



# THE CORD

A Newsletter From St. Anthony's Guild

Dear Friend of St. Anthony,

Greetings and welcome to the inaugural issue of The Cord. It is my pleasure to introduce our new quarterly newsletter. We felt it would be a welcome addition to St. Anthony's Guild by way of inspiration and education to help continue God's love at work through the ministry of the Franciscan Friars.

On June 13, we honor St. Anthony in a special way and thank him for his many intercessions in our needs. Please know that all of the Franciscan Friars will continue to pray for all St. Anthony's Guild members and all of your needs each and every day. On June 13, The Feast of St. Anthony, I will send special blessings to you and all those you love and care for. Please enjoy this special issue of The Cord and thank you for all of your continued support.

Fr. David Convertino, OFM

Executive Director of St. Anthony's Guild

## What St. Anthony Did For Me

**Story recounted from L.J., a volunteer for one year at The Saint Francis Inn in Philadelphia.**

The Franciscan Volunteer Ministry (FVM) of Holy Name Province provides an opportunity for young people to volunteer for a year of service to the poor. The volunteers live and serve as part of a full-time Franciscan community. There is a sign on the back of a door at the Saint Francis Inn in Philadelphia, one of the Franciscan Ministries where the volunteers can serve. It reads "Smile, Jesus is at the Door." The Inn is a place of ministry to people who are homeless, addicted, mentally ill, and very poor. The main ministry is the soup kitchen feeding up to 400 people a day— not only in body, but also in spirit.

At first the sign struck me as pious nonsense, but the truth of that sign has hit me many times while serving. When I first got to the Inn, I was particularly aware of who was poor and who was not. It was very much an "us and them" mentality. There were clearly defined lines



between the guests who came to eat and those of us serving them — the non-poor. Of course, these lines were only in my mind.

This attitude was slowly broken down by daily life at the Inn. Sometimes, we were so short-handed when meal time came, that we recruited some of the guests to serve the meal. When I started listening to their stories, I realized that save a different upbringing, we were not much different. Hearing the stories of Sean, who has an addiction and is trying desperately to get in a rehabilitative program, or of Catherine's struggle to find a good job to provide for her children, or even of Harry who is extremely mentally challenged, forced me to identify with them. Seeing how they suffer, I began to see the suffering Christ in them.

It is true they are Christ. When the bell rings at the Inn, Jesus is at the door. In fact, I realized, while organizing people in the yard, that there is no separation between them and me. I realized they are my sisters and brothers. They are family in Christ.

### In This Issue

- **What St. Anthony's did for me:** A volunteer accounts his journey at The Saint Francis Inn in Philadelphia.
- **Fun Fact**
- **Calendar of Novena's**
- **My Legacy**



### A Fun Fact You Didn't Know: St. Francis

**His Name Was Originally John.** At his birth in 1182, his mother had Saint Francis baptized John (Giovanni), after St. John the Baptist. However, when his father, a rich cloth merchant Pietro di Bernardone returned from business travels, he renamed him Francis (Francesco) because France was where he made his livelihood.

## Please Join Us For Our Spring, Summer and Fall Novenas

### Great Novena to St. Anthony



**June 4 - June 12, 2018 with Mass on June 13 for the Feast of St. Anthony.**

### Our Lady of the Assumption



**August 6 - August 14, 2018 with Mass on August 15 for the Feast of the Assumption.**

### Great Novena to St. Francis



**September 25 - October 3, 2018 with Mass on October 4th for the Feast of St. Francis.**



# MY LEGACY

**You can't take it with you. Yes, you can!**

**By: Fr. David Convertino, OFM**

Surely, you have heard the phrase: "You can't take it with you!" There's a lot of solid folk wisdom packed into those six words. It's a reminder that hoarding what we possess does no good and that our time here on earth is limited. But in my work, as Director of Development for the Franciscan Friars of Holy Name Province, I've learned it's not always true.

The "it" here, of course, refers to money. It is true that having money allows us a certain control over our life: a car, so we don't need to rely on irregular bus schedules; health insurance, so we can be taken care of in times of illness; food and shelter, for ourselves and our families. This control makes us feel better about our circumstances. It relieves anxiety about our future. Yet I've learned that it's possible to exert the control that money brings even when we have passed on to everlasting life in heaven.

**I believe you can take it with you.** Your money can still have an impact on the good works you want to see happen even after your life on this earth is finished. Bequests granted to St. Anthony's Guild continue to fund our direct service work to the poor. Already, if you received this newsletter, you are among 60,000 regular contributors to our good works and you will learn more about where we put our resources. And you have responded generously.

## **The Franciscan Friars continue to reach out.**

Every morning, 400 people line up for a modest breakfast, which is provided by the friars, outside our Provincial headquarters in New York City, near Penn Station, an area frequently populated by the homeless and the desperate. In Philadelphia, we feed 300 people every day, and in many cases, it's the only solid meal many can rely on. In Boston, more than 1,000 families receive groceries each month. In Anderson, South Carolina, we offer what's called "Clean Start." The homeless can go there to take a shower, do laundry and even get a haircut. These simple amenities are often taken for granted, but they offer some dignity to the people who live on the streets.



Around the East Coast, Japan and Peru, we can offer more than direct service with your money; we offer opportunities to end the cycle of poverty! Our thrift stores, legal aid, and leadership at Christ the King High School in Newark, New Jersey, offer opportunities to those working to escape the obstacles of poverty, hunger and desperation. At that high school, students from poor families find out what it's like to hold a job while they advance their education. The Franciscans assist more than two million people each year.

Your bequest to St. Anthony's Guild can be directed to any of these good works. Perhaps you have seen our work in your city and you want to assure that outreach continues. You can direct your gift to a particular ministry.

The good you do will continue after your death exactly the way you envision it. In my work, I am privileged to see how our benefactors make a difference, both through their contributions when they are alive and those made after death. Often, they are animated by the Franciscan spirit of giving that they experience: "It is in giving that we receive."



## **Here is an example:**

A lady called our office to say she was leaving everything in her will to the Guild. Struck by her generosity, when I was near her town six months later, I invited her out to lunch as a small gesture of gratitude. When the check came, the lady gave it to me. "I'm going to let you take it because you have everything else I have," she said. I was more than happy to pay the bill.

At St. Anthony's Guild, we appreciate everything our benefactors generously contribute, large and small. Occasionally, I hear thoughts about bequests granted after death such as: "What about my children? Shouldn't I leave my money to them?"

I agree that we should take care of our family first. But may I also suggest that we expand the definition of family beyond our blood family to include all our brothers and sisters as Christ taught us. Maybe we can't offer everything we have, but many of us can provide something to our poor brothers and sisters served by the Franciscan Friars.



Your contribution can also assist us in our care for our elderly friars, who have devoted a lifetime of service to you and now need your help. It also helps to

support the education of our young friars so that the work of St. Francis can continue for future generations.

Remember, your gift to St. Anthony's Guild can offer tax benefits, as we are a charitable, tax-exempt organization. Those benefactors who become part of our Padua Society are prayed for daily by our friars and we promise to try and be present at your funeral or wake to join our prayers with all who are there for you. All that time, you know that your treasure is doing good for God's poor.

## **Want to learn more?**

**Please give me a call at (212) 564-8834 or feel free to email me at [FrDavid@thefranciscans.org](mailto:FrDavid@thefranciscans.org)**



St. Anthony's Guild  
144 West 32nd Street  
New York, NY 10001-3202  
1.800.848.4538

[www.StAnthonysGuild.org](http://www.StAnthonysGuild.org) • [www.TheFranciscanStore.org](http://www.TheFranciscanStore.org)  
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