



the Seraph

News and Notables of
St. Bonaventure
Province

Issue #3 2020



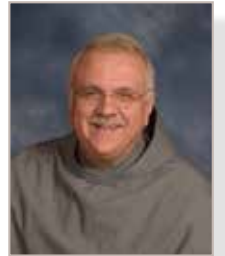
Above: Photos from Friars Day;

Left: Benedict at Adoration
- The friars covered the 24/7
Perpetual Adoration during
the Covid-19 quarantine.



A WORD FROM OUR PROVINCIAL

Dear Friars,



Praised be Jesus Christ!

I pray that you have found some time during these summer months to get a little rest and relaxation as we still battle with Covid-19.

As we prepare for our Assembly (formerly Extraordinary Chapter) to approve our Province's four-year plan, the six-year plan of our Order, entitled *Conforming Ourselves to the Gospel to Become a Missionary Fraternity*, says exactly what we have been discussing and reflecting upon in our House Chapters. We have learned from our Friars Day that we are longing for true Conventual communities where we can pray, reflect, and live together as brothers while walking in the footsteps of our Seraphic Father, St. Francis, and being witnesses to the love and transforming effects of Gospel living.

As Friar Carlos, our Minister General, writes in the six-year plan: *"To root ourselves progressively in Jesus means to transform ourselves into Him, to enter into His Passion for the Kingdom. This is why we chose 'Conforming Ourselves to the Gospel to Become a Missionary Fraternity'."*

We know that we have to change – personally and as a community – and perform ministry differently if we, as a Province, are going to continue. Upon reflection, the ministries of the past, particularly parochial ministries, are not where God is calling us as Conventual Franciscan Friars ministering in the Church in the US today. Yes, parochial ministry has served us well in the past; and, yes, it is a valid ministry in the Church, especially in the US. But is this the best place that God is calling us as a Province today?

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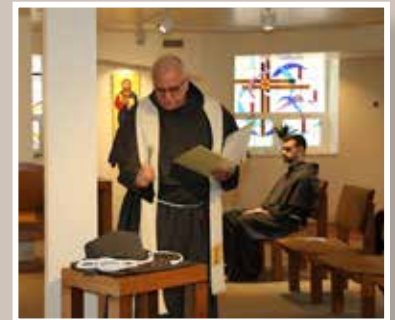
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Conforming ourselves to Christ means that we are open to conversion – daily conversion – to the Gospel, the mission, and message of Jesus Christ. Are we truly the vowed religious that we say we are? Another topic that has surfaced in our House Chapter discussions is our need for ongoing formation, especially in the areas of human development and Franciscan themes. Are we a true brotherhood in the way St. Francis envisioned his brothers to live and minister in the world? **Studying, reflecting, praying, and meditating in the school of the Gospel spurs us on to become a mission**

fraternity: men who announce Jesus Christ not just with words, but with deeds and actions as well.

Some friars are saying that this is not the first time we have used an outside firm to help us put together a strategic plan; not the first time that we have reflected upon our Mission Statement so that we can have a vision for the future; that everything that we did before looked good on paper, but we are no better off than before – *in fact, we are in a worse place because there are fewer of us called to do even more!*

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Group from Marytown



Paul Schneider, Novice Anthony Ruffolo, Brad Milunski

From Hans: Above are photos of our new Novice Anthony Ruffolo being invested, which took place at the Postulant House in Chicago on July 2, 2020. Many friars came who would otherwise not be able to attend if it had taken place at the Novitiate in Arroyo Grande. Afterwards there was a fantastic dinner.

Novice Anthony Ruffolo came to know our community through the Soup Kitchen and working with Donnie Thielsen. Donnie introduced Anthony to the 3rd Order, which he attended faithfully at Marytown each month. However, Anthony felt he needed to go deeper in his spirituality and started to inquire into our Order. This led him to attend *Come & See* weekends and visit Marytown on Thursdays to pray evening prayer with the friars, many times staying for dinner and conversation.

Our *Come & See* guest Paul Utterback was first inquiring back when Joseph Wood was vocation Director. He was only in high school at that time. Paul then reconnected with our community back in 2016. He is now thinking about entering the Order, so please keep him in prayer. He has been teaching in his hometown of Crawfordsville, Indiana.



Conventual Franciscan Novices, 2020-2021

*800th Anniversary of "Cum Secundum"
20th Anniversary of the inter-Provincial Novitiate*

Edgar Varela (OLA), Jonathan Garcia Zenteno (OLA), Bram De Backer (OLA), Wayne Mulei (SJC), Anthony Ruffolo (SB), Michael Boes (OLA)

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My brothers, if we are not open to personal conversion, then no matter what we do as a Province we will not grow, we will only diminish. If I do not see the need in my own life for conforming myself to the Gospel, how can we as a Province continue to become men of the Word, walking in the footsteps of St. Francis, transforming our culture and society?

We came to the Franciscan life because God called us! He chose each one of us to walk as a Franciscan, a Conventual Franciscan, for us to become holy and then to share what we have received from Him with our brothers in community and the people whom we are called to serve. Yes, the decisions that we will need to make, not only at our Assembly but in the coming years, will be difficult! The ministries that we have been doing are good. We have been of service to God and His people and we have been successful. We can be proud that we have responded to the call of the Church and have shared our charism.

Now, God is calling us in a new direction. Are we ready to die to ourselves? How open are we to the Spirit's new direction in our own personal life and in the life of our Province?

St. Francis struggled his whole life to conform himself to the crucified Christ. He wanted to reflect Jesus Christ to his brothers in community, and to the people of 13th-Century Italy and the Holy Land. Two years before he died, he received the marks of the Passion on his body. God the Father was pleased with St. Francis' lifelong struggle to conform himself to the Gospel. How pleased is God the Father in what we promised when we professed our vows? Can Jesus Christ be seen in our deeds and actions? Are my words in union with the Gospel? Do I speak as another Christ in the world today?

As St. St. Francis ends his Exhortation: ***"Brothers, while we have time let us do good!"***

God bless,
Michael





Corpus Christi



St. Ann's in Toluca

From Patrick Greenough: Due to the hot weather the parish picnic was moved inside. Music, food, and fun for all.



Scenes from the new reality



From Bob Cook:

Top L to R - Tuesday Zoom Rosary; A baptism for the Eritrean community, limited to parents, godparents, and immediate family

Above L to R - Archdiocese has required a face shield for the distribution of Holy Communion; A Vietnamese Mass in the church basement as a second worship site while another mass simultaneously occurs upstairs in the church

Left - One of more than 50 volunteers who sanitize hands and pews

St. Ita has restored its six weekend Masses (English, Spanish, Vietnamese/Lao) and offers daily Mass, while livecast Masses continue for those who do not feel safe in returning to church. Currently, we have about 25% of pre-COVID numbers on Sundays.

St Thomas of Canterbury Church has not yet reopened as a worship site, though we anticipate doing so in August or September.

Marytown

This and That



Jason on summer placement



Awaiting pilgrims



Friars enjoying some ice cream!



Tarcisus, our Sacristan



Matt celebrates his birthday

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Upcoming Events

Come & See Weekends

October 2 - 4, 2020, Marytown

November 27 - 29, 2020, Marytown

December 27, 2020 - January 1, 2021, Marytown

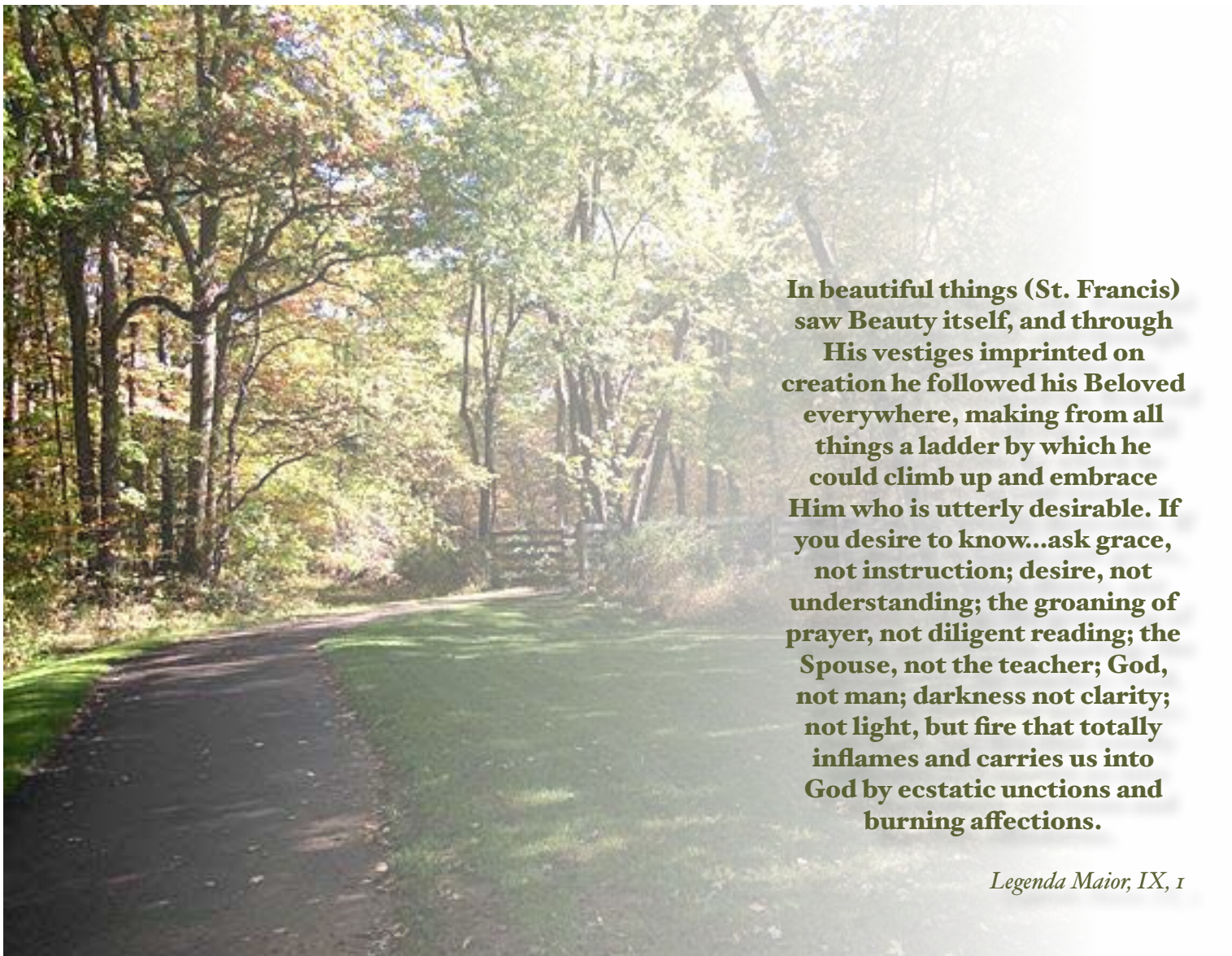
February 19 - 21, 2021, Postulant House, Chicago

September 28 - October 1 Province Assembly, Marytown

Dates for Ordinary Provincial Chapter (2022), Marytown

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

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



In beautiful things (St. Francis) saw Beauty itself, and through His vestiges imprinted on creation he followed his Beloved everywhere, making from all things a ladder by which he could climb up and embrace Him who is utterly desirable. If you desire to know...ask grace, not instruction; desire, not understanding; the groaning of prayer, not diligent reading; the Spouse, not the teacher; God, not man; darkness not clarity; not light, but fire that totally inflames and carries us into God by ecstatic unctions and burning affections.

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