



the Seraph

News and Notables of
St. Bonaventure
Province

Issue #1 2020



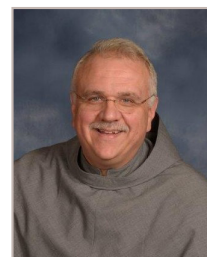
Br. Tarcisius Bucca's Simple Profession took place on Saturday, December 7th, 2019 at Marytown. Tarcisius is originally from Argentina. He was a member of the Franciscan Missionaries of the Eternal Word in Irondale, AL for about 14 years before discerning a call to the Conventual Franciscans.



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poverty, chastity, and obedience
free us so that we can live heroically in fraternity
where we think of the other first*

A WORD FROM OUR PROVINCIAL

Dear Friars,



Praised be Jesus Christ!

As we begin to settle into the routine of Ordinary Time I would like to offer a brief reflection on a book that I read during the Seasons of Advent and Christmas: *The Story of a Catholic Parish REBUILT: Awakening the Faithful; Reaching the Lost; Making Church Matter*. It was written by Fr. Michael White, former secretary to Cardinal Keeler and pastor of Nativity Church in Timonium, Maryland, and Tom Corcoran, pastoral minister at Nativity Church.

It illustrates their experience of trying to build the Kingdom of God in their little corner of the world in Timonium. They give very practical suggestions and concrete examples of what worked and did not work for them. They tell the reader that this book is their experience, and what each reader needs to do is to take their lived experience and adapt their suggestions and examples to each reader's lived experience.

Why I think this book is good for us is that we are in the midst of putting together a Strategic Plan. We, as a Province, have built up God's Kingdom in our corner of the world for 85 years, and now God is asking us how we are going to continue. What worked

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in the past is not working today. How do we, as Conventual Franciscan Friars, continue to build God's Kingdom in the third millennium?

As many friars as there are in our Conventual Franciscan branch, that is the number of opinions there are in building God's Kingdom while walking as disciples of St. Francis of Assisi. What we members of St. Bonaventure need to do is focus on our uniqueness. Why have we been around for 85 years? Yes, we have our Rule and Constitutions that we have professed, but so have 4,400 other Conventual Friars. What makes our way of life so important in the upper mid-west of the United States and in Australia so that we must continue as a Province?

Our Mission Statement says: "...called by God's love to the Gospel life in fraternity, simplicity, prayer and penance, love of the Eucharist, devotion to the Immaculate Mother of God. TOGETHER we proclaim the Incarnate and compassionate Christ...build communities of worship in service to the marginalized and poor, and praise the God of creation by reverencing our sisters and brothers and the whole earth."

One of the greatest gifts that we can give our Church today is our witness to the common life. Our world is screaming for authentic communities where people can feel loved, accepted, welcomed, safe, and where they can be themselves. The Lord has called us to live as brothers, a fraternity where God's grace is continually at work, calling us out of ourselves into a heroic way of living in the world today.

Our vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience free us so that we can live heroically in fraternity where we think of the other first: where we are free to love all; where we are free not to be preoccupied with material things and possessions; and where we are free to follow truly God's will by doing what He wants and not our own will.

My brothers, we are in a unique and graced moment as we plan for the future! Do we face the future with our heads held high responding to the challenges of building God's Kingdom as Conventual Franciscan Friars of the third millennium? Or do we hide our heads in the sand like ostriches waiting for the challenges to pass us by?

My brothers, we have the graces and blessings to respond to the invitation of the Lord to continue to be His disciples, evangelizers, and men of the Word. May we continue our humble walk with the Lord who is leading, guiding, and challenging us to be faithful to our Franciscan way of life!

God bless,
Michael



Celebrating Epiphany at Marytown

One of the greatest gifts that we can give our Church today is our witness to the common life.

Sharing Our Witness



(Top Left) Thanksgiving with the friars -- For the past two years, the friars at St Ita have invited parishioners with nowhere to go to join them for their Thanksgiving dinner. The event attracts nearly 100 people.

Blessing the straw at Marytown (Top Right)

(Middle Left) Sts. Ita and Thomas of Canterbury School Pageant (Fr. Arturo Felix stands tall in the back row)

(Middle Right) Youth and young adults of Our Lady of the Rosary, Kellyville, NSW, their parish priest, Fr. Alejandro López, and their Bishop, Most Rev. Vincent Long OFM Conv. processing to the final Mass of the Australian Catholic Youth Festival in Perth on December 10, 2019.

(Left) The Soup Kitchen

Vocation News

2020 marks an exciting time for the Australian Delegation as it welcomes two young men who will be living with the Mount St. Francis Friary community (Kellyville, NSW) to discern more deeply a Franciscan vocation as 'Aspirants' for one year, before entering the official Postulancy program.

Mitchell Gallagher

Mitchell is twenty-one years old and comes from Ballarat, Victoria. He is a convert to the Catholic faith and attributes this partly to the fact that his local Catholic Cathedral was the only Christian church that had its doors open throughout the day, making it an inviting and less confronting place to seek guidance. Since his conversion almost five years ago, he has fully embraced his faith and has been involved with the 'Immaculata Community' and various other Catholic groups and events. He moved to Sydney a few years ago and has worked in hospitality at the Star Casino Hotel. Last year Mitchell had the opportunity to attend Word Youth Day in Panama, and also traveled to Rome and Assisi for a private pilgrimage. He has been actively discerning with the friars for a year and looks forward to taking this next step in his faith-life journey.



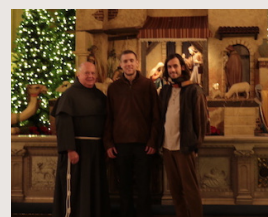
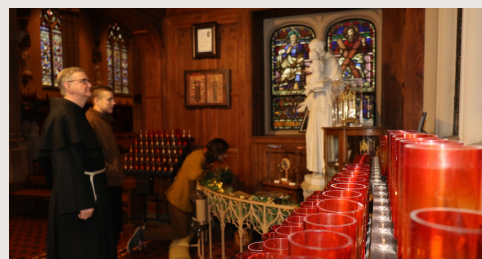
Nathan Boninsegni

Nathan is eighteen years old and is from Newport (Melbourne), Victoria. He graduated from High School last year, having achieved excellent results in his High School Certificate. He has been very involved with his local parish of Sacred Heart, Newport, acting as the Youth Minister. Nathan contacted the friars early last year to inquire and met with Br. Bernard Mary in Melbourne during a diocesan youth event. Since then he has attended a come-and-see weekend and has been visiting the Melbourne Friars at St. Joseph of Cupertino Friary (Dingley Village). He has an interest in Scripture studies and Church History. Now living with the friars in Kellyville, he is happy to begin this next stage of discernment and deepen his understanding and appreciation of the Franciscan life.



Come & See

Kyle Berceau and Alexander Verdoni attended the December Come & See.



FEAST of Epiphany (THREE KINGS) is CELEBRATED AT SACRED HEART




Fr. Jim blessing the special gifts that the students from the Religious Education program will present to Jesus. Inside this special box were the gifts of kindness, love, being nice and sharing with others.



Deacon Scott accepts the Epiphany Box from CCD students as their gift is brought to the Manger. Along with the Magi our students wanted to give Baby Jesus their gifts for the New Year and hopes for goodness.



Participating in the traditional blessing of homes on the Feast of the Epiphany, Fr. Jim blesses bags of chalk (left) which included the prayer for blessing to be done by a family member in their homes. Right, Mark Lauzon reaching high to mark the lintel of the Church Entrance with the sign of blessing [20 + C + M + B + 20]. Several comments were made regarding how much this ritual was appreciated and others that even though they have been 'life-long' Catholics they were not familiar with the custom and really enjoyed learning of this beautiful tradition.



Catholic Men's Group
Of Saint John's Clinton

Join us as we build Church through
activities and fun outings

Today's Feast marks the conclusion of the Christmas Season and the beginning of Ordinary Time. It's a feast of transition from Jesus' hidden life to that of His public ministry. It also echoes the theme of the Epiphany in that the Baptism of the Lord is another manifestation announcing Jesus' divinity to all of His first followers and to the disciples of John the Baptist.

Advent



Saint Ita Advent evenings of recollection

Given by Brother Tarcisius (Spanish) and Father Benedict (English)



Las Posadas

Las Posadas

Friars welcome the Holy Family into the church as part of the Mexican community's *Las Posadas* before Christmas



Our Lady of Guadalupe



Las Mañanitas

Full church at 5am to greet Our Lady of Guadalupe on the morning of her Feast

Decorating



friary Christmas Tree & Kenyan Nativity Scene at St. Ita



Supervisor of the Decorating at Marytown



Christmas 2020



St. Ann, Toluca



St. Patrick, Minonk



Basilica of St. Josaphat



St. Thomas of Canterbury



Marytown

In Other News



In November, the friars had dinner for two bishops who had been assigned to St. Ita in their first years of priesthood. Pictured in the friary rec room are Bishop Alberto Rojas, who is now the co-adjutor for the Diocese of San Bernardino, and Bishop Robert Casey, auxiliary bishop of Chicago. Between them is Father Claudio Diaz, who was assigned with them.



St. Ita Parish celebrations for Father Arturo's birthday even drew one of Chicago's auxiliary bishops.



Marian Conference at Marytown



The St. Ita annual Parish chili cook-off included entries from Father Simon, Father Robert, and Father Bob



The Saint Ita Filipino community Simbang Gabi Christmas celebration even drew Father Anthony Lajato from Rome.

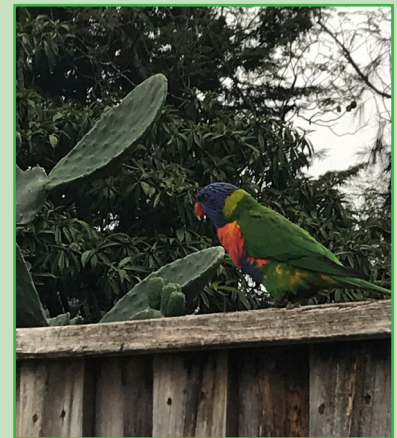


Los Aguinaldos -- Saint Ita's Colombian community has a special annual Christmas celebration, attended this by Colombia's Consul General Dixon Moya.

From Australia



Smoke covers the "Three Sisters" in the Blue Mountains, an hour's drive from the Kellyville friary. We are safe at the moment, but are surrounded by fires that bring smoke in the morning and cause sore throats and red eyes.



Rainbow Lorikeets gather for breakfast feeding by the Kellyville, NSW Australia friary. Br. Bernard Mary Fonkalsrud set up the feeder near the carport.



Upcoming Events

Saturday, February 1 – Spaghetti Dinner, St. Ita, Chicago, 6:30pm

Saturday, February 1 – **Brother Sun, Sister Moon** – A one-man musical featuring James Twyman, Holy Family, Peoria, 7pm (Also at St. Ita, Chicago, Sunday, **February 2**, 7:30pm)

Friday, March 13 – Maggie Bertram Foundation **Irish Fest kickoff** (including a fish fry), Holy Family, Peoria, 4pm

Sunday, March 15 – St. Joseph Altar, St. Anthony of Padua, Rockford: 10:30am – **Feeding of the Saints**; 11:30am-3pm – **Traditional St. Joseph Meal** (Blessing of the Altar on March 14, after the 4:30 Mass)

Saturday, March 21 **90th Birthday Celebration for Br. Martin Schmitz**
at the Little Sisters of the Poor (80 W Northwest Hwy, Palatine, IL 60067) Mass at 11am followed by lunch

September 28 - October 1 **Extraordinary Provincial Chapter**, Marytown

Dates for Ordinary Provincial Chapter (2022)

First Session: **April 25 - 29, 2022**

Second Session: **June 27 - July 1, 2022**

Marytown



Like Matthew, therefore, follow this most devoted Shepherd; like Zacchaeus, receive Him with hospitality; like the sinful woman, anoint Him with ointment and wash His feet with your tears, wipe them with your hair and caress them with your kisses; so that finally, with the woman presented to Him for judgment, you may deserve to hear the sentence of forgiveness: *Has no one condemned you? Neither will I condemn you. Go, and sin no more.*

From *The Tree of Life* by St. Bonaventure