

# **The Way**

## of St. Francis



**Celebrating  
100 Years**

**Always forward.**

# The Way of Saint Francis

Spring 2015 VOL. 20, NO. 2

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## On the Cover

Fr. Louie Vitale, OFM, former provincial minister, addresses the friars at the Province's 2012 Chapter. The friars at Chapter elect leadership and decided the future direction of the Province. The mural behind Fr. Louie is Blessed Junipero Serra who said, "Always forward, never back." The Province of Saint Barbara is celebrating its Centennial; they are celebrating their past, but always looking forward.

PHOTO: PETER JORDAN PHOTOGRAPHY

# 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.



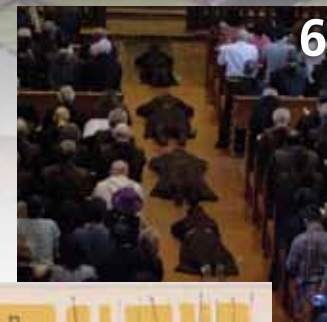
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## Editor's Note



### Dear Friends,

By the time Peter Jordan snapped our cover photo he'd been in a crouched position for some minutes eyeing the friars and Padre Serra in the mural behind them. Would a photo op come to pass? Leave it to Father Louie Vitale to seize the moment, and seize it he did, stepping to the open mike, hand raised in a visual echo of his forebear in Gospel life. *Adelante, Louie!*

Truth be told, we had chosen the cover photo as a sign of centennial vitality (pun intended) without knowing that Pope Francis would soon announce his intention to canonize the Apostle of California. Like the photograph itself, we'll consider the convergence a gift of divine providence.

But at the same time the cover might strike some—especially those who know their California history—as a bit out of sync. After all, with Serra in the background, shouldn't we be talking not about 100 years, but at least 200? So it goes with the history of the Province of Saint Barbara: our timeline proves our grandmother's wisdom: God writes straight with crooked lines. The Province of Saint Barbara was only established as an independent entity after Serra had come and gone. In another irony of history, God used German friars to do it. For the detailed account I defer to a real historian, Fr. Joe Schwab (Franciscan Thoughts, p. 14).

Whether our timeline spans 100, 200, or 2000 years it is, more than anything else, a gift of God's grace working through human beings — with all their foibles and strengths. The articles in this issue are an attempt to bring some of those people and the scriptures that inspired them to life. Which means of course, to you, our readers, who give us the chance to seize this moment with love.

Fr. Dan Lackie, OFM  
Editor

### Five Things I Learned Making a 100-Year Timeline:

- 1  
"Starting points"  
aren't really starting  
points.
- 2  
What's not on  
the timeline is as  
important as what is.
- 3  
1 and 2 are not  
excuses for scrapping  
timelines!
- 4  
Honoring the  
past means facing its  
complexities.
- 5  
I am because  
we are.

Have a comment or  
suggestion? Let us know  
by sending an email to  
[TheWay@sbofm.org](mailto:TheWay@sbofm.org)

## By The Way

This is a selection of events occurring in the Province over the next few months. If you have any questions regarding this list please call the Province for more information.

## PROVINCE OF SAINT BARBARA Centennial Celebration 1915–2015 A network of grace

2015 marks the centennial of the Province of Saint Barbara. In celebrating the past 100 years of the Province, we will take a closer look at the daily work of the friars within this community through a traveling exhibition presented at locations throughout the Province. This exhibit will highlight major movements and milestones and will present the lives and stories of our brothers committed to the needs of those inside and outside the Province.

Join us as we celebrate together 100 years of Prayer, Fraternity, Joy, and Service. Attend a prayer service, liturgy, or reception.

### Mark your calendars! Current exhibit locations and dates as follows:

#### February 22, 2015

San Damiano Retreat Center  
Danville, California

#### April 30–May 3, 2015

St. Francis Parish  
Sacramento, California

#### June 6, 2015

St. Francis Center  
Los Angeles, California

#### August 20–23, 2015

St. John the Baptist Parish  
Portland, Oregon

#### September 17–20, 2015

Old Mission San Luis Rey  
Oceanside, California

#### September 26, 2015

St. Elizabeth's Parish  
Oakland, California

#### October 4, 2015

St. Boniface and St. Anthony's  
San Francisco, California

#### October 22–25, 2015

St. Mary's Parish  
Phoenix, Arizona

#### November 13–15, 2015

Franciscan Renewal Center  
Scottsdale, Arizona

#### December 4, 2015

Old Mission Santa Barbara  
Santa Barbara, California

### More locations to come!

Check our website for the most current schedule.  
[www.sbfranciscans.org/centennial](http://www.sbfranciscans.org/centennial)



## Snapshot

### Solemn Vows August 30, 2014 Old Mission Santa Barbara

Ever since the day of his death almost 800 years ago, the story of St. Francis of Assisi has captured the imagination of artists, theologians, musicians, people of every faith, and continues to call Catholic men to religious life as Friars Minor (Lesser Brothers). This story has inspired young men for the past 800 years to place their hands in their Provincial Minister and vow: "The Rule and life of the Friars Minor is this, namely, to observe the Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ, by living in obedience, without anything of one's own, and in chastity."

This August Michael Minton, OFM; Phillip Polk, OFM; Ryan Thornton, OFM; and Victor Vega, OFM followed this inspiration and made solemn vows. They are not the first nor the last as they follow in a long line of Franciscan friars of the Province of Saint Barbara. The first friar to make solemn vows for the Province of Saint Barbara was Fidelis Kessler, OFM (pictured right). ❖



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## The Word

*The Word appears in every issue and explores the Holy Scripture. Its aim is to give the reader a deeper understanding of the Bible and how it relates to everyday life.*

## Making the most of it:

Matthew: 25: 14–30

by Fr. Warren Rouse, OFM

Parables seem designed not only to tell a story but deliberately to leave the audience puzzled and, hopefully, discovering more than one message. Check out this particular situation that Jesus tells the people about the Kingdom of Heaven:

**"For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away."** (A talent was worth more than fifteen years' wages of a day laborer. We're not talking small change here!)

**"...each according to his own ability."**

The generous donor knows the abilities of each man. By giving them different amounts, there is no idea of punishment or insult. He simply knows their strengths and their weaknesses. He respects these differences.

"The one who had received the

five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents."

Eventually the owner returns and congratulates these two for investing his talents and doubling them. He rewards them with more responsibilities.

Which brings us to the third person who is given one talent.:

"'Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.'"

So he believes that the owner is "a harsh man." But the other two had no issue here. Where did the idea of harshness come from? Possibly from his earliest days when an authority figure (father, for example) was a demanding person.

This third man is therefore

afraid of taking a risk of investing his talent and seeing the market go down. But true growth, natural or spiritual, always implies uncertainty, the possibility of making a mistake. Or maybe this man is just plain lazy. Fr. Anthony Giambrone, O.P. explains:

"If the third servant makes out badly ... it is because he has rendered his portion from the Lord closed to growth ... He has not even left the talent to increase in the bank—a thing requiring no effort from him. His hole-in-the-ground investment strategy has positively cut off all possibility of increase."

Giambrone's point is that the third man is "closed to growth." And that principle holds for the spiritual life also. A person open to spiritual growth will indeed grow, but if he doesn't make the effort, God's grace cannot prevail.

This holds for all of our lives! We are to take the risk of surrendering in faith to God even though we cannot see the future. As we friars of

the Province of Saint Barbara celebrate our 100th anniversary this year, we, too, gladly invest in the future. There's a wonderful, powerful prayer by Blessed Cardinal Newman who was a fellow traveler with you and me:

*"O my Lord, and Savior, in your arms I rest secure. If you keep me, I have nothing to fear; but if you abandon me I have nothing to hope for. I have no idea what will happen to me as I await my death; I know nothing of what is to come; but I entrust myself to you. I lean entirely on you since you know what is good for me. As for me, I do not know. Amen."* ♦

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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, CA.  
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... true growth, natural or spiritual, always implies  
uncertainty, the possibility of making a mistake...



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## Friar Profile

### A Franciscan Anthem

Anne Symens-Bucher

For this edition of the Friar Profile, we offer the words of Anne Symens-Bucher, Fr. Ray Bucher's niece. Anne, who was affiliated to the Province of Saint Barbara in 2006 after over 25 years of service in JPIC and other ministries, paid tribute to her uncle and his classmates last December, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of their priestly ordination. Her words, adapted here, direct us to the deeper music she hears in the life and time of their commitment. Knowing the love of Broadway musicals she shares with her uncle, we're sure Anne would much rather have sung this tribute from the flare of the footlights!

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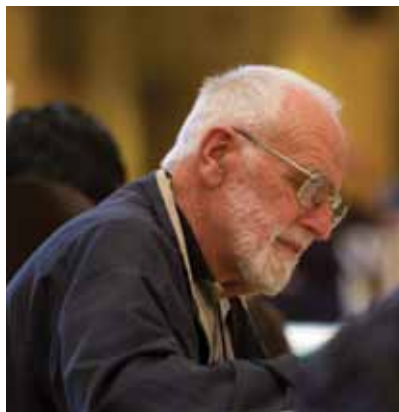
Fr. Alonso DeBlas, OFM



Fr. Ray Bucher, OFM



Fr. Michael Guinan, OFM



Fr. Ignacius DeGroot, OFM

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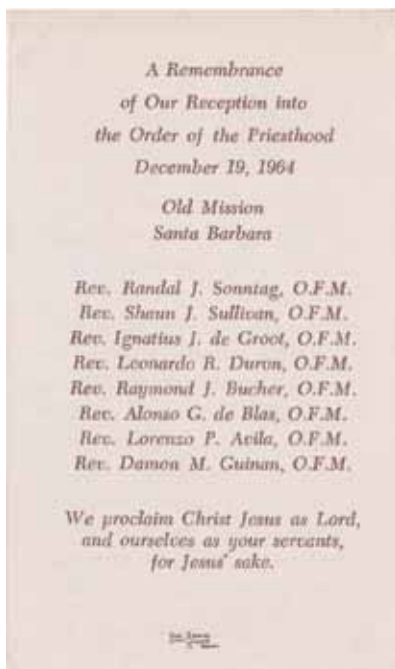
Highlighted above (left to right) are Fr. Guinan, Fr. DeGroot, Fr. DeBlas, and Fr. Bucher, at the friar ordination class of 1964. Their ordination took place at St. Roque Church in Santa Barbara, CA with then Bishop Timothy Manning.

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**I**N 1964, THE YEAR that my uncle Raymond and his classmates were ordained to the priesthood, was a year marked by turning points. President Johnson signed two of the most important documents in the history of the U.S. in the 20th century: the Civil Rights Act and the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, the latter giving him broad powers to expand the war in Vietnam. The Second Vatican Council was in full swing and Martin Luther King received the Nobel Prize. That same year *Hello Dolly*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, and *Funny Girl* opened on Broadway.

To memorialize their ordination the friars took an ecumenical track and quoted the Jesuit philosopher/scientist, Teilhard de Chardin. Printed on remembrance cards handed out to all those in attendance at the ordination at St. Roque Church in Santa Barbara, the words capture well the commitment of these friars to engage fully with the joy, tumult, and change represented by each of the events named above.

*To the full extent of my power, because I am a priest, I wish from now on to be the first to become conscious of*



To memorialize their ordination the friars took an ecumenical track and quoted the Jesuit philosopher/scientist, Teilhard de Chardin on their remembrance cards handed out to all those in attendance at their ordination.

*all that the world loves, pursues and suffers: I want to be the first to seek, to sympathize and to suffer; the first to unfold and sacrifice myself to become more widely human, more nobly of the earth than any of the world's servants.*

The words carry such a strong echo of Isaiah 61 that when the two pieces are stitched together, form something of an anthem for a prophetic, Franciscan priesthood.

*"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because the Lord has anointed me. To the full extent of my power, because*

*I am a priest, he has sent me to bring good news to the afflicted, to be the first to become conscious of all that the world loves, pursues and suffers, to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, release to the prisoners, comfort to those who mourn, to be the first to seek, to sympathize and to suffer, the first to unfold and sacrifice myself to become more widely human, more nobly of the earth than any of the world's servants."*

The closing words of this anthem, *"To become more nobly of the earth*

...along with as well Paul's admonition to the Corinthians, *"We hold this treasure in earthen vessels"*, resounds with the reader. In 1964 this reference to a nobility rooted in the earth itself forecast the renewal of a Franciscan spirituality sensitive to all that binds together church, ministry (priesthood included) and the created world. In fact, 50 years on, these same words raise important questions as the earth is increasingly plundered and poisoned for profit. For instance, does anything change when we think of ourselves as "of earth," rather than "on earth"? Might "earthen" refer to a kind of clay too often considered less worthy or, worse, expendable, when set in opposition with the "heavenly"? In 1964, new questions were pointing to a new direction for the church and its ministers, one that focused in a particular way on an incarnational and ecological dimension central to Franciscan spirituality.

In their combined 200 years of service, the four friars honored here have been exquisite earthen vessels of the Gospel. In fact, it is astonishing to consider their achievement in light of the context of their vocations and how much the priesthood has changed since 1964. However you think vocations to the priesthood happen, it certainly seems true that the times, the parish, and the family container in which these friars grew up paved the way for their priesthood. No one could have predicted in that heady time of Vatican II that vocations to the priesthood would decrease dramatically in the US, nor could anyone have imagined the exodus from the priesthood that

occurred in the 1960s and 70s. I have no doubt that when Raymond and his classmates were ordained they made a life commitment to the priesthood. Each of these friars had to wrestle with his vocation, find his way, adapt, grow, stretch, and stay. How did they manage to navigate their way when maps and guidebooks were in short supply? And what might their fidelity and perseverance say to us today?

I'll answer with a poem and a song. In her brief poem "Sometime", the poet Mary Oliver lays out a series of imperatives that for me capture the "instructions" that Raymond, Alonso, Michael, and Ignatius have followed well.

*Instructions for living a life:*

*Pay attention.*

*Be astonished.*

*Tell about it.*

The willingness to be present; the capacity for wonder; the boldness of the living word. These are basic elements of service which four friar priests embraced 50 years ago and now extend to us as we recall that beautiful day when their priestly journeys began. Let's be astonished, let's be grateful, let's allow the faithfulness of these men to inspire faithfulness to our own baptismal priesthood in the world. ❖

*..... Anne Symens-Bucher is not only Fr. Ray's niece, she's also his goddaughter. She says it was one of the greatest privileges of her life to be asked to compose and share this reflection on the occasion of his Jubilee. Anne and her husband Terry are the parents of five children and the founders of Cantic Farm at St. Elizabeth Parish in Oakland, CA.*



## Franciscan Thoughts



# THE PAST IS PROLOGUE: a history of Province of Saint Barbara

By Fr. Joseph Schwab, OFM



THE PROVINCE OF Saint Barbara has its headquarters in Oakland, California. Friars of our Province live and serve in places that cross ethnic, cultural, and economic boundaries throughout California and in the states of Washington, Oregon, and Arizona. We also serve in missions in the Holy Land, northern Mexico, Russia, and we minister among Native American peoples of the southwestern United States.

(Pictured left to right) Br. Crispin Kurpinski, OFM; Br. Willibrord Tewes, OFM; Br. Dominic Rheidt, OFM; and Br. Bernard Jurczyk, OFM spend the day working the field at Old Mission Santa Barbara. (Inset photo, right) Br. Robert Rodrigues, OFM and Fr. John Hardin, OFM walk down the sidewalk at Old Mission San Luis Rey during the 2012 Province Chapter.





Friars assembled at Mission Santa Barbara for the Installation of First Province of the West, 1915. Old Mission Santa Barbara is considered the Queen of the Missions.

The Province of Saint Barbara incorporates many of the oldest sites in Franciscan history in North America. From the beginning of Franciscan life in this region, the brothers were noted for their adventurous spirit as they crossed the boundaries of their cultural world. First arriving in present day Arizona and New Mexico in 1539, the Spanish and later Mexican friars established numerous missions among the native people of what is now the southwestern United States. Not a few friar missionaries were killed during this era. With expansion into California in 1769 under the leadership of Blessed Junipero Serra, the Order represented the Church in this part of the world for many generations. A series of attacks on the life of the Church began after Mexican independence from Spain in 1821: expulsion of Spanish-born friars in the 1820s and secularization of missions in the 1830s, later followed

by the exlaustration of religious and the annexation of California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas to the United States. Through all these changes, the only unbroken community presence the friars could maintain was in Santa Barbara.

Rather than despair, the brothers sought new ministries and accepted new challenges. People from all over the world poured into the Gold Rush country of California, and the friars went on preaching tours to meet the people where they were. With the development of an educational institution in Santa Barbara, seminary teaching, an orphanage in Northern California and itinerant preaching among the scattered remnants of Mission Indian populations, the small mixed community of Mexican, Irish and American-born friars was very busy and creatively engaged in ministry to a diverse population.

In the meantime, friars were fleeing anti-Catholic legislation in



Friars assembled at Mission San Luis Rey for the Provincial Chapter, 2012. Old Mission San Luis Rey is considered the King of the Missions

Germany and coming to the central United States, forming Sacred Heart Province. The California friars petitioned Rome to be incorporated into an American province. This resulted in the arrival of Sacred Heart friars in Santa Barbara in 1885. Soon, these new immigrant brothers began missionary work among German, Irish, Italian and other immigrant populations, in addition to Native American people in Northern California and central Arizona. Parish ministry flourished.

**B**y 1900, the large influx of German friars was ending, and recognition that the Order must become locally based was widespread. At the same time, the reality was that a European, monastic lifestyle did not fit well with itinerant preachers covering vast tracts of territory and spending many nights sleeping in camps, church sacristies and other shelter. It was at this time that the Order expand-

ed into the states of Washington and Oregon. The friars gladly took on large mission fields and mixed-nationality parishes. Even though it was difficult to supply personnel for all the places accepted by the friars, brothers were sent to China in 1914. In 1915, the friars of the western U.S. separated from the Sacred Heart Province and our Province of Saint Barbara was established.

It seems as if boundaries established through centuries of practice of religious life in Europe and Spanish Colonial America were giving way to new living situations. While there was a great dedication to remaining faithful to the Rule and religious life, living in a non-Catholic society brought changes in interactions with secular people and such things as the use of money, extensive travel, and the wearing of secular clothing. Frontiers were being crossed on many levels.

The Province accepted new

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28

## Community Connection

# A Beacon of HOPE

By  
Brother Scott Slattum, OFM



**O**N SATURDAY, OCTOBER 4th of 2014, the Feast of St. Francis, the St. Anthony Foundation took a bold step into the future, while celebrating its past. They opened a new ten-story building, sixty-four years to the date of its founding. Executive Director, Barry J. Stenger, said they were “opening the door to so much more, more meals, more help, more hope.”

PHOTOS: (BACKGROUND) TAYLOR SKILLIN; (INSET) SAINT ANTHONY FOUNDATION ARCHIVE



Pictures: (background) The facade of the new St. Anthony's building; (left to right) An early St. Anthony's location, 1973; Br. Anthony's rosary. Attached to the rosary is a bullet removed from his body during World War II. The bullet is a reminder of his fox-hole conversion and his desire to serve God out of gratitude; Br. Anthony in his room at the Mercy Center.



“This is not a groundless hope,” said Stenger, “we stand solidly on sixty-four years of history. In fact, the line of people on Golden Gate Avenue waiting to walk in the door goes back more than 100 years. The Franciscan friars have emulated their founder, St. Francis, the patron of this city, and have seen in those who are poor, brothers and sisters ...”

St. Anthony's story is part of the history of the Franciscan friars of the Province of Saint Barbara. It dates back to 1950 when its founder, Fr. Alfred Boeddeker, OFM served the first meal in a converted auto-body shop, but the story doesn't begin there. The story begins with friar Anthony Lavorin, OFM and his fox-hole conversion.

Br. Anthony served in the South Pacific theater in World War II. He recounts his story, “Bullets whizzed

over my head. I was pinned down. I was the platoon sergeant in charge of thirty men. We had dashed out of the jungle onto a Guam airfield. The cracking gun of a Japanese sniper kept us down for hours and eventually a slug ripped into my leg.” Now ninety-four, the former marine's story of his ensuing months of recuperation begins to sound familiar to St. Francis.

In the hospital stateside he came across the story of St. Francis, and a metamorphosis of his life would soon follow. He was faced with another bullet he couldn't dodge. Anthony was engaged to be married, but now felt a desire to show his gratitude by serving God. In Oakland, California, he



met two Franciscans who won him over. Anthony made the decision to become a Franciscan friar of the Province of Saint Barbara.

Br. Anthony went on to do great things. He served as a missionary in the Peruvian mountains and with the Apache American Indians in Whiteriver, Arizona. Little did he know that it would be the simple act of making a sandwich for those who gathered at the doors of St. Boniface Church that would become a future beacon of hope for the poor of San Francisco.

Br. Anthony was the porter of St. Boniface Church. He was in charge of offering hospitality to visitors at the door. He soon discovered it was the hungry who gathered there. He found himself spending his days procuring food and making sandwiches. As the years progressed, it became increasingly difficult to meet the demand.

Something needed to change; parishioners were complaining about the arduous task of gaining access to the Church through the long lines gathered at the door. It would be a comment by Br. Anthony to Fr. Alfred Boeddeker, pastor of St. Boniface, which would plant the seed for a new way of meeting the needs of the poor. An auto-body shop would be purchased by Fr. Alfred and the food for the first meal would be prepared by Br. Anthony. Over sixty-four years later, that which had started as a simple sandwich became a new ten-story building.

The new dining room is a response to the growing food insecurity of San Francisco where one in five adults lacks the resources to

provide food for themselves or their families. In the Tenderloin, that number is as high as one in two. St. Anthony's serves about 3,000 hot, nutritious meals a day. The meals served feed individuals and families who have slipped through the safety net.

The new dining room seating capacity is also 43% larger. The section for women and families is twice as large. The new kitchen and food storage area are expansive and commercial grade. There are two serving lines. Guest who are waiting outside are protected from the weather by a new covered arcade. However, the best part of the dining room is it's open to natural light and fresh air.

The building is more than the dining room. The second floor is home to St. Anthony's Social Work Center and the Free Clothing Program. The Social Work Center utilizes the network of programs within St. Anthony and connects clients with other services to support, stabilize, and improve quality of life for more than 1,750 low income and working poor individuals and families each year. The Free Clothing Program provides warm clothes, interview or employment apparel, and children's clothing. They provide free clothing to 29,000 men, women and children each year.

The rest of the building consists of ninety units of affordable senior housing, built and operated by Mercy Housing California, and will provide wrap-around services to some of San Francisco's most vulnerable residents.

The new ten-story building for the St. Anthony Foundation is an extraordinary moment in the

history of San Francisco and the Franciscan friars of the Province of Saint Barbara. It's a reminder of the friars' and community's commitment to the poor. Executive Director, Barry Stenger captured the essence of this commitment in his opening speech:

"This is also an extraordinary moment for our city. You've heard of a battle going on in our city, particularly here in the Tenderloin. Some say it's a battle over real estate. Others say it's a battle over housing. Some say it's about jobs. It's a political battle; it's an economic battle. It's probably all of these things. But I believe it's a battle for the heart of this city.

By raising up this building, we are saying that there is a place in the City of St. Francis for those who are poor. This beautiful dining room, these affordable housing units, this new clothing program and social work center are clear statements that yes, there's a place in this city for those who have more than they need, but there is also a place for those who are in need."

The inspiring story of St. Anthony Foundation is the story of a simple act, the making of a sandwich for a stranger at the door. This simple act is not only an act of charity, but for a Franciscan and Christian, an act of justice. Justice calls for the fair and equitable distribution of life's necessities, and the scriptural idea of justice is based on the truth that all human beings have dignity, worth and are children of God.

St. Anthony Foundation is committed to this vision, which is why the Franciscan-sponsored ministry isn't simply a dining hall, free

clothing program, technology lab, medical clinic, drug and alcohol recovery program, or a social work center. St. Anthony provides justice education and advocacy.

The prophets declared that God defended the poor, the oppressed and those who had experienced injustice (Am 5:11-12). St. Anthony is an advocate for policies and programs that address root causes of poverty, and that will better serve the needs of the poor and homeless people in San Francisco. They also offer education about poverty and homelessness to the public.

Jesus also proclaimed that the wealthy were obligated to see the poor and take care of them (Lk 16:19-31). St. Anthony provides a structured program to support this teaching of Jesus. They welcome more than 10,000 volunteers each year from every sector of the community, from students to corporate employees. In addition, the St. Anthony Foundation does not receive local, state, or federal funding, but relies on benefactors.

We are told by Stenger that the line that stretches outside the new ten-story building goes back more than 100 years, a reference to the Province of Saint Barbara celebration of its founding 100 years ago, and a reminder that the Franciscan friars are not simply celebrating their past, but continue to remain committed to a future full of hope for the poor and marginalized. ♦

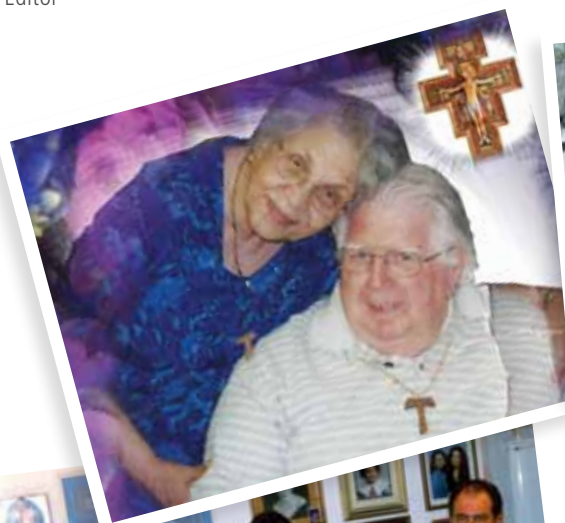
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Br. Scott Slattum, OFM is a Franciscan friar of the Province of Saint Barbara. He currently serves as the assistant editor for The Way of St. Francis, and works with the poor and homeless in San Francisco, CA.

## Donor Profile

### Imelda Schroeder: a life of partnership.

In a recent letter to us, a very special friend, Imelda Schroeder in Sacramento, looked back on her life just as St. Francis did 800 years ago, with gratitude. As professed members of the Order of Franciscans Secular for over 50 years Imelda—known to most of us as Mel—and her late husband John developed many rich friendships in the Franciscan family, all the while raising eight children. Often called to important service as bridge builders between Spanish- and English-speaking fraternities, John and Mel participated in countless projects of prayer and ministry, as shining lights of simplicity and generosity. With Mel's permission, we are printing part of her recent letter as this issue's "Donor Profile."

—Editor



**Photos (left to right):** The Schroeders with their six children; George and Imelda Schroeder in 2006; The front of St. Francis of Assisi Church, Sacramento, where Imelda Schroeder and her husband George started attending in 1968.

PHOTOS: LEFT,  
SCHROEDER FAMILY;  
ABOVE, J.D. WARRICK

Dear Friars:

Thank you so much for the card celebrating 100 years of the Province of Saint Barbara and especially for the prayers you have offered for all of our family. I was very honored when you asked me to write a little something about John and mine's experience as Franciscans. I hope the following is ok.

John and I first learned about the Secular Franciscan Order on our return from John's military stint in Guam. John was in the chapel at the Air Force Base when he noticed a note on the bulletin board that mentioned the Third Order of St. Francis. In much the same way that Francis' experience in a chapel brought about his conversion, so to did this tiny notice in a chapel bring about our own.

Once John and I got to El Paso, Texas we investigated this "Third Order" and we fell in love with what we found. In 1962 both John and I professed as Secular Franciscans. Since that time, we have been a part of the Franciscan Family. This community has really blessed us as a second family. It has changed our lives completely and we have stayed involved and served in whatever way we could over the years. Every day we have learned something new that brought happiness in our marriage, our family, and our community.

After our time in El Paso, we moved to Sacramento in 1968. When John retired from the United States Air Force in 1972, we thought we wanted to go back to Tucson, Arizona, but God had different plans and John got a job in Sacramento.

St. Francis of Assisi in Sacramento has been our parish since we put down roots in this wonderful town those many years ago. It is in this amazing parish that we met Fr. John Vaughn, OFM and throughout the years, Fr. John has become a good friend, and he is now my priest, my friend, and my brother. When Fr. John was the Master of Novices many years ago, he used the friary here in Sacramento as the novitiate. Through this novitiate, we were blessed with many other friars who we love and have gotten old with.

My prayers and my blessings go out to all of the friars in the Province and all of our Franciscan Family.

Peace and All Good,  
Imelda

The friars are very grateful to Imelda Schoeder for her generous Legacy Gift to help ensure that our work will continue and flourish long beyond her life. For more information about making a Legacy Gift to the Franciscan Friars, Province of Saint Barbara, please contact Fr. Dan Lackie, OFM at 714-392-5622 or [dlackie@sbofm.org](mailto:dlackie@sbofm.org).



*Celebrating creativity in all of its forms, this section of The Way of St. Francis celebrates the artistic work of friars in the province; be it visual, written, musical or something else all together.*

### Why does the world chase after you, Francis of Assisi?

Holding supernatural wings,  
Francis flies into all hearts  
like the high flying birds,  
that sing with his song,  
a coming new creation.  
In the ordinariness of October,  
Francis laid down life for new life.  
So that he could carry the aftertaste of  
Lady Poverty, in whom he saw the Lord!  
Why does the world chase after you, Francis?  
Sublimed, humble, poor; the Poverello of Assisi.  
Do you have the words of everlasting abundant life?  
What is there in your heart which you so fiercely loved?  
Fearlessly your lived in passion of ancient wounds anew.  
What kind of love brings you as welcomed guest at my door?  
What grips us by you, why does our soul grasp to know more?  
What is there in our hearts that we ensure as comfort of a dream?  
These are the days when the sky is filled with the darkness of desire.  
From a place in heaven, open our wings to fly, to a purpose revealed.  
You have done what is yours to do, may we do now what is ours to do.

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#### About the author

*Fr. Larry Gosselin, OFM is a Franciscan friar of the Province of Saint Barbara. Fr. Larry was born in Sumner, Washington and is presently serving in the parish of St. Barbara at Old Mission Santa Barbara in Santa Barbara, California. He is the author of Hidden Sweetness a book of poems that read like prayers. It is published by Tau Publishing.*

### Kneading the bread Heeding the hungry.

What can ever separate us  
from this love beyond telling?  
Neither hunger, famine, need, nor  
greed, will diminish our taste for God.  
And we hunger, in need of bread to fill us.  
Jesus said, bring five loaves and two fishes.  
To want for me is the food that never perishes.  
This is what we want, having starved ourselves.  
We ate, all ate, and received more than enough.  
The Lord is so generous in bringing food to all.  
Bless the Lord of life, who feeds the people,  
Kneading the bread, heeding the hungry.  
Let us never loss this taste we have  
for the living bread that comes  
down from heaven.  
May it fill us..

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#### About the selected poems

*An altar poem is any type of poetry where the characters, words, and lines have been written in such a way that when looked at as a whole, the poem forms an outline that is easily recognizable to the reader. The object that is outlined is usually related to the poetry and gives meaning to the poem itself.*

*This selection of poetry is from the soon-to-be published book entitled **Unshadowed Light** which is scheduled to be released this Easter by Tau Publishing. To purchase this book or other works by Fr. Larry visit Tau Publishing's website: [www.taupublishing.org](http://www.taupublishing.org)*

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## The Scholar's Desk



### Let Us Praise the Lord

by Fr. Garrett Galvin, OFM

Most will readily acknowledge the importance of the psalms and their place as spiritual masterpieces. If we have any doubts, we need look no further than the gospels where no book from the Old Testament is more frequently cited. If we would like to come to a greater appreciation of the psalms, it is important to recognize how the psalms work both individually and as a book. The psalms are poems, and every poem can be appreciated in and of itself. Yet as part of a book, our understanding of the structure of that book will help us to better appreciate the individual psalms. Moving from the general to the specific, I will examine the psalms as a book before returning to types of psalms. Then I will try to offer some strategies for appreciating how the psalms encourage us to find our refuge in a God of abundance.

#### The Psalms as a Book

Recent research has helped explain how the psalms work. Experts have detected that the psalms are divided into five books by tell-tale signs. Doxologies or “cries of praise” end

each of the five books in Psalms 41, 72, 89, 106, and 150, although some feel that Psalms 146-150 are all doxologies. Regardless, five clear sections can be seen.

Whereas many see the first three books as an acknowledgment of Israel’s difficulties, the final two books represent a new beginning. Book 4 opens with Psalm 90, which reminds us of our fleeting nature and God’s eternal nature. After the destruction of Jerusalem, we see a great concern with God’s role in creation and salvation history in these psalms. They affirm the Lord reigns (Pss. 93, 95-99). The entire Book of Psalms has only nine references to Moses, but seven of them are in this book including the opening and closing psalms. Book 5 completes the transition from the lamenting of the opening books to the praise of the later books and confidence in the abundance of God’s love found in creation.

#### Types of Psalms

Two communal implications to finding God emerges from the psalms. 1) The psalms point to the city of

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... we currently live in “an age of anxiety.” Whether or not this is the case, the psalms offer a remedy to various anxieties.

Jerusalem or Zion and apply to it theological language elsewhere reserved for God. The Psalter classifies Psalms 120-34 as psalms of ascent as they seem to describe the end of a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Psalm 122:2-5 describe the virtues of Jerusalem. These psalms give us a sense of being able to find the abundance of God in a physical place with people rather than just the heavens. 2) The psalms also point to the collectivity of the righteous or upright of heart as signs of the abundance of God’s presence in the world. The psalms promise that “justice will return to the righteous” (94:15) and plead with them to “be glad in the Lord” (32:11).

These implications lead to an abundant vision of God. Although the psalms will also discuss the difficulties of finding God (89:47), they more typically give us a sense of the divine presence in our midst. I believe we are called to read them in order to discern this divine presence no matter how hard it may be to find or how many difficulties we are having finding it. Only when we see the abundance of divine action in the world and our own lives can we say as in Ps 86:15: “You, Lord, are a merciful and gracious God; slow to anger, and abundant in faithfulness and truth” (my own translation). God’s abundance in faithfulness and truth overflows in all our lives.

#### The Psalms as Antidote to Indifference and Discouragement

The psalms push us toward engagement with both God and each other. Many commentators have noted that we currently live in “an age of anxiety.” Whether or not this is the case, the psalms offer a remedy to various anxieties. If we focus on Psalm 33, we are forced to reconsider our image of God. Lest we think that God devises anxieties for us, we discover God “loves justice and right; of the kindness of the Lord the earth is full” (33:5). The psalmist urges us to be aware of the abundance of God’s love in the here-and-now. Ultimately, Psalm 33 will refer to God’s kindness or faithfulness three times in Psalm 33 (vv. 5, 18, and 22). There are many ways to translate this from Hebrew, but they all speak of a God whose love is abundant and accessible. When we respond to this love with gratitude as the thanksgiving psalms urge, we have a sure antidote to indifference and discouragement. ❖

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*Fr. Garrett Galvin, OFM holds a doctorate in Biblical Studies from The Catholic University of America. He is assistant professor of Sacred Scripture at the Franciscan School of Theology in Oceanside, CA where he teaches a variety of courses on the Old and New Testament.*



Native American mission fields in southern Arizona, New Mexico and California, sometimes returning to areas first evangelized by friars centuries before. This was an era of building: churches, schools, hospitals and other institutions were founded or expanded. Our strong German heritage was weakened by war with Germany even as new immigrants escaped civil and economic unrest in Mexico by coming across the border, a movement that is still shaping our society today. Poverty in the United States was common during the Great Depression of the 1930s, beginning the ministry to the very poor and homeless at many of our city churches.

Changes in society led to the need for a change in Franciscan formation. Discussions, disagreements and the need to make hard decisions forced change. Many lay people were gaining access to higher levels of education than the friars were, and the friars had to cross another boundary: accreditation of the province's college

became a reality in 1956, not without resistance from several of the brothers. The professed lay Brothers of the province also yearned for the more professional levels of training enjoyed by many of the German Brothers. By the 1950s, it was becoming normal for some friars to be sent to non-province institutions and universities to receive advanced degrees.

From 1945 to 1964, the size of the province grew from 290 to 493 friars. We had served as military chaplains and many discharged service men came to the fraternity. A new mission field was accepted in the Philippines, high school ministry was accepted in numerous places, and the retreat ministry, still an important part of province commitments began.

**A**ll of this expansion led to tensions between fraternity, mission, and religious and personal identity. Exterior change led to interior responses and new initiatives during a time of experimentation. A strong concern for boundaries, obedi-

ence, clericalization and a monastic routine clashed with the pastoral demands of institutions and rapidly growing populations. The inherited understanding of religious life and the demands of expanded and mobile populations with different ethnic and educational backgrounds led to generational changes in education, outlook, ministerial practice and institutional commitments. A new focus on foundational Franciscan documents and the application of social sciences to personal life and ministry led to the realization that a particular style of Franciscan life was passing away. Yet another frontier would have to be crossed, and that was the illusion we had developed of a perfect and unchangeable system.

By the early 1960s, the tensions arising from changing religious lifestyle, apostolates, lay expectations, independent thinking, mobility, suburban Catholic life and materialism became nearly intolerable. Pushed into an interior experience of spirituality by the

conflicting demands and challenges of law, the Franciscan Rule and Constitutions, personal experience, ministry, educational, German and Hispanic heritage, a largely Irish-American church hierarchy, American patriotism, ethnic parishes with disappearing ethnic neighborhoods, and a Church strong on rituals and institutions but weak in evangelization, the province was ripe for change.

The mid-1960s to mid-1970s in the U.S. were characterized by tension over large and small questions, and many departed from religious life. Personal conversion and challenge often effected systematic change. Friars sought personal growth and responded to many new challenges to pastoral life, such as an unpopular Vietnam war, the farm workers' movement and the expansion of poverty in inner cities. The teachings of the Second Vatican Council affected religious life and the spirituality of the people at large. Groundwork was laid for the present life of the province.

**T**oday, our province is much smaller numerically than it once was. It is also more ethnically diverse than ever. Many of us speak Spanish, Vietnamese, Arabic or other tongues as our native languages, and many of us are bi or multi-lingual. We remain committed to missionary work in Mexico, Russia, Israel, and among Native Americans. While many of our churches function bilingually, some are multi-ethnic. We are proud that several of our friars have served in leadership for the Order worldwide. We maintain a graduate school of theology that educates lay and vowed religious people of diverse cultural backgrounds to serve in a multicultural church. Many of our houses and churches serve as havens for the poor and outcast, and many are popular with large numbers of people looking for a spiritual home. Our heritage is one of crossing frontiers and finding new ministries.

Every friar is a gift given by God to the order and the Church. Friars differ in

temperament, cultural background, customs, abilities, gifts and traits. Together with the whole Franciscan family, we are challenged to adapt ourselves to a rapidly changing church and world while remaining true to the spirit of Saint Francis. Like his original followers, Franciscans today are called to live the Gospel. Our charism is not to any specific task. Rather, it is to be brothers among ourselves, to all people, and to all of God's creation. We strive to be persons of prayer involved in a variety of ministries. With the grace of God and the guidance of the Spirit, our future looks to be as dynamic and unpredictable as our history. For the Province of Saint Barbara, The Past is Prologue. ♦

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Joseph Henry Schwab attended college at Phoenix College and Arizona State University, graduating with a BA in Religious Studies. He holds a Master of Theological Studies from the Franciscan School of Theology. Fr Joe Schwab, OFM is the Executive Director of the Franciscan Renewal Center and a Pilgrimage Director.

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## At Last

### The Gift of Culture

By Br. Phillip Polk, OFM



**A**S I GATHERED with my family and other members of the Apache community at a recent ceremony, I reflected about how grateful I am to be an Apache. I looked around and saw the young and the old together in prayer. It is here, among many of these elders, I too learned what it meant to be in community, and to pray to a God who has gifted us with so much. Now as a friar, I bring all I learned from my Apache family, and share it with my Franciscan family.

Our Province is blessed with the gift of having so many men from diverse backgrounds and cultures. The rich cultural heritage these men bring and share gives us all a rich understanding of who God is, and how the Sacred is working among the many cultures of the world. God has been present, and has revealed God-Self in each culture in unique ways, as we read in the Act of the Apostles, "And God made from one person every nation of humankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, hoping that they might feel their way toward God and find the divine. Yet God is not far from each one of us, for 'In God we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we are indeed God's offspring.'" (Acts 17:26-28).

Having men from such diverse backgrounds is not always easy because it means that we have to learn to understand outside of our own cultural comfort zones. If we enter into community with our brothers with an open mind and heart, God will show another aspect of who the Divine is. For it is "with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— one Lord, one faith, one baptism," (Ephesians 4: 2-5). With abundant gratitude I give thanks for the many gifts all my brothers bring and share with our community. ❖

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*Br. Phillip grew up on the San Carlos Apache Reservation in Arizona. He is the first American Indian to join the Franciscan friars of the Province of Saint Barbara. The friars have ministered on the San Carlos' reservation for over 100 years. This past August he made solemn vows and is currently in studies at The Franciscan School of Theology in Oceanside, CA.*

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"All of us who saw these days know well  
how quietly and peaceful those times  
passed, as long as the servant of Christ was  
alive, and what rich abundance there was of  
all good things."

*The Remembrance of the Desire of the Soul, Book II*



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