



the Seraph

News and Notables of
St. Bonaventure
Province

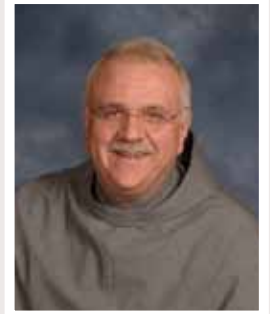
September 2015



A Word from Our Provincial

Dear Friars,

Praised be Jesus Christ!



On Saturday, Sept. 12, we had a glorious Solemn Vow celebration of our brothers Arturo and Thomas. During the Profession Rite I asked Arturo and Thomas: “Dear brothers, what do you ask of God and His holy Church?” They responded: “We ask to follow the teaching and footprints of our Lord Jesus Christ and to be received definitively into this fraternity in order to profess until death, with a holy activity, the life and Rule of the Order of Friars Minor Conventual.” Arturo and Thomas reminded all of us that by our profession we are to follow Jesus Christ, “with holy activity, until death” our rule and life which is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We, freely and with the best of our intentions, have said that by our lives we will follow Jesus Christ. A tall order, but we do this not in isolation but in community, with the help and encouragement from one another.

So I ask: do we see our brothers as gifts given to us by God so that we can help each other to be faithful to our vowed life? Our community living should bring the best out of each other so that together we walk in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. So often in community life, we pigeon-hole each other. We remember past transgressions, fallings, faults, hurts, and stumbles that have affected us;

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and at times that is all that we can remember. We forget that the Holy Spirit is constantly working in us, changing us into a more committed follower of Jesus Christ. We preach a merciful God – a God who not only forgives, but forgets. But when we come to our brothers all we see is faults, fallings, transgressions, and sins. One of the most cancerous effects of community living is not forgiving each other the way that we have been forgiven by God.

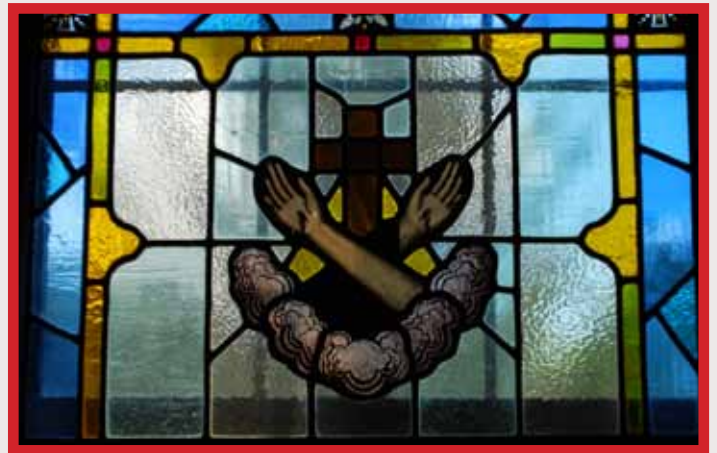
We are still celebrating the Year of Consecrated Life as a Church, and our Province is focusing on Mission and Evangelization. Religious life is a great gift for the Church because it reminds us that we are made for heaven and if we so choose to follow the Gospel, heaven is not some far off utopia, but can begin to be lived and experienced today! I am not trying to be some Pollyanna, pretending that community life is not a struggle. But if we are going to be faithful to the Gospel, faithful to our vowed life, then we must give witness to our community life and live it the way that it is supposed to be lived. We are to “Wake up the world” by the way we live with each other.

St. Francis Day is in two weeks, when we remember our founder and celebrate how committed he was to the Gospel. He tells us that true Gospel living and community life are possible if we are willing to die to ourselves and live for Christ; a difficult thing to do but not impossible. Every day we have a choice to make: do I follow my profession or do I make an excuse not to follow what I vowed? Is my life a credible sign of God’s Kingdom? Am I evangelizing just by the way that I am living? Happy St. Francis Day, and may our Founder give us the zeal and commitment that we need to remain faithful to our vowed life.

God bless,
Michael

PS! October 3 is a day of fast and abstinence in preparation for the Solemnity of St. Francis.

***Happy St. Francis Day,
and may our Founder
give us the zeal and
commitment that we
need to remain faithful
to our vowed life.***



***But as the Lord has given
me to speak and write the
Rule and these words simply
and purely, may you un-
derstand them simply and
without gloss and observe
them with a holy activity
until the end.***

***St. Francis of Assisi
From The Testament***



Brother Martin gives Friar Arturo the thumbs up before his profession.



Friar Thomas the morning of his solemn vows



At rehearsal the morning of solemn vows



Families, friends, and friars celebrated together as Friars Thomas and Arturo professed their vows.



2015 Kolbe Award Report

by Fr. John P. Grigus

On the Solemnity of St. Maximilian Kolbe, August 14, 2015, Marytown had the privilege of presenting the Kolbe Award to the Very Rev. James McCurry, OFM Conv. The Award honors those who exemplify the life and mission of St. Maximilian. Fr. James himself established it in October 1989, while serving as the National President of the MI. Besides being the Provincial Minister of Our Lady of the Angels Conventual Franciscan Province, Fr. James is the foremost scholar in Kolbean spirituality in the world, and has been involved all his life in spreading the message of St. Maximilian Kolbe and the mission of consecration to the Knights of the Immaculata (or the MI), an evangelization movement founded by St. Maximilian in 1917.



The day began with Fr. James serving as celebrant and homilist for the Noon Mass at Marytown during which he talked about his involvement with the work of St. Maximilian. The Chapel was filled to capacity with persons, young and old, who came to celebrate the Feast.

The actual Kolbe Award event continued with a special Mass celebrated and preached by our Minister Provincial Michael Zielke, OFM Conv. In his homily Fr. Michael spoke of the love exemplified by St. Maximilian, a love which in imitation of Christ poured itself forth in the very exchange of his life for another at the infamous Auschwitz Concentration Camp. This is also the love that characterizes the life and ministry of Fr. James McCurry in his work for the Order and the spread of the spirituality of St. Maximilian. The Mass was concelebrated by many friars from St. Bonaventure Province and beyond, and attended again not only by the laity but by many of our Franciscan Brothers and formation students.



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Labor Day Gathering Marytown



Friar Giles making sure that Bro. Stanley gets a little bit of everything



Bro. Charles and his hot dogs

Australia Update

News and Photos



The third annual walk to honour and commemorate our new Shrine of the Holy Innocents in Kellyville (near Sydney), Australia, took place on the feast of the Assumption. The walk focuses our attention and prayers for all those who have lost their lives and/or innocence through abortion or abuse one way or another. Although a permanent Shrine was constructed only in 2013, our friars have encouraged the public to pray for the “Culture of Life” since a small outdoor shrine was initiated in 1993.



The new leadership team of our Delegation meets to plan for the future benefit of our life and ministry in Australia. (from L-R: Fr. Benedict La Volpe, Fr. Robert Melnick, Br. Louis Schmid, Br. Joseph Wood)



Friars who participated in the walk from L-R: Br. Jerry Payne, Br. Louis Schmid, Fr. Robert Melnick, Br. Dominic Levak)

Dancing the Night Away

Our Lady of the Rosary Parish, Kellyville, NSW, held its annual Dinner Dance on July 18, 2015, at the Riverside Golf Resort in Cattai. The event helps raise money for the renovation of the church. Present were friars Robert Melnick, Louis Schmid, Jerry Payne, Gerard Lofranco, and Alejandro López, along with some kangaroos that “played through” on the course below.

Gerard Conga-ed while Louis floated with a foxtrot. Auction items included an icon of Our Lady of Tenderness from Todor, and a dinner prepared and hosted by the friars. A grand time was had by all. Some claimed it was the most fun they’d ever had at a dinner dance! Next year the community plans to reach out to invite more roos!





Fr. Tony Labedis' Garden at Holy Family in Peoria



Basilica of Saint Josaphat

Nearly 150 people were in attendance to hear Fr. Anthony Kuzniewski, SJ, professor of history at the College of the Holy Cross, present a lecture called "The Polish Church War in Wisconsin" on August 20, 2015. Derived from his book "Faith and Fatherland," the talk highlighted the role of the Basilica in this important era in American Catholic history.

Other News



Sacred Heart Parish's 150th Anniversary

Parish Council President, Mr. Ron Coit, unveils one of the newly renovated statues. Statues of St. Joseph and the Blessed Virgin Mary were restored to original beauty for the Sesquicentennial.

Fr. Jim poses with parishioners as Sacred Heart Parish, Farmer City, Illinois celebrate their 150th anniversary of the parish's founding. 1865-2015 (the parish predates the founding of the Peoria Diocese)



2015 Kolbe Award

The Mass was followed by the reception and presentation of the Award to Fr. McCurry, with about 160 attendees. In his address Fr. McCurry spoke of how he became involved in promoting the ministry of St. Maximilian, beginning as a young priest he was asked to teach at Father Kolbe High School in Bridgeport, CT. He was assigned to a class of juvenile delinquents. Fearing for his life and his inability to handle them well, he made a deal with Father Maximilian, who by that time was already declared Blessed but not yet canonized. If Bl. Maximilian would help him with these difficult students, he in turn would pray and work for the cause of his canonization. The teaching assignment did go well through the intercession of Bl. Maximilian. In fact, as Fr. Jim mentioned, even several vocations came forth from that class.



Bro. Augustine reading the Kolbe Award at the presentation.

Fr. McCurry continued to promote the canonization cause, giving seminars at various places relating the life and ministry of Bl. Maximilian. When the canonization was declared to take place in 1982, he thought his ministry had come to an end. But Fr. Jim's provincial asked him to organize a pilgrimage for the canonization, for which 750 signed up. He and Bro. Raphael Ruffolo, then Guardian of Marytown, were asked to take part in the offertory procession. Later they had a private audience with Pope John Paul II. Coming up to the pontiff, Father Jim said, "Your Holiness, pray that all of us would be consecrated to Our Lady as St. Maximilian was." The Holy Father, pointing his finger at Father Jim, said, "You do that!" Fr. Jim took this as a command from the Pope himself to continue to spread the cause of St. Maximilian, with the motto being: "when you make bargain with a saint, be careful with your wording. Make sure you set a time limit to your involvement." Of course, the room roared with laughter at this.

Father Jim spoke of the Kolbe Award and its first recipients, who were Fr. Patrick Peyton, Fr. John Hardon,

Mother Theresa of Calcutta, Bishop Austin Vaughn and Bro. Raphael Ruffolo. Each of these exemplified some aspect of Father Kolbe's life and mission, and all of whose causes for canonization have been introduced, or already declared Venerable or Blessed (with the exception of Bro. Raphael, at least not yet).



Betty Kabance, sister of Bro. Raphael (a prior winner of the Kolbe Award), looks on as Fr. James McCurry, OFM Conv. receives the 2015 award.

Fr. Patrick Peyton was the great crusader for the family. St. Maximilian exchanged his life for the life Francis Gajowniczek because he did not want his family not to have their father return to them. Fr. John Hardon, S.J. was a teacher of doctrine, a teacher of truth. It was St. Maximilian's printed testimony to the truth regarding the evils of the Nazi regime caused him to be arrested and sent to Auschwitz. Mother Theresa of Calcutta was a living martyr of charity in her mission to serve the poorest of the poor. St. Maximilian was also a missionary of charity in his ministry to preach God's word through his printing ministry to the poor hungering to hear God's Truth. Fr. Jim shared how in December of 1991 he led Mother Theresa to make her consecration to the MI, a treasured document signed by Mother that he still has in his possession. Bishop Austin Vaughn of New York was the champion of the unborn who even spent some time in jail for his defense of the unborn. St. Maximilian



Friar Donald joined in the laughter.

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2015 Kolbe Award

similarly denounced the Nazis for their evil medical experiments on both the young and old, and in time was also declared a patron saint for the Pro Life Movement.

Speaking at length about Bro. Raphael, Fr. Jim went on to mention how he was permitted by the Vatican to become the first Brother Guardian of a Franciscan friary in 750 years, the last Guardian being the compatriot of St. Francis himself, Brother Elias. It was the fact that St. Maximilian allowed brothers not merely to be servants but leaders and directors of ministries and supervisors of other friars that led the Vatican to finally offer their permission to having Bro. Raphael be elected as Guardian. St. Maximilian was a champion of the vocation of religious brothers, which Brother Raphael also promoted.



Friar Michael speaks at the reception.

Lady, brought that work of evangelization to fulfillment by offering his life in exchange for another, and by ministering to the other nine sentenced to die by starvation. And what permeates the authentic work of evangelization in charity is joy. All the Kolbe recipients were filled



Friar James with Friar Luke

with this joy. Fr. Jim spoke of the last exchange of words that he had with Mother Theresa, two months before she died. Father Jim, crouching down to her level as she was badly bent over said to her: "Mother, thank you for your smile." She in turn said to him, "Jesus wants us to be joyful; spread his joy." That joy is a byproduct of one's authentic gift of self to God. Mary gave herself to God through Her "fiat" to God's will. We are asked to do the same. We will be enabled to do so through our consecration to Mary, which will allow her to make of us authentic instruments in her God-given mission of working for the sanctification of others and the salvation of the whole world.

We thank Father Jim himself for being a joyful witness in his ministry of Franciscan leadership and evangelization as a true Knight of Our Lady. If you wish to hear Father Jim's talk and the presentation of the Kolbe Award in its entirety, please visit Marytown's website at www.marytown.com.



Upcoming Events

October 2 - **Forty Hours Devotion for the Feast of Saint Francis**

Holy Family, Peoria: 7 p.m. Opening Solemn Mass of Exposition

October 3 - **(a day of fast and abstinence)**

Blessing the animals:

St. Anthony's, Rockford 10 a.m.
Basilica of St. Josaphat 10:30 a.m.
Holy Family, Peoria 10:30 a.m.
Marytown 10 to 10:30 a.m.

Basilica of St. Josaphat Choir
Concert/CD Release 7 p.m.

Transitus:

St. Anthony's, Rockford 7 p.m.
(with Secular Franciscans)
Holy Family, Peoria 6 p.m.
Marytown 6 p.m. (led by students)
Novitiate 7 p.m.

October 4 - **Feast of Saint Francis**

Holy Family, Peoria: 11 a.m. Solemn Mass of St. Francis with Eucharistic Procession
to close Forty Hours (Bishop Daniel Jenky, presider) followed by spaghetti dinner
Marytown: 9:00 a.m. Mass and 7:00 p.m. Vespers in honor of St. Francis

October 14 to 15 - Fr. Mauro Gambetti, Custos of Assisi, will visit the House of Studies

October 25 to 26 - Definitory Meeting at House of Studies

October 31 - Ordination to the Diaconate for Friar Arturo, 2:00 p.m. Marytown

*And after the Lord gave me
some brothers,
no one showed me what I had
to do, but the Most High
Himself revealed to me that
I should live according to the
pattern of the Holy Cross.*

