

The Way of St. Francis

In the
Footsteps
of Saint
Junípero
Serra, OFM

The Way of Saint Francis

WINTER 2017, Vol. 22, No. 1

on the cover

Detail of the sculpture of Fray Junípero Serra that stands outside of the Mission San Jose on Mission Blvd. in Fremont, California. There are scores of statues of Father Serra identical to the one pictured here at many of the missions and at other locations in California. The gifted sculptor commissioned to do these works was Dale Smith. Created in the early 1990's, these life-sized statues were funded by the William H. Hannon Foundation as part of Mr. Hannon's deep, abiding interest in Father Serra. Mr. Hannon hoped these sculptures would inspire interest in Father Serra and the efforts to have him declared a saint by the Catholic Church.

IMAGE: © GLENN NAGEL/DREAMSTIME.COM

Publisher

Very Reverend David Gaa, OFM
Provincial Minister

Editor

Father Dan Lackie, OFM

Editorial Staff

Mr. Kevin Murray
Father Dan Lackie, OFM
Father Charles Talley, OFM

Art Direction and Design

Paul Tokmakian Graphic Design

Contributors

Father Daniel Barica, OFM
Father Dan Lackie, OFM
Mr. Tuan Anh Nguyen
Ms. Joanne Romeo
Father Warren Rouse, OFM
Ms. Barbara Stricker
Father Charles Talley, OFM
Brother Keith Douglass Warner, OFM

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

The Way | WINTER 2017

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.



www.sbfranciscans.org



dear friends...



Peace And All Good!

As we put together this issue, we were very mindful that Saint Junípero Serra has been with us in his new official capacity for just over one year. It's been good to revisit memories connected to the official

celebrations of September 2015—so many inspiring moments!—but it's also been good to return to the questions about culture and discipleship which the celebration sparked.

Recently, when I asked one of our friar historians what's stayed with him in the year since the canonization, he suggested this line of inquiry: "How do we answer the call to witness to Christ in the midst of structures and a culture which are imperfect?" It occurred to me that that this question takes on new meaning as Washington, DC prepares for another highly charged and controversial celebration, this one involving the installation of a new president. Saint Junípero was an 18th century Spanish missionary; we're 21st century citizens of the United States of America. Sainthood, whether or not it's official, is all about the grace to practice virtue. Generosity, perseverance, and partnership are a few of the practices we hope to inspire with this volume of The Way.

In fact, partnership is reflected in the pages that follow in the good work of the very talented Father Charles Talley OFM, the newest member of The Way editorial team. Without Charles' skills and perseverance, this issue would not have made it to print. Recently appointed Communications Director of the Province of St. Barbara, Charles came to the friars, as many readers will know, with many years experience as a professional writer and editor. Many will also know first-hand his creative gifts as a preacher and pastor. In the light of Saint Junípero Serra's example of never going it alone, the presence of Charles as a creative partner offers a starting point in grappling with the important question posed above: "How do we answer the call to witness to Christ in turbulent times?"

We hope you find some comfort in the stories that follow. ❖

Father Dan Lackie, OFM
Editor

ORIGINAL PHOTO BY ©PETER JORDON PHOTO 2014

by the way

JANUARY

69th Annual Men's Retreat: "Francis of Assisi: Gospel Merchant"

1/20–22 • St. Francis Retreat San Juan Bautista CA

Brother Bob Barbato, OFM Cap. Explore Francis' life as a "Gospel Merchant" and reflect on how we are called to spread the good news of Christ in our world today.

More Information:
stfrancisretreat.com or call 831-623-4234



Franciscan Spirituality Retreat: "Performing Ordinary Things in Extraordinary Ways"

1/27–29 • San Damiano Retreat, Danville

Father Joe Chinnici, OFM This retreat will examine "the contemplative gaze" of St. Francis of Assisi

More Information:
sandamiano.org or call 925-837-9141

FEBRUARY

Men's Retreat: "Discovering the Kingdom Within"

2/2–2/5 or 3/3–3/5 • Serra Retreat, Malibu CA

Sister Carol Quinlivan, CSJ & Father Michael Doherty, OFM.

More Information:
310-456-6631

Women's Spirituality Retreat

2/10–2/12 • Franciscan Renewal Center Scottsdale AZ

Carole Whittaker, PhD and Gloria Cuevas-Barnett Deepen your capacity to receive the grace of the Holy Spirit; share teachings, practices, prayer and ritual in quiet reflection and conversation.

More Information:
480-948-7460 ext. 132

Hispanic Women's Retreat: "Discovering the Kingdom Within"

2/17–2/19 • Serra Retreat, Malibu CA

Sister Ines Telles, CSJ, and Father Ray Tintle, OFM

More Information:
310-456-6631

MARCH

Ash Wednesday Day of Renewal

3/1 • San Damiano Retreat, Danville

Father Ken Laverone, OFM
More Information:
sandamiano.org call: 925-837-9141

Ash Wednesday Mini-Retreat

3/1 • San Luis Rey Retreat Oceanside CA

Father Larry Dolan, OFM Prepare to enter the sacred liturgical season of Lent Light lunch included; please bring your bible

More Information:
www.sanluisrey.org or 760-757-3659

Lenten Taize Service 3/8–4/5 (Wednesdays)

7:00–8:00pm • San Damiano Retreat, Danville
San Damiano staff and friends.

More Information: sandamiano.org call: 925-837-9141

The Holy Spirit in the Spirituality of Saint Francis

3/17–3/19 • Franciscan Renewal Center Scottsdale AZ

Father Steven McMichael, OFM, Conv, Ret. Explore the dynamic and transformative role of the Holy Spirit in the writings and spirituality of St. Francis of Assisi.

More Information:
480.948.7460 ext. 132

8th Annual Spring into Serenity Retreat: A Weekend for Women in Al Anon

3/17–3/19 • San Luis Rey Retreat, Oceanside CA
Includes meetings, yoga, and a writing workshop—all optional.

More Information:
760-757-3659

Canonization of St. Junípero Serra, OFM
September 23, 2015

Basilica of the National Shrine of the
Immaculate Conception Washington, DC

Photo taken by Friar Alvin Te, OFM

The Pope and the Friars: Who said what?

Among friars and friends in the Province of St. Barbara, the most talked about photo connected to the canonization of Franciscan Saint Junípero Serra was this one of Pope Francis greeting several friars. Father Giovangiuseppe Califano, OFM, from Assisi Province is seen shaking hands with Pope Francis. Second in line to greet the Holy Father is former Vicar Provincial Ken Laverone, OFM, followed by former Provincial Minister Mel Jurisich, OFM (far right). Father Ken and Father Mel played a prominent role not only in the celebration, but also in the

compilation and delivery of all the documentation required by the Roman Curia and the Congregation of the Causes of Saints as part of the canonization process. Musing on the photo recently, Father Mel remained tight-lipped about his exchange with Pope Francis. Instead, he proposed that viewers ponder the question for themselves: What exactly did Father Mel say to the Pope, and what do you think the Pope said to him in response? Any guesses?

the word

The Many Faces of Idols

by Father Warren Rouse, OFM

BEFORE THE GREAT Old Testament stories were written down, they were handed from one generation to the next orally. The original lessons were preserved, but frequently details were embellished to make the story more exciting. So the story of the Golden Calf: “We do not know what happened to this man Moses, who led us out of Egypt,” the Israelites whine, “so make us some gods to lead us (Ex: 2:1).” Aaron collects their jewelry and silverware and tosses it all into a fire: “He took the earrings, melted them, poured the gold into a mold, and made a gold bull-calf.” For the moment they are content: “Israel, this is our god, who led us out of Egypt!”

Shortly afterwards, however, Moses, stone tablets under his arms, races down the hillside post-haste because the Lord has told him: “... your people, whom you led out of Egypt, have sinned and rejected me.” Aaron’s alibi was that the people were upset; that he acted out of innocence: “I threw the ornaments into the fire and out came this bull-calf!” While the ancients laughed at this lame excuse, the moral of the story retains its gravity. The great national flaw of the people was their tendency to stray repeatedly from the one, true God.

Our own response is probably on the smug side: “I know I’m not perfect, but at least I don’t worship any pagan gods!” Perhaps



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that is not altogether true! In our hearts and in our daily life, are there not secret idols and altars? How about the altar dedicated to resentment? Or consumerism? Or envy? Or any number of “gods” whom we ashamedly cherish?

Our human nature is a virtual factory of idols. What to do? First, accept yourself as a flawed person. We are imperfect; we need to accept that. Second, don’t allow yourself to be discouraged by your imperfections! St. Bernard of Clairvaux encourages us: “... Turn aside from. . . anxious reflection on your own progress, and escape to the easier paths of remembering the good things which God has done; . . . you will find relief by turning your attention to God.”

Yes, we, like the Israelites, often have our own cherished idols. But the Lord has promised: “I will be your God, and you will be my people.” ♦

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Father 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.
frwarren@serraretreat.com

donor profile

A Pilgrimage to a Legacy

by Father Dan Lackie, OFM



Founded by Junipero Serra in July, 1771, Mission San Antonio de Padua today is a place of prayer, retreat, and sacred encounter for many a pilgrim visitor.

FRIAR CANDIDATES ON their way to the priesthood have a new supporter who named his goal in simple terms:

“You can’t solve the world’s problems. I picked the one thing closest to my heart. I want to help Franciscans survive and grow.” The donor’s gift establishes a dedicated fund supporting the education and formation of friar candidates in perpetuity.

The donor, who asked that his name not be used in this article, grew up in a small town in California’s San Joaquin Valley. He says he could not have predicted he would one day become part of the Franciscan family. His parents were Protestant, and his mother had strong reservations about the

Catholic Church. “It was my sister who encouraged me to learn more about Catholicism.”

After graduating from high school in 1942, he followed his sister to U.C. Berkeley. While pursuing studies in chemistry, he discovered the Catholic Newman Center and was eventually baptized while an undergraduate.

After a transfer to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) to pursue studies in physical chemistry, active duty in the Army Reserve interrupted his academic career. After service in South Korea, he completed his undergraduate degree at MIT and went on to earn a Ph.D. from Harvard. His career eventually led him to PerkinElmer, a

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Retracing the Pilgrim Steps of Saint Junípero Serra OFM

By Brother Keith Douglass Warner OFM

(opposite) The church of Nuestra Señora de la Luz at
Tancoyol.(above) Detail of the façade.



SEVERAL YEARS AGO, when Pope Francis mentioned—seemingly in passing—that he would canonize Blessed Junípero Serra during his visit to the United States in 2015, I was taken aback. Why Serra? Why now? But I have since reflected on what Pope Francis was proposing, and have come to view

Junípero's life as an important case study in faithfulness for us all. After all, he left his native Majorca to go to Mexico, where, for a while, he joined an apostolic college, a kind of training center for missionaries. Then, Serra spent a decade among the indigenous people of the Sierra Gorda of Mexico before setting out for Alta California. I shared with my good friend, Brother James Lockman, OFM, my long dormant interest in visiting the Franciscan missions of the Sierra Gorda where Serra had served. Together, we made plans to visit the area together last winter.



The “Serra” missions are located in the state of Querétaro, in a rural area of about 8 hours north of Mexico City by car. They are all situated along a 3500-foot high ridge which one reaches only after negotiating a treacherous road reputed to have more than 630 curves! These five church buildings all have astonishing facades. And they most certainly reflect the vision of faith, community and culture that guided Serra and his companions in their ministry

there. The mission churches reflect a blending of cultures and traditions. Their structure is definitely European, and the saints and their stories depicted on the façades are identifiably Catholic—with strong Franciscan themes. But the artwork also reflects the sensibilities of the indigenous Pame people. The facades are realized in red, yellow, and orange—colors readily derived from local minerals. Animals considered sacred by the indigenous





(above) The author (red cap), with Brother James Lockman, OFM and guide José Dario Ledesma Gracia, who bears Pame ancestry. (below) the façade of the church of San Francisco del Valle de Tilaco at Landa. (opposite) Depiction of John Duns Scotus on the ceiling of the church at Landa.

people—such as the rabbit and jaguar—are present as well. Termed “Mestizo Baroque”, this style of decoration shows the culture and confident “hand” of the local people.

Images of saints Peter and Paul, Francis, and Dominic grace several of these facades. The figures are often surrounded by local plants—maize, cacao, and nochebuena (poinsettia)—and other native embellishments. The blending of these diverse cultural elements certainly reflects Serra’s personal vision for evangelization. He wanted his brothers to live the Gospel with respect for local culture and traditions, while at the same time attempting to construct a utopia built upon Franciscan values. He insisted his confreres learn local languages and experience local reality—including hunger—right alongside the people.

I was surprised to discover the prominence given to (Blessed) John

Duns Scotus, the most famous of Franciscan philosophers. In fact, Serra had studied his thought, and philosophy while still a seminary professor in Majorca. Scotus taught



that we are good because we are made in the image of God. In the Franciscan-Scotistic vision, all people and cultures are understood to bear an image of God. This appears to have shaped the approach of Junípero and his companions. The friars worked with the people, encouraging them to “weave” their own love of nature into the churches they built. Needless to say, such respect was not widely practiced during the mid-1700s.

Statues of Junípero Serra adorn the area about the Franciscan shrine of the Miraculous Holy Cross in old colonial Querétaro as well. Mexican Franciscan friars consider Junípero Serra to be their saint as well, since he spent so many years evangelizing the region. Ironically, a plaque on one statue even celebrates Junípero as a “civilizer” of indigenous people. Today, the idea of “civilizing” people of another culture

makes one wince. But it is unfair to judge the past by the values that we hold today. The people of his time recognized Junípero as compassionate, loving and inclusive.

I returned from our pilgrimage to Querétaro deeply moved by the material marks left behind by Saint Junípero Serra and his companions, and by the way he is celebrated even today in Mexico. Not content with just crossing the Atlantic, he journeyed first to Sierra Gorda and then to present-day California. He was a Franciscan who, as Pope Francis urges us today, was willing to “move to the margins”, embracing with love all those whom he encountered. ♦

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Brother Keith Douglass Warner is Senior Director, Education and Action Research at the Miller Center for Social Entrepreneurship, Santa Clara University (Santa Clara, California).

friar profile

- ▶ Father Alberto Villafan
- ▶ Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish
- ▶ Guadalupe, Arizona



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"GOD HAS PLANS
FOR US...AND GOD
IS IN CHARGE."

By Father Charles Talley, OFM

IT'S 7 O'CLOCK on a Saturday morning—another muggy day in Phoenix. Father Alberto has been up since 5 for his run and breakfast before work. It's going to be busy: a morning retreat with 40 choir members, followed by a chat with Deacon Santino Berasconi before a scheduled baptism. Then, a quick lunch with his associate, Father Louis Khoury, at nearby Rosita's café. Next, another baptism followed by a 3pm wedding, followed by a quick rest, some phone calls, and prep work for the 7pm Vigil Mass. Dinner will get squeezed in there somewhere. With luck, Alberto will be home by 9 pm.

Welcome to the life of Franciscan Father Alberto Villafan, pastor at the 100 year-old church and parish of Our Lady of Guadalupe (Guadalupe, Arizona). Alberto had been here just six weeks when I first visited last August, but he already had a handle on



Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, Guadalupe, AZ

things and some definite ideas of what he would like to do, and how he would like to do them: "Poco á poco. One step at a time. I want to get to know the people and secure their trust first. That's the most important thing. I'm happy moving from the ground up—starting right away while I am still new and the people are most open to fresh ideas."

Father Alberto, age 50, is a native of Chavinda, Michoacan, Mexico. After immigrating to the United States, he studied in the ESL (English as a Second Language) program of the Province before entering postulancy (early formation) in 1993. He was ordained a priest in 2005 and has worked in

both St. Francis Parish (Los Angeles) and more recently at St. Elizabeth Parish (Oakland) for six years prior to his current post. Father Louis, who assists Alberto, is a native of Amman, Jordan, and was ordained at the parish on October 22—the

first ordination in its history. The parish was founded by Friar Lucius Zittier, who helped the indigenous Yaqui people of northern Mexico escape persecution by securing them land for a reservation and helping them to immigrate. The Franciscan presence in the area has continued uninterrupted ever since. Most recently, Friar Joseph (Joe) Baur retired from his ministry here after nearly 30 years of service.

"I guess this is my honeymoon period," Alberto reflects. "But I have to say I am so happy right now and I really enjoy every minute of it." He has a special love of liturgy and sacramental ministry: "I am grateful for my experience at the Franciscan

continued on page 23

Christmas Giving

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AVING THE CHANCE to become more familiar with the work done at San Damiano Retreat (Danville, California) has enriched my life tremendously. I have learned a great deal about the Franciscan way, especially when it comes to opening up one's heart to those who are in need. My observation and experience of the spirit at San Damiano have provided me with an insight—an epiphany—that I would not have realized otherwise.

Last year my girlfriend and I decided to forego our custom of giving Christmas gifts to each other and to family members. Instead, we decided to do something which would help other people—especially the homeless—in very direct, concrete way. We managed to convince our families that their presence in our lives was as valuable as any gift we could ever receive from them, so we asked them to forgo giving us presents too. Instead, we decided to purchase some things that homeless people would want and be able to use. We settled on getting socks, paper tissues, tooth brushes, snacks, and a variety of other practical items. When we finished our shopping, we actually formed an assembly line and packaged the items in Ziploc bags and stored them for our Christmas Eve adventure.

We loaded up the car with 50 “care packages” and set out driving around the city of Oakland, looking for groups of homeless people, such as those living in tent communities, or individuals we might encounter on the street. At first, we both felt uncertain about what would happen when we approached people with our offerings, but we were determined to complete our mission. The very first person we encountered was a gentleman we found living under an overpass; he was standing outside of his tent, which was alongside several other temporary shelters. We were surprised at how genuinely grateful he was when we gave him one of our care packages. Then he said those three magic words that warmed our hearts immediately: “God bless you!” With that simple expression of gratitude we knew our small mission held some real purpose and meaning.

We continued to carry on our work, driving around the city and delivering our Christmas gifts to people we encountered until everything was distributed. The experience brought about so many emotions for both of us: sadness for the people and what they have to endure; happiness that

we were able to give them something; and, thankfulness that we may have made a difference in their day. When I met people, I would look into their eyes. It helped me to realize that I was looking at my fellow human beings—people struggling with existence, dealing with their own daily obstacles. I felt such gratitude in my heart for what I have received in my own life, and it made me want to do more for those in need.

In one instance, we encountered another tent settlement of people living under a bridge. I noticed the piles of garbage and what appeared to be trash surrounding their dwellings. This was the most difficult and also the most rewarding moment for me. I suddenly realized: hey, these folks had no electricity, no bathroom, no garbage cans even. It made me thankful for what I had, but sorry for what these children of God lacked. So often we take for granted even the most basic essentials. My exposure to the Franciscan way showed me how to give, how to open my arms and my heart to those in need.

At the conclusion of our mission, we looked at each other with a deep sense of satisfaction with what we had done. We hoped that in our little project we might have made a difference—if not forever, then at least for a moment in time—in someone else's life. We hope that we will be able to repeat our effort next year as well, and plan to increase the number of care packages we deliver.

Frankly, upon reflection, I realize that if I had not observed the Franciscan charisma so beautifully demonstrated by the people I met at San Damiano, I probably would not have given anything to those in need this year. Christmas would have brought the usual exchange of gifts, with a “thank you” to family and friends for things I really could have done without. But this year was different because we put the less fortunate first, and like St. Francis, we both tried to put aside our own desires to focus instead on the needs of others. The gift we both received in return has a value greater than any material object: the contact, smiles, and appreciation of the people we met. ❖

This manuscript was submitted to us by a couple living in the San Francisco Bay area who requested that their names be withheld.



A Shot at the Planet:

Photography as a way to heal Mother Earth.

By Father Daniel Barica, OFM, photos from his 2017 calendar

ONE OF MY FAVORITE ways of expressing myself artistically is to take photographs, because I like the expediency and the quick payoff. It's so easy to compose an image, take a picture, and then have it uploaded to the computer for creative processing.

My favorite subject is nature and I particularly love photographing the colors I find in birds and in the landscape. I connect nature photography to Franciscan spirituality when I celebrate God's beauty in creation

and am moved to awe and wonder in the inexhaustible colors and patterns that I find. Anyone who doubts the existence of God need only open their eyes to the natural beauty that surrounds us. I don't think enough people are looking, however, or at least looking long enough to fall in love with the Creator who fashioned it all. ...

As a full-time pastor, my time is limited so I do what I can to further my mission of documenting and displaying the face of God through

Proceeds from the calendar sales support the Franciscan Friars and their ministry in the Province of Saint Barbara. To view the photos inside the calendar or learn how to order the calendar, please visit the following website, www.ssj.org/2017calendar, or call (714) 962-3333.



nature. Those who fall in love with what they see might be moved to protect what they love. And as our planet continues to suffer the wounds of misuse, greed and wastefulness, there is no time to lose.

So I make pictures of the planet. The proceeds made through selling framed prints, calendars and cards supports the Fraternal Care Trust of

the province, assisting our men in formation and our elderly friars.

Look around you; God is everywhere! ♦

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Father Daniel Barica, OFM, is currently Pastor at Sts. Simon & Jude Catholic Church in Huntington Beach, California. Daniel has been taking photographs since high school, "focusing" his lens on the natural beauty of God's creation.

THE AUTHOR,
TUAN NYGUEN,
WITH VOLUNTEERS
HELPING CHILDREN WITH
FACE PAINTING AT THE
HEALTH FAIR CONDUCTED
BY THE FRANCISCAN
FRIARS IN GUAYMAS,
MEXICO.



Meet The Franciscan "God Squad" in Guaymas, Mexico

BY TUAN ANH NGUYEN!!

I ONCE THOUGHT THAT MY EXPERIENCE AS A CATECHIST IN MY HOME PARISH IN SAN JOSE AS WELL AS MY DEGREE IN PHYSIOLOGY FROM SAN FRANCISCO STATE UNIVERSITY, GAVE ME A SOLID FOUNDATION IN BOTH RELIGION AND SCIENCE. HOWEVER, THESE PARTS OF MY LIFE DIDN'T COME TOGETHER FULLY UNTIL I WORKED RECENTLY WITH A TEAM OF FRANCISCAN FRIARS SERVING IN GUAYMAS, SONORA, MEXICO. DURING MY BRIEF STAY WITH THEM, I WAS ABLE TO HELP SERVE THE SICK AND LESS FORTUNATE WITH THIS INCREDIBLE BAND OF BROTHERS.



FRANCISCAN BROTHER
RAMI FODDA DEMONSTRATES THE
USE OF AN INHALER TO A PATIENT AT
THE CLINIC OF THE CASA FRANCIS
CANA IN GUAYMAS, MEXICO.

MY TRAVEL TEAM consisted of Father Martín Ibarra, Director of the Casa Franciscana, Father Oscar Mendez, a medical doctor; Brother Rami Fodda, a nurse practitioner; Brother Craig Wilkins, a registered nurse; and Brother Bob Valentine, a physician assistant. Together, we would treat the medical and spiritual needs of the people. Science, medicine, and faith were intertwined.

On our first day, we began with morning prayer, then set off to our project site with fellow volunteer professionals. I was amazed to see the devotion with which everyone worked. We hopped off the bus at our destination, met by crowds of eagerly waiting schoolchildren. Then, we organized ourselves according to specialty: medical professionals in the main building, paramedics on the patio, and the dentists in tents. Volunteers were on hand to ease the worries

of the children with face painting and coloring projects. Together, we were able to serve more than 300 people a day, every single day for four days in a row! Astounding!

I am not fluent in the language, but my limited "Spanglish" seemed to suffice. I found that what connected me with people most easily was a genuine, heartfelt smile. To a poor person who is battling an illness like diabetes, a smile can turn their whole day around. And smiles were present on nearly every face there; from the old and fragile señoras and señoras, to the youngest "niños bonitos".

Once, on another day, we were heading back to the friary when Father Martín told us about groups of immigrants from Honduras which were passing through on their way to the United States. They were taking refuge at the local train station, so we decided to see them. I

had imagined encountering healthy young people who would be there for only a brief stopover. Instead, I saw entire immigrant families who had set up temporary shelters nestled in the low-hanging trees. Toddlers were playing in the dirt and mud. But I also met young people with so much hope in their eyes. And I could see their faith, but that faith was beginning to diminish in their hardship.

THE FRIARS HAD another mission now—to supply these people with enough help materially and spiritually to sustain them on their journey. Father Martin phoned the volunteers back at the Casa to pack a bus full of blankets, food, and water. Brothers Bob and Rami set off to buy additional supplies, such as diapers for the babies. But when we were all ready to deliver the supplies, the immigrants had disappeared! Luckily, someone had seen

them about a quarter of a mile down the tracks. Armed with diapers, food, and water, we were truly on a rescue mission. When the families saw us, their eyes just lit up, despite their fatigue. We recognized immediately the impact we had made. I began to feel genuine gratitude in my heart for the first time in a long time. I had begun to “see” God in these people and to feel His presence.

During my stay in Guaymas, I witnessed and experienced the impact that the Franciscan friars and lay volunteers have on the community on a daily basis. I felt so honored to be a part of it all. My own faith has been strengthened and renewed. I thank God for bringing these wonderful people into my life and showing His love through us all. ❖

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Tuan Anh Nguyen is a catechist in his home parish of Our Lady of Lavang in San Jose, California. He holds a degree in physiology from San Francisco State University in physiology.

VOLUNTEER HEALTH CARE WORKERS ASSIST IN THE HEALTH FAIR ORGANIZED IN GUAYMAS BY THE FRANCISCAN FRIARS AND THE STAFF OF THE CASA FRANCISCANA!!!



donor profile: *continued from page 9*

biotechnology company based in Massachusetts.

“In 1954, I met the love of my life,” he said of his late wife, with whom he would share the next three decades. Before their marriage, she had attended St. Boniface Church in San Francisco’s Tenderloin District and supported the late Father Alfred Boeddeker and his outreach to the poor at St. Anthony’s Dining Room, now St. Anthony Foundation.

Early in their marriage, he and his wife befriended Brother Joachim Grant OFM,

then stationed at Mission San Antonio de Padua near Jolon, California. He describes Brother Joachim as the “quintessential Franciscan” and their deep friendship led directly to a life-changing pilgrimage and his vows as a Secular Franciscan.

“I decided to go to Assisi after my retirement, but the regular tours would only give me a day to visit. Brother Joachim helped me find a three-week study pilgrimage. It was transformational. I learned about St.

Francis, his history, and his acts. I didn’t know it, but by the end of that first pilgrimage I had become a Franciscan.”

The Franciscan Province of Saint Barbara is honored to list this donor as a member of its St. Francis Legacy Circle. For more information about the Legacy Circle, contact Father Dan Lackie at dlackie@sbofm.org or 510-536-3722. ❖

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Father Dan Lackie, OFM, serves as editor of The Way as part of the Outreach Office of the Province of St. Barbara.

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 friar profile: *continued from page 15*

School of Theology (FST). I am practicing what I learned there. It gave me the resources to do and to enjoy what I am doing right now.” Education and spiritual formation are top priorities for the new pastor. “I tell the people ‘You need to do your ministry with love and with joy.’ Plans are afoot for additional ministry retreats: “I joke with the ministers. I tell them: ‘Come to the retreat I am organizing for you, or else I will give you a penance!’” There are also long-term hopes for reaching out to the teens and young adults: “I hope we can build up the religious education

program—catechism classes, Confirmation preparation, and then a youth group. There are big problems with the young people in the community—with gangs, drugs, and alcohol.”

While Alberto is not afraid to step in when needed, he is also clear that he wants to share responsibilities with the lay members of the parish. He is also quick to recognize the generosity of the people and trusts that they will be given the resources they need: “I tell the parishioners: ‘Thank you for whatever you are able to offer.’ And then, we have gotten so much

from people outside of the parish in donations—especially from the Casa in Scottsdale! People brought us beds, furniture. A woman even came to me: ‘Father, I heard you need a car. Here are the keys and here is the title. It’s yours.’ She gave me a car that belonged to her husband who passed away—just like that!” As for the future? Friar Alberto is confident and clear: “God has plans for us. And God is in charge.” ❖

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Father Charles Talley is the Communications Director for the Province of Saint Barbara.

Serra's Majorca & The Pearl of Faith

by Barbara Stricker, Pilgrim

A longtime friend and enthusiastic supporter of the Franciscans, Phoenix area resident Barbara Stricker first met the friars some 20 years ago while living in Huntington Beach, California. A member of Sts. Simon & Jude Parish at the time, she recalls that "from the beginning, I was enveloped in the Franciscan spirit of 'All are welcome here!'" Upon moving to Arizona in 2013, Barbara soon found the Franciscans again—this time at the Franciscan Renewal Center and Our Lady Queen of the Angels conventual church in Scottsdale. She has most recently participated in Franciscan-led pilgrimages to Majorca (2016) and Assisi (2015).

RECENTLY I JOINED the Franciscan Pilgrimage to the birthplace of a missionary movement, "The Cradle of Missionaries to America," the beautiful island of Majorca, Spain.

Having lived in Southern California, for a time in Ventura—home to the Mission San Buenaventura—I knew who Junípero Serra was and about some of the missions. How little I actually knew about the missionary dynamic became evident in Majorca.

What I did know was that Majorca is world-famous for its pearls.

As a pilgrim in Assisi last year with the Franciscan Pilgrimage program my experience was a walk in faith, in trust, in being open and welcoming to what would come; to hold no expectations or pre-conceived notions.

So it was in Majorca.

Prayer, reflection, time to think. Being in the land of pearls it came to me that the creation of a pearl and the blossoming of faith within have similar journeys.

Whether natural or created, the pearl forms around a nucleus, a grain, a speck of sand, something that induces the oyster's reaction to cover it, to surround it, as a protection against the irritation. Layer upon layer builds, forming what it becomes and is—a pearl.

My faith journey started in the cradle with baptism and then changed and grew in layers as I changed and grew in years. The seed of my faith within me and the energy of the Holy Spirit that has always been within me



On pilgrimage with Franciscan friar Joe Schwab, the author made an unexpected discovery in the Majorca (pictured here in front of the Cathedral of Santa María, Palma, Majorca).

was building up layer over layer of faith, moment after moment, experience after experience over my irritations and uncertainties, protecting my faith from loss.

The gift never left me, even while the full engagement with my faith was missing for several years. My pearl, my faith, has grown exponentially since I made acquaintance and acceptance with the Holy Spirit within the Franciscan Community of the Province of Santa Barbara in Huntington Beach, California. I took on the responsibility for my continuing faith formation, along with the challenge to grow up and open out to embrace what has been there all along: *God's love*.

So did I buy a pearl in Majorca? Of course!

That Pearl in this reflection is the pearl growing within me ... faith, love, hope, trust—layer by layer.

Eventually pearls are harvested. I pray that my pearl, That Pearl, pleases God when he calls me home.

In the meantime, I'm sure my good friend the Holy Spirit will keep on inviting me to layer more faith into my life. ❖

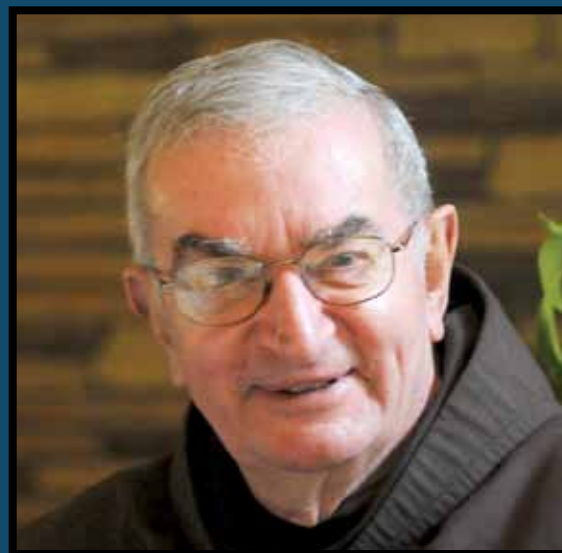
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The “New Porziuncula” Chapel at Old Mission Santa Barbara

by Father Charles Talley, OFM



ON OCTOBER 4, the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, a small group of friars and supporters gathered in a corner of the historic Old Mission Santa Barbara church to bless its new Porziuncula (Blessed Sacrament) chapel. In doing so, they added their efforts to a spiritual and material “work in progress” which dates to the Mission’s founding in 1786. Architects John Burgee and Tom Bollay, who worked on the project, commissioned the tabernacle as well. Shown here, it was crafted—using 24 pounds of pounded silver built around a walnut base and frame—by artist Scott McGrath of Mariposa, California. The piece was inspired by the original tabernacle (now in the Mission museum) which was created by the Chumash Indians especially for the church in the late 18th century. It is the only such work of its kind surviving from the Mission period. The original watercolor wall patterning in the chapel (circa 1952), was restored by Patty West. The chapel itself is a decidedly intimate space and accommodates no more than 6–8 people comfortably. As such, it is intended to be a place of silent prayer and contemplation—not unlike the original Porziuncula (or “little portion”) chapel outside the walls of Assisi so beloved by St. Francis himself. ❖



Former Minister General,
Father John Vaughn, OFM
(1928–2016)

“He has taught us what it means to trust in God, believe in the goodness of the brothers, and work to build a Kingdom that is inclusive, abounding in mercy, and reflective of love and care for all people ...”

❖ CURRENT GENERAL MINISTER, FATHER MICHAEL PERRY, OFM ❖

Franciscan Friars of California, Inc.
Province of Saint Barbara
1500 34th Ave.
Oakland, CA 94601



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