



PROVINCIAL CHAPTER 2026

THE SERAPH

Newsletter of St. Bonaventure Province

SPECIAL EDITION

A TIME FOR REFLECTION, RECOMITTMENT, & RENEWAL

Every four years, the Solemnly Professed members of the Province are required to come together, over two week-long parts, to look back over the past quadrenium, elect leadership, and set goals for the next term. Though sessions can be long, and sometimes lively, it is a great time to reflect honestly, share quality fraternity, and prayerfully discern the future together.



Provincial Chapter Prt1. Group Photo inc. Postulants and visiting Friars (Marytown, Libertyville IL)

ST. BONAVENTURE PROVINCIAL CHAPTER PART ONE, APRIL 27 - MAY 1, 2026

Over the week of April 27 - May 1, 2026, the Solemnly Professed Friars of the St. Bonaventure Province in the United States (Midwest) met at the National Shrine of St. Maximilian Kolbe ('Marytown,' Libertyville IL) to hold Part One of their Provincial Chapter which occurs every four years. They were joined by the successor of St. Francis of Assisi, 120th Minister General of the Franciscan Order, Fr. Carlos Trovarelli, and Assistant General for the CFF, Br. Joseph Wood (who is also a member of SB Province).

Forty 'Capitulars' were able to participate in this First part of Chapter. After beginning with a Mass invoking the Holy Spirit, Friars and professionals from various commissions and ministry sites presented reports and answered questions from those gathered. There was also ample time to split into smaller discussion groups rotating around the room to address various key topics and share openly with one another in an air of brotherhood and earnest self-reflection. The feedback from these discussions were synthesized and will be used by the Definitory to compose a draft 'Four-Year-Plan' which will be presented at the Second Part of Chapter in July.

PHOTOS FROM SB PROVINCIAL CHAPTER PRT.1

Opening Chapter Mass of the Holy Spirit with Minister General, Fr. Carlos Trovarelli



Sessions were held in the Immaculata Conference Hall



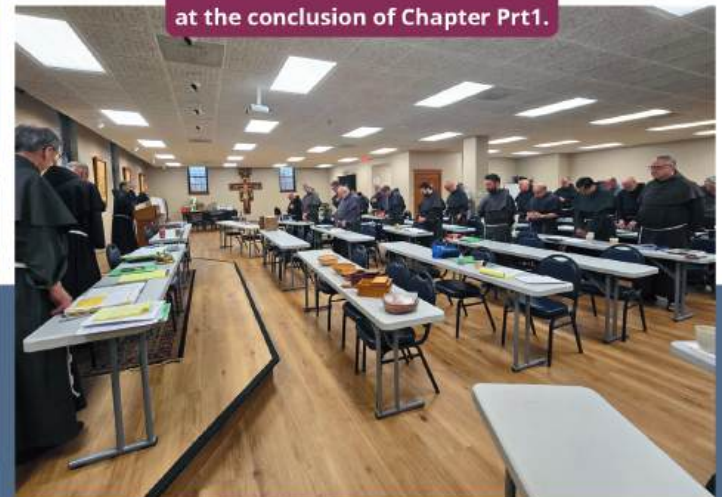
Br. Joseph (Assistant General, CFF), Fr. Carlos (Minister General) & Br. Bernard Mary (Chapter Secretary)



Friars participated in fruitful group sharing and discussion



Friars receive Fr. Carlos' blessing at the conclusion of Chapter PRT1.



ELECTION OF THE NEW PROVINCIAL DEFINITORY

MINISTER PROVINCIAL OATH OF OFFICE

As has been the usual procedure in St. Bonaventure Province, the Solemnly Professed Friars voted for the Minister Provincial by postal ballot prior to the Chapter. Votes were counted on December 2, 2025, and Fr. Paul Joseph Langevin was re-elected on the first ballot. At Part One of Chapter, Fr. Paul Joseph made his Profession of Faith and Oath of Office into the hands of Fr. Carlos Trovarelli, Minister General, in the presence of the Capitulars assembled. After Fr. Carlos addressed the Friars, Fr. Paul Joseph then shared his own words, encouraging the Friars and rededicating himself to their service. The Friars came forward one-by-one to give their obedience to the Minister Provincial and to offer him congratulations and well wishes. This is Fr. Paul Joseph's Second and last Term as Provincial and he will lead the Province for the next four years.



Fr. Paul Joseph Langevin makes his Oath of Office into the hands of the Minister General



Friars come forward to give Obedience to the Minister Provincial and offer congratulations

VICAR PROVINCIAL & DEFINITORY

On Thursday, April 30, the Chapter Capitulars met to vote on the Definitory (Council) of the Province. All names were individually proposed by the Minister Provincial, Fr. Paul Joseph, and Friars voted on each by written ballot; those elected to serve as members of the Province Definitory are Fr. Paul Mary Schneider, Br. Bernard Mary Fonkalsrud, Br. Augustine Kelly, Fr. Alejandro Lopez, and Fr. Robert Mary Cook. From the elected Definitory, two names were proposed by the Provincial for the offices of Vicar Provincial and Provincial Secretary; Fr. Paul Mary was elected to serve as Vicar Provincial and Br. Bernard Mary as Provincial Secretary. Fr. Thomas Fetz was proposed and elected to serve as Province Treasurer. Later that day, during Vespers, the members of the Definitory were sworn in and the Vicar Provincial made his Profession of Faith and Oath of Office into the hands of the Minister Provincial.



Fr. Paul Mary Schneider elected as Vicar Provincial



Br. Bernard Mary Fonkalsrud
Definitory & Provincial Secretary



Br. Augustine Kelly, Definitory



Fr. Alejandro Lopez, Definitory



Fr. Robert Mary Cook, Definitory

LITURGIES & CELEBRATING JUBILARIANS

Throughout the week of Provincial Chapter, the Friars maintained a routine of praying the Liturgy of the Hours in common and celebrating solemn liturgies. Friars were assigned to various liturgical roles which helped to give variety and offer opportunities for involvement. During one of the Masses, on Thursday, April 30, Friars celebrating significant Jubilees were recognized; in particular, the Province gave special acknowledgement to Br. Martin Schmitz who celebrates his ninety-sixth birthday and seventy-fifth anniversary of Religious Profession. There was a wonderful air of joy and fraternity as Friars and friends gathered in the refectory, following the Mass, to share in a delicious meal prepared by the Marytown staff and to show our love and appreciation for all the men who have dedicated so many years to the service of God, Our Lady, and the Church. Br. Martin made the most of the visit to Marytown (he resides at St. Joseph Home with the Little Sisters of the Poor) to stop in at the gift store and enjoy the heritage area where younger photos of him can be found.



PART TWO OF ST. BONAVENTURE PROVINCIAL CHAPTER WILL BE HELD AT MARYTOWN, JULY 20-24, 2026



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