



CAPERONE

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A Novice Ponders

One of the beauties of the Novitiate is the withdrawal from the wider world. It's beautiful in its healing and freeing nature, but it's also painful. In the same way that a withdrawal from an addiction causes tremendous pain because your body is left with an emptiness it can't satisfy itself, departure from distraction plunges one into the painful reality of boredom.

Yes, boredom is pain. And it's something that by definition we are incapable of satiating by our own writ. Praise be to God, because at the same time that the Novitiate plunges us into the gaping emptiness of boredom--the melancholic destitution of spending time with oneself undistracted--it also provides the cure: Love! Love, not in the abstract, but in the persons of the Trinity. Love that bubbles over our own glass to fill our neighbors, our brothers, as well.

Sometimes I despair of eternity, because I quite wrongly fear boredom in the presence of God, but this is a fundamental misunderstanding of what it means to be adoring the face of God: to sit in His presence is Love without end. It is painful to arrive at this heavenly reality while still imperfect on earth, but the Novitiate directs our heart towards that everlastingly joyful end.



Formator's Corner



Fr. John Celichowski, OFM Cap.

God Laughs

There's an old Yiddish proverb: *Der mentsh trakht un Got lakht*. It means "Man plans, and God laughs." About six months ago, I was at a conference at Seton Hall in New Jersey. During the morning break, I received a text message from my Provincial Minister, Br. Michael Sullivan. It would prove to be a reminder of the verity of that proverb.

Br. Michael asked me if I would be willing to serve as the Director of NAPCC Novitiate here in Santa Ynez. He and the members of our Provincial Council had been engaging what is often a fraught exercise among the provinces in our conference: staffing our Novitiate. When the NAPCC came together over a decade ago to collaborate on a shared novitiate, one of the selling points was that it would make staffing the novitiate easier.

Der mentsh trakht un Got lakht. It's never been easy. Each of the provinces in our conference struggles to varying degrees with limits on personnel. No province wants to give up one of "their guys." Having been in Br. Michael's position years ago and having served as President of the NAPCC for two terms, I remembered how difficult and painful that exercise could be. It's like pulling teeth—healthy teeth!

Br. Michael described how he and the Council had been discussing the possibility of offering one of our province's friars to the Novitiate when one of them, a former provincial

minister himself, suggested my name. Br. Michael assured me that this had to be the work of the Holy Spirit!

I wasn't so sure. I could only pray for the faith to believe it. But with that and our vow of obedience in mind, my first instinct to his invitation to serve here at San Lorenzo was to say "yes." And I did.

But I also asked for some time to contact my spiritual director and "sleep on it" before confirming that "yes." The thought of leaving Chicago, a city I loved (except for the traffic), parish work, and my service as a dean in the Archdiocese and moving thousands of miles from my province, family and friends troubled me. Living and ministering in the novitiate was something I never desired, sought or expected. Even today, I have doubts about whether I am suited for formation work. In addition, I have never liked living in the country.

Yet here I am! *Der mentsh trakht un Got lakht*. In our lives as friars, the vow of obedience requires that we accept that each of us suffers from a degree of blindness. That is, we can't always see what God sees, and we must hope and believe that those whom we have elected and entrusted to lead us are graced with a portion of that divine vision.

In his Letter to the Romans, St. Paul tells us "all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose" (8:28). He later exclaims, "Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How inscrutable his judgments and how unsearchable his ways" (11:33)! St. Paul wasn't kidding.

It's been 33 years since I entered my province's novitiate at Mt. Calvary, Wisconsin, just two miles from where the seeds of my Capuchin vocation were planted at St. Lawrence Seminary High School. Like many novices, I had thoughts, expectations, and dreams about where my life as a friar and priest would take me. Some have been realized, but many have not. That has been a blessing.

Over the past three decades, I have been in places and done things that I couldn't imagine as a novice. I have visited 20 countries on six continents and have seen the richness of our Church in all of them. I have witnessed the best and the most troubling dimensions of our lives as religious and clergy, relishing times of celebration and slogging through times of scandal. In my 50's, I was asked to learn a new language and have managed to do so, *más o menos*. (*¡Necesito aprender mucho más!*) I have been privileged to share in the lives of families in the entire spectrum of life, baptizing an infant in a hospital as she prepared to undergo heart surgery and burying my grandparents and my dad.

These are all the fruits of obedience—a few bitter but the vast majority sweet and life-giving. Sharing those fruits, along with those of our other evangelical counsels, poverty, and chastity, is one of the central tasks and privileges that Br. Kip, Br. Miguel and I have as members of the Novitiate Team. We are also blessed to listen to the thoughts, expectations, and dreams of our next generation of friars.

A few days ago, I went to the DMV and got my California driver's license. *Der mentsh trakht un Got lakht*. –jc

Investiture



The Novitiate Class of 2020-2021

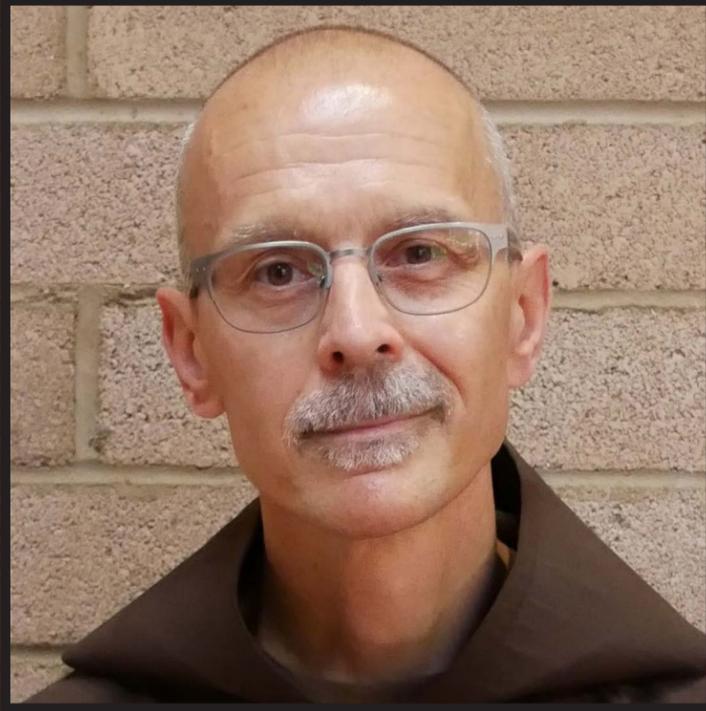
From Left to Right: Br. Charbel Allen (SC), Br. Antonio Villafranca (SC), Br. Nicholas Singgih (ABVM), Br. Gregory Armstrong (SC), Br. Derek Ressel (SC), Br. CJ Webb (SSF), Br. Christopher Woods (SM), Br. Norman Valenzuela (SSF), Br. Connor Bannon (SA), Br. John Lampton (SA), Br. Shebin Philip (SJ), Br. Josean Castro-Arroyo (SA), Br. Ryan Schmeltzer (SA), Br. Anthony Yousef (SJ), Br. Daniel Sullivan (SA)



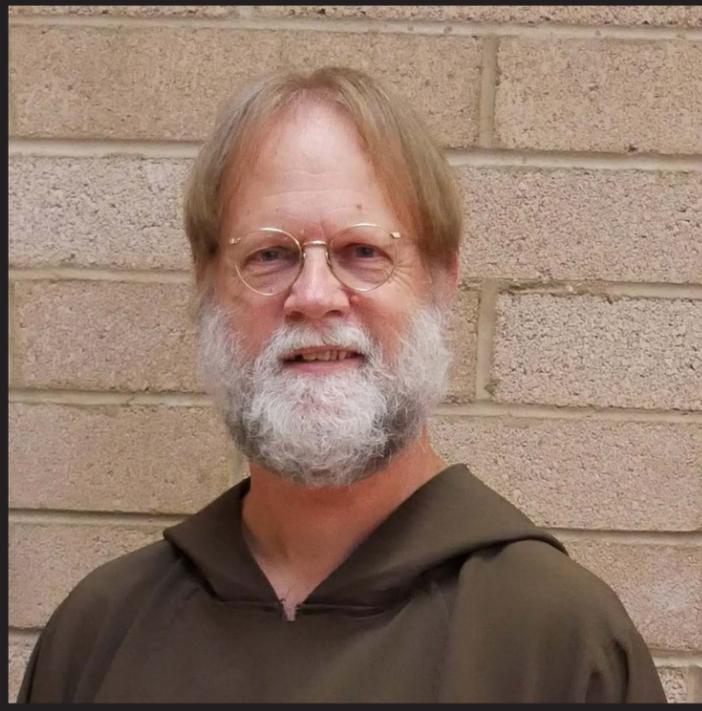
- SA St. Augustine
Pittsburgh
- SC St. Conrad
Denver
- SJ St. Joseph
Detroit
- SM St. Mary
New York/New England
- SSF Stigmata of St. Francis
New Jersey
- ABVM Assumption of the BVM
Australia



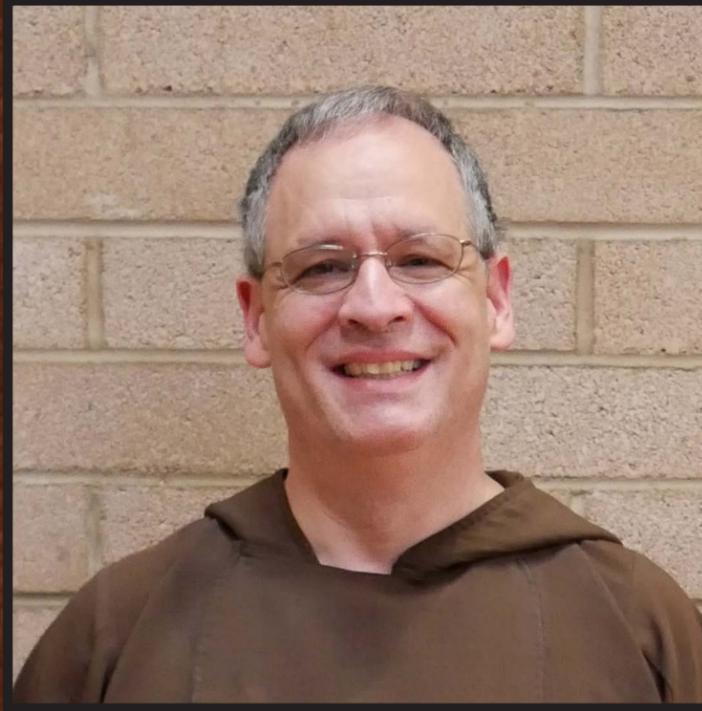
Our Formators



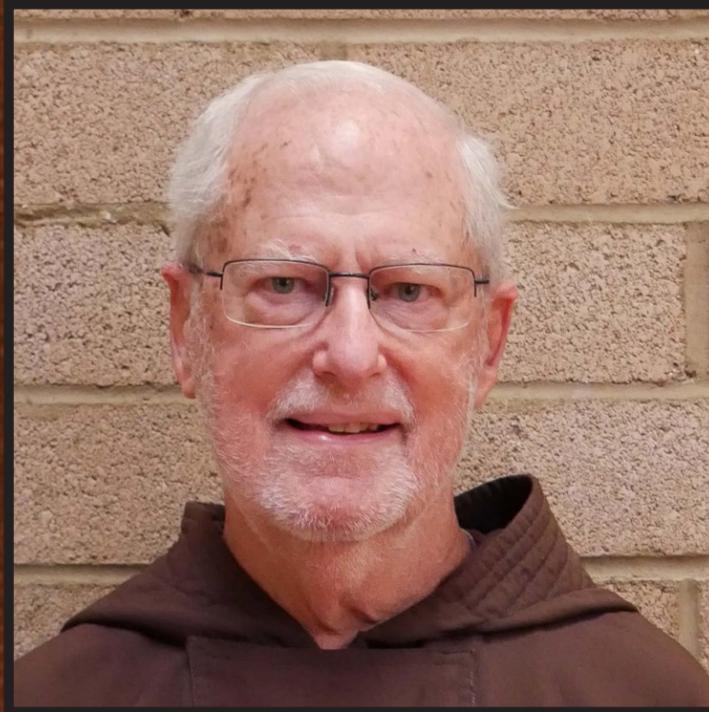
Father John Celichowski
PROVINCE OF ST. JOSEPH
Novice Master



Brother Kip Ledger
PROVINCE OF ST. AUGUSTINE
Formator



Brother Miguel Ramirez
PROVINCE OF THE SACRED STIGMATA
Formator



Father Bill Talentino
PROVINCE OF ST. AUGUSTINE
Senior Resident Friar



Brother Lance Love
PROVINCE OF OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS
Property Manager

2020-2021

Meet the Novices



Brother Charbel Allen
PROVINCE OF ST. CONRAD
Circleville, OH

Fun Fact
I love to read a good novel

Favorite Saints
St. Therese of Lisieux
& St. Benedict Labre



Brother Gregory Armstrong
PROVINCE OF ST. CONRAD
Fort Morgan, CO

Fun Fact
I have ten fingers and they know how to play both piano and violin

Favorite Saint
Gregory the Great



Brother Connor Bannon
PROVINCE OF ST. AUGUSTINE
Edmond, OK

Fun Fact
I've read the Lord of the Rings three times...in the last three years

Favorite Saints
Augustine of Hippo
& Stanley Rother



Brother José A. "Josean" Castro Arroyo
PROVINCE OF ST. AUGUSTINE
Peñuelas, PR

Fun Fact
I've been in a triathlon & I love mofongo.

Favorite Saints
Br. Conrad of Parzham,
& Kaiser Karl of Hapsburg



Brother Shebin Philip Elamatha
PROVINCE OF ST. JOSEPH
Sharjah, United Arab Emirates

Fun Fact
If I won the lottery, the first thing I'd buy would be Shawarma

Favorite Saint
Thomas the Apostle



Brother John Lampton
PROVINCE OF ST. AUGUSTINE
Huntsville, AL

Fun Fact
I like cats

Favorite Saints
St. John of the Cross
& St. Theresa of Avila



Brother Derek Ressel
PROVINCE OF ST. CONRAD
Kelso, MO

Fun Fact
I'm a certified crane operator through the NCCCO (National Commission for the Certification of Crane Operators).

Favorite Saint
St. Padre Pio



Brother Ryan Schmeltzer
PROVINCE OF ST. AUGUSTINE
Pittsburgh, PA

Fun Fact
I love to go fishing.

Favorite Saint
The Blessed Mother, Padre Pio,
& Moses of Ethiopia

2020-2021

Meet the Novices



Brother Nicholas Singgih
PROVINCE OF THE ASSUMPTION
OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY
Jakarta, Indonesia

Fun Fact

I once finished a whole box of Chocolate Chip Cookies...by myself...maybe twice...

Favorite Saint
St. Augustine



Brother Daniel Sullivan
PROVINCE OF ST. AUGUSTINE
Lancaster, OH

Fun Fact

I founded an app development startup.

Favorite Saints
Gabriel the Archangel,
Veronica Giuliani, & Padre Pio



Brother Norman Valenzuela
PROVINCE OF THE SACRED STIGMATA
South Miami, FL

Fun Fact

I love Salsa music;
I know about 100+ songs

Favorite Saints
The Blessed Virgin Mary



Brother Antonio Villafranca
PROVINCE OF ST. CONRAD
San Antonio, TX

Fun Fact

I was a Civil War Reenactor

Favorite Saints
St. Aidan of Lindisfarne



Brother Chandler Jordon Webb
PROVINCE OF THE SACRED STIGMATA
Sugar Hill, GA

Fun Fact

I've been playing Stand-up Bass
for over 10 years.

Favorite Saint
St. John Vianney, St. John Paul II



Brother Christopher Woods
PROVINCE OF ST. MARY
Wantagh, Long Island, NY

Fun Fact

I love evangelizing via Music & Media.

Favorite Saints
St. Padre Pio



Brother Anthony Yousef
PROVINCE OF ST. JOSEPH
Michigan

Fun Fact

I love cooking food
and the friars love eating.

Favorite Saint
Saint Anthony of Padua



2020-2021



Los Padres Mountains



The novices receive a grand tour of the area surrounding the novitiate from their formators, and finish with a stop in Solvang for ice cream.



Old Mission Santa Inés

The Novices visit the Santa Inés Mission, staffed by our Capuchin brothers from Our Lady of the Angels Province. Thanks to Fr. Bobby Barbato, OFM Cap. for his tour of this beautiful mission!





Provincial Feast Day
with our brothers from
Our Lady of the Angels Province





Our First Public Mass Since March



It was so great to meet everyone!





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ABOUT US

CAPERONE is a newsletter produced and edited by the novices of the North American Pacific Capuchin Conference.

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