

Franciscan Alumni Association



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Serving Provinces of Our Lady of Guadalupe and St. John the Baptist

www.franciscan-alumni.org

2023 Reunion/Retreat, June 22-25



We are delighted to invite you to join us for a time of renewal, reflection, and relaxation with fellow Franciscan alumni and their families at St. Francis Retreat House (SFRH), with our OFM hosts Henry Beck, Mark Ligett, Loren Connell, Ed Skutka, and Scott Obrecht.

The 23-acre campus has a familiar look and feel, nestled in a secluded nature setting, much like many of our Franciscan formation centers of old.

The all-inclusive feature of this reunion weekend is reminiscent of our time in formation, where all of our needs were met.

We know that this would involve travel for many alumni and guests, but we are grateful to have been offered very reasonable rates for lodging and meals at

the Retreat House. We hope this will enable you to make travel plans to be with one another for a fun weekend and to deepen fraternal bonds. We also look forward to reflecting on the future of our association.

St. Francis Retreat House is about 20 minutes from the **Allentown/Bethlehem/Easton (ABE)** airport and less than a 90-minute drive from the **Newark (EWR)** and **Philadelphia (PHL)** airports. There is a bus from the Newark airport that comes close to the Retreat House. The drive from Cincinnati is about 8 hours.

St. Francis Retreat House
3918 Chipman Rd
Easton PA 18045

Registration:

<https://whennow.com/event/faa-reunion-and-retreat>

- or -

Call Barbara, SFRH Secretary:
610-258-3053, ext. 10

Schedule of Activities

Thursday, June 22

- 4-6 pm: Arrival at SFRH, Registration, Settling In
- 6 pm: Supper together
- 7:15 pm: **Our Franciscan Mosaic**: Sharing stories of how we have been living the Franciscan charism in our lives since our formation years
- 8:30 pm: Recreation with snacks and drinks
- "Sing-a-Long Song" group for those interested in playing music or singing
- 10:00 pm: Quiet and rest

2023 Reunion Plan, Continued

Friday, June 23

- 8 am: Morning Prayer for those who wish or public Mass in Main Chapel

- 8:30 am: Breakfast together

*Please sign out at breakfast if you will not be having lunch here at SFRH today.

- 9:15 am: **Our Futures Joined Together:** Do you prefer to stay an alumni association for SJB and OLG Provinces as we have in the past? Do you have any dreams for a more engaged Franciscan fellowship in the future? Do you desire more fraternal connection with other Franciscan alums? What would it look like if we built on the union of the six USA provinces to form a six-province Franciscan alumni fellowship? Would you like to be a part of the "impetus" for a nation-wide Franciscan alumni association to come into being? (small groups) Family members are free to take part or to have some fun with other family members by going sightseeing or relaxing together.

- 10:15 am: Break

- 10:30–11:30 am: Our Futures Joined Together II: We'll continue this discussion all together in the large group.

- Noon: Lunch together for those staying on campus for lunch, or lunch on your own away from campus.

*Please sign out at breakfast if you are not staying for lunch here at SFRH.

Free afternoon: Time to explore the towns of Easton, Bethlehem, Jim Thorpe, or explore nature trails nearby. Several nearby attractions will be suggested.

- 6 pm: Supper together

- 7:15 pm: Movie Night: Possibly "Soul Searching: The Journey of Thomas Merton," "A Celtic Pilgrimage" with John O' Donohue, "Of Gods and Men," "Two Popes" or another movie with a spiritually reflective meaning.

- 9 pm: Recreation together with snacks and drinks

- 10:30 pm: Quiet and rest

Saturday, June 24

- 8 am: Morning Prayer for those who wish

- 8:30 am: Breakfast together

*Please sign out at breakfast if you are not staying for lunch here at SFRH.

- 9:15 am: **Beginning Again:** A little more time to share

insights from conversations about our future together. What new insights and guidance have we felt for our personal lives and for our FAA fellowship to grow in the Franciscan charism that we all share? What new thoughts do we have about "widening our tents" to join with alums and their families from the other USA provinces? (small groups)

-10:15 am: Break

-10:30-11:30 am: Beginning Again II: What guidance can we offer to the present Franciscan Alumni Assn Board and to future FAA Board members about going into the future? What direction would we propose about engaging with alums and their families from other USA provinces? (large group)

Noon: Lunch together for those staying on campus for lunch, or lunch on your own away from campus.

*Please sign out at breakfast if you are not staying for lunch here at SFRH.

Free Afternoon until 4:30 pm to explore nearby attractions

--> Also, two activities at SFRH during the afternoon:

1:15 pm: **"Journey into Our Roots"** with Loren Connell, OFM.

2:45 pm: **"Creation Meditation Walk"** with Frank Lopez at a nearby county park

- 4:30 pm: Franciscan Alumni meeting, Awards, and Brief Intro to Secular Franciscans

[For those leaving early on Sunday, there is a 5 pm Weekend Mass at St. Jane de Chantal Parish nearby ... five minutes from SFRH.]

- 6 pm: Supper together

- 8 pm: Franciscan Alumni Memorial Service in Main Chapel

- 9 pm: Recreation with snacks and drinks

- 10:30 pm: Quiet and rest

Sunday, June 25

- 8 am: Morning Prayer for those who wish

- 8:30 am: Light breakfast together

- 10 am: Sunday Eucharist with SFRH Sunday Community in Main Chapel

- 11:30 am: Larger Brunch together

- 12:30 pm: Departures

Contact person for questions: Fr. Henry Beck, OFM: 610-258-3053, ext. 13
You may wish to visit www.stfrancisretreathouse.org to see photos and more information.

Registration:

<https://whennow.com/event/faa-reunion-and-retreat> - or -

Call Barbara, SFRH Secretary: 610-258-3053, ext. 10

Cost for those staying at the St. Francis Retreat House (SFRH):

Thursday to Sunday: \$225 / person (\$420 / couple)

3 nights, 9 meals, evening socials, coffee and juices throughout the day

All lodging and meals included from Thursday supper through Sunday lunch

Friday to Sunday: \$190 / person (\$360 / couple)

2 nights, 6 meals, evening socials, coffee and juices throughout the day

All lodging and meals included from Friday supper through Sunday lunch

Or if you wish to stay at the nearby Hampton Inn:

Lodging: Hampton Inn and Suites, 200 Gateway Drive, Bethlehem PA 18017 / 610-868-2442

Guaranteed rates for "Franciscan Alumni Reunion" group are \$109.99 plus tax for Thursday evening and \$149.99 plus tax for Friday and Saturday evening. A continental breakfast is included. They will hold 10 rooms for us until June 4th. **The direct booking link:**

https://secure3.hilton.com/en_US/hp/reservation/book.htm?inputModule=HOTEL&ctyhocn=BLMPAHX&spec_plan=CHHFAR&arrival=20200625&departure=20200628&cid=OM,WW,HILTONLINK,EN,DirectLink&fromId=HILTONLINKDIRECT

SFRH meal plans for commuters: \$156 for Thursday to Sunday or **\$101** for Friday to Sunday

Meals included except breakfasts (please eat breakfast at the hotel)

* The listed prices for St. Francis Retreat House are totals. No tax will be added.

** Please note that the lodging and food rates at St. Francis Retreat House are very special (cheap) so we won't be able to prorate a signed-out meal, a late arrival, or an early departure. Thanks for understanding!

Nearby attractions include:

- Martin Guitar Museum and tour in nearby Nazareth, PA
- Illick's Mill Park, Bethlehem, PA
- Bethlehem Steel Stacks: Walking the Trestle
- Canal boat ride on the Lehigh Canal in Hugh Moore Park, Easton, PA
- Town of Bethlehem
- Town of Easton

Additional information is at: <https://franciscan-alumni.org/reunions/faa-reunion-2023/>

2022 Humanitarian Award: Antonio Trujillo '78

by Larry Dunham, OFM '65



Antonio Trujillo came to the St. Francis Seminary from the wonderful and beautiful village of San Rafael, just south of Grants, New Mexico. It's also near Acoma Pueblo, near Laguna Pueblo, and near the village of San Fidel, where he now lives. He's a member of the St. Francis Seminary class of 1978. He was ordained a friar priest in 1989.

In 1974, I was stationed at St. Francis Seminary, working for the vocation office. I also coached the freshman soccer team. Antonio was a member of the team, and he was very little. I remember thinking, boy, these guys are going to get stomped, but they were extraordinary at getting the ball away from the other team.

They were so pesky that they got the nickname, "the fleas." They would not leave anybody alone. At the end of the game, they'd be bloody and bruised, but not one of them would give up. They were absolutely determined that they were going to stay in the game. They were just focused on the goal and they were tough, little guys. Their confidence grew and they just couldn't wait to get in the game, and they'd see a big guy on the other team and they'd say, "That big guy is going down."

So, I first met Antonio there. Of course, the freshmen got the worst of the uniforms. They were hand-me-downs and we couldn't get them in sizes that were extra, extra small, so for photos we told them, "Bring your belts," because we needed to strap the uniforms to make it look like they fit. And yet, we were a great team and we did very well. Antonio showed utter courage and utter fearlessness, goal driven.

I met his family during Christmas of 1974. I happened to be in the southwest, visiting students, and I came to San Rafael. Antonio's family provided wonderful hospitality.

Antonio had four assignments as a friar priest. He was an associate pastor at Holy Family in Albuquerque. He was a member of a missionary team in Juarez, Mexico. He was then an associate pastor in Roswell, NM, and later at Acoma Pueblo as pastor.

I was always taken with Antonio's incredible pastoral commitment. He reached out to relationships.



What he believes is that it's not finances and money that are going to make the world go around... not position, not power, not honor, and not glory. Franciscans believe the only thing that really, ultimately moves the world... is love. After a lot of prayer and discernment over a tough decision, Antonio decided in 2000 that he needed to go in a different direction,

not as a priest, but as a family man, a husband. He married his lovely wife, Lucinda. Around this time, Antonio took on a new challenge as a grower of grapes and a maker of fine wine. It was a risky venture and hard work, but he excelled at it. His Guadalupe Wine won several prestigious awards.

All of a sudden, in 2009, Larry Bernard (pastor of Laguna) said to Antonio, "We're really having problems with that school down the road from you, St. Joseph Mission School. The number of students dropped to 12, teachers are unhappy, the administrator has quit, and every single month

they're on the verge of closing. I need you to come in for just 6 months as a temporary person and keep it from going under and do what you can." Antonio said yes, even though he was a very busy vintner.

He helped the school to improve, but after Antonio's 6 months were up, he went back to fulltime wine-making.



Unfortunately, St. Joseph School continued to have problems and went through 3 administrators during the next year. Antonio returned to the school as administrator around 2011 and he has served as principal ever since. He excelled at fundraising, which was challenging. There are now 51 very happy students enrolled, who are full of joy and life, because of what Antonio has done for that school.

The definition of holiness is "letting the light of Christ shine in our lives." Antonio has spent a lifetime filling others with holiness. He has a

heart of extraordinary faith, incredible compassion and kindness, unflinching integrity and honesty, willing to serve anyone and everyone. This is how each of us knows, loves, and respects Antonio Trujillo.

Challenges continue, but typical of his time as a flea on the freshman squad, Antonio never loses his stride. He was a man on a mission to save that school and he loves those students. That's what hope looks like. Antonio always expects a happy ending, even when there doesn't appear to be a real reason for doing so. His faith empowers him to believe that all will be well. St. Francis of Assisi would be proud.



2022 Christian Life Award: Charlie Martinez, OFM '71 by Rick Kasper '70



Fr. Charlie was pastor at St. Patrick's in Chama, NM, from 1984 to 1992 and at St. Peter's in Roswell, NM, from 2010 to the present day.

Fr. Charlie shared that he has experienced great joy in Christian outreach ministry, but now that he is older, his focus has shifted more to fraternal relationships.

In addition to pastoral responsibilities, he has

taken on community roles such as definitor for twelve years, vocation director for seven years, post-novitiate formation director for eight years, and vicar provincial for the past seven years.

In his closing remarks, Fr. Charlie emphasized that it has been an honor to serve God's people and the Franciscan Order that has given him so much.

Fr. Charlie Martinez, OFM received the 2022 FAA Christian Life Award. Fr. Charlie graduated from St. Francis Seminary in 1971 and he was ordained a priest in 1980. He has served his entire ministry for Our Lady of Guadalupe Province.

Upon receiving the award, Fr. Charlie remarked that he has truly

been enriched by the diversity of the Franciscan Family: "Living and interacting with friars of varied backgrounds, cultures, personalities, points of view, and ages has been a true blessing." He noted that this has challenged him to be a more creative pastor, e.g., visiting missionary villages in Central America.



Friendships that Last Forever by Mark Clark and Dave Gehring '72



As of June 2022, it had been 50 years since the class of 1972 graduated from St. Francis High School Seminary.

Twelve members of the class of '72, out of the 41 who were part of the class at some point, came together along with spouses and other alumni in San Antonio, Texas during the annual Franciscan Alumni Association reunion.

Prior to the event, Dave Gehring and Mark Clark reached out to classmates to encourage interest and participation.

Twelve were able to attend:

Gary Bales Mike Kordenbrock
Dave Gehring Mike Vogler Ted
Gomez Albert Haase, OFM
Mark Clark Hank Rethlake Ed
Schellenbach Pat Valdez Mike
Giovanetti Dale Weigel

Rick McCoy was also on this list as a planned attendee, but unfortunately, he was not able to get a flight from South America, where he was providing humanitarian assistance to a family in need.

Throughout the weekend, everyone enjoyed sharing and hearing stories from those formative

years in the early 70's and ever since that time. They also took pleasure in getting together with alumni from other classes and hearing about similar experiences.

During the extended weekend, the class of '72 attempted to address thought-provoking questions that were presented during high school years:

Who am I? Who is God? What am I going to do about it?

Discussions during the weekend touched on how we have kept this in mind throughout our lives.

2022 Franciscan Alumni Reunion in San Antonio



San Antonio River

Our gracious hosts:
Gale and J D Moya



The whole gang on Thursday night



2022 Reunion in Pictures (Continued)



Have I Told You About...?

by Leonard Waldorf '62

These stories were posted during the past year on the Franciscan Alumni Facebook website. Thank you, Leonard, for sharing your entertaining, true tales from seminary life.

Have I told you about the time at the seminary that...

I took the Wheel Horse out to mow around the bee hives? There were about 15 to 20 hives and I was one of the lucky ones who got to work with the bees. It was really a great activity and one that I did continue years after I had left the seminary. It was also fun to work with the priests who likewise enjoyed the hobby. Anyway, through reading about bees I learned that tall grass or weeds growing in front of the entrance to a hive could slow down the bees and cause them to lose some of the pollen they were carrying. I drove the Wheel Horse mower out to the bee shack, put on my beekeeping gear and started mowing along a line about 3 or 4 feet in front of the hive -- just to sort of see how the bees took it. No problem. I made another pass a little closer. A few bees buzzed around a little, but I was used to that. On the third pass, I drove as close as I could to the hives to get a nice clean path for the bees coming and going. All went well until I got a little too close to one of the last few hives in the line. The shield over the mower blade just caught the edge of the ledge that serves as the entrance for the bees. The hive twisted a bit. I should have stopped right there, but no. I decided to drive on. The hives were placed on some cement blocks to keep them up off the ground. As the hive twisted, the blocks were pulled over. The hive leaned over. The hives were made of sections called "supers." When the corner of the bottom section hit the ground, the supers started separating. Need I say that the bees were somewhat startled? I received a few stings immediately. I gunned the Wheel Horse and drove a serpentine course through the orchard. I made a quick decision to leave

the Wheel Horse to the bees and run a while. But that's not the end of the story. I knew that I was going to have to put the hive back together. After a short rest, I grabbed my bee smoker and went to work. I got the bottom section set back up and added the first super without issue. The next one was a little more work because some of the frames that held the honeycomb had come out. I had to reinsert those one at a time. The longer I worked, the more upset the bees got. I put up the remaining 3 or 4 supers quickly, added the cover and stepped back. All looked good -- except that one of the supers was upside down. I was not about to crack open that hive again that day. The bees and I had all had enough. I would correct my error in a few days. Well, I did not get the chance. Fr. Rector decided we should go do a little work on the hives after class the next day. One of the hives he decided to open was the one with the upside down super. He just could not figure out how that could have happened, but he did joke about the bees flying upside down.

Have I told you about the time at the seminary that...

I nearly killed myself on a trail in Winton Woods? A few of us were walking along the trail beside a small creek that was maybe 5 or 10 feet down a hill to our left. Unknown to us at the time, it emptied into a much larger creek that would cross our path some distance ahead. That creek was between 25 and 30 feet lower than the trail where it took a sudden turn to the right. It was really quite picturesque with its flat stone bottom straight down from the top. Anyway, another group of seminarians showed up on the other side of the small creek and we decided to race. I was first in line and when I reached the jog to the right, I ran straight into midair. I reached back with one hand and grabbed the trunk of a small tree that I swear had not been there moments before. I slowly pulled myself up far enough that my

friends could pull me up the rest of the way just as the roots of the tree were working their way out of the ground. I still refer to that tree as the tree that wasn't there.

Have I told you about the time at the seminary that...

I and a few of my closest friends buried a gallon jug of apple cider in the section of pine trees that grew on the side of the hill beside the creek? We inserted a metal tube into a cork in the top so we could find it again. Come winter, we went out to find it and check how much it had fermented. We each took a sip and lived. I wonder if the jug is still there.

Have I told you about the time at the seminary that...

we took a toboggan into the woods for a little fun? I'm not sure just how many of us it would hold, but it sure could move. There was a hill that went down toward the road just a little beyond the dam below the swimming pool. It was a narrow path with trees on both sides. There was a barbed wire fence hiding at the bottom of the hill. You guessed it. I was in the front position for that run. We could see the road ahead and we did not want to slide out onto the road, so we all put our feet down and managed to stop just before the road. Normally, the man at the front of the sled gets off first but I could not move. The barbed wire was a little more than an inch from the bridge of my nose. I had to wait until the others worked their way off until I could work my way back. *(Continued on next page)*

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Have I told you about the time at the seminary that...

a few of us took a springtime walk in Winton Woods? It was chilly and there was still ice on the lake, so we started to cross it. I was first with the others following. I had a sinking feeling as the ice ever so slowly gave way beneath me. When I had sunk enough that the water was up to my armpits, I attempted to pull

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myself back up onto the ice but I just kept making the hole bigger. I decided that flailing my arms would break off the weaker ice and I'd be able to climb out onto the thicker part. That wasn't working very well either. When I paused, I heard the others yelling at me. They had noticed that I was stirring up mud in the water around me. They were yelling "STAND UP! STAND UP! YOU ARE ON THE BOTTOM!" I looked down and could see what they were talking about. I walked ashore. A nice gentleman in a pickup truck stopped and offered us a ride. I offered to sit outside in the bed because I did not want to get the cab wet and dirty. He and the guys with me would hear nothing of that so I sat inside. Upon reaching the seminary, I managed to get downstairs into the locker room unnoticed. I stood in the warm shower for a half an hour or so and managed to get to dinner. As far as I know, none of the priests or brothers ever knew about my ordeal. If my partners in crime want to admit their involvement, I'll leave it up to them to tell about it.

The Franciscan Alumni Association newsletter is mailed to approximately 1,200 members for whom we have addresses. The only cost of production is the expense of printing and mailing. Additional stories and photos are available on the website. Thank you for your interest and support!

Franciscan Alumni Association Board of Trustees

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