

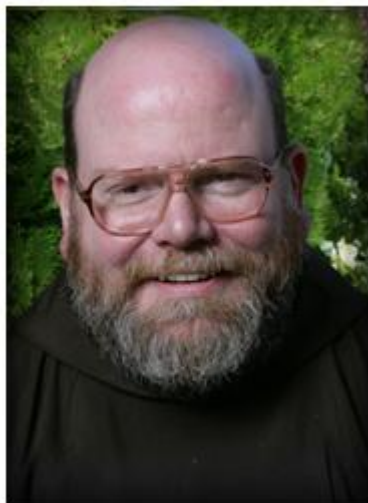
# PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 1, 2010**

**CONTACT: Fr. Gregory Coiro, O.F.M.Cap.**

**San Buenaventura Friary**

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**Fr. Gregory Coiro** was born in New York but grew up in Garden Grove, California. In 1972, he entered the Capuchins and was ordained in 1982. His first assignment was to teach theology at St. Francis High School. In 1987, he began working in the Public Affairs Office of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles and, in 1994, Cardinal Roger Mahony appointed him director of Media Relations. As an official spokesman, he represented the Church on radio and television programs and he hosted "Clergy on Call" on KPLS-AM. In 2000, he became associate pastor of Our Lady of Angels, Burlingame, but returned to St. Francis High School as chaplain in 2002. He presently resides at San Buenaventura Friary in San Francisco where he is spiritual assistant to the Knights of St. Francis of Assisi at the National Shrine of St. Francis of Assisi.

**San Buenaventura Friary - San Francisco, CA**

## **ARCHBISHOP NIEDERAUER APPOINTS CAPUCHIN FR. GREGORY COIRO RECTOR OF NATIONAL SHRINE OF ST. FRANCIS AND PORZIUNCOLA**

San Francisco Archbishop George H. Niederauer has entrusted the care of the National Shrine of St. Francis of Assisi and the Porziuncola Chapel in the city's North Beach to the Western American Province of Capuchin Franciscan Friars and has appointed Father Gregory Coiro, O.F.M.Cap. as rector effective July 1, 2010. A former director of media relations and spokesman for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, Coiro, 57, has spent most of his ministry in Catholic education having taught at Daniel Murphy High School, Los Angeles; San Joaquin Memorial High School, Fresno; and St. Francis High School, La Cañada Flintridge, where he also served as chaplain.

During his tenure in media relations in Los Angeles, he was a regular fixture on radio and television programs such as KABC radio's "Religion of the Line" and "Today's Religion" on KCBS-TV, in addition to hosting his own talk-radio show, "Clergy on Call" on KPLS-AM. He also served as a consultant to motion pictures and television programs including "The Father Dowling Mysteries", "Sister Act" and "Sister Act 2: Back in the Habit".

Coiro was parochial vicar for two years at the Capuchins' Our Lady of Angels parish in Burlingame until his return to St. Francis High School in 2002.

Transferred in August 2009, to San Buenaventura Friary in San Francisco by Father Matthew Elshoff, O.F.M.Cap, the Capuchin provincial minister, Coiro has been serving as spiritual assistant to the Knights of St. Francis, the association of volunteers founded by former San Francisco Board of Supervisors President Angela Alioto. The Knights of St. Francis staff both the Porziuncola Chapel, daily welcoming tourists and pilgrim, and Francesco Rocks, the shrine's gift shop.

Founded in 1849, St. Francis of Assisi Church was the oldest parish in California and served as the pro-cathedral for the Archdiocese of San Francisco for three years. It survived the 1906 earthquake although the fire that followed gutted it. The church was rebuilt within its still-standing walls and continued to serve as a parish until it was closed as part of a realignment of parishes following the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake.

Then-Archbishop (now Cardinal) William Levada re-opened the church as a shrine in honor of the city's patron saint in 1998 and entrusted it to the care of the Conventual Franciscan friars. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops designated it as the National Shrine of St. Francis in September 1999 and the diocesan clergy staffed it after the Conventuals left in 2005.

Currently undergoing seismic retrofitting, the shrine church is scheduled to resume operations on July 1. Throughout the time the shrine church has been closed, the Porziuncola chapel, a faithful replica of St. Francis' favorite church in Assisi, has continued to welcome pilgrims and host special events.