

THE

Caperone

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The LA Religious Education Congress



From The Formators

Peace and Good!

As you will read in this edition, the novices and formation team spent three exciting, beautiful and tiring days at the Los Angeles Archdiocese Religious Education Congress in Anaheim. Each year this trip is a highlight, a time to be reaffirmed in our own faith and reassured about the life of the Church. It is a time to pray together, to hear powerful speakers, and to meet other Catholics from all over the world. Why do we include this experience in the novitiate? St. Francis was very aware of the fact that he had received his faith through the Church, and just as importantly was called to be an active and vibrant member of the church. It is important for the novices' discernment that they remember that any call to religious life is a call to deepen one's faith in the power of God working through His church, and the fact that as Capuchins we are one small part of the awesome reality that is the body of Christ.

On another note: we teach the novices about the value of obedience and itinerancy. This summer there will be some changes here at the novitiate: three of the present team members (Bros. Jerry, Bob and Bobby) will be going back to their provinces, to be replaced by Bros. Bill Hugo (St. Joseph Province), Phil Bernier (St. Augustine Province) and Michael Banks (St. Mary Province). Transitions are a normal part of Capuchin Franciscan life, and we ask your prayers that all involved in the upcoming transition will be blessed by God's grace.

As we continue our Lenten journey toward Easter, we ask your prayers for the novices. March 13-18 they will be on a silent retreat, focused on the question of whether or not they are called to take vows as Capuchin Franciscans.

God bless!

- **Br. Bobby**



The Formation Teams

Calendar Of Events

March 1-2:

St. Bonaventure Presentation
(Br. Bobby Barbato)

March 7-9:

Easter Triduum Presentation
(Br. Bob Herrick)

March 13-18:

Silent Discernment Retreat

March 21-23:

Holy Week Presentation
(Br. Bob Herrick)

The Caperone

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Comments and Questions

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In Memory of Br. Michael

The Funeral of Michael Walsh

The Capuchins of the California Province mourn the loss of one of their brothers this month. Br. Michael Walsh passed away unexpectedly on Feb 10th, Ash Wednesday. The symbolism in the date of his passing was not overlooked by the friars; for someone who had dedicated his whole life to repentance and conversion, it was fitting that Ash Wednesday be his date of birth to eternal life. We celebrated Br. Michael's funeral mass and interment the following Wednesday at San Lorenzo Seminary, which has a cemetery for the deceased friars of the province. Early that morning, our novice Br. Akram mentioned that a traditional Iraqi adage states that rainfall at a funeral means that the person being buried was a holy one. It is fitting then, that Br. Michael's funeral was bookended by a sprinkling of showers just before and right after the ceremony. He was truly a holy man of God. The friars who came to celebrate his life gave witness to this brother's exceptional life, a life of constant conversion and seeking the Lord. Br. Bobby's eulogy made it clear that Br. Michael's was one filled by many trials, but supported all the way by God's grace and the grace of fraternity. We always mourn the passing of fellow brother, but it is a remind to us all of our ultimate goal, and a special reminder to us novices of what our Capuchin life is all about. San Lorenzo is a place of beginnings and endings; here the novices are newly invested into the order, while other friars are invested into their eternal reward.

Our Beloved Friar

Each night at the novitiate, we read the necrologies (obituaries) of our deceased brothers from all the provinces in the NAPCC. The lives of these brothers remind us of the variety of personalities, talents, and even quirks that make up Capuchin Franciscan life. The life of each friar is a testimony to the work of God's grace, and the joys and struggles that living out that grace entails. On Ash Wednesday, 2016, our Brother Michael Walsh of Our Lady of Angels Province passed from this world. He was a man of many talents, who tried to use them for the glory of God and the good of the world. He had his own mannerisms and interesting habits, as well as a great generosity and enthusiasm for things Franciscan and work with the poor. What touches me most in remembering Michael (who was my high school teacher, my guardian, and my fellow worker in parish ministry) is recalling his struggles. He had physical challenges and also the depression that came with them. At times he seemed about to lose hope, but he always waited patiently for the grace of God and in turn encouraged others. In this I hope he has been a good example for our novices and is praying for us all. Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord!



- Br. Bobby



Novitiate Classes

As the novices draw deeper and deeper into our novitiate discernment, the friars have been giving us a whole range of classes and workshops throughout this past month to help us dive more fully into the life of the order and discover more deeply the Capuchin identity. Our first class this month was given by Br. Thomas McFadden of Assumption Province in Australia, on the history of the province and its development since their foundation. With bits of colonial history, the movement of the Franciscan spirit, and a heaping of Capuchin humor and wit, Br. Thomas gave us a brief overview of the work of the friars there, and helped us gain some perspective on the struggles of the friars living on the other side of the globe.

Following the first Sunday of Lent, Br. Bill Hugo of the Midwest Province came in to lead a workshop on two of the Plenary Councils of the Order (PCO). A PCO is a major international gathering of friars to discuss a specific aspect of our life as Friars Minor around the world. Br. Bill's class opened up for us an entry into PCOs six and seven, on our fraternal life in poverty and minority. During those three days we learned the history of the PCOs, the cultural and societal context in which PCOs six and seven were written, and the ways in which they affected the order and must still affect and inspire our way of life today. The class was rich in thought-provoking material for the novices to reflect on as we continue to discern God's call in our lives.

After the second Sunday of Lent, our Br. Paul Dressler of the St. Augustine Province came to us to give a workshop on encountering St. Francis of Assisi "up close and personal." Through an exploration of the history and development of Franciscan art, Br. Paul brought to us a fresh look at the spirituality of St. Francis in view of the incarnation and the cross. His energetic and passionate style drew us into the living spirit of our founding saint, bringing him to life in the context of today's world. But more than that, Br. Paul made it clear to us that this wasn't just about an up close and personal Francis, but about an up close and personal Jesus. Francis leads us into relationship with Christ, and without that, a friar's life is doomed to fail.

Our final class of the month dealt with the life, writings, and spirituality of St. Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, considered the "second founder" of the Franciscan order. His work as minister general only 31 years after the death of Francis was crucial in establishing the legitimacy and authenticity of Franciscan life, and Bonaventure's many writings brought forth a depth of theological and spiritual wisdom that showed the extent of his incredible intellect and holiness. His writings are still used by friars today as a source of insight and inspiration for following the footsteps of St. Francis.



Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the season of Lent, and in the novitiate, this means another opportunity to enter into a deeper self-reflection, conversion, and a turning to the Lord in new ways. To truly enter into the spirit of Lent and prepare ourselves for this period of renewed fervor and repentance, we took a full day of silence - a longer time than our usual recollection days - and Br. Bobby's presentations gave us plenty of reflections to meditate on. His topic for the recollection day aimed at taking the spiritual richness of the Lenten season and weaving it together with our discernment of the three vows. He took the story in Genesis of the Fall of Adam and Eve and used it as a basis to explore the incentives for having the period of Lent; it is a time to restore our relationship to God. Sin may alienate us from Him, as it did to Adam and Eve, but His mercy and faithfulness, His love for us, is the remedy for our sin and alienation. Br. Bobby reminded us that Lent is above all a time of hope.

We are to look at the areas in our own lives that feed our alienation from God, an alienation from our true selves. We are creatures meant to be in relationship with our Creator; let us then repent, convert, and return to the Lord.

Br. Bobby took the three vows of a Capuchin religious and related them to the three traditional Lenten practices: prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Prayer is one of the central ways in which we build up our relationship to God. The vow of obedience is centered on learning to obey God's will in our lives. Fasting centers around our relationship with the created world, and learning to use it properly, for the building up of people rather than for our own selfish desires. The same reasoning goes for the vow of poverty. Finally, almsgiving is aimed at helping us reconsider our

relationship with each other, with other human beings, especially those less fortunate than us, and our vow of chastity is also based in the ability to be in relationship



in a special way as brothers to every person we encounter.

Ash Wednesday was a very special day for us. With Br. Bobby's presentations and the whole day for silent reflection, it was an excellent way to prepare for this season of renewed conversion. We pray that it will be a grace filled time for all of us.





LA Religious Ed Congress

For the past sixty years, Catholics have been gathering in Los Angeles, CA for the Religious Education Congress at the beginning of each year. The Religious Education Congress is a three day event where thousands of Catholics come together to attend talks, interact with each other, and encounter the faith in its many cultural contexts. In recent years, Congress attendance has reached up to 40,000 people, and the Capuchin friars and novices of San Lorenzo are among them. The LA Congress is a highly important trip for us as we go to explore a multitude of topics on the faith and encounter so many religious and lay people who are all on fire for the Catholic faith. This year the Congress went from February 26th-28th at the Anaheim Convention Center, right across the street from Disneyland (some of us were tempted to stop over for a day). The theme for this year's Congress was *"Boundless Mercy," encouraging us to continuing encountering the God of forgiveness and compassion during this Jubilee year of mercy.*

We arrived in LA on Thursday to spend some time with the friars at our two friaries at La Cañada (St. Francis High School) and Watts (St. Lawrence of Brindisi parish) where we stayed during the weekend. We were able to relax and enjoy our California brothers' company over a savory grilled meal. It was a good chance for the novices to get to know the Southern California friars and their ministry a little better.

Friday was our first day at Congress. We arrived early that morning to collect our programs and name badges and head over to the arena for the opening liturgy. It was then that we realized just how massive this congress is, as we searched for seats in the sea of people in the arena. This was an immense display of the size and diversity of the Catholic faith. Throughout the day we attended three hour-long workshops on a vast array of topics, from mercy, evangelization, and Eucharist, to encountering Islam, ministering to gang members, and serving the LGBT community. Also at the Congress was a large conference hall filled with vocation booths and vendors from all over the country, selling Catholic literature, music, art, and other devotional items. Our own Capuchin friars made an appearance with a





LA Religious Ed Congress

vocation booth run by none other than our beloved Br. Peter Banks. By the end of the day everyone was exhausted, but even then there was nothing but talk of excitement as we recounted to each the fruits of the many talks we attended during the day. The following day we arrived just in time for an amazing keynote address given by Sr. Helen Prejean, CSJ, who has worked with inmates on death row for much of her life. She gave a powerful witness to a side of our pro-life doctrine that isn't spoken about as much as other aspects, and inspired us all to continue working to accomplish God's justice of mercy. We again attended many powerful talks. Also part of the event was a host of different style masses each evening. On the first day some of our brothers attended the "Church on the Margins" Mass, and some others the Indonesian Cultural Mass. Both were very impactful. The following day were Masses for Black Culture, Syriac liturgy, Vietnamese, and Care for Creation. Each novice had only wonderful things to say, and we were all feeling pretty inspired by the time the day ended.

The evening of the second day we were invited to the house of Jeannie McDaniel and other members of our deceased Br. Matt Tully's family for a taco dinner. It was a great night and a chance to spend time with one of the many families that help support the work of the friars at San Lorenzo. We are extremely grateful for their generosity.

On Sunday morning all the novices and friars gathered at St. Lawrence parish in Watts to attend mass there. The community at St. Lawrence is largely Hispanic and African-American. We went to the English mass, which Br. Bobby celebrated, and it was one of the most powerful experiences the novices have had this year. It is hard to describe to someone who hasn't experienced it, but the energy at that liturgy was incredible. The choir belted out those hymns with soul and passion, lifting up the whole church in prayer and zeal for the Lord. We were able to speak with some of the parishioners, and we can only say that this community is a shining example of holiness and the living gospel in our midst. They were an inspiration to us all. After the mass and a brief lunch provided by the generosity of the community, we headed for home, back at San Lorenzo by dinner time. It was an extremely tiring weekend, but one filled with powerful experiences and a renewal of faith for us all.





Friars' FYI

The LA Religious Education Congress

The Los Angeles Religious Education Congress was an amazing experience. There were about 30–40,000 people that attended the religious education congress. There was a great energy and excitement in the people as we first arrived, and throughout the two days that we were there. The lectures that I attended were a range of diverse topics that were very informative. They had a conference room of vendors that had different items for sale. It was very exciting to be able meet different types of people there from different parts of the country and the world. I had a chance in one of my workshops to be able meet three people from Australia.

The highlight for myself was the keynote speaker Sr. Helen Prejean, CSJ. She was giving her story of ministering to death row inmates. It was full of lessons learned, humor, and regrets. What stood out to me was the passion that sister had to defend human dignity. It was very impactful and moving to be able to reevaluate these issues.

- Br. William Cisneros



Creative Capuchins

"Our Lady of Sorrows"

Graphic Marker

by Br. Matthew Timonera

