

FRANCISCAN BROTHERS OF PEACE

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Speak, LORD

for your servant is listening.

— 1 Samuel 3:9

Br. Paschal Listi, fbp professes Final Vows
as a Franciscan Brother of Peace

Photos by Dave Hrbacek

Devoted to the Gospel of Life



Brotherhood Update

by Brother Conrad Richardson, fbp
Community Servant

Happy New Fear!

Happy New **Fear**? No, that isn't a typo, it's a play on words that sums up (albeit sarcastically) the chronic condition that we may find ourselves in if we succumb to the influence of the media. The constant barrage of fear—mongering that spews out from broadcasts, podcasts, blogs, vlogs, chats, tweets, posts...#STOP! Can you imagine a news anchor signing off with, **“And that's the way it is.” So remember, ‘Pray, hope and don't worry.’**” How refreshing that would be (thanks St. Pio of Pietrelcina).

Early last fall I spent some time at our Spiritual Center up in the Arrowhead region of Minnesota and “unplugged” myself from the noise. I was sitting by the end of the channel at Wilson Lake (no, not a news channel) and experienced a stillness that was so serene and peaceful. With that serenity in mind, my resolution this year is tuning out the fear and tuning into Faith, Hope and Charity.

I came across the following quote by St. Gemma Galgani who, like all the Saints, “has been there, done that:” *“During this new year I resolve to begin a new life. I do not know what will happen to me during this year. But I abandon myself entirely to you, my God. And my aspirations and all my affections will be for You. I feel so weak, dear Jesus, but with Your help I hope and resolve to live a different life, that is, a life closer to You.”* — St. Gemma Galgani

That's the news folks, and I'm stickin to it!

“And the Lord gave me brothers...”

Congratulations to Brother Paschal on his Final Profession of Vows and to Brother Antonio on the renewal of his First Vows.

May God grant you both peace and grace to persevere as fellow pioneers among your Franciscan band of brothers.

Feeding the Needy

Thanks be to God—through your generosity, we were able to provide as many families with holiday meals and gifts as in past years. We did not even have to close our regular food shelf in order to build up a surplus to handle the needs of Thanksgiving and Christmas. Thank you so much for your faithful support and partnering with us to feed the hungry,

clothe the naked and welcome the stranger. With all of the unfortunate ways that COVID-19 has impacted our world, we have come up with some creative ways to continue serving those in need. For as long as our brother-

hood has been around, we have steadily provided food for those trying to make ends meet. Friends who have fallen on hard times frequently come to our home to collect food to share in their homes. It is hard to imagine, but some of those “homes” are actually tents where the bravest have decided to endure our Minnesota winter outside rather than risk contracting COVID-19 in shelters where social distancing is a challenge. Lord, have mercy and protect Your people!

Virtual Family Christmas Party

I just finished ranting about the news and social media, but there is a platform which has provided a novel way for people to keep in touch with family, school and work. On December 23rd, the brothers hopped on the “virtual bandwagon” and hosted an online gathering with members of our families, near and far. Up until this last year, we have hosted a potluck Family Christmas Party at Queen



“WE BECOME WHAT WE LOVE, AND WHO WE LOVE SHAPES WHAT WE BECOME.

IF WE LOVE THINGS, WE BECOME A THING. IF WE LOVE NOTHING, WE BECOME NOTHING. IMITATION IS NOT A LITERAL MIMICKING OF CHRIST, RATHER IT MEANS BECOMING THE IMAGE OF THE BELOVED, AN IMAGE DISCLOSED THROUGH TRANSFORMATION. THIS MEANS WE ARE TO BECOME VESSELS OF GOD'S COMPASSIONATE LOVE FOR OTHERS.”

— ST CLARE OF ASSISI

of Peace Friary a week before Christmas. The brothers typically do not make a home visit to be with our families on or around Christmas so this allows an opportunity for them to be with us.

The best part of the evening is when everyone gathers in our chapel to sing Christmas carols. At one point we choose a young niece or nephew of the brothers to help find the life-sized Baby Jesus statue that is passed around to everyone before the little one comes up to the altar and lays him in

the manger. Of course this was not going to be possible so we emailed all of our family members a link to join us for a virtual party.

In addition to singing carols, each brother had an opportunity to introduce their family members and share a Christmas greeting, including Brother Dominic Michael whose Aunt Gloria was celebrating her birthday, turning a spry ninety-six years young. Brother Antonio was also able to join us live from the Philippines, and that was with a fourteen hour time difference. Early last spring, Brother Antonio traveled to visit his family in the Philippines before the pandemic broke and his return has been delayed since. Please pray with us for our dear Brother's return to the community.

Beginning a New Chapter

On May 23rd, Pentecost Sunday, the brothers will hold what is called a Chapter, or General Chapter, which occurs every three years according to our Statutes. Wikipedia defines a chapter this way, *"The name derives from the habit of convening monks or canons for the reading of a chapter of the Bible or a heading of the order's rule. The 6th-century St. Benedict directed that his monks begin their daily assemblies with such readings and over time expressions such as "coming together for the chapter" (convenire ad capitulum) found their meaning transferred from the text to the meeting itself and then to the body gathering for it."*

During our General Chapter, the brothers in lifetime vows will read through all of our founding documents—our Brotherhood Ideal, Statutes, Way of Life and Policies of the Franciscan Brothers of Peace. Brothers may also propose amendments to these documents, if any, or other items concerning the whole community during pre-chapter meetings, which may be brought to a vote on Pentecost Sunday. A general election may also take place at the General Chapter for the offices of Community Servant, Vicar to the Community Servant and a Local Servant for each of our friaries.

Please pray for us as we prepare for our General Chapter and for more vocations to our brotherhood. We know that God has many wonderful things in store for us. *"The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest."* —Matthew 9:37

May God bless all of you for your love, prayers and support. Come what may, let's pray for a blessed and Happy New Year!

Br. Antonio Renews His First Vows While in the Philippines

By Br. John Mary

We offer thanks to Br. Antonio's good friend and main celebrant Bishop Florentino F. Cinense, Bishop Emeritus of Tarlac Diocese, Philippines, for witnessing and celebrating the Mass of renewal of simple vows for our brother, as COVID restrictions continue to confine him to his home country. Though separated on the other side of the world, his Franciscan Brothers were certainly with him in spirit, being able to witness via live stream his profession Mass. Br. Antonio, too, expresses his sincere gratitude that his own family could be personally present to share in his ceremony.

During Br. Antonio's profession Mass, celebrated at the beautiful Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Magalang, Pampanga, Philippines on October 3rd, 2020, Fr. Odon De Castro preached on a sermon given by St. Bonaventure, dwelling on the lamentations of the prophet Ezekiel. Countless souls were being lost for no one was present to offer instruction of the precepts of God. Now, though, according to St. Bonaventure, by the example and life of St. Francis and those who authentically follow in his footsteps consecrating themselves to the Lord's service, innumerable names are being inscribed into Heaven.

Br. Antonio Pagba, fbp, with His good friend and main celebrant, Bishop Emeritus of Tarlac Diocese, Bishop Florentino F. Cinense and concelebrating priests.



Br. Antonio with his siblings, nieces, nephew and cousins.

Speak, LORD

for your servant is listening.

— 1 Samuel 3:9

BY BR. JOHN MARY

“Thus all Israel came to know that Samuel was an accredited prophet of the Lord.”

— 1 SAMUEL 3:20

All praise and thanksgiving to God! In profound gratitude, on the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi 2020, the Franciscan Brothers of Peace were honored to celebrate two Masses of profession of vows of our Brothers Paschal Listi, fbp and Antonio Pagba, fbp. We give thanks to the Archbishop of St. Paul and Minneapolis, Most Rev. Bernard Hebda for presiding at and witnessing the lifetime profession of poverty, chastity and obedience of Br. Paschal at the Church of St. Patrick in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Br. Paschal was deeply grateful that his parents drove over a thousand miles to join in his celebration, as well as childhood friend Ian who was influential in introducing him to the Lord’s love. Karen Listi, his mother, appreciated the reading of 1st Samuel in the liturgy. As a single young adult she prayed that, if God were to grant her a son someday, she would offer him up to His service as Hannah did. Karen felt graced this day to have had that opportunity.

Referring to the above scripture, the Franciscan Brothers are honored to witness how both Br. Antonio and Br. Paschal live out their vocations prophesying through their mission endeavors of the love of God.

Quoting Br. Paschal, “Only through your grace, O God, live out these vows through me.”

May it be so.

Please visit the YouTube channel of the Franciscan Brothers of Peace to view this profession, and many other liturgical celebrations.



Br. Paschal lies prostrate in the ancient symbol of self-offering as the clergy and faithful intone the Litany of the Saints—asking for their intercession before the Lord on his behalf, and upon the whole world.

*“Only through your
grace, O God,
live out these vows
through me.”*

— BR. PASCHAL





Br. Paschal professes lifetime vows before Christ, His Church, and the Franciscan Brothers of Peace—witnessed by Community Servant Br. Conrad and Council Member Br. John Mary.



Archbishop Bernard Hebda presides at the Profession Mass, Feast of Our Holy Father St Francis, Oct. 4, 2020.



Our sisters and brothers of the Karen Catholic Community choir raise their voices in song.



Br. Paschal with his parents, Karen and Sam Listi of Belton, Texas.



Archbishop Bernard Hebda blesses the newly lifetime-professed Br. Paschal, while Fr. Seraphim Wirth, fbp and our other concelebrants join in prayer.

ST. MARY MAGDALENE:

ENTRUSTED WITH THE GOOD NEWS OF CHRIST'S PASCHAL MYSTERY

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ—Greetings! Following are some questions and answers about my previous reflection concerning St. Mary Magdalene and the role of women in the Church (see *Newsmagazine A.D. 2020, Volume 34, 2nd Edition, Page 7, hardcopy or online at www.brothersofpeace.org*):

What is the biblical evidence for Mary Magdalene's "closeness and friendship" with Christ?

1. Mary was a member of a group of women disciples who followed Jesus and looked after his needs (*Mt 27:55-56, Mk 15:40-41, Lk 8:2-3*). 2. Jesus ate at the family home of Mary, her sister Martha, and their brother Lazarus on a number of occasions when Jesus was in Bethany (*Lk 10:38-40, Jn 11:1-44; 12:1-3*). 3. On one such occasion, Mary sat at Jesus' feet to listen to him speak; and Jesus defended Mary against the complaints of her sister, who wanted her help in preparing the meal (*Lk 10:38-42*). 4. On another visit, Jesus inquired about Mary and specifically requested to see her (*Jn 11:28-29*). 5. On yet another visit to Bethany, Mary showed her affection for Jesus by pouring precious ointment over his head and feet, and by drying his feet with her hair; and Jesus defended her against those who were complaining that she was being too extravagant in her expression of affection for him (*Jn 12:3-8, Mt 26:6-13, Mk 14:3-9*). Jesus also praised and exalted Mary in her expression of affection for him, by declaring that it would forever be a part of the Good News, and would be proclaimed in remembrance of her for all time (*Mt 26:13, Mk 14:9*). 6. Mary was one of the women present at the crucifixion of Jesus, obviously a sign of loyal friendship on her part (*Mt 27:55-56, Mk 15:40-41, Lk 23:49, Jn 19:25*). 7. Mary was also one of the women who kept vigil at the tomb of Jesus after his death, another sign of deep friendship on her part (*Mt 27:61, Mk 15:47, Lk 23:59*). 8. On the morning of the resurrection, Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene first (*Mk 16:9*). Whether this is an absolute "first" or a relative "first" (Jesus presumably would have appeared to his mother without delay, though this is not recorded in the Gospels) it's very clear that Jesus appeared to Magdalene prior to his appearance to his Apostles and to his other disciples—prior to Peter his head Apostle, and perhaps even more astonishingly, prior to John his beloved disciple who, like her, was also present at the crucifixion. 9. Mary, blinded by her tears, grief, and confusion at the tomb, ultimately recognizes Jesus simply on the basis of his calling her by name. This is an indication that Jesus had a familiar way of saying her name, which was immediately recognizable by her as coming from Jesus—a sign of intimacy in friendship (*Jn 20:11-18*). 10. Mary expressed her deep affection for Jesus not only by her unswerving determination to find and care for his lifeless body (*Jn 20:1-2, 11-15, Mt 28:1, Mk 16:1-2, Lk 23:55-56, 24:1-4, 9-10*) but also by being so bold as to physically embrace Jesus after his resurrection (*Jn 20:16-17, Mt 28:9*). 11. The seven demons that Jesus cast out of Mary (*Mk 16:9, Lk 8:2*) and the void that was left in her heart and soul as a result of this exorcism, had to be replaced by someone or something (*Mt 12:43-45, Lk 11:24-26*). The Gospel witness indicates that Mary's heart and soul were filled by her Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, that from that point forward she became a Christian, and that she dedicated the rest of her life to the love and service of Christ and his Church. 12. Jesus, without any intermediary, personally and intentionally entrusted Mary with the Good News of his resurrection (*Mk 16:9-11*) and of his ascension (*Jn 20:17-18*) the

glorious culmination of his life on earth, and sent her to be a bearer of his Good News—a Christ-bearer, *Christotokos*—to his Apostles.

For all of these reasons, Mary Magdalene's closeness and friendship with Christ seems to be biblically, historically, and theologically indisputable. At the same time, the suggestion or implication that Jesus Christ's relationship with Mary was at any time, in any way, less than perfectly continent, perfectly chaste, and perfectly celibate—would, of course, be moral, theological, and historical nonsense.

How do we know that Mary Magdalene's presence at the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus was the result of the "expressed will and intention of Christ" prior to his death?

As mentioned above, Mary was a member of a group of women disciples who followed Jesus and looked after his needs. When Mary showed her affection for Jesus by pouring precious ointment over his head, Jesus put a meaning on her gesture which she most likely did not intend—that she was preparing his body for burial (*Mt 26:12, Mk 14:8*). Since Mary was in the habit of caring for Jesus' needs during his earthly ministry, it would be only natural for her to understand Jesus' comments as an implicit request for her to care for his needs after death as well, by anointing his body again postmortem. In the Gospel of John, Jesus explicitly asks that Mary keep the rest of the ointment for the day of his burial (*Jn 12:7*). Jesus' expressed will and intention that Mary anoint his body after his death, and Mary's loving desire to fulfill that request, resulted in her presence at his crucifixion, burial, and resurrection.

Where is the "divine commissioning" of Mary Magdalene in the Gospels?

The divine commissioning of Mary Magdalene to the Apostles and other disciples is mentioned in all four Gospel accounts of the resurrection. Although it is difficult to reconcile some of the details of the four Gospel accounts regarding the resurrection of Jesus, the general flow of grace, truth, and beauty on the morning of the resurrection seems clear and unanimous in all four accounts—grace, truth, and beauty flowed from the risen Christ and from the angel(s)... through the women in general and Mary Magdalene in particular... to the Apostles and other disciples of Jesus.

The Divine Commissioning of the Women/Magdalene

by the Angel(s)

Matthew 28:1-8

Mark 16:1-8

Luke 24:1-12, 21-24

by the Risen Christ

Matthew 28:9-10

Mark 16:9-11

John 20:11-18

As you can see, I have been inspired by the Gospel witness of St. Mary Magdalene. I hope that you are inspired too. Following is a prayer-poem about our love of God, a love which reaches beyond all sight and understanding, to which Mary Magdalene certainly bore witness, especially at the crucifixion. Like her, we must persevere in loving God through the dark night of the soul and of the spirit. Thank you for your prayers and support of the Franciscan Brothers of Peace. God bless you!

In the Hearts of Jesus and Mary,
Theophilus*



St. Mary Magdalene washes the feet
of Christ before his burial...

BLIND LOVE

*You shall love the Lord your God
with all your soul; with all your heart,
with all your mind, with all your will.^a*

**O Lord, strip my heart.
O Lord, strip my mind.
O Lord, strip my will.**

**O Lord God,
Strip my soul
Of all that is within me,
And cast me in
Your Utter Dark
Again.**

**Draw me deep
Within
Your Blackest Bosom,
That I may blindly
Love You
In silence.**

*No one has ever seen God,
the only begotten Son
who is in the bosom of the Father
has made God known.^b*

(a) Mark 12:30, Deut 6:5 (b) John 1:18

*A pen name chosen by a dear friend of the Brothers
out of a desire to remain anonymous...

2021: THE YEAR OF SAINT JOSEPH

By Br. Pio

Pope Francis has recently proclaimed 2021 the Year of St. Joseph. Joseph is well known by various titles: Patron of the Universal Church, father of Jesus, husband of Mary, the Worker, the “just man” (Mt 1:19), and Patron of a Happy Death. Joseph showed great faith and trust in his obedience to God’s will through revelations in four different dreams. What does it mean to the Church?

In the Apostolic Letter “*Patris Corde*” on St. Joseph, Pope Francis urges us to reflect on Joseph’s ways of being father: beloved and tender, especially to Jesus and Mary, obedient to the Father, accepting, creatively courageous, as worker—in the shadows (not the spotlight)—and apply these to our lives. Perhaps the intercession and example of St. Joseph can guide us to trust in Divine Providence with creative courage and be unafraid to live our faith. This would certainly be relevant in these times of pandemic, governmental/societal turmoil, and attacks on religious freedom, our faith, and Church. Fatherhood itself is often devalued, minimized, or attacked in our day.

What a remedy is St. Joseph! Joseph teaches the great value of silence and prayerful communion with God to better gain wisdom in discerning God’s will through the Holy Spirit. Today, many voices, sources of information and knowledge clamor to complicate our knowing God’s will in our lives.

What does the Year of St. Joseph mean to us as Franciscan Brothers of Peace? One of the lesser-known titles of St. Joseph is “Patron of Religious Brothers.” We are considering a community consecration to St. Joseph in April. As modeled by St. Joseph in the Holy Family and his community life, we are called to live our consecrated lives in a more fraternal way in community by being “brother” to all we encounter in daily life. I believe Joseph exhorts us to become ever more men of prayer, bearing fruit in sacrificial love in action. Another challenge would be to grow in acceptance of God’s will, not needing control or complete understanding in the particulars.

St. Joseph pray for us!



Icon of St. Joseph in the Church Abbazia di San Pietro, Modena, Italy.



Photo courtesy of Pro-Life Action Ministries

Br. Paul (left) & Br. Michael (right) with Joe Scheidler prior to our founding.

In Memoriam...

A pro-life hero and longtime friend of the brothers passed away on the morning of January 18, Martin Luther King Day. Joseph (Joe) Scheidler, 93, founder of Pro-Life Action League and known as the “Godfather of the pro-life movement,” was surrounded by his family as he went on to his eternal reward. Joe is pictured here with our co-founders, Br. Michael Gaworski, fbp and Br. Paul O’Donnell, fbp, before our community was founded.

“Well done, my good and faithful servant.”
—MATTHEW 25:23



Please Join Us via LiveStream on YouTube or Facebook!

FRANCISCAN holy hour

Every First Friday at 7:00 P.M.

Adoration + Franciscan Crown Rosary + Chanted Compline + Benediction

www.brothersofpeace.org