



Capuchin Franciscan Friars

PROVINCE OF ST. AUGUSTINE

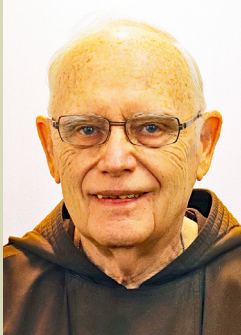
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April 2025

Our Senior Friars appreciate your love, prayers and support and include you in their prayers and at daily Mass.

I want to bring you up to date on our elderly priests and brothers that I live with here at St. Augustine Friary in Pittsburgh. I see them every day, and we need your help!

Unfortunately over the past several months, we lost two of our missionary giants, Fr. Allan Wasiecko and Fr. Colman Studeny. They labored for many years in the missions of Papua New Guinea - more than 100 years combined! Fr. Allan and Fr. Colman loved the people of Papua New Guinea and brought many of them into the Church. They lived with them and were part of their lives in both joyful and sad times. The people loved them. May they rest in peace.



*Our dear departed brothers
Fr. Allan (left above) and Fr. Colman*

One of their fellow missionaries is Fr. Brian Newman. Just about a month ago Father received the news that he was terminally ill with only weeks to a few months left. Fr. Brian declined treatment and entered hospice care here in the Capuchin friary. He wants you to know that he needs and appreciates your prayers as he makes this final journey. I must tell you that Fr. Brian is happy and looking forward to being with the Lord for all eternity.



Fr. Brian Newman

I know we can count on your prayers for Fr. Brian and all of our Senior Friars.

May I also count on your generous support?



Fr. Leon Leitem

Fr. Leon Leitem is the most elderly friar of our community. At 93 he is able to get around with a walker and is faithful to community Mass and prayers. Every evening he makes his way to dinner with the friars, but Fr. Leon has had a few setbacks recently. After a fall he was admitted to a physical therapy facility. He is back now, a bit weaker but quite mobile. As he recently remarked to me, "It might be time to move on." I knew what he meant.

Fr. Sam Driscoll is 92. Perhaps a bit forgetful at times, Fr. Sam has a great appetite, gets around fairly well in his wheelchair, and engages in conversation with the friars. He is always pleasant and ready to smile. Fr. Sam prays for you and all of our benefactors every day.

Fr. Lester Knoll just finished writing another book! Fr. Lester continues to be a spiritual director to seminarians, priests, sisters and lay people. He hasn't slowed down much, even at the age of 87. Fr. Lester is always thinking of the next way to share Christ's love and life with others.



Fr. Lester Knoll

I just noticed that all of these friars were missionaries. Fr. Leon worked for many years in Puerto Rico, and the others were long-time missionaries in Papua New Guinea. These men have given their all as Capuchin friars and priests.

Another former missionary, Fr. Albert Alexandrunas, is always joyful and attentive. He gets around on a motorized cart - sometimes a bit too fast! Fr. Albert loves talking about his work in the missions. With a very sharp memory and great humor, he is a living, breathing mission history book.

Would you help us take care of our elders?

There are more friars I will mention in future updates.

I love living with these men. They have given so much; they are faithful and faith-filled priests and friars. They worked in very difficult conditions and loved it. Each of them sacrificed their best years because they have a great love for Christ and the Church.

Your generous support will be an enormous help.

After all the good they have done - with the grace of God - they deserve great care every day.

I know you will make that possible with your gift for our Senior Friars.

God bless you for your love, concern and generosity.

Can I count on your continued support of the Capuchin friars?

Sincerely,

Fr. John Pfannenstiel, OFM Cap.



Fr. Sam Driscall (left) and Fr. Albert Alexandrunas

P.S. Your generous gift to the Capuchin friars will help us take care of our senior friars after many years of faithful service to our Lord and the Church.