



# CONVENTUAL FRANCISCAN FRIARS

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December 20, 2009

Dear Mission Honduras International Supporter,

In the words of St. Francis: May the Lord give you peace.

Please allow me to begin by thanking all of you, donors and leadership alike, for your long and faithful service in support of the ministries in Honduras, the Dominican Republic and Liberia. We Franciscans are deeply grateful for your care and generosity to God's children. We also thank those of you who brought to our attention the allegations of abuse. This was very sobering and sad, especially when such allegations were found to be credible and were then substantiated.

While these last months have included various meetings involving members of MHI, APUFRAM, APUFRAM Int'l, Fr. Emil Cook, as well as Franciscan friars from both Central America and the United States, recent actions and inaction have brought things to a breaking point. This past week, the Definitory (board) of Mary, Mother of the Poor Custody in Central America and the Definitory of the Province of Our Lady of Consolation in the U.S. met in Costa Rica with Fr. Emil. After hearing from him and reviewing all information, the leadership of both Franciscan jurisdictions reached the following conclusions. The MMP Definitory proposed and both Definitories unanimously agreed to the following measures:

- 1) Letter of obedience that Fr. Emil is to report to Saint Joseph Cupertino Friary in Comayaguera (Tegucigalpa) by 1 February 2010 to be involved in the ministry of the friars in the parish and is to cut himself off from APUFRAM.
- 2) Put in place the safe environment policies as agreed to in October at Mount St. Francis, Indiana.
- 3) Accept the conclusions of the truth commission investigation, led by Fr. John Stowe (who is a friar of the OLC province), a friar of the custody in Central America, and four Honduran professionals named by the custody.
- 4) Fr. Emil is forbidden in any way to preach or raise funds for APUFRAM; the bishops of the U.S. should immediately be notified of this.
- 5) The above are to be applied until the results of the truth commission recommend otherwise.

OFFICE OF THE MINISTER PROVINCIAL

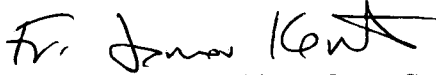
Province of Our Lady of Consolation 101 St. Anthony Drive Mt. St. Francis, IN 47146 Tel: 812.923.8444 Fax: 812.923.8145 ProvOffOLC@aol.com

These measures were relayed to Fr. Emil by his Major Superior, Fr. Edgar Ramirez Arias, with both Definitories present. These were difficult decisions to reach and came only after many months of concerted efforts to have APUFRAM provide a safe environment for children. If and when the above conditions are met--and we pray it will be soon--the prohibitions will be lifted. We had hoped it would not reach this point and are disappointed it unfortunately has.

In the meantime, we ask you to continue your generous support for MHI because they have assumed the operations of the whole Liberian mission. APUFRAM has stopped all support and without MHI there would be no one to provide basic care to the 200-plus children. Franciscan friars, Fr. Don Halpin and Fr. Christian Moore, have graciously agreed to serve as Spiritual Directors for MHI, and Fr. Don plans to visit Liberia this February. We thank them as we thank you for reaching out in such a time of great need.

In this season of giving, may almighty God, who gifted us with the birth of His Son in Bethlehem, inspire us to do what we can for His Kingdom.

Peace and blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fr. James Kent". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "K" and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Very Rev. James Kent, OFM Conv.  
Vicar (and acting) Provincial