



# THE ST. ANTHONY COMPANION

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## Little Portion Farm to Serve the Poor



*Fr. Michael Heine, OFM Conv., Vicar Provincial of the Our Lady of the Angels Province, blessing the Little Portion Farm in Ellicott City, MD. The farm is producing food to serve the poor. (Photo by Kevin J. Parks, Catholic Review Media)*

Looking out over the acres of farmland on the grounds of the Shrine of St. Anthony in Ellicott City, Maryland, Friar Michael Lasky, OFM Conv., wondered how the bucolic retreat could minister directly to the poor.

The Shrine of St. Anthony is a thriving center of Franciscan ministry. Open to the public 365 days a year, the Shrine provides a refuge for prayerful reflection for the expanding population of the Baltimore-Washington corridor. Yet, as the Director of the Our Lady of the Angels Province's Office of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation (JPIC), Friar

Michael imagined something to make this land even more fruitful.

In collaboration with the Shrine of St. Anthony, Mary's Land Farm, and the Franciscan Center of Baltimore, the JPIC office of the Our Lady of the Angels Province is embarking on a new vision for a farm ministry in Ellicott City. Named after the Portiuncula, in English "little portion," the tiny church in Assisi that served as the early home of St. Francis and his first friars, the new Little Portion Farm will convert the Friars' acres to organic farmland.

For many years, the Friars have leased 85 acres to a tenant farmer. Using the standard methods of farming in industrial countries, the farmer planted one crop on the entire 85-acres each year, requiring extensive use of

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*"Those who lovingly work their  
small expanse of fields, reap  
enough for themselves and others."*

*Blessed Giles of Assisi  
Feast Day - 23 April  
Farmer, Friar &  
Early Follower of St. Francis*

*With the words of Blessed Giles of Assisi, the patron of Little Portion Farm, overlayed onto the photo, Fr. Michael Lasky and farmer Matt Jones gaze across the grounds, at the Shrine of St. Anthony in Ellicott City, Maryland, being developed as the Little Portion Farm.*

### *Continued from on Page 1*

chemical herbicides and pesticides to protect the vulnerable monoculture. Heavy chemical applications over the years have resulted in soil that is sterile and depleted of nutrition.

Each year the tenant farmer alternated between commodity crops grown not for human consumption, but rather to be processed into fuel like ethanol, food additives like corn syrup, or feed for industrial livestock production. In short, as the products of the farm were not destined to strengthen human life, they were not fulfilling the mission of the Church and the Franciscan Friars.

Thus, the friars looked for a different method of farming to deliver different outcomes.

Mary's Land Farm, a 160-acre permaculture farm nearby, is owned and operated by Mr. Thomas Cunningham, a faith-filled Catholic and regular communicant at the Shrine of St. Anthony. His farm will lease 82 acres of the Friars' land, converting it to organic pasture on which it will raise grass-fed beef and lamb. The animals will help return the soil to a healthy state as will the different kinds of grasses the field will host. The conversion to pasture will also virtually eliminate erosion. Additionally, the organically fed, ethically-raised animals will become

part of the area food supply.

Cunningham is excited to help those who are less fortunate.

"The people who need it the most do without the nutrition they need," Cunningham said.

The heart of Little Portion Farm, though, is a three-acre parcel reserved for the Friars' direct service to the poor. On these acres, the Friars will grow organic produce exclusively for the hot meal program at the Franciscan Center in Baltimore. The meal program at the Center feeds 700 of the most vulnerable, food insecure men, women, and children in central Baltimore, five days per week. Founded in 1968

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by the Franciscan Sisters of Baltimore, the Franciscan Center's mission is to provide assistance and supportive outreach to persons who are economically disadvantaged, assisting them in realizing their self-worth and dignity as people of God. After 50 years of service in Baltimore, the Franciscan Center continues to find new ways to fulfill its mission.

Working in collaboration with the leadership of the Franciscan Center and Mary's Land Farm, Little Portion Farm will grow a large quantity of staple vegetables used in their meal preparation daily, like onions, carrots, potatoes, and leafy greens. This will create greater reliability of fresh, local, organic ingredients for daily food preparation and it will reduce the budget needed for food purchases.

Jeff Griffin, Franciscan Center executive director, said the partnership will allow the center to serve fresher meals and add fresh produce to food pantry bags at a lower cost. Savings will be used to hire additional personnel to teach cooking lessons. The best parts are "bringing fresh food to a community that is not used to having easy access to fresh produce and seeing all these communities come together to help those in need," said Griffin.

While the primary mission of the farm is to grow food to feed the hungry in Baltimore, a key element of the ministry will be to share the site to promote a Franciscan vision of care for the poor and care for creation, as exemplified in Pope Francis' Encyclical, *Laudato Si*, and Catholic Social Teaching, to the wider public. Little Portion Farm will provide volunteer and educational opportunities allowing the public a chance to work on the land from planting to harvest. Also, the public will learn how care for the poor and care for creation intersect in the act of farming.

"*Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home*," Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical on the environment, came out after the initiative for Little Portion Farm began, but Father Michael said it served as another driving force to make change. "It's all about relationships. We hear the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor, and then we respond in partnership with others to help restore creation and to feed the hungry as God intends for us to do."



*Restorative grasses are now being grown at Little Portion Farm to repair damage from heavy chemical applications and return nutrients to the soil.*

With the generosity of our Companions, the Friars hired a farm outreach coordinator to manage operations at Little Portion Farm. Matt Jones will work with Mary's Land Farm to plan the crop selection as well as the planting and harvesting schedule, coordination of volunteers, and delivery of produce. In addition, the outreach coordinator will work with Fr. Michael to educate the public about the Franciscan understanding of caring for God's creation while caring for the poor.

Sharing his commitment to these goals, Matt Jones said "The ways we grow and distribute food reveal a great deal about how we are living out our call to care for creation and the poor," said Jones. Sharing his commitment to the goals of this new ministry, Jones concluded, "This farm is one modest, integrated solution to these important issues that we hope will nurture the vulnerable and plant the seeds for future change. I'm excited to work for the Friars because they understand this reality and its importance to living out our faith."

# Covenant, Company & Conversion

By Fr. Emanuel Vasconcelos, OFM Conv.



*Detail of painting by Fr. Joseph Dorniak, OFM Conv., at St. Francis of Assisi Church, Athol Springs, New York.*

The liturgical seasons of Lent and Easter are a yearly invitation to deepen our relationship with God, with others, and with ourselves. Each year

we have an opportunity to look at three “C”s in our lives: covenant, company, and conversion.

The theme of covenant comes to mind since we have the chance to renew our baptismal promises in a very special way during Lent and Easter. We reflect on what makes us followers of Jesus, and how we are living out our faith in our day-to-day lives. In many parishes we are even inspired by other adults who are entering the process of being baptized or fully initiated into the Catholic Church at Easter. The various Scripture readings we hear proclaimed at Mass have a regular theme of God making a covenant with his people and keeping that covenant even when they are unfaithful. God’s love and mercy are a constant anchor in the midst of the passing things of this world.

We entered a covenant relationship with the Trinity at our Baptism. Through the Holy Spirit, we are able to call God our Father and Jesus Christ our Brother. The relationship we have with God is not static or simply formal but something dynamic and living. How is that relationship with God going for you? Are you open and honest with God in your prayer? Have you been tossed about by the waves in your life that you need to hold on to the anchor of God’s fidelity a little tighter? Thank-



fully our baptismal covenant relationship can be renewed each day, giving us the chance to deepen our commitment to the Lord.

During these liturgical seasons we can also reflect on the company we keep. My father would always say to me: “show me your friends, and I’ll show you your habits.” When reflecting on your company, focus on the type of person God is calling you to be and how the company in your life is either helping you or hindering you in that process. Certainly there is some company that is unavoidable (and we need to learn how to tolerate such people), but a good part of the company we keep is our choice. We have the ability to invite certain people in our life, and we also can distance ourselves from those we don’t want in our life or who are making it difficult for us to live out our call. That can be challenging to do, but nothing worthwhile ever is easy, is it?

Company can mean people, but it can also take various forms: we can reflect on the “company” and ideas we invite in our minds and in our hearts. Sometimes this is harder to face, because it is more internal and requires more honesty, humility, and courage on our part. As difficult as this internal reflection may be, remember that Jesus was able to make himself present among His apostles after His Resurrection even though they had locked the doors (see John 20:26). What parts of you are “locked” from others that you want Jesus to enter and heal? Know that He has the power to come into those spaces and bring His light and peace, if we let Him. The Sacraments of Penance and Eucharist are great ways in which we invite Jesus into those spaces.

Finally, Lent and Easter invite each of us to conversion. We know that the heart of Jesus’ message is to repent and change our ways. The Greek word used for “repent” is *metanoia*: a blend of the words *meta* - “beyond”, and *nous* - “our mind”. Jesus is calling us to get past our own minds, our own worlds, and remember the greater picture. We are invited to be attentive to our world, to think of others’ needs, and to see how we can respond to our current circumstances.

*“God’s love and mercy  
are a constant anchor in  
the midst of the passing  
things of this world.”*

I invite you to enter these days with a new set of eyes, to see things a bit differently in your life. Part of the reason the Church revisits liturgical seasons every year is to give us a chance to try something that we’re not used to doing, or to see the same things in our life with another year of experience behind us. How attentive can I be in my home, in my parish, in my place of work, in my neighborhood?

As we celebrate these great seasons of Lent and Easter, let’s take time to reflect on these three C’s: our covenant with God through our Baptism, our company to discern who helps us in this Christian journey and who is more of a challenge, and finally our own conversion as we move past the limits of our mind.

### *About Friar Manny*



Friar Emanuel Vasconcelos, OFM Conv. (also known as Friar Manny) serves as an associate pastor at St. Anne Catholic Church in Columbus, Georgia. A lifelong devotee of Saint Anthony (of Lisbon AND Padua), Friar Manny was ordained a

priest in June of 2018. He completed studies at Providence College in Rhode Island and at The Catholic University of America in Washington, DC. He enjoys music and singing, as well as Portuguese culture and offers weekly reflections on the Companions' YouTube channel!

# Fr. Ignatius Maternowski: From D-Day to Sainthood?



*Memorial in Guetteville, France, commemorating the charity and heroism of Franciscan Friar Conventual Fr. Ignatius Maternowski on D-Day, June 6, 1944.*

In collaboration with the World War II Chaplains Memorial Foundation, the Franciscan Friars Conventual of the Our Lady of the Angels Province have begun promoting Fr. Ignatius Maternowski's cause for canonization.

Fr. Maternowski was born in Holyoke, Massachusetts on March 28, 1912. After graduating from St. Francis High School in Athol Springs, he entered the religious Order of the Franciscan Friars Conventual, professed his first vows as a friar in 1932, and was ordained a priest by Bishop Thomas O'Leary of the Diocese of Springfield on July 3, 1938. After the outbreak of World War II, Fr. Ignatius responded to the need for service as a military chaplain, enlisting in the U.S. Army in 1942, and later volunteering to become a member of the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment of the 82nd Airborne Division. After rigorous training with fellow troops, he attained the rank of Captain, serving God and country loyally for 23 months.

Deployed to Ireland and England in readiness for the battles that would re-claim the freedom of Europe, he offered one final Mass for his troops, and administered General Absolution on the eve of the Normandy Invasion.

In the early morning hours of D-Day, Fr. Ignatius parachuted with a large number of troops into occupied territory, the hamlet of Guetteville in the town of Picaucville. An American glider had crashed nearby. There were many casualties. Immediately Fr. Ignatius began ministering to the wounded paratroopers and glider victims. Realizing that a suitable aid station would be needed, Fr. Ignatius calculated a risky strategy: attempting negotiations with his German counterpart, in the peaceful hope of combining their wounded together in one common hospital. Walking between enemy lines unarmed, with helmet hanging from his belt, and wearing his chaplain's insignia and a Red Cross arm-band, he bravely went to meet with the head Nazi medic. As he returned through the no-man zone to the American side, he was shot in the back by an enemy sniper – becoming the only US chaplain to be killed on D-Day. He was 32 years of age, in the 5th year of his priesthood.

To commemorate his heroic virtue during the D-Day Invasion, Friar Martin Kobos, OFM Conv., the former Director of the Companions of St. Anthony, will represent the OLA Province at services in Normandy, France this June for Fr. Ignatius and all who sacrificed for freedom during those fateful days in June 1944.

As a special sign of the Friars' love for their many Companions, Fr. Martin will celebrate Mass in Normandy for the loved ones of Companions who served in the armed forces. Please send in the names of your loved ones (with enclosed reply slip) and Fr. Martin will hold those petitions near to his heart as he thanks God for their service.

"Fr. Maternowski is a holy example of Franciscan generosity and part of a tradition of Friars to serve as military chaplains," said Fr. Martin. "Our Friars have always faced dangerous risks in spreading the Gospel message. We go where we are needed and called. It is my great honor to go to Normandy and represent the Our Lady of the Angels Province, along with Joseph Hamilton, Director of the Companions of St. Anthony, in honoring this great Franciscan and genuine American hero."



# MISSION REPORT

## Ghana Wells Challenge Update

Congratulations!

As of the end of 2018, we have successfully raised the funds necessary to drill three new wells in Ghana, West Africa. On behalf of the many people who will have clean water in 2019, we thank you!



As this issue of the St. Anthony Companion went to press, arrangements were being made for the installation of the wells. We will have pictures and stories from the lives of those you've touched very, very soon! For now, know your prayers and financial support are making a big difference in the lives of many of our brothers and sisters in Ghana, West Africa.

## Laboratory Equipment for Ghana's Newest Hospital

This year, the Companions of St. Anthony want to provide laboratory equipment for the newly-constructed Nyameakola Hospital in Jema, Ghana. Completed in December 2017, the hospital is located 37 miles from the next

nearest hospital. Before this hospital was built, women died in labor, men died from work accidents, and children died from simple illnesses.

Jema is a poor village, unable to afford the high cost of building a hospital. Yet, with the help of the Friars, led by Fr. Joseph Blay, OFM Conv., the residents of Jema committed to do whatever was necessary to bring healthcare to their village. The citizens of Jema performed all construction work that could be done without special skills or heavy equipment, such as digging foundation trenches, excavation for septic tanks, carrying sand and gravel. In addition to the manual labor, the villagers donated \$10,500, over 10% of the hospital's cost.

With the hospital complete, the in-house laboratory remains to be finished. The lack of equipment forces many sick people to be sent to distant hospitals. To analyze ordinary samples and remove the difficulty and economic hardship of travel for people, the laboratory needs items such as microscopes, centrifuges, ultrasound machines and basic kits for midwives.

To help, the Companions of St. Anthony seek to raise \$20,000 for the necessary supplies to outfit a basic clinical laboratory. In the Akan language of the area, "Nyameakola" means "God is able" or "God can." For more information, or to donate to this special effort, visit our web site at [www.franciscanmission.org](http://www.franciscanmission.org).



*In 2019, we seek to raise \$20,000 for supplies to outfit a basic laboratory at the new Jema Nyameakola Hospital in Ghana.*



**FMA**  
Franciscan Mission Association

*From the beginning, the Companions of St. Anthony have supported the missionary works of the Franciscan Friars Conventual around the world. Help us share the hope of the Gospel. Please give today! [www.franciscanmission.org](http://www.franciscanmission.org).*

# Pilgrimage to the Holy Land



*Gethsemane Garden, one of the featured stops on this pilgrimage.*

In 2019 the Franciscan Friars invite you to join us for another unforgettable pilgrimage, this time to the Holy Land, October 21-31, 2019 with Fr. Jobe Abbass (Pilgrimage Director) and Fr. James McCurry (Spiritual Guide).

We will visit the places in the Holy Land where Jesus was born,

lived, died and rose to life again. These places hold a special meaning to every Christian.

Live the lifetime dream, shared throughout the ages by believers everywhere, who have longed to visit the Holy Land and connect with the roots of their Christian faith. During each day

of this pilgrimage, the Scriptures will come alive as you walk in the footsteps of Jesus. Visiting such memorable places as Bethlehem, Nazareth, Gethsemane, the Holy Sepulchre, Mount Tabor and walk the Stations of the Cross along the ancient Mater Dolorosa Street. You will have time to affirm your faith, to pray and reflect.

The pilgrimage is limited to one motor coach and is available on a first-come, first-serve basis.

A flyer with complete details on this pilgrimage is now online at [www.olaprovince.org](http://www.olaprovince.org) or, for more information and to place your name on a list of interested pilgrims you can contact Mary Gorecki at Pat Tours, via email at [mary@pattours.com](mailto:mary@pattours.com) or toll free at 1-800-388-0988.

## Have a Will?

Do you have a will? Has it been updated?

Every adult needs a will particular to his or her circumstances. A good will should take into account family situation, the size of the estate, and the causes and organizations that are important in one's life.

The drafting of a will need not be frightening, but it does need the expertise of an attorney to fully protect one's interest and directives. The omission of even minor details can cause a will to be declared invalid or give rise to lengthy complications which can be costly.

A qualified attorney is the best starting place. An attorney will make sure that the wording is clear, that all your wishes are considered and that your will conforms to state law. Fees for writing a will vary and depend on a number of variables. However, any cost is far outweighed by the resulting peace of mind as well as savings realized at the time of probate.

Remembering the works and the Franciscan Friars may be something you wish to consider when writing your will. Since the time of St. Francis, generous benefactors have always walked with the Friars and supported their ministries.

If you wish to remember the Companions of St. Anthony in your will, the proper legal title is: Companions of St. Anthony, 12290 Folly Quarter Road, Ellicott City, MD 21042. Do not hesitate to call or write Joseph Hamilton at the Companions of St. Anthony with questions regarding bequests or other gifts to the Companions.

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