CHRIS HEISEY, THE CATHOLIC WITNESS

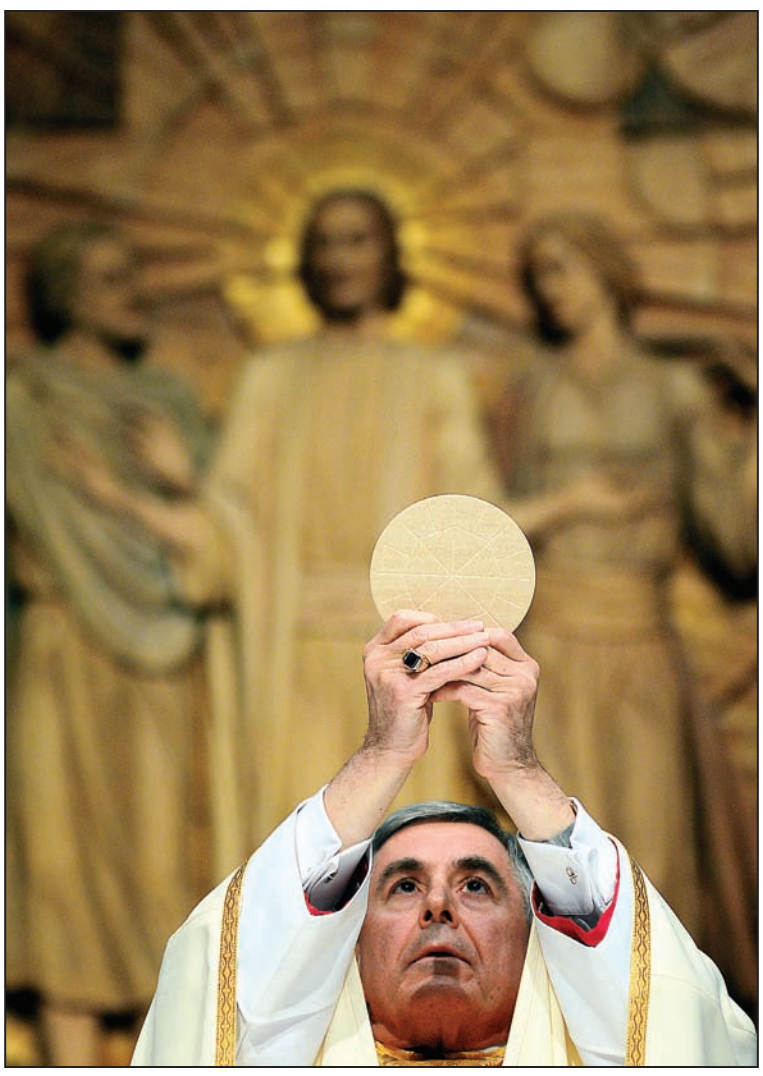
Capuchin Friars concelebrate Mass with Bishop Ronald Gainer at St. Joseph Church in York Oct. 4 to mark the 35th anniversary of their congregation's presence there. From left are Father Roman Kozacheson, pastor from 1979-1983; Father Jim Menkhus, a current priest of the parish, Father Eric Gauchat, who served there from 1995-1996; Father John Daya, pastor from 1988-2001; and Father Richard Owens, a current priest of the parish.

Mass Honors Service of Capuchin Franciscans in York

By Bernadette Snook
Special to The Witness

It has been 35 years since the Capuchin Franciscan Order of priests and brothers began their ministry in York's St. Joseph Parish.

The parish honored this special anniversary on Oct. 4 – the feast of St. Francis of Assisi – with Bishop Ronald Gainer celebrating Mass at St. Joseph's.



Bishop Ronald Gainer elevates the Eucharist as he celebrates Mass to mark the anniversary of the Capuchins serving at St. Joseph's in York.

Current and returning Capuchin Franciscan priests and brothers who have served at St. Joseph Parish, as well as priests from the York Deanery, concelebrated the Mass.

To honor the Capuchin friars who have served the parish and continue to do so, parishioners presented to their pastor, Father Louis Petruha, their pledges of service to the poor and marginalized in the community. Monetary contributions were presented to benefit Capuchin vocations in the Province of St. Augustine in Pittsburgh, which serves the parishes of St. Joseph in York, St. Joseph in Dallastown, and St. Francis of Assisi in Harrisburg.

The Order of Friars Minor Capuchin, or Capuchin Franciscans, was established as a religious order of priests and brothers, all called "friars," in Italy in 1528. Three-hundred years after the death of St. Francis of Assisi, a number of friars, who traced their community's origin to St. Francis, desired to live in strict observance to his ideals and asked Pope Clement VII for permission to form a new community of Franciscan friars. They became known as the Capuchins, named for the long hoods of their clothing.

In the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi, the friars serve the Church in diverse ways that are in harmony with their way of life. They embrace the ministries that are especially difficult, showing special care to the poor and marginalized, but willingly serve where there is an urgent need for any form of apostolic activity. Today, there are 11, 000 Capuchin Franciscan friars worldwide.

Katie Ostrom lends her voice to the choir, which led the congregation in song during the anniversary Mass.

Since their arrival at St. Joseph Parish in 1979, a total of 37 Capuchin Franciscan priests and brothers have served the parish, including four pastors: Father Roman Kozacheson, Father DeSales Young, Father John Daya, who led the parish in the construction of the current church, and current pastor Father Louis Petruha. Father Jim Menkhus and Father Richard Owens also currently serve the parish.

"The Capuchins who have served here have certainly been blessed by the parish and its people," Father Petruha told *The Catholic Witness*.

"We friars are greatly honored that members of the pastoral council wanted to celebrate the 35 years of Capuchin ministry to the people of St. Joseph Parish," he said.

"Having St. Francis of Assisi as our spiritual father and inspiration for our personal life, the ministry certainly brings to the parish the essence of the Franciscan spirit. That essence is the brotherhood we have and desire to share with you," Father Petruha said in a message to parishioners. "We journey with you as brothers and we minister to you sacramentally and pastorally. The simplicity of Capuchin life hopefully enables you and us to work together and to be one with each other in our common pursuit of holiness and evangelization. That is preaching and living the Gospel life, the very heart of the Franciscan spirit."

(*Bernadette Snook is a member of St. Joseph Parish in York. Contributing to this article was Jen Reed, of The Catholic Witness.*)