

## Grads Carry Franciscan Charism



**Rick Riccioli, OFM Conv.**

“Be real! Action speaks volumes!” Friar Rick Riccioli, OFM Conv., exclaims when asked how St. Francis would evangelize to young people. It’s not hard to tell that Rick is passionate about his work with FrancisCorps—an organization headquartered in Syracuse, New York. According to [FrancisCorps.org](http://FrancisCorps.org), the goal of FrancisCorps is to “share the dream, the passion, and the vision of St. Francis of Assisi with the next generation of Catholics.” As the director of FrancisCorps since 2012, Rick cultivates the charism of St. Francis among the young-adult volunteers who participate in the program.

Rick’s embrace of the Franciscan spirit can be traced back to his own young life in Canada. Rick was born and raised in Montreal—where a high school teacher’s showing of the film *Brother Sun, Sister Moon* opened his eyes to the Franciscan worldview. “I remember feeling attracted to the freedom and exuberance that Francis experienced in his life,” Rick says.

Later on, in college, Rick met a Franciscan friar who invited him on a transformative vocation retreat. Rick recalls that he was

“immediately sold on the friars because of their down-to-earth way of being, their healthy spirituality. . . .” Not long after, in 1983, Rick professed his vows as a Conventual Franciscan and, seven years later, was ordained a priest.

FrancisCorps was founded in 1997 as a not-for-profit ministry by the Order of Friars Minor Conventual (Our Lady of the Angels Province). Initially operating out of Syracuse, FrancisCorps now has a placement site in Costa Rica, which opened in 2005.

The young adults who volunteer for FrancisCorps—the majority being Catholic college graduates between 21 and 25 years of age—make a serious commitment by joining the program. Over the course of 12 months, volunteers live communally, share at least one meal and pray together every day, and work 40 hours a week without pay.

“Part of what we do at FrancisCorps is model a vision of Church where men and women work in a collegial and respectful manner, building on each other’s gifts—sort of like Francis and Clare,” says Rick.

The volunteers’ work focuses on serving the marginalized of society, from helping to

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### STORIES FROM OUR READERS

#### A First-Time Prayer-er

After a visit to the bank this past winter, I lost my key to the safe-deposit box. I noticed when, after I got home, the key was not in my pocket. I looked everywhere: the car, the driveway, the house. I decided to return to the bank and retrace my steps as best as I could remember. Unfortunately, we just had a snowstorm, so I was worried it was buried somewhere in all that white stuff!



I’m 81 and have never prayed to St. Anthony to find something. But I figured this would be a good time to start! I went back to where I had parked the car and crossed the street toward my son’s business where I had lunch with him earlier. As

I got to the other side of the street, lying in the snow and in plain sight was my key. Thank you, St. Anthony!

—Vernon Hunstad, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

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To learn more about Friar Rick Riccioli and FrancisCorps, log in to your digital edition at [StAnthonyMessenger.org](http://StAnthonyMessenger.org).

Digital  
Extras

run a food pantry in central New York to caring for the elderly at a home for senior citizens in Costa Rica. In Rick's mind, whatever the work may be, it's all linked to St. Francis' spirit. "We love and serve others not because it is right, not because of our solidarity, nor even to help, but because the 'other' is my brother, my sister," he says.

The year of service work that FrancisCorps volunteers engage in not only helps those in need, it profoundly transforms the volunteers themselves. "While the service the volunteers do is extremely valuable, the ultimate mission of FrancisCorps is to form young men and women in the Franciscan charism so that they can become leaders in their communities," Rick explains.

In the 17 years since it was founded, FrancisCorps can claim doctors, nurses, lawyers, clergy, and businesspeople as alumni. Powering the program all the while is its Franciscan identity. "Our volunteers go on to live lives that are full of love, caring, compassion, and service," says Rick. "What unites them is that they carry the spirit, the song of St. Francis in their hearts."

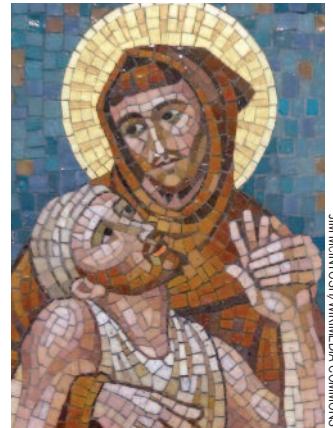
—Daniel Imwalle

## ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

### Values Challenged

In his *Testament*, Francis of Assisi wrote: "When I was in sin, the sight of lepers nauseated me beyond measure; but then God himself led me into their company, and I had pity on them. When I had once become acquainted with them, what had previously nauseated me became a source of spiritual and physical consolation for me."

Francis reflected the common wisdom about leprosy: it was very contagious. When he opened himself more to God's grace, he had a conversion that enabled him later to call them his "Christian brothers and sisters." —P.M.



JIM MCINTOSH/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

To learn more about Franciscan saints, visit [SaintoftheDay.org](http://SaintoftheDay.org).

## ST. ANTHONY BREAD

The National Shrine of St. Anthony is located in Cincinnati, Ohio. Consecrated in 1889, it includes a first-class relic of St. Anthony and serves as a center for daily prayer and contemplation.

The Franciscan friars minister from the shrine. To help them in their work among the poor, you may send a monetary offering called *St. Anthony Bread*. Make checks or money orders payable to "Franciscans" and mail to the address below.

Every Tuesday, a Mass is offered for benefactors and petitioners at the shrine. To seek St. Anthony's intercession, mail your petition to the address below. Petitions are taken to the shrine each week.

To post your petition online, please visit [stanthony.org](http://stanthony.org), where you can also request to have a candle lit or a Mass offered; or you may make a donation to the Franciscans or sign up to receive a novena booklet.



**Send all postal communication to:**  
St. Anthony Bread  
1615 Vine St.  
Cincinnati, OH 45202-6498

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