



# the Seraph

News and Notables of  
St. Bonaventure  
Province

Issue #1 2022

## A WORD FROM OUR PROVINCIAL

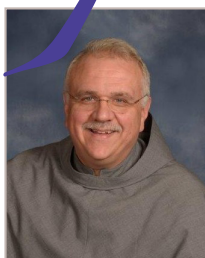
Dear Friars,

Praised be Jesus Christ!

I hope and pray that all are well and still enjoying a bit of the Christmas peace and joy, even though we have begun the grind of Ordinary Time until Ash Wednesday.

For Advent and the Christmas Season, I was reading a daily meditation titled: **God with Us, Rediscovering the Meaning of Christmas**, edited by Greg Pennoyer and Gregory Wolfe. The meditation for Christmas Day reads:

*On this day, the full dimension of our relationship with God is revealed and we become, through Christ, God's children. Because God took on human flesh, human flesh is made holy. Even lowly and dusty feet, if they carry God's message, are beauti-*



*ful. This is the glory and the scandal of the feast we celebrate today. Things that we would prefer to keep separate – the holy and the profane – have come together, in a cold and smelly stable. The God of Ages is warmed by the breath of cattle, and by His mother's arms.*

My brothers, when we stop to take time and reflect and meditate on the Birth of Jesus Christ, it is scandalous that God would become like His creatures – all because of love. The mystery of Jesus' birth can only be explained in terms of love: unconditional, undeserving, lavishly thrown down from heaven for all people, poured out upon believer and unbeliever alike. And what is even more scandalous is that this Divine Love can be accepted or rejected by the creatures, men and women. God has come to save!

My brothers, if we only would begin to comprehend the love that God has for His people, fear would disappear, hate would be read about only in history books, all the -isms would be things of the past. No one would

*Continued on Page 2*



Angel, Saint Josaphat  
Basilica; Kenyan  
Nativity Set,  
St. Francis of Assisi  
Friary



Continued from Page 1

go hungry and thirsty, lack proper housing, be poor, sad, lonely, or afraid. Love, Divine Love, can truly transform and change what seems to be impossible and unmovable!

Didn't our founder, St. Francis of Assisi, begin to comprehend this Divine Love that was first shown at the birth of Jesus? Wasn't this Love calling St. Francis from the Cross *"to go repair my Church, for you see it is falling into ruin..."*? Why was St. Francis given the marks of Jesus' passion two years before he died? My brothers, St. Francis not only comprehended this Divine Love he made it his love throughout his life! He kept the struggle of faith alive in his very being, to the point that he, like St. Paul, could say: *"I no longer live, it is Christ living in me."*

My brothers, look what is possible when we lose ourselves in Divine Love. Before St. Francis had his conversion, he was a party animal. He had so many friends because he paid for everyone's good time! As the old song goes, St. Francis was *"looking for love in all the wrong places."* Once his conversion happened, St. Francis not only found True Love – he let Love rule his very mind, heart, soul and body. He lost himself in Love.

My brothers, as we prepare to celebrate our Ordinary Provincial Chapter in a few months, we will examine again our way of life, ministries, apostolates, and ways of walking in the footsteps of St. Francis in today's world. Imagine if the Divine Love that leapt down from heaven on that first Christmas morning was our driving force in all our decisions as we gather in Chapter...

Am I too idealistic? Am I still drinking the spiked egg nog left from Christmas? What could we do as a Province if we lose ourselves in Divine Love?

God bless,  
Michael



Left: St. Gregory  
Below: Angel from  
Basilica of St. Josaphat;  
All Saints, Dearborn  
Bottom: St. Thomas of  
Canterbury



# *Friar Bede Thigpen*



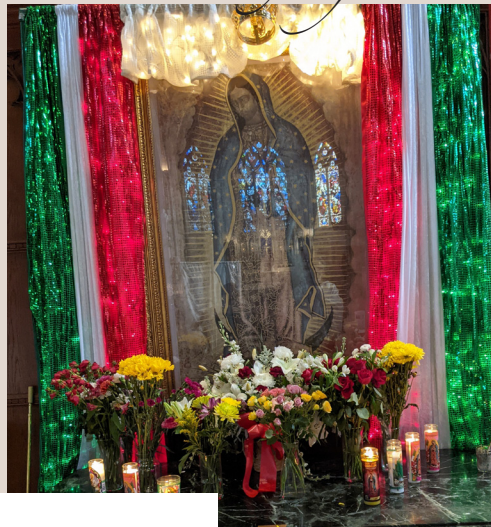
*Ordained a  
Deacon  
January 15th*

# Celebrating

# Our Lady of Guadalupe



Fr. Romert Morales celebrated the 6:00 am Mass at St. Ita.



Friars with Filipino community for Simbangabi

# Simbangabi



For the Feast of St Thomas of Canterbury, we celebrated renovations to the church as well as blessed a new image of Saint Thomas created by artist Joseph Malham

# St. Thomas of Canterbury

# Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God



On the solemnity of Mary Mother of God, parish patroness, Bishop Bartosic came to the church to rededicate the altar, into which had been placed the relics of the three parish patrons (Ita, Thomas of Canterbury, Gregory the Great), as well as relics of St Francis, Anthony, and Bonaventure.

# Marching for Life



*Christmas*

*Celebrations*



*Basilica of St. Josaphat*



*St. Patrick, Minonk*

*St. Mary, Wenona*





*Marytown*





*St. Gregory*



*St. Thomas of Canterbury*



*St. Ita*



Photo by Ruth Durkin



# Renovating



All four Churches in rural Illinois have been renovated and continue to have more work done.

St. Patrick's in Minonk is having new flooring installed in the Sanctuary, down the Center aisle, across the front of the Church, and in the Sacristy. St. John's in Lostatant is taking out the concrete step in the old Sanctuary thus making the entire church one level as well as putting in new flooring and new chairs. St. Ann's in Toluca just finished its new handicapped entrance and will be installing new doors and a new entrance to the church. St. Ann's won first prize for Christmas decorations in Toluca!! The fields may be fallow but something is always going on. Photo is of St. Ann's new entrance.



Renovation Update for Our Lady of the Rosary Kellyville, Australia: Rain continued to dampen our efforts but the construction crews did what they could during the dry spots. Plumbers are setting up pipes to support the water in the new onsite toilets. Steel workers came to lay out one layer of steel mesh. Surveyors came out to make sure all was ready for what came next, weather permitting. God was with us and Our Lady kept the rain away for a few days along our site to dry. The concrete slab was poured on December 16, 2021. The workers have been on break until mid-January when the work begins anew. With weather continuing to be wet and humid, we pray for dryer days.

# Epiphany



## What has been happening through the Vocation Pipeline

From July 2nd until January 1st there have been men visiting each of the *Come & See* events.

In the days of July 1-3, we had the “Welcoming” of the new postulants. Matt from WI., Ross from TN (originally from IL.) and James from MI. attended and stayed at Marytown. This gave them a chance to see what happens when new members enter.



The Feast of St. Francis (October 2-4) also took place at Marytown where we had two James' attend. I nicknamed them James the greater and the lesser. James M. is from MI. He also was as at the Welcoming ceremony in July. He was so impressed by it that he came back for a repeat to see how the Postulants

were doing. James C. is from IL. He happened to have just graduated high School. One of the mothers of our servers at Marytown had told James the lesser about our *Come & Sees*, so he contacted me and I invited him.

Later in October, 22-24, there was another *Come & See*. Peter from WI. and Chris from TN. attended that weekend. This took place at the Postulant House. It was a time of just hanging out with the postulants, asking them questions, helping with chores, praying with them and sharing vocation stories.



December 3-6 was a special visit

offered to Ross from TN. He attended on these dates at the Postulant House because he was not able to attend any of the other *Come & See* (C&S) dates. This time gave him a chance to meet with the postulants, hear some talks and teachings that the postulants were given from Fr. Benedict La Volpe and Fr. Paul Schneider.

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Our last C&S of the year is more like a retreat since it is six days long; December 27th until January 1st. Two men joined us. Valetin from KS. and Daniel living in North Dakota, raised in Ohio, and has family in Illinois. He is kind of all over the board. This



C&S took place at Marytown. I kept them very busy as we traveled to many different friaries and parishes in the outlying vicinity. Each day was a new adventure.

On the second day of the C&S retreat, we headed to Rockford where our guests were regaled by Fr. Jim Ciaramitaro's history of St. Anthony's parish and that of the friars who have been assigned there. We then all went to Stone Eagle restaurant for a late lunch/early dinner.

The next day was a trip to St. Ita and St. Thomas of Canterbury. Fr.'s Bob, Robert, Simon and Thomas met with these guests. History of the parishes were told, evening prayer was prayed, food was served and eaten in our common community fashion. Lastly, the night ended with the celebration of Mass at St. Thomas of Canterbury for his feast.



On the following day, we returned to Chicago to visit Fr. Paul Schnieder, the Postulant Director. He took care of our guests and explained the postulant program while I joined Brothers Jim Dufresne and Thomas Hercegovics to count the votes in the election for a new provincial. After the votes were counted, both Br. Jim and Br. Tom offered their time to talk to our guests about the role of the brother and the experiences of their vocations. Then we all had lunch. After lunch, Fr. Jude Winkler was there from Rome. He was available to talk about what it is to be a missionary.



The final day of traveling led us to St. Josaphat Basilica. Fr. Chris and Fr. Lawrence met us and gave our guests an inspirational tour of the basilica. Our guests eyes were opened very wide with the history, heights and depth of St. Josaphat's. We ended that tour with a lunch at Final Approach.

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In between all these visits at any given C&S date, the friars who were available, talked with the guests by either describing their ministries, giving short classes or vocation talks. Fr. Benedict, Br. Augustine, Br. Ayub, Br. Tarcisius, Br. Charles and Fr. Arturo filled in the gaps by talking about the province history, how it feels coming from another culture to the U.S. and the different areas of formation.

With all these places our guests attended or stayed at, from the new postulants to the oldest friar, I say thank you for being open, friendly, cordial, genuine and inviting to these guests. The mission of vocation work falls to each of us, and the way I have been trying to sell our community



and our way of life if you will, is to show guests who we are, in our environment as we live, and how we interact with each other. If we do not show them the authentic side of ourselves, those who visit would eventually see it as a false facade.



At the time of this newsletter, we have two who are filling out an application to join the province of St. Bonaventure next July: James Muzzy, MI., age 35 and Ross Caruso, TN. via IL., age 40. Please keep them in prayer and keep inviting those young men who are discerning our Franciscan Community.

Our last *Come & See* for the season will be February 18-22 and will take place at the Postulant House in Chicago. If you know someone who is interested, please have them contact me.

## Upcoming Events

**Come & See  
Weekend**

**February 19 - 21, 2022, St. Bonaventure Friary, Chicago**

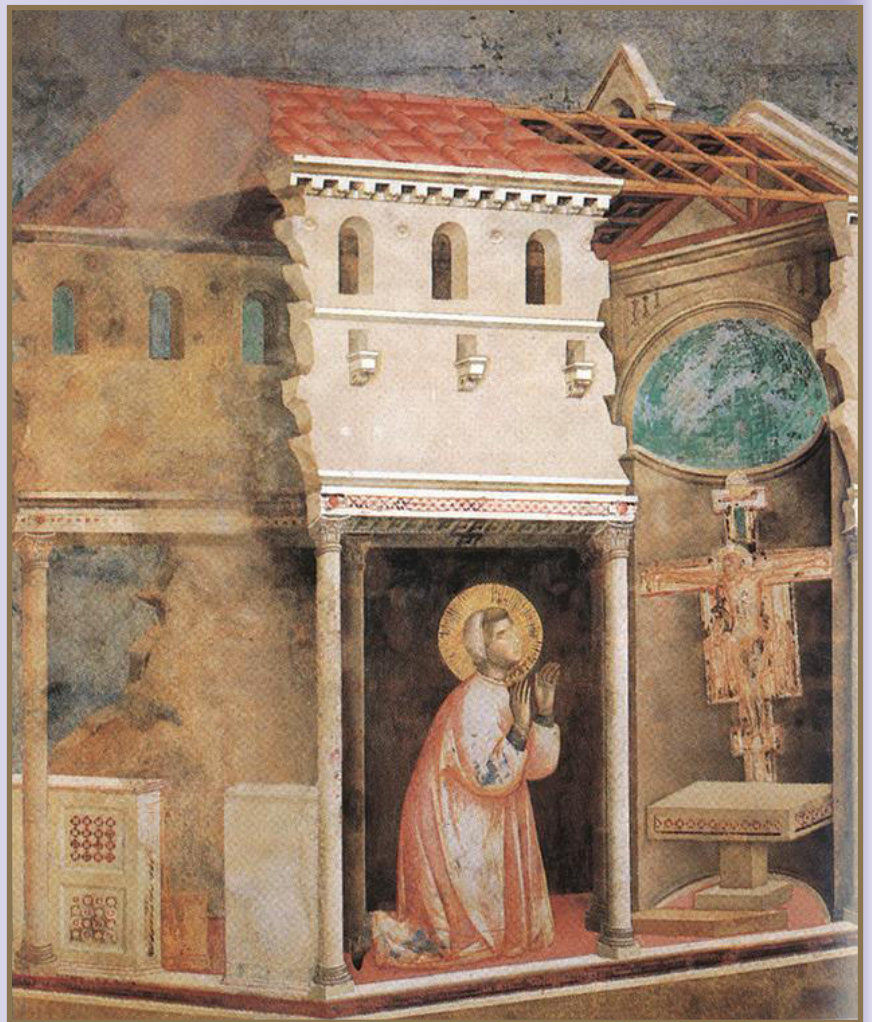
**Dates for Ordinary Provincial Chapter (2022), Marytown**

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

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

Kneeling before an image of the Crucified, he was filled with great fervor and consolation as he prayed. While his tear-filled eyes were gazing at the Lord's cross, he heard with his bodily ears a voice coming from the cross, telling him three times: *'Francis, go and repair my house which, as you see, is falling into ruin.'*

Trembling with fear, Francis was amazed at the sound of this astonishing voice, since he was alone in the church; and as he received in his heart the power of the divine words, he fell into a state of ecstasy. Returning finally to his senses, he prepared to put his whole heart into obeying the command he had received. He began zealously to repair the church materially, although the principal intention of the words referred to that Church which Christ purchased with his own blood, as the Holy Spirit afterward made him realize...



Life of Francis  
St. Bonaventure