



SUMMER 2025

THE SERAPH

Newsletter of St. Bonaventure Province

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203rd Ordinary General Chapter
(Rome, Italy)



FROM OUR PROVINCIAL

**Fr. Paul Joseph
Langevin, OFM Conv.**

***Greetings and
peace to you!***

Having recently participated in the 203rd Ordinary General Chapter of our Order, it was certainly a privileged moment in the history of our community to be gathered with so many of the brothers from around the world and to experience the charism of our Franciscan fraternity being rediscovered and renewed. While addressing the many proposed motions often elicited spirited dialogue and passionate rhetoric, nonetheless, this was further evidence that the Holy Spirit was enlivening the direction we should move into the future.

"Hope: Writing the Future in the Present" was the report given by our newly re-elected Minister General, Carlos Trovarelli, OFM Conv. In it he warned against allowing the situations we must face in the present, like the COVID pandemic, ongoing wars, and the worrying situation of migration, climate change, and scandals in the Church, to become a denial of a hopeful future. He noted, *"Authentic hope takes shape between the lived present and the imagined future, without forgetting the uncertainties that exist, and the patience required to move forward."*

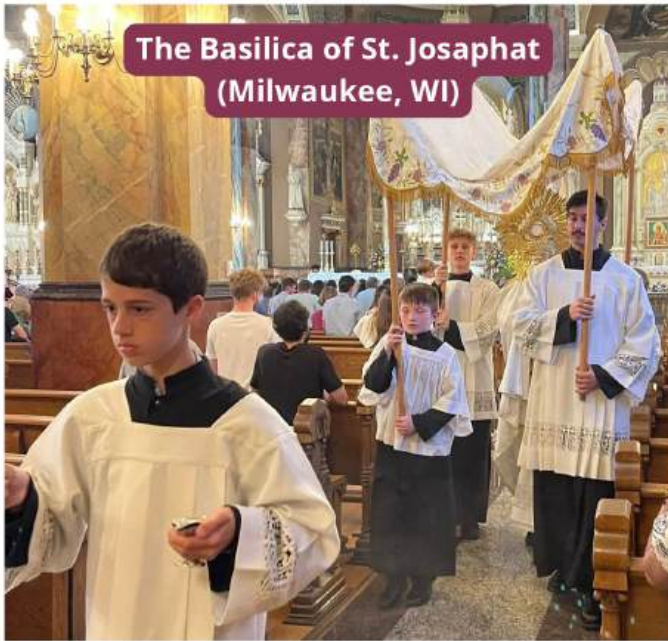
He emphasized that hope cannot exist apart from relationships; it is embodied in the faces we meet and the situations in which we find ourselves along the journey of our life in Christ. It is the virtue that challenges false hopes of a world tainted by individualism and guides the heart toward a trusting openness to others and a sense of personal responsibility.

This message was re-emphasized during our audience with Pope Leo XIV during which he reminded us, *"It is not our personal interest that should move us, but that of Christ; it is his Spirit that we must listen to, first and foremost, in order to write the future in the present."* He encouraged us all to listen to the Spirit in the voice of each other, in the discernment of our community, in attentiveness to the signs of the times, and in the appeals of the Magisterium.

As we continue our journey through this Jubilee Year as Pilgrims of Hope may each of us find greater hope in Jesus Christ and then share that hope with the world.

Peace and all good!

CORPUS CHRISTI AROUND THE PROVINCE



The Basilica of St. Josaphat
(Milwaukee, WI)



St. Anselm's Parish (Dearborn Heights, MI)



National Shrine of St. Maximilian Kolbe (Marytown, IL)



St. Mary's Parish (Algoma, WI)



Mary, Mother of God Parish (Chicago, IL)



The beautiful peonies are in full bloom at Marytown!

FROM THE MISSION ADVANCEMENT OFFICE

Introducing the Canticle of Creatures Society: A New Way to Walk in Faith

As we joyfully commemorate the 800th anniversary of the *Canticle of the Creatures*, the beloved prayer of St. Francis of Assisi, the Mission Advancement team is proud to announce the launch of the **Canticle of Creatures Society**—a new monthly giving society that invites you to walk more closely with us in faith, service, and fraternity.

In his *Canticle*, St. Francis praised God for the beauty and unity of all creation, reminding us that we are all bound together as *brother* and *sister*—a single family under God's loving care. This vision of sacred relationship continues to guide our Franciscan way of life and inspires our ministry to the poor, the marginalized, and all creation.

The Canticle of Creatures Society honors this spiritual legacy by welcoming monthly donors whose ongoing support reflects that same spirit of love, commitment, and connection. As a monthly donor, you help sustain the life and work of our friars—whether in educating future friars or supporting our infirmed and retired friars.

Your monthly gift, no matter the amount, is a powerful expression of your faith. It says: We are one family. We are walking this journey

together. *We are building a future rooted in simplicity, love of the Eucharist, and devotion to the Virgin Mother.*

We invite you to become a founding member of the **Canticle of Creatures Society** and join us in living out the timeless message of St. Francis—one of joy, peace, and fraternity. Thank you for being a vital part of our Franciscan family.

To learn more or to enroll, please contact Jennifer Georgis, Director of Mission Advancement, at 773-274-7681 ext. 253 or MissionAdvancement@FranciscanCommunity.org.

Coming Soon: The Mission Advancement office is planning a one-day pilgrimage to Marytown and the Basilica of St. Josaphat. Come see the friars in action and learn more about the Province's apostolates. The date is TDB but will likely be on a Saturday sometime this Fall.



WELCOMING THE 2025-26 POSTULANT CLASS

Rite of Beginning Fraternity

On July 5, friars gathered from around the United States at St. Bonaventure Friary (the House of Studies) to officially welcome the new class of Postulants. The 'Rite of Beginning Fraternity' was held within the context of Evening Prayer (Vespers) with Fr. Michael Heine, OFM Conv., the Minister Provincial of the Province of Our Lady of the Angels, presiding. This year's cohort is comprised of nine men from around the United States and beyond – including three from our Province!



The excitement and significance of the occasion was palpable. Fr. Michael concluded his address saying, *"In a few moments you will be receiving the San Damiano cross. St. Francis embraced the cross [as] his personal emblem symbolizing repentance and conversion. As you put on this cross tonight and every day may you be committed to conversion, humility, reform, simplicity and your own commitment to living the Gospel way of life."*



Representatives from the four provinces came forward to invest each of the respective Postulants with the San Damiano Crucifix. Then all friars were invited to come forward to congratulate the Postulants. A special blessing was also prayed over the two formators, Friars Paul Mary Schneider and Ian Bremar.

Then on July 16, the local community officially welcomed another man into the Postulancy Program for the Order of Friars Minor Conventual. The newest Postulant is from the Provincial Delegation of Canada (OLA Province) and was delayed due to the visa process. He is settling in well with his classmates and is excited to begin this deeper period of discernment.

Finally, we prayerfully await one last Postulant to join us from the UK who is also delayed due to the visa process.

Please keep these nine Postulants in your prayers as they undertake this year of formation and growth in their understanding and appreciation for the Franciscan life.



INVESTITURE OF THE NEW NOVICES

Rite of Investiture

We give thanks to Almighty God for the Investiture of five new Novices for our Order in the United States! On July 12, at the St. Francis of Assisi Novitiate in Arroyo Grande, California, friars from around the United States gathered to celebrate the Investiture of five men in the habit of the Order of Friars Minor Conventual.

Fr. Martin Day, OFM Conv., Minister Provincial of the Province of Our Lady of Consolation, presided over the Rite of Investiture which occurred within the context of Vespers (Evening Prayer). At the beginning of the ceremony, the men were called forward; Daniel Paul Devera (OLC), George Harris (SB), Matthew Flaherty (OLC), Tristen Paraiso (OLA), and Kole Resler (OLA). Fr. Martin questioned the men about their intentions and their willingness to live the Gospel Life, to which they wholeheartedly agreed.

The psalms were prayed, and three readings were read. Fr. Martin reflected beautifully on the need to be open to the voice of the Lord and how we as friars receive formation from a variety of places and in a variety of ways—not only from our designated formators, but also from our peers, and especially from the friars who have come before us.

The new Franciscan habits were blessed, and then each respective Ministers Provincial came forward to invest his Novices.

Cole, George, Matthew, Tristen, and Paul were officially entrusted to their Directors, Frs. Jim Ciaramitaro and Tony Vattaparambil, as the assembled friars interceded for them and their ministry as Formators. Prayer continued with the praying of the Cantic of Mary, intercessions, and a concluding prayer and blessing. After photographs, all the friars enjoyed a delicious cookout.

Please keep these five Novices in your prayers as they undertake this year-and-a-day of probation and deeper formation in the Franciscan life.

Before they were invested, we interviewed each of the incoming Novices and asked them to share their thoughts on discernment and their time during postulancy. Watch the videos by scanning the QR code or following the link to visit the Province's website: franciscancommunity.org/news



SIMPLE PROFESSION OF VOWS

Friar James Carlo Muzzey

On July 15, the Feast of our Province's Patron, St. Bonaventure, friars gathered to witness the Simple Profession of our brother, Friar James Carlo Muzzey, who completed his canonical period of probation as a Novice. Friar James (taking the Religious Name 'Carlo,' after soon-to-be-Saint Carlo Acutis) was blessed to have his parents and a close friend present.

After the Psalms were prayed and the Reading read, the Minister Provincial of the Province of St. Bonaventure, Fr. Paul Joseph Langevin, OFM Conv., preached a beautiful ferverino reflecting that in order for us friars to truly live the Vows we have to acknowledge that it is only possible if we fully cooperate with Christ's work of salvation and rely on the intercession of Mary Immaculate. We, like Mary, "magnify the Lord" by living out our Vows faithfully, and are called to keep the Word alive in our hearts.

Friar James Carlo was then called forth to be questioned about his intentions regarding the living of the religious profession and his desire to conform himself to Christ by his adherence to the Evangelical Counsels (Chastity, Poverty, and Obedience); to each question he wholeheartedly agreed. Kneeling and placing his hands into those of the Minister Provincial, Friar James Carlo professed his three vows. He was then invested with the knotted cord and the Franciscan Rule and Constitutions of the Order of Friars Minor Conventual.

They then approached the altar, where Friar James Carlo signed the Book of Profession. All the Professed friars present then came forward to wish Friar James Carlo their congratulations. To signify his membership in the fraternity, Friar James Carlo came to sit with the friars, symbolically "leaving mother and father behind" to follow Christ.

Solemn Vespers concluded with the chanting of the Magnificat, Intercessions, and the chanting of the Our Father. Following the final prayer and blessing, all present sang the Salve Regina in honor of Our Blessed Mother, entrusting our brother Friar James Carlo to her maternal care and protection.

Afterwards, the Marytown community provided a delicious spread for dinner and dessert. A great time of fraternity was enjoyed by all. We ask everyone to continue to pray for Friar James Carlo as he will soon begin his studies for the priesthood at the House of Formation in San Antonio, TX, in the coming weeks.



NEWS FROM THE APOSTOLATES

ST. ANSELM PARISH (DEARBORN HEIGHTS, MI)

Revitalization of the Sacramental Life

St. Anselm is the newest of the parishes the friars have taken on within the Province. The parishioners are happy to have a Franciscan pastor and like seeing how the friars work together as a community to help each other within our family of parishes. This summer there have been several baptisms, and one wedding—with another scheduled for October. These are the first weddings since before the COVID-19 Pandemic!

For Corpus Christi, a large number of parishioners joined in song and prayer during the procession. Fr. Hans Flondor, OFM Conv., was told the parish had never had a Eucharistic Procession before and everyone thought it was great. The friars have also instated regular penance services and weekly Reconciliation times on Saturday. Daily Masses are celebrated in the morning and some in the evening to try and meet the needs of the parishioners.



Additionally, the parish school will have a new principal this year, and efforts are underway to promote the school and increase enrollment. Please pray for the friars, parishioners and staff as we infuse our Franciscan charism in the life of St. Anselm Parish and School.

NATIONAL SHRINE OF ST. MAXIMILIAN KOLBE (MARYTOWN, IL)

Master Tailors at Work

The Br. Augustine and his student Fr. Boniface were busy at work in their studio this summer. They made habits for the five incoming novices who were invested with the Franciscan habit on July 12 at the Conventual Franciscan Novitiate in California! The novices come from around the country and are beginning their second stage of formation.

Continued Improvements

New copper gutters and downspouts were installed on the retreat house. We thank all who support Marytown through their prayers and donations, which make these improvements possible!



BASILICA OF ST. JOSAPHAT (MILWAUKEE, WI)

Mass of Thanksgiving for Pope Leo XIV

The Basilica's Mass of Thanksgiving for Pope Leo XIV was a moving and intimate celebration. Afterward, Bishop Dan Turley, OSA, fellow Augustinian and long-time friend of the Pope, shared heartfelt stories from their mission work in Peru—offering a beautiful glimpse into the Pope's early years, deep compassion, and enduring friendships.

One especially touching moment: Bishop Turley recalled how then-Father Prevost gave him a watch—possibly his father's—when his own had broken. A small act, rich in meaning. It was an evening of reflection and gratitude—a powerful reminder of how personal connection and shared mission can shape a life of service.



Celebrando el trabajo duro (Celebrating Hard Work)

Since the Basilica began a monthly Spanish Mass for our school families, attendance has grown to over 100 people! The committee who makes this Mass possible gathered for a celebration in the Parish Center.



The Basilica is Getting a Check-up!

On July 3, neighbors could spot a lift and some very focused folks examining the Basilica's exterior. It was a structural engineer and masonry restoration expert doing a full check-up on our beautiful building!

The St. Josaphat Basilica Foundation has them assessing the stonework to see what needs fixing, where we might need a bit of protective netting, and helping us plan for future repairs and restoration. So, if you see netting go up in the coming weeks, it's all part of keeping things safe and sturdy!



MARY, MOTHER OF GOD PARISH (CHICAGO, IL)

Lessons from Vietnam: Reflection by Fr. Thomas Fetz, OFM Conv.

This spring, I visited Vietnam to study the language. The experience was beautiful, and I greatly desire to return. One thing that I have found consistently in trips to other countries is that there is so much more to learn than the language. Here are some things I learned in my journey:



FRATERNITY

Vietnamese culture is extremely communal and familial. The friars spend a lot of time together and happily welcome outsiders. Their approach to fraternity taught me how to be willing to make sacrifices for the community and for visitors.

CULTURE

Vietnam has a deep and distinct cultural heritage. I particularly enjoyed their sacred music and chant, which differs from English because of the tonality of the language. Naturally, there were plenty of delicious and unusual foods—blood, insects, reptiles, and just about every interior organ were all on the menu!

LANGUAGE

The express reason for my trip was learning the language. I find Vietnamese several times tougher than Spanish, so I had to work very hard. It was easy to get confused; the friars

laughed at me because I kept confusing the word for city ("thành phố") and bathroom ("phòng tắm")! However, I did make progress; by the time I left, I was preaching in Viet every other day. I still have a long way to go, but I can at least function in the liturgy!



Ciao from Rome!

For the month of June, Fr. Alejandro Lopez, OFM Conv. was in Rome hearing confessions at the Vatican. Because of the Jubilee Year, priests are especially needed to hear confessions in Spanish. Fr. Thomas Fetz, OFM Conv. will fulfill the same assignment during August.

The Conventual Franciscan Friars have been the official confessors in St. Peter's Basilica for over 250 years. The friars reside within Vatican City and undertake intense training to be able to administer the Sacrament of Penance to the countless pilgrims to St. Peter's.



FOUR SAINTS CATHOLIC CHURCHES (CENTRAL ILLINOIS)



St. Patrick's New Roof

Earlier this Spring, the entire roof of St. Patrick's Church in Minonk, IL was replaced. Now we are finishing the final renovation project of the church after several years of renovating the ceiling. Finished pictures will come in the next issue of *The Seraph!*



St. John's Becomes an Oratory

The restructuring of the Diocese of Peoria has sparked innovative thinking. St. John the Baptist Church in Lostant, IL has now become an Oratory, a place set aside by ecclesiastical authority for prayer and the celebration of Mass.

The building is open daily for individual and small group prayer with a lounge, conference room, and spaces for private prayer. On July 24, Fr. Patrick Greenough, OFM Conv. offered a Day of Prayer in the space. Devotion to the Holy Face of Jesus as practiced by St. Thérèse (the Little Flower) is beginning to draw in people as well as the mural of the desert in which John the Baptist lived and prayed.



Renovating the Friary

In addition to new landscaping outside of the church building and the parish hall, the friary of St. Ann's Church in Toluca, IL has undergone many changes. There is a brand-new garage, driveway, and front steps to the house. The inside has been freshened up with new coats of paint and the kitchen and laundry room have been modernized as well.



Tastes of Summer was a Success!

In July, Mary, Mother of God Parish had their summer fundraiser. Many different international groups came together to help, and each booth featured homemade, traditional food. Best of all, the day brought everyone from across all three churches together as one community.

UPCOMING EVENTS

CFF 800TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CANTICLE OF CREATURES RETREATS

September 1-6, 2025 in Santa Cruz, California

October 26-31, 2025 in Mesilla Park, New Mexico

AUGUST 26-28 — DELEGATION ASSEMBLY IN AUSTRALIA

SEPTEMBER 14-15 — SOLEMN PROFESSION OF VOWS AND PROVINCE ASSEMBLY

SEPTEMBER 26-28 — 'COME & SEE' WEEKEND AT THE HOUSE OF STUDIES

SEPTEMBER 16 & NOVEMBER 11 — DEFINITORY MEETING

OCTOBER 11 — BASILICA GALA: HERITAGE IN HOPE

OCTOBER 14-24 — PILGRIMAGE: IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ST. PAUL (GREEK ISLES)

NOVEMBER — PROVINCIAL ELECTION BEGINS

NOVEMBER 7-9 — 'COME & SEE' WEEKEND AT THE HOUSE OF STUDIES

DECEMBER 5-7 — 'COME & SEE' WEEKEND AT MARYTOWN



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