

THE ST. BON'Y PROVINCE NEWS & NOTABLES

Geography

SEPTEMBER 2011

PART ONE OF A SPECIAL FOUR-PART STORY

Outreach—A Ministry to the Poor and Those in Need

By Fr. James P. Henning



Fr. Jim speaks with senior citizen John about how the parish can help with an outstanding water bill.

In 2006 when someone phoned the parish of St. John the Baptist in Clinton, Illinois, requesting assistance, they were referred to an individual parishioner who “took care” of them from her home. Funding for this assistance came from the proceeds of the weekly BINGO. Accounting for the expenditure of funds was a photocopy of the Outreach Checkbook. This system was adequate for awhile, however some storm clouds were gathering.

BINGO at the parish was slowly dying. Attendance was dropping off due to the new Illinois Law prohibiting smoking in public places as well as the introduction of computerized Bingo Machines. After much discussion, it was decided to close the weekly Bingo and thank those who had volunteered for many years. All well and good, but what about those people who depended on the monetary support which was realized through the funding of the Bingo. What do we do?

The situation was presented to the Parish Pastoral Council. It was decided to ask the people of St. John the Baptist to support the efforts of the Outreach Ministry through a second collection. Once a month, on the second Sunday of the month, an additional



Debbie Askins, parish secretary, gives Sue an intake form to be filled out to indicate the amount of financial support she requires for rental assistance.

August Outreach Power Assistance \$942.56
Rent Assistance \$325.00
Water Assistance \$142.24
Rx: Assistance \$209.00
6 individuals were helped with Food Vouchers

collection would be taken up for the support of the Outreach Ministry. This collection began in July of 2007 and has been on-going ever since.

Because a greater accountability was desired by the Parish Pastoral Council, the Outreach Ministry is currently coordinated through the Parish Office. Rules and Guidelines have been established. Mondays and Wednesdays from 9 am until 2 pm people may come to make requests for assistance. Since the parish cannot support a traditional food pantry, gift certificates are purchased from the local Save-A-Lot Food Store. This system has proven to work well. Save-A-Lot does not sell liquor or tobacco products. Thus

the certificates may be used to obtain any other item a person or family may need. Often personal hygiene and cleaning supplies are not covered by the Food Stamp Program. The certificates enable people to supplement what other services or agencies do not cover.

This Summer has proven to be a great challenge for the St. John the Baptist Outreach Ministry Funds. LIHEAP—the organization that typically assists with power and water bills had no money. The State of Illinois literally closed their doors in the face of the poor and elderly and told them to: “keep warm and well-fed.” The people of St. John the Baptist stepped up to meet the challenge. Listed above is what the parish was able to give to those who came to the Church in August seeking help. Please note well—99.99% of those seeking assistance are not associated with the Catholic Church and typically un-Churched. We are reminded that Jesus said, “I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. These also I must lead...” (John 10:16).

THIS SUMMER I...

(Editor's note: Friars at various levels of formation were asked to share some of their summer experiences. Enjoy their reflections...)

Fr. Hans Flondor: This summer, I was stationed at St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Rockford. While there, I deaconed at the Sunday Masses, including the Italian Fest Mass. During the week, I was enrolled in a C.P.E. (Clinical Pastoral Education) course at Rockford Memorial Hospital. Four others from different denominational backgrounds were also enrolled (see picture below). Together, we ministered in the different areas of the hospital. My units included nephrology, dialysis, progressive care and transitional care with a focus on respiratory and neurological problems. Many times I ministered beyond these areas. I attended to a person suffering from a cat bite, to suicide attempts, to those with chronic illnesses, others actively dying and to families grieving the death of loved



ones. Being the only Catholic in the group, at times I was asked to help the other interns because their patients requested a Catholic priest. I was the best that they had, when a priest could not be found. I kept the other chaplains close to teach the patients that no matter what our Christian denomination, we are all centered on Christ when we pray. When it came to the sacraments, well that is where it became confusing for the non-Catholic chaplains.

The course allowed me to be pushed in directions I did and did not expect, yet I am glad for having this (Continued on page 3.)



LABOR DAY PARTIES

In Dearborn Heights, Michigan, an outside picnic planned for Labor Day quickly moved inside as the weather changed the night before (dropping from 99 to 60 degrees). Chief chef, Fr. John Krzyzanski of Saint Anthony Province cooked while our own Br. Jim O'Brien supervised. A "Buffer" was set up in the Friary Kitchen. Looks like plenty of eats! (Pictured above and left)

The House of Studies in Chicago hosted a Labor Day celebration to welcome the new postulants (see story on page 5). All hands were on board to help with cooking...and feasting! (Pictured right.)



HOLY FAMILY PARISH in Peoria, Illinois was privileged with a visit from Fr. Abraham Crisostomo, OFM Conv. and his translator, Dianne Young, for the weekend of August 27-28. Father Abraham shared his experiences of life and ministry in Mexico with parishioners at all the weekend masses. A second collection was then taken up for Holy Family's sister parish, The Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, in Tlacoachistlahuaca, Mexico. On Saturday evening Fr. Abraham, Dianne the friars of Holy Family and the entire Mexican Mission Committee enjoyed a wonderful dinner at the home of two of its members, Skip and Paula Morris (pictured right).



FEAST OF ST. BONAVENTURE FEASTING In Bloomington, Illinois, the "Boys of Peoria" gathered to celebrate the Patronal Feast of the Province, meeting at Jim's Steak House for lunch. The central site was chosen so that all could celebrate fraternally and then return to their respective parishes for evening meetings (pictured left).

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experience. Part of this course is presenting cases about patients visited to the group. Through questions and sharing they help you to see your strengths and weakness in how you ministered to the patient. Even though I did not like what I heard all the time, I kept an open mind, and I learned a lot about myself and how I can be more effective in future situations.



Friar Paul M. Schneider: This past summer I participated in the Franciscan Study Pilgrimage to Assisi in preparation to profess my Solemn Vows. I cannot imagine a greater preparation for Solemn Vows than to be able to visit and walk in the footsteps of St. Francis. The pilgrimage was just the right balance of visiting sites and churches, attending lectures, having time for prayer and just breathing in the culture and relaxing. (Who knew there were so many different flavors of *gelato*?)

Many places, events, and people stand out in my mind as I look back on my pilgrimage/retreat. Walking in the shadow of Saint Peter's Basilica and witnessing the great number of pilgrims from around the world, visiting



the four Major Basilicas of Rome, and standing in awe at all of the ancient and beautiful churches and Roman ruins, helped me to realize how large the Church is and how old it is. At Greccio (pictured left), in the beautiful Rieti Valley, the Incarnation and our responsibility to make God known to others made a deep impact as we celebrated Christmas with a special Mass and a Christmas pranzo. Assisi was like walking back in time to the Middle Ages. The simplicity of St. Clare's tomb and praying in front of the original San Damiano Crucifix, the ironic hustle and bustle of the crowds at the tomb of St. Francis, walking on the same streets and visiting some of the same churches as Francis, and witnessing the faith of hundreds of young people who were on pilgrimage to San Damiano are memories that will be etched in my mind.

My favorite place to pray was at the Porziuncola. We were privileged to celebrate Mass in this little Church that meant so much to Francis. It was here that the early

friars learned to live the Rule. It was here where he put his trust in Our Lady. It was here where Francis died. There was a special peace here, though this small church is engulfed by the huge Basilica of St. Mary of the Angels.

In Padua we visited the tomb of St. Anthony. Besides his tomb, the focus of the Basilica of St. Anthony is on the Eucharist. Mass is celebrated throughout the day. The importance of the Eucharist and of good preaching was brought home here.

To celebrate the beauty of God's creation, we ended our pilgrimage by visiting the beautiful city of Venice and the huge Basilica of St. Mark. We also had the opportunity to attend an outdoor opera in an ancient coliseum in Verona, which was a prayer in itself (pictured lower left).

One of our leaders kept track and by walking in the footsteps of Francis, we walked over 60 miles in the first three weeks! The trip helped to make everything that we had learned and heard about in formation classes come alive. This

experience deepened and strengthened my desire to live the rest of my life as a Friar. I will be forever grateful for this experience.

Br. Peter Joseph O'Malley: Never in my twenty-one short years have I lived outside of the Midwest. However, this past summer I had the marvelous opportunity to stay with our Conventual brothers in Lourdes, France—the city wherein Our Lady appeared to St. Bernadette in 1858. Our brothers in France reside year-



round in a small and narrow friary but a few paces from Bernadette's most impoverished residence, the Cachot or the "dungeon." During the summer pilgrimage season, a larger guest friary welcomes a variety of student friars from around the globe, among whom I had the privilege of being the sole American (Pictured third from the left, above). We student friars gave tours on the life of Maximilian Kolbe in a small exhibition space near the Cachot (pictured right).

Having taken a year of French at my university, I refined the sparse French I already knew and expanded my knowledge of the tongue by attending a language school for three weeks. Afterwards, I spent



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me gain a small glimpse of what it must be like for so many of our friars who leave family, friends, and all the comforts of the familiar, to be of service in another part of the world. The "Down Under" experience also helped me appreciate a broader



their mutual ministry to one another. Also during my time at Kellyville, I was a featured guest speaker at the school and at a parish youth group meeting. I'll be certain next time, however, to pack my gumboots for helping to feed the "chooks" (chickens) and collecting their eggs (pictured bottom, left).

the subsequent three weeks practicing my French in the friary's kitchen as a sous-sous-chef in the mornings and giving a mix of English and French tours on the life of St. Maximilian Kolbe in the afternoons. In spite of my initial culture shock, my experience in France among the friars was beneficial beyond my original expectations: it fortified my Franciscan vocation, gave me a stronger appreciation of my brothers in Chicago, renewed my desire to promote the MI, and reinvigorated my devotion to Our Lady. In all, *c'était fort exquis!* (Pictured above, Friar Peter Joseph on a Sunday outing to the Pyrenees Mountains.)

view of our Franciscan heritage and fraternal life outside the boundaries of our apostolates, Province, and country.

The Aussie (be certain to pronounce it "Aw-zee") friars are all truly great guys (pictured at right)! I was so welcomed and was most fortunate to have been able to meet and spend time with them all—including Alfred and Greg who will be with us at the House of Studies as postulants. (See story on page 5.) Whether it was teaching me about Australian settlement history, the various cultural influences, native trees, flora and fauna, or clueing me in on Aussie slang, I was graciously treated as a brother.



Friar Paul J. Langevin: Having left Milwaukee after a Sunday morning Mass and traveling for nearly 20 hours before arriving in Australia, it felt as if I were in a dream. To be half way around the globe and to experience ministry and Franciscan life in another part of the world was truly a great blessing. The time away helped



and koala bears while I was "Down Under." I was able to assist with the ministry of music by playing the organ during several of the Masses and the various devotions. I was also able to shadow the friars as they went about their ministries (e.g., house and business blessings, hospital visits, planning funeral liturgies, Franciscan Mission Association, etc.), and assisting with various friary tasks and chores. Many of the parishioners I met are so devoted and faithful. It is such a beautiful thing to witness and experience support and love between parishioners and friars in

While at the time I had no idea what was to lie ahead for my summer experience, now, I absolutely smile knowing it was Divine Providence and through the intercession of Father Francis and Our Lady that I was blessed at the "extractions" with Our Lady of the Rosary during our annual Epiphany party this past year. I can see you already smiling and chuckling before I



even tell you that the name of the parish in Kellyville where I spent the majority of my time while in Australia was, indeed, Our Lady of the Rosary.

I look forward to sharing with you, mates, more of my *Aussum* summer experience.



