

FMS RETURNED MISSIONER BECOMES FRANCISCAN FRIAR

The life of mission not only takes missionaries on a physical journey to a destination they might not expect, but also on a spiritual journey they never thought possible. For FMS Returned Missioner, Br. Paul O'Keefe, OFM, he never expected that his mission to Kenya and Jamaica in 1996 would lead him to profess solemn vows as a Franciscan friar this past August.

During the Rite of Solemn Profession held at St. Francis of Assisi Church in New York City, Br. Paul made the

commitment to live according to the rule and order of St. Francis – taking the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. He was glad that many of his friends from the FMS family were able to make the trip to witness and celebrate his profession to the Order of Friars Minor, as he dedicated himself “to the teachings of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers” (Acts 4:42).

Before his time in mission, Br. Paul anticipated adventure and being

able to make a difference in the community. As a “young, impressionable 20-something”, he was eager to find his place in the world and make his mark.

“What I got was much more,” said Br. Paul. “My eyes were opened to the reality of the poor; my awareness of the injustices that plague our world and our church made me want to be part of the solution.”

While on mission, he had the chance to live and work with Franciscan friars, which impacted his decision to join the OFM community.

“My decision to join the Friars was based, in large part, on my experience with the friars I came in contact with during my time with Franciscan Mission Service.”

Br. Paul said that his experiences as an FMS lay missionary gave him the courage to say “yes” to the possibility of choosing a life of fraternity and simplicity. His journey in the Franciscan tradition extended much longer than three months of training and three years of life overseas with FMS. For Br. Paul, this Franciscan journey has now become a lifetime commitment.



(L to R) Kim Smolik, Megeen White Testa, Claire Dignan-McGarry, Sr. Barbara Fried, SMIC, Br. Paul O'Keefe, OFM, Sr. Jean Amore, SMIC, Lorraine, Diego and Annamaria Coca-Morales (not pictured, Fr. George Corrigan, OFM, and Fr. Joe Nangle, OFM)

news

Van Donation Needed

The FMS van, a 1998 Nissan Quest that has served our missionaries-in-formation and staff well for the past ten years, is at the end of its life. If you have a van in good working condition that you no longer need, please contact Kim Smolik to discuss the possibility of a donation. We will come and pick it up, even at a far distance.

FMS Hosts the Executive Council of the SFOs

As fellow lay people living out the Franciscan charism, the Secular Franciscans represent a very integral part of the Franciscan family. Deacon Tom Bello, Secular Franciscan and FMS Board Member, leads the National Executive Council of Secular Franciscans in the United States. As part of the National Council's biannual meeting, FMS hosted ten SFO leaders for a crab feast on July 23rd. The missionaries, staff, and SFOs present engaged in meaningful dialogue on living out core Franciscan values and celebrated the growing partnership between FMS and the SFO community.

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Did You Notice?

This issue of *Franciscan World Care* is full color AND it is less expensive than our previous newsletters. We have formed a partnership with www.uprinting.com. They provide significant discounts to nonprofits. We hope you enjoy it!

Tickets still available!

20th Anniversary Benefit & Celebration

October 23, 2010 | 7:00 p.m.
Trinity College Center
125 Michigan Avenue Northeast
Washington, DC 20017



Featured Speaker: Fr. Richard Rohr, OFM
Keynote Address: How to Be in a World that Does

Richard Rohr, OFM is a Franciscan priest and founder of the Center for Action and Contemplation. He is an author and speaker internationally known for his powerful and inspirational messages.

Award Recipients: Sr. Barbara Fried, SMIC and the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception will be honored with our 6th annual Anselm Moons, OFM Award.

Fr. George Corrigan, OFM, will be honored with the 2nd Annual Joseph Nangle, OFM Lifelong Mission Award.

Details: Support and celebrate our 20 year history of serving in solidarity with poor communities around the world in the spirit of Saints Francis and Clare. The event will include live Bolivian music by Adinay and a social hour with wine and hors d'oeuvres.

How to register: Please complete the reply form included in this invitation or register online at www.franciscanmissionservice.org. Upon successful registration you will be sent an email with a confirmation number.

Cost: \$75 per person

There is limited free parking at Trinity College and on Michigan Ave., as well as a free shuttle from the Brookland/CUA Metro Station.

For more information visit our website:
www.franciscanmissionservice.org
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World care

RENEWING ONE ANOTHER IN *Lifelong Mission*
RETURNED MISSIONERS GATHER IN COLORADO

One thing is for sure – mission changes you deeply and dramatically. FMS missionaries know this right from the start. In fact, change begins the moment we first take note of that small voice inside of us calling us to mission life.

We answer that call hungry for an uncommon life in which Christ uses us for extraordinary purposes.

We go into mission aware that we will not be the same person when our term overseas is completed.

In May, thirty FMS returned missionaries gathered at St. Malo's Retreat Center in Allenspark, Colorado, for a three-day retreat entitled “Renewing One Another in Lifelong Mission”. At the largest gathering of returned missionaries to date, we shared stories and reflected on the many ways mission continues to transform us.

FMS has a unique focus on what we call “lifelong mission”. We spend a few years overseas as missionaries, but our service does not end there; in fact, that is just the beginning. FMS missionaries commit to the challenge of working in continual service to the poor by being witnesses to the love and truths we learned from our mission communities. We strive to live simply and peacefully in a world that is often just the opposite.

The group of attendees was diverse – men and women of varying ages and career paths.

Some shared stories about their life in a rural village in Guatemala, while others recounted their journeys through the bustling streets of Bangkok.

Some had returned from their overseas mission more than twenty years ago, while others had been back only five months. Despite our vast range of experiences, we learned how much we have in common. As we prayed, cried, and laughed together – we realized that we are not alone in this journey.



On the final day of the retreat, Kim Smolik, Executive Director, and FMS Board Member, Fr. George Corrigan, OFM, presented a talk about the current state of FMS. In response to their talk, we held an “open space” session where we discussed ways in which we can commit to concretely furthering the mission of FMS. Our dialogue was full of energy about the ways returned missionaries can stay connected to one another and to supporting the mission of FMS. Since the retreat communication has increased via a listserv and there are plans underway to establish regional groups of missionaries that meet more frequently.

We left the serenity of St. Malo's saddened to say goodbye to the amazing people we met there, yet at the same time energized to return to our families, friends, communities and workplaces changed once again by mission.

Katie Mulembe
Returned Missioner, Zambia 2004-2006

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Lay and Religious

Walking Side by Side

Hospitality, partnership with the poor and oppressed, and a personal “ministry of presence” are hallmarks of Franciscan mission; taken together, and especially when practiced by lay and religious missionaries working side by side, they can produce miracles. This year I traveled to Zambia and Jamaica to evaluate potential sites for our missionaries and to explore and strengthen connections



Kim Smolik with Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Nicola Girasoli and Fr. Patrick Chisanga, OFM Conv.

with Franciscan communities in mission. On both trips I saw how, in the midst of poverty and suffering, a community may still rejoice and nurture hope. This hope includes welcoming into their community “the outsider” -- lay missionaries from the United States.

Upon my arrival in Zambia, Fr. Patrick Chisanga, OFM Conv, personally picked me up at the airport, despite his busy schedule as Provincial of the expanding Zambian province. He became my guide for the week, seeming to find a way to integrate me into every aspect of his ministry as we journeyed across

the country. Together we witnessed the joy of a Golden Jubilee celebrating the presence of the Franciscan Sisters of Assisi in Zambia; and we shared in the deep sorrow that followed the tragic deaths of two young friars in a car accident. Though faced with many demands on their time and resources, the entire community extended a loving embrace to me wherever we went. As each day passed, I became increasingly confident about FMS building a lay-religious partnership in Zambia.

The need for partnership was also expressed during my April visit to Jamaica, another promising location for future classes of missionaries. I met with Bishop Dufour of Montego Bay, who said, “Please send us lay missionaries,” adding that, “Lay people have an important role in the work that needs to be done in the Church of Jamaica.” I was impressed not just by his enthusiasm for lay mission, but also by his understanding of the sometimes challenging, yet rewarding dynamic of a lay-religious partnership.

My time in both countries reiterated a message that is very familiar to us at FMS – relationship building is a key component of mission. Through these visits and ongoing communication, we look forward to establishing strong, supportive placement sites in both locations, building upon our history and vision of lay and religious walking side by side in service with the most vulnerable.

Kim Smolik
Executive Director



We Pray to be Peace in the World...

On August 28th, FMS planted a peace pole at Casa San Salvador, the organization's headquarters in Washington, DC, as one of the events commemorating the 20th Anniversary of FMS. The FMS staff, returned missionaries, new missionary candidates, friends, and neighbors celebrated with a barbecue. Fr. Joe Nangle, OFM, former Director of FMS, blessed the pole, which is inscribed with the prayer “May Peace Prevail on Earth” in eight languages: English, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Arabic, Swahili, Tagalog, and Thai. These languages represent regions of the world to which FMS has sent missionaries.



A peace prayer planted during the ceremony

mission matters

UPDATES FROM THE FIELD

Catherine Giller is now living in Tiqti Sur in the southern part of Cochabamba, Bolivia. Her main ministry is with the Franciscan parish of San Carlos where she is responsible for educational outreach to the local children. Recently, she assisted with a health day at one of the centers performing routine health and dental exams. Her spare time is spent in building connections with the local community.

Clare Lassiter serves at Niños con Valor, a local Bolivian organization that works to reduce the discrimination and stigma for children living with HIV. Each day she spends time mentoring the children and teenage girls and organizes workshops for them about HIV. She thoroughly enjoys living in Cochabamba at the Franciscan Social Center with Nora Pfeiffer.

Joel Vaughn and Lynn Myrick have moved to Carmen Pampa in southern Bolivia, where they are working at the Unidad Académica Campesina, a rural college that is a division of the Catholic University of Bolivia. Joel and Lynn are teaching English, working in campus ministry, and mentoring the students in their first year at the Franciscan founded university. Joel shared that they feel continually challenged to critically understand their decision to undertake an out-of-country, out-of-culture experience, and to examine perceptions of themselves in the context of others.

Nora Pfeiffer is combining her passion for the environment with her love of youth ministry. Working at Franciscans International, Nora collaborates with leaders from Bolivian religious orders to raise ecological consciousness and inform local families about caring for creation, a core Franciscan value. She started a project that reduces trash in the community by salvaging old tires to make composting bins. With time, the food waste will turn into rich dirt, enabling the people to grow their own food. Nora also works with high school students at an after-school program in the San Carlos parish.



L: Bolivian Missioners Lynn Myrick and Nora Pfeiffer performing at their language school graduation talent show. **R:** Tim and Cecilia Marcy, with South African Sister Connie Kuele at Regina Mundi Catholic Church, Soweto, South Africa.

Tim and Cecilia Marcy Depart for South Africa

The final two members of FMS' 25th class of lay missionaries, husband and wife Tim and Cecilia Marcy, departed for mission in late July. They served as FMS lay missionaries in Bolivia from 2004 to 2007 and decided last year to return to mission – this time in South Africa.

Tim and Cecilia are working at the St. Francis Care Centre, a sanctuary for the terminally ill, particularly those suffering from HIV/AIDS, founded in 1992 and located on the outskirts of Johannesburg. The Centre was founded as an apostolate of the Irish OFM Province and includes several clinics, a nursery school, children's home, and an AIDS hospice. For more information about the St. Francis Care Centre, please visit Tim and Cecilia's blog at <http://timandcecilia.blogspot.com/>.

Inside FMS' Full-Time Domestic Volunteer Program

Franciscan Mission Service's Domestic Volunteer Program provides a unique opportunity for full-time service in support of mission, within the spirit of the Franciscan charism and ministry.

Begun in fall 2009, it currently consists of five volunteers serving one-year commitments. The volunteers live and work full-time at the FMS headquarters in Washington, DC – assisting with communications, fundraising, and support of the lay missionaries.

The Franciscan emphasis on community is clearly evident at FMS. In joining the organization, the volunteers become members of a large family that includes staff, missionaries, returned missionaries, donors, and Franciscan religious. Volunteers live together in community with missionaries-information and recently returned missionaries, sharing meals and learning firsthand about the work of FMS as they live a simple lifestyle that imitates the Franciscan vow of poverty and respects the integrity of creation.

One of the most meaningful parts of my time at FMS was interacting with the men and women who give several years of their lives to live and work with our impoverished brothers and sisters abroad. Their decision to answer the call to mission and their concern for the poor and marginalized was and is inspiring. So, too, is the Franciscan philosophy that informs them.

I have learned that the way that so many well-meaning people approach service – with the aim to help, to step in and do something for others – is one that creates a one-way relationship between the service worker and the impoverished community. The Franciscan charism instead emphasizes a ministry of presence; loving people as they are – in the midst of whatever suffering and ugliness they are in, acknowledging human dignity, and seeking to work in partnership with others for the bettering of everyone's condition. This focus has greatly affected my thinking about ministry, both formal and informal. As I've learned, what is difficult is not to do something for people, but to enter into a relationship with people.

I will miss the friends I made at FMS, and am grateful to the organization for all that it has taught me about mission, ministry, and life. I already find many of the lessons learned at FMS helping me in my current parish ministry position.

Peter Mueller

former FMS Domestic Volunteer | 2009-2010



(L to R) Susie Zagar, Rachel Roa, and Rhegan Hyypio

staff updates

Welcome Rhegan Hyypio, FMS Program Director

Rhegan Hyypio is the new Program Director at FMS. As an FMS Returned Missioner who served in Brazil and Bolivia (2005-2008), she brings an abundance of firsthand experience to this position. Rhegan is overjoyed to be working directly with FMS again and guiding the current missionary candidates through their formation and discernment process. She is excited by the many “deep, challenging, and prayerful discussions” that the missionaries have presented so far, and all that lies ahead.

Welcome New Domestic Volunteers

This summer Rachel Roa and Susie Zagar joined the FMS team. They have committed to one year of full-time service with us.

Rachel Roa is a recent graduate of Misericordia University in Dallas, PA. With a background in accounting and communications, she is assisting with many of the central administrative tasks in the FMS office. In her first few months in the office, Rachel has felt encouraged by the “large, supportive community surrounding the FMS family”.

Susie Zagar comes to FMS with a master's in Professional Writing from Towson University in Maryland. She is excited to be learning new things everyday – both in the office as she focuses on grant writing and publication materials, and through community living. “I've learned new cooking techniques from the missionaries in training and even how to jump-start a car!”

Welcome Rhegan, Rachel, & Susie!

FMS blog spotlight

Fr. George Corrigan, OFM, an FMS Returned Missioner, is a monthly contributor to our blog. To the right is a highlight from his current series about mission in the Franciscan tradition.

Francis' vision of mission included the very strong idea of leaving one's “camp” and crossing over to another “camp.” In other words, to be truly Franciscan is to be missionary across boundaries in whatever form one might encounter them...But the intent is not simply to stand with the others. The intent is always to call both sides of the divide to form one “camp” and to witness to the inauguration of the Reign of God in the here and now. (August 2010)