

July 9, 2020

Dear Good People of Coal Township, Trevorton, & Shamokin,

It is our pleasure to welcome to our friary and to the area, Friar Michael Lasky, who will soon begin his new ministry at Our Lady of Hope and St. Patrick Parishes.

Friar Mike is a native of Baltimore, Maryland. In 2019 he celebrated 25 years as a professed Franciscan Friar. He was ordained to the priesthood in May 2000. Following his ordination, Friar Mike was assigned to St. Francis High School in Hamburg, NY where he served as a faculty member and campus minister for five years. From there he moved to Danbury, CT where he was the Catholic Chaplain at Western Connecticut State University and also taught a summer course in human rights. In 2010 Friar Mike moved to New York City where he became the Director of Franciscans International, an NGO at the United Nations. After a brief sabbatical in South America where he studied Spanish, Friar Mike moved to North Carolina where he served in campus ministry at Duke University and then as pastor/campus minister of the Newman Parish at the University of North Carolina.

Friar Mike is currently the director of the Franciscan Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation Ministry (JPIC), serving the friars in North America, Australia, Great Britain, and Ireland. In addition, he is the President of the Franciscan Action Network (FAN) in Washington D.C., an organization that seeks to transform United States public policy related to peace making, care for creation, poverty, and human rights.

In 2017 Friar Mike began coming to our area to work with the friars and our local community on projects of sustainable development. He was instrumental in the founding of the Franciscan Center, located on the property of Our Lady of Hope Parish. Through Friar Mike's contacts at FAN, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) also began collaborating on various local initiatives. Over these last years, Friar Mike has traveled monthly to our area for the Faith Alliance for Revitalization (FAR) meetings and other events. At his current friary in Ellicott City MD, Friar Mike oversees Little Portion Farm, which provides fresh food from farm to the table of a soup kitchen in Baltimore City. He will remain the director of the farm in Maryland, as well as continue his JPIC ministry to the friars (virtually during this time of Covid-19).

Friar Mike will be moving into the Franciscan friary in Shamokin on July 15th, the feast day of the Franciscan St. Bonaventure who famously said: *CHRIST'S WORKS DO NOT GO BACKWARDS, BUT FORWARDS.*

As Friar Mike moves to take up the ministry of pastor at Our Lady of Hope and St. Patrick Parishes, we invite you all to join us in walking forward with him, in the path that Christ has called us all to journey on as a people of faith in our region.

Peace and Goodness!

Friars Martin Kobos, Steven Frenier, Stephen King, & Rich Rome

