



NET MINISTRIES RECEIVES FRANCISCAN UNIVERSITY'S POVERELLO MEDAL

NET was honored to accept the Poverello Medal, Franciscan University of Steubenville's highest non-academic award on September 15. The award was presented at a reception held near NET Ministries' headquarters in West St. Paul, Minnesota.

Father Dave Pivonka, TOR, president of Franciscan University, told how he experienced "fellowship and the power of the Holy Spirit" as a NET missionary before attending Franciscan University.

Like St. Francis of Assisi, who received a commission to go and rebuild the Church, Father Pivonka said, "NET has been a part of the rebuilding of the Church, rebuilding families, rebuilding faith, restoring confidence and trust in the Church." Continued on page 4.

PICTURED LEFT TO RIGHT: Bishop Andrew Cozzens, Father Dave Pivonka, Archbishop Bernard Hebda, and Mark Berchem.

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A WORD FROM OUR FOUNDER

DEAR FRIENDS,

As you will read in this edition of our newsletter, NET was recently honored to receive the Poverello Award from Franciscan University of Steubenville. I must be honest, when Father Dave Pivonka, Franciscan's President, called me to share the good news, I was dumbfounded. I had never heard of the award, and quite honestly, NET usually flies under most people's radar. When he began describing the purpose of the award and began listing the past recipients, including Mother Teresa, I humbly said, "Yes, we would be honored to receive the award."

I found it very fitting that NET was given this honor during the COVID-19 pandemic. We couldn't have a big celebration, since indoor seating capacity was limited. We couldn't gather a big group of supporters and alumni to celebrate. The presentation happened during Mass with the current NET missionaries – some attending in person and others watching via livestream in the adjoining gym. How fitting! Nothing fancy and nothing glitzy, just like our ministry. Our teams don't rely on the newest technology or emotional gimmicks. Our missionaries rely on the time-tested method modeled by Christ and encouraged by the Church. "In the long run, is there any other way of handing on the Gospel than by transmitting to another person one's personal experience of faith?" (On Evangelization in the Modern World, St. Paul VI).

Our team members are out there now, in the midst of the pandemic, sharing their faith with the people they serve.



One person telling another person, “This is what Jesus means to me and how He has changed my life; He can do something extraordinary in your life too.” Our teams usually conduct retreats for teenagers. This has been made more challenging this year – masks, social distancing, temporary lockdowns, etc. During training in September, I shared with our teams the challenges that they would face. I told them that schedules would be fluid; we wouldn’t always know what they would be doing until the last minute. We wouldn’t always know ahead of time where they would sleep or how they would be fed. I tried to tell them that this would be a year of challenge and some suffering. They were undeterred.

Almost every one of them told me, “I knew it would be difficult. That is why I want to serve now. When I see all the suffering with the pandemic, racial tension, economic instability, political division, I knew I couldn’t sit this one out. The world needs God now more than ever. If not me, then who?” You will meet these courageous young Catholics in the following pages. Please keep them in your prayers. Really, please keep them in your prayers.

WITH MY THANKS,
Mark Berchem

MARK BERCHEM, M.S.W., M.T.S.
Founder and President
NET Ministries



POVERELLO MEDAL (CONT.)

Reading from the citation, he said, “Thanks to NET, teenagers who may have never otherwise had a personal encounter with Jesus Christ have come to embrace him as their Savior and make the Catholic Church their spiritual home. Amid a culture that often rejects Christian principles, they are emboldened and empowered to live their faith.”

Mark Berchem, founder and president of NET Ministries, accepted the Poverello Medal on behalf of NET Ministries.

“We’re pretty simple. We just take young adults who know Christ, give them a little training, and send them out to change the world,” Berchem said.

He thanked NET’s faithful donors including the Rose Totino family, whose mother Rose, who died in 1994, was one of the first NET donors. One of Rose’s daughters said, “Our family will be forever indebted to NET Ministries for changing hearts, encouraging the young, and reviving our Catholic Church.

We firmly believe NET’s mission perfectly fits the words of St. Augustine: ‘Our greatest romance is to love God. Our greatest adventure is to seek God. And our greatest achievement is to find God.’”

Auxiliary Bishop Andrew Cozzens of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, also a former NET missionary, said “We need institutions like NET, like [Franciscan University of] Steubenville who will help connect people with a living relationship with Jesus.”

Cast in steel to signify simplicity and poverty, the Poverello Medal honors organizations and individuals who follow in the footsteps of St. Francis of Assisi, Il Poverello (“the little poor man”), through strong Christian character, practical charity, and service to the poor. It was first presented in 1949 to the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. Other recipients include St. Teresa of Calcutta, Dorothy Day, the Little Sisters of the Poor, and Mary’s Meals.



IN MEMORIAM: DON REGAN



NET became a family affair for Don. After Don's service on the board ended, his brother, Bill, followed, and now his son, Pat, sits on our current board.

When NET received the Poverello Award from Franciscan University of Steubenville this past September, founder Mark Berchem shared a few brief words about the "founding families" of NET, one of whom is the Regans.

In his brief remarks, Don said:

"None of us know what life has in store for us and why the Good Lord places us in a position. We don't know why it is that any of us are in a position that we are, but I guess I'm a little bit concerned that maybe I've not done enough for my fellow man or fellow woman, but I'm going to keep trying."

I was at the genesis of NET Ministries with this guy (Mark Berchem), who loved the Lord and an auxiliary bishop (Bishop Robert Carlson) who was preceding our current auxiliary bishop (Bishop Andrew Cozzens) who was a Netter. What a marvelous experience to sit in with that group. And we'll do everything we can to help - and we have, and we will. Thank you."

That was Don. He was all in! He was all in for his faith, for his family and friends, and for helping his fellow men and women. He has left us an inspiring example of a life well lived. It was a gift and honor to know Don and share in mission with him.

Eternal rest grant unto Don, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him. May his soul, and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

The NET family lost a great man on October 23. Don Regan, a founding board member, went home to the Lord surrounded by prayer and family. Don was well known in the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis and beyond for his devout faith, commitment to family, and generous philanthropic activity. When NET was putting together our first board of directors with Bishop Robert Carlson, Don was the first person he recommended. What a blessing Don has been! His counsel, friendship, and encouragement helped lay the foundation for NET's work with young people.

Don was a problem solver. When he recognized the importance of safe and reliable transportation for the NET missionaries, he put into place a plan to help obtain and maintain reliable vans. Don's plan is still being used 30 years later.

Don was a gentleman who valued every person he met. He treated everyone with kindness and was quick to offer his help to those in need. He had a strong commitment to family, and he and his wife, Jean, instilled the values of faith, family, service, and integrity in their seven children. He was a beautiful example to us all of how to live a Catholic family life.

PICTURED LEFT TO RIGHT:

Mark Berchem, Bishop Andrew Cozzens, Pat Regan, Don Regan, Father Dave Pivonka, Sean Regan, Archbishop Bernard Hebda

INTRODUCING THE 2020-2021 NET TEAMS



TEAM 1: HOME TEAM



TEAM 2: RETREAT TEAM



TEAM 3: CINCINNATI REGIONAL TEAM



TEAM 4: RETREAT TEAM



TEAM 5: LOS ANGELES REGIONAL TEAM



TEAM 6: RETREAT TEAM



TEAM 7: RETREAT TEAM



TEAM 8: RETREAT TEAM



TEAM 9: RETREAT TEAM



TEAM 10: DISCIPLESHIP TEAM
(SIOUX FALLS, SD)



TEAM 11: DISCIPLESHIP TEAM
(GENEVA, IL)



TEAM 12: DISCIPLESHIP TEAM
(NEW BRIGHTON, MN)

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COMMISSIONING MASS

On September 17, Bishop Andrew Cozzens commissioned the 2020-2021 NET teams at a mass concelebrated by NET's chaplain, Fr. Brian Park (pictured above). The mass was livestreamed to NET's Facebook page in lieu of welcoming parents and other visitors in person.

IDW DATES NOW OPEN

NET MINISTRIES INTERVIEW DISCERNMENT WEEKENDS

Learn About Becoming a NET Missionary
From the Comfort of Your Own Home

JANUARY 15-16
JANUARY 29-30

netusa.org/apply

