve our neighbours by putting into practice creative charity. Pictured are Fr. Christopher Joseph and a volunteer making a meal-to-go for the poor at Friar Benet’s Kitchen in Canning Town, England.



I remember it all very vividly. I was in eighth grade, mindlessly flipping through the channels. I finally stopped on one channel, struck by the fact that there was a monk-looking-dude hosting a show and talking about the Faith. Even more shocking...I was actually interested in what he was saying! It was like I had found something I didn’t even know I was searching for.

I finally turned it off, feeling ridiculous and thinking I must be the only middle-schooler in the world watching this. But sure enough, I went back and watched some more the next day, and the next, and so on. It was through continued watching of EWTN that I was better catechized and first became familiar with the CFRs. After seeing Fr. Benedict and some of the other Brothers on TV, I remember having the feeling that I was going to meet these guys one day. I brushed it off, because growing up in Wisconsin, New York City was another world away.

Not too long after, I went to confession for the first time in eight years. Walking back to my pew, I realized a new person had just walked out of that confessional. It was one of the most tangible experiences of God’s presence in my life: I knew I was loved unconditionally, and I knew God had a purpose for me. I remember thinking that if I could give my life for one thing, it would be to bring others to that same love and mercy of Jesus Christ.

I ended up joining the college seminary for my diocese. A fellow seminarian was looking to join the CFRs after graduating and invited me and another friend to visit the Friars with him over spring break. I remember walking into St. Joseph Friary in Harlem and feeling immediately at home. I knew that these were guys I could pray, work, and have a good laugh with; men that I wanted to join on the path to holiness. Although I was not ready to enter the Community at the time, the next several years of study, work, prayer, spiritual direction, and learning to allow the Lord into my struggles, helped to mold and mature me. In His mercy, this allowed for a greater openness in my heart to receive the gift of this life.

-Br. Matthew Solanus, CFR

Congratulations Bishop Bob Lombardo

Robert Lombardo was born in Stamford, Connecticut. In 1980, he entered the Capuchins, taking his perpetual vows in 1986. He is one of the eight founders of the Community of Franciscan Friars of the Renewal. Those eight friars desired to work more definitively for personal and communal reform within the Church. Fr. Bob served in numerous capacities for the Community over an eighteen-year period in the South Bronx. In 2005, he responded to an invitation by Francis Cardinal George to open Our Lady of the Angels Mission Center for the poor on the west side of Chicago. “Not to the East, but to the West” was Pope Leo XIII’s request to Saint Mother Cabrini, who exchanged her dreamed-of mission to China for the reality on New York City. Fr. Bob similarly responded to Cardinal George’s request to exchange New York City for Chicago (where Mother Cabrini died in 1917).

Nineteen years to the day, I recall the telephone call from the FDNY Engine 71-Ladder 55 fire station around the corner from St. Crispin Friary. In the midst of the horror and evil that occurred at Ground Zero in NYC, Fr. Bob set out with courage alongside the firefighters and first responders in order to bring Christ’s priestly presence into the maelstrom of that day and the following weeks. It was a work of providence that his episcopal call came on September 11th. In 2020, a year of pandemic, not only in the United States but worldwide, unrest in western civilization and in the Church, we are in the midst of a great confusion that arises when there is a need for great boldness and renewal. The Lord called Fr. Bob to respond courageously, in the midst of the unknown.

On November 13, 2020, (feast of Saint Mother Cabrini) Fr. Bob was ordained an auxiliary bishop of Chicago. Let us remember him in our prayers.

