

# *The Caperone*

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*Newsletter of the North American Pacific Capuchin Conference Novitiate*



**‘To the Glory of His Resurrection’**

**The Great Gift of Silence**

**Easter Poems and Prose**



Dawn over the mountains of Santa Cruz, Saint Clare's Retreat Center, Soquel.

BRO. CARLOS GARCIA-CRUZ



## *The Caperone*

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Newsletter of the North American Pacific  
Capuchin Conference Novitiate  
"My God and My All"

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Mary, Mother of the Good Shepherd  
(Central Canada)

Our Lady of Angels (California-Oregon)

Our Lady of the Assumption (Australia)

Our Lady Star of the Sea

(Vice Province: Guam-Hawaii)

Saint Augustine (Pennsylvania)

Saint Conrad (Mid-America)

Saint Joseph (Detroit)

Saint Mary (New York-New England)

Stigmata of Saint Francis (New Jersey)

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Cover: Jerusalem cross,  
San Lorenzo Seminary, looking north.  
Photo by Bro. Carlos Garcia-Cruz.

## FROM THE EDITORS

# A Message of Transformation

Dear readers, happy Easter! May the love, peace, strength, and joy of our resurrected Christ be in your hearts.

What a wonderful season we are

living in! There is a sense of change, renewal, and hope in our midst. Why? Because Christ is not dead; He is alive. In the words of Brother Frank, "change is in the air when God is involved." And what an involvement of God in our lives; through Christ's resurrection, God has won for us eternal life and has invited us to be witnesses of Him, even to the confinements of the world.

Indeed, the message of the resurrection is one of transformation, one of passing from death to life. But in order to live out this message, we need to make a personal commitment. Hopefully, our Lenten practices prepared us to make such a commitment and thus embrace the invitation of the resurrected Christ.

We novices had a wonderful preparation to enter into the Easter season. Prior to Holy Week, we had a weeklong silent retreat in which our purpose was to meditate thoroughly on whether we believe God is calling us to take the religious vows. This retreat helped us to renew our desire to commit our lives fully to our living God (Page 9). In order to prepare well our Easter Triduum, we formed committees that were responsible for preparing the environment

and liturgies. Our work together made our liturgies deeply prayerful experiences (Page 4) and opened for us a direct encounter with Christ.

With the renewal of our baptismal promises during the Easter Vigil, we recommitted ourselves to living more fully our Christian life. This requires us to take concrete steps and adopt a practical mind-set in living our life. For example, we can learn from Brother Jerry's reflection that we need to learn to walk in hope (Page 7). Also, we need to embrace the gospel values that Pope Francis has exemplified through his messages and humble gestures. Pope Francis is another sign of the renewing work of our living God within His Church.

Indeed, our resurrected Christ continues transforming our time. As the resurrected Christ transformed the life of his disciples, so he wants to transform our lives. We just need to be open to God's work in us and trust in him. Let us ask our joyful heavenly mother to intercede for us, asking our living God to give us the grace to be open to the transforming work of God in our lives.

In the hearts of Jesus and Mary,

*Bro. Carlos García-Cruz*

*April 3, 2013*

*Wednesday Within the Octave of Easter*

**Ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam.**

## Irish for an Evening, Catholic for a Lifetime



BRO. CARLOS GARCIA-CRUZ

**Brother Fadi and Brother Alejandro and all the novice brothers feasted on corned beef and cabbage, delighted in Celtic music and dance, and took joy in good company as they celebrated Saint Patrick on March 10 at Old Mission Santa Ines.**

## Novitiate Calendar

April 7: Bro. Fadi Touma (birthday)

April 8: Annunciation (solemnity)

April 17: Relics of Saint Anthony of Padua at Old Mission Santa Barbara: evening meal and Mass

April 20: San Lorenzo Jubilee Mass

April 21: Celebration of Bro. Joachim Strupp's 50th sacerdotal anniversary

April 22: Mary, Mother of the Good Shepherd, and Saint Conrad of Parzham (patronal feasts)

April 23-24: Day of recollection (presenter: Bro. Mark Schenk, Province of Saint Conrad)

April 24: Saint Fidelis of Sigmaringen (feast)

April 27: House chapter; Mass and Guamanian festival, Queen of Angels Parish, Lompoc

## FROM THE FORMATORS

# Learn From the Lizards

For some it's the blossoming of the trees, for others the appearance of the wildflowers, or perhaps the increased singing of the birds. For me, though, the surest sign that spring has arrived at San Lorenzo is that the lizards begin to appear and can be seen sunning themselves on every wall, rock, and path around the novitiate. With apologies to the novices, I have to say that I've learned a lot about formation by watching the lizards.

It's fascinating to watch lizards sun themselves. They stand still, absorbing the sun's rays to regulate their body temperature and keep themselves alive through the still chilly nights. They need the sun to keep their blood warm. At San Lorenzo we teach the novices the importance of basking in God's rays, through the stillness of prayer, the warmth of fraternal life, and the light of a compassion expressed in works of service to others. We need the grace of God and the power of the Good News of Jesus Christ, otherwise our hearts will become cold.

The lizards also reveal another important aspect of our Capuchin Franciscan journey: that

we need to look at the world with new eyes and find God's beauty in its great variety among His creatures. At first glance, the lizards just seem to be dull-colored, scaly and unremarkable creatures. If you take the time to really look at a lizard, however, you will see all sorts of colors hidden in those scales, beautiful blues and impressive reds. In



BRO. BOBBY BARBATO

forming our novices, we formators have to look beyond any initial judgments we make, open to seeing the beauty of God's grace and love at work in each novice. Our goal is to help the novices to look at each other in the same way. Like Francis, the friars seek to honor the beauty of God in many different people, especially those who appear poor and unremarkable.

Thank God for the lizards. And thank God for the novices. We are all creatures of God, as Saint Francis would remind us, and each of us gives praise to God by being what we were created to be.

The Lord bless and keep you always!

Bro. Bobby Barbato

April 3, 2013

Wednesday Within the Octave of Easter

## 2012-13 NAPCC Novices

<b>Mary, Mother of the Good Shepherd</b>	Carlos Garcia-Cruz Ryan Gebhart
Michael Mascarenhas	Christopher Johnson
Fadi Touma	Andrew McCarty

<b>Our Lady of Angels</b>	<b>Saint Conrad</b>
Jose Chavez	Jason Moore
Alexander Rodriguez	Marshall Schmidt
Alejandro Sanchez	

<b>Our Lady Star of the Sea</b>	<b>Saint Joseph</b>
Gavin Diego	Fred Cabras
	Jason Graves

<b>Saint Augustine</b>	<b>Saint Mary</b>
Majdi Ammari	John Alvarado
Tage Danielson	Linneker Marin
Reynaldo Frias-Santana	Will Tarraza
	Anthony Zuba

## Preparing for the Paschal Mystery

Capuchins are not only people of prayer, but also leaders of prayer. Accordingly, all the novice brothers have a direct role in preparing our common prayer and daily celebration of the Eucharist. With Saint Francis of Assisi and our ancestors in faith, we believe that conducting the Liturgy of the Hours and the Mass with excellence is essential to cultivating the spirit of prayer and devotion proper to Gospel living.

With all our Easter Triduum celebrations taking place at San Lorenzo, all the brothers were enlisted in the liturgical preparations. Given the solemnity of these holy days, we were urged on to greater care in the organization and execution of the liturgies, so that our sacrifice of praise would be more perfect.

With eight months of experience behind us, including the solemnity of Christmas and the feast of Francis, we were ready for the challenge. At our side like a well-traveled guide was Brother Bob, who throughout Holy Week shepherded us across the field of Holy Thursday and the valley of Good Friday to the mountaintops of Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday. He taught us to conceive the Triduum as one continuous liturgy unbroken from the Thursday evening Mass of the Lord's Supper to Sunday evening prayer.

With that vision in mind, we set about our work with an attitude of collegiality. The spirit of cooperation that animates our house chores and work projects, our physical labors, permeated our spiritual labors.

We brought all our gifts to the sanctuary. No talent went overlooked, and the talents we employed were many. We needed cantors, musicians, readers, servers, yes; but we also needed editors, to design our worship programs; decorators, to fit the chapel to the function; and bakers, to bake our own Eucharistic bread! (Not to mention engineers, to build the fire for our paschal candle.) Highlights of the liturgy—the choreography of our foot-washing on Holy Thursday; the drama of the Passion narrative on Good Friday; the stately pace of our vigil—proved that the Holy Spirit works through preparation as much as by inspiration.

When we offer our petitions at evening prayer, Brother Lance is often heard to say, "In thanksgiving for the many ways that we worked together today..." Indeed, we join Brother Lance in gratitude to God for giving us the grace to collaborate so well in our spiritual labor. As one in heart and mind, but with many hands and voices, in all its members, our fraternity fully inhabited the Paschal Mystery.



BRO. JOSE CHAVEZ



BRO. MAJDI AMMARI



## Lumen Christi. Deo Gratias.

BY BRO. BOBBY BARBATO

On Holy Saturday night, as during any vigil, we stand in the night, in faith and hope that even in the darkness God is present among us. At the Easter Vigil we are given a very important symbol of our hope: the light of the Easter Candle lit from a blessed fire. We follow this light into the church and place it in our midst as we listen to the Word of God and sing His praises. We profess our trust in the Light of Christ.

Our life's journey is in many ways like the Easter Vigil, a journey through a world where there are shadows and darkness. The paschal candle is a powerful reminder of how we need to live out our Christian lives during such a vigil.

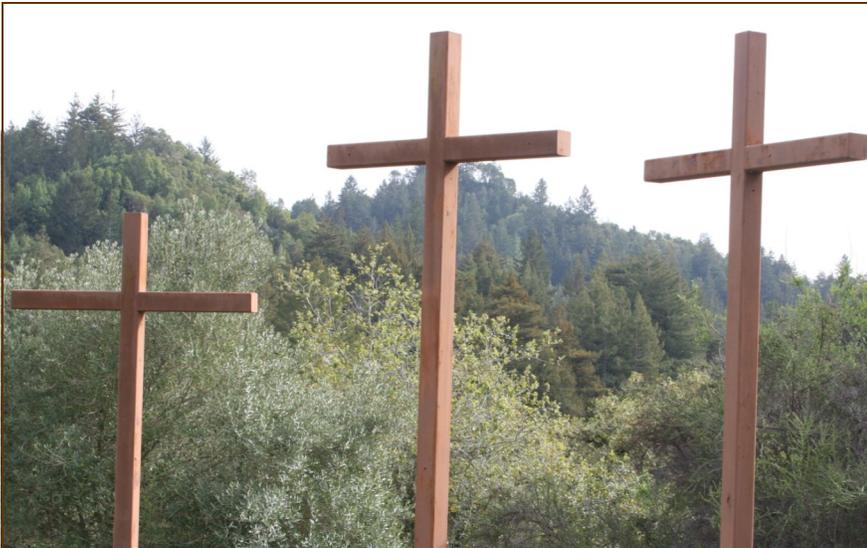
To see by the light of the paschal candle, we need to keep this light near to us, so that it can illumine the world around us. So also, if we are to make our way through the world as the followers of Christ, we need to keep His light near. That light comes to us through the Word of God and the sacraments, and it is nourished by our prayer. We are able to see the world by the light of Christ only if we stay in communication with God, making the Lord the center of our lives.

Another truth about the light from the paschal candle: it is not diminished when it is shared. After entering the darkened church, we all lit our small candles from the paschal candle, and so multiplied its light, and were better able to make our way forward. So too with our faith: the more we share it, the brighter it becomes. And if someone's candle goes out, it can be relit from another's candle. The compassionate support we give to one another on the journey of faith is a great gift from God, the light of Christ.

Finally, the light of the paschal candle during the vigil is a reminder that we are waiting for something even more glorious, the rising of the sun. What our faith reveals to us now about the light of God's love is only a small part of that amazing reality. The book of Revelation tells us that the heavenly Jerusalem will not need light of sun or the moon, because the Lord himself will be its light. Standing around the paschal candle, singing God's praises, gives us hope that Christ's light will drive away the shadows of hatred, fear, and violence. We will see the glorious sunrise of God's Kingdom come.

So on Holy Saturday, we pray that our experience of being gathered in the light of the paschal candle will help us live the Christian journey in faith, so that we with Jesus may be the light of the world.





## LA CRUZ

Cuando contemplo la cruz madero en que dio la vida mi amado amigo y hermano JESUS el alma se llena de no sé que.

El alma se llena de tristeza y dolor recuerda todo lo que sufrió JESUS su cuerpo torturado y ensangrentado su corazón destrozado por la traición.

Un sentido de incapacidad invade el alma en la cruz, JESUS me amo ilimitadamente y yo? Le amo limitadamente, y soy infiel no LE puedo amar como quisiera.

De repente, el alma se llena de alegría ha sentido que JESUS le dice: ánimo! no te reclamo nada, no te condeno tu deseo de amarme me agrada.

Ahora, el alma se llena de fuerza su anhelo es dar todo por JESUS, llevar la cruz como bandera, ir a donde a JESUS le señale.

Cuanta misericordia y gracia! como expresar agradecimiento el lenguaje humana es limitado solo el silencio es apropiado.

Bro. Carlos García-Cruz

## IS IT I, RABBI?

O beloved Jesus,  
who died on the cross for us,  
we continue to crucify you today.

It is you whom we crucify in the orphans,  
you we crucify in the wars  
among peoples,  
you we crucify in the poor.

O beloved Jesus,  
open our eyes to see as you see,  
touch our hearts to feel as you feel.

O beloved Jesus,  
transform our whole being completely,  
and pour out your Holy Spirit upon us.

You died on the cross for us,  
you paid the price of our sins,  
you are our Redeemer and Savior.

O beloved Jesus,  
show us your path,  
and teach us to carry our crosses.

O beloved Jesus,  
help us to announce the Good News,  
and denounce what is evil.

We crucify you every single day,  
in the women and children  
who are victims of war,  
in the sick and imprisoned.

We continue to crucify you  
when we oppress the workers,  
when we do not pay a just salary  
to our employees,  
when we do not support the poor.

When we do not treat immigrants with  
dignity and respect,  
when we approve evil laws  
against immigrants  
and when we go to invade other countries.

We continue to crucify you when we are  
indifferent towards our neighbor,  
when we are not crafters of peace,  
when we are discriminating against our  
Muslim siblings because of their beliefs.

O beloved Jesus,  
have pity on us,  
please have pity on us and show us  
your mercy.

Bro. Reynaldo Frias-Santana

Truck carrying sugar cane, Batey Las Pajas, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 2005.



IN THE GARDEN

# Easter Green

BY BRO. JERRY JOHNSON



**B**rothers Alex and

Andrew took over for Brothers Fadi and Marshall in the friary garden in January, when all the novices

switched to new house jobs. They, along with Brother Anthony, planted seeds from some different types of decorative squash, gourds, and pumpkins in 26 containers a few weeks ago. Those plants will be transplanted directly into the garden in early April.

This was the first planting of the 2013 friary garden, but they and the other novices have been hard at work all winter keeping the weeds down, transplanting perennials, and doing construction for the 34-by-60-foot shade cloth that might be ready for installation sometime this year.

Over the winter, the strawberry plants, asparagus, rhubarb, thyme, fennel, and some parsley continued to stay green, but the growth rate virtually stopped. As of now, about a third of the garden is made up of these plants, along with more raspberries, artichokes, and Brother Marshall's plot of mushrooms. Mushrooms tend to grow pretty well wherever friars are conversing.

Egg hunt and football toss at San Lorenzo, Easter Sunday.



BRO. CARLOS GARCIA-CRUZ

Jokes aside, several friars have done a tremendous amount of work and have really started a nice perennial section that will be producing heavily in a few years, when the plants mature. Perhaps the most important work was done by the friars who have worked hard to keep the weeds under control during the winter rains.

I try not to let it be too much of a distraction from my main work here at the novitiate, but I really do enjoy gardening during my free time. Unfortunately, it was a tragedy in the family that led me to appreciate the care of plants.

When I was 21 years old and still in college, I received a terrible phone call: Heath, my six-year-old nephew, had been in an accident. He sneaked out of the house one day, went to the garage, strapped on a helmet, and took a three-wheeler out for a ride on my sister's farm. He knew he was not permitted to do this. He was just a kid, but he was strong

enough to drive the three-wheeler around the house. This time, however, he drove to the backside of the property and flipped the three-wheeler in a ravine. He died shortly after arriving at the hospital. The family never quite recovered from this loss, and I don't think I have, either. I suppose people are never the same after the loss of a loved one.

My sister, Judy, told me that about a week before Heath died, he was looking intently out the kitchen window on a bright spring day that was around the time of Easter. She asked him what he was looking at. Out of nowhere, he asked her, "Do you know what my favorite color is?" She answered, "What is it?" He said, "Green..." From a Capuchin who was stationed at our local parish at the time, Bro. Bede Louzon, we learned that green is the color of hope.

Ever since then, I have tried to surround myself with green, the color of hope, as a reminder that God desires life, even in the midst of a people's worst nightmare. From the time I heard of Heath's favorite color until I joined the order and up to now, be it in Indiana, Brooklyn, Chicago, or Santa Ynez, I have tried to keep surrounded by plants as a reminder of God's desire for life, and to be consistently kind to the people I live with, even though at times I fail.

I've seen movies and greeting cards that portray heaven with images of a sort of cloudy blankness, devoid of creation, in the color of white. Especially near Eastertide, Heath is a reminder to us to think in the color of hope: a spring garden green that moves toward its fullness of life in the wake of the presence of God.

Lilies for the sanctuary.



BRO. CARLOS GARCIA-CRUZ

## LIVE

Oh my soul, glorify your God. Hear what He is saying to you—"I am your creator"—because He knew you from the beginning and he allowed you to be created. He created you to be good and perfect because you are from His pure, Holy Spirit. If you sin, He will forgive you, and if you sin again, He will forgive you again. But if you love the sin and you don't return to him, woe to you from His punishment on Earth and in Heaven. He will lock you away from Him, and you won't know when you'll be freed. Yet He gave us His Only Begotten Son who died for you, destroying that sin. By rising from the dead, He will always have mercy on you. Because He rose from the dead, seek forgiveness, and you will return to Him.

In truth, you do not want to be a slave to your body, because it is temporary, full of vanity and earthly desires. It will always desire more. Don't follow these earthly desires. Be careful. This body is full of grumbling, anger, and negativity. Tame your body like a lion. Treat it as an angel, not as a devil, and it will listen to you. If you do this, the truth is both of you will have the kingdom of God. You will taste heaven here on earth, now, until you will feast in the Heavenly Kingdom for eternity.

Praise, my soul, the Lord, and surrender yourself to Him in every moment of your life. Be mindful of yourself, because you are created from His Holy and Blessed Hand. And when you

become tired from your work to tame your body, find your rest in your Creator when He calls you home. Go, because you cannot sin anymore, for He has called you. You are absolved from any sin, because he wants you to praise Him perfectly and purely forever. You are for Him, for before anything, He is.

And as for you, my body, I pity you. How much you exhaust me from your troubling desires for earthly pleasures! You never stop asking, and when any temptations arise, you fall immediately, because you are weak and foolish. You want to eat, drink, and play unceasingly. How easily you forget who created you. How easily you forget where true life, true goodness, and true blessing come from. Never forget how God gives you goodness and blessings, both on earth and in eternal life.

Stop, my dear. Glorify the Lord, and give Him thanks for everything. Don't ask anything from Him, because as a loving Father, He knows what you need. Rather, be attentive to others in your prayers, fasting, and denying yourself and your desires. In that poverty and obedience to Him, you will show yourself purely giving to God what is His.

If you do this, both of you will have the Kingdom of God. Teach your soul, and let your soul teach you, for you are precious in God's eyes. He loves you; He created you because He looked upon you as good, and He will always love you and teach you. For Him is the glory, honor, and kingdom forever and ever. Amen.

**Bro. Fadi Touma**

## REFLECTION

# Meeting Jesus in Our Neighbor

BY BRO. JASON MOORE

**A**s we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus in this Easter season, we celebrate the presence of the risen Christ in our brothers and sisters.



In my ministry to the homebound through Old Mission Santa Ines, I have found that, not only do I bring Jesus to those I meet, but Jesus also comes to me through them.

I wasn't sure how this ministry would go at first. I am not a great conversationalist, and this left me unsure what I had to offer. But I put my trust in God and knew He would provide whatever I needed. It turned out amazing, and I met some incredible people who

had built up a solid faith over many, many years. I discovered it was they who were offering me something, those bits of wisdom about life, faith, and love that bring home the ideas only understood in theory.

They needed an ear, not a mouth, and I was capable of being that ear. Most of what people want and need is someone to recognize them as a person and someone to listen to them, to hear their struggles, their blessings, and their wisdom. I don't need to offer advice, fix their problems, or entertain them; I just need to be there, and God provides the rest.

Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, in speaking of truth in *Degrees of Humility and Pride*, says: "We discover truth ... in our neighbor when we suffer in sympathy with others." I have learned the truth in others through these experiences. I have seen how losing a husband who had been

there for more than 50 years can be devastating; how losing a child in an accident can leave deep scars; and how cancer and sickness can create so much suffering. But all these events leave them aware of their blessings and hopeful of the future and ultimately trusting in God.

Some share great truths of God. One of the women we visit speaks of Jesus as her "bud." She feels His promptings to give to this person or say something to that person, and she does it without hesitation. I know I have failed at those promptings many times, but through her, I see that these little moments make for a lifetime of doing God's will, of being a true disciple, of heeding the words of Mary: "Do whatever He tells you."

Not every day is a profound experience; sometimes there is not much to say or to be heard. But even then there is a recognition that Jesus is in those we meet. It amazes me how in these exchanges, both of us are filled with the love of Christ, for both of us are filled with more than what we offered. It is like the feeding of the multitude; what we receive appears to be only a little, yet it fills us to overflowing. God disguises His banquet so all have their fill.



BRO. CARLOS GARCIA-CRUZ

## From Silence to Great Silence

By BRO. ANTHONY ZUBA

During the week before Holy Week, March 17-22, the novices and formation team sojourned at Saint Clare's Retreat Center in Soquel, in the Santa Cruz mountains. With the exception of meals and one-on-one meetings with the formators, we spent the week in total silence.

What a gift from God and the Capuchins to us! And what a revelation. For us who are discerning whether we want to be Capuchins, if we are able to live the life, and if this is how God wants us to live, silence was the best thing for us. With our spiritual senses sharpened in the solitude, we could hear more clearly what God has always been saying to us.

Speaking for myself, never did I feel more Franciscan than I did that week. The Spirit stilled my thoughts and words, dilated my soul, and poured light into me. The silence was cleansing, healing, restoring.

The retreat also gave me a greater appreciation of the practical wisdom of our order's founders. From the beginning of the Capuchin reform, the brothers cultivated silence in personal and collective solitude in order to observe the Rule of Saint Francis and live the Gospel more faithfully. To safeguard this treasure of consecrated life, our Capuchin ancestors chose to live outside the towns and cities where they preached and ministered, opting for hermitages over a more conventual mode of residence. With admonitions to the friars to hold their speech in check, the original Constitutions of 1536 prescribed perpetual silence in the chapel, cloister, and dormitory as well as periods of silence in the refectory.

Our modern Constitutions state, "Let silence, which is the faithful guardian of the interior spirit and required by charity in community life, be held in great esteem in all our fraternities in order to preserve a life of prayer, study, and recollection" (57). At San

Lorenzo, the novice brothers have had opportunity to practice silence communally during meditation in chapel; and personally during the nightly hours of prayerful silence, weekly afternoons of hermitage, and monthly days of recollection.

But even in a secluded place like the novitiate, where the external distractions are minimal, there are things to induce a disturbance of the interior spirit. We have televisions and computers, newspapers and magazines, games and puzzles. Even our most constructive activities, such as house chores and work projects, kitchen duties, or class assignments, if done unmindfully, can lead us into a state of inward inattention.

This is why it is beneficial, even necessary, once in a while, for the brothers to seek a change of venue, leaving their own contemplative environment for another where they can set aside all their regular activities and diversions. Making a retreat, especially a silent one, is like hitting the spiritual reset button.

We broke our great silence after night prayer at the end of the fourth day. It was a curious feeling to speak again. The brothers spoke with subdued voices, and you could hear undertones of unusual warmth in each one.

They mingled with one another very freely, going out of their way to talk to brothers they had not spoken to lately. And they showed a charity toward each other in greater degree than the good measure they already do.

Our hosts were the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Sorrows, whose primary ministry is retreat and who have a firm devotion to the Divine Mercy. We thank Sisters Carol Anne, Joanne, Regina, and Therese for the food, the beauty, and the serenity ... and the sprinkling with holy water as we drove off that Friday morning! We are grateful to you for bringing us back to our Capuchin roots. We bless you for leading us from silence to great silence.



BRO. MAJDI AMMARI

## REFLECTION

# Be Sent

BY BRO. WILL TARRAZA



In high school, I wrote a short story about a Jesuit missionary in Peru who was killed by the Shining Path. Its details are unnecessary to relate here,

but you can see that some of us have fantasized about being a missionary.

However, being a missionary is not about personal glory; rather, it is an expression of what the Constitutions concerning Capuchin life calls “a daring adventure of love.”

Bro. Helmut Rakowski, general secretary for mission for the Capuchin Order, and Bro. David Beaumont, a humble California native ministering in Mexico, addressed our community recently. Both brothers shared an enthusiasm for mission that changed entirely my per-

spective on what it means to be a missionary.

The *mystery* of missionary life is, as Minister General Bro. Mauro Jöhri describes it, the heart of the Order.

Catholic foreign mission has always been a mysterious notion for me. The idea of traveling to a remote destination to bring the good news of Jesus Christ intrigues and inspires me. As Capuchin missionaries, brothers leave the stability and familiar practices of daily life in their homeland to bear witness to Christ and enter into a communion with people they serve. This seems daunting, but the words of Christ in John’s Gospel bear much meaning here: “As the Father has sent me, so I send you” (20:21).

In the same way Christ brought light to a dark world, so too is a Capuchin missionary called to bring a smile to a desperate face. But as I see it, only over the path of prayer and discernment can one “be sent” by Christ and the Order to a mission, because foreign mission is a “vocation within a vocation.”

We Capuchins understand that American culture is in need of the New Evangelization to enable the faithful to fall in love with Christ. In light of this, it may seem that foreign missions are not as important anymore, for the “need” is greater here. But Brother Helmut rebutted this

view, citing Brother Mauro’s circular letter to the entire order, “Mission at the Heart of the Order.” He quoted the letter, saying, “Our missionary activity should not be understood primarily in terms of how widely the Order is spread in the world, but rather as a way of making the charism of Saint Francis present in cultures where it is still unknown.” Granted, this charism may be practically unknown today in Western culture, but the Holy Spirit will call the brothers where it will, and the call is not conditioned by “need” alone. With the Gospel there are no boundaries.

For me, living this vocation means bearing a joyful spirit and being “on fire” with the love of Christ. To touch each broken individual with gentle, brotherly affection manifests Christ’s love. In the presence of Brother David you could feel a kind and tender nature. As he celebrated Mass with us, I felt connected to the people of Mexico he spoke of through his heartfelt homily, and his offering of the Eucharist showed me his ardent desire for Christ and his people.

As you finish reading this reflection, please say a prayer for Brothers David and Helmut, and for all missionaries. And may the Lord inspire more brothers to “be sent” as a way of bringing joy to a broken world.

## REFLECTION

# Vale, Benedictus. Ciao, Francesco!

BY BRO. TAGE DANIELSON

**B**enedict XVI’s announcement that he was abdicating the papacy surprised me. While I could see that he was aging and slowing down, the thought of him resigning did not enter my mind.



Even now as the Church has a new Holy Father, Pope Francis, I am still adjusting to the reality of Benedict bearing the title of “emeritus.” I will remember him in his papacy as a kind, gentle man who wanted to bring Christ alive for us. In the spirit of John Paul II, he reached out to young people, as during his installation homily, by telling us we have nothing

to fear—and nothing to lose—by choosing Jesus Christ. And, in reminding us of our history and tradition, he issued an important letter, *Summorum Pontificum*, encouraging a wider celebration of the traditional Latin Mass.

Unlike the 2005 conclave, where my only memory is a vague one of the white smoke signaling the election of Benedict, I followed closely this recent conclave. I read many articles online reviewing the different cardinal electors. There was a lot of speculation in the media about the new pope. From what region would he come? Would he be a major figure from the Roman Curia? Also, since the previous pope was alive, what influence would Benedict have on the election? I did not know what to expect from the conclave. There was a lot of chatter in the news, but in reality no one could know what would happen. I watched everything unfold with eager

anticipation for our next Holy Father.

The conclave was over quickly. What I witnessed was that the cardinals lived it as a prayer event. Before it began on the evening of March 12 (Rome time), there was morning Mass, then later a solemn procession in the Sistine Chapel. Some of us watched this procession on EWTN and saw individual cardinals pray over Scripture and pledge themselves to secrecy of the conclave. From the general congregations (meetings before the conclave) to the conclave itself, I saw the cardinals praying for guidance from the Holy Spirit—and asking the faithful to do the same. I have faith in the Church, and though I remain saddened that Benedict is no longer pope, I know this 2,000-year old Church, founded by Christ, lives on.

The Church lives on in Pope Francis, and the name he chose speaks to his vision. He reminds us to remember the material and spiritual poor, bring peace to the world, and care for God’s creation. The first pope to take the name Francis is channeling the life of our founder, Saint Francis of Assisi.

*Saint Francis, pray for us!*