

The Way of St. Francis

**MODERN
MISSIONARIES:**
A Humble
Counterpoint to
a World Marked
by Division



on the cover

The cover montage depicts the missionary work of three friars whose journeys to eastern Russia (top), Morocco (middle), and the Peruvian Amazon (bottom) symbolize the Franciscan spirit to reach out to the periphery. Set against a backdrop of the globe, the Tau necklace reflects the peaceful, prayerful, unifying response that friars seek to create in a world marked by division and discord. Read about the journeys of each of these friars in the story beginning on page 12.

IMAGE: PHOTO ILLUSTRATION PAUL TOKMAKIAN. BACKGROUND PHOTO © FRANKKITO | DREAMSTIME.COM

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Have a comment or suggestion? Let us know by sending an email to TheWay@sbofm.org

Prayer, Fraternity, Joy, Service

The Franciscan Friars of the Province of Saint Barbara are members of a Roman Catholic religious order, from a diversity of backgrounds and cultures, dedicated to serving the poor and promoting justice, peace, care of creation, and reconciliation in the joyful and prophetic spirit of St. Francis of Assisi.



Franciscan Friars
PROVINCE OF SAINT BARBARA



www.sbfriars.org

dear friends ...



Fr. Dan Lackie, OFM
Editor

How Pilgrims Make Progress

As the new year of 2016 drew near, two very public conversations were pricking the ears of The WAY editorial team. First, there was the anguish expressed by people of good will worldwide over the plight of refugees. Second, we heard the heated questions about Franciscan missionary work posed by the legacy of our newest Franciscan saint, Junipero Serra.

Two articles in the following pages attempt to enrich the continuing dialogue in both these areas by exploring how, with respect to the refugee crisis and contemporary missionary work, the Franciscan tradition comes to life in the Province of St. Barbara today.

Last fall, before the joint session of the U.S. Congress, Pope Francis gave voice to that tradition when he urged his listeners to view refugees not as statistical tallies but as human beings. "We must not be taken aback by their numbers," he said, "but rather view them as persons, seeing their faces and listening to their stories—responding in a way that is always humane, just, and fraternal."

St. Francis was led by the Holy Spirit to "show mercy" to a stranger who was a leper. Again and again, he also called his brothers to become "pilgrims and strangers" themselves in this world. In mission work and ministry with refugees today, friars find themselves in places where faith traditions, language, and culture are potentially points of division, separation, and fear. How might the Franciscan tradition animate those settings and shape those encounters with true humanity and love?

Welcoming the stranger and, in faraway lands, becoming the stranger ourselves—radical options that raise an important question at the outset of this Year of Mercy: What makes us Franciscan? We hope the stories inside provide some answers. ❖

by the way

MARCH

Lenten Day of Reflection on Restorative Justice
3/2 • San Damiano Retreat, Danville, CA

Fr. Michael Minton, OFM, will lead a day of prayer and sharing for people who have been in prison, or do loved ones in prison, or do prison ministry. Please visit sandamiano.org for more information and to register.

Holy Week Retreat
3/20–3/27 • Franciscan Renewal Center, Scottsdale, AZ

Join the Casa for prayer, reflection, and celebration.
Part One: Palm Sunday, March 20–Wednesday, March 23, with Fr. Philip Chiroop, SJ.

Part Two: Holy Thursday, March 24–Easter Sunday, March 27, "Three Days that Changed Everything," with Fr. William Cieslak, OFM Cap. Pre-registration required: Call Amy at 480.948.7460 ext. 132. Visit thecasa.org for more information.

APRIL

Conscious Aging: Making Room for the Spirit as We Age

4/9 • St. Francis Retreat, San Juan Bautista, CA

As you think about retirement, discover how we can share our Spirit-given gifts,

talents, and experience in new ways that give continued meaning and purpose to our lives. Presented by Jim Briggs, recently retired executive director of the School of Applied Theology. For more information, visit sfrfranciscanretreat.com.

Celebrating Fr. Joseph Chinnici's 50 Years as a Friar and Retirement as President of FST
4/10 • San Damiano Retreat Center Danville, CA



Join us as we honor Fr. Joe Chinnici, OFM, for his 50 years as a Franciscan friar and to mark his retirement as president of the Franciscan School of Theology. For more information, contact Randy Quaid at rquaid@fst.edu. Please RSVP no later than March 17, 2015.

St. Anthony Foundation's Annual Serving Hope Gala
4/14 • City Hall, San Francisco, CA

Come for an inspiring evening to support St. Anthony's Job Training Program, with dinner, dancing, and the presentation

of the Fr. Alfred Boeddeker Award. Hosted by Renel Brooks-Moon, PA announcer, San Francisco Giants. For more information, contact Helene Sims at 415.592.2768 or hsim@santanthonySF.org, or visit StAnthonySF.org/events.

Luke's Gospel of Jesus: Setting the Earth on Fire
4/14 to 5/6 • Sts. Simon and Jude Church, Huntington Beach, CA

Occurring on four consecutive Thursdays. Go deeper into the scripture in the context of faith sharing. Studying scripture and reflecting on it together with others provides unique opportunities to integrate the text into our lives. More information available at www.ssj.org.

Men's Retreat—Renewed by Divine Mercy
4/22–4/24 • Serra Retreat, Malibu, CA

Pope Francis coined a word, "mercy-ing," to express his understanding about mercy. It is not just a commodity to be dispensed only to those who are worthy. Rather, "mercy-ing" is a way of being in the world that follows the example of Christ, who freely shared God's mercy. Join us at Serra to rediscover the true meaning of mercy, not as an object but as an action. Registration form available at www.serraretreat.com/retreats.

snapshot

Border Field State Park
July 15, 2015
Imperial Beach, California

At Border Field State Park in Imperial Beach, California, the fence between Mexico and the United States reaches its westernmost edge, extending into the Pacific Ocean. A group of friars traveled to the park last year for a time of theological reflection on one of the great “signs of the times” in the world today. Thirty feet north of the original fence is a newer fence, constructed in 2009 for added security. A gate in the newer structure is opened weekly to allow people on either side of the border to communicate through the mesh of the older fence (pictured here). Between the two fences, volunteers from the area have planted a small “friendship garden.”

In this photograph one of the volunteers who served as a guide for the friars stands in the Friendship Garden, facing Mexico, with his eyes intent on the fence and, so it seems, on what the massive barrier represents. For further information, go to www.franciscansforjustice and search Friars at the Border.

Photo by Br. Dick Tandy, OFM



Fruitless Faithfulness

by Fr. Warren Rouse, OFM

NOW THERE'S AN odd phrase! Even odder is the fact that it was written by an ancient, Paulinus of Nola (354–431 C.E.), who became a bishop after his wife's death. In the list of saints, his feast day is June 22. (Surely, you will mark that in your calendar!)

Perhaps Paulinus was thinking about the Gospel parable of the sums of money (Luke 19:11f). A servant simply buries his one gold coin, with the punitive result: "Take the gold coin away from him and give it to the servant who has ten coins." But let Paulinus speak for himself:

"You will then understand that to place your money on the Lord's table to make it bear fruit is far more profitable than to preserve it in fruitless faithfulness without its returning anything back to its creditor, to the great loss of the

useless servant whose punishment will be all the more heavy . . ."

Why the distribution of ten, five, and one coins—or talents—to the servants in the first place? Does God discriminate? Maybe it's true: "All are created equal, but not all are born equal!" In his graciousness, the Lord—almost like any parent—knows each child's talents and limitations but expects him or her both to grow and to overcome. "He manifests himself in just the measure of which he knows the one who is receiving him is capable." (St. Maximus, 580–662)

William Barclay elaborates nicely: "He gave his servants the money and then went away and left them to use it as they could and as they thought best. He did not in any way interfere with them, or stand over them.

He left them entirely to

their own devices. That is the way in which God trusts us. Someone has said, "The nicest thing about God is that he trusts us to do so much by ourselves." (*Daily Study Bible*. Italics mine.)

Here's another modern addition for us: Fruitless faithfulness has two aspects. We're well aware of the sins of commission, and these we confess in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. But what we frequently overlook are our sins of omission.

Sometimes, after we've stated our sins—the things or actions we consciously know are wrong—perhaps the Lord is quietly saying: "Yes, yes, I know what you've done wrong. But what should or could you have done that was the right thing to do?"

True, you usually won't find such occasions listed as sins. Common examples may be: deliberately ignoring a neighbor's need; refusing at least to acknowledge a trainee's presence as a human being; neglecting a kind act even when you know you should help. All the while, we religiously attend Mass every Sunday and feel quite satisfied that we have done well with our religious duties and empty hands.

There it is: fruitless faithfulness! But don't be discouraged! The late theologian and paleontologist Fr. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, S.J., offers beautiful encouragement to those of us who are trying to be better. "Trust in the slow work of God," he assures

us. Our troubles and foibles play just small parts in the prolonged natural process of growing into the fullness of our faithfulness:

Above all, trust in the slow work of God.

We are quite naturally impatient in everything to reach the end without delay.

We should like to skip the intermediate stages.

We are impatient of being on the way to something

unknown, something new.

And yet it is the law of all progress that it is made by passing through some stages of instability—and that it may take a very long time.

Give Our Lord the benefit of believing that his hand is leading you, and accept the anxiety of feeling yourself in suspense and incomplete.



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Fr. Warren Rouse, OFM, holds advanced degrees in music and liturgical studies. He has written close to 200 articles for The Way magazine. A former pastor, teacher, and retreat director, he edits the Province newsletter, WestFriars, and is the author of Words of Wisdom. He lives at Serra Retreat in Malibu, California.
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New Leaders, New Lessons



Members of the outgoing Provincial Definitorium (from left to right): Reverend Martin Ibarra, OFM; Reverend Ken Laverone, OFM; Brother Peter Boegel, OFM; Reverend Michael Harvey, OFM; Reverend Michael Doherty, OFM; Most Reverend John Hardin, OFM; Reverend David Gaa, OFM; and Brother Regan Chapman, OFM.

Franciscan friars elect their leadership at "Chapter," a meeting held every three to four years by the Province of St. Barbara. The friar elected to top leadership of the province is called the Provincial Minister. Another friar is elected to the position of Provincial Vicar. These two are assisted by six more friars, called Definitors. With the Provincial Minister and Provincial Vicar, they form an eight-member council called the Provincial Definitorium. The Definitorium administers and guides all ministries of the province, as well as the friars themselves.

In January 2016, the friars elected new members of the Provincial Definitorium. Here are quotes from three of the outgoing members.

I learned how human I am serving other human beings. That we are in God's time, in God's plan, in God's love. No matter how much I fought against these realities at the end, it was God's time the best, God's plan the best, and God's love everything.

Peace and good,
Fr. Martin Ibarra

I was truly blessed to be of service to my brothers and to experience firsthand how they minister to God's people in so many ways.

Fr. John Hardin

A loose quote from John Quincy Adams: If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more, then you are a leader.

Fr. Michael Doherty



Members of the incoming Provincial Definitorium (left to right): Reverend Joe Schwab, OFM; Reverend Bill Minkel, OFM; Reverend Dan Lackie, OFM; Very Reverend David Gaa, OFM; Reverend Martin Ibarra, OFM; Reverend Garrett Galvin, OFM; Brother John Gutierrez, OFM; Reverend Anthony Garibaldi, OFM.

MODERN MISSIONARIES:

A Humble Counterpoint to a
World Marked by Division by Stanley Raggio

THE CANONIZATION LAST YEAR of St. Junípero Serra generated renewed discussion of the role of missionary activity in the past and present. While today's postmodern sensibility calls us to celebrate the unique gifts of each culture, more challenging is how to reconcile that celebration with the Christian call to "make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (Matthew 29:19) This tension—a matter of respecting other cultures while evangelizing from a Gospel perspective rooted in one's own—invites reflection on the meaning of missionary activity today.

Friars from the Province of St. Barbara who serve in missionary ministry offer valuable lessons that can bridge this seeming divide. While some friars serve as missionaries in many places here in the United States—at Native American reservations in Arizona and New Mexico, for example—our spotlight will shine on a few who have made the missionary odyssey to remote, foreign lands.

Three friars from different backgrounds, ages, and life experiences have charted distinctive paths on their missionary journeys. In this age of global conflict, which some argue supports the gloomy thesis of Samuel Huntington's famous work, *The Clash of Civilizations*, Franciscan missionary witness provides a powerful counterpoint: Yes, it is a world marked by violence and strife over cultural and religious identity, but does it have to be?



Br. Antonio Gregory says goodbye to his brothers at the airport just before leaving for Morocco.



Br. Antonio poses for a photo with a local Berber woman at Our Lady of the Atlas Monastery, Midelt, Morocco.

BR. ANTONIO GREGORY, OFM, age 38, spent five months in the winter of 2015 as a missionary in Morocco working with Cruz Blanca Friars in that country's capital city, Rabat. (The Cruz Blanca Friars are a Franciscan religious congregation founded in Spain.) While Br. Antonio's particular ministry was teaching English as a second language, he volunteered with his local friar compatriots to perform direct "hands on" service to severely disabled and marginalized

Moroccan men. What so surprised Br. Antonio was the compassion shown by his host friars as they lived among those they served.

Each morning, the friars would rouse their disabled brothers from their beds, bathe them, change their bedding, and then dress them in fresh clothes before leading them to the refectory for breakfast. What Br. Antonio found most striking was "the pervasive spirit of fraternal love, made manifest by friars working side-by-side with lay volunteers,

both Christian and Muslim, where the boundaries of religion and the distinctions between lay volunteers and religious brothers, the disabled and healthy, no longer mattered."

As a young, simply professed friar, Br. Antonio had felt the call to missionary work as he reflected on the pain resulting from the increasing tension between the Arab and Western worlds. He viewed his missionary experience in Morocco as "an opportunity to serve, as well as to understand a radically different culture from a relational and human perspective, one far removed from books, films, or the news media." Br. Anthony claims he was transformed by his experience and looks forward to applying his lessons on his next missionary assignment.

FR. JOHN GIBBONS, OFM, age 53, now lives in Arceniev, Russia, in southeast Siberia near

the Sea of Japan, where he has ministered to the local people for more than ten years. His missionary call dates back to his teenage years, when he was inspired by a Maryknoll missionary in Peru. During that time, he harbored a dream "of a sort of macho missionary in the Andes with my backpack, hiking from village to village, making pastoral visits and bringing the sacraments, with rugged adventures along the way."

Over time, he came to understand that his call to Franciscan missionary life depended upon more than just his good education and his people and language skills. "My experiences of being in a strange culture where I did not know the language, customs, etc., forced me to rely more on God and other people. I was more humble, a better listener, and more faithful to prayer. I was responding, I hope, to the needs of the people



Fr. John (on left) stands with Ussuriysk community members Fr. Kiprian (Poland), Br. Stefano (Italy), and Max (postulant from Kazakhstan) in front of Arceniev parish.

rather than pushing my own ideas. This was more in touch with what I felt called to be as a Franciscan.”

Prior to his missionary assignment in Russia, Fr. John served the Tohono O’odham and Apache peoples in the southwest United States, and he spent time in India, Thailand, and Guatemala. Whether working alongside mother Teresa’s missionary brothers in India, where he cared directly for people abandoned on the streets to beg or die, or ministering to the diaspora of Roman Catholics surrounded by atheists or Orthodox Christians in Russia, Fr. John attests to being enriched by the experience of coming to realize an intimate reliance on God.

Fr. John speaks of a New Evangelization, which “simply underlines the fact that every Christian is called to share his or her faith, through words and/or actions, and that this is a conscious choice. It is not sufficient witness to say, ‘I am a Christian, I live among non-Christians, and therefore I am witnessing.’ Pope Francis also makes a point of going out to the people where they are at, not waiting for

them to knock on his door—because many won’t venture close enough to knock.”

TOMMY KING, OFM, is a third friar from the Province of St. Barbara who has served in missionary ministry. Fr. Tommy, age 59, is now pastor of St. Boniface Church in San Francisco’s Tenderloin District. Fr. Tommy’s call to be a missionary was also influenced from an early age by Maryknoll missionaries, particularly by reading and viewing their magazine that, he said, was filled with the “joyful faces” of those serving and those being served.

His sense of mission had all begun, however, because of the family in which he grew up in Sacramento and San Mateo, California. “My parents made it clear to me as far back as I can remember that it was central to Catholic identity to support foreign missions and those dedicated to the poor,” Fr. Tommy recalls. “In Spanish, they would say these early experiences gave birth in my heart to inquietudes” (promptings of the Holy Spirit).

Also influential to his missionary call was his interaction, as a younger friar, with the late, legendary friar Br. Ed Dunn in the summer of 1989. This friendship transformed his missionary inquietudes into a personal call from God to be a Franciscan missionary. Br. Ed was then serving in a Franciscan parish in San Bartolo, a poor parish on the outskirts of San Salvador, where he and his pastoral team



Members of Fr. John’s faith community in Arceniev, Russia, enjoy a luncheon celebration.



Fr. Tommy, Franciscan Sr. Guadalupe, and members of the youth choir head out in a “peke-peke” (motorized canoe) to celebrate Mass in a neighboring Peruvian village.

modeled a Franciscan missionary spirit that emphasized an intense solidarity with the poor at a time of civil war and social fragmentation.

Marked by his brother’s powerful example, Fr. Tommy later spent 11 years in Guatemala and Peru. In Peru, he plied the Amazon by small boat—a 14-foot aluminum fishing boat with a 30-horsepower engine—visiting his parishioners and the indigenous people scattered among 61 villages along the Ucayali River. He experienced bouts of isolation and loneliness there, and he now reflects with wonder on the missionaries of long past, including St. Junipero Serra. While Fr. Tommy had occasional access to email every couple of months, his forebears could not communicate with family, friends, or fellow friars for months or years on end. In addition to his experience in extreme circumstances, Fr. Tommy brings to his reflection extensive academic work, including graduate studies in the area of contemporary missionary

practice. He cites documents from Catholic social teaching, such as *Lumen Gentium*, which, in terms clearly reflective of a Franciscan approach, goes to some lengths to define evangelization as “the proclamation of Christ by word and testimony of life,” and *Ad Gentes*, which claims that the essential elements of mission and evangelization are Christian witness, preaching the Gospel, and forming Christian community. “The words ‘mission’ and ‘evangelization’ can be called Jesus’s job description,” says Fr. Tommy. “for Jesus invites all of us into a personal loving relationship with God, through his actions and words, by entering into the present and future reality of the kingdom of God.”

Fr. Tommy feels blessed to have been formed as a missionary in a post-Vatican II church and a post-Vatican II Franciscan order. “The Vatican II Declaration of the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions [*Nosstra Aetate*] recognizes that there are



Fr. Tommy baptizes a child during a feast day of one of the 61 villages of Misión Franciscana in the Peruvian Amazon.

deep spiritual moral truths in other religions, and that Catholics must respect this fact.” Recognizing that every culture has grace and sin, he says, “Catholic missionaries are called to celebrate the grace in other cultures and religions and, based on the Gospel vision of Jesus, to challenge the areas that they find sinful.”

In the spirit of another Vatican II document, *Gaudium et Spes*, Franciscan missionary activity in today’s globalized world entails reading the signs of the times and responding in ways that can be understood in the myriad cultures in which Franciscans minister.

These accounts of three friars who have been involved in missionary activity testify to a Franciscan understanding that missionary work is God’s work, not the friars’ own. Franciscan missionary work today means meeting people where they are, serving with humility, giving witness by being in relationship—especially with the marginalized—and allowing God’s grace to work through these loving and respectful relationships and

through the diverse cultural signs, settings, and practices that surround them.

This view of Franciscan missionary work calls to mind St. Francis’s famous writing that dates back to his Earlier Rule (c. 1221 CE): “All the friars should preach by their example” or, in some translations, “their deeds.” Francis outlines a simple missionary approach, directed specifically at those venturing into lands where the practice of Islam was dominant, “not to engage in arguments or disputes but to be subject to every human creature for God’s sake.”

Fr. Tommy appropriates this enjoiner in a very personal way: “In spite of this invitation, I am often argumentative and lack humility, however, when I am respectful and humble with others, I see the Holy Spirit act in people’s lives in a marvelous way.” In such times, in the encounter with the other, especially the poor and marginalized or those from different cultures and faith traditions, Fr. Tommy finds deep consolation by way of a simple, reliable plea: “When I ask Jesus to help me see His face in the poor and marginalized people I meet, I am often blessed with peace and joy in my heart.”

In their varied missionary work, Fr. Antonio, Fr. John, and Fr. Tommy all give witness to Gospel values in ways that they hope remain faithful to Jesus’s mandate. In a world whose centrifugal forces polarize people, create winners and losers, and demarcate “us” over “them,” the ministry of these friars seeks to bridge the divide by creating community wherever they serve in the name of Christ. ❖

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Stanley Raggio is the chief operations officer for the Franciscan Friars of California.



ARE YOU LISTENING?

Near the end of his life, St. Francis of Assisi reflected on his own journey: “And after the Lord gave me some brothers, no one showed me what I had to do, but the Most High Himself revealed to me that I should live according to the pattern of the Holy Gospel.” As Franciscan friars in the 21st century, we strive to imitate Francis, serve the poor, and promote justice, peace, and care of creation.

Have you considered becoming a Franciscan priest or brother? Join us!



www.sbfranciscans.org
 (408) 903-3422





San Buenaventura

Bicentennial Mission Bells: The Sound of a Living History

TO MARK THE celebration of the United States bicentennial in 1976, Fr. Nevin Ford, OFM, crafted a series of 21 bronze mission bells, each about three inches tall and marked with a sign of the mission's patron and the date of the mission's founding. The bell pictured above commemorates Mission San Buenaventura, founded in 1782. The cardinal's hat of St. Bonaventure is the bell's distinctive marking.

While the Liberty Bell in Independence Hall, Philadelphia, featured most prominently in mementos and news stories created for the nation's bicentennial, Fr. Nevin's creative work highlighted a chapter of U.S. history that had unfolded on the other side of the newly forming nation. The impact of the Franciscans on American history, concurrent with the nation's struggle for independence from England, would gain prominence 40 years after the



San Luis



Santa Cruz

About the Artist

Ordained in 1954, Fr. Nevin Ford's first assignment was at St. Anthony's Seminary in Santa Barbara, where he dedicated 13 years to teaching. While there, he created works of mosaic and sculpture in his spare time. When he created the collection of bronze mission bells, Fr. Nevin traveled to a smelter in Paso Robles, California, because there was nowhere to smelt bronze on site at Mission Santa Barbara. In his 68th year as a friar, Fr. Nevin resides at New Bethany Residential Care Community in Los Baños, California.



San Miguel

bicentennial with the canonization of Padre Junípero Serra in Washington, D.C., on September 23, 2015. The canonization not only called attention to the distinctive cultural, social, and religious history symbolized by the mission bell, but marked a turning point in the telling of that history. Last fall, in dialogue with descendants of the Ohlone and other native peoples, the Roman Catholic bishops of California initiated a revision of texts and displays used in Catholic schools and mission museums. The revisions now in process attempt to tell a fuller story of the indigenous people who were first summoned to prayer by California mission bells.

For more information, go to cacatholic.org and search for "mission reconciliation." ♦

God Don't Make Junk

by Br. Mark Schroeder

San Damiano is a place of refuge for people of all faiths and backgrounds who are lost and seeking, people who are craving contemplation and reflection, and people moved to rebuild the world. As a Franciscan presence in Northern California, San Damiano is a place for rebuilding relationships with God, creation, the marginalized, and among Catholic, Christian, and other religious communities.

IN SEPTEMBER OF last year, Pope Francis asked every parish and religious community in Europe to take in a family of refugees. "The Gospel calls us, asks us to be near the least and the abandoned. To give them concrete hope, not just say 'Hang in there, have patience!'" The pope added that this gesture would be a compassionate way to express the reality of the Holy Year of Mercy (which began in December).

The friar community at San Damiano Retreat in Danville, California, decided to take up the pope's challenge. I had the chance to interview a man whom we will

Mark Schroeder: *I like your button.*
K: One of the people at work gave it to me. And I liked it.

MS: *Why are you a refugee?*

K: Because I was under religious persecution.

MS: *What does religious persecution mean?*

K: You are not equal to the main religion of the country. You are not

equal to other people. You have no right to defend your rights. In my experience, the persecution meant they tried so hard to [convert] me to Islam. They are Muslim. The government stopped my education. They took job opportunities away from me. They took benefits away from me. Government agents tortured me.

MS: *At what age did you realize this was happening to you?*

call K, a 25-year-old refugee from the Middle East who recently resided at the retreat center. K did not want to use his name, nor did he want to reveal his country of origin, because he worried that anything he said could have consequences of persecution for family members back home. We talked after K had walked a mile and a half to his new home from a ten-hour shift at his job. K wore his work uniform, with a button pinned on his shirt. The button read: "I'm loveable because God don't make junk."

K: It started when I was eight years old. From other young kids. My teachers told the other students, "He is different." Kids often threw rocks at me. Now in looking back, I can see that mentally and physically this started in primary school. When I was a teenager, other teenagers would pick fights with me; their anger actually comes from their beliefs.

MS: *And how has this affected you now?*

K: When you get older, you always feel that you are less than human. There is no equality. For 20 years, I was told I was not equal. Unless you grew up like this, you will never be able to understand this. This is the heaviest thing that I still carry, even now that I am in the United States.

MS: *Did you plan to leave?*

K: I decided to leave when I was 18. I hoped to end up in the U.S., so I started to teach myself English using the Internet. I learned English to communicate with people of the other cultures in the U.S.

MS: *Can you describe how you ended up here?*

K: I signed up for a refugee program when I was 20. They got me to Europe, in a country where some people speak English. When I arrived, no one met me at the airport. I was homeless the first three months. I found a job and rented a room. And after a while, the program arranged an I-94 refugee visa for me and flew me to California to be placed with a family. Within three weeks, I found a job, but the family decided they couldn't house me any longer. I was homeless here, yet I learned of a social service agency who was willing to help. Br. Mike [Minton, OFM] was contacted, and I happily moved in here.

MS: *Are you comfortable living here?*
K: All I can tell you is that the Franciscans have saved my life. I really mean that.

MS: *Are you able to be in contact with your family back home?*

K: Text and email. But I have to be very careful because the government can open both.

MS: *Do you have any big plans?*
K: To live in the U.S. forever, to have a family, to have an equal life. Right now, I would like to find a new job, get my own place to live, and get a bachelor's degree.

MS: *You told me when we met that all of this has not been easy.*

K: Yes, I'm not living in a place with people my age. I cannot find a friend my age. I work long hours. So, there is loneliness.

MS: *What would you like to say to anyone who reads this?*

K: Regarding the topic of refugees and immigration in your country, it's hard. But you should deal with it. Because this is a better life for each refugee than before. Remember, they are refugees here because they had some problem in their country.

MS: *It seems like you have something else you want to say.*

K: Talking with you brings back memories in my head. But I'm okay now. ♦

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Br. Mark Schroeder, OFM, has dedicated most of his Franciscan life to ministry in areas of social justice, peace advocacy, and service to the poor and marginalized. He lives in Sacramento, California. His Facebook page is FranciscansForJustice, and he can be reached at brothermark@att.net

“Put on Love”: The Clothing Reveals the Calling

By Mary E. Lyons, Ph.D.

I RECEIVED A SURPRISE phone call from the Provincial in May with news that the General Definitorium of the Order of Friars Minor voted to affiliate me with the order. As I began to understand more about this incredible honor, I also learned that I would be measured for my own religious habit to be worn during the affiliation ritual. As grateful as I was (and am) to be recognized by the Franciscan family in this special way, the idea of receiving and wearing the habit for the cer-

emony gave me pause. I struggled to understand and appreciate this dimension of the affiliation and, moreover, how to explain this attire to my assembled friends and family.

At about the same time, I was preparing to retire and to move. I began to downsize and to sort through accumulated artifacts, long concealed in boxes and darkened corners of closets. Most people, I believe, have similar collections, “treasures” that may have little



At the Affiliation reception, Mary is flanked by her granddaughter, Siena Lyons, and one of her new brothers, Rami Fodda.



Uniquely accessorized, Mary stands with four provincial ministers (left to right): Joe Chinnici, Finian McGinn, Mel Jurisich, and John Hardin.

material value but remain precious nonetheless and reveal the narratives of our lives with all their inevitable joys and sorrows. One of the more telling collections I have is an assortment of “uniforms,” attire worn over the years to represent something to which I belonged. I had saved one of the uniforms from my 25-year career as a naval reserve officer. Next to it hung my academic regalia, used every year at commencement during my 25 years as a college or university president; next to it, a long cape featuring the symbol of the religious confraternity into which I had been inducted, and so on. And now, to this collection, would be added the religious habit of the Order of Friars Minor.

Simply putting on a uniform, or regalia, or a habit does not transform us, nor does it ensure that we become the ideal or perfect member of the society or organization

we represent. But it does suggest that we belong to something far bigger than ourselves, that we have the desire to cooperate and contribute to the mission of that group, and that we have companions along the way. It is true that, for many decades, I have loved and been loved by those who follow Francis and, in turn, I have tried to cooperate with them in our mission for the Church and the world. Thus, this tremendous honor, including the putting on of the habit, fills me with both great gratitude and a continuing desire to participate in the mission of Francis.

The artifacts of our lives—like my collection of clothing—simply reveal our calling as Christians, our mission to “Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.... Put on love... And be thankful.” (Colossians 3:12 ff.) ♦

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Dr. Mary Lyons began her work with the Province of St. Barbara 35 years ago as adjunct professor of rhetoric and homiletics at the Franciscan School of Theology in Berkeley. She has been an active promoter of the Franciscan mission in education ever since. Last fall, Mary retired as president of the University of San Diego.

at last

Think again ...



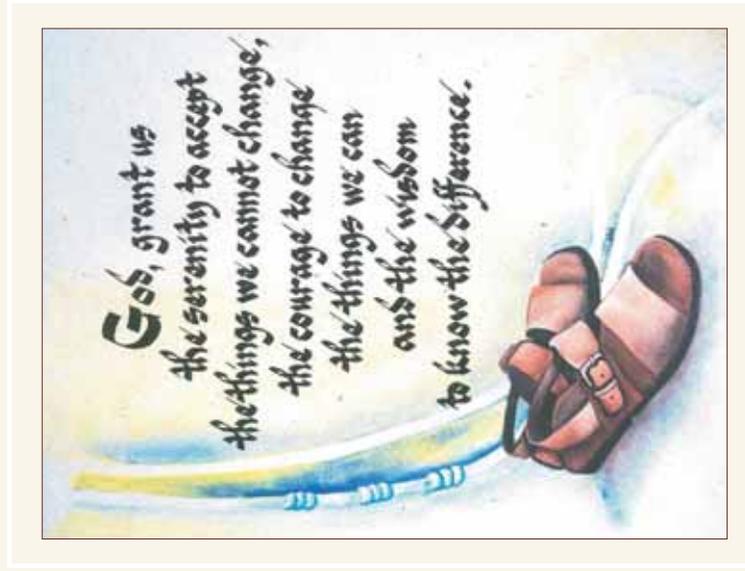
True - False

1. Someday, I'll get my act together.
2. I can learn enough and strength and others in or-charge of my own life.
3. It's necessary to be in control of self and others in order to feel good.
4. Feeling good is what it's all about.
5. When I feel bad, it means I've failed.
6. Peace and joy have to be earned.
7. Life is "one damned thing after another" - a series of problems to be solved.
8. Everything would be okay if people would just stop and let me explain myself.
9. People who don't agree with me don't see the real picture.
10. How I see (feel about) things is the way they really are.

If you answered True to any of the above, go back and think again.

Fr. Alex

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Fr. Alex Manville, OFM, was pastor of Sts. Simon and Jude parish in Huntington Beach California, from 1982 to 1994. From the publication of his first bulletin reflection, parishioners sensed their pastor was someone special. He communicated with a style all his own: creative, down to earth, and yet with a certain sophistication. Two years ago, in response to mounting demand, the parish staff collected Fr. Alex's weekly articles—most of which had fortunately been saved in a parish archive—and produced an informal printing entitled "Life and Times With Fr. Alex." The above is excerpted from that collection and dates from the Spring of 1990. Fr. Alex is currently in residence at Mercy Retirement and Care Center in Oakland.



The custom of distributing Catholic prayer cards, also called holy cards, is a centuries-old tradition of the Catholic Church. The oldest surviving Catholic prayer card is St. Christopher and dates back to 1423. Holy cards bear a religious image with a favorite verse or prayer and are used to commemorate special moments. The prayer card above was created by Reverend Franklin Fong, OFM, for the Province of Saint Barbara 2016 Chapter meeting.

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