



THE ST. ANTHONY COMPANION

VOLUME 7, NUMBER 1

Ministering and beautifying through art



St. Anthony and the Donkey. Designed by Fr. Joseph Dorniak, OFM Conv., this statue, depicting the power of faith, greets visitors to the Shrine of St. Anthony in Ellicott City, Maryland.

Most of our passions and talents are rooted in the experiences of our childhood. This is certainly the case for Fr. Joseph Dorniak, OFM Conv., who has graced many of the facilities at which he has lived and ministered during nearly 50 years as a Conventual Franciscan Friar with stunning original works of art. This art has included drawings, paintings, murals, statues and more.

Fr. Joe, who is currently a pastor at a Franciscan parish in Dublin, Ireland, discovered his passion for art during the rainy days of his childhood, sitting at

the kitchen table with his father in his hometown of Bridgeport, Connecticut.

"When I was a child, my father and I would sit at the kitchen table and he'd teach me how to draw ducks in water, with the curly waves," said Fr. Joe. "That was the extent to which my father could go, but I went on to draw trees and clouds and I have been drawing and decorating ever since, but I always attribute it to my dad, on rainy days to start my artistic talent."

As a boy, Fr. Joe attended St. Michael's parish, run by the

Conventual Friars, in Bridgeport. In elementary school he was taught by Franciscan nuns from Hamburg and he watched with fascination as an old factory, right across the street from his high school, was transformed

Continued on Page 2

LOOK WHAT'S INSIDE...

OUR CONNECTION WITH GOD 4-5



CELEBRATING ST. JOSEPH 6

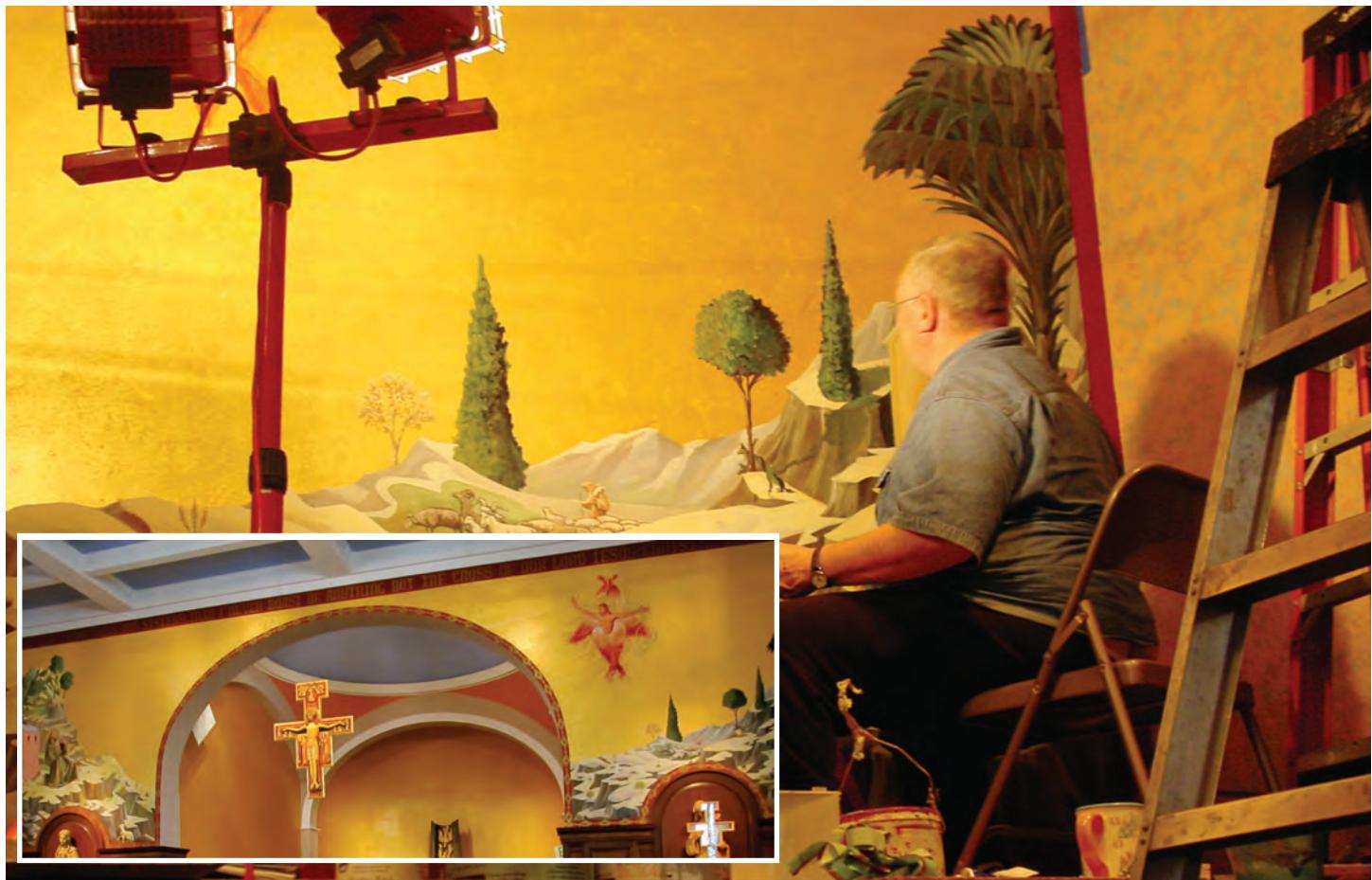


FMA: WELLS FOR GHANA 7



THE FRANCISCAN PLACE 8





The master at work. Above, Fr. Joe toils on a scaffold to paint a mural gracing the sanctuary of the chapel at the Shrine of St. Anthony, with the finished work in the inset box.

Art, from on Page 1

into a Franciscan high school, St. Maximilian Kolbe High School. It was only natural that he matriculated to the new school and this is where he first began to consider life as a friar.

“Watching the Friars, especially in high school, teaching, they seemed to get along together and they seemed to be happy,” said Fr. Joe. “I thought it would be a good fit for me and so far, it has fit.”

Fr. Joe, who considers himself an “environmental” artist who has created works of art designed to beautify and enhance the places where they reside, en-

tered the Franciscan novitiate in 1969.

“You know what you love and I love nature,” he revealed. “I love everything about life, so I like to reproduce it, if it needs to be reproduced for some reason.



A mural, painted by Fr. Joe at St. Mary's Above Rock's Mission in Jamaica.

It is not difficult to put it on paper or put it in paint for me. I really think about the things I am painting, as I see them and experience them.”

Fr. Joe’s thought process can be revealed as he discusses one of his more recent works, the design for a statue of St. Anthony and a donkey, gracing the grounds of the St. Anthony Shrine in ELLICOTT CITY, MARYLAND.

“Anthony is holding our Lord in the monstrance and the wind is blowing against it,” explained Fr. Joe. “Even the donkey’s tail is blowing in the wind. Yet, even with that opposition and that doubt, that cynicism of the wind,

Continued on Page 3

Art, from on Page 2

he (the donkey) bows down. It was my hope and it is hard to believe today, it's always hard to believe, that the statue would say, despite the doubts, even a simple, humble animal like a donkey could believe."

Fr. Joe believes he has left at least one piece of art in nearly every place he has lived or worked during his Franciscan journey.

"I think every place I was stationed as a friar, I left something decorative, whether in the church or in the friary. Throughout the seminary, I designed a lot of our friars' first Mass holy cards or designed chalices, painted murals at different schools where I taught. When I was in the missions, I painted murals in our churches. It was fun doing that because I liked to see people react to them. Most of them were rather favorable and they liked their church looking decorative. A lot of times I would do things after learning I had been re-stationed. I would paint



Fr. Joe designed this open air Shrine to St. Maximilian Kolbe, on the grounds of the Shrine of St. Anthony in Ellicott City, MD.

something, as a memento of me or a thank you for them."

Although he believes his work may assist some in their relationship with God, Fr. Joe does not believe he is part of that conversation.

"I know God is with me when I am doing this. In a minor way I think I assist, but I love to step out of the way and let them have a relationship with whatever it is I created. It is none of my business what God wants to say to them through my work."

At his current parish in Dublin, Fr. Joe is contemplating what he may create for a new social center which is being built. In addition, he is planning a garden.

"I love gardening. I would consider myself a gardener before an artist."

Whether it be through gardening or his art, Fr. Joe's work beautifies its surrounding environment, creating focal points for worship and reflection – a lasting gift and legacy.



One of several stunning murals painted by Fr. Joe at St. Francis Parish in Athol Springs, NY.

Our Connection with God

By Fr. Dennis Mason, OFM Conv.



In my life as a Franciscan Friar, I am often asked about prayer. Here at our Shrine of St. Anthony and through our Companions of St. Anthony program, we get questions from all over the country about prayer. Today I'd like to share with you some reflections about prayer. I want to base these meditations not on some

theory of prayer, but on our actual experience of praying.

But let's begin by asking a simple, but very important question: Why do we pray? It seems that prayer is second nature to us. When life brings us a struggle, we automatically go to God in prayer: "God, please help me." When a difficult time has passed, we naturally

think and say: "Thank God that's over." Even when we've been startled by some news we didn't expect, isn't it true that without even thinking, our hearts and minds so often come out with "Oh, my God?" Our desire, our need, to go to the Lord is instinctive, it's automatic, again, it's second nature to us. But where does it come from?

I believe that it comes from a deep longing in our hearts – a yearning that maybe we can't even name, but we know is there. It's a longing for connection, a yearning for something, or better said, *someone* to fill our hearts. I believe our desire and need to pray comes from a deep longing to be connected with the God from Whom we came.

You and I were made in the image of God. And God is three Persons- Father, Son and Spirit. Those three Persons are connected to one another. They are related to each other, they are with one another, and they are for one another. Love radiates between Father, Son and Spirit. And since we are made in the image of the Trinity God, we have a built-in need and desire to be connected to each other, but most of all to be connected with God in love.

We call our loving connection with God: prayer. However, prayer is not first of all the words we say or the actions we do. Prayer is first of all being connected to God. Being in a relationship with God. Our words and actions in prayer are what foster and deepen that connection. But the connection, the relationship, comes first.

It's like the married couple, sitting in the living room, content and grateful just to be with one another. Love radiates between them before a word is spoken or a kiss is given. They simply are with one another, connected in heart, related in love. And that's a good image to start with when we talk about prayer: simply being with the God Who loves us, the God Whom we love.

How much it must please God when we try to make ourselves present to Him, quietly resting in His company, as God is always present to us! This relationship to God starts when we allow the longing in our heart to rise to the surface: "Lord I just want to be with You."

Throughout our day we take God with us. He is always connected to us and we renew our connection to Him in simple ways. A pause to breathe in the breath of the Spirit when things are hectic. A heart-deep yearning to have Jesus accompany us to our doctor's appointment. A heart-felt sentiment of gratitude for a blessing God has given.

Again, it's like the married couple who throughout the day have one another in mind and turn to one another in heart even when distance separates them. Each remembers the place the beloved has in their heart and looks forward, longs, and yearns simply to be with the beloved again.

Words and actions are important to the life of prayer just as they are important in any relationship. Spouses who never share how their day went are in for trouble. Friends who don't keep in contact will lose a friendship. But underlying all the words and actions is the relationship, the deep connection, with God. It comes from a God-given yearning to be with the Lord. The quiet resting in the assurance that God is there

**"Our desire, our need,
to go to the Lord is
instinctive, it's
automatic, again, it's
second nature to us."**

for us- that God's bond with us is secure-that God's love for us is true. The experience of that love radiating between God and us. That is the foundation, the basis, of all prayer.

Like our God, a Trinity, we are made for relationship, for connection. Our most important relationship is the one we have with God. And prayer begins with our longing to experience that relationship. Prayer develops as we appreciate that relationship more, are more grateful for that connection, and more quietly rest in that love.

Why do we pray? Because we long to be connected with the God Who is always connected with us.

This reflection is the first of a four-part video series on prayer presented by Fr. Dennis. To view the whole series visit www.companionsofstanthony.org or find the Companions of St. Anthony on Facebook.

About Friar Dennis

Fr. Dennis J. Mason, OFM Conv. serves as a retreat director and spiritual director at the Shrine of St. Anthony in Ellicott City, Maryland. He grew up in Connecticut, professed vows as a Franciscan Friar in 1969 and was ordained a priest in 1978. The things he really enjoys most are praying, preaching and peanut butter.



Celebrating St. Joseph, our patron and protector

Most saints do not warrant two feast days, but not every saint is St. Joseph, husband of our Holy Mother Mary and the foster-father of Jesus.

March 19th is the traditional feast day of St. Joseph and it always falls during Lent. In addition, to foster deeper devotion to Saint Joseph among Catholics, and in response to the “May Day” (May 1st) celebrations for workers sponsored by Communists, Pope Pius XII instituted the feast of Saint Joseph the Worker in 1955. This feast extends the long relationship between Joseph and the cause of workers in both Catholic faith and devotion.

St. Joseph is seen as a patron and a protector of the church and, according to Fr. Michael Martin, OFM Conv., Director of Catholic Campus Ministry at Duke University, it is his example that makes him so special.

“St. Joseph's example inspires in us a desire to allow Jesus to be the main story,” said Fr. Michael. “St. Joseph shows us how to do our work, be known for who we are, but let the focus be where it deserves to be, on the Son of God. Contextualizing our lives as not the epicenter of existence is critical in a world with such clamor to make it all about ourselves.”

St. Joseph has inspired many traditional celebrations, all over the world.

In Italy, where he is considered a patron saint to many, a large feast is prepared in his honor, and, much like the green worn on St. Patrick’s Day, the occasion is marked by wearing red. This was originally established as a thank you to St. Joseph, in the middle ages when the people of Sicily prayed to him to bring rain during a time of great drought. The rains came, saving the region’s fava bean crop and the population from starving.

For the same reason, many mark the Solemnity of St. Joseph, as the feast day is also known, by giving food to the needy. On this day, altars are adorned with flowers, limes, candles, wine, fava beans, specially prepared cakes, breads, and cookies (as well as other meatless dishes), and zeppole. Foods are traditionally served containing bread crumbs to represent saw dust since Joseph was a carpenter. Because the feast occurs during Lent, tradi-



**Saint Joseph,
pray for us.**

tionally no meat is allowed on the celebration table. The altar usually has three tiers, to represent the trinity.

In Spain the feast is regarded as “Father’s Day,” as St. Joseph was a symbol of what a father should be. In Poland, tables are decorated in red and white, with holy cards, candles and meatless dishes. In the Philippines, an old man, a young lady and a small boy are chosen from among the poor and are dressed up as Saint Joseph, the Virgin Mary, and the child Jesus, seated around a table set with the family’s best silverware, and served a variety of courses. In the United States, variations of all of these traditions are held in New Orleans, various Italian and Polish communities in New York, and throughout New England and the Mid-Atlantic.

FMA: Building wells, drawing water & life in Ghana



Young girls in Ghana collect fresh drinking water for their families from newly drilled wells.

Fresh clean drinking water. We take it for granted, but it can mean education, health, and even life itself, to millions of Companions in Ghana.

For over 800 years, Franciscan Friars have followed the call of Jesus Christ, to share the hope of the Gospel around the world. Over the centuries this has taken many forms, but Franciscans always protect and celebrate the dignity of each person, that he or she may have “life and life abundantly.” (John 10:10)

Founded in 1924, the Franciscan Mission Association (FMA) financially supports the missions of the Order of Friars Minor Conventual. In Africa, Asia, Latin America, the former Soviet Union,

and even right here in the United States, Franciscan Friars Conventual serve the Lord by caring for our poorest brothers and sisters.

Supporting projects in 25 countries in the last 20 years, the FMA has provided: hospitals and medical centers to serve those suffering from leprosy and AIDS, clinics and maternity wards for remote villages without access to health care, and daycare and schools to educate the poorest children in remote rural

areas as well as desperate city centers. The FMA has also built churches, chapels, and shrines to celebrate the sacraments of the Church as well as seminaries and houses of formation to accommodate the growth of vocations.

The Companions of St. Anthony would like to contribute to these Franciscan efforts overseas by selecting a single project to support during 2018. This year's project is called Wells for Ghana and seeks to drill wells to provide fresh, clean water with which to drink, cook, and clean. Many villages in the Western African country do not have a source of clean drinking water nearby. Children often have to walk miles to the nearest source of water,

often before school. Tired from the long walk and carrying a heavy load of water, these children are usually too tired to perform well in school, or miss school entirely. Besides, the source of water may be a stream or river whose water can cause sickness and disease. With a well placed close to the village, kids can get to school rested and on time, and parents will have the relief of knowing the water their children drink is healthy.

Yet it only costs \$6,000 to provide a well for a village of 25,000 people. ***For just \$17 per day, in one year we can provide one well which can change so many lives.*** How much more could we do with \$34 dollars or \$51 dollars? Please consider a gift today to this project. We will report back on the progress of this effort—and, with God's help, we may dig one, two, or even three wells for Ghana!



To highlight their efforts for wells in Ghana, the FMA has produced a short video documentary. You may view it by visiting the FMA web site at www.franciscanmission.org

The Franciscan Place

It is no secret that St. Anthony of Padua was a great preacher. People flocked to hear his heart-stirring words. One fine day in the countryside a large crowd of listening folks was growing larger by the minute and Anthony knew he had to do something to be seen and heard. The quick-thinking Anthony soon found a perch in a nearby walnut tree and preached aloud to the crowds. He was always looking for any means to call people to repentance and to embrace Jesus in their hearts.

About 20 years ago, the Friars serving in Syracuse, NY, responded to a similar challenge, finding an innovative way to be seen and heard. Like the old walnut tree that Anthony put to a use, our Friars looked at the large Carousel Center Mall, just two miles from their friary. Millions of people pass through the facility each year. Soon, the idea of having a Catholic chapel (with a modest religious gift shop) in the Commons Level of the mall became a reality. Its name is simply The Franciscan Place – Chapel and Religious Gift Shoppe.

The primary ministry is sacramental, done in the chapel nestled in the back, away from the noise of the mall corridors. Mass is offered Monday through Friday. But the most important ministry is the Sacrament of Reconciliation, held multiple hours each week day and three hours on Saturday. In the latter days of Advent and Lent, two confessors are scheduled to accommodate the increased traffic of penitents. It's easy to see what a great service this is.

The gift shop in the front section has expanded beyond religious articles to include educational and inspirational books, CDs, DVDs, etc., for children and adults. Income from sales helps to sustain the more important ministry done in the chapel.

In recent years Carousel Center Mall went through a huge expansion and changed its name to Destiny USA. With a lot of help from mall management and generous benefactors, The Franciscan Place was also remodeled and nearly doubled its size. The improved chapel is still the heart of the friars' ministry and remains a "Peaceful, Prayerful Presence," ac-

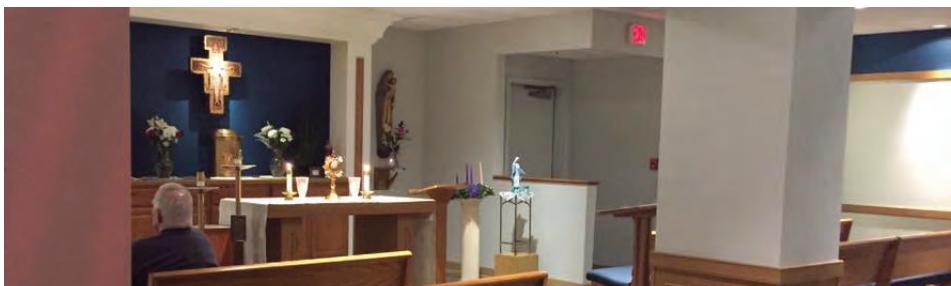


A life-size cutout of Pope Francis, greeting visitors at the store front of The Franciscan Place in Destiny Mall.

cording to Fr. Adam Keltos, OFM Conv., the chaplain at The Franciscan Place.

After nearly two decades, this ministry has bloomed. Like St. Anthony, the Friars are still trying to bring God's love and healing to people by being present where they are, and helping them find the Way, the Truth, and the Life – JESUS.

To learn more about The Franciscan Place, including hours of operation and its address, visit them on Facebook www.facebook.com/The-Franciscan-Place.



What makes The Franciscan Place in Destiny Mall different from other religious gift shops is this full chapel where Mass is celebrated Monday through Friday.

THE ST. ANTHONY COMPANION

*is a publication of
the Companions of St. Anthony*

12290 Folly Quarter Road
Ellicott City, Maryland 21042
410-531-9200

Visit us online at
www.companionsofstanthony.org