Monastery Renovation Still “On Time”

We’ve been informed that, in spite of the pandemic, the renovation of St. Francis Monastery in Milwaukee is still on time. The completion of the parish center is estimated for Spring 2021, and the friary is scheduled to be completed by Fall 2021.
Brothers Celebrate Religious Jubilees

Silver Jubilarian David Heffron, a native of Detroit, joined the Capuchin Franciscan order in 1993, was invested in 1994, took first vows in 1995 and was perpetually professed in August 2000. During formation, David ministered at the House of Peace in Milwaukee. After being perpetually professed, David ministered at St. Bonaventure and is now retired.

The VA home where David Heffron is living, invited people to drive by and wave to their family members earlier this week. They decorated the car for David for both his birthday as well as his 25th Jubilee.

Gary Keegstra was born in Beaver Dam, Wisconsin. He entered the order in 1980 and was perpetually professed in 1984. In 1986, Gary was ordained a priest. Gary’s time in ministry with the Capuchins includes periods at St. Lawrence Seminary, at the House of Prayer in Madison and at St. Fidelis. “One day (during college) I was home for a weekend visit and decided to visit my old grade school principal, Sr. Rose. I told her about my problem of not finding many Franciscan communities that serve the sick. She said: ‘Try out the Capuchins. They have many apostolates besides teaching. They are the best community of men that I know.’”

Former San Damiano Property Becomes Lakefront Oasis

Saint Norbert Abbey and the City of Monona WI agreed to the sale of a 10-acre parcel of land on Lake Monona. Both parties began a discussion of the sale seven months ago and agreed to work together to help preserve the last open piece of lakefront property. The agreement was approved by the Monona City Council on Sept. 8, 2020. “We Norbertines are happy to partner with the city to be able to offer this green space on the east shore of Lake Monona for the benefit of the citizens of Monona. As it had been for us for many years, this oasis can provide people with a peaceful place of rest and recreation,” stated Dane Radecki, O. Praem., abbot of Saint Norbert Abbey in De Pere, Wisconsin. The house on the property served as a student house for Norbertine seminarians for many years and later Norbertines studying at the University of Wisconsin lived there. However, in recent years, the students of the order chose to study elsewhere. Without students, the Norbertines decided that to invest in renovation of the house served no purpose.

In 1975, the Capuchin Province of St. Joseph began to use the house for retreats and a home for their elderly. During this time the house was called the San Damiano Friary.
The Season of Creation is a time to renew our relationship with our Creator and all creation through celebration, conversion, and commitment together. During the Season of Creation, we join our sisters and brothers in the ecumenical family in prayer and action for our common home.

Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios I proclaimed 1 September as a day of prayer for creation for the Orthodox in 1989. In fact, the Orthodox church year starts on that day with a commemoration of how God created the world.

The World Council of Churches was instrumental in making the special time a season, extending the celebration from 1 September until 4 October.

Following the leadership of Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios I and the WCC, Christians worldwide have embraced the season as part of their annual calendar. Pope Francis made the Roman Catholic Church’s warm welcoming of the season official in 2015.

In recent years, statements from religious leaders around the world have also encouraged the faithful to take time to care for creation during the month-long celebration.

The Season of Creation is a time to renew our relationship with our Creator and all creation through repenting, repairing, and rejoicing together. During the Season of Creation, we join our sisters and brothers in the ecumenical family in prayer and action for our common home.

This year, amid crises that have shaken our world, we’re awakened to the urgent need to heal our relationships with creation and each other. During the season this year, we enter a time of restoration and hope, a jubilee for our Earth, that requires radically new ways of living with creation.

The Season of Creation unites the world’s 2.2 billion Christians around one shared purpose. With so much injustice all around us, now is the time for Christians everywhere to come together and show the world how to love each other and creation.

Hispanic Heritage Month recognizes and celebrates the contributions Americans tracing their roots to Spain, Mexico, Central America, South American and the Spanish-speaking nations of the Caribbean have made to American society and culture. The observance was born in 1968 when Congress authorized the president to issue an annual proclamation designating National Hispanic Heritage Week. Just two decades later, lawmakers expanded it to a month long celebration, stretching from September 15 to October 15.

The timing is key. Hispanic Heritage Month — like its shorter precursor — always starts on September 15, a historically significant day that marks the anniversary of independence of five Latin American countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. The designated period is also a nod to those from Mexico and Chile, which celebrate their independence on Sept. 16 and Sept. 18, respectively.
Our affiliate, Rita Petrie, died recently at the age of 76. She was born September 21, 1943, in Fond du Lac, WI. She married Melvin Petrie, on March 3, 1962, who preceded her in death in 2002. Rita attended St. Peter Catholic School and St. Mary’s Springs High School. After graduation, she worked at Grandcare Nursing Home, National Exchange Bank, and the Villa Loretto. In 1970, she started at St. Lawrence Seminary in the food service department; retiring in 2004 after 36 years of service. She was a member of St. Isidore Parish-Holy Cross Church in Mount Calvary and a member of the Christian Women’s Society. On March 19, 2012, she was affiliated to the Province of St. Joseph of the Capuchin Order. Survivors include her three children, Sharon (Chad) Weber and Mark (Ginny) Petrie both of St. Cloud, and Annette Petrie (fiancé, Rick) of Plymouth. A Mass of Christian Burial is tentatively set for 11:00 AM on Saturday, September 26, 2020 at St. Isidore Parish-Holy Cross Church in Mount Calvary, WI. Visitation: Family and friends may visit with Rita’s Family at the church that morning from 9:00 AM until 10:30 AM. A memorial fund will be established in her name.

John Willger, Capuchin friar, died peacefully on 28 Aug at the age of 72, following struggles with a number of health issues. John was born on 14 Feb 1948 in Rice Lake WI, the son of Joseph and Frances (née Dostal). He was invested in the Capuchin habit in 1967, and perpetually professed in 1975. John ministered at St. Lawrence Seminary in Mt. Calvary WI since 1973. John is survived by his seven sisters: Mary Stuve (Rochester MN), Kathy McCarty (Inver Grove Hts MN), Angela Poirier (Rochester MN), Anne McMahon (Eden Prairie MN), Frances Romportl (Stillwater MN), Veronica Willger (River Falls WI), and Beth Habenester (West Bend WI), and his brothers: Ed and Tom (Rice Lake WI), Gerard Willger (Medford WI), Tony Willger (Roberts WI) and Joseph Willger (Tony WI), as well as his many Capuchin brothers with whom he lived, prayed and ministered for more than 50 years.

Our brother, Charles Robinson, died at the age of 78 on 1 September 2020. Charlie was born in 1942, the son of John and Margaret Robinson, in Helena MT. Charlie was invested in the Capuchin habit in 1962, perpetually professed in 1967, and ordained a priest in 1970. He was on the faculty of St. Lawrence Seminary in Mt. Calvary WI from 1970-1980, at which time he was assigned to St. Labre in Ashland MT. He ministered in Montana until 2014 when he retired to Appleton WI. Charlie is survived by his mother, Margaret (101 years old), and his brother Bill (Olympia WA) and his sister Audrey Ledgerwood (Ephrada WA), as well as his many Capuchin brothers with whom he lived, prayed and ministered for more than 58 years.

Nota Bene: We hope you understand that the pandemic has compromised our publication schedule. Activity in our ministries/communities has been severely diminished. We will publish periodically when we have news to share with you.