

Weekly re:Cap



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Franciscan Province of St. Joseph

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Hospitality

by +Rupert Dorn

Hospitality: I love the word! To me, it connotes love, acceptance, warmth, generosity, friendliness and brotherhood.

Scripture blesses hospitality. Paul says: "Look on the needs of the saints as your own, be generous in offering hospitality" (Rom. 12:13). In Hebrews, Paul reminds us not to "neglect to show hospitality, for by that means some have entertained angels without knowing it" (13:2).

In the ancient Near East, hospitality involved customs and practices which all were expected to observe: a process of receiving outsiders and *changing them* from strangers to guests. Hospitality has been defined as an act of friendship shown to visitors.

Christian life, and — alas — Capuchin life, has everything to do with connectedness, nurturing, and intimacy. Our constitutions tell us that "all the brothers who visit [should] be received with fraternal charity and a joyful spirit" (Ch 6). When I consider Capuchin hospitality, I am filled with feelings of pride and gratitude.



Rupert Dorn
1924-2014

Of course, I can think of isolated cases when friars lacked a hospitable spirit. Perhaps they thought they were too busy, or there was some reason why they were not feeling warmly toward a particular visitor. I even recall a reference to some guests as "freeloaders." There was a time when one friar peeked from his room and said: "Has he gone yet?" Some friars may rationalize that they're busy...they don't have time to sit with visitors. All this may be a practice of avoidance, rather than a ministry of presence for Capuchin guests. For the most part, however, my experiences of Capuchin hospitality have been very positive.

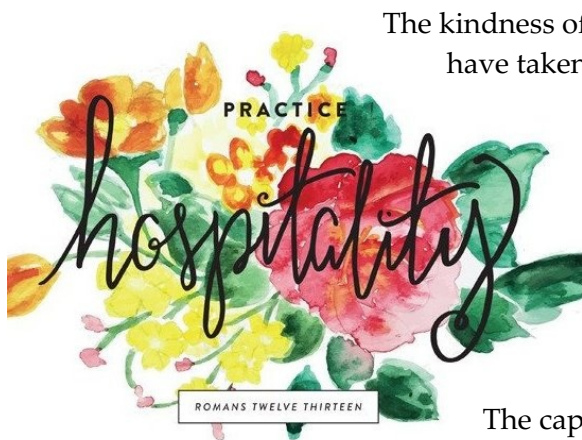
There was a time when all of our friaries had "porters." This office was the ministry of our own brother Solanus Casey, a friar who exemplified this ministry extremely well. The porter was the first friar we met when visiting a Capuchin Community, and his office was considered one of special responsibility. Today, many of our friaries have "guest masters" who harbor the responsibility of caring for visitors. Local ministers need to be concerned that guests are properly welcomed and cared for. However, all of us living the friary need to be guest masters! Each one of us helps to create an image of hospitality in our homes.

I have received great hospitality in the houses of my own province, and I will always be grateful for that. I have happy memories of hospitality in Capuchin houses all over North America and throughout the order. I often think of Capistran, who took time off from his work to show me New York. I remember the gracious hospitality of Etienne in Montreal, and our dining together at the "Piglet." On my way to and from general

chapters, I have always visited Capuchin friaries in Europe, and this broadened by knowledge of Capuchin life (doesn't that sound like a legitimate reason to travel?).

Each time I have returned home from these visits, I resolved to be more hospitable to visitors from other provinces. I have been so impressed by the hospitality that I have received. Perhaps I have an honest face, but I've never had to prove who I was. No one has ever asked me for an "obedience."

I have also found that differences in language and culture need not be barriers in giving or receiving hospitality. We all smile in the same language; a warm handshake or a hug feels good no matter what language or culture of the shaker or the hugger. I enjoy hugs in Italian, Irish, German or English. At one time, I was spiritual director for a group that had official "huggers" to meet members and guests as they arrived for meetings.



The kindness of Capuchins has always touched me deeply: times when others have taken me to the airport, train stations, or taken time to show me the city, the scenic countryside or a neighboring friary. How kind of those who helped make reservations, to point things out on a map, to translate. How good of those who took time to just sit with me when they could have been doing something "more important." Every province has boundaries; but they need not be barriers. They can be entrances into a fuller and wonderful experience of Capuchin life.

The capitulars at the general chapters are divided into language groups, and each group has a designated room in which to gather for meetings and recreation. During the evening hours, I often wandered into these different rooms, even though I might not be familiar with the particular language of the group. I have always been greeted with smiles and welcoming gestures. I would partake of their snacks and drink, and join in their singing, as best I could (or last least listen). Music is a universal language, and I found myself celebrating a diversity as well as commonality: difference in language and culture, but the same fraternal spirit. There is listening with the heart as well as with the ear; there is laughing and loving in a hospitable setting.

We are guests in God's beautiful world. He is lavish with his hospitality. We can do no less than be hospitable to others, especially to our own Capuchin brothers.

Rupert Dorn served the province as provincial minister from 1967 - 1973, and attended more general chapters than any other friar of our province. Rupert died in 2014. This essay was originally published in "Imaging," 1997.



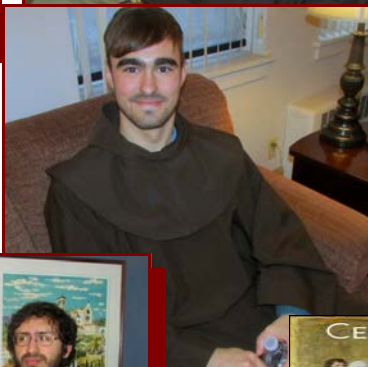
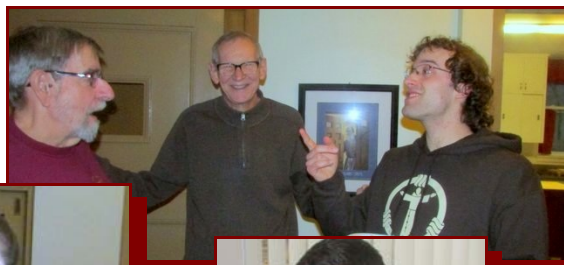
Welcoming another brother to our province!



Pushparaj (left) with his father, mother and brother.

In the month of March we will welcome Alphonse Pushparaj (Pushparaj for short) from the Amala Annai Province in Tamil Nadu, India (Muthu's home province) to live and minister at Saint Lawrence Community and Seminary, as part of our fraternal collaboration efforts. Pushparaj is 35 years old and is recently ordained. He is from the city of Chennai, where his family still resides. Since his ordination he has been at Saint Matthias friary and parish in Chennai while waiting for his visa to be approved.

We saw you at the St. Conrad "Candlemas" celebration





Amy Bertram (sister-in-law of Michael Bertram) recently underwent surgery.

John J. Celichowski (father of John Celichowski) was released from the hospital and has been transferred to a rehabilitation facility following his stroke last week. John and his family are very grateful for the dozens of expressions of prayer, encouragement and concern.

Weekly re:Cap is grateful for a recent donation from former friar Richard Hansen.



“Essential to the attainment of these goals is the moral imperative of ensuring social justice and respect for human dignity. The great biblical tradition enjoins on all peoples the duty to hear the voice of the poor. It bids us to break the bonds of injustice and oppression which give rise to glaring, and indeed, scandalous social inequalities. Reforming the social structures which perpetuate poverty and the exclusion of the poor first requires a conversion of mind and heart.”

~ Pope Francis

I Dream A World

By Langston Hughes

I dream a world where man
No other man will scorn,
Where love will bless the earth
And peace its paths adorn
I dream a world where all
Will know sweet freedom's way,
Where greed no longer saps the soul
Nor avarice blights our day.
A world I dream where black or white,
Whatever race you be,
Will share the bounties of the earth
And every one is free,
Where wretchedness will hang its head
And joy, like a pearl,
Attends the needs of all humankind-
Of such I dream, my world!

FEBRUARIE	
15	Chapter Prep Video Conf Provincial Review Board, Milwaukee
15-16	Provincial Council, Milwaukee
16	Michael Crosby (B) Arthur Cooney (B)
17	Development Video Conf Michael Bertram (B) John Gau (B)
20	World Day of Social Justice
21	Investment Commission, Detroit
24	SLS Ministry Council, Mt. Calvary
25	Martin Pable (B)

