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Friars Celebrate Posadas

by André Weller



The *Posadas* are a nine day popular religious celebration (common in Latin American countries and also in our Hispanic parishes here in Chicago) re-enacting in word, song and procession the journey of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem, the rejection they faced seeking lodging. Did this rejection reflect racial profiling, being too poor, foreigners from the northern kingdom?

Pope Francis has urged us to bring the scriptures alive, relating their message to the lived situations of people today. Each evening in the celebration, a short reflection was shared on different issues involving exclusion, rejection as Mary and Joseph had experienced; our sisters and brothers who are victims of homelessness, racial profiling, bullying, poor educational opportunities, lack of access to adequate medical attention, addictions, migrants and refugees, etc.



The challenge for each Christian community celebrating the Posadas: are we only remembering what happened two thousand years ago (and satisfied with that?) or do we also see it lived out today? What is our response?

St. Clare of Montefalco Parish, with a \$3,000 match challenge from The Province of St Joseph, raised more than \$3,000+ to buy enough food and hygiene articles to fill 100 large bags for one hundred families thru Port Ministries. Each family also received a personal note written by a religious formation student from the parish along with a pocket size Gospel-Acts of Apostles booklet. The entire gift was delivered to the families on January 5th to celebrate the feast of the Manifestation of Christ to the world.



For All That Has Been, Thanks; For All That Is Yet to Be, Yes!

by Marge Lindell

St. Anthony Board Member



December 31st marked five years since the transition of leadership at St. Anthony's Retreat in Marathon WI. So many people prayed and worked and donated to support the process of transition from the Capuchin leadership to lay leadership. Although the future of this holy place was far from certain on December 31, 2013, we went forward in faith, with trust in God's constant and loving presence. We prayed for the wisdom and guidance of the Holy Spirit in the months leading up to that night and we continued to pray for the Spirit's gifts as we moved forward into the unknown. For all that has been these past five years, we give thanks to God.

Here we are, five years later, in the midst of celebrating 100 years of St. Anthony's. These five years have held many joys and struggles, many reasons to celebrate and many reasons for doubt, many chances to grow and learn and trust. We begin another year humbled by all that we have received and still moving forward in faith, still stepping into the unknown each day. For all that is yet to be, we say Yes, and pray:

We thank you for the gifts of the Capuchins, for the example they set, the faith they shared, and the encouragement they gave to all who came through these doors. Through their commitment and hard work this has become a sacred and holy place. We thank you for the seeds they have planted and for the fruit that has ripened and continues to ripen in the hearts of the many men and women who have been touched by their ministry through the years.

We thank you for all the support the Capuchins offered to the lay leadership, which made the transition possible. Thank you for inspiring so many of your faithful to come together to continue this ministry. Give them the grace to continue to be faithful conduits and co-creators with you so that your vision for this sacred place will be realized.

Thank you to all who have helped us thus far, and may your new year be filled with many blessing, peace and all good.

The above is excerpted from St. Anthony Center's weekly newsletter.

Capuchin Kevin Crowley Receives Human Dignity Award

From Independent Catholic News



Kevin Crowley accepts award

Kevin Crowley, the Capuchin Franciscan Friar who runs the Capuchin Day Center for Homeless People in Dublin, Ireland, is the recipient of the Oireachtas Human Dignity Award for 2018. The award is given annually to a person or group whose commitment to the promotion of human dignity has been exemplary.

The Center, founded by Kevin in 1969, provides over 700 hot meals each day to people who are homeless and in need. From Monday to Saturday it provides a morning and afternoon meals service, distributes new and second-hand clothing, and provides hot showers and personal care facilities and products.

Its services also include a GP/nurse clinic, a dental clinic, a chiropody clinic, an optician clinic, a counseling service, and advocacy, social and information support. Over 1,500 food parcels are distributed each Wednesday to the homeless and poor of Dublin. The latest additions include a cervical smear screening service and a COPD and Diabetic Clinic run by the Mater Hospital. Many professionals provide their services pro bono as their support to the great work of the Center.

Kevin says that "While it breaks our hearts to see anyone in need of food in 2018, it is harder for the families with children who are rushing to make it for dinner because they have no money, or a home with proper facilities to cook for themselves. For us Capuchins, the welfare of families is a priority and for this purpose we established a designated 'Family Area' section in the dining hall where children and their parents can enjoy a nutritious meal in safety."

On the first day of his visit to Ireland on 25 August, Pope Francis met with Kevin, his Capuchin brothers, staff and clients of the Day Center as part of the pope's pilgrimage to the ninth World Meeting of Families.

Holocaust Remembrance Day



On November 1, 2005, the UN General Assembly adopted resolution 60/7 to designate January 27 as International Holocaust Remembrance Day. The date marks the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau and is meant to honor the victims of Nazism. The same resolution supports the development of educational programs to remember the Holocaust and to prevent further genocide.

Resolution 60/7 not only establishes January 27 as "International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust," it also rejects any form of Holocaust denial. The resolution encourages member states of the UN to actively preserve sites that the Nazis used during the "Final Solution" (for example, killing centers, concentration camps, and prisons.) Drawing from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the resolution condemns all forms of "religious intolerance, incitement, harassment or violence against persons or communities based on ethnic origin or religious belief" throughout the world.

Season for Nonviolence: Jan 30th - Apr 4th



Season for Nonviolence was established in 1998 by Arun Gandhi, Mohandas Gandhi's grandson, as a yearly event celebrating the philosophies and lives of Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. Today, he co-chairs the Season along with Michael Bernard Beckwith of the Agape International Spiritual Center. It is convened by the Association for Global New Thought.



The "season" begins with the anniversary of Mohandas Gandhi's assassination on January 30 and ends with the anniversary of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination on April 4. It is anchored by a mission, statement of principles, and commitments by participants towards living in a nonviolent way.



- Terry LaCross (brother of Larry LaCross) was recently hospitalized for a brain bleed after a fall.
- Anish Cletus' uncle recently suffered a mild heart attack.
- Natalie Galloway (sister of Franklin Eichhorst) has been diagnosed with 4th stage ovarian cancer.
 - Bill Stier (brother of former SLS staff member Jane Lefeber, and brother-in-law of SLS faculty member Charles Lefeber) died recently.
- Thank you for your prayers. The results could not have been better. Not only did they find that I have a heart but that it is very healthy. They determined that an earlier test produced a "false positive" for the possible need for a stent. I choose to believe your prayers may have influenced that. Either way no stents were needed and I'm doing great. Be assured that you all are now in my prayers of gratitude.

~ Harlan Swift
- Mary Ann (sister of Michael Bergen) is grateful for the prayers offered regarding her lymphoma.

re:Cap is grateful for recent donations from Rosemary Murphy and Marion Rife.

JANUARY

16	Otto Bucher (N) U.S. National Religious Freedom Day
17	Paul Hanisko (B)
20	Fabian Fehring (N) World Religion Day
21	William Frigo (B) James Magnan (B) Martin Luther King Jr. Day Tu B'Shevat
23	Ben Markwell (B)
26	Republic Day (India)
27	Holocaust Remembrance Day
28	Walter Kasuboski (B) Thomas Zelinski (N) Neal Plale (B)
29	Joseph Maloney Joseph Smetana (B)
30	Season for Nonviolence begins
31	Ana Martinez (B)

He Held Radical Light: the Art of Faith, the Faith of Art

(By Christian Wiman Farrar, Straus and Giroux; 2018, \$23.00)



Christian Wiman is renowned as a gifted poet and prized as the author of the important memoir *My Bright Abyss*, in which he interspersed the story of his struggle with cancer with profound reflections on life and death. In this latest book, he has done neither of these things, or both, depending on how you look at it.

The heart of the book is neither memoir nor poems, but rather an exploration of the possible relationships between poetry and faith. Poetry, says Wiman, is a spiritual hunger that thrives on longing and dies when the longings have been fulfilled. But does poetry lead us to God, or is it the opposite?

Poetry and faith, each in its own way, is shaped as an open-ended and never fully satisfactory embrace of truth, whether aesthetic or "more ultimate." What makes poetry so mysterious, even mystical, and so important is that the poet is grasping after command of emotion and insight that he or she knows will never entirely succeed.

(The above is excerpted from a review by Paul Lakeland, which was published by NCR)