

The Capetone

Volume vii Issue 7 February & March 2014



Pilgrimage to the National Shrine of St. Francis and the Portiuncula

The National Shrine of Saint Francis of Assisi is located in San Francisco, CA and is run by the Capuchin Friars of the Province of Our Lady of the Angels (CA). During February we traveled to the Bay Area to visit the shrine, and in particular, to visit the near life-size replica of the Portiuncula, the famous church in Assisi that was home to Francis and his early band of brothers, as well as the sight of his Transitus from life in this world into the next.

The concept of pilgrimage informs the entire Franciscan story. The novices learned that in Francis's understanding of the Gospel, Jesus was a traveler, a pilgrim on the way....Francis and the early companions visited the tomb of Peter after they received approval of the primitive Rule. Francis did not conceive of pilgrimage as exclusively an inner journey, but as "an inner journey which corresponded to an outer one." The novices made a pilgrimage to the Portiuncula to pray and remember the times of Francis and his early companions.



San Carlos Borromeo de Carmelo Mission Basilica

During our journey to the Bay Area we made a couple of notable stops along the way, one of which being the Mission Basilica of San Carlos Borromeo in Carmel. We gathered in the Basilica Church to pray Vespers communally as is our custom. Visiting this amazing church was a great way to enter into our pilgrimage experience.



Mission San Miguel



Mission San Juan Bautista



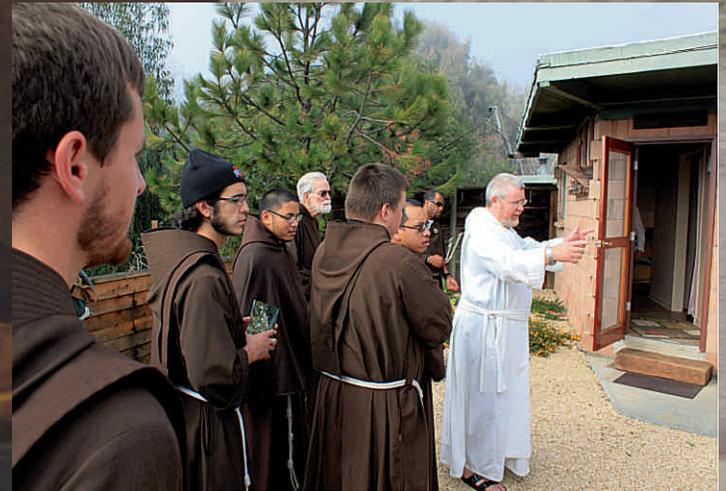
On our return trip from the Bay Area we stopped at two additional California Missions: Mission San Juan Bautista for Mass and Mission San Miguel for the closing prayer service for our pilgrimage.



Camaldolese Monastery

Our first stop on our way to the Bay Area was to the Monastery of the Camaldolese near Big Sur, CA. We had prayer and mass with the monks and received a tour of their monastery and the grounds.

The Camaldolese in Italy sheltered the early Capuchins during the beginning of our reform and it is believed by some that their way of life may have influenced the choice of our founders to become an order of active-contemplatives.



ST. ANTHONY'S
SAN FRANCISCO



St. Anthony's Foundation

One of our stops in San Francisco was to the St. Anthony Foundation to see a contemporary model of ministry based on the values of our founder St. Francis and the orders of the Franciscan Family. *St Anthony's mission states: "We are committed to providing the poor of San Francisco with basic needs and services as a gateway to reclaiming their sense of dignity and progressing toward stability." Sr. Andrea Turbak gave us a tour of the facilities and shared with us many great stories.



Prayer and Dinner with the California Friars



While on pilgrimage the Novices stayed at a few different houses of the California friars in the Bay Area. The community in Berkley, which is the home of their house of studies for the province, invited our whole class and the formators to join them for dinner and evening prayer. Dinner was prepared by Br. Chris Iwancio who the following weekend took perpetual vows as a Capuchin Friar.

Carmelite Sisters of Cristo Rey

While touring the Bay Area we stopped to visit the Carmelite Sisters of the Monastery of Cristo Rey a Bilingual Community that is made up of both Spanish and English speaking sisters. We had a wonderful visit with the sisters who we spoke to through the grated window that separates the visitor's space from the sister's enclosure. Enclosure really means a "place set apart". The external signs of this enclosure and the fact that they rarely leave the bounds of the monastery are a symbol of the place, or cell, set apart for God, which each sister is endeavoring to create in her heart.



Novices meet Juan Diego House of Discernment for Soccer Social

"About two months into our novitiate, we started to play soccer and ultimate Frisbee in order to be able to continue to fit into our habits...seriously! Later on, when we heard that we were being challenged by our brothers at the College Seminary, we started to practice soccer about twice a week because we expected the seminarians had a number of Latinos who had played soccer before. And worse, a number of our Capuchin brothers had never played soccer before!

In order not to lose so badly, we took practices seriously and, using small goals, we focused on basic techniques and teamwork. Perhaps we need to give salute formators as well. The vow of obedience came in handy when we had to play a full field (11 vs 11) when we had never practiced in such a large field. All of our brothers stuck to their position. The result was a Capuchin victory, 3-1. In all Franciscan humility, we dominated the game and our seminarian brothers had no chance." - Br. Diogo



"The idea for the soccer event was actually developed by a Seminarian of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, Louie Reyes. He was asked by the Archdiocese to coordinate an event that would foster and develop his leadership skills. Br. Joshua and Br. Victor have had the opportunity to work with Louie at their ministry site. This led him to invite our novitiate class to spend a day in fellowship with the Seminarians at the Juan Diego House of Studies. Initially, the event was set up to be a day of prayer and getting to know one another, but it was suggested by Fr. John Love, the vocations director for the Archdiocese, to include a soccer match." - Br. Victor



A Preview of the International Order



As part of our ongoing classes during the Novitiate we had an amazing series of presentations from Br. John Corriveau on the recent efforts of the order to address the values of minority, poverty, equity, and fraternal economy as an international order. We discussed the Constitutions and Plenary Councils, as well as the experiences and challenges we face as the Order (and the Church) continue to grow in the Southern Hemisphere and decline in the Northern. This discussion was very fulfilling for the novices in a special way in light of the fact that our class represents 7 provinces, 9 countries of origin, 7 original languages, and many other unique aspects of our various cultures.

Br. John Corriveau, OFM Cap is the former General Minister of the International Capuchin order from 1994 to 2006 and the sixth and current Bishop of the Diocese of Nelson, British Columbia.

Formator's Corner

Saint Bonaventure says of Saint Francis: "True lesser brother that he was, he was accustomed to search with special eagerness in whatever way he could how to serve God more perfectly. As long as he lived, this was his highest philosophy, this his highest desire: to ask from the wise and the simple, the perfect and the imperfect, the young and the old, how he could more effectively arrive at the summit of perfection."

We have this in mind each year as we formators plan the novitiate pilgrimage to the National Shrine of St. Francis. The main purpose of this pilgrimage for the novices (and their formators) is to ask God's guidance, through the intercession of our brother Francis of Assisi, in their discernment—to make our highest desire the discovery of God's will.

So why, then, do we visit Camaldolese monks and Carmelite nuns, and stop to pray at several of California's old missions? Because we know we can learn a lot about the love of God and the joys and

challenges of religious life from our brothers and sisters in Big Sur and San Francisco. We know that we, with countless others, can still be inspired by the zeal of the early missionaries to California, especially Blessed Junípero Serra, at whose tomb we prayed.

Pilgrimage is about encouragement and dreaming, about learning to seek God each day of this journey of our earthly life. We are also grateful for the beautiful places God shows us along the way. The journey of the novitiate continues, and we ask you to keep us all in your prayers and know you are in ours. Peace and Good!

Br. Bobby Barbato



Our Father's Love:

The Font of My Vocation

When I joined the Capuchins nearly two years ago I thought I was looking for a way to please God, a way to finally give him everything to make him happy with me. I was trying to earn God the Father's love. I believed that I was going to finally hand everything over, put on the habit, pray a lot, and then, finally, God would – in a sense – stop bothering me – this is a little bit of an exaggeration. But, my point is: In trying to appease or placate God I was depreciating myself, thinking that groveling meant humility, all the while a heart of rebellion boiled below the surface of my religious garb. But, God our Father, the living and true God broke through this idol of mine and revealed to me that “pearl of great price”.

Through several vital moments of novitiate God the Father's tender, sincere, total, gentle, all-good, beneficent, and merciful love finally made his way into my heart to reveal that my deepest desire is in doing the Father's will. But, not the will of a power hungry, almost bloodthirsty, and unaffected demanding father. No! My true Father has spoken these words in my heart: “You – Jacob – are my beloved son, in you I delight.” I do not have to earn my Father's love; I am already his delight. My Father blesses me; he cherishes my little gifts; smiles upon me; and, by freeing me from fear, frees me for joyful service knowing that “I have been loved first” (1 John 4:10). My vocation will flow – today – from the font of the Father's love which precedes any act of mine, anticipates any failing, and guides every joy. “For freedom Christ has set us free” (Galatians 5:1). This “freedom of the sons of God” now serves as the springboard for discerning my vocation. And I know and believe that, no matter where I am called to love God's people, my Father's vulnerable and gentling love has already gone before me to prepare the way and shower it with his blessing.



Brother Jacob Bearer

THE CAPERONE

VOLUME V ISSUE 7 - FEBRUARY 2014



The Newsletter of the North American Pacific Capuchin Conference Novitiate

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