



the Seraph

News and Notables of
St. Bonaventure
Province

January 2016



*Happy
Epiphany*

A brisk day laid itself asleep into a clear night, allowing the stars to twinkle above the Province of St. Bonaventure as its friars gathered at Marytown for their annual Epiphany banquet. It, as always, was a happy time for the friars as they came from far and near to exchange their social exultations. Even if a whole friary could not attend, there were at least representatives – from St. Josaphat in the North; Sts. Peter & Paul, St. Anthony, and St. Stanislaus in the West; from the near West were the friars of St. Margaret Mary; those representing the South were from Holy Family, St. John the Baptist, and Sacred Heart. Looking East: starting from Chicago, St. Bonaventure friary brought along the ever-important postulants, who read the names and saints that are given out anew each year. From a bit further South and East were those of the novitiate of St. Francis of Assisi and St. Joseph the Worker Parish in Gary, Indiana. All in all it was a truly international experience, with friars from England, Poland, Australia, and Croatia.



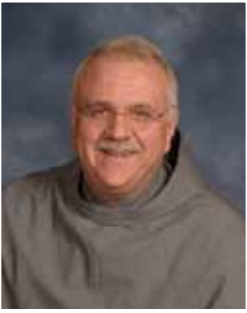
We fraternized with appetizers and cups of cheer, leading later to the main course in the refectory where everybody had their fill of meat, vegetables, and the most pleasant desserts – appealing to the eye, but more so to the taste. Then came the time to begin the prayer and song for the drawing of saints. We started off slow and quiet, yet when it came to St. Clare's name being drawn and proclaimed, the ooooh's and aaaah's started to ring out. Laughter picked up as the unlucky postulant who was chosen to read the Polish surnames became tongue-tied. We all chuckled like we do each year to see how each name will be pronounced each time.



Alas, the time came after the last name was read and saint given out that we all prayed the closing prayer and ended in song. It was a good time, a joyous time, a time that is always too short in coming and gone like the daylight during this time of year. Until next year, let us remember each other in our prayers until we come together to rejoice in the finding of the Christ child as the Wise men did.

--Fr. Hans Flondor, OFM Conv.

A Word from Our Provincial



Dear Friars,

Praised be Jesus Christ!

I hope that all of you had a wonderful Christmas and that the start of 2016 is holy, happy, and healthy!

I was reading the blog *Whispers in the Loggia* and saw that Pope Francis made a private visit to Greccio on

January 5. He prayed in the church that holds all the Nativity scenes, visited the friars, and had lunch with the local bishop. All was done privately – no crowds, no TV cameras, no press; although I am sure there were some pictures taken. I was struck that Pope Francis wanted to go to the town where in 1223 St. Francis re-enacted the first Nativity with live animals and living people.

We know that the reason St. Francis re-enacted the first Nativity was because the world was growing cold, forgetting the real meaning and message of Christmas. St. Francis wanted to show the townspeople of Greccio just how real and personal God's love is for all of His people. Pope Francis, in the quiet of the Christmas season, quietly goes to Greccio so that he can experience the realness of Christmas and again help us to focus on the true meaning and message of Christmas.

As we conclude our Year of Consacrated Life, where Pope Francis has asked us to “wake up the world” by our authentic living of the evangelical counsels and by our witness to community life, we see him making real the true meaning of Christmas, the Word made flesh, God becoming a man so that we can become like God. With the Holy Year of Mercy barely being a month old, with the Christmas decorations still fresh in our memories and maybe we still have a few poinsettias that only have dropped a few leaves, we are being called to make real the love of Christmas by continuing to be authentic missionaries and evangelizers of the Gospel, the Good News of Jesus Christ!

How do we continue to make real the love of Christmas? One way is to ask ourselves: Am I living the corporal and spiritual works of mercy? Do I remember the corporal and spiritual works of mercy? The corporal works of mercy: feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, sheltering the homeless, visiting the sick and the imprisoned, burying the dead. The spiritual works of mercy: counseling the doubtful, instructing the ignorant, admonishing the sinner, comforting the sorrowful, forgiving injuries, bearing wrongs patiently, praying for the living and the dead.

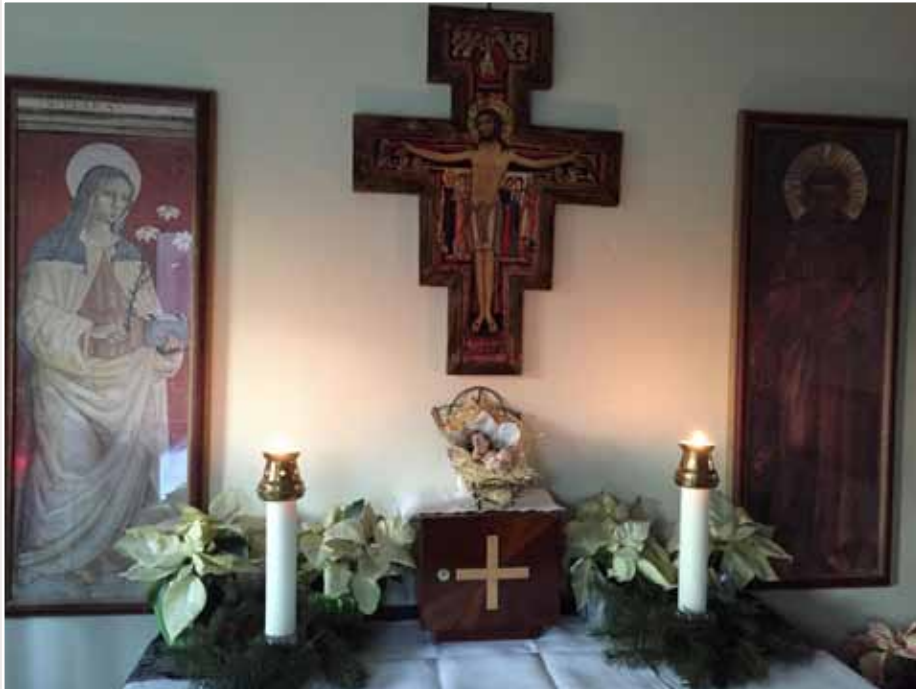
So often we complicate the spiritual life. We paralyze ourselves because we feel as if our own inadequacies, faults, failings, and sins keep us from truly becoming the evangelizers and disciples that the Lord is inviting us to be. When we remember how the Lord is calling us to live and put His Gospel into action, to be examples of His love, it is not as complicated as we make it out to be!

Maybe one New Year's resolution that we can all make is to take one of the corporal or spiritual works of mercy and put it into practice each month. Yes, it would be better if we tried to practice one of the corporal or spiritual works of mercy each day, but the experts tell us that one sure way to fail at our New Year's resolution is try to do too much. Try taking one a month, or if that is

too small an effort one a week. But whatever we decide to do, the important thing is that we are trying to make real the love of Christmas, the love that has and continues to transform all men and women of faith who want to be authentic evangelizers and missionaries of Jesus Christ!

May this New Year truly be holy and graced-filled so that together we can continue to grow as disciples, missionaries of Jesus Christ who are living examples of His merciful and unconditional love.

God bless,
Michael



Holy Family, Peoria, Illinois

Christmas Scenes Around the Province

(more on next page)



Left to Right:
Top Row: All Saints Friary, Dearborn;
 Basilica of St. Josaphat, Milwaukee
Second Row: Shrine of the Holy Innocents,
 Australia; Saint Bonaventure Friary,
 Chicago; St. Anthony of Padua, Rockford
Third Row: Our Lady of the Rosary Parish
 in Kellyville, New South Wales, Australia;
 Holy Family, Peoria: Entrance to Chapel
 in Dearborn



Christmas Feasting The Friars of Mount Saint Francis gather to celebrate Christmas supper around the friary Christmas tree. From left to right: Fr. Gerard Lofranco, Br. Louis Schmid, Br. Jerry Payne, Fr. Robert Melnick, Br. Dominic Levaq, Fr. Alejandro López.



Decorations at St. Josaphat Friary, Milwaukee



Christmas Dinner at All Saints Friary, Dearborn



Christmas Party at Marytown, Libertyville



Saint Bonaventure Friary, Chicago

Vocation Office News

Come & See Retreat

We had six vocation guests visit from Sunday December 27, 2015 until Friday January 1, 2016. They were: Matt Goodwin from Cheney, Kansas; Jonathan Huber, a long-time inquirer from Lexington, Kentucky; Andrew Nalywajko from Palatine, Illinois; Daniel Robertson from Rochester Hills, Michigan; Andrew Robinson from Libertyville Illinois; and Jason Warrer another long-time inquirer, from Lowell, Indiana, which is right over the border of Illinois.

Out of these six, Jason Warrer was the only one who had previously attended the Come & See weekend in October. They all arrived late Sunday evening. Br. Donny Thielsen was kind enough to make pizza and chicken for dinner. The next day we took off in the Suburban truck to Rockford. The weather was unpleasant, but upon arriving and meeting Fr. Jim Ciaramitaro the rest of the morning flew by with stories about St. Anthony of Padua and its history. The parish was decked out in all its Christmas splendor and wowed our guests as Fr. Jim gave the tour.

The next day we drove up to Milwaukee to meet Fr. Paul Schneider, who talked with our guests and guided them through St. Josaphat Basilica and its history. We started in the main sanctuary, then on to the Christmas Polish City for a picture. Fr. Paul allowed time to browse through the main church and gaze up at all its glory. He then took them up to the balcony for a birds-eye view. We all then went to the lower church to see its restoration, the reliquary room, and the mural of Lourdes.

In talking with our guests once we returned to Marytown, none of them thought either parish was better than the other. They saw the beauty in both and understood the cultural difference of each.

During the rest of the week, I had them intermingle with the M.I. young adult retreat to get an understanding how we as a province are involved with St. Maximilian Kolbe and his understanding of being consecrated to Mary. In fact two of our guests were so influenced they asked if they could be consecrated during the New Year's Midnight Mass.

Continued on Page 6



At St. Anthony Parish



In front of the Polish Village



In the lower church at St. Josaphat.

Continued from Page 5

Come & See Retreat

Just as you would expect, we also talked about St. Francis and the first Nativity scene he established. We discussed our Province, what it means to be a friar as a brother and priest, as well as a plethora of other questions about formation and becoming a Conventual Franciscan.

I know what you all want to ask: “How many do I have coming in for next year?” What a tiring question! Your guess is as good as mine. So far this year four have inquired about applications, and two are presently filling them out. But until they actually come to us as postulants and stay that first whole day, I cannot say if the Lord has blessed us or not.

We all need to do our part and pray for them, and persist in asking our Lord and his Mother to continue bringing us inquirers, especially for the next “Come & See” on February 19-21.



Fr. Paul Mary Schneider and Friar Bernard Mary visited with some of the Juniors and Seniors at St. Anthony High School on December 11th and spoke about vocations.



Fr. Michael Zielke celebrates the Eucharist during the retreat at St. Bonaventure Friary for the nine Postulants living in San Antonio and Chicago. Three student friars from OLC and SJC Provinces led the retreat.



Other News

On November 30, signs identifying the Basilica of St. Josaphat as an historical site were placed on the Interstate freeway directing tourists to the location. These signs were made possible through a special law enacted by the Wisconsin State Legislature. The new signs received a total of 13 segments from Milwaukee's four TV stations. There are a total of eight signs. Here is an example of the news coverage:

<http://www.wisn.com/news/dot-hangs-signs-directing-people-to-st-josaphat-basilica/36725052>



Fr. John and Br. Augustine open the doors of Marytown for the Jubilee Year of Mercy. Remember to tell everyone that Marytown and the Basilica of St. Josaphat are official pilgrimage sites for the Holy Year.



Christmas Chicks born on Christmas Eve. Mount Saint Francis Friary in Kellyville, NSW Australia, welcomed the birth of seven new chicks.



Pictured from left to right: Gaspar, Melchior and Balthasar.

On 25th November, our Springvale and Dingley friars (Melbourne area) traveled to the local cemetery to honour our deceased friars. It is the month of remembering the dead, so we wanted to make sure that we found the time to be together at their graves. The three deceased friars are Frs. Boniface Cannas (Italian), Victor Bonello (Maltese), and Karl Chesher (USA-OLC). All three men spent most of their priesthood ministering in Australia. We will forever be grateful for their sacrifices for our community.

Other Feasts & Celebrations



On December 14, friars from the House of Studies and Marytown joined the friars of the Basilica for their **Advent Penance Service**. At the dinner beforehand, the friars celebrated Fr. Luke's birthday -- complete with sweet potatoes served in martini glasses. Sto lat!



Enjoying a cool 77 degree summer day in December, some of the Friars of Mount Saint Francis Friary (Kellyville, NSW, Australia) share a **“last supper”** with Fr. Adrian Robson at Lusso Italiano restaurant. The founding Rector of the Shrine of the Holy Innocents will be in the New World, specifically residing at Marytown in Libertyville, Illinois, for a much-needed six-month sabbatical. Pictured from left to right: Br. Jerry Payne, Fr. Gerard Lofranco, Fr. Adrian, Fr. Alejandro López, and Fr. Robert Melnick.





Happy Thanksgiving Down Under

The friars of Mount Saint Francis in Kellyville gathered on Thanksgiving day to celebrate the American holiday. Everyone pitched in to help make a feast that would have made the pilgrims proud. Pictured: the entree table (which is what Australians call “appetisers”), the main course, and the dessert bar. Afterwards, all posed for a photo. Pictured from left to right: Fr. Alejandro López, Fr. Adrian Robson, Br. Jerry Payne, Fr. Gerard Lofranco, Fr. Robert Melnick, and Br. Louis Schmid. The tight close up is of an Australian (or New Zealander, depending on whom you ask) dessert called Pavlova. Finally Fr. Adrian prepared himself for his six-month sabbatical at Marytown by drinking a Budweiser and waving the Stars and Stripes.



New Year's Eve Young Adult Retreat at Marytown



From December 29th, 2015, through January 1st, 2016, the annual Young Adult New Year's Eve Retreat was held at the National Shrine of St. Maximilian Kolbe in Libertyville. The event was organized and facilitated by friars Anthony Lajato, Bernard Mary Fonkalsrud, and Thomas Fetz, with about 50 young people converging on Marytown.

Taking their theme from that of the upcoming World Youth Day in Krakow, "*Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy,*" the talks were centered around the Jubilee Year of Mercy. Fr. Masseo Gozales from SJC Province was also in attendance, and presented a talk and shared his musical talents with the group. Br.

Bernard Mary taught the group the Australian 'Nutbush' dance at the talent show, which was a big hit. At the midnight vigil Mass for the Solemnity of Mary the Mother of God, ten of the participants consecrated themselves to Mary in the M.I. using Maximilian Kolbe's formula. A fun and spiritual time was had by all.

--Br. Bernard Mary Fonkalsrud OFM Conv.



News from the Franciscan Shrine of the Holy Innocents, Australia



The Epiphany celebration began in the original timber shrine chapel with a procession of the three kings to the main chapel for mass. After the Mass the friars led the traditional extraction of patron saints for everyone present and then enjoyed a delicious "Morning Tea."



The annual Mass of the Holy Innocents was celebrated on January 28th. The main celebrant was our own Conventual Franciscan Bishop Vincent Long. It was a real homecoming for Bishop Vincent who is a former "parish priest" (pastor) of the parish. The Mass was celebrated in the parish church of Our Lady of the Rosary. Following Mass there was a procession to the original shrine chapel for Benediction.



Christmas at the Shrine was a family event celebrated on December 18.

Upcoming Events

January 17-22	Meeting of General Definitory with all Provincials in Assisi
February 5	Friars Day on the Revisions to the Constitutions, presented by Friar Tim Kulbicki at Marytown, beginning at 2:00 PM
February 7-8	SB Province Definitory Meeting, House of Studies, Chicago
February 10	Ash Wednesday
February 15-20	CFC Provincials meeting in Boynton Beach, FL.

*And He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them; and His mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man.
(Luke 2:51-52)*



*Just as she is the most perfect instrument in the hand of God,
in the hand of Divine Mercy, the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus,
so we are instruments in her hand.
Thus through her we are the instruments of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus,
that is, of God's Mercy.
Thus our watchword is "Through the Immaculata to the Heart of Jesus."*

St. Maximilian Kolbe