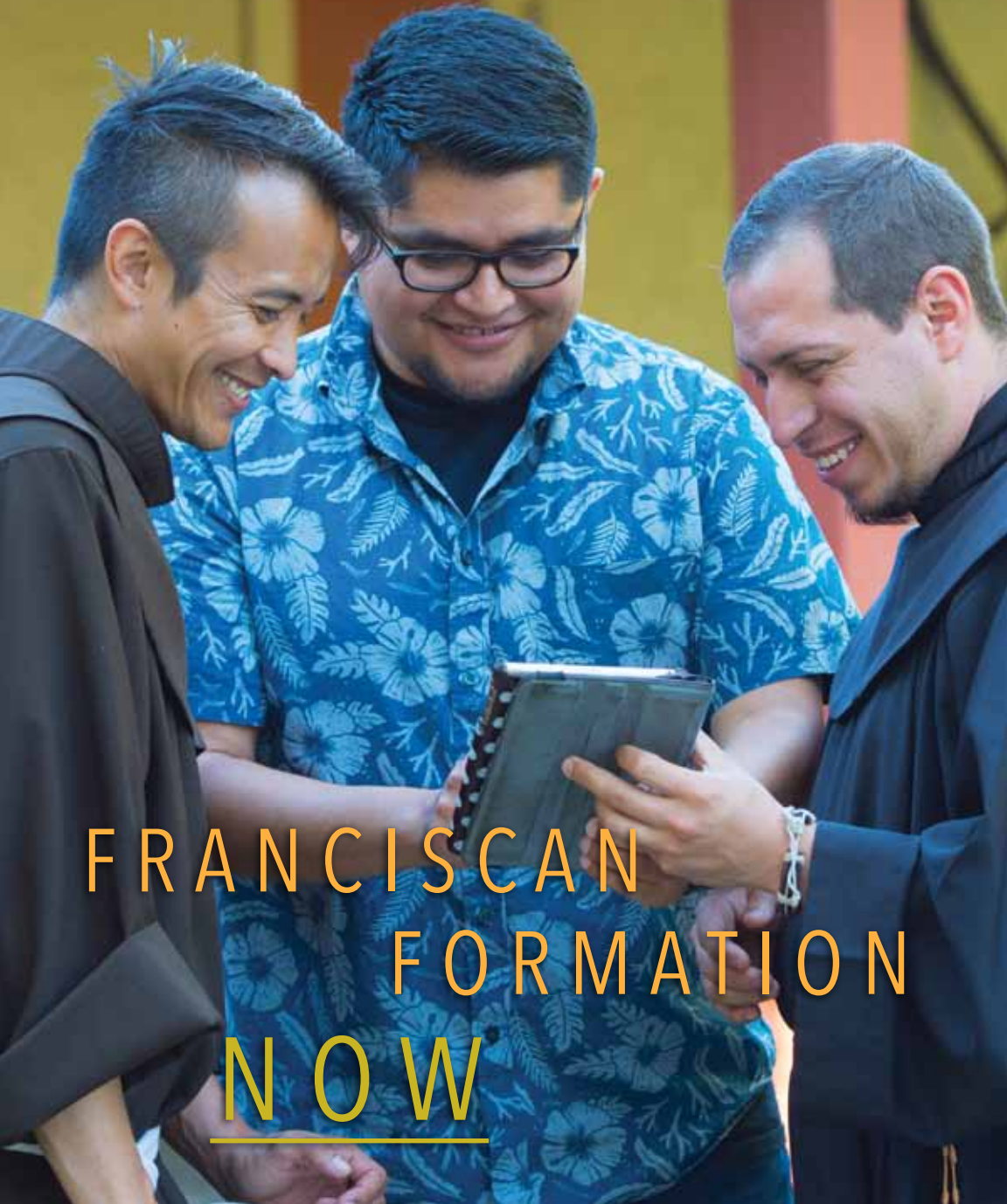


# The Way of St. Francis



FRANCISCAN  
FORMATION  
NOW

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on the cover

(l-r): Friars Sam Nasada, Phillip Polk, and Octavio Cornejo share a laugh while looking at a tablet computer during a recent gathering of friars at St. Elizabeth Friary in Oakland, CA. Phillip, a San Carlos Apache from Arizona, is currently studying theology at the Franciscan School of Theology (FST) in Oceanside, CA. Octavio is a student friar from the Province of Saints Francis and James, Jalisco, Mexico who is working at our St. Elizabeth Parish in Oakland. Sam is a native of Indonesia and a recent graduate of FST. Sam shares his formation experience on pages 10-13 of this issue. These three young friars represent the dynamism and diversity of our Franciscan formation today.

PHOTO: ©PETER JORDAN PHOTO 2017

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# Prayer, Fraternity, Joy, Service



The Franciscan Friars of the Province of Saint Barbara are members of a Roman Catholic religious order, from a diversity of backgrounds and cultures, dedicated to serving the poor and promoting justice, peace, care of creation, and reconciliation in the joyful and prophetic spirit of St. Francis of Assisi.



Franciscan Friars  
PROVINCE OF SAINT BARBARA

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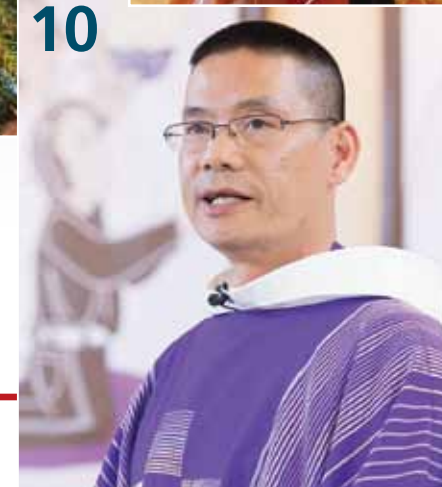
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Have a comment or suggestion?  
Let us know by sending an email to  
[TheWay@sbfofm.org](mailto:TheWay@sbfofm.org)

dear friends ...

## As a young friar

*just out of theology studies, I was privileged to have the late Father Floyd Lotito as a mentor. Clad in his brown robe, Father Floyd was for years a loving sign of Franciscan hospitality at St. Anthony's Dining Room in downtown San Francisco. His trademark baseball cap and cheery "Good Morning!" were a calming bit of whimsy at the often-rowdy intersection of Golden Gate and Jones. In such situations, he would often remind me: "The Franciscan way is caught, not taught."*

*While many people in San Francisco and beyond caught the flavor of St. Francis from this unique man, I've come to see Father Floyd's insight as an example of another catchy Franciscan principle: "Never either/or. Always both/and."*

*In this issue of The Way we hope to show you how the tradition sparked by Saints Francis and Clare is caught and taught today. Two of our younger friars—Sam Nasada and Vincent Nguyen—are entering new chapters in their Franciscan journey following graduation and ordination respectively. Two of our newly appointed formators, Brothers Jeff Macnab and John Gutierrez, are entering into new phases of their lives as well. At Old Mission San Luis Rey in Oceanside, California, the power of good example and prayer (caught), together with study and reflection (taught) are shaping a dynamic center of Franciscan evangelization under the leadership of Executive Director Kathleen Flanagan. The windows of the new conventual church of Our Lady of the Angels at the Franciscan Renewal Center in Scottsdale, Arizona will be instruments imparting Franciscan theological perspectives as well—to both community members and pilgrims alike. They are intended to catch the eye and heart as they teach the mind. Sister Mary Jo Chaves and the staff at the Franciscan Spiritual Center in Milwaukie, Oregon, are catching and teaching as well, through their commitment to educating others in spiritual direction.*

*Whether you prefer to be caught or taught—or both!—we hope you find inspiration in all these stories as you walk, like Father Floyd, along your own journey of joy. ❖*

*Peace and all good!*

**Father Dan Lackie, OFM**  
Editor

ORIGINAL PHOTO: ©PETER JORDAN PHOTO 2014



by the way

### SEPTEMBER

#### **Solemn Profession of Vows of Brother Scott Slattum, OFM**

09/16 • 10:30am–1pm • Saint Mary's Basilica, Phoenix, AZ  
Br. Scott Slattum will make his solemn profession of vows to the Franciscan Order. Join us for this joyous celebration.

**More information:**  
www.smbphx.org or  
602-354-2100

#### **Blessing of The Waves**

09/17 • 9am–2pm • Huntington Beach Municipal Pier, Huntington Beach, CA  
Fr. Christian Mondor, OFM, "The Surfing Padre", will be joined by other religious leaders, in this interfaith service at the beach.

**More information:**  
www.ssj.org or 714-962-3333

#### **Franciscan Spirituality Retreat – What Is Yours To Do?**

09/29–10/01 • San Damiano Retreat Center, Danville, CA  
**Presented by:** Anne and Terry Symens-Bucher

**Sacramental ministries:** Fr. Ray Bucher, OFM  
**Music leader:** Jesse Manibusan  
The examples of Saints Francis and Clare of Assisi are as relevant today as they were 800 years ago. Participants "weave" experiential exercises from the Work to reconnect ritual,

prayer, poetry and song into personal yearning from which to grow a life's purpose.

**Cost:** \$235 single room, \$205 double room.

**More information:**  
www.sandamiano.org or  
925-837-9141.

#### **Sts. Simon & Jude Annual Fall Festival**

09/29–10/01 • Sts. Simon & Jude Roman Catholic Church, Huntington Beach, CA  
This fun celebration for the parish and the neighboring community honors the Feast of St. Francis. Volunteers are always needed (and appreciated!) for this event.

**More information:**  
www.ssj.org or  
714-962-3333.

### OCTOBER

#### **The Transitus of St. Francis**

10/03 • 7:30pm–8:30pm • San Damiano Retreat Center, Danville, CA  
Celebrate the Transitus of St. Francis to eternal life.

**More information:**  
www.sandamiano.org or  
925-837-9141.

#### **Friends of St. Francis Center**

10/04 • 5:30pm–8:30pm • Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels, Los Angeles, CA  
In its eighth year celebrating the feast of St. Francis. SFC supporters from L.A. to Orange County gather for dinner, drinks, silent auction and networking.

**More information:**  
www.sfcla.org or  
213-747-5347

#### **Men's Retreat**

10/06–10/08 • Serra Retreat Center, Malibu, CA

**Retreat Masters:** Sr. Carol Quinlivan, CSJ and Fr. Michael Dougherty, OFM. Explore the glory of the Kingdom of God within you.

**Cost:** \$220 double room, \$280 single room.

**More information:**  
www.serraretreat.com/retreats or 310-456-6631



PHOTO: ©PETER JORDAN PHOTO 2017

#### **People of Peace: St. Teresa of Kolkata**

10/21 • 9am–3pm • Franciscan Renewal Center, Paradise Valley, AZ

Fr. Larry Gosselin, OFM shares his experience meeting and living with St. Mother Teresa. Learn more in his book *I Have Been Waiting for You*.

**More information:**  
www.thecasa.org or  
480-948-7460

#### **Día de los Muertos Festival**

10/29 • 10am–5pm • Mission San Luis Rey, Oceanside, CA  
Celebrate the Feast Day of All Souls with altars, food, live entertainment, and arts and crafts. Free admission. Parking \$5.

**More information:**  
www.sanluisrey.org or  
760-757-3651

## snapshot

### I MADONNARI FESTIVAL

May 29, 2017

Old Mission Santa Barbara

Photo: Brother Sam Nasada

On Memorial Day weekend every year in Santa Barbara, the plaza of the Old Mission becomes a canvas for street painters at the *I Madonnari* Festival. The artists use pastels on pavement in the great Italian tradition to create dozens of images. This year's featured artist, Meredith Morin, a graphic designer living in Santa Barbara and a graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design, chose to do a 12' X 16' piece honoring Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta after reading *I Have Been Waiting for You*—a personal and spiritual journey with St. Teresa of Kolkata. The book's author, Father Larry Gosselin, OFM (pictured here) gives the following account of what happened in the encounter captured here at this year's event:

*"I was sitting there watching alongside the other woman shown here. After sitting quietly for some time we began to talk. She was also captivated by the work. We spoke and she told me she was Muslim, as was indicated by her head scarf, and that she was a psychiatrist visiting from New York and just happened to come upon the event. We spoke about her work in psychiatry and her faith perspective. We both felt very drawn into the image before us, as it seemed to be drawing us closer to itself and to each other."*



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## the word

### Step Forward:

Mark 10:46ff

By Father Warren Rouse, OFM

**T**HE MOST DRAMATIC moment in an investiture ceremony is when suit coats are flung into a corner of the sanctuary and the novice is clothed in the habit of a brother.

There is a similar incident in St. Mark's Gospel (10:46ff) that is important not only for Franciscans but for anyone wishing to follow the Lord in the spirit of St. Francis:

A blind man (Bartimaeus) calls to Jesus, much to the annoyance of others: *"Many of the people scolded him and told him to be quiet. But he shouted even more loudly, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!'"*

*"So he threw off his cloak, jumped up, and came to Jesus."*

First, he dumps his cloak—his most valuable possession. Remember how the young Francis stripped off his rich clothes before the Bishop? If we want to learn and be formed in this same spirit of the blind man and Francis, the process begins with coming to terms with whatever obstacles in our lives stand between God and ourselves.

Second, after Bartimaeus is healed, we learn: *"'Go,' Jesus told him, 'your faith has made you well.' At once he was able to see and followed Jesus on the road."* Notice: "followed Jesus on the road."

A meditation of Pope Francis comes to mind:

*"If up to now you have kept him at a distance, step forward. He will receive you with open arms. If you have been indifferent, take a risk; you won't be disappointed. If*

*following him seems difficult, don't be afraid. Trust him, be confident that he is close to you, he is with you and he will give you the peace you are looking for and the strength to live as he would have you do."*

St. Francis is specific: *"The Rule and Life of the Lesser Brothers is this: to observe the Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ by living in obedience, without anything of one's own, and in chastity."* (Rule of 1223)

These words do not apply just to vowed Franciscans! Observing the holy Gospel of Jesus Christ is a universal invitation. The Saint is right on target when he writes in his *Testament*:

*"And I strictly command all my cleric and lay brothers ... not to place any gloss upon the Rule ... saying: 'They should be understood in this way.' But as the Lord has given me to speak and write the Rule and these words simply and purely, may you understand them simply and without gloss and observe them with a holy activity until the end."*

With Francis, all are called to embrace the Gospel. It's always the same: following Jesus on the road and being formed in the Gospel life. But we have the assurance of Francis himself, regardless of the spiritual path we choose.

*"And whoever observes these things, let him be blessed in heaven with the blessing of the Most High Father, and on earth with the blessing of His Beloved Son with the Most Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, and all the powers of heaven and with all the saints. And, as far as I can, I, little brother Francis, your servant, confirm for you, both within and without, this most holy blessing." ❖*

.....  
*Father Warren Rouse, OFM, is a former pastor, teacher, and retreat director, and is the author of Words of Wisdom. He lives at Serra Retreat in Malibu, California.*

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## donor profile

### "Gardening" the Franciscan Way

By Linda Whitman, OFS

**M**Y GRANDMOTHER HAD the finest flower garden in Conway, Massachusetts, and she supplied her local church with flowers all summer long. I'm not that great with plants but I do love people, so when I stumbled into the Franciscan family it just seemed right to get involved. Getting involved and building community, after all, were values demonstrated to me by my family from an early age. As an adult, I learned from three women in particular who were instrumental in helping me to "grow" my commitment to service as a Secular Franciscan. In a spiritual sense, they taught me to "garden" the Franciscan way.

In 2004, when I first started attending St. Barbara Parish at Old Mission Santa Barbara, I saw a woman wearing a Tau cross around her neck. I was drawn to it, and wondered why she wore it. She struck me as approachable—I later learned that she was also very funny—so one day I asked her about it. Her name was Katherine Demny and rather than answer my question outright, Katherine invited me to come to a meeting of the Secular Franciscans, so I went.

At the meeting I met another Secular Franciscan, Lyn Carman, who unlike Katherine, started immediately to recruit me! (If you knew Lyn, this would come as no surprise.) However, when I think of my final decision to start in formation



Linda Whitman at Old Mission Santa Barbara.

to become a Secular, I realize that seeing Katherine Demny's Tau cross had more of an impact on me than the cajoling of all the others.

The third person who had a major influence on my spiritual development was a fellow parishioner named Viola Valenzuela, or Vi, as everyone called her. Vi was homebound at the time and I took Holy Communion to her. During our visits she really shared with me from her heart. I wanted more of the sweetness of her spirituality. I still get emotional when I think of her last days here on earth. In fact, all three women—Katherine, Lyn, and Vi—are now with the Lord.

I tell family and friends, in simple terms, that we Secular Franciscans are a "lay-person group" that follows the teachings of St. Francis. I always add to my description that St. Francis is more than just the patron saint of animals and the environment. What is important to me is that he was passionate about following in Christ's footsteps, shown by his reaching out to the leper. I share that passion.

*continued on page 25*

## friar profile

► **Father Vincent Nguyen, OFM**



Interestingly, Sam and Vincent both speak of the importance of clinical pastoral education (C.P.E.) in their formation. A months-long program of intense training in a hospital setting, C.P.E. involved them each in rounds of visits to patients followed by group conversations with supervisors and fellow students which included verbatims (word-for-word reports) of selected bedside exchanges. Here, they both agreed, was the place where they were able to hone their listening skills, develop their sense of theological reflection and deepen their shared commitment to “paying attention to life.”

But my brothers’ excitement about C.P.E. quickly turned to theological matters of a uniquely Franciscan variety—specifically the significance of the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation—which, for them, formed the intellectual and spiritual backdrop of those bedside encounters with the vulnerable. It became clear that their studies and ministerial internships had supplied both men with a sharp sense of incarnational vision—they had been deeply touched

# FRANCISCAN MILESTONES: FRUITFUL FORMATION

By Father Dan Lackie, OFM

PHOTO: ©PETER JORDAN PHOTO 2017

**F**OR FRIARS VINCENT NGUYEN AND SAM NASADA — both of the Province of St. Barbara—this has been a milestone year in their Franciscan journey. For Sam, 2017 marks the completion of studies and graduation from the Franciscan School of Theology in Oceanside, California. For Vincent, this year will be recorded in our Province annals as the year of his ordination to the priesthood, an event that took place at Sts. Simon & Jude Parish, Huntington Beach, California in March. From my perspective, the convergence of these great occasions offers a unique opportunity to glean some reflections from my “milestone brothers.” What do they see at this point in time as the central elements of their preparation and training for ministry and life as Franciscans?

► **Brother Sam Nasada, OFM**



PHOTO: ©PETER JORDAN PHOTO 2017

by the impact of God's love revealed in the person of Jesus Christ taking on human flesh. Each describes the traces of the mystery of the Incarnation in a way that reflects his own particular journey of faith.

For Sam, the Incarnation is that act of divine love that makes us brothers and sisters. "Incarnation focuses us on our humanity," he told me. "It speaks of the care that is due to each person—everyone is unique." It was through this lens, in fact, that Sam shaped the final project for his Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree. During a year of ministry at our Franciscan parish in downtown Phoenix, he devoted his time to work with immigrant families, paying careful attention to the changing demographics of its vibrant multicultural setting. (He entitled the project "Welcoming the Stranger: Three Pilgrimages with St. Mary's Basilica Parish.")

Sam also points out the importance of liturgy in giving expression to the implications of the Incarnation. "Our Sunday celebration gives us life by bringing us together, but it also propels us outward to meet the 'stranger,' our brothers and sisters whom we are called upon to serve." For himself personally, says Sam, the challenge of the Incarnation is that it summons us to treat co-workers, fellow friars, family—everyone, in fact—with the reverent care their God-given dignity deserves.

For Vincent, the Incarnation opens us to the "fingerprints of God" on all of creation. Not a surprising observation, coming from a talented artist who has spent much energy on the creation of icons, paintings, drawings, and small-scale sculptural forms. "When I work with clay and create a figure, for example, my fingerprints are all over it!" he says.



Brother Sam at FST graduation, Old Mission San Luis Rey.



PHOTO COURTESY OF STS. SIMON & JUDE PARISH

Father Vincent receives the gift of a special quilt after his ordination.

"And when I finish a painting," he adds, "there is not a single place within the frame that doesn't contain something of my brushstroke." Speaking of the Incarnation in these terms can sometimes be a challenge for Vincent. Some listeners might hear this as an expression of animism, as if the Spirit of God actually "inhabited" one's natural surroundings, thus making gods of trees and clouds. There are challenges as well in communicating to others that God enters creation with love and that the Incarnation is not contingent upon human sin, but rather flows from the primacy of that love in Christ which has poured forth "from the foundation of the world." (cf. Eph. 1:4) This insight, drawn specifically from the Franciscan theological tradition, can also take people by surprise and spur resistance. Vincent notes: "To some people in communities where I have ministered, the Franciscan way

doesn't make sense, and they can't accept it."

That said, both Vincent and Sam are friars who are unafraid to take on the challenges of living out and expressing their Franciscan formation. Vincent's first years of priesthood will be in service to the parish community where he was ordained. Sam, a native of Indonesia, will be spending the next year in southern Arizona as part of a small community of friars serving migrants and local families in conflicted border areas. Wherever their journeys lead them, I am sure the Gospel, glowing with a soft Franciscan light, will be leading their way. This year has been truly a significant one for our "milestone brothers" ❖

*Father Dan Lackie, OFM serves as editor of The Way as part of the Outreach Office of the Province of Saint Barbara.*



## Friar Formation in Transition

R&R Franciscan style: It's a whole new thing!

By Father Charles Talley, OFM

ALL PHOTOS: ©PETER JORDAN 2017

**R&R. When people see this acronym, they many think: "Oh. Rest & Recreation. Great! I'm all for it!" But when we friars speak about "R&R Franciscan-style" these days, we're more inclined to think: "Oh. Revitalization & Restructuring." And many friars, especially Brother John Gutierrez and Brother Jeff Macnab of the St. Barbara Province, are just as likely to add: "Great! I'm all for it!" Both of these very talented Franciscan formators are slated to play important roles in efforts now underway in Silver Spring, Maryland and in Santa Barbara, California. Here's the background:**

R & R Franciscan-style embraces a fundamental shift in terms of the formation process—the education and integration—of new members into our community as vowed religious men. It is a shift which

John and Jeff come in. This fall, for the first time, the OFM branch of the Franciscans in the United States and Canada are joining together to form a single postulancy program on the campus of the former



(Opposite page, l to r) Friar Freddie Rodriguez, Michael Lomas, Friar John Gutierrez, and Antonio Luevano. Michael and Antonio are in the 2017–18 novitiate class. (Above, left) Friars Jeff Macnab (l) and Tom West. (Above, right), Friar John Gutierrez.

implies significant changes both in approach (revitalization) as well as in organization (restructuring).

The entry level of Franciscan formation is known as postulancy: a 10-month residential term in which men learn the essentials of Franciscan identity and community living. Emphasis is on growth and development in one's identity as a human, a Christian, and a Franciscan. The second level, the novitiate year, is a time of more intense discernment, in which men enter into an intense period of prayer, study, service, and ongoing dialog and conversation with team members. At the year's conclusion, those who have completed the program make their first public profession of the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

In terms of R&R Franciscan-style, then, both postulancy and novitiate programs are currently undergoing significant changes, including geographical ones. This is where Friars

Holy Name College in Silver Spring, Maryland. Brother John Gutierrez (St. Barbara Province) is one of four directors in a team that includes friars from other parts of the country: Friars Rommel Perez (Sacred Heart Province), as well as Walter Liss and Charlie Miller (Holy Name Province). This year's class will include 18 men from around the country.

On the level of novitiate formation, the interprovincial program has been in existence and evolving over the past 25 years. This year it is making an historic move from Burlington, Wisconsin to the grounds of Old Mission Santa Barbara in California. Brother Jeff Macnab, as Director of Novices, is part of a team including Sister Susan Rosenbach SSSF, and Friar Michael Blastic (Holy Name Province). Eight men have been accepted for the current term.

Both Brother John and Brother Jeff, along with their team members, bring a wealth of personal

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# OLD MISSION SAN LUIS REY

## Evangelization and Formation

By Kathleen Flanagan

ALL PHOTOS: ©PETER JORDAN 2017

The following is from a detailed reflection entitled "Franciscan Evangelization and Education at Mission San Luis Rey," available on our province website: [www.sbfranciscans.org](http://www.sbfranciscans.org)

**OLD MISSION SAN** Luis Rey (OMSLR) is a perfect site for an evangelization center. From a distance, you can easily spot the gorgeous white-stucco church silhouetted against the vast, blue sky. But the 56-acre campus is also a lively place as well as a beautiful one. Or should I say, places—since we are really four distinct entities: a Parish of six thousand families; an historic Mission Church with a retreat center, cemetery and museum; the Franciscan School of Theology; and a 24-member friar community. Brother Rami Fodda once referred to us as "cousins" and that fits. We share Franciscan genes and a certain family resemblance—each with its distinct personality. And in the end, we share the common goal of evangelizing through a Franciscan lens.

A typically busy day at OMSLR can include multiple Masses, classes, retreats, meals, funerals, weddings, training, staff meetings, ministry meetings, board meetings, parties, and prayer requests. It can involve interactions between and among friars, theology students, volunteers, maintenance workers, and visitors—especially 4th graders from all over California! Yet somehow it also exudes peace.

Evangelizing—sharing the Good News—means, above all, being an expression of God's love in all situations. It happens when a night security guard welcomes a late-arriving guest, or when our maintenance staff see a homeless person carrying a heavy load and offers him a ride to the bus stop in their golf car. It even happens when housekeeping opts for non-toxic, "green" cleaning products! It's visible when the gift shop manager stops to comfort someone buying a holy card for a loved one who just received a difficult diagnosis, or when a friar makes a middle-of-the-night call to a dying person. It becomes real when a student at our Franciscan School of Theology (FST) signs up to teach Religious Ed and finds herself crouching down next to a third-grader to admire her drawing. You can see it in Father Finian McGinn as he sits in front of the Old Mission every morning, giving hundreds of visitors the chance to interact with a friar and to receive

his blessing and counsel. The calm presence and care-filled words of comfort offered by Father Michael Dallmeier, our Cemetery Chaplain, speak volumes to all who meet him.

Our individual efforts at evangelization are certainly fruitful, but it is when we collaborate that we are at our best. FST students work in the Retreat Center, at the Parish and in the Gift Shop. Ariana Quintero, one of two FST graduates the Mission has hired, used her graduate Capstone Project to create a step-by-step manual for the Parish on how to provide religious education to children with special needs such as autism and deafness.

In my opinion, though, being kind, peace-loving, hospitable, or humble is good, and even Christian, but not necessarily Franciscan. What's the difference? The motivation! To live out the Gospel as a Franciscan, we need to understand what drove Sts. Francis and Clare, what fueled their understanding of God, how they interpreted their experiences and how prayer helped them discover who they were and what they were called to do. We want those

insights, as well as the wisdom of Blessed John Duns Scotus and St. Bonaventure after them, to inform our theology and serve as the foundation and motivation for our actions. But this takes education.

At the Parish, education starts in the homilies our priests deliver. It continues with new staff and volunteers at the Mission and the Parish who receive a written document on Franciscan values. Education is also



(Opposite page above left) The mission hosts numerous events throughout the year. (Above) Mass at the Old Mission Church.

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creative spirit

# Windows of Inspiration:

Conventual Church of Our Lady of the Angels, Scottsdale, Arizona

By Father Joe Schwab, OFM

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY, FRANCISCAN RENEWAL CENTER

**O**UR NEW WINDOWS were designed in cooperation with the artist Scott Parsons, of Sioux Falls, South Dakota and the talented team of people at the Derix Glasstudios, Taunusstein, Germany.

The overall design of our new church is organized around the key theme of Franciscan theology: the mystery of the Incarnation. Because God has chosen to take on human flesh in the person of Jesus Christ, we stand in awe of the humility of God who emptied Himself and took the form of a slave (Phil. 2: 6-8). We also celebrate the Franciscan idea that God would have chosen incarnation



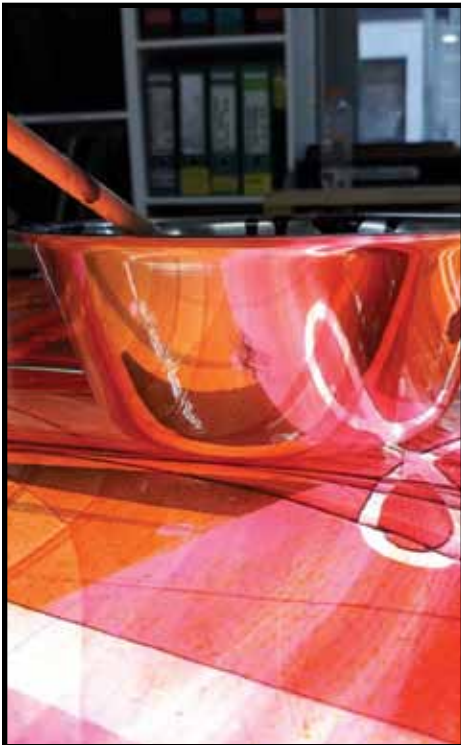
Artist Scott Parsons (l), with FRC Director of Liturgy & Music, Norbert Zwickl (r) inspects installation of the art glass windows for the Conventual Church of Our Lady of the Angels (inset) at the Franciscan Renewal Center, Scottsdale, Arizona. Other photos: details of windows designed by Scott Parsons and executed by Derix Glasstudios, Taunusstein, Germany.

even if sin had never been chosen by humanity, and that Christ is the reason for creation (Col. 1: 15-18). The windows are an invitation to all people to enter the story of God's presence among us and to journey into discovery. They honor the beauty and goodness of creation, the beauty of human nature made real in Mary, and above all, the Presence of the Incarnate God.

Our new art glass window themes were selected with these theological principles in mind. Neither fully abstract nor representational, they invite the viewer to interpret what is seen. ❖

.....  
*Father Joe Schwab, OFM is Executive Director of the Franciscan Renewal Center.*

Fabrication of windows for the Conventual Church of Our Lady of the Angels at Derix Glasstudios, Taunusstein, Germany

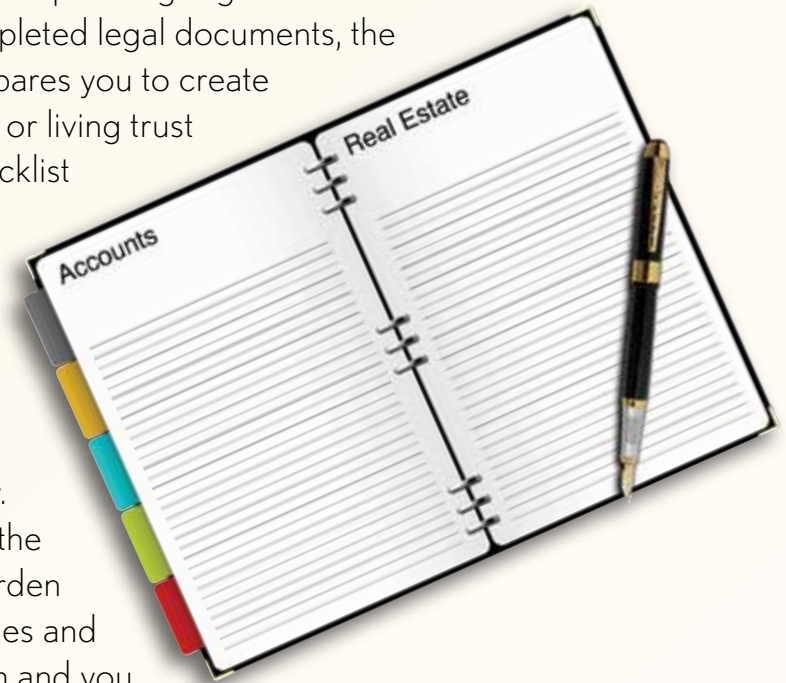


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# Franciscan Spiritual Director Training Program

Franciscan Spiritual Center,  
Milwaukie, Oregon

By Sister Mary Jo Chaves, OSF

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY, FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL CENTER

**T**HE CENTER'S MISSION is to serve as a place of peace, presence and community for all who come seeking companionship on their spiritual journey. Daily, men and women of diverse faiths and spiritual traditions are welcomed; all are received with genuine Franciscan hospitality and joy. Reverend Larry Peacock, Director of the Center, is a retired United Methodist Pastor and experienced retreat leader, spiritual director and spirituality minister. In addition to Reverend Peacock, nine staff members, including three Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia and six women and men of various faith traditions serve at the Center. Sponsored by the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, the Center rents space formerly used as a convent for sisters who ministered at nearby St. John the Baptist Catholic Parish, where Father Jorge Hernandez, OFM, is currently pastor.

One program particularly relevant to formation in the Franciscan Spirit is the Franciscan Spiritual Direction Training Program. Sister Mary Jo Chaves, OSF, has served as Director of this program since its beginning in 2011. Holding a Master's degree in Applied Theology, and certificates in Spiritual Direction and in Supervision of Spiritual Directors, Sister Mary Jo has been engaged in spiritual ministry in the Portland, Oregon area since 1996. Another staff member, Reverend Eileen Parfrey, a retired Presbyterian pastor and experienced spiritual director, facilitates the program along with Sister Mary Jo.



Sister Mary Jo Chaves



Over the years, women and men of diverse faith traditions have participated on a monthly basis in the two-year program which runs from September through June. The fifth, and current, group of participants has just completed their first year. At their last session in June, participants expressed deep appreciation for the program and for the support and encouragement they have received from each other. The sixteen participants include Catholics, Protestants, a Buddhist, and an Anglican priest, as well as chaplains, counselors, and other professionals. All are exploring the Franciscan values which are foundational to the program: the joy of Gospel living, the abundance and goodness of God and creation, the dignity of the human person, ongoing conversion, God's generosity and self-giving, the ultimate humility and freedom of God, the relationship and interconnectivity of all things, and the mystery of God's extravagant love.

Both years of the program include study and integration of these core Franciscan values into the participant's spiritual direction training. Sister Mary Jo, Reverend Eileen, and regularly scheduled guest speakers provide insightful presentations. In addition, the program offers shared retreat time, discussion of reading materials, creative activities, etc. In the second year, program participants engage in a practicum in which they each direct two or three people who volunteer to be their directees. The Center's staff provides supervision and consultation to the participants.

This program differs from other spiritual direction training programs because of its Franciscan foundation including studies of the insights of St. Francis, St. Clare, St. Bonaventure and Blessed John Duns Scotus as



Reverend Eileen Parfrey

well as contemporary Franciscan theologians. As participants, in their role as spiritual directors, learn to listen more deeply to others, they recognize that they are companioning their directees in understanding their own goodness and truth, and as being made in the image and likeness of God— a God who loves them extravagantly. From the beginning of the program participants develop the listening skills and the use of inclusive language which lead them to deeper clarity about their own image of the Divine. One participant expressed his enthusiasm for the program by sharing that his heart has "come home" through the Franciscan spirituality he is integrating into his own life. He added that he hopes to share the richness of this tradition with his directees once he has completed the program.

A new group will begin their training in September 2018. The website for the Franciscan Spiritual Center ([www.francisspctr.com](http://www.francisspctr.com)) contains a more detailed description of the program in addition to application information. ❖

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*Sister Mary Jo Chaves, OSF is a member of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia and presently lives in Portland, Oregon*

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and professional experience to this new formation scene. Brother John reflects: “When I entered the Order in 1971, inspired in part by the fresh winds coming from Vatican II, we had a highly unstructured program. Over the years, the friars have come to understand and describe our way of life and values more clearly. Now, we have more of a focus. My nearly 40 years in hospital work and as a union activist/organizer included 18



PHOTO: DICK TANDY, OFM

Friars Jeff Macnab (l) and Angelo Cardinalli (r) inspect renovations at Old Mission Santa Barbara, new home of the Franciscan (OFM) interprovincial novitiate

years as an emergency room tech. They have given me a deep sense of what it means to accompany people. Today, I get to accompany men who really want to live with each other as brothers and are responding to our core identity as Franciscans.”

Brother Jeff also has a rich background in formation work. In fact, he has been involved in three separate religious communities himself: the Benedictines, the Franciscans, and the Trappists. Initially, he lived as a member of the Benedictine community in Mount Angel, Oregon for five years: “The monks gave me discipline, a love for liturgy, for community, and for prayer and the contemplative life.” Then, in 1979,

Jeff entered the Franciscans: “The friars embraced all that I brought from the Benedictines and helped me to understand that I could take the gifts I had received in the cloister of the monastery and apply them to what St. Francis called the ‘cloister of the world.’ More recently, Jeff spent two years at St. Joseph Abbey, Spencer, Massachusetts: “The Trappists put me back in touch with everything I had learned from

both the Benedictines and the Franciscans and helped me to put it all together.” Jeff is excited about the novitiate’s move to Santa Barbara, not in the least because it also allows for closer contact and collaboration with the novitiate programs of our Capuchin and Conventual Franciscan novitiate programs which are in the region.

Brothers John and Jeff are both convinced that these “revitalized and restructured” formation programs will serve an important witness to the work of the Spirit, gathering men together from across the continent to share our rich diversity of personal and cultural gifts. As Brother Jeff puts it: “In terms of the process we are undergoing, the men entering the Franciscans now will help us all to redefine ourselves, to articulate a vision appropriate for our times, and to experience the Gospel as inspired by Saints Francis and Clare in new and exciting ways.” R&R, Franciscan-style. It’s a whole new thing! ❖

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*Father Charles Talley, OFM is Director of Communications for the Franciscan friars of the Province of St. Barbara.*

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expressed through Bible study and other formation classes and the integration of Franciscan spirituality to the religious education curriculum. And education grows when each member of the Pastoral Council, for example, decides to choose a particular Franciscan value, research it, write a reflection and distribute one every single month for use by staff and ministry heads! In fact, all of our meetings begin with prayer and reflection in the Franciscan spirit.

Of course, not all of our efforts at education and evangelization “work.” Some days our efforts resemble fine art; other days, spilt paint. For example, the distribution of the U.S. Provincials’ statement on

immigration to all of our staff and volunteers required a special meeting to calm the storm. A discussion on serving only vegetarian meals to retreatants in order to reduce our carbon footprint practically incited a riot. And then there’s me—who just last week, after putting down my copy of Brother Bill Short’s *Poverty and Joy*—got in my car, drove down the road and within moments found myself cussing at someone who had cut me off. We are all really “works in progress”, aren’t we? ❖

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*Kathleen Flanagan is the Executive Director of Old Mission San Luis Rey and C.O.O. of Mission San Luis Rey Parish, Oceanside, California.*

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I feel modern-day lepers are the people who are most often misunderstood; for example, the intellectually challenged and the mentally ill.

A lot has happened since my early formative experiences, including my election to leadership roles in the Seculars. I now see formation and education from that perspective. It’s been wonderful to get to know Secular Franciscans all over the western U.S. For support, feedback, and help, I know I can count on any member of our regional board or another minister. I have a fond friend who is Minister of her fraternity in San Diego. We communicate in Spanish (my third language) and English (her second). Another dear friend is Vietnamese, and we communicate in French (my second language). We’re not always fluent in each other’s languages, but the task is doable.

I professed vows as a Secular Franciscan in October 2008. But

my experience has taught me that when it comes to formal study and preparation, the profession of vows is not a destination; rather, it’s a step along the way. Whatever our role in the Franciscan family, there is no time limit on how we can help form each other into better Franciscans, better Catholics, and better Christians. Katherine, Lyn, and Vi helped me get started on a great Franciscan journey. Like St. Francis they were always nurturing something beautiful in their hearts. And like my grandmother and her garden, they reached out and gave that beauty to others. I only hope I can do the same as I continue to learn to “garden” the Franciscan way. ❖

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*Linda Whitman, OFS, has been a Province supporter for seven years. She is married, with two stepdaughters and three grandchildren and lives and works in Santa Barbara, California.*

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PHOTO COURTESY OF FRANCISCAN SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

## The Franciscan School Of Theology:

### An Education In Compassion

by Darleen Pryds, Ph.D.

*Excerpt from commencement address given at the Franciscan School of Theology, Old Mission San Luis Rey, Oceanside, California (May 20, 2017). Darleen Pryds, Ph.D., is Associate Professor of Christian Spirituality and History at FST. –ed.*



Compassion is at the heart of Franciscan privilege: presence with suffering, presence with those who disagree with you. This is the privilege your degree confers on you. This is not a stance of meekness. No, the Franciscan way shows us we must be bold enough to walk up to someone who is different from us and with an open heart to be curious to understand.

The education you have pursued here at the Franciscan School of Theology has challenged you to cultivate a curiosity—not only of the intellect, but also of the heart. And contrary to what many think, this curiosity of both intellect and heart requires great boldness... the boldness to be present to those different from us, the boldness to be present to our very selves. And this is where so many of us get caught up in this Franciscan understanding of poverty. We have so few models of real humility, real poverty—that we may think that Francis must have been very timid when he approached the wolf (at Gubbio).

But we misrepresent and get confused if we think being Franciscan is about playing small. A humility and a poverty that stems from playing small out of timidity? That is a caricature of this Franciscan privilege of poverty; this Franciscan privilege of compassion. In fact, it takes much courage to be ourselves—to be vulnerable to misunderstanding and critique by exposing our hearts. It takes much courage to encounter others who are different from ourselves when we are this vulnerable. ❖

“Ongoing formation is a journey of our whole life, both personal and in community, in which our own gifts, our witness to the Gospel and our choice of calling are constantly developed, after the example of St. Francis, who always invites us anew ‘to begin to do good.’”



ADAPTED FROM *GENERAL CONSTITUTIONS, ORDER OF FRIARS MINOR, ARTICLE 135*

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