



Capuchin Franciscan Friars

PROVINCE OF ST. AUGUSTINE

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One of them is 92 and has finally decided it was time to retire. The other will turn 86 in about a month and plans to return to work in Papua New Guinea.

Fr. Roman Kozacheson and Br. Ray Ronan are two of our senior friars. Both are an inspiration and have given their lives to Christ, the Church and the many people they have served.

Will you help us care for these two great Capuchin friars?

My experiences with them go back many years: Br. Ray when I was a high school student and Fr. Roman when I was a newly ordained priest over 40 years ago. Both were great examples to so many people.

If there is one word that would describe both of them, it would be "fearless." Whatever assignment they were given, they did it with all their hearts and energy, undaunted by the challenges they faced.

Shortly after his ordination back in 1961, Fr. Roman was chaplain to a Youth Detention Center in western Pennsylvania. Yes, it was a prison for male adolescents who had committed serious crimes. Fr. Roman gave his all to those troubled kids.



Br. Ray and Fr. Roman

Throughout his priestly ministry, he served in various rural, suburban and urban parishes. He is able to connect with all sorts of people living in very different circumstances. From a large, upper middle class parish in York, PA, to a poor, gigantic, multilingual parish in Washington, DC, to a quiet parish in the Laurel Mountains of Pennsylvania, and numerous other assignments, Fr. Roman adapted and excelled. He was the "go-to guy" for challenging parishes and ministries.

He worked with the homeless, was chaplain to a large community of Sisters, provided pastoral care in a busy hospital, and heard confessions day in and day out in a center city parish.

But you'll never hear Fr. Roman bragging about his work. He is a humble man with a big heart. He loves Christ and the Church.

Now in his 90s, Fr. Roman needs a little extra attention and care. I hope you are able to help.



I mentioned that I knew Br. Ray when I was in high school. He visited my family home in Kansas as I considered a vocation to become a Capuchin friar.

Not too long after those visits in the late 60s, Br. Ray was assigned to the mission of Papua New Guinea. He had expressed interest in becoming a missionary, and his Capuchin superiors took him up on his offer.

The Ohio native found himself on the other side of the world in the Southern Highlands of Papua New Guinea. There he joined about 45 other Capuchin missionaries to continue the work that began in 1956.

It had to be a fascinating first several years. The Southern Highlands people had only just recently seen a wheel! Yes, here was the Stone Age awakening to airplanes and radios. Can you imagine?

Br. Ray brought his many talents to serve the friars, like cooking and tailoring - he still makes our Capuchin habits, our brown robes, but he was also eager to spread our Catholic faith to people who had never heard of Jesus Christ and a loving God.

He taught the Catholic faith to men who wanted to become catechists, teachers of our faith. For sure, it was difficult because there were more than 200 separate languages in the Southern Highlands and very few knew how to read and write.

Br. Ray trained the catechists who would travel through rugged mountains and valleys of the Highlands to bring our Catholic faith to more and more people.

Fr. Roman and Br. Ray are two friars who have given their lives in service to God and the Church. Fr. Roman has finally fully retired and has moved into the Capuchin Motherhouse in Pittsburgh. Br. Ray has been here since before Christmas for a break and medical attention.

We depend on your kindness and generosity to care for our senior friars like Fr. Roman and Br. Ray. They deserve the best after years of tireless work.

May I count on your generous gift?

Know that all of the Capuchin friars are praying for you, and I know Fr. Roman and Br. Ray remember you every day.

We are prayerfully grateful for your support of the Capuchin friars.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Fr. John". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "F" and a stylized "John".

Fr. John Pfannenstiel, OFM Cap.

P.S. Your generous gift to the Capuchin friars will help us take care of our senior friars like Fr. Roman and Br. Ray.

