



the Seraph

News and Notables of
St. Bonaventure
Province

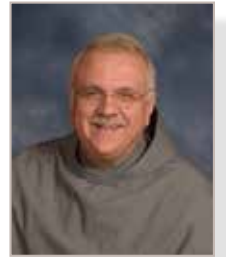
Issue #1 2021

A WORD FROM OUR PROVINCIAL

Dear Friars,

Praised be Jesus Christ!

I pray that all of you had joyful and peace-filled holy days and holidays!



Photographs from:
Tarcisius in Assisi (top);
St. Gregory; St. Thomas of
Canterbury; and
Marytown

*For unto us
a Child is born*

With the start of the New Year, we were all hoping and praying that 2021 would be much different than 2020. Unfortunately, it has not started out the way that we were hoping and praying: the virus has gotten more deadly, the political divisions have gotten worse, the vaccine roll-out is going at a snail's pace, and we have received new directives for the distribution of ashes.

We must remember that our hope is not in political parties, science, or directives, but rather in the person of Jesus Christ! We just finished celebrating Jesus' birthday, when He entered time as a man so that once and for all God could prove His unconditional love and mercy for His people. Jesus Christ's life, death, resurrection, and ascension – the Paschal Mystery – broke the circle and the cycle of sin and death. Now more than ever are we called as men of the Word, men of the Gospel, consecrated religious, to give witness to Jesus Christ and His saving Gospel. We have professed the Gospel; the Gospel is our Rule and Life!

Go back and re-read the story of St. Francis and the Sultan. St. Francis, a thoroughly Catholic and apostolic man, went to preach the Gospel to the Saracens. Everyone thought that he would be martyred. Because of St. Francis' great respect for all of creation, including non-believers, after a few days of discussion St. Francis received a gift from the Sultan,

Continued on Page 2

Continued from Page 1

and was guaranteed safe passage back to Italy. Imagine if the Crusades had been led by men like St. Francis! How might history have been different if men like St. Francis had led the “*holy wars*?”

Yes, I might be living in a dream world. But many in the Church when St. Francis was forming his group thought that St. Francis was too idealistic and that his way of life would never be approved. Is radical Gospel-living a dream, an ideal, something that exists only in fantasy?

My brothers: now more than ever are we called to be bridge builders. When people encounter Jesus Christ, they are changed forever and changed for the good! Our Church and our world are counting on authentic witnesses to Jesus Christ who will preach the Gospel in and out of season. But it must be preached in a way that is inviting and attractive, not condemnatory and inflammatory. Remember the old cliché: “*It is not what we say, but how we say it!*”.

As we continue through 2021, this year can be different if we each make a conscious choice every day to be an authentic witness to Jesus Christ and our vowed life. Our hope is in Jesus Christ! If we are humble enough to ask Him for the grace of transformation, so that we may live the Gospel in a radical way, we can be bridge-builders, and the divisions that separate human beings from one another will go away.

Of course, we cannot do everything. But each of us can pray for the grace to be a more effective witness to Jesus Christ and His way. Remember in the early Church, before we were called Christians, we were called “Followers of the Way.” There is a better way to live in the world. There is a better way to interact with people. THE WAY is Jesus Christ! Are we ready for the challenge? Peace and all good!

God bless,
Michael

Holy Family, Peoria



*Basilica of
Saint Josaphat*



*Unto us
a Son is given*

Marytown



*St. Thomas of
Canterbury*



St. Gregory



And His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor

St. Ita



The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father



*St. Francis
Friary at
St. Ita*



The Prince of Peace

*Celebrating Our Lady of
Guadalupe and Simbang
Gabi at St. Ita*



Tarciscius in Assisi





Paul Langevin visited Anthony Labeledis who is in hospice care at the Little Sisters of the Poor.



Brother Louis from Dingley friary, Melbourne, is seen here at the weekly meeting of The Confraternity of St Michael. This is a youth group of nearly 80 young people who meet for faith and formation. Brother Louis is the group's spiritual facilitator. It is wonderful to see so many young people taking an active interest in their faith.



Our Minister General wearing a St. Bonaventure facemask



Bishop Mark Bartosic takes a turn stirring the pot at the St. Thomas of Canterbury soup kitchen.

A snowy day at Marytown



Alejandro Lopez and his Star Wars collection was published in Catholic Outlook. Here is the link: <https://catholicoutlook.org/kellyvilles-fr-alejandro-showcases-star-wars-collection/>

Kellyville Friars Remember Fr. Emmanuel Gatt

The friars of the Australian Delegation of Our Lady Help of Christians were shocked and deeply saddened by news of the sudden death of Fr. Emmanuel Gatt, a friar of the Maltese Province who had ministered in Australia for most of his Religious life, forty years, before retiring back to his home country only a few years ago. Fr. Emmanuel will be fondly remembered and greatly missed.

The friars of the Mt. St. Francis community, together with the parishioners of Our Lady of the Rosary Parish in Kellyville held a memorial Mass to remember their confrere and former parish priest. The Mass was well attended (following the 'COVID Safe' plan), particularly by the Maltese community and longtime friends of the friars. Fr. Alejandro Lopez, Parish Priest, was the main celebrant, with Fr. Tony Fox preaching a very touching and heartfelt homily reflecting on the witness of Fr. Emmanuel and the profound impact he had on many lives through his ministry and personal relationships.



Upcoming Events

**Come & See
Weekend**

February 19 - 21, 2021, St. Bonaventure Friary, Chicago

Dates for Ordinary Provincial Chapter (2022), Marytown

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

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



St. Bonaventure
Painting by Alvise Vivarini (1442-1505)
McNay Art Museum
San Antonio, Texas

We must suspend all operations of the mind and we must transform the peak of our affections, directing them to God alone. This is a sacred experience.

It cannot be comprehended by anyone unless he surrenders himself to it; nor can he surrender himself to it unless he longs for it; nor can he long for it unless the Holy Spirit, whom Christ sent into the world, should come and inflame his innermost soul. Hence, the Apostle says this mystical wisdom is revealed by the Holy Spirit.

If you ask how such things can occur, seek the answer in God's grace, not in doctrine; in the longing of the will, not in the understanding; in the sighs of prayer, not in research; seek the bridegroom not the teacher; God and not man; darkness not daylight; and look not to the light but rather to the raging fire that carries the soul to God with intense fervour and glowing love.

St. Bonaventure