



Capuchin Franciscan Friars

PROVINCE OF ST. AUGUSTINE

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January 2025

The New Year brings the promise of new blessings! May 2025 be a year of abundant blessings to you and your loved ones.

Our senior friars brought in the New Year quietly and prayerfully. We had a wonderful New Year's Day Mass, an excellent dinner and good times with all of the friars.

As we sat chatting at the table after the meal, I noticed Fr. Jim Menkhus and Fr. Bill Graham at a nearby table.



Fr. Jim Menkhus

They were classmates all the way back to their days at St. Fidelis Seminary High School in Herman, PA. About 60 years ago they met for the first time, one from the Pittsburgh area and the other from St. Louis.

Along the way they completed their studies, became Capuchin friars and were ordained to the priesthood. Fr. Jim Menkhus loved parish ministry and served in Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Maryland. Fr. Bill Graham had his cherished parish experiences, too, and he also loved teaching and ministering to young folks.

In addition to his pastoral responsibilities, Fr. Jim has always loved the arts. He was a fine musician and vocalist. He even composed music for the liturgy. Fr. Jim was also a visual artist and over the years produced many beautiful pieces that now hang on the walls of the friary.

Fr. Bill loved sports and engaging with young folks. He made many friends and would go on to officiate at their weddings, baptize their children and even their grandchildren.

Both friars are now in our assisted living unit at St. Augustine Friary. They sit across from each other every evening at dinner and are good company for one another. After all these years, here they are again, classmates rejoined for good conversation and recalling the "good old days" 60 years ago.

They know that God has blessed them in so many ways: the gift of life, a vocation to be Capuchin brothers and to serve God's people as priests.



Fr. Bill Graham

In turn, many have been blessed by the Lord through Fr. Jim and Fr. Bill.

Fr. Jim and Fr. Bill always seem to be smiling and enjoying life, even as they become more needful of assistance. Both need walkers now to get around.

They are thankful for friends who come to visit them and the friars who lend a helping hand.

And who doesn't need help? Every one of us needs help; none of us can make it on our own, even with the best of health and determination.

Fr. Jim and Fr. Bill, along with more than a dozen other friars, need your help.



*Fr. Bill Graham, Fr. Jim Menkhus and
Fr. Joe Mindling at prayer in the friary chapel.*

Every one of our senior friars retired only when they couldn't go on any more. That's the way it is for the friars; we gladly work until we can't anymore. That is true about Fr. Jim and Fr. Bill.

Yes, they need a helpful hand from the friars, but they also ask for loving support from you.

Are you able to help us take care of our senior friars?

As I sat at the table at our New Year's dinner looking at Fr. Jim and Fr. Bill, I thought about their more active years and how they had blessed so many people. I was moved by the joy and serenity they exhibit every day even as they sometimes struggle physically.

I hope that you are able to help us care for our senior friars.

Know that you are in our prayers, especially at the altar as the holy Mass is offered for you and your loved ones.

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.

P.S. Your generous gift to the Capuchin friars will help us take care of our senior friars and train our youngest brothers.