

VOL VIII, ISSUE 05

# CAPERONE

DECEMBER 2016



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# FORMATOR'S CORNER

## CHRISTMAS SPIRIT

If you haven't heard the recent "good news", the novices accompanied the Nativity float sponsored by Our Lady of Angels Capuchin Vocation Office in the local Solvang Christmas Parade and it won 1st Place! I want to reflect on this unexpected Christmas "miracle" by considering the question: "What were the possible reasons for this honor?"

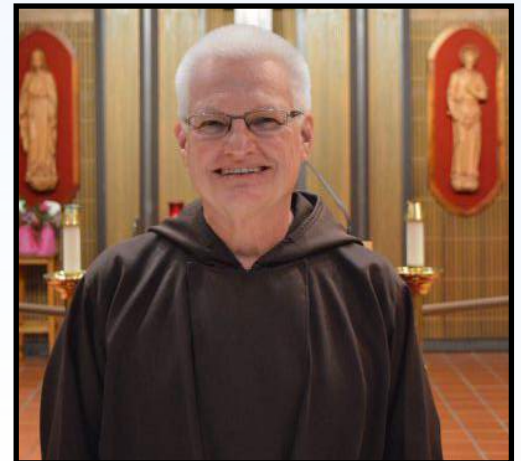
Could it be the generosity of the novices when given the option to do so or stay behind for the regularly scheduled Saturday morning Work Projects? (Hey, no human motive is exactly pure – even saints are good so they might get to heaven!).

Was it Alex and A.J. fulfilling the Christmas prophesy: "Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low. The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth" (Lk 3:5)? My interpretation: The way of the Lord will become "handicapped accessible" for all God's people at his birth. (A.J. had bad luck during a soccer-volleyball game and has been healing with the aid of a wheelchair. Alex deftly maneuvered him throughout the parade).

Was it Mike being "selected" (more likely coerced like Simon the Cyrene) to represent St. Francis on the float before the baby Jesus? Mike tells me he went into a "mannequin challenge" and remained on his knees perfectly still in prayer the entire parade. Such spiritual intensity had to be noticed by the judges.

Possibly it was none of the above, as children and a real-life baby were in the manger scene! No one can resist such a coup! Unless others placed a few dogs and cats on their floats, it would be a no-brainer!

However, I would put my money on the novices' combined spirit, energy and enthusiasm. They were one of the last floats and yet chose to go ahead to applaud each entry that preceded them. "Two claps each??" (*inside joke*). They then returned to joined the vocation float and truly made it a "Living Nativity" as they went out from it to greet and mingle with the crowd. Many asked "Are you for real???" And their joyful response was "Yes we are!!!" – Yes, they are!!! ("Two claps each!!")



**Br. Frank Grinko,  
OFM Cap.**





# YULETIDE BLESSINGS



Father Calin of the St. John the Evangelist Romanian Catholic Mission of Oxnard came with his family to celebrate Mass for us in the Byzantine Rite at the beginning of the month.



The Capuchin Vocation Office won first place for their float in the Solvang Christmas parade this year!





# YULETIDE BLESSINGS



The novices celebrated Our Lady of Guadalupe with Old Mission Santa Ynez!



Bishop Robert Barron came to San Lorenzo for Mass on the last Sunday of Advent.





# YULETIDE BLESSINGS



Our outstanding *Belen* (Guamanian Nativity Creche) was the work of our brothers Austin & Francisco. The local Chamorro community came to celebrate with us, and they shared their wonderful cooking with us!



Christmas decorating!





# WINTER BLESSINGS



# MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM SAN LORENZO!



# NOVICE HIGHLIGHTS



## Br. FARIS NAJOR Province of St. Joseph

**Hometown:** Baghdad, Iraq via Farmington Hills, MI **Age:** 37

**Name a book, movie, or song that you think describes you:**

The Return of the Prodigal Son by Henri Nouwen

**What were you doing before you entered Capuchin formation?**

Enjoying the single life. Working as Commercial Underwriter. Directing & leading Kairos retreats and other retreats, as well as participating & volunteering in different Chaldean parish activities.

**What brought you to the Capuchins?**

God.

**What kind of ministry do you enjoy doing (and why)?**

Jail ministry in Milwaukee. We talked about Christ's teaching. I listened to their stories. These men's stories influenced me to focus more on social justice issues.

**Who has influenced your spirituality the most?**

Different people throughout my life have had different influences on my spirituality.

**What is something that our readers probably don't know about you?**

I belong to the Chaldean Rite.

## Br. ALEX de MELO

### Province of Mary, Mother of the Good Shepherd

**Hometown:** London, Ontario **Age:** 27

**Name a book, movie, or song that you think describes you:**

Book: The Art of Manliness Movie: Pacific Rim

Song: "Learn to Fly" by the Foo Fighters

**What were you doing before you entered Capuchin formation?**

Worked at a fast food restaurant, worked at a factory, leader of youth ministry. Work hard, play hard!

**What brought you to the Capuchins?**

My spiritual director encouraged me to check out the Capuchins.

**What kind of ministry do you enjoy doing (and why)?**

Anything involving helping people; I am a huge people person.

**Who, in particular, has influenced your life and spirituality?**

My family but especially my Dad. He has shown me what hard work really means.

**What is something that our readers probably don't know about you?**

I like classic things such as wet shaving, fountain pens, and poetry.





# PAX ET BONUM



## **ABOUT US**

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

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