



CAPERONE

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2019

THE WORKING LIFE AT THE NOVITIATE



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FORMATOR'S CORNER

A PATIENT(?) PATIENT

By Br. Phil Bernier, OFM, Cap.

I grew up a southpaw, left-handed just like my father. So sure was my mother of this natural inclination that she traveled with me on the first day of Catholic school to ask the teachers not to force me to write with my right hand; Sr. Mary Francesca assured her that those days were long past. I was not, as was once believed, a servant of the Devil but just left-handed! And as so often happens with lefties, I did develop a certain dexterity living in a right-handed world but when push comes to shove, when grabbing for a pen or picking up a knife and fork, the left hand wins out...until a Monday morning in early December when, for no apparent reason, a pen simply slipped through my left hand, now suddenly unable to hold it in place.

That startling event began a medical journey that moved from chiropractor to physician to a "hand" doctor (I didn't know such a specialist existed!) to a neurologist and then finally to an orthopedic surgeon. Further challenge came when my operation was cancelled out of an abundance of caution by the surgeon while I was under anesthesia on the operating table! After all that drama and delay, everything ultimately came to pass with surgery on February 27th. I've been back at San Lorenzo for three weeks with life *slowly* returning to "normal" but not nearly as quickly as I think it ought to be! Through all of this, a phrase well-known to us at San Lorenzo keeps ringing in my ear: "Patience in all things." Why is it so simple to say and so challenging to live?

Before coming to San Lorenzo, I spent six-



teen years in parochial ministry, with twelve of those as a pastor in urban parishes. One of the great blessings of those days was the honor to be welcomed to parishioners' bedrooms in world-renowned medical centers, community clinics, nursing homes, hospices and best of all, visiting at the kitchen table sharing the healing of the sacraments along

with a cup of coffee! The events of the past weeks brought those experiences to life again but this time, not from the bedside but from the bed of an impatient patient. But how blessed I have been, "blessed by the Best" as my parishioners loved to say! Blessed to have been cared for with concern and dignity in an outstanding hospital, to have Bill with me, watching each step of the way, to have Robert let me sleep in when I need to and return to life here as I can. I feel blessed by our novices, attentive and concerned, always ready to run for the mop to clean up the mess when things still slip through my hands and to have people all over the world lifting me up in prayer to our Divine Physician! This year, God gave me a Lent that I would have never asked for but it's bringing me back to the basics: the consolation of prayer, the power in simple gestures, kind words, in hearts willing just to be present to one in need. It is challenging to be a patient and to be patient, but it becomes simpler when the experience of God's healing love is made tangibly present in so many ways! How blessed to be blessed by the Best!

All Good Things!

THE WORKS OF OUR HUMAN HANDS

An integral part of novitiate is work projects and house jobs. Work within the community was an important part of fraternity for St. Francis and has been so for the Capuchins as well; as such, it is part of the novices discernment.

With this in mind, we asked the novices: How have work projects and house jobs impacted your discernment of the Capuchin way of life?

House Job: Sacristan



"It has allowed me to explore a new aspect of Capuchin life and to have a new respect for creation and care for it. It has also allowed me to have a sense of minority. I have learned the dignity of work (for those who labor) and how to be a minister to creation and my brothers."

- Br. Martin Ngo

"Being told to work with horse manure is not No. 1 on my favorite things to do. As a Capuchin I won't be shoveling manure literally, but figuratively I will be asked to do things I won't want to do. Brotherly obedience is a learning opportunity within the human experience."

- Br. Jessie Quintanilla



House Job: Caperone

"Through working, I have learned the value and dignity of work and to apply myself to it diligently. Every work carried out with love glorifies God and contributes to the betterment of the community. Working has taught me to be more patient, prudent and loving."

- Br. Heherson Alarde



"Manual labor here at the novitiate has stretched me in my discernment. Most importantly, it has given me a new appreciation for all the workers who do this type of manual labor every day."

- Br. Javier Rodriguez



House Job: Sacred Heart and Marian Halls Cleaning and Linens



"Having grown up on a family farm, all the manual labor has made me feel right at home! I feel the work to be a good ground for me. It is also a good foundation for life in fraternity and for life in ministry, close to everyday experience of most people

- Br. Peter Poel



"It has made me realize the importance of manual labor and of doing one's part for the good of the community."

- Br. Luis Vallhonrat

"Work projects and house jobs have taught me that learning how to work in community is an important part of the Capuchin life."

- Br. Artie Vazquez

House Job: Guestmaster



"It has helped me to witness how all our gifts come together and realize how the Lord invites me to use my gifts in our way of life."

- Br. Jarred Elbaghd



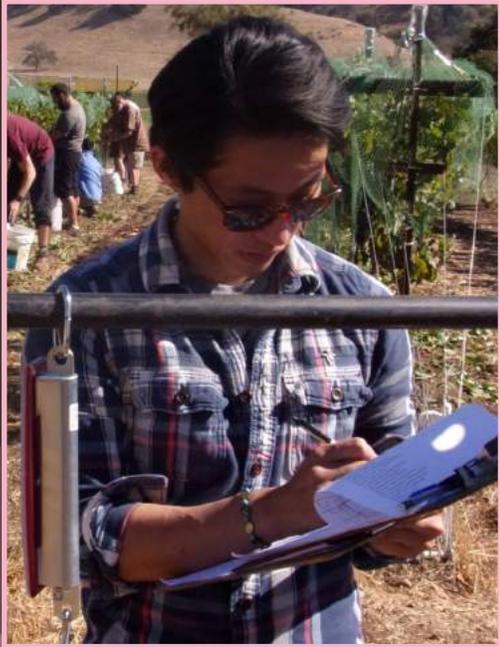
House Job: Car Zar

"I like how we work together during work projects. The house job is a way to stay active when most of the time we are sitting down during a normal day"
- Br. Joe Morton



House Job: Kitchen

"I enjoy work projects, especially working at the vineyard, because it is a great opportunity to be with and in nature, with God's providence."
- Br. Luke Kim



"Being a hands on person, I quite enjoy it. However, how we collaborate and foster fraternity in a working environment is the important aspect of it. Francis' rebuilding of three chapels is a great example of this."
- Br. Duy Tran

House Job: Garden



House Job: Vineyard



"It has made me appreciate how blessed I am and calls me to do more for others, especially those who are not as fortunate."
- Br. Aldrae Cruz

A NOVICE'S JOURNEY

By Br. Javier Rodriguez

Let's Get To Work



Desk and office jobs. All jobs I have held since I was a teenager were office jobs. As all of you might know, there is not much heavy manual labor involved with those types of jobs. It is easy to figure out that I am not much an outdoorsy type of guy, so when I hear about work projects at the novitiate, I was a bit concerned.

I was not disappointed with my concern. Work projects here at the novitiate range from the simple house cleaning to the more strenuous ditch and hole digging. However, we have spent most of the time at the vineyard, vegetable garden and flower gardens around the property. And usually, we only spend about four hours a week on work

projects, eight if house jobs are included.

Personally, this has been one of my biggest challenges here at novitiate. Primarily because I am not used to it, both mentally or physically. However, it is part of the novitiate program and I should participate, whether I like it or not.

Now, looking back, I am happy I have had to participate. Doing this type of work has allowed me to experience, in a very small way, the life of the people who do this type of work. For example, getting up early in the morning to pick grapes at the vineyard gave a glimpse at the daily life of people who work in the fields, most of whom are grossly underpaid and mistreated immigrants. If I thought highly of them before, now I have a new-found respect for them and their labor.



Besides the new respect I have for people who do manual labor, work projects have also allowed me to spend time with my brother novices in a different way. Here, we need to work together and support each other in order to get the job done. This leads to building a stronger community and fraternal bonds. It is another blessing in this way of life.

As much as I have struggled with work projects, I am happy that I have had to do this type of work. It has been an unexpected and welcomed aspect of my discernment, one that reassures me that, at this point in my life, I am where God wants me to be.

Another part of the novitiate which has been a great source for my discernment has been ministry, my favorite...



NOVICE SPOTLIGHT



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

Hometown: Sydney, Australia **Age:** 26

Name a book/movie/song that you think describes you: Naruto, a Japanese manga series.

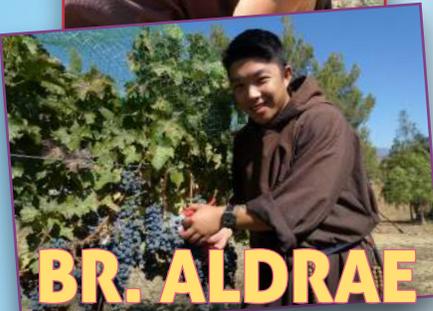
What were you doing before you entered Capuchin formation?: I was an electrician.

What brought you to the Capuchins?: I have this desire to know God more and to love and serve His people better.

What is your ministry this year and what do you enjoy the most with it (and why?): I serve at St. Vincent's in Santa Barbara which was established in 1858 by the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul. I serve as tech support where I help anyone who comes there as best I can with their computer or phone problems. What I enjoy most in this ministry is the big smile and relief I see in people's faces each time I can assist them.

Who has influenced your life/spirituality (any person in particular?): I love St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta, the founder of the Missionaries of Charity. Her unwavering zeal and great love for people especially the poor and marginalized inspires me to do the same.

What is something that our readers probably don't know about you?: When I was in school as a kid I used to be a cause for distraction during classes that my teachers always made me sit at the front by myself so that I won't disturb the class.



Province: Our Lady of Angels (California - Western America)

Hometown: Madera, California **Age:** 25

Name a book/movie/song that you think describes you: Love Is Letting Go Of Fear by Gerald G. Jampolsky, MD.

What were you doing before you entered Capuchin formation?: I was a seminarian for the Diocese of Fresno.

What brought you to the Capuchins?: When I was in seminary, the seminarians and the Capuchin novices played a soccer match. I was impressed with the way the Capuchins supported each other and how joyful they were that day. That left a positive impression on me such that I considered them when I was discerning religious life.

What is your ministry this year and what do you enjoy the most with it (and why?): My ministry is at Catholic Charities in Lompoc. I enjoy it very much because of their work for the poor. I am very blessed to be a part of a ministry that helps the poor.

Who has influenced your life/spirituality (any person in particular?): Priests from my home parish and our own Capuchin saints especially Padre Pio have greatly influenced my life and spirituality.

What is something that our readers probably don't know about you?: I first felt God's call for me to the priesthood when I was seven years old and I have been pursuing that call ever since.



BR. ARTIE VASQUEZ



MINISTRY IN FOCUS

WITH BR. MARTIN AND BR. ARTIE

AT CATHOLIC CHARITIES - LOMPOC



WHAT IS YOUR MINISTRY AT CATHOLIC CHARITIES?

BR. ARTIE: At Catholic Charities, I help out in the office and at the front desk reception where I help the clients sign in and make sure that they have all their paper work turned in.

BR. MARTIN: At Catholic Charities I work in receiving and assisting the clients with the procedure of getting their food items and supplies. I also assist in preparing their food carts so that when they come in they can go through the procedure as smoothly as possible. At times, I also work in the shipping area where we receive the donations. I then process these donated food items to make sure that they are in good and edible condition for the clients' use and then I sort them in the donation pantry shelves.



HOW IS MINISTRY HELPING YOU WITH YOUR DISCERNMENT?

A: One of the works of the Capuchins is their involvement in helping the poor. Working at Catholic Charities allows me to be with the poor and serve them in a concrete way. Here also, by listening to them, I am able to share their journey.

M: The ministry helps me to open my eyes and my heart to everyone. I realize my own brokenness and interestingly enough, a volunteer told me once that I belong there just like everyone else because I too am broken and had a past. And that is so true. I am one and in solidarity with those whom I serve as I walk with them through their struggles. It amazes me to see how solid their trust in God is that they will be provided for on their needs. This in turn makes me grateful in my discernment for it allows me to put my trust in God too despite my brokenness and to know that He is always there for me through the thick and thin of life's journey.

HOW DO YOU SEE THE CAPUCHIN LIFE REFLECTED IN THIS MINISTRY?

A: As I mentioned earlier, one of the hallmarks of the Capuchin calling is our "preferential option for the poor" and working at Catholic Charities fulfills that calling in a tangible way.

M: One of the pillars of Capuchin life is fraternity. I can see this aspect of our fraternal community life reflected within my ministry. The workers and volunteers there have a close-knit relationship as they are part of each other's lives. This relationship extends even to those who come through our doors as they are all welcomed with open arms. Each volunteer really knows the clients and they show a general concern for their well-being and try to aid them as much as they can with what we have. And even among the clients themselves, they know each other and are genuinely concerned for each other too.

HOW DO YOU SEE GOD IN THIS MINISTRY?

A: In Matthew 25: 35-36, Jesus says: "For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me." Each time I help someone at

my ministry, I see Jesus in them and His words echo in my heart, you did it to Me.

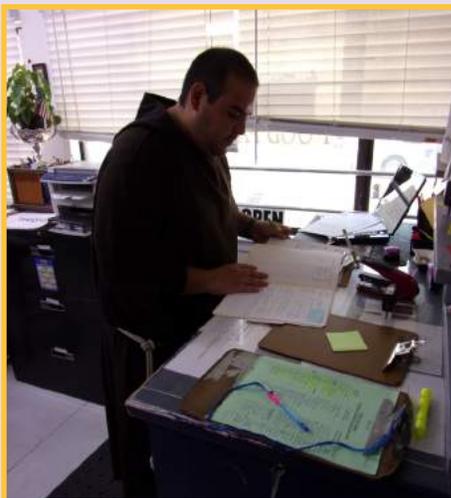
M: Here in this ministry, I see the face of God in giving mercy. Here, people come in and some of them have really nothing left and they become quite desperate. But they leave the doors with joy and gratitude for receiving kindness and generosity through the simple basic needs in life such as food and relationship. Here, they come with heavy hearts and they can pour out their struggles knowing that they will be listened to and this somehow takes the heavy yoke off their shoulders. Conversely, I see the face of God and His great love for me in their faces too, when they love me for who I am despite my brokenness. By giving love and mercy, I also receive love and mercy.



WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PART IN THIS MINISTRY?

A: My favorite part of this ministry is being with the people – both whom I serve and those I work with. It's an amazing opportunity to share each other's journey.

M: My favorite part of this ministry is the chance to interact with different people, both the volunteers and the clients. The ministry also allows me to be just be myself, to have fun by joking with them and sharing my life even in the short period of time that we are together.





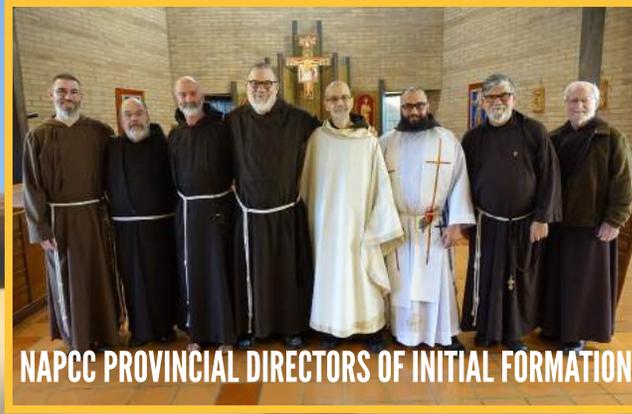
SAN LORENZO SCOOP

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.



**BR. STEVEN KROPP &
BR. ANTONY JULIUS MILTON (SJ)**



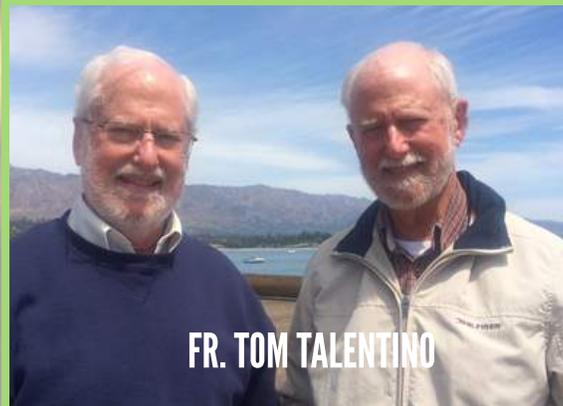
NAPCC PROVINCIAL DIRECTORS OF INITIAL FORMATION



**BR. CHRISTOPHER POPRAVAK
(PROVINCIAL MINISTER - ST. CONRAD)**



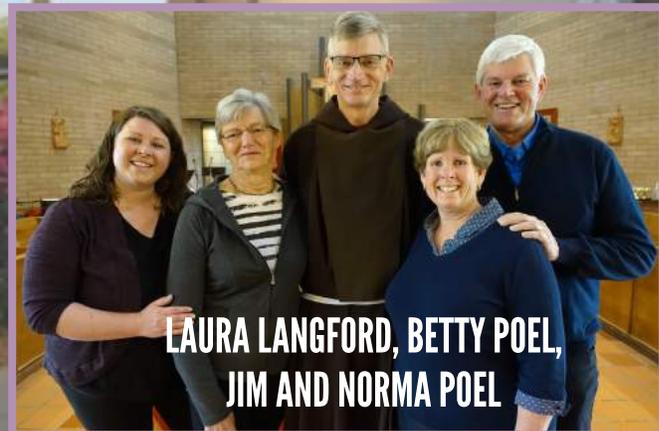
**MRS. GRACE CRUZ &
ALDREANE CRUZ**



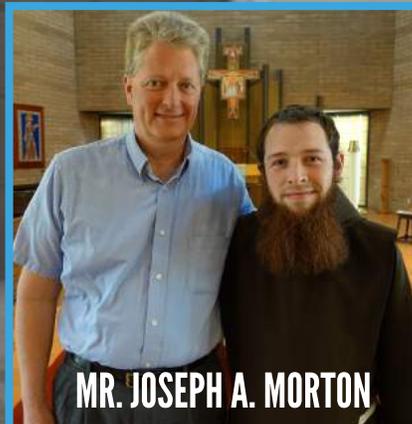
FR. TOM TALENTINO



MR. JULIO BRENES



**LAURA LANGFORD, BETTY POEL,
JIM AND NORMA POEL**



MR. JOSEPH A. MORTON



**BR. AUBERT BERTRAND
SACRED HEART PROVINCE (QUEBEC, CANADA)**



HAPPY BIRTHDAY, BR. LANCE!



**Requiescat in pace
Br. James L. Cleary, OFM Cap
(1937 - 2019)**



**XĪN NIÁN KUÀI LÈ! 新年快乐!
HAPPY LUNAR NEW YEAR!**

Sojourn in Soquel

By Br. Heherson Alarde

The serene and beautiful surroundings of **St. Clare's Retreat House** in the Santa Cruz Mountains in Soquel, California provided the perfect setting for the Novices' Mid-year Discernment Retreat from 17th to 22nd February.



After completing half of the Novitiate year, the primary focus of this discernment retreat is to allow us the time and space to consider in a more focused way

if our own life, talents and skills, and personality are suited to the Capuchin way of life, and whether the Capuchin life is the way that God is calling us to live.

At the beginning of the retreat, Br. Robert Stewart, our novice master exhorted us through Acts 9:6 **"Now get up... and you will be told what you are to do for me."** Some of the questions that we were encouraged to consider and reflect on are: *How does the Lord want me to come to the perfection of love and grow in the image of Christ? Has He shown me that this can happen through living a vowed life as a Capuchin friar? Am I ready to respond in freedom to this call?*

During the retreat, each novice had the chance to talk to the novitiate formators to discuss, clarify, or ask questions about our journey in the program thus far. While I was waiting for my turn to meet the formators, I spent some quiet time in the Holy Spirit chapel. I reflected on the beautiful stained-glass window at the altar. The window depicts the Holy Spirit in the form of a descending white dove with outstretched wings from which seven dazzling rays issue forth symbolizing the seven gifts given to us at Baptism. The Holy Spirit, our Retreat Master was also represented by a blazing flame behind the form of the dove – a flame that enkindles the fire of love of the Father in our hearts. In the morning, the bright rays of the rising sun penetrate through the image and in that moment in prayer, I felt enveloped in the warmth of the love of the Holy Trinity for me. That powerful experience allowed me to be a more sensitive listener and I experienced a deeper awareness of the Father's love for me...The love of the Father for me... He loves me...I am deeply loved.



The retreat place is truly a haven which offers the space to unwind, to get in touch with God, with oneself and reality; a place of both physical rest and spiritual renewal. While there, I explored the area and found the hiking trails where you can find life-size crosses marking the stations of the **Way of the Cross** which leads up to **Meditation Point**, a high hill with a vantage point overlooking Soquel Valley down below covered with

redwoods. Just a short distance from there is **Contemplation Rock** where you can have a 360° view of the surrounding valley. I also visited

Madonna Grove, a shrine to Our Lady where one can enjoy the gentleness of the breeze under the cool shade of a cathedral-like grove of tall redwood trees. There is also **St. Francis Way**, a trail running across a verdant meadow where one can walk and meditate along the way the life of St. Francis of Assisi depicted in 12 different etchings. This quarter of a mile walk ends at the **Three Crosses**, which depicts Christ's crucifixion flanked by the two thieves.



Beyond this is a meditation shelter with a bench. There is also **St. Therese's Shrine** and the **Chinese Garden** which equally offers a place of solitude and quiet meditation.

I think all of us novices that spent time there returned home with a profound experience of encountering God in the stillness and beauty of God's magnificent creation. The retreat helped us to ask within us the questions that needed to be asked, to reflect back on the six months that had been. As Br. Robert said in his homily for the Mass on the first day of the retreat: *"Do not ask 'Why am I here?', rather the question we should be asking is: 'Am I here? Am I truly here?'"* I pray to God that all of us may receive the grace to be fully aware of where we are in our discernment journey and to be more open where God is leading us to for the second half of the novitiate.



St. Clare's Retreat House is operated by the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Sorrows, a Catholic community of religious sisters which began in China in 1939 and founded by Rev. Rafael Palazzi, OFM, then Bishop of Heng Yang, Hunan, China. The community fled communism in 1948 and began missionary ministries elsewhere, including California, Oregon, Canada, Taiwan and Hong Kong.



- 2 - Br. Robert Stewart (B)**
- 28 - Br. Bill Talentino (B)**
- 29 - Br. Alex Rodriguez (Perpetual Vows)**



KEEP CALM AND BÌNH AN VÀ TỐT LAÑH

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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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