



the Seraph

NEWS and NOTABLES of
SAINT BONAVENTURE
PROVINCE January 2015



HAPPY EPIPHANY!

Approximately 51 friars attended the annual Epiphany party held at Marytown in Libertyville, IL on January 5, 2015. Chris Gremore decorated the friars' dining room and gifted the community with many of her homemade sweets. All had a marvelous time enjoying the preprandium and the dinner that followed. Cooks Russ Haas and Juan Sanchez prepared the feast with the help of Rolando Orantes.

As with previous Epiphany celebration, new postulants, Ted Cramer, Tim Blanchard, Robertson Lubin Cayes, Frank Lino Sopolie, Aaron Clark and their director James Reiter helped with extractions (pictured left).



A WORD FROM OUR PROVINCIAL

Dear Friars,

Praised be Jesus Christ!

I want to thank Br. Augustine and the friars at Marytown for a wonderful Epiphany Celebration. The Vespers and Extraction Service were prayerful and helped us to focus on the true meaning of the Christmas Season and the hors d'oeuvres and the supper were most delicious. A true spirit of fraternity was evident among the friars so again, THANK YOU to all!

In "The Little Blue Book, Advent and Christmas Seasons, six minute reflections on weekday Gospels," the meditation for January 2 tells the reader to say out loud: "I am not the Messiah" repeating the first words that we hear spoken by the Baptist when disciples of the Scribes and Pharisees ask him if he is the Messiah. The author of the reflection tells the reader to repeat these same words to lift the burden that we all feel at times when we think we need be the "messiah" of people, circumstances,

or situations. The author also tells the reader to add to the words of the Baptist: "I am not the Messiah," but "World, I have good news for you. Although I am not the Messiah, the good news is that there is a Messiah, and I'd be glad to point Him out to you;" a great reflection for us to ponder as we begin the New Year because we know that we are not the Messiah but sometimes we act like we are.

Our vowed life reminds us that we are to point out the Messiah to our brothers in community as well as to the people that we are being called to serve. Are my deeds and actions pointing out Jesus, the Messiah? Do I speak of the Lord and His ways? Do my brothers and the people around me see the Messiah in deeds and actions? The theme for the Year of Consecrated Life, Wake up the World



reminds us we are called to follow the Messiah in such an authentic way that all that we do and say will stir up a desire in people to seek out the Messiah themselves.

As we continue our journey in these very early days of 2015, maybe a New Year's resolution that we can all make is to continue to live our lives in such an authentic and true way that all that we do and say points to the Messiah. The Gospel is "good news" not just for us who have professed to live the Gospel but for all peoples. I am sure you have heard that you might be the only "Gospel" that someone reads about Jesus Christ! Is your life a Gospel pointing out the Messiah?

God bless,
Michael



Come and See Retreat

Four men came to visit our community for a "Come & See" retreat. The theme of the retreat was "Franciscan Christmas." As part of their experience, they were able to sit in on a few talks given by speakers during an M.I. Young Adult Retreat, including the famous friar James McCurry, OFM Conv. who fascinated them with his wonderful stories.

The men also took a day to visit the Basilica of St. Josaphat in Milwaukee, WI, decorated for Christmas. The night before the visit, the men had talked about the use of beauty in the Church. Their jaws dropped in delight upon entering and experiencing the beauty of the Basilica.

The main group of men stayed for four days. Times had been set to sit in front of the fireplace and read portions of the life of St. Francis that dealt with Christmas; the very first nativity scene he created; the use of food; how poverty plays into it; how his preaching affected others; and what it meant when he dressed in Levite garments. They were able to see a different perspective of our community and learn something about Francis as they entered into our daily prayer life during the Christmas Season.

Pictured at left: flanking the four prospects are friar Paul Schneider (far left) and friar Luke Poczworowski (far right).

CHRISTMAS SCENES AROUND THE PROVINCE

Friar Robert Melnick writes from Our Lady of the Rosary Parish in Kellyville, Australia: Merry Christmas! Things here are different (hot weather) but nice. Good crowds for everything and the friars prepared a wonderful dinner for Christmas Day. The decorations in church were 2 large floral arrangements behind the altar and a nativity scene in the corner of the church. Here, they have a tradition of having different ethnic groups take turns creating the nativity scene from their own culture and traditions. Last year it was done by African parishioners and this year by a group of central Europeans (below).



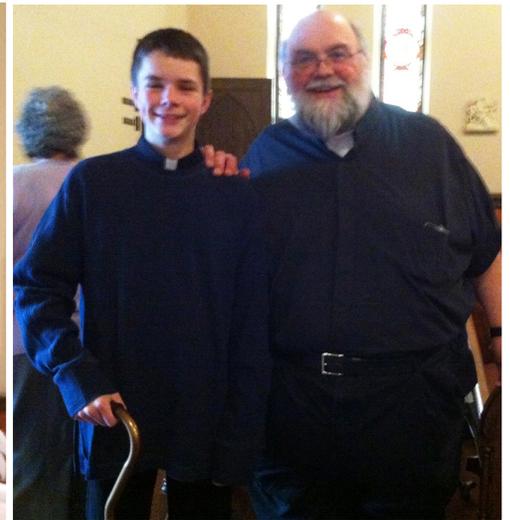
Clockwise from above right:

Four scenes from Holy Family, Peoria IL: the St. Francis Window; an angel with Poinsettias in front of the altar; the creche with lit trees; Baby Jesus and his stuffed bear (thank you, friar Anthony Labedis).

A panoramic of the Basilica of St. Josaphat in Milwaukee, WI; the Basilica's high altar.

Parish Priest friar Benedict La Volpe, before the Christmas creche at St. Joseph Parish in Springvale, Victoria, Australia.





Left: children from Sacred Heart Parish, Farmer City, IL learn the Christmas story. With the help of their "pastor," they expressed what they learned to the gathered adults. Pictured are the students in the Sunday CCD program. Above: channeling his pastor, friar Jim Henning, Tommy Toohill played the parish priest in the Christmas play. Aiming for authenticity he even used a cane! (Friar Jim needs to feel threatened, very threatened!) The Province Vocation Director will be given his contact information for the Postulant Class of 2023.



Have a Merry, Yummy Christmas! Each year for the past 32 years, St. Hedwig Cemetery donates food baskets (pictured above) to St. Hedwig & Our Lady of Guadalupe Parishes here in the Detroit Area for the Christmas Holiday. 20 food baskets are given to each parish so they can be distributed to families with children that are in need at Christmas.



New Visitors Exhibit The Pope John Paul II Pavilion at the Basilica of St. Josaphat in Milwaukee, WI, unveiled new display cases on the first Sunday of Advent. The permanent exhibit highlights the life of Saint John Paul II and features a zucchetto worn by the Pope, a fabric swatch from one of his copes, and other memorabilia. The exhibit also presents some of the early history of the Basilica, including its Polish immigrant heritage, early postcards, and artifacts.

