

re:Cap



Published for the Friars of the
Capuchin Franciscan
Province of St. Joseph

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15 March 2021

Issue 1188



March 8th was International Women's Day, and in the United States, the entire month of March is dedicated to the contributions of women.

There was a time, not that long ago, when friars basically did all of the tasks related to our life and ministry. And it was rare that a woman would be invited into the friary "cloister," much less be involved in either external or internal ministries of the province.

We asked three women to reflect on their years of service as employees of the St. Joseph Province, recognizing that the province has *many* female employees who support our mission and ministries every single day. Some of these women are more visible than others, as their role calls them to visit our ministry sites or our provincial residences. Many more of our employees are coming to work every day in an office unseen by most of the friars. Regardless of whether our female partners-in-ministry are in high or low profile positions, the province is fortunate to have so many talented and dedicated women, without whom we simply could not continue our ministries.

re:Cap offers sincere appreciation to all of our wonderful partners-in-ministry, and we take this opportunity to acknowledge the contributions that women continue to make to the life and ministries of the brothers.

Thank you!



Amy Peterson

Amy Peterson is director of the Office of Pastoral Care and Conciliation, which addresses misconduct within the province.

When I was asked to reflect on what it has been like for me, as a woman, to work in a religious order of men, I immediately thought that just being asked to do this reflects a partnering and an inclusion that I have felt since day one!

Having worked in the church for more than 17 years, I cannot always say it has felt this way. Although the ministry of my office is challenging and difficult, I have continued to work for the province because I have always been supported, respected and included in ways that impact the lives of the friars and those they serve.

I have come to believe that the ministry I do is deeply personal and relational. Even under some of the most difficult circumstances, I have always been welcomed.

I have certainly had some apprehension when staying in friaries, but not because I was treated poorly or disregarded, but simply because it was a new experience to so often be the only woman in the room. I imagine that at times both the friars and I are challenged to have me in the room! I have never felt dismissed or

marginalized by members of the province because of my gender. If friars are challenged by my presence and role in the province, I haven't felt it or certainly wouldn't say it is because I am a woman. It's more likely to be because of the challenging work of my office and what it represents. In ten years, working with friars from the Province of St. Joseph has affirmed my belief that they support women in leadership roles.

From the beginning of my relationship with the province, I have had an "invitation in" to both the lives of the friars and the organizational practices that impact my work. This must be a reflection on where the men of the province are in their commitment to equality, while in the *wider church, these challenges or tensions still exist.*

The mission and values of the province have always resonated with me; but more than that, as a female employee, I have experienced them lived out in my day to day work and relationships with the friars.



Colleen Crane

Colleen Crane, retired public relations director, served the province for 14 years.

I was hired by the province in 2004. At that time, TL and I had offices on 24th & Locust, above the Dominican Women's Center. I reported to my new office and met with TL. When I discovered there were no files or a computer to glean information from past pr/marketing communication efforts, I realized what an extraordinary opportunity I had been given.

TL explained the history of the position and that it was now up to me to create the "public/external" brand of the Capuchin Province of St. Joseph, and instructed me to "hit the road" ...and the sooner the better. He gave me a list of ministries and friars to visit and off I went on a fabulous adventure that would last 14 years. Later I learned that hitting the road solo was not the typical tradition in the province...but all the better. I had been empowered to swim in the deep end.

My tour would start in Detroit where I was greeted warmly by then-provincial minister Dan Anholzer. And I was similarly greeted all during my tenure...(some more enthusiastically than others), but always with the underlying message, "You are welcome here. You are valued."

My first dinner at St. Bonaventure's in Detroit was on the Feast of St. Francis. (I had thought such an elaborate meal was nightly.) I grew accustomed to joining the friars for dinner after evening prayer in the friars' chapel. We would stand in the dining room for Grace after which the local minister would then "officially" welcome me and any other visitors. A booming *welcome* would be the response. Such would be my experience throughout my 14-year 'tour.'

My career with the Capuchins was a series of firsts. Dan Anholzer had tasked me as my first order of business to create a provincial website. At that time, only the Vocation Office has a website. In October 2004, he asked when we would be able to launch. I replied March, when the crocus blooms. I didn't realize that the crocus blooms earlier in Detroit (vs. Milwaukee). Once we had our crocus blooming schedule straight, www.TheCapuchins.org launched. That website was followed by many websites until each ministry had its own website, all with the same Capuchin look and feel.

I doubt if any of the "firsts" would have taken place without the empowerment that was showered upon me by the friars. An early turning point was traveling with Dan and the provincial services team. Dan wanted to educate team members on the Capuchin history and values. With such a background, we would then accurately reflect the province's mission, vision and values as we did our daily work. We were attending a session at St. Anthony's Retreat Center in Marathon WI. It was winter and guest speaker, Roberta Swift, was

explaining the importance of living the mission of an organization. Through Roberta's help I realized I didn't have a job with the Capuchins; *I had a vocation.*

During my tenure with the Capuchins, the opportunities were great. One particular occasion, I was traveling with friars outside of our province, and I learned that the Province of St. Joseph attitudes toward women were unique!

Having been a child in the 50s/60s and "coming into ones' self" in the 70s, I learned as I began to grow into my pr/marketing communications career that sometimes it was necessary to have to "fight" for a seat at the table. During my time with the province, I sometimes had to explain why it was a good idea for me to join the table...but once there, I always felt welcomed and valued. For that I shall always be grateful to have been a part of such an inclusive, welcoming organization.



Debby Van Ermen has served the province as director of healthcare for the past nine years.

Being a woman working for a male religious order has provided me many opportunities to learn and grow, not only as a nurse but as a Christian woman as well.

It goes without saying that there have been challenges along the way. This is not only true for myself, but probably for the friars as well. I've been part of many difficult conversations with friars over the years. Whether I am facilitating driving evaluations for the senior friars or assisting with moving a friar to a retirement home, I find myself praying to God for the right words to make the situation less painful for the friar. There have been times that I field the brunt of the anger that's incited by a very difficult, painful change. As a woman working with very independent men, I consider these to be *character building* times I will always remember.

Most of us want to keep our health issues private and some of the friars are no exception. I learned early on that what is unique with the friars is that without a spouse or grown children to rely on during a health crisis, a person benefits by having a "go-to" person to help navigate their way through our ever-changing and complicated health system. The province has three licensed nurses and one healthcare assistant who act as healthcare advocates going to doctor appointments, communicating with healthcare providers and supporting a healthy lifestyle. The irony of this is that the province healthcare staff is all female. This has its ups and downs for the friars, but for the most part, I have seen many more ups than downs.

By nature, nurses are nurturing and compassionate. I believe this is true among the Province healthcare staff. We have a chance to provide not only skilled nursing care but to build trust and have a unique relationship many nurses never experience with their patients. Our main point of care is in the friars' residences and that alone is a more personal setting than a hospital room or clinic site.

I believe that the friars benefit greatly by having healthcare staff advocating for them just as we staff members benefit in so many different ways by being part of the friars' lives. I know for myself, caring for the friars has been one of the highlights of my life. mindful of my own place in the world and whether I will leave a story behind for my grandchildren when I am no longer here.

**“Women belong in *all* places where decisions are being made. ...
It shouldn't be that women are the exception.”**

~ Ruth Bader Ginsburg

March 19th – Happy Feast Day!



"The first chapter of the Province of St. Joseph was held Feb 6-12, 1873...The first decision of the chapter, that St. Joseph be taken as a protector, was couched in the words: 'Considering the greatness of the task that has been allotted to our province, to cultivate with apostolic labor such a vast and unusual field, mindful also of the many dangers that might be laid in its path or cause the ruin of its members, the province anxiously raises its eyes on high to implore the help of Almighty God, of the Immaculate Virgin, our fair protectress, and proclaims and pronounces St. Joseph, the foster father of Jesus Christ and the pure spouse of the Immaculate Virgin and Mother of God, patron of the province, and it decides that it shall always be called by his name and that its seal bear the representation of this glorious saint.'" (From: *The Province of St. Joseph of the Capuchin Order in the U.S.*, Benziger Brothers, 1907. Icon created by our brother Thomas Skowron.)

Recent Prayer Requests

- ! Mark Romanowski has been admitted to ICU with very high blood sugar levels.
- ! Pat Groeschel (sister-in-law of Larry Groeschel) has been hospitalized with COVID.
 - ! Helen Schmitz, mother of Tom Schmitz (affiliate), died recently.
 - ! Wally Balduck has been diagnosed with two kinds of bladder cancer.
 - ! Joachim Dinh Xuan Thai, brother of Tien Dinh, died recently.
- ! Tom Schmitz (affiliate) and family are grateful to all who sent cards/messages on the occasion of the death of his mother.
- ! Thank you very much for all of the prayers and condolences for the passing of my brother. His wife, two children, my families and I greatly appreciate the warm words of comfort and prayers during this time.
Thank you. ~ Tien Dinh

An Invocation for Learning and Safety

Julie Gard pens a poem for academics across the country who are teaching during a time of crisis and uncertainty this fall.

So let us plan and improvise, pivot and flex.
Let us share, collaborate, mix and integrate.
Let ingenuity coexist with fear, compassion
with defense, humor with darkness. Let us be real
with each other, touchstones for each other.

And let us take care of ourselves. Bring on the lake,
the video games, the sourdough, the woods,
the Bach and punk; bring us everything that keeps
us going. And everything we wish for ourselves,
let us wish it for our students,
and everything we wish
for our students, let us wish it for ourselves.

To live an altered life that is still full of meaning,
to keep learning and dreaming in a time of crisis,
to let crisis influence us but not dissuade us
so that it's not our roadblock, but our material.

Let us continue this experiment together,
with every precaution possible,
borne of commitment, curiosity and love.
Let us be open to transformation.



Spring is almost upon us. Enjoy...but continue to be vigilant!