



CAPERONE

OCTOBER 2018

CELEBRATING OUR SERAPHIC FATHER

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CORNER



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MONTH

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FORMATOR'S CORNER

OUR NEIGHBORING NOVITIATES

By Br. Phil Bernier, OFM, Cap.

Franciscan Friars have been a part of the fabric of California since the mid-16th century but truly began to establish roots with the founding of Mission San Diego in 1769, the first of what would become a chain of twenty-one mission stations situated along *El Camino Real*, today's US Route 101. Centers of agriculture and evangelization along with a few military posts to guard against incursions by British or Russian marauders, these outposts in "Alta California" also lit the fires that still fuel California's economic engines, the fifth largest economy in the world! These vast church properties were secularized by the Mexican government in 1833; the missions and some of their lands were restored to the Church by Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War. Now at the beginning of the 21st century, Franciscan novices have gathered along an eighty mile stretch of the *Camino* in three novitiate programs, a unique juxtaposition that speaks both to the past and perhaps more powerfully to the future of the First Order Franciscan family.

The Capuchin novitiate here at San Lorenzo was the first to make the big move west from Pittsburgh in the summer of 2011. The Conventual Franciscans' novitiate settled in Arroyo Grande, fifty miles to our north, in June, 2016 after fifteen years in Mishawaka, Indiana, near Notre Dame University. Last but not least, the Friars Minor novitiate moved to Santa Barbara, thirty miles to our south, in September, 2017 from Burlington, Wisconsin, a facility also used briefly by the Capuchin novitiate prior to our move west.

The three novitiates came to be through the crucible of inter-provincial cooperation within each Franciscan family. Those experiences are now helping to guide the gradual growth of our cooper-



ation and desire to work together at what one might call a pan-Franciscan level. At the foundation of all that we do is the desire to build relationships between the novices and their formators as well. We gather for liturgy and prayer throughout the year. All class offerings are open to each program, sharing the best academic opportunities for all of our novices. This academic collaboration continues for some in

post-novitiate theological education in Chicago and Washington, DC. We now have a concentration of friars able and willing to engage our novices in spiritual direction. And without a doubt, we have a deeper pool of talent for the annual soccer game with the diocesan students at St. John Seminary, events noted recently by a spirit of Franciscan humility rather than athletic excellence!

Br. Jeff Macnab, OFM, mentioned that the choice to relocate their novitiate to Mission Santa Barbara was made because of the presence of the Capuchin and Conventual novitiates in this area: "We are blessed to be a part of this venture of unfolding our lives, traditions and breaking ground for the future of collaboration. We are coming to see and have a new appreciation for each other's story." I find this appreciation of our traditions and stories positively impacting the novice's discernment process: not only is a calling to a Franciscan way of life confirmed through the sharing of our common Gospel values but so is a calling to a particular lived expression of those values through our unique charisms, a double layer of discernment if you will. Where this will lead us into the future God alone knows, but only with God is unity among the sons of St. Francis possible!

ST. FRANCIS' FAMILY CELEBRATES HIS FEAST



For the second year in a row all the Franciscan novitiates in California got together on October 4 to celebrate the Solemnity of our Seraphic Father, St. Francis of Assisi. This year the OFMs hosted the Capuchins and the Conventuals at the Old Mission Santa Barbara.

The lack of electricity didn't stop 33 novices and their formators from partaking of the Eucharist and a lovely candlelight dinner. This is also the second time this year that all three novitiates get together for a celebration, and we all look forward to many other fraternal time together throughout the remainder of the novitiate year.

Thank you to the OFMs for creating a great atmosphere for this fraternal sharing.





On the eve of the feast day, October 3rd, the Capuchin Novices held the Transitus service at San Lorenzo, remembering the life and death of St. Francis



NOVICE SPOTLIGHT



Province: The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Australia)

Hometown: Sydney, Australia **Age:** 20

Name a book/movie/song that you think describes you: Every Lebanese cookbook and every Syriac Aramaic book.

What were you doing before you entered Capuchin formation?: High school graduate.

What brought you to the Capuchins?: The ordinary way the Gospel was lived out among the brothers, but in that ordinariness was a deep holiness which continues to draw me in.

What is your ministry this year and what do you enjoy the most with it (and why?): I go to UCSB for ministry. I definitely enjoy it because I get to do it with Br. Jessie and we meet a lot of people and interact with them and receive Christ from them, too.

Who has influenced your life/spirituality (any person in particular?): Many people have influenced my life and spirituality but I have to say my biggest influence is my mother. I am continuously inspired by my mother's love for prayer, for all our tradition and her unwavering trust in God.

What is something that our readers probably don't know about you?: I do get tired of talking sometimes (Haha!). Perhaps people don't know that I come from the Syriac Maronite Rite, an Eastern Catholic Rite Tradition. We have our own unique spirituality, liturgy, and way of expression in the Antiochene-Aramaic Tradition that dates back to the Apostles and Christ Himself, yet we are totally Catholic and have always been in union with Rome.

For this month's feature question, what does the novitiate 'cave experience' mean for you?: It's to return to the 'garden of my heart'. Adam and Eve tried to 'grasp' for the fruit that would make them 'like God', yet they already bore His "image and likeness". Oftentimes, I try to grasp what I already have in abundance within me. Adam had sown onto himself the fig leaves to hide who he was out of shame, not knowing he was entirely loved for who he was. I feel that this cave experience is having the fig leaves unsown so that I will be clothed anew in my new self without shame and enrobed in His glory which is the human person fully alive.

BR. JARRED
ELBAGHD



Province: Mary, Mother of the Good Shepherd (Central Canada)

Hometown: Toronto, Ontario, Canada **Age:** 24

Name a book/movie/song that you think describes you: Restless Heart (Life of St. Augustine)

What were you doing before you entered Capuchin formation?: Graduating University, and working in my home parish.

What brought you to the Capuchins?: It was the love that they showed to the poor and the relationship that they build with them in ministry and the simple lifestyle.

What is your ministry this year and what do you enjoy the most with it (and why?): I volunteer with Catholic Charities (Lompoc). I enjoy it because it is both a ministry of presence to the poor and also manual laboring - working with my hands.

Who has influenced your life/spirituality (any person in particular?): My mother, by the example of her strong faith in the face of adversity throughout her life.

What is something that our readers probably don't know about you?: I'm 'good' (apparently) at making desserts! (Even I didn't know this until novitiate.)

For this month's feature question, what does the novitiate 'cave experience' mean for you?: A candlelit dinner with your Lover. As the night draws you come to the table with your Lover. As you sit down you notice that it is dark all around and the candle light shines only to your Lover. As you gaze into your Lover's eyes, there is silence yet years of conversations are made. Then you remember why you fell in love. Your Lover then reaches out and touches your hand and in that moment you remember that you are loved completely with all your flaws and blemishes, then at that moment you let go of all that and return that embrace. As the candle burns out, the flame of love is rekindled and blazing with you as you become whole and complete. You are reminded that your Lover will never be separated from you and you bring that love to all you meet and everywhere you go.



BR. MARTIN NGO



A NOVICE'S JOURNEY

By Br. Javier Rodriguez

Entering the Cave



Ever since we arrived on July 20, we have been hearing that the novitiate is our “cave experience.” Three months later my formator keeps asking me, “Have you entered the cave yet?”

If you have not visited San Lorenzo, I can tell you that this is no cave. The closest thing that resembles a cave is our rooms. But they are not dark enough, nor damp enough to come close to be a cave. So, when the formators talk about the cave experience, they aren't talking literally but about a rhetorical cave.

This reference to caves goes back to St. Francis. As we celebrated his feast day a few weeks back, I remembered the stories about Francis's times inside caves. It is said that he spent time in them doing some reflection and in prayer, especially early in his conversion journey. Francis enjoyed this time of solitude to meditate on his life and the life of the new religious community he founded.

Thus, the novitiate is a time for us to enter that type of solitude and silence to reflect and discern on our call to be Franciscan friars. However, for me, it has been quite the struggle to move from hearing about it to actually entering the cave, especially when I'm surrounded by 13 other brothers. So, how can I enter the solitude and silence of the cave?

Well, God has his ways, even with someone as analytical as me! Just as my concerns with the habit, the Spirit keeps moving within me with a simple message: “Listen! Let go, listen and trust! That's all you need to do to enter the cave.” Again, easier said than done for someone who likes to control things and have them be perfect. And as Samuel said, “Speak for your servant is listening.”

However, I've slowly started to allow myself to let go of everything and listen, although it is still a struggle. As of today, I can say that I'm at least a few feet passed the entrance of the cave. I trust that, with the guidance of my formators and my spiritual director, I will fully enter the cave and allow God to bless me with the experience He desires for me.

And that would probably happen sooner if I would come to terms with the amount of time we spend in communal prayer...

**NOVEMBER
CELEBRATIONS**

1 - All Saints (S)

Br. Joe Slominski (PV)

2 - All Souls

7 - Br. Javier Rodriguez (B)

9 - Dedication of St. John Lateran (F)

17 - St. Elizabeth of Hungary (F)

19 - Br. Alex Rodriguez (B)

30 - St. Andrew, Apostle (F)

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SAN LORENZO SCOOP

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING AT THE NOVITIATE SO FAR...

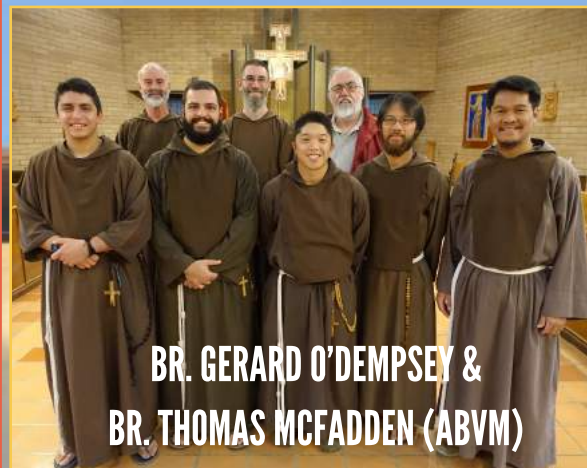
BELOW ARE SNAPSHOTS OF RECENT EVENTS, ACTIVITIES, AND VISITS OF PRIESTS, LAITY AND VISITING FRIARS FROM DIFFERENT CAPUCHIN PROVINCES.



SR. JOANNE SCHATZLEIN, OSF & CONVENTUAL
FRANCISCAN NOVICES AND FORMATORS



BR. ROBERT WILLIAMS (SSF)



BR. GERARD O'DEMPSEY &
BR. THOMAS MCFADDEN (ABVM)



BR. REYNALDO FRIAS-SANTANA (SA)



FR. TOM DONOHUE
(DIOCESE OF LONDON, ONTARIO)

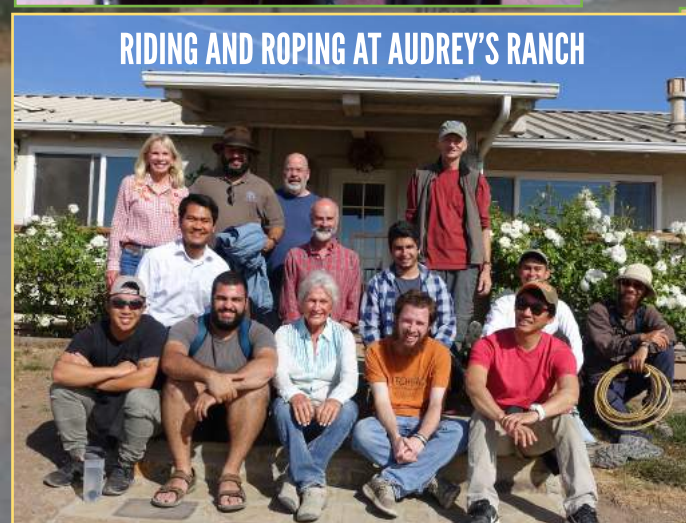


BR. BOB MARVA (SA)



SAN LORENZO VINEYARD HARVESTING

RIDING AND ROPING AT AUDREY'S RANCH



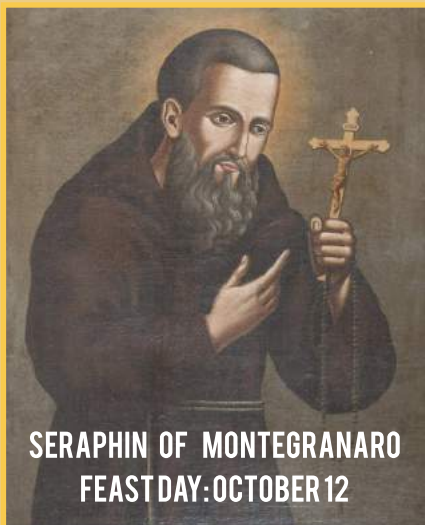
INVESTITURE OF THE OFM NOVICES



HAPPY BIRTHDAY, BR. LUKE!

SAINT OF THE MONTH

By Br. Brendan Bourizk, OFM, Cap.



A conversation with Br. Pio on St. Seraphin of Montegrano

Br. Brendan: Give us a brief overview of our Saint of the Month.

Br. Pio: St. Seraphin was born in 1540 with no exact date of his birth. He was canonized on 16th July 1767 along with St. Joseph of Cupertino. He was born Felix and he wasn't fit for doing hard labor, yet his father sent him to a sheep farm which he enjoyed because he was able to spend some time there in prayer where he developed a love for silence. He would meditate on the life of the desert fathers, where he got the inspiration to become a hermit. He later heard about the Capuchins and went to visit them in the city that they lived in. He was really attracted with the way they lived and so decided to join them. He was a very clumsy man and would get scolded before he even entered the Capuchins, especially from his brother and later from his brothers within the Capuchins.

Talk about the experience St. Seraphin had before the Tabernacle:

It came that one day he went to the Tabernacle and said to the Lord that he didn't want to continue and felt discourage as a result. He poured out his heart telling the

Lord of his troubles and that he was being scolded by the friars for his clumsiness. So, he said to the Lord that he can't do it anymore.

Interiorly, he heard a voice come from the Tabernacle telling him to persevere, to continue and to not give up. The voice reassured him to take up this cross and to continue. Seraphin then made the resolution to pray a decade of the Rosary for those who would scold him for his clumsiness, which he persevered with for the rest of his life. Later, he heard again during prayer a voice coming from the Tabernacle and God said to him that He was pleased with the prayers that Seraphin was offering for those who would humiliate him and make fun of him. Then God promised him that He would grant him what he asked for.

Is there an experience St. Seraphin had that you can resonate with?

His care for the people that would come to him ask for his prayers and intercession is what resonates with me because I want to be someone who is there for the people of God to hear and to listen to them and pray for their needs that the Lord will grant what they ask for.

What can the world learn from our Saint of the Month?

What we can learn from him is to totally abandon ourselves to God, to live that poverty so that we may be able to give completely ourselves to God and not be attached to material and worldly things. Also, praying for one another – being a person of prayer. We see how St. Seraphin's prayers were very powerful and that God does listen to all our prayers.

How can the life and example of your Capuchin brother St. Seraphin help you in your novitiate?

It's his prayer life which is basically having a good conversation with God. To let God know how I am doing daily – my joys, my victories, my good moments, my struggles and yes, even my sad moments. To bring to him whatever it is that is in my heart. Also, poverty - learning how to detach from material things so that I can give myself completely to God.



SPECIAL THANKS

To Audrey O'Brian-Griffin and to Kristin Reynolds for hosting the novices for a day of roping and riding at Audrey's ranch. We truly had a great time!





KEEP CALM AND PEACE AND GOOD

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ABOUT US

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

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