

# THE Caperone



**San Lorenzo Celebrations  
For The New Year**



## From The Formators

**P**ease and Good! All of us have experienced again the special time of year that surrounds the Feast of Jesus' birth and epiphany. Each year, Advent gives way to Christmas, and Christmas to "Ordinary Time." There is a rhythm captured by the Church in her liturgy that helps us find God: sometimes in silent expectation, sometimes in glorious celebration, often in the simple realities of daily life.

The reality of the Incarnation means that we have to seek God in all aspects of human life. This was something St. Francis of Assisi learned throughout his life, and tried to share with his brothers. Francis found God in the dramatic moment of embracing the leper and experiencing God's sweetness, but also in the humble task of helping bathe and feed his sick brothers and sisters, washing their feet as Jesus had done with his disciples.

As the novices learn, God at times speaks to us in dramatic ways, but mostly through our daily tasks: in praying psalms, cleaning bathrooms, and enjoying the sound of the rain (which, thank God, we are experiencing once more). Novitiate life has its high points and its daily routine, which at times can be dull, and both are important in discerning God's will. In Capuchin life, we are often asked to do simple and ordinary things, with commitment, perseverance, and love. This is often pointed out in the obituaries of our deceased friars: their faithfulness in living and ministering in the mundane realities of fraternal life and ministry.

We pray that the Word made Flesh, Who dwells among us, may continue to guide our novices into the depths of God's love, that they may hear the Lord's voice and follow His will, wherever it may lead. And we pray for all of those who share our lives, especially the readers of the *Caperone*. *May the Lord bless and keep you all through 2016!*

- *Br. Bobby Barbato*

### Calendar Of Events

**January 4-6 and 11-13:**  
*Capuchin Constitutions*  
(*Br. Jack Ratschmidt*)

**January 18-21:**  
*Bay Area Franciscan Pilgrimage*

**January 25-26:**  
*Christology*  
(*Br. Bob McCreary*)

**January 26-27:**  
*Day of Recollection*  
(*Br. Jerry*)

## The Caperone

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### Comments and Questions

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# Franciscan Celebrations

## OFM Province 100th Anniversary

The beginning of December found us celebrating a great milestone of our OFM brothers in Santa Barbara. December 4th marks the 100th anniversary of the OFM friars' Province of Santa Barbara on the west coast. As fellow Franciscan we were invited to join them for their celebration at the church of Mission Santa Barbara. Provincials from across the country came to celebrate the mass, preach, and give testimony to the incredible work and dedication of the friars in the past century. This 100th anniversary of the province is a testimony to the enduring legacy of Franciscans in the church. All throughout the world the followers of Saint Francis have spread the spirituality of the Poverello, and these friars have once again shown that Francis' spirituality is one that will endure.

That day was also the first time we were able to really get together with the OFM friars and spend time in community with them. The friars graciously hosted a dinner for us after the mass, and we spent the evening in jovial conversation. It was a chance for two branches of the Franciscan family to share their lives with one another and celebrate the unity of all friars, whether Capuchin, OFM, or any other branch of the order. We hope to see them again.



## Fr. Matthew Installed As Pastor

The month of December was kicked off with a celebration of one of our own Capuchin brothers. On December 4th, Fr. Matt Elshoff was officially installed as pastor of Old Mission Santa Inés. The installation mass was celebrated by our newly appointed regional bishop Fr. Robert Barron. The novices were delighted to meet Bishop Barron, well known to them for his evangelization through the media. Fr. Matt has already proven his great love and care for the parish, and the wonderful community which gathers each weekend to join in prayer and praise.





# Marian Celebrations

## La Purisima Concepcion and Our Lady of Guadalupe

If May is the month of Mary, then December is the month of her feast days. In December we get two of the most important Marian feast days for the United States: Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, patroness of the United States, and Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of all the Americas.

The Immaculate Conception gives us great fruit for reflection during this time of waiting for the coming of the infant Jesus. Mary is our perfect example and model, showing us the way we should grow in faith, hope, and love. This was the subject of our own Fr. Bobby's homily celebrating the Mass at La Purisima Mission on the day of the feast. The mission normally has no Mass celebrated in the church at all. Only on the feast of the Immaculate Conception are the doors flung open to venerate Mary and worship Christ in the Eucharist. This year Bobby was invited to celebrate the Mass and many of the novices went along with him to experience Mass at the mission. It was a beautiful liturgy, and we were really able to enter into the whole history of the mission, praying in unison with all those who have gone before us at this place, friars, settlers, and native peoples alike.

Our Lady of Guadalupe was a whole other caliber of celebration altogether. Because of the presence of such a large Hispanic community in our valley, the veneration of Our Lady of Guadalupe is a day of great praise, prayer, song, and worship. About half of our novices, along with three of this province's Capuchin candidates, joined in on the celebrations at Mission Santa Ines. Starting at 3:30am (after a bit of searching) we joined in the community's Rosary Procession across the town of Solvang, coming to the grotto of Our Lady at the church to raise our voices in prayerful song to Mary, a Hispanic tradition known as Las Mañanitas. Then followed a 5:00am mass with a procession of Los Machetines, traditional Aztec dancers, and a recreation of the moment that Juan Diego revealed his tilma to the bishop. It was a joyous and refreshing celebration for all of us.





## San Lorenzo Christmas

Christmas is always an extremely important part of the Christian year, but especially for us as Franciscans, who value so highly the Incarnation of the Word as the basis for our spiritual life. In the same way that Christ emptied Himself of all power and became an infant out of love for us, so too must we, in imitation of Him, empty ourselves for love of Him. For Franciscans this is the core, and our starting point, and so as Christmas came around we made sure to celebrate with vigor, energy, and enthusiasm.



Our Advent of building up anticipation for the coming Christ was heightened by a special Hispanic tradition known as *las posadas* (“the shelters” in English), recreating the night when Mary and Joseph traveled through Bethlehem in search of a Posada, a place to stay. Many of the Hispanic community at the Old Mission Santa Inés came to help us celebrate this tradition, about half way through Advent, and to add their voices in prayer and song. It was a wonderful reflection for all of us, especially those who have never experienced a Posada before. And afterwards, as Hispanic custom also dictates, we ate posole, pan dulce, and hot chocolate.

Christmas was celebrated with a beautiful midnight mass here at the seminary, with our novice schola and a packed church. The schola gave an incredibly moving musical prelude prior to the mass, with members of the schola performing solos and duets of our most cherished Christmas carols including hymns in Arabic, Aramaic, French, and Korean. They did an astounding job, touching our hearts in preparation for mass. The whole celebration was one of awe, joy, and wonder. Fr. Bobby with his booming voice made sure to keep all of us awake during his homily as he spoke of the incredible love of God found in this mystery of the Nativity. Only a God who is “crazy in love” with His creation would do something as amazing as taking our own form. The night was one of powerful prayer, beautiful song, and the building up of strong bonds of community and fraternity, all in the true spirit of Christmas.





## Friars' FYI

### Christmas Luncheon

The 3rd Sunday of Advent found us all at Mission Santa Ines for an early Christmas party. Put together by the Mission Hospitality Committee, it is an annual event for the community to come together before the mad rush of the holidays, to have a relaxing afternoon with our friends at the mission. This year we celebrated with good food and music provided by a parishioner and some of our own novices. At one point we even made a conga line! It was a great time, and the perfect way to begin anticipating the upcoming festivities. We couldn't be more grateful for their generosity.



### Ministry This Year

There is a wing at Marian Hospital where the cancer known as loneliness does not sleep. The subtlety with which this menace works is undeniably tragic. Oftentimes it manifests itself as anger or sadness with those trapped inside the walls of the hospital; and who can blame them?

Facing this loneliness at Marian extended care has been a great challenge for me this year. The lack of familial support endured by many of the patients there is unfathomable. Most of the time I can only imagine the pain these people are going through.

All of this has caused me to reflect on the nature of loneliness in my own life. Obviously as a Capuchin novice, I am striving to live a life void of an exclusive relationship with one other person. At times the lack of an exclusive relationship can cause me to feel quite lonely. The temptation to embrace loneliness as a sign of my inability to be a Capuchin is quite real.

However, as I continue through this novitiate year I am slowly learning the power of fraternity in combating loneliness within myself. I take great comfort in knowing that my brothers will always support me in whatever trials I may face; even those trials which are self-inflicted. The brothers are always there to remind me that loneliness is only as strong as I allow it to be. Loneliness is a sickness; and fraternity is the cure. I can only hope to continue to share the fraternal love I experience at the friary with the lonely souls at Marian Hospital.

- Br. Nick Blattner



## Friars' FYI

### Ministry This Year

**M**y Ministry has been working at The University of California Santa Barbara (UCSB) every Friday with Brother Clint Evrard. We work under the pastor at the University Campus church of St. Mark's, Fr. John Love, whose focus for us is to minister to a select group of graduate students. Each week we meet for lunch with about five graduate students and check in to see how everything is going in their lives. It has been a great opportunity to minister to them and befriend them as they are all individuals with a deeply rooted faith.

After lunch Brother Clint and I walk around the campus in our habits with the intention of being a visual religious presence on campus for the students as well as to spark up conversations with any student who is interested. I was told the focus of this ministry was mainly the ministry of presence and I have come to better appreciate the necessity of this. By simply being present, I have made myself available to the students and for God to use me and I have seen the fruits of it. I have had the opportunity to engage in open conversations with students, counsel students, answer questions they are curious about and talk to them about why it is that I have chosen this life.

Ministering at UCSB has helped with my ongoing formation and discernment process. It has helped to give me a greater understanding of my new role as both a Capuchin and minister of the church. I have also seen the spiritual poverty that exists in college culture which stems from the pervasive thought in secular culture that there is no need for God, faith or religion. I know the importance of being a witness of Christ in a world that pushes God away and it has really invigorated my desire to choose a religious way of life and to share the gift of my faith which God has given me.

- Br. Vince Thomas



### Creative Capuchins

"Immaculate Heart of Mary"

*Painting*

*by Br. Luke (Eric) Jordan*





## Life In Novitiate

December has been a busy month, and the brothers have been feeling the drain. With all the celebrations, feast days, the OFM province anniversary, and of course Christmas, there has been a lot of action going on at the seminary, and we got some much needed rest this week after the intense build up to Christmas.

We've had some good moments in fraternity these past few weeks as well, especially surrounding Christmas. A yearly tradition of ours is the Secret

Santa. At the beginning of Advent we all picked a friar's name out of the hat and by Christmas day there were 28 gifts under the tree, all from a "Secret Santa". The gift exchange on Christmas day was filled with oohs and aahs as each gift was opened, and each person tried to guess who got them their gift. Afterwards we sat together enjoying some Christmas music and each other's company.

One of the perks of the holiday season comes in the countless "care packages" of cookies, chocolates and other candies being sent by families back home for everyone to enjoy. In fact we've gotten so many at one point we didn't know what to do with it all; there are twenty of us, not fifty! But we must say the holiday treats are very much appreciated.

The colder weather has been knocking down our novices left and right, guys getting sick one after the other. Whether it is a sign of what is to follow this winter, that is yet to be known, but we hope and pray for good health throughout.

In many ways this month has gone by very quickly, week after week the Advent candles lit up in a flash of time, suddenly Christmas, and suddenly we are coming into 2016. There is a buzz of excitement in the air as we look forward to all that the new year is going to bring us. In January we will be heading off on pilgrimage to San Francisco to visit several shrines there, and February has us going to Los Angeles for the massive Religious Education Congress. It's a lot to look forward to, and as we look back at all the blessings of this year, we hope for the many more to come. A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all.

