



SUMMER 2026

THE SERAPH

Newsletter of St. Bonaventure Province

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A Springtime of Vocations in the Province



FROM OUR PROVINCIAL

Fr. Paul Joseph

Greetings and peace to all!

One of the greatest blessings of serving as Minister Provincial is witnessing the many ways God continues to bless our Conventual Franciscan family—and sharing that joy with you. Through your faithful prayers and generous support, you are an important part of all that God is doing in our Province.

Our solemnly professed friars recently concluded our 27th Ordinary Provincial Chapter, a time of prayer, discernment, and fraternity. Together we reflected on where the Holy Spirit is leading us and how we can best serve the Church in the years ahead. The Chapter included new assignments for several of our friars. We are grateful for the friars from Provinces around the world who have served alongside us these past four years, and we warmly welcome

those who are joining us as we continue proclaiming the Gospel and serving God's people.

The past several weeks have also been filled with signs of new life in our Province. We invested three Novices with the habit of St. Francis and welcomed six Postulants who have begun their discernment with the Conventual Franciscans. Their generous response to God's call fills us with hope for the future.

Our celebrations concluded in the most fitting way: the First Profession of Simple Vows of friar Raphael Maria (George) Harris. His joyful "yes" to Christ was a sacred way to conclude our Provincial Chapter and a beautiful reminder that the Lord continues to call men to our Franciscan way of life.

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SIBLINGS FOLLOWING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

These days, it is not often you hear of multiple siblings pursuing the Religious Life, but we are blessed to have Postulant John Flynn who is following after his older sister, Sr. Maggie Flynn of the Franciscans of the Eucharist of Chicago, who recently professed her temporary Vows; John was able to attend and serve the Mass, together with Friars Bob Cook and Thomas Fetz. May St. Francis continue to inspire many more young men and women to consecrate their lives to God.

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Thank you for believing in our mission. Through your prayers, financial support, and encouragement, you help form future friars, strengthen our fraternity, and sustain the ministries entrusted to us by the Church and inspired by St. Francis.

Please continue to pray for friar Raphael Maria, our newly invested Novices, our Postulants, and all our friars as we begin this new chapter in the life of our Province. Know that you and your loved ones are remembered daily in our prayers and at the altar.

May the Lord reward your generosity and fill your heart with His peace.

Friar Paul Joseph Langevin

Minister Provincial
St. Bonaventure Province, Midwest USA

"The LORD gave me brothers"
- Francis of Assisi -

A TRIBUTE TO DECADES OF SERVICE

After over twenty years of dedicated service to the Province of St. Bonaventure, Mrs. Dawn Krasinski is now enjoying time for rest and relaxation in retirement. We thank her for all that she has done and wish her peace and every blessing as she enters this next chapter of her life. She was farewelled at the 'House of Studies' in Chicago, IL, with a delicious meal, and received some tokens of thanks, including a signed card from all the friars of the Province, and a beautiful Rosary, blessed by Pope Leo XIV.



THE FACES OF OUR FUTURE

In recent years, we have been witnessing a large boost in the number of men actively discerning a vocation to the Franciscan Life, and an increase in the number of men currently in formation.

This year, on July 10, the Conventual Franciscan Federation (CFF) welcomed eleven men into the Postulancy Program based in Chicago, IL, to begin their formation as Franciscan Friars; six of whom are for our Midwest Province of St. Bonaventure (SB), together with two from Our Lady of the Angels (OLA) on the East Coast, two from Our Lady of Consolation (OLC) in the South-Midwest, and one from St. Joseph of Cupertino (SJC) on the West Coast. Already, the men have been settling into their new surroundings and have been adopting the schedule of prayer, service, and formation.

The six men who were in Postulancy last year have now been invested with the Franciscan Habit at the CFF Novitiate in Arroyo Grande, CA, and began their year-and-a-day Novitiate experience. Three are from SB, two from OLA, and one from the Custody of Blessed Agnellus of Pisa (BAP) in Great Britain and Ireland.

This time is one of deeper prayer, contemplation, and discernment of the the Evangelical Counsels (the Vows), as they prepare for Simple Profession next year.

Recently, during each of the respective Provincial Chapters, four men professed their Simple Vows; one from SB, Friar Raphael Maria Harris, two from OLA, and one from OLC. After some time of vacation, they will begin their studies at the Formation House in San Antonio, TX.

There are a number of men currently undertaking studies in Texas, some towards Priesthood, and others as Religious Brothers in various ministries. We are blessed to have two men who have been engaged in studies who, over the Summer, have been on Pastoral Placement back in the Province. They return to continue studies, joined now by their newly professed brothers.

Though he is Solemnly Professed, we also have Friar Anthony Ruffolo who is continuing his seminary studies at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology in Milwaukee, WI, while also serving at the Basilica of St. Josaphat.



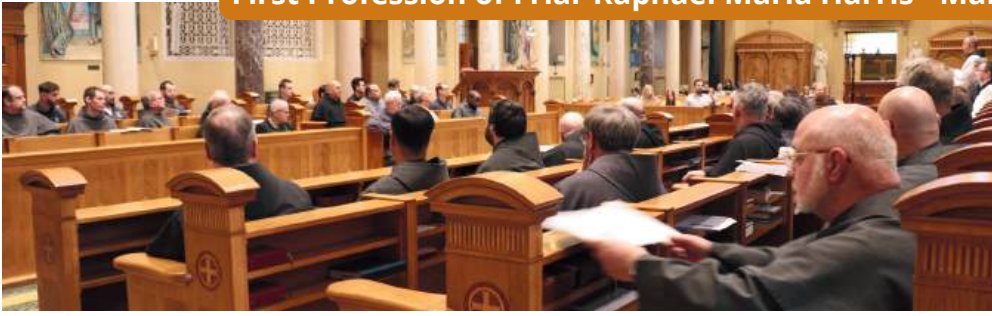
From the Postulancy Program - Chicago, IL



From the Investiture of new Novices - Arroyo Grande, CA



First Profession of Friar Raphael Maria Harris - Marytown, Chicago, IL



Friar James Carlo Muzzey assisted at Mary, Mother of God Parish, Chicago, IL, over the Summer including at St. Thomas of Canterbury Food Pantry



Friar Maximilian Anselm Rewa undertook his CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education) course in Milwaukee, WI, where he also served at St. Josaphat's Basilica



Basilica of St. Josaphat, Vocation Sunday



**Vacations with God Camp, Divine Mercy Parish
Lombard, IL**

FROM THE VOCATION OFFICE

BR. BERNARD MARY FONKALSRUD, OFM CONV., VOCATION DIRECTOR

Though these Summer months have been a little quieter due to school break and vacation time, there have still been a number of notable events that the Vocation Office has been a part of.

On Sunday, May 24, the Friars' Basilica of St. Josaphat, Milwaukee, WI, hosted a 'Vocations Sunday' event with a number of Religious Orders and the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. Each group facilitated a vocations table with displays and materials, giving interested parishioners the opportunity to come down to the gathering space to engage, ask questions, learn more, and take information home for further discernment. Refreshments were provided and there was a great atmosphere of intrigue and curiosity by all who attended. The Religious also attended many of the Masses and participated in Reading and the Offertory Procession.

On Tuesday, June 9, I attended the Polish Parish of Divine Mercy in Lombard, IL, for their 'Vacations with God' Summer Camp where I presented sessions on St. Francis of Assisi and the Franciscan Vocation to each of the age based groups. It was a ton of fun to spend the day there, engaging with the youth, and joining

them for Holy Mass, Eucharistic Adoration, Rosary, and sharing about our life during this Year of St. Francis. The young people asked great questions, and were genuinely intrigued at having a Franciscan Friar present.

On the evening of July 15, the 'Young Catholic Professionals - Chicago' held a special event at Holy Name Cathedral, to commemorate their ten year anniversary. The evening began with Holy Mass and a light dinner with a number of vendors promoting initiatives, including vocations to our Order. I was joined by Friar James Carlo Muzzey, who had been in Chicago for his Summer Placement. It was a wonderful evening with fantastic interactions and discussions. The evening concluded after a talk and a final "cheers" to ten years.

The Friars' Mary, Mother of God Parish, Chicago, IL, held their annual 'Tastes of Summer' festival with delicious food and performances from various cultures in the Parish. The Postulants and friars attended, joined by two different vocations guests who came throughout the day. It was a joyful occasion with everyone leaving stuffed and satisfied!

Keep praying for vocations! Thank you!!



**Tastes of Summer Festival,
Mary, Mother of God Parish, Chicago, IL**



**Young Catholic Professionals 10 Year Anniv.
Holy Name Cathedral, Chicago IL**

ST. BONAVENTURE PROVINCIAL CHAPTER - PART TWO

From Monday, July 20 - Wednesday, July 22, the Solemnly Professed friars of St. Bonaventure Province gathered at the National Shrine of St. Maximilian Kolbe at Marytown, Chicago, IL, for Part Two of our Provincial Chapter (Part One was held in April this year).

The first day was dedicated to the memory of the deceased friars of the Province, with particular focus on those who died over the past four years. After the Office of Readings and Morning Prayer, Holy Mass was celebrated with Fr. Patrick Greenough as the main celebrant and preacher. Before the Chapter began, the friars were surprised by a visit from the patriarch of the Province, Br. Martin Schmitz, who resides at St. Joseph's Home. Br. Martin shared some words and expressed his love for the friars. After going over the logistics and approving the schedule, friars then met in small groups to primarily discuss the draft Four-Year-Plan for the Province and provide feedback. There were a number of Proposals which were submitted in regards to Australia; the Social Media Policy; the Formation Directory; and the Provincial Statutes. The most time was spent having honest discussion about the future of the Province and ways to better collaborate with other Provinces in the CFF. New friary Guardians were also elected and sworn in, as well as heads of commissions and committees. Fr. Lawrence Zurek, Rector of Marytown, celebrated the Mass on day two, with Fr. David Blowey, the Assistant General for the CFF, celebrating Mass on the third and final day of the Chapter. On Tuesday evening the friars enjoyed freshly made woodfire pizzas by 'Mamma Mia Pizza.' On Wednesday evening, the friars joyfully witnessed the Simple Profession of Friar Raphael Maria (George) Harris during Solemn Vespers and shared a delicious meal. All in all, it was a fantastic time of renewal, discussion, and fraternity. The Holy Spirit was truly at work.



NEWS FROM THE APOSTOLATES

THE BASILICA OF ST. JOSAPHAT, MILWAUKEE, WI

125 YEARS AND STILL GOING STRONG

On Sunday, July 19, Archbishop-Emeritus of Milwaukee, Jerome Listeki, celebrated Holy Mass in commemoration of the 125th Anniversary of the Dedication of the Church (now Basilica) of St. Josaphat. The friars of the Basilica were also joined by Fr. Paul Joseph Langevin, Minister Provincial, and Br. Bernard Mary Fonkalsrud, Vocation Director and Secretary Provincial. Following the Mass, a reception with refreshments was hosted down in the Basilica gathering space and a 'Dedication Day Raffle' was drawn. Many memories were shared and everyone enjoyed the celebratory occasion.

BASILICA PARISH PICNIC REVIVED

As part of their 125th Anniversary celebrations, the annual Parish Picnic was revived after some years of hiatus. Over 150 people attended the June 28 event, where they shared delicious food, music, and fellowship. It was a great opportunity to reconnect with old friends and welcome new parishioners to the Parish family.

AN ACTRESS AT THE BASILICA

On Thursday, June 4, the Basilica welcomed 'Malcom in the Middle' actress, Jane Kaczmerak, who was there to film a piece for the Wisconsin Historical Center. Her parents had been active members of the Basilica parish and contributed to the restoration efforts. She is pictured next to the doner board where her parents names are displayed.

SCHOOL SACRED HEART PROCESSION

The Basilica of St. Josaphat School held a public procession on June 8 in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Students processed from the School down the road and up to the Basilica. It was preceded by a special breakfast for graduating students.



MARY, MOTHER OF GOD PARISH, CHICAGO, IL



CORPUS CHRISTI PROCESSION

Mary, Mother of God Parish held its Eucharistic processions to mark the Feast of Corpus Christi following its 10:30 AM English & 12:30 PM Spanish Masses. The faithful marched around the block surrounding Saint Ita church, praying and singing hymns in honor of Our Lord Jesus Christ and His True Presence in the Eucharist.



PARISH PRESERVATION EFFORT ON TV

Mary, Mother of God Parish was recently featured on Chicago's ABC7 News! The story focused on the parish's new Heritage Room Archive & Library. Parish staff worked with volunteers and Loyola University students to preserve artifacts, documents, and histories of the parish's three churches: Saint Ita, St. Thomas of Canterbury, and St. Gregory the Great. Parishioners and neighbors will be able to use the space for personal research and to learn more about the parish. You can watch the story online at: <https://tinyurl.com/MMOGONTV>



TASTES OF SUMMER FESTIVAL RETURNS

Dozens of international delicacies were available at Mary, Mother of God Parish's annual Tastes of Summer festival. Foodies sampled moi, halo-halo, pupusas, and more while enjoying live music under the summer sun. Guests were also treated to a performance from a local Danza Guadalupana group, which performs traditional Aztec dances in honor of the Virgin Mary. Mary, Mother of God Parish offers Masses in five different languages, making it one of the most diverse in the entire Archdiocese of Chicago.



NATIONAL SHRINE OF ST. MAXIMILIAN KOLBE, 'MARYTOWN' LIBERTYVILLE, IL

100TH ANNIVERSARY MOSAIC

Marytown commissioned a new mosaic in honor of the 100th Anniversary of the 28th International Eucharistic Congress, which took place in June of 1926 in Chicago and at the Mundelein Seminary. The artwork for the mosaic was taken from the official logo of 28th International Eucharistic Congress. The mosaic was officially blessed and dedicated on Corpus Christi Sunday, June 7.



250TH ANNIVERSARY OF OUR NATION

Fr. Lawrence did a magnificent job decorating the Marytown chapel, inside and out, for the 250th anniversary celebration of our nation's founding.



CORPUS CHRISTI SUNDAY

On Sunday, June 7, Marytown held its annual Eucharistic procession for the Feast of Corpus Christi. The Marytown community walked with Our Lord around the grounds, giving public witness to the true presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. They were blessed with fine weather for the occasion.



MILWAUKEE FRANCISCAN PILGRIMAGE

On Saturday, May 16 Marytown led a group of 100+ pilgrims on a Franciscan Pilgrimage to Milwaukee in honor of the Year of St. Francis proclaimed by Pope Leo XIV. We visited two stunning religious sites: the School Sisters of St. Francis and the Basilica of St. Josaphat. Our day ended with an outstanding lunch at the Old Town Serbian Gourmet Restaurant!



NEW STATUE TO BE BLESSED

The newly commissioned bronze statues of Our Blessed Mother and St. Maximilian Kolbe arrived on July 30 and were set in place to adorn the main entrance of the Shrine. The statues will remain veiled until Saturday, August 15, the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, when they will be formally blessed and dedicated following the Noon Mass.



A SPRING MESSAGE FROM THE OFFICE OF MISSION ADVANCEMENT

JENNIFER GEORGIS, DIRECTOR OF MISSION ADVANCEMENT

August Is Make-A-Will Month

*"Possessions are not ours, but are lent by God."
– St. Francis of Assisi*

*"Why are the life insurance policies in the boys'
school folder???" – Jennifer Georgis*

I aspire to reach St. Francis' level of spiritual detachment — the deep trust that everything we have is simply on loan from God, and that true fulfillment comes from our relationship with Him, not our possessions. But if I'm honest, everyday life has other plans. Between bills, buried paperwork, and insurance policies that mysteriously migrate into school folders, stewardship can quietly slide to the bottom of the to-do list.

That's why my husband and I set aside time every August, right before the school year starts, to look back on the year behind us and plan for the one ahead. It's also when we review our will and estate plan, making sure it still reflects our family's current needs and values. Knowing our sons - and the causes we care about — are provided for gives us real peace of mind. And as a bonus, it forces me to clean out last year's school folders and finally track down those life insurance policies!

Estate planning is about far more than assets. It's about making sure your wishes are honored and your family feels cared for and secure. Yet nearly 55% of Americans still don't have a will or estate plan in place, a gap that can leave loved ones tangled in frustration, confusion, and unnecessary costs. Everyone deserves access to a simple, trustworthy way to protect the people and causes they love.

That's why we're excited to share that the Mission Advancement Department has vetted and partnered with LifeLegacy, an independent, third-party platform that walks you step-by-step through building your will and estate plan. As a member of our Franciscan community, you can use this tool free of charge. Just get started here: <https://app.lifelegacy.io/?partner=franciscan-community>.

With LifeLegacy, you stay in full control of your assets and can change your plan at any time. Including Conventual Franciscan Friars of St. Bonaventure Province is entirely optional, but if you do, please let us know, so we can say thank you.

We're honored to walk alongside you in this important act of stewardship, and to support your desire to build a legacy rooted in love, service, and hope. Just don't ask us to help you find a missing life insurance policy. For that, you'll want to enlist St. Anthony, patron saint of lost things (and, apparently, school folders).



St. Anthony of Padua

**WOULD YOU LIKE TO SUPPORT OUR MISSION?
Follow the link, or scan the QR code**

<https://franciscancommunity.org/donate/>



**THANK YOU
FOR YOUR
GENEROSITY!**





Minister Provincial, Fr. Paul Joseph Langevin, imparts a final blessing on the friars at the conclusion of the Provincial Chapter, 2026

"The Lord bless you and keep you.
May He show His face to you
and have mercy.
May He turn His countenance to you and
give you peace.
The Lord bless you!"

- St. Francis of Assisi, Blessing of Br. Leo

UPCOMING EVENTS

AUG 14 | FEAST OF ST. MAXIMILIAN MARIA KOLBE

**AUG 15 | SOLEMNITY OF THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY &
2026 MARIAN KOLBE CONFERENCE, MARYTOWN, LIBERTYVILLE, IL**

SEPT 25-27 | 'COME & SEE' WEEKEND, HOUSE OF STUDIES, CHICAGO, IL

OCT 3 | 800TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TRANSITUS (DEATH) OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

OCT 4 | FEAST OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

FRIEND OF POLONIA

Our brother, Br. Ayub Mwenda, received the 'Friend of Polonia' Award which recognizes individuals who have made a meaningful impact on the Polish-American community. The award was presented on the evening of July 23 during the 2026 Award Ceremony hosted at the Consulate General of Poland in Chicago. We are so proud of our brother, and congratulate him for this fantastic achievement! Well earned!



FR. TIMOTHY'S 10 YEARS OF PRIESTHOOD

We congratulate Fr. Timothy Machila on his tenth anniversary of Ordination. Fr. Timothy is the Pastor of two parishes where the Kenyan Province has a presence in the Green Bay Diocese, WI. Br. Bernard Mary, Fr. Simon, Fr. Francis, and Fr. Peter joined Fr. Timothy and the St. Mary's Parish community, Algoma, for Mass and a wonderful catered meal.



**Franciscans of Saint
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