

## Franciscans 1209

The Capuchin Franciscans trace their heritage back 800 years to the little poor man of Assisi, whom history knows as perhaps the most perfect imitator of Jesus Christ. St. Francis of Assisi followed Jesus' footsteps so closely and loved humanity and all creation so deeply that he is known as "the universal saint." He began the Franciscans – the Order of Friars Minor, literally "lesser brothers" – in 1209 and quickly gave them a Rule of Life, which the Pope verbally approved in 1221. Along with St. Clare of Assisi, Francis co-founded the Poor Clares and established the Secular Franciscan Order.

## The Capuchin Reform 1528

The Capuchin Franciscan Order began in 1528 as a renewal of the Order of Friars Minor. The friars of this reform movement wanted a life more focused on prayer and a stricter observance of poverty. These men were also fervent preachers of the Gospel and compassionate servants of the sick and suffering in their day. Attracting followers through their preaching, prayer, austerity, and service among the poor, the new reform movement grew rapidly and soon spread throughout all of Europe. The Capuchin Reform movement was given official approval by the Church in Pope Clement VII's Papal Bull, *Religionis Zelus* on 3 July 1528, which established them as an independent part of the First Order within the Franciscan Family. The Capuchins truly captured the hearts of the people when the Black Plague struck Western Europe killing millions. While many of the clergy and religious fled the catastrophe, the Capuchins remained to care for the people. Over 2,000 friars died from the plague as Martyrs of Charity. Today, the Capuchins number about 10,400 friars worldwide.

## The Capuchins in Mid-America

The following skeletal history of the Capuchin Franciscans in the center of the United States of America was written by Fr. Blaine Burkey, O.F.M.Cap., in 1997 and most recently updated by him in 2022.

### A Pre-History 1772-1977

Capuchins first came to the middle of the present United States in the late colonial period. The earliest European settlers in this area included **FRENCH** Capuchins who served as the first Catholic pastors of St. Louis, Mo. Fr. Valentin of Neufchateau, O.F.M.Cap., was there already in 1772, and that same year Fr. Hilaire of Genevaux, O.F.M.Cap.—the first prothonotary apostolic in what is now the U.S.—became pastor of nearby Ste. Genevieve. When Valentine left in 1775, Hilaire cared for the St. Louisans until the 1776 arrival of Fr. Bernard of Limpach, O.F.M.Cap., from the **BELGIAN** Province. Bernard cared for not only St. Louis, but also Florissant, Carondelet, St. Charles, and Portage des Sioux. He was there until 1789. **IRISH** Capuchin Thomas Flynn also had the care of St. Louis and its dependencies from 1806 till 1808. It was 69 years then till the friars returned to Mid-America. **RHINE-WESTPHALIAN** Capuchins from Cumberland MD, were the first to come. Anton Schuermann and six other friars took over the care of St.

Mary's Parish, Metamora, Ill., on July 25, 1877; and in the spring of the following year, the Westphalians also took charge of Sacred Heart Parish in Peoria. That same spring, **BAVARIAN** Capuchin Hyacinth Epp, who had led a group of Capuchins to Pittsburgh, PA, in 1873, visited the Volga-German settlements in western Kansas; and in May, 1878, he sent Matthew Hau and Anastasius Joseph Mueller to Victoria to begin St. Fidelis Friary and care for all the Catholic stations between Russell and the Colorado border. The Bavarian and Westphalian Capuchins in the **UNITED STATES OF AMERICA** joined forces in 1881, and on July 16, 1882, Pope Leo XIII authorized the establishment of the Capuchin Province of Pennsylvania. Thus on August 7 of that year, the Pennsylvania Province became one of the first two Capuchin provinces outside of Europe. The other was the Capuchin Province of Calvary, which while begun as a community already in the 1850s, was established as a province the very same day.

### **Beginning of St. Conrad's Province of Mid-America (1977)**

For the next 95 years, Mid-America was part of the Pennsylvania Province which extended from the East coast to the Kansas-Colorado border, a distance of over 1,500 miles. Already as early as 1915, there was talk of dividing the province into two more manageable-sized territories. This began to take form Feb. 6, 1963 when Colorado was added to the province's territory because of "the possible eventual need of additional metropolitan areas if the western part of the Pennsylvania Province is ever to be raised to the status of a province." The request for this was made by a provincial council on which the first and second councilors had served for many years in the West: Frs. Thomas More Janeck and Alfred Carney. In February of 1970, this opportunity was advanced by Fr. Thomas More and his definitory, which actually sent the first three friars to serve in Archdiocese of Denver, as well as others to serve in the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas. The following year, a provincial chapter called for study of the pros and cons of division and appointed Fr. Anselm Martin as vice provincial *ad experimentum* to lead the Order in Mid-America. The next chapter in 1974 decided to start working toward a division, and in 1975 provincial councilor Fr. Vincent Rohr moved from Pittsburgh to Hays KS to begin the Office of Planning, in which he was assisted by two elected advisors, Frs. Gilmary Tallman and Thomas More Janeck. Thus it came to pass that on 12 April 1977, the Province of Pennsylvania was dissolved and two new provinces established: the one keeping the name Pennsylvania Province of St. Augustine and the other named the Mid-America Province of St. Conrad. The dividing line was the Illinois-Indiana border. Friaries in the Mid-America Province at the time were St. Fidelis, Victoria, Kan. (founded in 1878), St. Joseph, Hays, Kan. (1893), St. Mary's, Ellis Kan. (1918), St. Bonaventure, Hays, Kan. (1938), St. Charles Borromeo, St. Louis (1943), Sacred Heart, Atwood, Kan. (1952), Annunciation, Denver (1970), and Good Shepherd, Shawnee, Kan. (1972).

### **First Triennium 1977-80**

Two days after the establishment of the two new provinces (14 April 1977) the leadership of the new Mid-America province was appointed and installed by the general minister, Fr. Paschal Rywalski, at St. Fidelis Church in Victoria ("The Cathedral of the Plains," which had been dedicated in 1911).

**Vincent Rohr, provincial minister; Charles Chaput, provincial vicar; Daniel Conway**

### **Gilmary Tallman, and Thomas More Janeck, councilors.**

Fr. Vincent had served as a councilor of the undivided province, and Fr. Thomas More had earlier been its provincial minister. As convener and first president of the North American Conference (NACC), Thomas More had participated in the 1st Plenary Council of the Order in Quito, Ecuador, in 1971. Soon after the Mid-America province was established, the friary in Ellis was closed, and new friaries established in Thornton CO and Kansas City MO. The latter, St. Conrad's, became provincial headquarters. Also during the triennium, Fr. Joseph Schreck was elected vice provincial minister in Puerto Rico (1978); Fr. Berard Tomassetti, one of Mid-America's eleven Papua New Guinea missionaries, was a delegate to the 3rd Plenary Council of the Order at Mattli, Switzerland (1978); and friars in Hays began the New Year's custom of annually "wuensching" the parents of friars from Ellis County (1977). Every year since 1977, the province has had at least one meeting of all the friars in the province. **When Fr. Daniel died in 1978, Ed Judy filled the vacancy.** In 1979, an extraordinary chapter was held to prepare for the first ordinary chapter by adopting procedures for running the chapter. As the province was considering asking to have universal suffrage at the 1980 ordinary chapter, all were invited to the 1979 chapter and also delegates were chosen following the procedures of the old Pennsylvania Province. Every decision was submitted to two votations: one by the delegates, and one by all the solemnly professed. As it turned out, there was a perfect correspondence between the two sets of votes. Seven friars died during the triennium: Frs. Richard Bollig, Daniel Conway, Raphael Engel, Robert Meis, Aquinas Patch, Camillus Schmidt, and Callistus Rectenwald.

### **Second Triennium 1980-83**

Mid-America's first ordinary chapter (1980), with special permission from the Vatican, was the first one in the entire Order to enjoy universal suffrage. Western America was the second to use it, and at the next general chapter in 1982, the possibility was added to the constitutions. Today the method is in rather common use worldwide.

**Vincent Rohr, provincial minister; Charles Chaput, provincial vicar; David Gottschalk, Michael Scully, Ed Judy, councilors.**

The friars in St. Louis moved from St. Charles Borromeo Friary to the new St. Patrick's Friary (2 Aug. 1981), and St. Crispin Friary was begun in St. Louis at 3739 Westminster Pl. (June 1982). Also Fr. Thomas More Janeck began his extensive ministry to migrant workers (1982). Internationally, Fr. Charles Chaput represented NACC at the 4th Plenary Council of the Order at Rome (1981), and Frs. Vincent Rohr and Dominic Unger participated in the General Chapter there (1982). Three friars died during the triennium: Jordan Hammel, Flavian Meis, and Dominic Unger.

### **Third Triennium 1983-86**

**Charles Chaput, provincial minister; Gene Emrisek, provincial vicar; David Gottschalk, Earl Meyer, Michael Scully, councilors.**

As in the first two trienniums, the chapter was held at Thomas More Prep-Marian. In 1983, the provincialate was moved from Kansas City to St. Elizabeth Friary in Denver, Fr. Gene moved there a provincial executive secretary and treasurer, a provincial advisory board was established, and Fr. Christopher Popravak began the postulancy program in Kansas City. Fr.

John Lager started the provincial development office on 17 Sept. 1984, Fr. Harvey Dinkel became executive secretary in 1985, and the provincial assembly room in Victoria was completed that same year. Since then practically all provincial chapters and most provincial assemblies have been held there. During the triennium, Fr. Simeon Gallagher began his ministry as an itinerant preacher (1983), Fr. Steve Reichert was elected regular superior of the Capuchins in Papua New Guinea (1984), Bro. Joseph McGlynn at Kansas City became the province's first lay guardian (1984). In 1984, the Province entered into a unique partnership with the Salina Diocese by being co-owners of Thomas More Prep-Marian in Hays. Also the Catholic Campus Center at Ft. Hays State University was dedicated (17 June 1984), the province sent Bill Kraus and Didacus Dunn to lead Samaritan Shelter (1 Sept. 1984), and the postulancy program moved to St. Louis (1985). Sister Death did not visit us during the triennium.

#### **Fourth Triennium 1986-89**

**Charles Chaput, provincial minister; Charles Polifka, provincial vicar; Earl Meyer, David Gottschalk, Joseph McGlynn, councilors.**

Joseph was the first lay friar on the province's council. The 1986 chapter voted overwhelmingly for a preferential option for the poor and also called for rounding out the Franciscan charism by bringing Capuchin Poor Clares into the province. Fr. Harvey Dinkel became also provincial treasurer in 1986. During 1986, friaries in Thornton CO, Atwood KS, and Shawnee KS were closed, the postulancy program moved back to Kansas City, St. Crispin's Friary moved from 3739 to 3727 Westminster Pl., and St. John's Friary was begun in Lawrence KS (15 July). Also during the triennium, the Capuchin Poor Clares arrived from Irupuato, Mexico, and began Our Lady of Light Monastery (17 Nov. 1988). Friars began ministering at Cure d'Arts parish in Denver (1986), St. John's Church, Lawrence (1986), and the Catholic campus center at Haskell Indian Nations University (1986), and the new Samaritan House was dedicated (20 Nov.). David Songy was commissioned for service in Papua New Guinea in 1987 and was there till 1994. **When Fr. Charles Chaput was named Bishop of Rapid City in 1988, Fr. Charles Polifka became acting provincial.** Most of the Mid-American friars attended Bishop Chaput's episcopal ordination in Rapid City (26 July 1988), Fr. Vincent Rohr became the first executive director of NACC (1988), Bro. Mark Schenk was named English-speaking Secretary for the Order's General Curia at Rome (1988), and Fr. Charles Polifka attended the General Chapter at Rome (1988). Two friars died during the triennium: Alvin Werth and Valerian Brungardt.

#### **Fifth Triennium 1989-1992**

**Charles Polifka, provincial minister; David Gottschalk, provincial vicar; Bill Kraus, Gene Emrisek, Joseph McGlynn, councilors.**

Later that year, the Poor Clares were encloistered (May 21). During the triennium, the friars at Lawrence moved into St. Conrad Friary (15 July 1990), Fr. Berard received the 1st Conrad Key of Recognition for his development work in Papua New Guinea (1991), Immaculate Conception Friary was begun at Arnold MO (21 June 1991), the Alverne Chapel (a Capuchin ministry since 1961) closed in St. Louis, and Fr. Canice Froehlich and Fr. Simon Conrad moved their confession ministry to St. John the Evangelist Church (1991). In Papua New Guinea, Fr. Pete Meis was elected regular superior of the Custody (1990). Five friars joined the Eternity Fraternity: Leo Leiker, Mark Linenberger, Arthur Limbacher, Solanus Lamson, and Clement Naef.

### **Sixth Triennium 1992-95**

**Charles Polifka, provincial minister; David Gottschalk, provincial vicar; Joseph McGlynn, Duane Reinert, Felix Petrovsky, councilors.**

At the chapter, Bro. Benignus Scarry received the 2nd Conrad Key of Recognition for his work with Habitat for Humanity. At the assembly in 1994, Fr. Thomas More Janeck was given the 3rd Conrad Key for his work with migrant field workers. During the triennium, St. Elizabeth Friary was closed, the friars and provincialate moved to the new St. Francis of Assisi Friary (1 June 1993), numerous friars helped with Denver's World Youth Day in 1993, and the first Capuchin Friars' Gala was held (29 Apr. 1994). Elsewhere, Fr. Peter Meis was named first vice-provincial minister of the Capuchins in Papua New Guinea (11 Feb. 1993), Fr. Charles Polifka and Bro. Joseph McGlynn represented NACC at the first ever (and only) Assembly of the Order at Lublin, Poland (1982), Fr. Charles attended the General Chapter in Rome (1994), and Bro. Mark Schenk was elected vicar of the fraternity of the General Curia in Rome (23 Jan. 1993) and later Acting Secretary General of the Order (1994). Both of these were firsts for a lay friar. During the triennium, Mother Josephina Vargas and Fr. Timothy Gottschalk died.

### **Seventh Triennium 1995-98**

**David Gottschalk, provincial minister; Gene Emrisek, vicar; Mike Scully Jim Moster, Duane Reinert, councilors.**

Fr. Michael Scully received the 4th Key of Recognition for his service of the poor and evangelization of youth (1995), and Bishop Firmin Schmidt the 5th one for his evangelization and development work in Papua New Guinea (1996). During the triennium, Fr. David Songy began the Capuchin Center for Spiritual Life at Victoria (1995), Fr. David Gottschalk (as NACC president) and Bro. Mark Schenk participated in the International Congress on Lay Expression of the Capuchin Vocation (Sept. 1996), and the renovated friary at Victoria was rededicated (1997). St. Bonaventure Friary (started in 1938), which had been moved to the top floor of the Comeau Catholic Campus Center in 1994, was closed altogether (21 June 1997). Fr. Stephen Reichert was consecrated second Bishop of Mendi (7 May 1996), Fr. Blaine Burkey began Capuchins-on-Line International (1996), Bishop Charles Chaput was installed as Archbishop of Denver (7 Apr. 1997), and Fr. Berard Tomassetti published *Papua New Guinea Encore* (1997). Sister Mary Carmen Ordoñez, Br. Brendan Tighe, and five friars (Neal Mahaffey, Vincent Rohr, Rene Bowers and Fidelis McManus) died during the triennium.

### **Eighth Triennium 1998-2001**

**David Gottschalk, provincial minister; Gene Emrisek, provincial vicar; Michael Scully, Frank Grinko, Blaine Burkey, councilors**

At the chapter, Fr. Paulinus Karlin was given the 6th Conrad Key of Recognition for his saving & recycling efforts, his services of the poor, and his peacemaking, and Fr. Bill Kraus was commissioned for missionary service in northern Mexico. That same year, Fr. David Gottschalk represented NACC at the 6th Plenary Council of the Order at Assisi. In 1999, Bro. Gerald Wintz was commissioned for missionary service in Papua New Guinea, Fr. Blaine Burkey began the province's web site at [www.midamcaps.org](http://www.midamcaps.org) and [www.capuchins.org](http://www.capuchins.org), (23 Apr. 1999), and the province dedicated a new friary (Fraternidad San Antonio) to replace Annunciation Friary,

Denver (3 May 1999). About the same time, Frs. Felix Petrovsky and others began a year's ministry of Reconciliation Missions throughout northeastern Colorado. This ministry was well received, and was renewed the following year. In subsequent years it was restricted to Advent and Lent, and though eventually diminished in extent continued in one form or another up until 2007. Pope John Paul II awarded Fr. Thomas More Janeck the *Cross pro Ecclesia et Pontifice* in 2000 for his work with the migrant workers. That same year, the friars left the care of Cure d'Ars parish in Denver (after 14 years) and the Catholic Campus Center at Ft. Hays State University, Hays (after 83 or more years); and Fr. David attended the General Chapter. Harold Vogler died during the triennium.

### **Ninth Triennium 2001-2004**

**Michael Scully, provincial minister; Gene Emrisek, provincial vicar; Frank Grinko, Charles Polifka, Mark Schenk, councilors.**

The province gave Valentine Young the 7th Conrad Key for his service of the poor in downtown St. Louis. Soon afterwards a decision made by the previous administration to return Immaculate Conception Church in the Arnold to the diocesan clergy was implemented (24 June 2001). Plans quickly unfolded for a new ministry in Colorado Springs CO. Solanus Casey Friary was begun 10 Aug. 2001 with five friars, all of whom began working at the new Catholic Center which the province began at The Citadel Mall (23 Nov.) to offer Mass, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and pastoral counseling to the mall clientele. In 2002, the province celebrated its silver jubilee with a special assembly at the Catholic Life Center in Wichita. Fr. Robert L. McCreary of the new Pennsylvania Province led the friars in a mini-retreat, which was followed by a festive celebration. For the occasion, Fr. Blaine Burkey was commissioned to produce a commemorative booklet, *Mid-America Ho! the pilgrimage goes on....* The province also had five regional celebrations held with those whom friars serve from St. Louis to Denver. That year President George W. Bush appointed Archbishop Chaput to a four-year term on the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, and Regis University gave Fr. Ed Judy its *Civis Princeps* Award for his work with the homeless. A second house, dedicated to Padre Pio, was established in Colorado Springs in 2003 to accommodate post-novitiate students. Four friars joined the Eternity Fraternity: Christian Fey, Ed Judy, Paulinus Karlin and Berard Tomassetti.

### **Tenth Triennium 2004-2007**

**Michael Scully, provincial minister; Mark Schenk, provincial vicar; Frank Grinko, John Cousins, and Jim Moster, councilors.**

Fr. Ed Judy posthumously received the 8th Conrad Key of Recognition for his extraordinary efforts on behalf of the poor and marginalized, and Catholic Charities named an house in Sheridan for the care of abused women the Fr. Ed Judy House (2 May 2005). Plans began for the establishment for a permanent repository for archival materials which at the time were spread all across the province. Work finally began on the center in October of 2006, and it was dedicated at the end of the final meeting of the administration in on 12 Feb. 2007. In 2005, an interprovincial bonding program for men in the last months of their postulancy was moved from the Stigmata province to Victoria. This yearly program continued until 2019, having been moved in 2014 to rented facilities in St. Louis. Regis University gave its *Civis Princeps* Award for 2006 to Fr. John Lager, and the province was fully accredited by Praesidium, Inc., on July 31,

2006. In 2006, Padre Pio friary was closed and all post-novitiate formation was moved to St. Francis Friary in Denver. During the General Chapter in August of 2006, attended by Fr. Michael Scully, Bro. Mark Schenk was elected a general definator, the first lay friar known to have ever held the office in the Capuchin Order. **Fr. Frank Grinko was chosen to replace him as provincial vicar.** During the triennium, Bishop Firmin Schmidt died.

### **Eleventh Triennium 2007-2010**

Fr. Charles Polifka, provincial minister; Jim Moster, provincial vicar; Christopher Popravak, Frank Grinko, and John Schmeidler, councilors.

The 9th Conrad Key went to Fr. Regis Scanlon for his service to the imprisoned. On May 27, Fr. Christopher Popravak was named to an international committee charged with preparing proposals for updating the general constitutions at the next general chapter. Fr. John Lager became full-time vocation director, ending the Order's 23 years at the helm of Samaritan House. Bro. Jerry Wintz joined the staff at Samaritan House as a case worker, and Fr. Gene Emrisek came to Denver to serve as pastor of the province's second inner-city parish, Sacred Heart church on Larimer Street. Fr. David Songy became the counsellor at the American bishops' North American College in Rome, and Fr. Christopher Popravak replaced him as director of post-novitiate formation (2007). After much investigation, the council decided in 2007 to center its theology program at St. John Vianney Seminary in Denver. The province started planning in 2007 to establish a Capuchin formation foundation for support of the province's formation programs. Groundbreaking for a provincial administration building adjacent to St. Francis Friary and the Provincial Archives was made on Feb, 12, 2008, followed by occupancy in October. Archbishop Chaput formally blessed our new headquarters 28 April 2009. At the annual assembly in March, 2007, Barnabas Eichor and Joseph Elder became the first two friars solemnly professed in the province since 1996. Gina Francis became director of special events in 2008, and Archbishop Chaput's book, *Render Unto Caesar*, was on the New York Times best seller list for several weeks. That same year, Fr. Cyrus Gallagher began his long career of pulpit-based questing for a diverse group of non-profit charitable organizations. Extensive re-envisioning of the province began to take effect in the summer of 2008, when St. Crispin Friary in St. Louis was closed, the postulancy moved to San Antonio Friary in Denver, the post-novitiate moved to a new friary, San Damiano Friary, in Denver, and a new second friary began in rural Colorado Springs. This one dedicated to Our Lady of Angels, "focused on prayer" and, envisioned as a possible site for a future novitiate, opened July 10, 2008. At year's end, St. Patrick's Friary in St. Louis was also closed and the friars there were reassigned to four other friaries. Thus ended over 65 years of Capuchin presence in St. Louis. Preparations for the 2010 chapter began at the 2009 Easter assembly with the election of Joseph Mary Elder, Jeff Ernst, John Lager, Duane Reinert, and John Toepfer to the steering committee and the discernment of a theme focusing on identifying and clarifying the province's Capuchin values with a special emphasis on how such values are lived out concretely in fraternal life and ministries. Five friars joined the Eternity Fraternity during the triennium: Frs. Joe Schreck, Malachy McBride, Gene Pellegrino, Thomas More Janeck & Valentine Young.

### **Twelfth Triennium 2010-2013**

**Charles Polifka, provincial minister; Christopher Popravak, provincial vicar; James Moster. John Cousins, Jeff Ernst, councilors.**

Michael Suchnicki received the 10th Conrad Key of Recognition for his service of the poor and homeless in Denver. Postulancy was lengthened to two years and St. Anthony of Padua Friary opened to house the postulancy program. Stephen Reichert was installed as the Archbishop of Madang on Feb. 2, 2011, and Charles Chaput as Archbishop of Philadelphia on Sept. 8, 2011. Frs. Christopher Popravak, Gene Emrisek, and Blaine Burkey were among the founders of the Julia Greeley Guild on 1 Aug. 2011; and Blaine published *In Secret Service of the Sacred Heart: the Life and Virtues of Julia Greeley* in 2012, which set the stage for the opening of Julia's Cause for Canonization three years later. Fr. Charles attended the 2012 General Chapter at which Br. Mark was reelected to the general council, and a new set of constitutions was approved. Since they were not provisionally approved then by the Vatican till much later they are now referred to as the Constitutions of 2013. In early 2013, Solanus Casey Fraternity moved from its quarters near the Colorado Springs Cathedral into two newer buildings on University Drive. The province decided to remain in the NAPCC novitiate and Fr. Frank Grinko began preparing for the move of the novitiate to California in 2011. In 2012, Fr. Sojan Parappilly arrived from St. Francis Province in Kerala, India. Prior to this, four foreign friars had been with us for visits of several months, but Sojan became the first of a continuing list of long-term foreign guests. Sojan was aggregated to our province in 2016 and in 2018 became our first naturalized citizen. Two friars joined the Eternity Fraternity during the triennium: Sr. Mary Isabel Valtierra, and Frs. Didacus Joseph Dunn and Gregory Beyer died..

#### **Thirteenth Triennium 2013-2016**

**Christopher Popravak, provincial minister; John Cousins. Provincial vicar; David Songy, Jeff Ernst, John Lager, councilors.**

The 11th Conrad Key was given Fr. Bennett Colucci for "his advocating for the poor and building bridges to the marginalized and promoting J & P in the streets." In 2013, the friars left St. Joseph Friary and Parish in Hays after being there for 135 years. The following year, St. Fidelis Church in Victoria was named a minor basilica, and Fr. Regis Scanlon's residential program for homeless single women, Julia Greeley Home, became a reality. San Lorenzo Friary in San Antonio, Texas, began in 2015 with in an existing Dominican priory, so as to accommodate our theology students attending the Oblate School of Theology. At that same time, Fr. David Songy became president of St. Luke's Institute in Silver Springs, Maryland. In 2016 Ms. Debbie Scott was hired as director of development, and Fr. Blaine Burkey published his long-overdue history of the Capuchins' first 25 years in Papua New Guinea. During the triennium, four new long-term guest friars took up residence in the province, two from India and two from Eritrea. Sr. Mary Adriana Gonzalez and Frs. Thaddeus Posey and Simon Conrad joined the Eternity Fraternity.

#### **Fourteenth Triennium 2016-2019**

**Christopher Popravak, provincial minister; John Cousins, provincial vicar; Sojan Parappilly, Bill Kraus, and John Schmeidler, councilors.**

The 2016 Chapter provisionally approved a set of Economic Statutes for the province. Mrs. Patty Holly was hired as executive assistant to the provincial minister and Ms. Carolyn Hendrickson as our database manager. Later that year, we began another Our Lady of Angels

Friary in a parish of the same name in San Antonio, and numerous members of our province attended the Beatification of Solanus Casey in Detroit. During 2018 Fr. Christopher attended the 2018 general chapter at which amendments suggested by the Vatican to the new Constitutions of 2013 were approved. That same year, Sojan Parappilly became an American citizen, and the province published an English translation of new biography of St. Conrad (written by Br. Niklaus Kuster) so as to commemorate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our patron's birth. Seven new guest friars arrived in the province during the triennium, five from India and two from Eritrea; and Sister Death did not visit us at all.

### **Fifteenth Triennium 2019-2022**

**Mark Schenk, provincial minister, Bill Kraus, provincial vicar; Frank Grinko, Curtis Carlson, Sojan Parappilly, councilors.**

After being initially turned down by the Congregation for Religious for not being a priest, and following an intervention by Cardinal Sean O'Malley and Pope Francis, Mark's election was approved about a month later. Aside from a clerical error in 1983, Mark was the first lay friar in about 400 years to be approved by the Congregation as a major superior. The 2019 Chapter definitely approved the new Economic Statues. The province began its food truck ministry on 25 Nov. 2019 with a new vehicle and support funding from the Routzon Family Foundation. Much of this triennium was spent dealing with the height of the Covid-19 pandemic. Early in the pandemic, we began livestreaming Sunday Masses from St. Francis Friary, and daily greetings to the homebound under the banner of *Good Morning, Good People*. The provincial assemblies of 2020 and 2021 and many provincial council meetings were held by Zoom. The 27th annual Brown Robe Benefit in 2020 was a fully virtual event, the one in 2021 a blended virtual and in-person event with four satellite in-person components, and in both years the results far exceeded those of any previous Brown Robes. On 23 Mar. 2021, the province sold the land occupied by Thomas More Prep-Marian in Hays to the diocese of Salina, which had run the school since 2003, for \$475,000 in addition to the cancellation of about \$2.7 million of liabilities owed to the school. The diocese gave the land to the Capuchins in 1942 in return for the Capuchins' helping the diocese avoid insolvency by a gift of \$300,000 (equivalent to \$5 million in 2021 buying power). Also in 2021, Archbishop Chaput published his book *Things worth dying for: thoughts on a life worth living*. In May 2022, Mark and Bill attended the first Pan-American Capuchin Encounter in Sao Paolo, Brazil. During the triennium, John Schmeidler secularized with the Salina diocese; Jeff Ernst was laicized; and Sister Death took Frs. Bennett Colucci, Myron Flax and Regis Scanlon.

### **Sixteenth Triennium 2022-2025**

**Mark Schenk, provincial minister; Bill Kraus, Provincial vicar; Sojan Parappilly, Jason Moore and Joseph Mary Elder, councilors.**

Just twelve days before the 2022 Chapter, Pope Francis issued a *moto proprio* enabling the Congregation for Religious itself to approve the election of lay brothers as major superiors, and the chapter subsequently reelected Br. Mark. Soon thereafter, Mark, Bill, and Fr. Curtis Carlson attended a symposium at St. Bonaventure University on St. Francis' regula non-bullata of 1211.