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 Official Newsletter of Our Lady of Guadalupe Province, Order of Friars Minor, Albuquerque NM
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“That They May Be One as We are One”

Ite Vos and a Shared Franciscan Charism

— Shared from the Internet —

Over 100 friars from the three branches of the First Order converged in a spirit of fraternity and joy at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago on November 4, 2017 to attend “Looking to the Future Together: Beyond *Ite Vos*.” This Franciscan Study Day was convened at the behest of the ESC after Pope Francis urged friars to work together for an “authentic and profound reconciliation” of the three branches in the hopes that such unity would renew power of the spirit of Francis and Clare in the modern world. The day was organized by Joseph Rozansky, OFM, Michael Kolodziej, OFM Conv. and John Celichowski, OFM Cap.

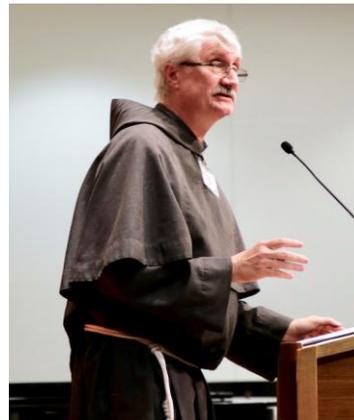


After a powerful prayer service developed by friars in formation, Dominic Monti, OFM began the session with “The History and Context of *Ite Vos*,” placing the papal bull, which formally divided the First Order into two separate families, into its historical and cultural context. In doing so, he brought to light the common values of fraternity, minority, conversion, and mission that the branches share.

This set the stage for “Common Franciscan Values,” during which Regis Armstrong, OFM Cap. highlighted the ways in which Francis was open to the revelation of the

Lord when dealing with this brothers. Regis also commented on Francis’s use of John 17:11 (“may they be one, as we are one”) in the Early Documents.

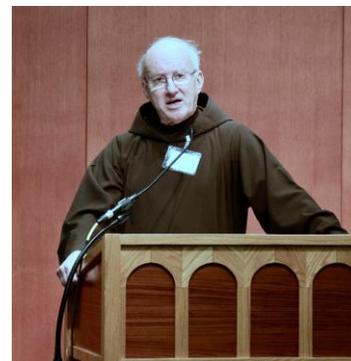
Jude Winkler, OFM Conv. rounded out the morning with “Common Franciscan Projects,” by raising up some of the inter-obediential work that is already being done in the Order, including Franciscans International, the consolidation of the Antonionum and Seraphicum in Rome, inter-obediential intentional communities, and coordinated formation programs in places like California and Zambia.



In describing the bridge building being done by the Ministers and Definitors in Rome, Jude pointed out that “sometimes more work gets done over the picnic table than at the conference table.” This proved to be the case in Chicago as well. During the breaks, lunch, and the small group discussions in the afternoon, the friars from the three branches ate, got to know one another, and brought to life the common fraternity they already share. In addition to sparking some ideas about how the three branches might work together—many involved social media, and even more involved food—these informal times and sessions were clear indicators of the shared spirit of Gospel joy that burns in the hearts of the brothers, no matter what branch. Vito Martinez, OFM Cap was particularly inspired by the practical bent of the study day. “I felt that the Symposium wasn’t just an opportunity to think about an abstract future of collaboration but I had the chance to network with other friars who shared similar ministries. I’m hopeful that opportunities of collaboration can occur at the local level.”



It also sparked some serious questions about the work we as Franciscans are called to do moving forward. We acknowledged the scarcity of brothers devoting themselves to the Franciscan intellectual tradition, and were challenged to think more deeply about how well we were living out our charism and what kind of prophetic voice a unified Franciscan family might be able to raise, especially in the midst of the toxic political climate in the United States. In thinking about the symposium further, Joe Nangle, OFM questions, “After hearing in great detail the history of *Ite Vos*, it would be interesting to speculate on what Pope Francis would write if he issued a similar call today. Might he not say: “Three families or one, *go out as Franciscans and smell like the sheep*”?



While working on the Early Documents, Regis Armstrong came to the realization that what the text taught him about the Franciscan charism was being lived out in the experience of working on the texts in an inter-obediential team. This was also the case

during the *Ite Vos* study day. In learning and discussing that which divided us, we wound up celebrating that which unites us and put ourselves on the path of even greater unity.

INTERPROVINCIAL NOVICE INVESTITURE



Photo caption: (left to right) Novices Antonio Luevano (SB), James LaGrutta (HNP), Jason Damon (HNP),

Michael Lomas (SB), Troy Hillman (HNP), and Luis M. Rosado (HNP). Photo by Charles Talley OFM

SIX OFM NOVICES RECEIVED HABITS

Old Mission Santa Barbara California

November 14, 2017

Charles Talley, OFM

The six novices currently participating in the OFM Interprovincial Novitiate all received their habits in a service attended by friars from around the province (of St. Barbara) and across the country at Old Mission Santa Barbara on Tuesday, November 14.

The friars' chapel at historic Old Mission served as the venue for the 45-minute ceremony of investiture, which was live streamed to enable friars, friends, and well-wishers outside the area to witness the event. The prayer service involving novices from the Holy Name and St. Barbara provinces respectively took on a distinctly inter-obediential flavor as well, with the presence of confreres from the nearby Conventual and Capuchin Franciscan

novitiate programs.

The six men represent both Holy Name and Saint Barbara provinces: **Jason Damon** (HNP), 23, from Buffalo, New York; **Luis M. Rosado** (HNP), 46, from Puerto Rico; **Troy Hillman** (HNP), 24, of Olean, New York; **James LaGrutta** (HNP), 28, of Goshen, New York; **Michael Lomas** (SB), 29, from San Jose, California; and, **Antonio Luevano** (SB), 28, of San Bernardino, California. **Minister Provincial David Gaa** and **Vicar Provincial Martín Ibarra** represented the St. Barbara province, while **Provincial Vicar Larry Hayes** and **Friar Michael Blastic** represented the Holy Name province. Michael is a member of the novitiate team along with **Novice master Friar Jeff Macnab** (SB) and **Sister Susan Rosenbach, SSSF**.

Reflecting upon the inner meaning and purpose of the habit in his remarks, **Michael Blastic** reminded all present that for St. Francis and for ourselves “the habit, that is the poor clothes the brothers wore—must not get in the way of being who you truly are—a brother of the human race. . . (It) should not get in the way of letting your body be your ‘tongue’”. Michael further reflected that, through the writings of biographer Thomas of Celano, we learn that Francis changed his clothes on at least nine different recorded occasions—each event signaling a significant threshold in the course of the saint’s ongoing conversion. Recalling the last wishes of Francis that his body be left lying naked on the ground upon his death, Michael concluded that “for Francis, the poor clothes—what would become the habit—needed to become transparent in order to reveal what they covered—a poor simple man who had nothing of his own, a man who spent his entire life becoming a lesser and smaller person... (who) identified himself as ‘brother Francis’”.

A reception and dinner hosted by the novitiate team and friars at the Old Mission followed the mid-afternoon ceremony. And yes, the newly invested novices got to do the dishes.



Into Our Tradition

— Jack Clark-Robinson, ofm —

*A monthly Reflection from Our Franciscan Heritage #17
December 2017*

Last month, I ended this column with a Question – What is NOT important about our lives together and our proclamation of the Gospel? If there is one thing which I hope we all agree is important to our lives together and proclamation of the Gospel it would be the that both are focused for us in the Rule and Testament of St. Francis. We are vowed to the Rule, and we are to be guided by the Testament, both of which are then authentically interpreted for us as members of the Order of Friars Minor in the General Constitutions and General Statutes. Thus, fittingly, the first two Articles of the General

Statutes state:

Article 1 The Ministers and Guardians are to ensure that each Friar has a copy of the Rule and Testament of St. Francis, together with the General Constitutions and Statutes.

Article 2 §1 Each week, in so far as is possible, at least some portion of the Rule or Testament of St. Francis is to be read in fraternity. At the end of the reading, the Guardian is to read the exhortation and blessing of the Seraphic Father (Testament 40-41).

§2 The Ministers and Guardians, in interest of a continuous renewal of the spirit, are to ensure that the writings of St. Francis, the General Constitutions and other documents that have emanated from the General or Provincial Chapters for a better interpretation and updating of the Rule are read and explained at an appropriate time.

§3 All that has been prescribed in the proceeding paragraphs is to be more explicitly defined in the Particular Statutes.

At the conclusion of our Provincial Chapter about six months ago, I made sure that every house of the Province had a copy of the Rule, the Testament, the General Constitutions and General Statutes as they were published by the General Curia in 2010. Now I have a question, which I must admit I ask with some fear and trepidation. How many of those copies of the Rule, the Testament, the General Constitutions and Statutes have been opened since then at all, much less on a weekly basis? How many times have we listened together to the words of Francis? I would point out that Article 2.1 specifies that some portion of the Rule or Testament is to be read each week “in fraternity.”

While I have little doubt that there are brothers who individually and I pray even some of our communities which faithfully seek to hear and attend to the Gospel with heroic energy, who seek to listen with their hearts and wills as well as their ears to the Rule and Testament, and maybe even to plow through the Constitutions and Statutes, I doubt that those brothers and communities are in the majority. (I will admit to you my own individual negligence in doing these things until YOU called me to task to become a better Franciscan with my election as your Minister. So now I long with my heart to call you to strive to be better brothers as well.) But even for those who are reading the Rule and Testament, our individual attention to these things will not make any of us members of a Franciscan fraternity. “In fraternity” requires two or three or four or more brothers to be about these things TOGETHER.

Over the next few weeks I am going to be concluding visitation for the year by coming to most of the Houses of the Province. I have already mentioned that I wish to have a session with each community during our time together, even if the individual members of the community have already had visitation with one of the Provincial Councilors, and during that time I want to work with the community to do the following:

1) Plan the dates and times of the minimum of six House Chapters (and I would hope actually ten to twelve) which the community will have in 2018. For those who say that our busy pace of life prevents us from

planning so far ahead, I would answer that it is precisely the hectic pace of our lives that DEMANDs that we prioritize community in this way by planning for regular House Chapters and having them on the calendar before they get crowded off by upcoming events.

2) Plan a course of the reading of the Rule and Testament which will take place on a weekly basis in each community, as well as a minimal time for faith sharing by the brothers about what they heard in that reading in fraternity before the Guardian's blessing.

3) Discuss how the community will seek to be a better, more fraternal, more loving, more evangelizing and more Gospel-centered community through 2018.

4) Plan for times to pray together and recreate together outside of the daily routine of the house, so as to emphasize just how important and special it is for us as Brothers to pray and recreate together.

I know that many of our communities are already doing some of these thing and I pray that I will be joyously surprised at how much they are doing and that the initiative that you are taking in these matters. But I also know that we can all be and all need to be more attentive to these things. To imagine that we have become as Franciscan as we can ever be, is a bit like saying, I am as heavy as I need to be, so I am going to stop eating. To stop seeking to deepen our sense of what it is to be Franciscan by ceasing to share the meaning of that charism with each other is truly to place ourselves on a spiritual starvation diet.



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- 8 December** - Ordination of Edgardo Diaz
 - 11 December** - Province Guadalupe Celebration
 - 12-13 December** - Visitation On the Navajo Reservation
 - 15-17 December** - Visitation in Roswell
 - 19 - 22 December** - Visitation Laguna, Gallup and the Reservation
 - 24-25 December** - January - Christmas Assistance in Jemez
 - 28 December - January 3** Visit with Family (Niece's Wedding)
 - 3-7 January** - American Catholic Historical Association
 - 8-12 January**- Inter-Provincial Retreat
 - 18-21 January** CFIT Meeting in Denver
 - 21-17 January** - Teaching Novices in Santa Barbara



Birthday Greetings . . .

- Blane Grein, December 14, 1935**
- Bart Wolf, December 22, 1942**
- Juan Pablo Vergara, December 28, 1981**

Farewell to our Brother Bill Spirk, OFM . . .



Br Bill was laid to rest on November 29, 2017 at Mt Calvary Cemetery in Albuquerque NM. He ministered in Alamogordo NM, Roswell NM , San Fidel NM, Chinle AZ, and finally retired in Albuquerque at our Casa San Juan Diego Friary in 2013. Br Bill was 72 years old. May he rest in Peace.



Thanksgiving was enjoyed by twenty-five Friars at our Casa Guadalupe Provincial House in Albuquerque NM. Chef Bruce Michalek, OFM prepared everything but the kitchen sink, including Roast Tom Turkey with Apple-Bacon Bread Dressing and Gravy, Honey Baked Ham, Tart Cranberry Port Wine Relish, Honey-Orange Glazed Yams, Yukon Gold Mashed Potatoes, New Mexico style Calabasas and Red Chile Picante. A Good time was had by all!