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DECEMBER 2011



A FRATERNAL VISIT FROM THE MINISTER PROVINCIAL

The Very Reverend Father Patrick Greenough writes: I visited the novices Dec. 2-3 and gave them a brief history of Mariology. I have been giving this conference to novices for 15 years now at novitiates from New York, to California and now Indiana. I took them all out to dinner on Friday and we had a grand old time. Please keep them in your prayers. They are our hope and our future. Below is the homily I delivered. I want to share it with you as a way of making you part of my visit:

We are blind—the blind men who asked Jesus to help them see.

I dare you to go to your room sometime today, shut your door and for ten minutes close your eyes and try to do something, and straighten up your room, make your bed, change your clothes.

See what it is really like to be blind. And see how fortunate you are to be able to see. And boy can we see! We can see everything around us.

We can even see the faults and sins of others. We can see the idiosyncrasies of those around us. Those strange, quirky things that people do. You can even see the things of your directors that you would like to change.

But how well do we see our own faults and sins? Do we see our own idiosyncrasies that drive other friars crazy? Are we blind to the suffering, the loneliness, the hurting of the friars we live with? Are we

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THE FINAL PART OF A SPECIAL FOUR-PART STORY Feeding the Hungry Christ

By Fr. Alejandro López

What would you do if Christ came to your door and needed something to eat? On the south side of Milwaukee, the parishioners of the Basilica of St. Josaphat give him something to eat!

Since the 90s, volunteers reach out to the hungry of the neighborhood through their food pantry, regardless of religion. “We turn nobody away,” said Soledad Socha who, along with her husband Michael, currently oversee the ministry.

But because of the great need and the limited resources, those who live outside the area are given food *only* on their *first* visit. To receive the food bags once a month, you must live within a designated area (between Becher and Cleveland and First to 13th Streets). However, a system of food help remains ready for other sections of the city. Volunteers

are quick to direct the needy to the other sites.

This past year, the Basilica gave away almost 9,500 bags of food! A great feat, considering the pantry opens for only one hour once a week, Wednesdays between 10 and 11 in the morning. Yet, they open every week, all year round, no matter if the Wednesday falls on a holiday since hunger takes no holiday!

Volunteers begin around 8 am to sort through donations. Often the staff continues working late, until 1.

Donations come in many forms. Some of the other, area, Catholic churches collect cans and goods to keep the shelves stocked. Grasch Food’s (a grocery store in Brookfield) gives fresh fruits and vegetables and other bakery items. Basilica volunteers collect the goods before coming for the day’s work. Other bakeries in the neighborhood also donate their day-old stock.

Did you know
One in five children in America struggle with hunger every day?

Pantry volunteers rejoice over a cornucopia of donated gifts.

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SACRED HEART CHURCH in Farmer City hosted the annual Community Thanksgiving Service. Each year the Ministerial Association sponsors a time of shared prayer and fellowship before the Thanksgiving Holiday. Father James P. Henning (a.k.a. "Friar Tuck" because of the habit) created a balanced service to feature the 'Catholic' attitude for the civic holiday. Participating in the service were pastors from the First Christian Church of Farmer City, the Methodist Church of Weldon and Farmer City, Trinity Fellowship, Victory Christian, Bethel Baptist, and the Methodist Church of Mansfield.



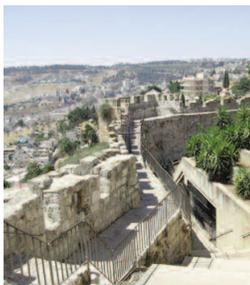
THE MI INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL was held in Rome from Nov. 14-17 at Casa Kolbe. The Minister General, the Very Rev. Marco Tasca, and the Vicar General, the Very Rev. Jude Winkler, attended with our Minister Provincial, the Very Rev. Patrick Greenough. The group is revising the MI International Statutes, reviewing the MI throughout the world and preparing for a new web site and National Directories.

WORLD TRAVEL EXPERIENCES

Since 2005, the Province has invested in those in Formation through spiritual pilgrimages to Poland with the hope that this fraternal and spiritual experience will ground them in their vocation and our brotherhood.

While some have experienced these opportunities and have left the community, many have stayed. It is believed

that these common experiences will bind us together as a stronger and more fraternal brotherhood and help us witness our minority more clearly to the world.



The CFC has also reinstated the Assisi Pilgrimage for those preparing for Solemn Vows. In addition, it has become standard in most schools of theology that students have a Holy Land experience. Therefore, the theologians in Milwaukee as well as Joseph Schenk will be visiting the Holy Land in January. Please keep them in your prayers.

Any friar of the Province who has not had the opportunity to visit Poland, Assisi, or the Holy Land should have the opportunity as a son of St. Francis and a brother of St. Maximilian. Please contact the Provincial who will make it possible so that all can share in a common spiritual and fraternal experience in the Lord and as brothers in Francis.

God Bless, Fr. Patrick

(Feeding the Hungry Christ, continued from page 1.)

About every other month, parishioners donate through a "reverse collection." Before Sunday Mass begins, a basket is passed with slips of paper containing pantry needs. The people are asked to take one of the slips and bring back the items the following week. Hence, the whole Christian community gets involved in feeding the hungry Christ and all can become aware of the needs of their neighbors.

Numbers of families looking for assistance vary. According to Michael, "Usually we help between 35 and 75 families. The most we've ever helped in one day was 95!" More and more seem to be coming with the depressed economy.

Even on the coldest days, on the corner of 7th and Lincoln, people line up outside the former convent awaiting the opening. The old brick building stands beside the magnificent Basilica and serves as the parish center. On Wednesday's, it also serves as the pantry's hub of operations.

Upon entering, folks needing help must offer information that volunteers record and keep on file. Specifically, the pantry wants to know the numbers living within the household. This information then determines how much is offered.

Older students from the Basilica of St. Josaphat School also assist. Many speak Spanish and can help translate for English-only volunteers. The students also help in sorting the donations. They stay together in threes and usually help between 45 minutes to an hour and a half.

I must confess, it's not easy to be among the needy. I feel overwhelmed at times, but try to go often because it's important to be there for the people, both the volunteers and those looking for help. When I go, I visit, offer prayers, a smile and words of encouragement. My favorite is to give cookies to the little children who patiently wait with their family.

On one visit, a gentleman stood out. Not only did he tower at six feet four inches tall but he beamed a huge smile like he had a secret. He reminded me of the Cheshire Cat from *Alice in Wonderland*.

When I noted that he'd waited in line for some time and asked about that smile, the man simply offered, "St. Paul tells us to be 'thankful in all things.' He didn't say 'for' all things but 'in' all things. And so I am thankful for the many blessings I have no matter what happens."

Hopefully, through volunteers feeding the hungry Christ, more of the area's needy come away with a similar attitude of gratitude.

