

VOL. XI ISSUE NO. 2



# CAPERONE

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## Formator's Corner



*Br. Miguel Ramirez, OFM Cap.*

**B**alance, where is balance? The universal search for balance in life is of major importance. It determines how much meaning, peace, and enjoyment life brings us. Without it, stress, anxiety, and other harmful symptoms have more power over us. But, how is balance achieved in a world, culture and society where efficiency, productivity, and accomplishments are often over valued and over emphasized? The answer may be in such a simple, seemingly insignificant word: daily routine. At first, it can sound like my life is scheduled, planned out for me, dictated or controlled. A closer look will reveal that if our daily routine is well balanced with time for all essential human interaction, labor, recreation, and rest in the context of community that is, among others, and not in isolation, then balance is much more achievable. Here at the San Lorenzo Novitiate, balance is one of the goals and values emphasized. It begins with a daily schedule that places prayer and contemplation at the center, not periphery of each day. Three hour together in the chapel daily sets the tone for a clear mind and heart set on the primary purpose of our existence. Hours are not passing us by, but rather we are passing the hours building relationships with the Creator who is ABBA our Father, Jesus who redeems us, and the Holy Spirit who sanctifies and makes Holy all to whom make a welcome place in their heart/soul. Eucharist is where together, we worship and are nourished, in Sacred Word and Sacred Bread.

Next, we begin our time of classroom study together, usually on a subject matter directly connected to our life as Capuchin brothers, but also on issues of faith, human development, relationships, vows, ministry and service to and with others. Meals are shared together and we converse and listen to each other's views, opinions, and insights that frees us from our own limited views of the world and church. We clean the house, tend the vineyard, till the garden, and work with our hands knowing that labor and work are essential for balance and bonding. It is there where we learn to work with others, setting aside dominance,

control, the "my way or the highway" mentality where I know how to do it better than anyone and everyone else. We learn and live the value of contributing to the greater good by our own abilities, talents and time. That feeling of "having done my part" and belonging to a group, emerge from work and labor. Doing tasks that are at times tedious or not ones preference allow for personal growth and build a sense of necessary sacrifices in strong relationships.

After time of work, we set aside time for reflective walks, reading, personal hobby or interest, letter writing (yes, paper and pen) in lieu of social media where 90 minutes is our weekly limit. Time with myself becomes an opportunity to listen to the inner stirrings of the Divine in an atmosphere of reflective quiet, away from the noise of the world. What does one find in the stillness? What emerges from within? All those wonders, hurts, healings, angers, graces, fears, consolations, desolations, etc. in a sense, all that has been buried and drowned by the business and busy-ness of life and that for years never had a chance to be heard or tended to. Now, one can open to the magnificent loving power of the most intimate companion, Jesus, the Lord. Now can the healer of souls, the giver of life, prince of peace, enter into the depth of one's being. Now can one feel all that needs to be felt, the joys and sorrows, the anger and hurts, the gratitude, forgiveness, mercy of an amiable God who knew of all these sentiments within us all along. Now we emerge as friars and men fully alive because we have discovered and entered into the presence of God that has awakened our affective heart: the heart that can love freely and thoroughly.

Evening recreation together adds to balance by leisurely connecting with each other in a light and often fun filled activity. Music by guitar, board games, 2 in-house movie nights per week, short walks in small groups, and other such endeavors, are just some examples where we refresh and enjoy wholesome time with each other. Thursdays, are days for exploring the beauty of the local Santa Ynez Valley, savoring local eateries, discovering history and museums nearby, and even shopping for personal needs and toiletries.

On Fridays, ministry becomes the main event as we go to serve among and with others in a spirit of Gospel brotherhood. About eight hours are dedicated to reaching out beyond ourselves to be with others in need and lift their spirits and hopes for healing and consolation, food and household items, social connections for persons with disabilities, college students, housing for low income families, senior citizens, etc. Perhaps preaching with or without words yet surely with deeds and action.

Cooking on weekends becomes fraternal service and cultural expression as teams of two offer up their culinary gifts. Sunday, we connect with family and friends, friars and benefactors, through the world of Skype, visitors, and phone calls. These healthy connections add to the balance of our lives and support us in our vocations.

So, balance, where does one find balance? "All work and no play" is just as harmful as a life of just leisure. Both neglect the need for balance and both interrupt, damage and destroy relationships, whether it be family or friary. Workaholics and the slothful deny themselves the potential for meaningful and loving relationships. Proper amounts of work and play make for a balanced, enjoyable life that make people more valuable and relationships more profound.

So, work to your best, and take time to rest.



## a novice ponders

Jesus at the center?

Since I started to live my life as a Franciscan Friar (the last 14 months) the fraternal life and brotherhood is something I have never experienced within the world before. There is a certain JOY and LOVE that all the brothers have and give to each other. Where do they get this from? We live and do everything together 24/7... I know how some of these guys are (mwahaha)! In all seriousness, we do spend a lot of time together and there is a lot of beauty in that because it builds relationships with each other - but there is also a danger in that as well. Are we a fraternity... or a fraternity that evolves from our personal relationship with Christ, our brother?

As brothers here in the Novitiate we pray together about 3hrs a day and the rest of the time is together. We do have a lot of land here and many places to "hide" but you eventually run into someone. Spending time with several brothers playing a board game, to taking time to be with one brother who might be struggling and in need of a talk... and or to pray together, to ask Jesus for answers; this ALL builds the relationship(s) and brings us together closer.. This truly is a gift from God;...who were once strangers but now my brothers.

So why would I say that there is a danger to the fraternal life? Because it is so easy to spend time together than to sit in a chapel alone and embrace the silence. This can be a challenge because God created us to be together. Personally speaking, I always have to find that healthy balance between my relationships with the brothers and Christ himself! Am I spending little time with Jesus and to much time with the brothers? Am I taking their TIME away from Jesus? While reflecting on these questions, I came to this conclusion: "What I embrace in prayer with my time with Jesus will only better my time with my brothers and the relationships that I am building". As much as I enjoy and love the life of fraternity, I also have to love my time with Jesus... whom I love above all and that is taking time to be with Him as well. What Jesus will show me and teach me in the areas to grow in; the better of a brother I can be for the guys I live with and also those I may encounter in the day.

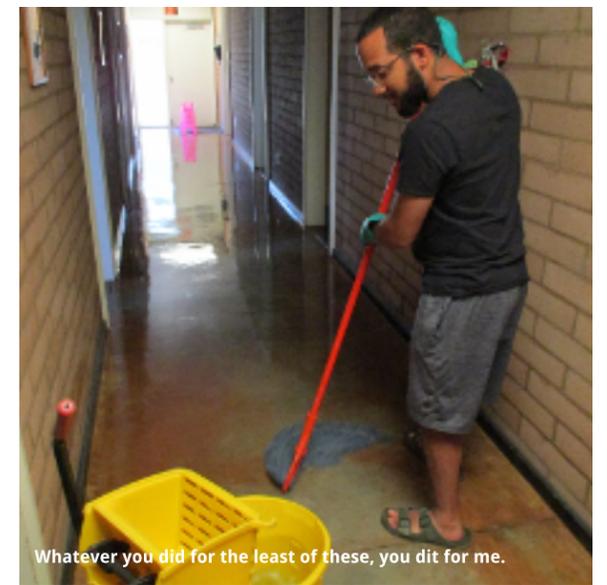
If I wanted to join a fraternity than I should have done that in college! But this is not college! Novitiate is a gift of time to not only grow in my relationships with the brothers but to make sure that my relationship with Christ evolves, so that I may be a better brother for my brothers here, and for the world.

# Work & Play

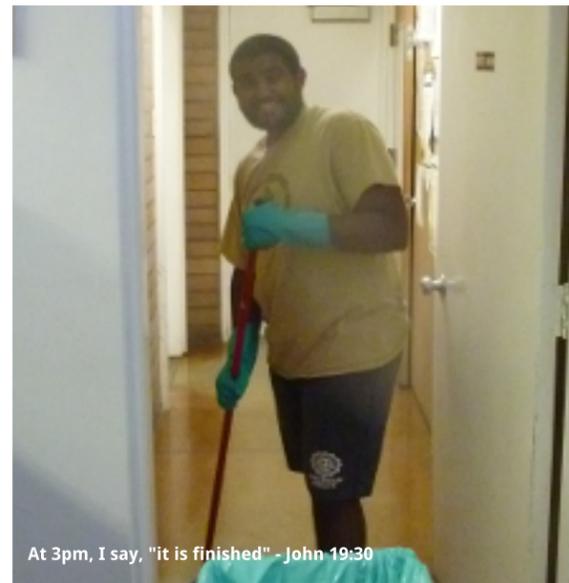
With the novices of San Lorenzo



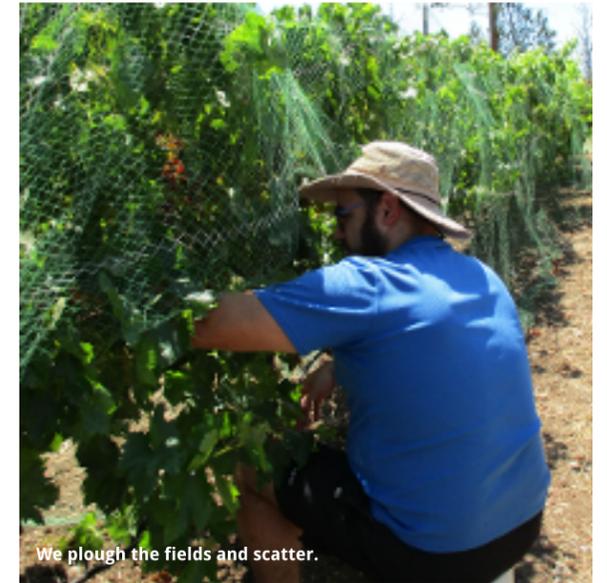
Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap.



Whatever you did for the least of these, you dit for me.



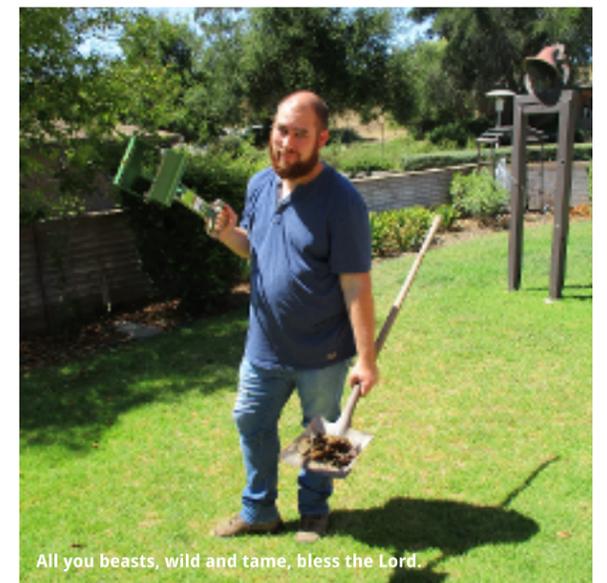
At 3pm, I say, "it is finished" - John 19:30



We plough the fields and scatter.



Cleanliness is next to Godliness



All you beasts, wild and tame, bless the Lord.

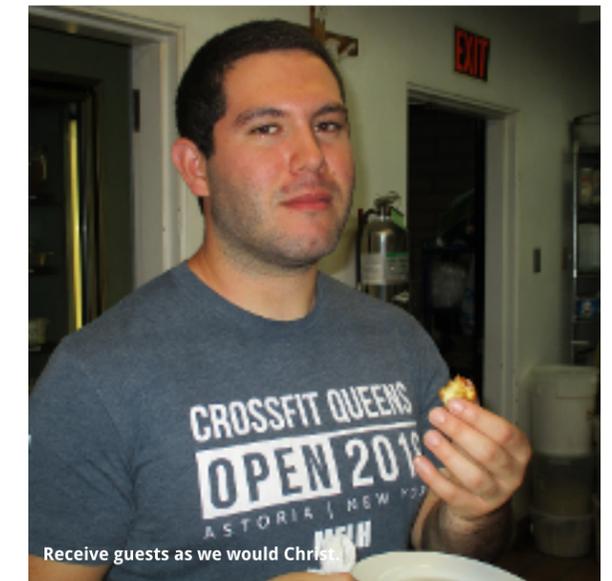


The Our Father, helps me enter into doing my housejob.

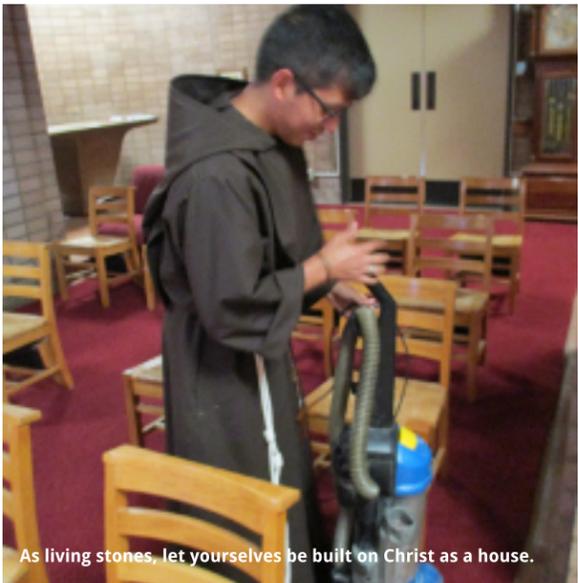
Every novice has their style of work and work ethic. The one likes his house job because it reminds him of the housework he did when he was still a child, the other has a more theological interpretation.

Work is a part of novitiate life, is a major part of Capuchin life.

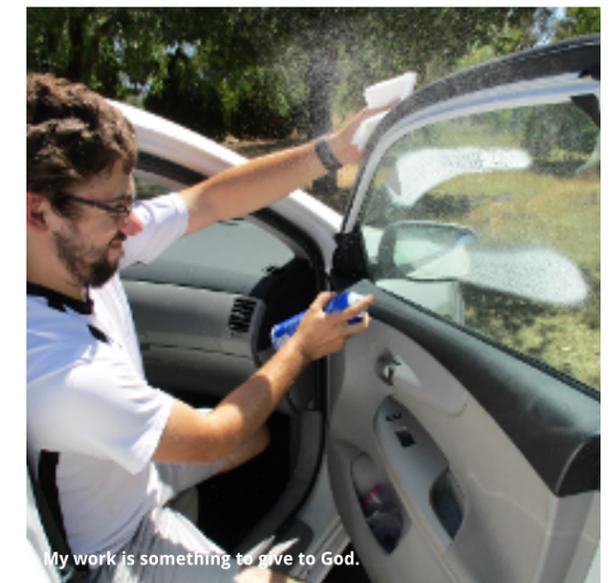
You won't see any snapshots of our ministry work. Every Friday we leave San Lorenzo the enter into a very different world. When we return, always an experience to carry in our prayers and discern in our life.



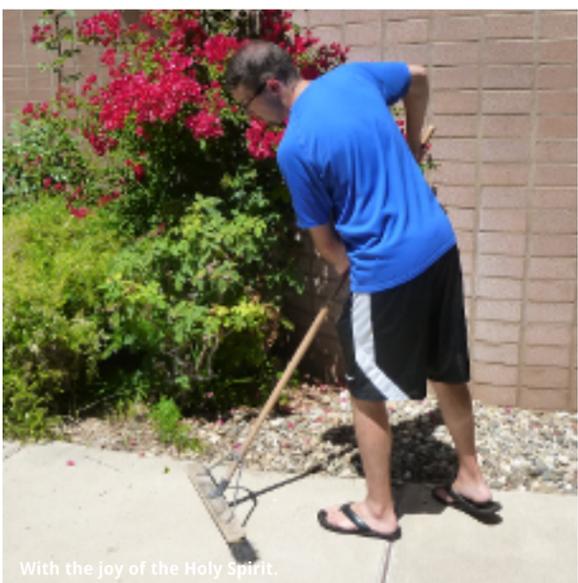
Receive guests as we would Christ.



As living stones, let yourselves be built on Christ as a house.



My work is something to give to God.



With the joy of the Holy Spirit.



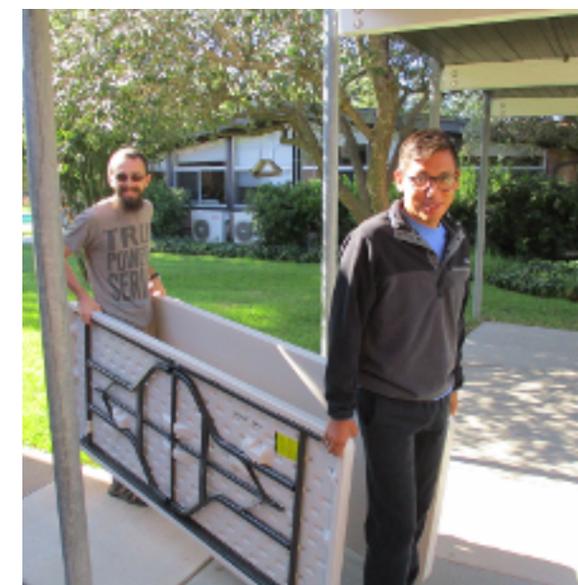
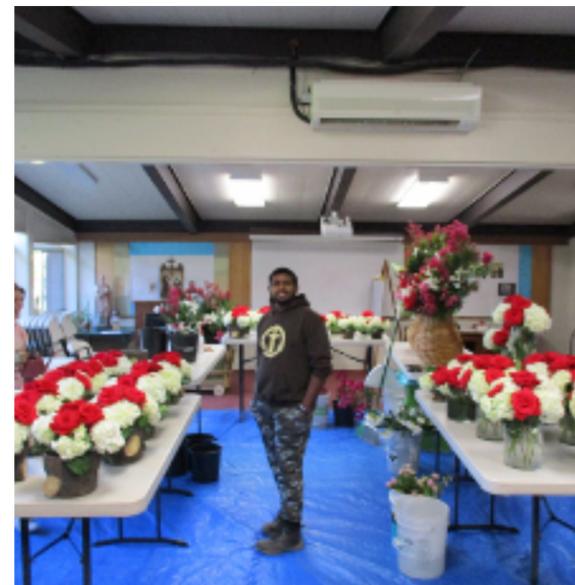
# Gala

From all the brothers of San Lorenzo, we want to thank everyone for coming and to those who donated their time and money! Also, for all who helped with the setup and preparations for the Gala.

The Gala on September 7th had a great turn out and a lot of fun for all of those who attended.

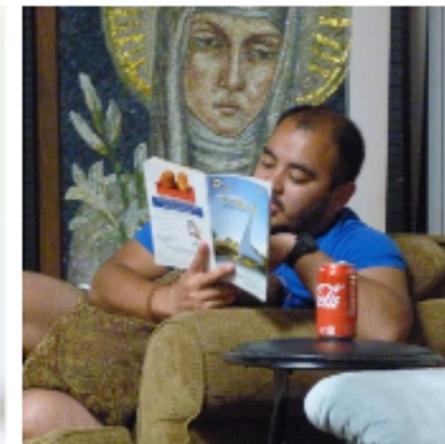
Great company, delicious food and amazing deserts made by the novices themselves!

We appreciate all of you who support us in many different ways and we hold each of you close in our hearts and prayers.



# *Work... and play*

Life in the novitiate is not only work and pray, we also have time to play, get to know each other better, or just time to relax, work out or watch a movie.

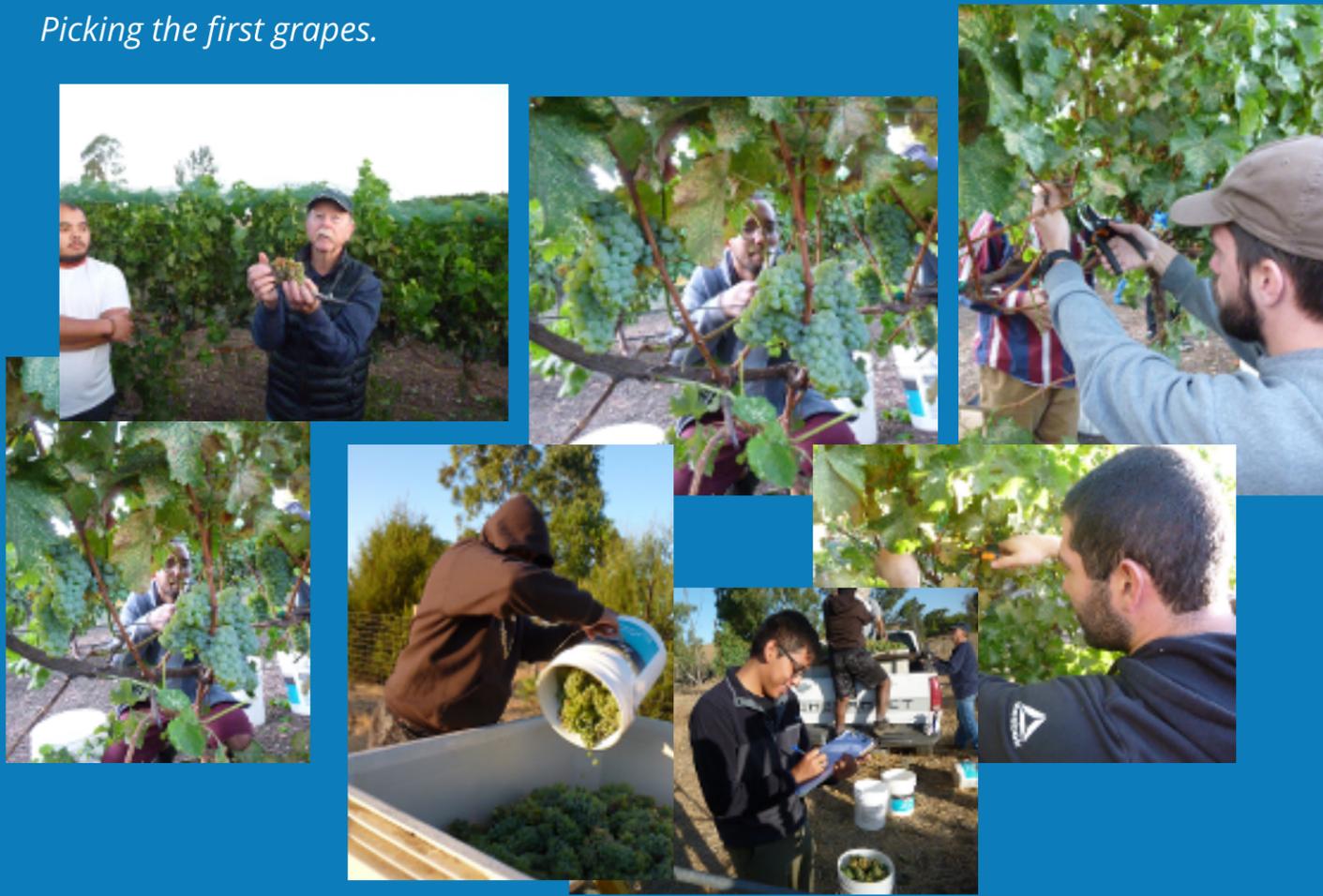


# *I am the vine...*

*The novitiate's first Red wine was bottled.*



Picking the first grapes.



## *All dogs go to heaven*

In loving memory of Sister Roxy,  
who left us on the 16<sup>th</sup> of September 2019.

In gratitude for her 14 years  
of tail-wagging affection for all of us at  
San Lorenzo Seminary.



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and more pictures!

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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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