



Friar News

SAINT JOSEPH OF CUPERTINO PROVINCE | WINTER 2020 | FRANCISCAN FRIARS CONVENTUAL

Winter 2020

Dear Friends and Supporters of the Friars,

Greetings and best wishes as we celebrate the Nativity of Jesus our Lord and Savior. Together with the entire Church we have journeyed through Advent recalling that God's plan was to offer redemption, forgiveness and loving understanding to all humanity.

The prophets have revealed each day of this season that a solution to the rift between God and man was part of the plan. God was not going to let limited human beings derail His efforts to bring creation to a full and eternal union with Him.

I know that we sometimes wonder whether this is possible when we look at the chaos in the society around us. Nature has not helped with the coronavirus as a challenge for us. Yet God has given us Jesus and Jesus has left us His daily presence in our midst.

God does walk with us constantly, is aware of our struggles and loves us beyond measure. May you and your extended families receive the abundance of gifts that we describe as peace, joy, comfort, healing (physical and spiritual) and love.

A Blessed, Holy and Merry Christmas! Unlimited Happiness in the New Year!

A Special Appeal for Ordinary, Everyday Help for the Friars in Viet Nam

Finances and the economy are a constant worry for most people in our day. The Friars experience this both in their community living and in the ministry which is theirs.

Amazingly, the current finances for the Friars of our Province are more stable than we might have expected. Yes, there is less income. But there are also fewer expenses. With the lockdowns, we don't travel to meetings, we don't gather for shared retreats, we don't have communal events (sadly), etc. As the Provincial, I am unable to visit the Friars as I should. Which means no lengthy trips to Asia.

The one area which is clearly a problem is the ordinary support for the daily needs of the Friars in the Delegation in Viet Nam. Every year we have done many mission appeals in the summer in the United States. Because of COVID-19 we were unable to do these last summer. There was no income from the appeals to allow us to offer support for the daily living expenses and tuitions in Viet Nam.

The Friars there do earn an amazing 45% of their daily needs. Why do I say "amazing?" Of the 70 to 80 men in Viet Nam at the present, we have nine novices, around twelve aspirants, about 20 postulants and a dozen or so studying philosophy or theology in preparation for ordination. If you were a regular family of 7 or 8, you would have 5 or 6 in school with two, maybe three, incomes and the part-time help of your students. The Vietnamese Catholics have been very generous as well.

We have a number of years before there will be enough native Friars to earn incomes to support the young men completely. Therefore, I am asking that you consider a donation at Christmas to the everyday support of the young Friars. When I say young, I mean that. The oldest Friar in Viet Nam at the present is 52.

Please consider a contribution now, remember us in your estate planning and, if financial help is not possible, pray fervently. All contributions are being directed through the Viva Francis Foundation this time.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!!!

Rev. Victor P. Abegg, OFM, Conv.

Minister Provincial, Conventual Franciscans of California

God Causes the Growth!



Above & Left: On Saturday, August 1, 2020, nine novices from the Provincial Delegation in Vietnam (of the Province of St. Joseph of Cupertino in the USA [SJC]) were vested in the habit. The ceremony took place at the St. Anthony of Padua Friary in Hồ Chí Minh City, Vietnam.



In his Homily, Fr Peter Emard Hoang, the Novice Master addressed the novices, “As you begin today your divine adventure in Franciscan life, you are embarking on a journey of “seeking” and “seeing,” focusing on God the way St. Francis did, mindful that Jesus Christ “pitched his tent” among us and in His tent – His Church, our Order – we friars live and move and have our being.”

After being clothed in the habit of our Order, they will spend a year and a day in fraternity there, in private and communal prayer, in classes, workshops, seminars, experiencing manual work, and other activities in line with the goals of this stage of formation. Please keep them and all of the Novices of the Class of 2020-2021 in your prayers.

Below & Right: On August 8, 2020, the Delegation welcomed fourteen new postulants for their first year of discernment and formation. Additionally, four confreres renewed their temporary vows on the same day. Fr Joseph Luc Vu, the Delegate of the Delegation of Vietnam received the Vows on behalf of Fr Provincial Victor Abegg during the Mass.



Viet Nam St. Anthony Bread Program for the Poor, Sept. 19, 2020



The Origin of St. Anthony's Bread, from St. Anthony's Messenger

One legend dates back to the year 1263, when a child drowned near the Paduan Basilica of St. Anthony during its construction. The child's mother prayed to the saint to bring her boy back to life. In return, she promised to give to the poor an amount of corn equal to the child's weight. When the child was miraculously revived, the mother made good on her promise.



Centuries later, in 1888, a woman named Louise Bouffier managed a small bakery store in the seaside village of Toulon, France. One morning, she couldn't open the shop's door with her key. Neither could a locksmith, who advised her that he'd have to break the door open. While he went to get his tools, Louise prayed to St. Anthony that she would give some of her bakery's bread to the poor if the door could be opened without force. When the locksmith returned, he tried the lock again and was easily able to let Louise in. True to her word, the baker made sure that the poor of Toulon received their due.



It wasn't long before Louise's friends began to follow her example of promising a gift of bread or alms to the poor in return for prayers answered by St. Anthony. In the 1890s, they formalized this practice by founding a charity called "St. Anthony's Bread."



In the spirit of this charity, some parishes bless and distribute small loaves of bread on June 13, his feast day. Below is a recipe for an Italian bread that may be shaped into individual loaves for you to pass out at church, among friends and family or to the disadvantaged in your community.

Our Novices in Arroyo Grande, CA

The Novices

Our 2020 Novitiate class consists of six men from different parts of the world and representing three provinces. The Friars novices will live together for a year and day, and take part in the full novitiate program under the guidance of their formation team. They will discern and develop their sense of vocation to the religious life within the Conventual Franciscan Order. (All text coming is from www.franciscannovitiate.org.)



Above Left & Right: July 21, 2020

“We want to thank Fr. Marek for our first retreat. ‘The Soul’s Journey into God.’ It’s been a blessed time of prayer and fraternity. Thank you all for keeping us in your prayers. We have been keeping all of you in our prayers, as well.”



Fruits of Our Labor

Left & Below: November 5, 2020 “Here at the novitiate we enjoy the fruits of God’s creation! The brothers harvest fruits and vegetables that we use to cook our meals with. We have lots of fun cooking for and with each other!”



New Life Abounds!

WHERE IT STARTED



WHERE WE ARE NOW

Above Left:

November 16th:

"I figured I would join the trend, but use it as an opportunity to discuss discernment. These two photos are over a five year period. Starting religious life versus where we currently are.

Discernment is not one choice . It is a series of choices. We may even have multiple options available and we are to decide what is best. Even with these two photos, there is the journey between the two.

Discernment is both personal and communal. While you make the choice, there are still external factors.

For those interested in more, never be afraid to ask. There is a vocation for everyone." —friar Chris Garcia

Right: December 12th: "Today we had two celebrations on two different continents, a diaconal ordination and a graduation. Friar Dominic Hoang Thanh Nghia was ordained a transitional deacon by Archbishop Marco Tasca at the Sanctuary of the Vision - Camposampiero (Padua). Friar Dominic was not able to return to Vietnam in August to be ordained. Father Victor was able to make arrangements for Friar Dominic to be ordained along with six other Friars. Friar Nicholas Maria (Roberson) Lubin actually graduated last Saturday virtually. Today he received his diploma in a pandemic friendly ceremony at the University of St. Mary's in San Antonio. His degree is in Spanish with a minor in Philosophy. "—Br. James Reiter, OFM Conv.

Bottom Right:

September 19th: St. Bonaventure Catholic Church Catechist Annual Retreat.

September 28th: Friar Nicholas Maria facilitating 2nd—3rd grade of 2nd year Holy Communion Catechism.



Above Right:

November 1st: Rachel Wood and her family posing for a nice photo after receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation at St. Paul's in Pismo Beach, CA.



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California Franciscan Vocation

