MGC leadership makes unexpected change

The sudden passing of MGC Community Servant and President Br. Donald Columba Steele at Fall Retreat made for several changes in the annual meeting along with changes in the Community's Leadership Council.

Br. Bill Ketcham, Community vicar, has now become our Community Servant. The position of vicar was not filled and it was not determined whether a replacement would be appointed prior to Chapter X on Oct. 2-6, 2017. Chapter is the Community's business meeting, conducted every three years. Officers and other positions are named at that time.

Br. Don, who started feeling ill during the morning meeting on Sunday, Oct. 2nd (2016), the first day of Fall Retreat, retired to his room. Two members, who later checked on Don, found that he had passed away. Emergency medical and law enforcement authorities were called. When Br. Don's body was removed from the building, several of the Sisters of St. Francis joined in singing a Franciscan Blessing.

The funeral for Br. Don was Oct. 7 at First Presbyterian Church, Elizabethton, TN, where Br. Don had served an interim pastorate. The Rev. Brian Ammons, former MGC member and close friend of Don's, conducted the service.
Donald Steele was born Dec. 17, 1946, to Lewis M. Steele and Annie M. Steele in Nashville, TN. He joined the Church Triumphant Oct. 2, 2016. A celebration of his life and of witness to the resurrection was held at the First Presbyterian Church of Elizabethton, TN, Friday, Oct. 7th.

He was preceded in death by his parents; one infant brother; and his nephew, Alexander Lewis Steele. He is survived by his brother, Lewis M. Steele Jr. and his wife Ann Labounsky Steele, Pittsburgh, PA; his former wife, Cynthia Gladney Steele, and their son Davidson Macdonald Steele, Homer, La.; his longtime companion, Jeffrey Watkins, Elizabethton, TN; two nieces, Elizabeth Ann Connolly and husband, Mike, Pittsburgh, PA, and their sons, Patrick, Jack and Ian, and Claire Janeway LeBeau and her husband, Herb, and their son, Logan, Seattle, WA; as well as a multitude of extended Steele, Macdonald and Gladney relatives and friends around the globe.

Don was a graduate of Battle Ground Academy, Franklin, TN, and received his BA with honors from Southwestern at Memphis (now Rhodes College), the M. Div. and D. Min. from Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, Va., M. Theo. as the first Protestant graduate from Maryknoll School of Theology in New York, and the PhD. from University of California at Berkeley and the San Francisco Theological Seminary. He also did chaplaincy work in Omaha, NB, Williamsburg, Va., and San Francisco, CA.

During his college and seminary days he served the First Presbyterian Church of Corinth, Miss., the Westminster Presbyterian Church in Austin, MN, and First Presbyterian Church in Memphis, TN.

Don was ordained to the parish ministry at the First Presbyterian Church of Hinton, W.Va., and then served as pastor of the Spencer, W.Va. Presbyterian Church while also being the Coordinator of the Coalition for Appalachian Ministry and the Commission on Religion in Appalachia and as Special Presbytery for Appalachian Ministry for Greenbrier Presbytery. He was pastor also of the Ruffner Presbyterian Church in Charleston, W.Va. before being the director of the Presbyterian Church (USA) World Hunger Program in Atlanta, Ga. He taught at the Franciscan Theological Seminary in Berkeley, and was Dean of the Dr. of Ministry graduate program at McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago before moving to Gallup, NM., to be pastor of the Presbyterian church there.

Failing health forced him to take an early retirement. He then volunteered his services at the Sixth Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh, Pa., and the First Presbyterian Church in Elizabethton, TN.

Don was the personification of the saying “There is nothing so strong as gentleness and nothing so gentle as real strength.” He was proud of his roots as a Scottish Presbyterian but worked throughout his ministry for ecumenical unity. A son of the South, he worked tirelessly for the dispossessed there and around the world. He was a devoted son, brother, husband, father and friend.

Those wishing to make a memorial should support those causes Don served to promote peace, equality, and human rights. Among these are PFLAG, Presbyterian Hunger Program, the Southern Poverty Law Center as well as ministries of the Presbyterian Church in Elizabethton, TN, such as Assisted Resource Ministry (ARM), Shepherds Inn and Food for the Multitudes.
Brother Ronald Francis dies

One of the founding members of the Mercy of God Community and former Community Servant and President, Ronald F. “Brother Ron” Crepeau-Cross, 80, of North Smithfield, RI, passed away Tuesday, Jan.3, 2017 at the Saint Antoine Residence there.

Born in Woonsocket, RI, he was a son of the late Maurice N. and Doris G. (Laramee) Crepeau. Ron worked for the State of Rhode Island, Department of Statewide Planning, for many years before retiring. He was a graduate of Mount Saint Charles High School and Boston University. He was a very caring person who volunteered his time helping the poor and less fortunate.

He leaves a sister, Claire M. Smith and her husband, Matthew; their children, Matthew, Andrew, Daniel and Kathleen; two brothers, Paul C. Crepeau and his wife, Amy; their son, Michael, and Wendy Beavuier, and Normand Crepeau.

The funeral and visitation was Jan.9th at Russell J. Boyle & Son Funeral Home, and Mass of Christian Burial was in Saint Mary Church, both in Providence. Burial was in Saint Charles Borromeo Cemetery, Woonsocket.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be given to Saint Antoine Residence, 10 Rhodes Avenue, North Smithfield, RI 02896 in his memory.

Community gives memorial gifts

The Mercy of God Community has made two gifts to memorialize our recently departed brothers. A $100.00 gift was given to the Sisters of St. Francis Foundation in memory of Community Servant and President Br. Donald Columba Steele. The money will be used toward updating the heating system at Anna's Place in Chester, PA and will be greatly appreciated and will enable us to respond to the needs of our brothers and sisters in the winter months, said Sr. Deborah Krist OSF, director of mission advancement for the foundation, in a letter recognizing the gift.

Br. Don, as well as MGC, have been added to the prayer intentions at Assisi House, the sisters’ retirement center, and at St. Ann's Convent in Tacoma, WA.

A gift of $100.00 also has been given to Saint Antoine Residence, 10 Rhodes Avenue, North Smithfield, RI, the residence of former Community Servant and President Br. Ronald Crepeau-Cross, in his memory.

Our program for Spring retreat

For our Spring retreat program, Sr. Mary Annette Griffin, OSF will lead us in learning T’ai Chi Chih®.

T’ai Chi Chih® is a series of 19 moves and one pose that was developed by Justin Stone (1916-2012) in 1974 in Albuquerque, NM. T’ai Chi Chih® focuses on circulating and balancing the Chi (intrinsic energy). It is not a martial art. It is completely non-violent. Many people who practice T’ai Chi Chih® have found that it can reduce stress, improve balance, increase the ability to focus, and leads to an appreciation of the interconnectedness of all things, Sr. Mary says.

Sr. Mary will be presenting the T’ai Chi Chih® in three sessions: One session on Fri., March 31st from 3:00pm to 4:00pm., on Saturday April 1st from10:00 am to 11:00am, and the final one that day from 3:00pm to 4:00pm.
Community Calendar

Chapter X, Oct. 1, 2017, Franciscan Spiritual Center, Aston, PA.

Footsteps

Footsteps is a publication of the Mercy of God Community. Written contributions and photos should be submitted by e-mail to maxbartholomewmgc@gmail.com.

Information regarding MGC is posted at www.mgc.org.

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