



# the Seraph

News and Notables of  
St. Bonaventure  
Province

Issue #1 2019

## A WORD FROM OUR PROVINCIAL

Dear Friars,

Praised be Jesus Christ!

I hope that you had a wonderful Christmas Season filled with many awe-inspiring moments as again we experienced the mystery of God-made-man. I pray that 2019 will be holy, happy, and healthy as we continue to respond to our call as Franciscans.

I am reading a book, **Through Him, In Him, With Him** by Ruth Burrows, and one of the chapters deals with the reality that all believers need their own personal epiphany of the Lord if he/she will continue as a believer. When I first read that chapter I thought it was kind of peculiar in stating that all believers need their own personal epiphany, but as I started to reflect and meditate on that chapter it began to make more and more sense.

What made the Magi interpret the stars and take the journey to follow the star that led them to Jesus? Tradition tells us that there were three, but some scholars say there were as many as fifteen astrologers who traveled to Bethlehem. Three or fifteen, the number really does not matter; what matters is that they decided to follow the star. I am sure that many other astrologers saw the new star in the heavens, but what made these astrologers travel to Bethlehem and acknowledge Jesus? It was their own personal epiphany! They were ready to read the signs of the times and reached out in faith and make the journey to Jesus. And once they made the journey and found Jesus they were changed forever!

Have we been changed by our encounter with Jesus? How many Christmases have we celebrated, and how has this one changed us? Many people struggle with depression around the holidays and holidays. They miss the people who are no longer with them, or the hus-



More Epiphany photos on page 6



The Magi at the Basilica of St. Josaphat

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tle and bustle of the season is just too much for them to handle. I am not a psychologist or psychiatrist, and I do not want to make light of people's struggles, but when we lose focus on Jesus we too can become depressed and lose our way.

My brothers, reflect for just a moment on all the signs, the stars that God has given us in order for us to recognize His presence in our lives? Yes, if we want to be honest there are times when we have recognized the Lord's presence in our lives, and there are times when we failed or even chose not to recognize the Lord's presence in our lives.

One of our greatest gifts that we Franciscans can offer the Church is our sense of God's presence, not only in our lives but in the world around us! We love to hear the Canticle of the Creatures prayed or sung because we are reminded in that Canticle that the world and everything in the world points to God. The Canticle of Creatures is a manifestation, a Theophany of God!

Remember that we too, are a manifestation, a Theophany of God. As Franciscans, our lives point to God; they reflect His goodness and greatness.

As we journey into the New Year of 2019, my prayer for all of us is that we, like the Magi, continue to reach out in faith to God and one another...that we continue to help each other and the world around us to recognize the presence of God among us...that just as the Magi were changed by the presence of Jesus, we too, along with our world, can be continually changed and transformed by the presence of Jesus.

God bless,  
Michael



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Top: Our Lady of the Rosary Parish, Kellyville, NSW, Australia  
Bottom: Marytown

# Vocation Report

## Come and See Events

October 19-21, 2018

We had four men visit and stay at the Postulant House in Chicago. They found the experience of talking with the postulants fruitful. We also had them participate in serving at the Soup Kitchen at St. Thomas of Canterbury. A few of them had never served the less fortunate. We also visited Marytown where Fr. Benedict gave them a talk about the life and service in Australia.

In following up with these four, two are discerning cautiously, meaning taking their time. Another contacted me because he wanted to attend the December C&S, but then a few weeks later sent me an email stating that he was accepted into another community. The fourth, I believe, we will let slip away for both the good of the community and himself. I believe he is realizing that we are not a fit for him. It is all part of the back and forth process of discernment of both the community and the inquiring candidate.

December 27, 2018 - January 1, 2019

We had four attend. Two have been on our C&S's before; for the other two it was a first-time experience. It was definitely a good opportunity for them too see what is involved in being a Conventual Franciscan, while at the same time visiting many of our parishes and the Soup Kitchen at St. Thomas of Canterbury.

The visits usually begin with introductions to Marytown and how to get around. Then there is a talk by Fr. Benedict, prayer with the community, and of course times to eat with the friars. The patterns for each day would include prayer and/or Mass in morning or afternoon, then a visit to a parish and a talk or discussion led by me or one of the Friars.

The ages of themen ranged from 20 to 41. One of them did not know anything about community life, two had some idea and have joined in C&S's before, and the last had been in a religious order before. All enjoyed their experience and thought it was a balanced program, including time to pray and discern on their own. At this point one is actively finishing his application, two are going to continue with their discernment (which still includes our community, so we are not out of the question for them), and one knows he needs time to mature in his understanding in what the Lord is asking him as he continues to finish his college studies.

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Top two photos: October Come & See  
Bottom three: December

In between the October Come & See and the one in December I attended three vocation conferences.

**Men of the Cross** This is a one-day event directed toward men, and many fathers brought their sons. It was in La Crosse, Wisconsin, where I stayed the night at Bishop Callahan's residence. He is still hoping that the Conventuals will come to his diocese and take on some parishes.

**Called by Name** This was in the Joliet Diocese with 2000 7th and 8th graders. Postulant Michael Hintze was amazed at the genuine interest they had about the Order and the questions they asked. I've been to this conference four times now. The process is to plant seeds, let them know who the Conventual Franciscans are, and tell the girls about St. Clare and her Poor Clare nuns. Michael was invaluable. With his height and size he was a giant among these kids, which was all the more an attraction for them, since they could spot him and our table easier.

**Inheritance** This took place at the Cousin Center in St. Francis, Wisconsin. Postulant Michael again helped talk with the college students who attended. This conference has been taken over by the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. This is the fourth time I have attended, and most likely my last. The attendance has dwindled and the vocation directors of the Archdiocese don't want the men who are discerning to think about religious life.

Last Fall I also attended the **Seek** conference. It was my third trip to this conference put on by Focus. 17,000 men and women attended. The conference keeps expanding each year. These are solid Catholics looking

to either enhance their Catholic faith or rediscover it, or in some cases for non-Catholics to understand what Catholicism is. Postulant Michael spoke with many junior and senior college guys who routinely kept returning to our table daily with a genuine interest in our community. Since Michael is a postulant who just entered the community, he felt that he was a kind of bridge between those who were already professed religious and the laity who were inquiring. He was able to encourage them about taking the next step, instead of being apprehensive. They asked Michael about his call and he related his own experience with their

discernment. Many were confused by what they were sensing from the Lord, and Michael was able to reassure them that there is a genuine call, and that they should look deeper into that call through prayer. Many responded that they felt something tugging at their heart, but did not take it to prayer. With this they asked Michael how he developed his prayer life, so they could discern their own call better.



It has been a benefit over the last years to take as many of those in formation as I can to these vocation conferences. It is one thing to talk to a Conventual Friar, but another to relate to someone who is fresh within the community, whom they can relate to and ask those pointed questions. A recurring question I have noticed is: What is Conventual? We have to make ourselves more recognized, or recognizable. How? By being among the people and in the few schools we have. Young people need to become familiar with us and not desire to go anywhere else when they are being called by our Lord and Savior. The challenge proposed to all of us: what can we do to make ourselves more well known so a person does not say "What is a Conventual?" but says instead, "Oh yeah! I know who those guys are."

# Investiture



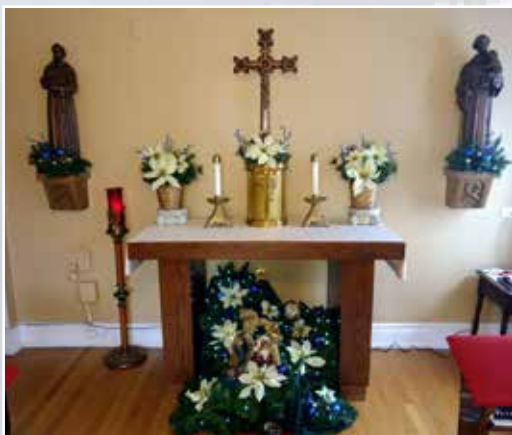
On Friday, December 7, in the Chapel at Marytown, Friar Tarcisius Bucca was invested in the Conventual Franciscan habit by Minister Provincial Michael Zielke. He will spend his novitiate year at Marytown.

A native of Argentina, Friar Tarcisius had previously professed solemn vows with the Franciscan Missionaries of the Eternal Word.

We welcome Friar Tarcisius and pray that his year confirms him in his Conventual vocation.



# Christmas 2018



St. Francis Friary, St. Ita, Chicago



St. Thomas of Canterbury, Chicago



Novitatz, Arroyo Grande



St. Ann's, Toluca



Holy Family, Peoria



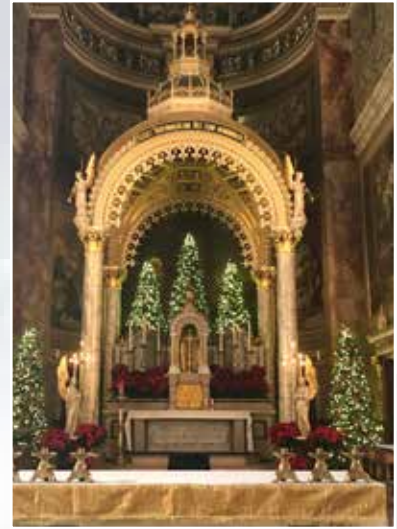
St. Linus, Dearborn Heights



St. Anthony of Padua, Rockford



Marytown



Marytown



St. Ita, Chicago



St. Mary's, Wznona



Basilica of St. Josaphat, Milwaukee



St. John the Baptist, Lostat



St. Patrick, Minonk

# Epiphany Celebration



The Province Epiphany party took place at Marytown on Monday, January 7. Bishop John Stowe OFM Conv. of Lexington, Kentucky, joined us for the festivities, which included the extraction of patron saints for the year and lots of good food and drink.



# News from Australia

On January 15-19, friars from Our Lady Help of Christians Provincial Delegation gathered for a Fraternal Assembly at Mount Saint Francis Friary in Kellyville. The friars reviewed their ministries and discussed mid-term and long-term goals for the Delegation. In addition, elections were held for various Delegation leadership roles.



Part of the beautiful Christmas decorations at Our Lady of the Rosary Parish, Kellyville

On December 27, friars from Kellyville visited an exhibit called “Star Wars Identities” at Sydney Powerhouse Museum. Pictured in front of the entrance to the exhibit are: Br. Bernard Finkalsrud, Fr. Alejandro López, Fr. Gerard Lofranco, Br. Dominic Levak, and Fr. David Blowey.



## Upcoming Events

**Saturday, February 2**, Spaghetti Dinner, 6:30 pm,  
St. Ita, Chicago

**Sunday, February 17**, 23rd Annual Adorers Gathering,  
Marytown

**Sunday, February 24**, Mardi Gras Pancake Pigout,  
St. Anthony of Padua, Rockford

### May 18 to June 18, General Chapter

**Monday July 15, Friars' Day**, Topic: Mission Advancement, Presentation by Sr. Georgette Lehmuth, President and CEO of the National Catholic Development Conference, 1:30 pm to 6 pm, **Marytown**

**Sunday, July 21, Profession of Temporary Vows of Friar Matt Bradley**, Solemn Vespers at 5 pm, dinner to follow, **Marytown**

**Wednesday, October 16**, Study Day on the revised Constitutions with Friar Tim Kulbicki OFM Conv., 1:30 pm to 6 pm, **Marytown**

**Marianne Morse's retirement party** will be held at Kenmore on Saturday, February 9th. Preprandium will be at 5pm followed by dinner at 6pm.

If you plan to attend please RSVP with Dawn Krasinski in the Provincial Office by February 1st. You may reach Dawn at DMK9271@gmail.com or (773) 764-8811 x 257. If you would like to stay at Kenmore overnight, please let Dawn know that as well.



Painting: Václav Mánes - Healing the Blind Man (1832)

“Aroused by everything to divine love, he rejoiced in all the works of the Lord’s hands and through their delightful display he rose into their life-giving reason and cause. In beautiful things he contuited Beauty itself and through the footprints impressed in things he followed his beloved everywhere, out of them all making a ladder through which he could climb up to lay hold of him who is utterly desirable.”

St. Bonaventure, The Major Legend of St. Francis, Chapter Nine