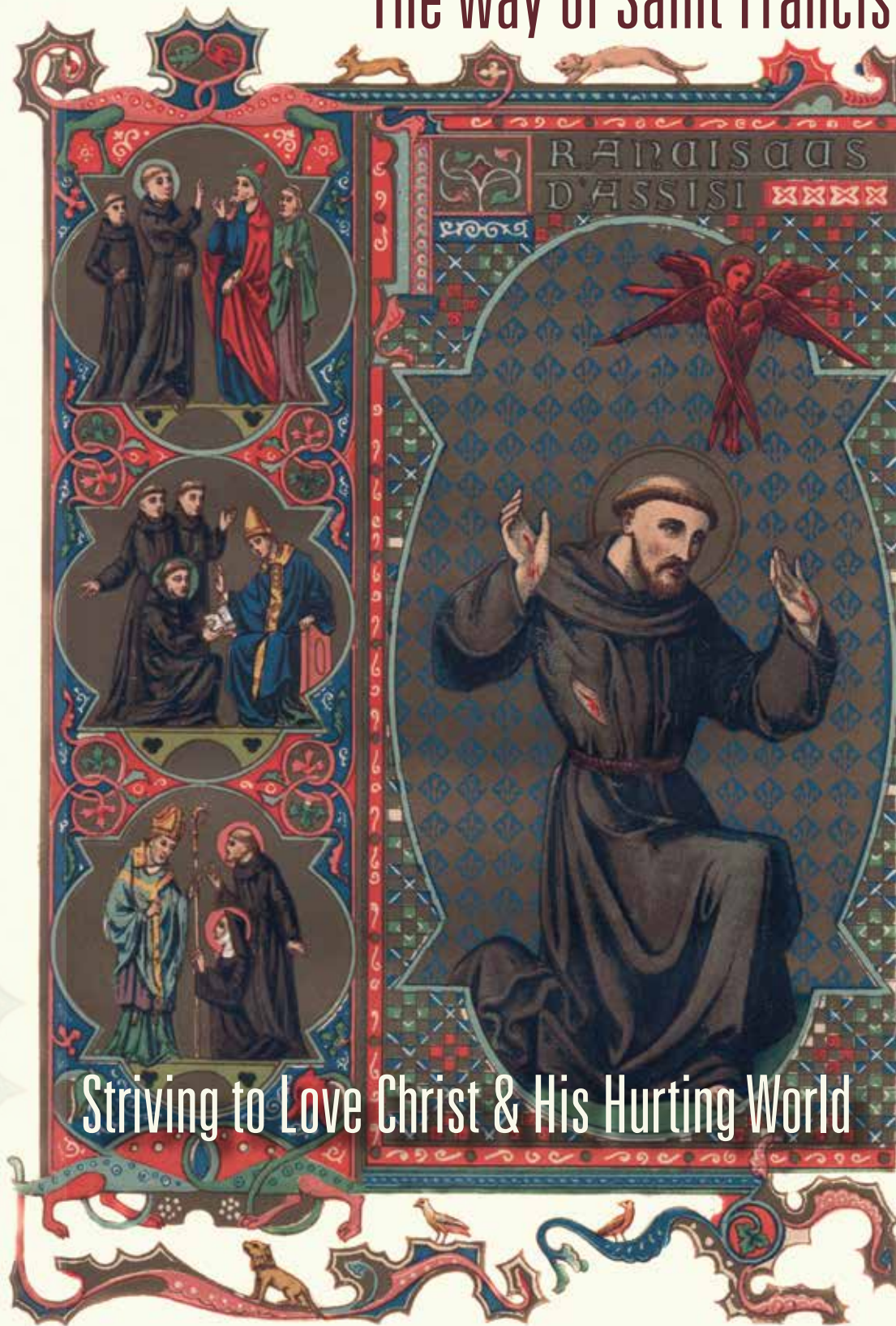


# FRANCISCAN BROTHERS OF PEACE

Newsmagazine A.D. 2020 | Volume 34 | 3rd Edition

## The Way of Saint Francis:



Striving to Love Christ & His Hurting World

*Devoted to the Gospel of Life*



# Brotherhood Update

by Brother Conrad Richardson, fbp, Community Servant

## Light in the Darkness

**“Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”**

— Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

In the midst of civil unrest and ongoing pandemic, the brothers continually seek to embody the light and love that we receive from Jesus, the Prince of Peace, during these precarious times. We pray the same for you, our dear friends. Truth, goodness and beauty have a ripple effect that can not be held back, so be a light in the darkness.

## Br. Paschal to Profess Lifetime Vows



Earlier this summer, Brother Paschal Listi, fbp submitted a letter of petition to the Brotherhood Council regarding his wish to profess lifetime vows as a Franciscan Brother of Peace. I am happy to announce that

the vote was unanimous and Brother Paschal will indeed be professing lifetime vows on October 4th, Feast of St. Francis of Assisi.

Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 we will be limited as to the number of people we will be able to have celebrate with us in person. For this reason, attendance will be by invitation only. For invitation inquiries, please email Brother Paschal at [paschal@brothersof-peace.org](mailto:paschal@brothersof-peace.org). I know Brother Paschal would appreciate your prayers as he prepares for this final step of his initial formation. If you would like to extend your congratulations to Brother Paschal, please mail your felicitations to:

**Brother Paschal Listi, fbp  
1289 Lafond Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55104.**

## Grateful for My Healing Journey

In our last newsmagazine, I shared some personal challenges that I had been struggling with and that I was going to take some time away to pursue restoration and renewal. I am grateful for the opportunity that I have had these past few months to do just that. I was able to journey with other priests and religious women and men who were equally seeking greater health and wellbeing by receiving treatment for mind, body and spirit. I have begun to truly understand what underlies my maladaptive use of food and I am continually learning how to surrender all to God. Praised be Jesus Christ, now and forever!

*“And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.”*

— GENESIS 1:2

This passage from the Book of Genesis about the Spirit of God moving over the waters shows us that even in the midst of so many challenges and changes in our society God never abandons His people. The Holy Spirit is still moving upon the water and it is still moving in our life.

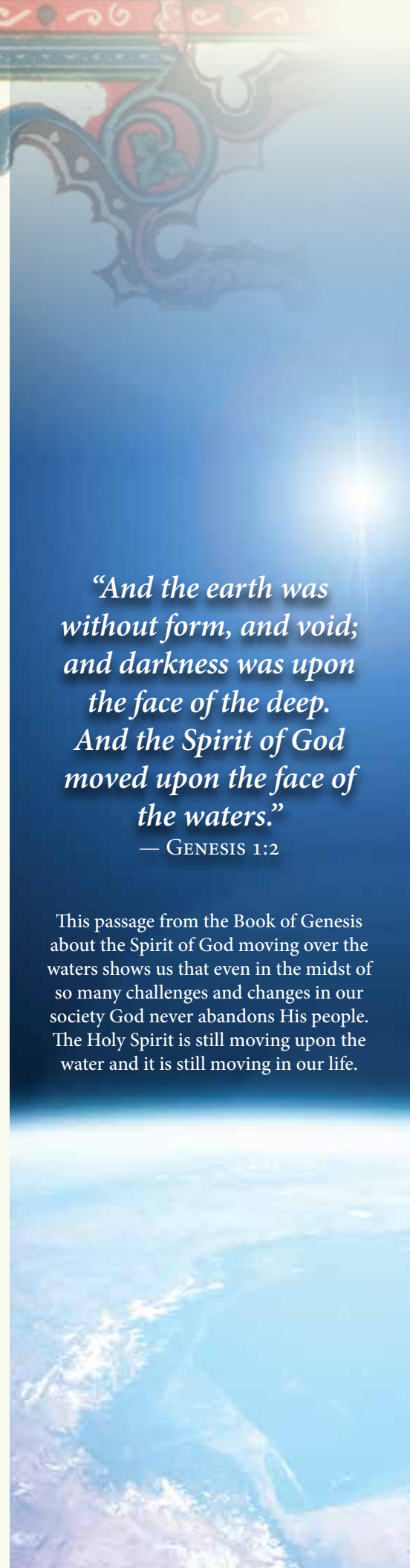


Please Join Us via LiveStream on YouTube or Facebook!

# FRANCISCAN holy hour

**Every First Friday at 7:00 P.M.**

Adoration + Franciscan Crown Rosary  
Chanted Compline + Benediction



# Being Drawn Into Contemplative Prayer

By Brother Joseph, fbp

**I**n the last year or so, I have been forced to spend more time in bed due to an increase in pain I am having because of complications of being paraplegic. I have found myself with a lot more idle time.

My personal prayer life has been fairly sparse, but with the help of one of my brothers who knew I liked devotional prayers (Sacred Heart) I began a collective of prayers that I committed to pray every day. From this I entered into a more contemplative life of prayer.

I also began collecting sacred images that I put on a prayer-shelf located on my nightstand. The images of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Immaculate Heart of Mary and depictions of Jesus carrying the cross and of the passion and crucifixion are helping me to cultivate a deeper prayer life despite my condition.

One of the prayer books I found most helpful is called “*Prayers and Heavenly Promises*” which has a collection of prayers and promises and revelations given to various saints. While many people pray a daily Rosary, I found a strong attraction to the St. Michael Chaplet and chose this as one of my main Marian prayers that I say daily. I also found that a lot of the prayers I chose were intercessory in nature. As we see in the world around us that there are many who choose to sin and few who choose to make reparation, so my ministry is now more of atonement than of helping the homeless, which I was involved in for many years.

### *Br. Joseph's prayer schedule...*

I divide my prayers into three groups: Morning, Daily and Night (including an examination of conscience). The first thing I do when I wake up is to dedicate myself and the day to the Holy Spirit. Building on this foundation, I add daily scripture and spiritual reading. My Adoration time is centered on receiving daily Eucharist and the prayers said while participating in community evening prayer and quiet Adoration time via a “baby monitor.” This is because I am unable to make it to the chapel because of my pain.

Another powerful prayer I say is called “The Rosary of the Holy Wounds” in conjunction with the pictures (pages 53 & 54 in *Prayers and Heavenly Promises*), also depicting a good examination of Jesus’ five wounds. Jesus tells



St. Faustina “the contemplation of My painful wounds is of great profit to you and it brings Me great joy.” I would say, to make Jesus’ joy more complete, if you add weekly fasting and small daily sacrifices to this overall routine, you could move mountains! It just takes the faith of a mustard seed.

On a most serious note, we are involved in a Cosmic Battle that no longer can suffer people standing on the sidelines. It is time to enter in on the side of Christ or become a pawn of the enemy through inaction. The lies and twisted messages we receive from many voices makes it hard to discern the truth.

Our relationship with the Truth is the way to make straight our lives in conformity to Jesus, as we carry our crosses behind Him. If we enclose ourselves in the Ark of Jesus’ Sacred Heart or Mary’s Immaculate Heart, we can weather the storms, come what may, and rescue as many souls as we can along the way!

The Holy Spirit continues to move in the life of the Franciscan Brothers of Peace and in some cases takes us across the water to new lands and people. In this newsletter we have many examples of how the Holy Spirit leads and guides us in our life as Religious. After reading through the many stories in this newsletter I would invite you to reflect on how the Holy Spirit is moving in your life and how God is using your gifts to bring the light of Christ to our world.

— Fr. Seraphim

# God Makes Good On His Promises

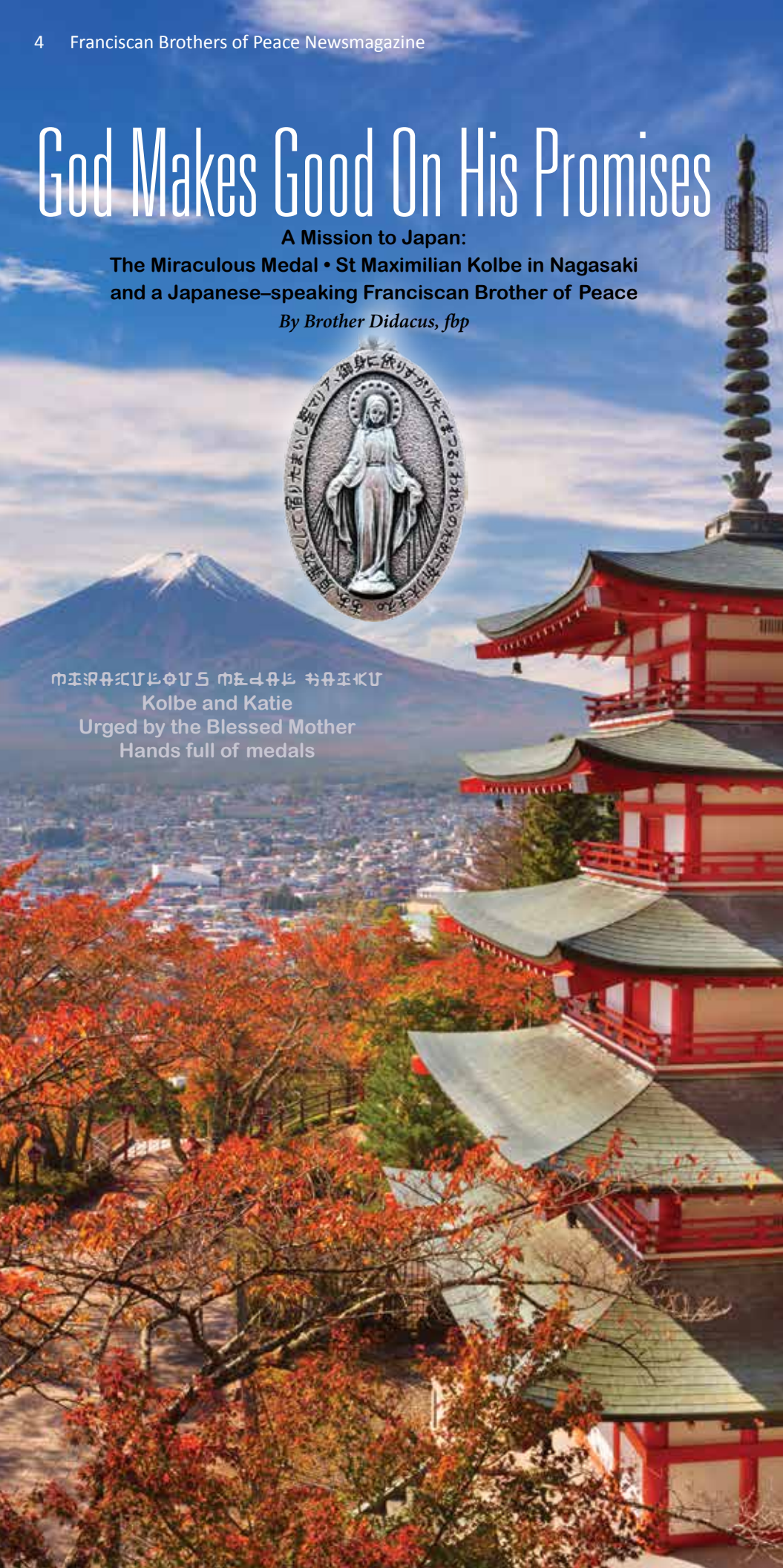
A Mission to Japan:

The Miraculous Medal • St Maximilian Kolbe in Nagasaki and a Japanese-speaking Franciscan Brother of Peace

By Brother Didacus, fbp



中本沢母マリアの御手 中本沢母に 中本沢母に  
Kolbe and Katie  
Urged by the Blessed Mother  
Hands full of medals



**I**f it's from God, He will make good come from it," Fr. Seraphim assured Leslie and I as we had apprehensions whether or not what we were doing was for ourselves, for the Church, or for God. We looked at each other and wondered, Could God's will really be THIS SIMPLE? Never would we have thought that handing out Miraculous Medals was a noteworthy or appealing mission in the Church, and yet, that is precisely why God calls us to do it. In all things, we must give God the glory, no matter how great or small the task is in our own estimation.

Our mission begins with the story of the Miraculous Medal. The account of the Miraculous Medal within the Church is one that spans centuries of devotion, and like other Marian devotions, has influenced the faith of people in many ways. Originating in Paris, France in 1830 with St. Catherine Labouré, who humbly followed the Blessed Virgin Mary's request to spread devotion to Jesus and the Blessed Mother through wearing the medal, the practice has culminated worldwide with a series of medals in only a few languages (most notably English and French). Even then, the authenticity of the message and the devotion of the medal itself were heavily questioned, as well as the motives of young Catherine Labouré.

A century later, a Franciscan Friar from Poland named Maximilian Kolbe began his vocation. Although not sure where his life would take him, he was convinced that he must submit himself to following a "great idea." Should God lead him into becoming an astronaut or a priest, he reasoned that the greatest thing he could do was to submit himself before God and the protection of the Blessed Mother. While all Catholics are encouraged to strive to become humble by setting all ambition aside, Maximilian (whose name literally means "the greatest") also humbly followed the will of God by giving his entire life to revealing the greatness of His Glory!

Kolbe answered this question when he first embarked on his mission to Japan in 1930, a country that is primarily Shinto-Buddhist (a combination of the Shinto [pagan] religion of Japanese origin and Buddhism deriving from India and China). He arrived nearly 400 years after St. Francis-Xavier—a Jesuit and patron of Apostles to Japan—first set foot in the country with his fellow Jesuits and encountered great difficulty learning the Japanese language.

*"Japanese Catholicism has contained including the saints, martyrs in the East at the Unzen Islands as well as the elimination of priests for over 200 years."*



St. Maximilian Kolbe, OFM Conv.

From the time of St. Francis-Xavier's first apostolic mission, Japanese Catholic history has contained a rich timeline including the scalding of the martyrs in the sulfuric water at the Unzen Hot Springs as well as the elimination of all priests for over 200 years; the complete

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extirpation of Nagasaki by Fat Man (the second atomic bomb dropped in August, 1945), including the Urakami Cathedral, Asia's largest Catholic Cathedral; and the peaceful, prayerful presence brought to the region by Takashi Nagai, a Servant of God whose spirit and love of Jesus Christ

inspired the people as they became devastated from defeat in WWII.

Not having any knowledge of the language or the culture, Maximilian Kolbe recognized the need to share the message of the Blessed Mother with the people of Nagasaki, a port city which for the span of 200 years under Tokugawa's persecution until the late 1800's was only open to the Dutch because of their valuable conference of medical and scientific knowledge. Most sources do not indicate what precisely motivated Kolbe to begin his mission in Japan, but upon arrival, he felt the Blessed Mother calling him to create a City of the Immaculate just like in his home city of Warsaw, Poland. In Nagasaki, he continued his work printing a monthly Catholic newspaper titled *Knights of the Immaculata*, to spread the message of the Blessed Mother in the native Japanese language. Not only that, but he devoted himself to spreading that relationship with her further by handing out

Miraculous Medals to those he encountered.

Further walking along the path of humility, Maximilian Kolbe never let go of his vision from the Blessed Mother that he was supposed to be establishing a Heavenly City on earth in her honor. Through the grace given to her by God, her love flowed through Kolbe as he took the vision to new heights for the glory of God's Kingdom. Today, a new generation of Catholics follow in the spirits of St. Catherine Labouré and St. Maximilian Kolbe, still even to the far reaches of the Orient. Since then, there have been others to take up the call to evangelize in Japan.

Leslie Swanby, a Secular 3rd Order Carmelite from the Superior, WI Diocese, envisaged a great idea through the humble guidance of the Holy Spirit. While abroad, she had truly stumbled upon a revealed mission in the Church—bringing Catholics abroad to experience Holy Pilgrimage Sites in Japan. While over there, she and Fr. Elias Mills, F.I. (the pilgrimage chaplain) both initiated handing out Miraculous Medals. What she soon realized was that the medals were popular amongst the people and an effective means of evangelization. The Japanese people were indeed receptive to the medals, but they were not fully aware of the graces they were receiving. It was then that Leslie's mission in the Church became even more apparent. Now that her mission was coming to fruition, she knew the next step would be to ask a Japanese-English translator for help.

Back in 2018, I had just entered the Novitiate of the Franciscan Brothers of Peace. As required by Novitiate Formation and the Spirit of our Order, I traveled to Marian Pilgrimage sites with Br. Dominic-Michael and Br. Dismas. When we arrived at the Our Lady of Guadalupe Shrine as one of our primary destinations, I was astounded by all the work that had been commissioned there in Her honor. Though I knew there was a trip to Japan being hosted by the friars there, at that time I had not yet met Leslie. After our pilgrimage, she was slipped a tip that a "Japanese-speaking friar" had recently visited the Shrine, and that she should get in touch with him.

Ever since I was a young boy (around 3 years of age), I loved much about the Japanese subculture from games to animation – which eventually led me to a passion for the culture and language itself. From there, I took

Spanish in high school out of necessity, which led me to declaring it my major in college, but then eventually passionately pursuing Japanese language which opened a whole new world for me. Learning about the diversity of this culture leagues away on a little island peaked my curiosity, and I soon began to desire to travel there.

During my first two years in college, I decided to travel abroad there, which was probably two of the most memorable weeks of my life. I made lots of friends, tried a variety of food, and even became obsessed with learning the language. When I returned to the States two weeks later, I yearned fervently to return there, and in fact I did for a year's worth study abroad. "Just how exactly do you expect to study Spanish there?" people would ask me. I would shrug my shoulders and say, "God will take care of it."

After traveling abroad there for the year, I had truly discovered a passion in being immersed in a foreign culture and studying the language—almost day and night. By the time I graduated college, I still did not have a clear idea of where God was leading me, all I knew was that I wanted to work in a culturally-immersed environment where I could freely practice my Catholic faith. Two years later after petitioning to enter the Franciscan Brothers of Peace, I received offers to go abroad and teach English or bring high school students

abroad to teach Japanese once a year. I had the opportunity to go, thanks be to God, but I was simply amazed that He would even allow me to go again at all.

With little delay, Leslie reached out to me and requested my help for providing resources contain-

ing the historical, cultural, and religious significance of the Miraculous Medal to be distributed in the Japanese language, such as a pamphlet, a video, and a website currently in progress. Together with her daughter Christina, who is a graphic artist, we have been working towards creating a foundation of faith where people can appreciate the sacrifices and witness of the saints in a country where very little is known about the Catholic tradition, yet it speaks volumes to the Western world as the country itself is not primarily Christian at all.

Having studied Japanese language passionately for over a decade with a year's ex-

*Continued top of next page...*



Br. Didacus  
with the Icon of St. Maximilian.



*Miraculous medal instruction translated into Japanese by Br. Didacus.*

perience abroad in Japan, I felt the Holy Spirit calling me to be involved in this mission as well (though, much to my amusement, I never believed such an opportunity would have presented itself after just receiving the habit of our order!). Two years ago, after traveling to Nagasaki, I was able to receive the blessing of St. Maximilian Kolbe and the 26+ Martyrs of Japan after taking a tour on August 14

(The Feast Day of St. Maximilian Kolbe, who incidentally is the patron of our brotherhood). I will never forget their heroic witness, which in our times speaks volumes as the Church again enters a period of intense persecution all around the globe. It is such a joy to be working together with Leslie on this mission!

God truly works in mysterious ways, but He makes all things possible and good according to His will. Ambition and desire can and do certainly follow the path of pride, but when we humble ourselves before the will of God and the Blessed Mother, we see how great those desires manifest themselves when they are submitted before them. As we walk forward in the spirit of St. Catherine Labouré and St. Maximilian Kolbe undertaking this simple mission, we ask that you keep us in your prayers that we may make disciples not only of Japan, but of all nations for the glory of His Kingdom. May they intercede for us as we bring forth a spirit of peace and mercy to the Japanese people, and at the same time experience it within ourselves.

## Japanese Evangelization Prayer

**Lord, Our God, there is no realm where You do not wish to extend Your mercy and peace.**

**Allow us, Your chosen vessels, to be instruments of Your will in Japan, the United States, and all around the world. Through the heroic witness of so many of Japan's saints, may we strive to be more effective witnesses of Your word and deed, especially when it leads us spiritually and even physically to the Cross.**

**Give us the grace and the fervor to unite ourselves wholly to You in every moment of every day, no matter the cost.**

**St. Francis-Xavier, Pray for Us.**

**St. Paul Miki and The 26+ Martyrs of Japan, Pray for Us.**

**St. Catherine Labouré, Pray for Us.**

**St. Maximilian Kolbe, Pray for Us.**

**Takashi Nagai and Satoko Kitahara, Pray for Us.**

**Most Blessed Mother, Queen of All Nations, Pray for Us.**

## The Secular Franciscan Order: Called to Witness to the World

*By Anne Keller, OFS*

Hello, my name is Anne Keller. I am a member of the Secular Franciscan Order and the Fraternity of Mary, Queen of Peace. The Secular Franciscan Order enables the Franciscan charism to be lived out by married and single members of the laity, and by diocesan clergy—bishops, priests and deacons.

The Secular Franciscan Order is just that, an Order within the Catholic Church and not an organization or club. It is governed by its own Rule of Life as well as general Church Law.

Secular Franciscans strive to live the Gospel in the manner of Saint Francis by spreading the Gospel by word and example in their homes, at work, and in their parishes; embracing the Gospel values of poverty, joy, simplicity, gratitude, peace and LOVE.

Secular Franciscans are members of a local fraternity, a living and active Christian community. The fraternity is the privileged place for developing their sense of Church, their Franciscan vocation and ministry.

Monthly fraternity meetings with their common prayer, formation, and fellowship provide the spiritual nourishment needed to live as a Christian in the world.

Our fraternity consists of members from throughout the Twin Cities area and beyond. We meet on First Fridays in conjunction with the Brothers' Holy Hour for World Peace. With the onset of the shut-downs in March in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, it became a challenge to continue to provide support for one another. We had to find alternative ways of having our meetings and connecting.

- In April, we began by watching the Brothers' First Friday Holy Hour which they posted on YouTube. We prayed in spirit with one another—each from our own homes.

- In May, we hosted an informal "Zoom check-in" for our members to connect virtually after watching the Holy Hour online.

- In June, we hosted a Zoom meeting following the Holy Hour. Our member Will Moore gave an excellent ongoing formation presentation on the Prologue of the Rule along with time for Q&A and intercessory prayer.

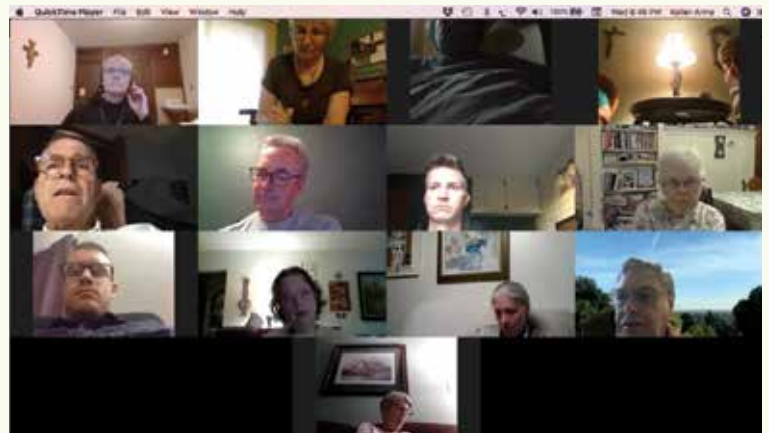
- In June, we also structured a way for members to call at least three other members in order to stay in touch.

- In July, the Brothers moved their Holy Hour to St Columba next door to Queen of Peace Friary. This allowed some of us to attend in person, spread out for safety (masks and disinfecting procedures are utilized). Our fraternity meeting then immediately followed the Holy Hour with discussion of the Sunday Scriptures.

- In August, we were able to accomplish a hybrid meeting with thirteen people attending in person at St Columba and seven people attending via Zoom. We had a business meeting for the first time in five months, as well as discussion of the Sunday Scriptures.

We are a work in process, learning how to accommodate to our new circumstances, one step at a time. Nothing is perfect. Adapting to new technology is a challenge. We miss those members who are neither able to attend in person or virtually. We are happy to see other members on Zoom that we have not seen for a long time!

Our challenge for the next meeting is to find a way to project the Zoom participants on a screen in the Church so that they can be seen and heard.



# Building Bridges Without a Blueprint

By Brother Dominic Michael, fbp

Initially, I started walking to keep my fitness up. While exercising, I would pray, but eventually I began to have unique encounters. The neighborhood is very diverse, and many of these neighbors have expressed negative feelings towards the Catholic Church. You never know how you're going to react to situations that eventually have become a ministry, being a brother to all. Here are three experiences in line with our charisms as Franciscan Brothers of Peace:

## 1. Cultivate Prayer Among the People.

The first story is about meeting a young man. We basically started talking right away, and he asked some basic questions about what our brothers were about. He asked about the habit and what we do day to day. I explained the first thing is we have prayer four times a day and that our prayer is from the Old Testament Psalms and New Testament Scripture, The Liturgy of the Hours.

He replied, "Well, I'm Jewish, but I used to love to pray with the psalms. It has been such a long time since then. I really feel I should get back to it. You kind of gave me an idea." I asked him if he had a copy of the psalms and he told me he didn't, so I ran home and found the copy that I had and brought it back to him. He was very happy with that.

Another encounter that I had was with a woman and her husband. The woman had no religious background, and her husband grew up as a Roman Catholic. One time, he noticed the Franciscan Crown Rosary hanging from the left side of my habit. He told me that it reminded him of his childhood and that his mom was very religious. After dinner, the family always prayed the Rosary, and he said that from the time he was a kid until the time he went to college, that was a custom in his family.

He had been away from the Church and any kind of prayer so he said something like, "Oh, maybe I kinda miss it."

I responded, "Well, would you like a rosary?"

"Yeah, but I'm gonna need to know how to say it."

"Don't worry—Brother D has your back," I assured him.

## 2. Be Ambassadors and Missionaries of Christ's Peace and Mercy.

I've found a good way to break the ice with people. A lot of our neighbors have dogs. Either I run into them while I'm doing my walking or if I'm sitting in front of our friary. The best way to make encounters with their owners is to fuss over the dogs (and I really *do* love dogs!). I give them doggy treats and come to find too that a lot of the owners I encounter have no religion.



They don't know anything about the Catholic Church but the thing that I find funny is that they say, "Oh we know who Saint Francis is," and they share a little bit about what they know. Most of the time it's that he's a patron saint of animals and that their relatives have a birdbath with Saint

Francis on it. So now, besides doggy treats, I give out Saint Francis medals for the dogs' collars—something that has been taken very well. After all, what is dog spelled backwards? God is definitely working through that relationship with the simple act of admiring their dog.



## 3. Be a Prophetic Witness, Whether it is Popular or Not.

The best story I can think of is of an older couple, the wife being very sick with Parkinson's disease. It took a long time for them to start talking with me. When we did start talking, the question they asked was, "What are you all about? What do you do?" I told them about our Food Shelf Ministry that we've been doing for several years out of the friary, helping out mothers with diapers and various other distributions; Pro-Life advocacy while working with immigrants, and the list goes on and on. The first thing he said to me was, "I never realized all that was going on." So, a few months go by and not too long ago he saw me and he said, "Wait. I have something to give you."

This is not a well-to-do couple. Their home is very simple and needs a lot of work. The man came out, and his wife came to the stairs and said, "We want to give you this." It was a check for \$200. He said, "We want this to go towards helping people." The seeds have been planted, and now the growth is taking place. There are countless stories, especially about people bringing fresh vegetables and/or canned goods with the pandemic going on. I have found that people are so generous. It's all about knowing what we actually are doing.

Listening to people sharing their problems is also one of the most fruitful adventures of my walking. I recite several rosaries, and when I pray those rosaries, I pray for the neighborhood; I pray for the people I will encounter, I pray for the Holy Spirit to speak through me should a discussion get heated or if somebody brings something up with a question, so that I may be able to answer them appropriately. I also carry a little pocket catechism, holy water, and my constant sacramental that I've been using for years. I call it my calling card—which is either a crucifix, or a rosary, or whatever I happen to have in my pocket.

Each encounter is a reminder that God may use me and each of us as a moment by moment instrument of God's loving peace and reconciliation.



**“I will lead the blind on their journey;  
by paths unknown I will guide them.”**

—ISAIAH 42:16

By Brother Antonio Pagba, fbp

Greetings to you all. I know many people are wondering where I am and how I'm doing—thankfully fine and healthy. I have been out of the USA for the past four months. Father Seraphim and I went to Thailand in March 2020 for our first mission trip there to witness and learn from the Karen community in their own land. It was during this time that the COVID-19 pandemic created a change for me. I ended up going back to the Philippines to care for my aged Father, and because of multiple situations I'm unable to return to the USA at this time.



*The homes at the mission are simple structures composed of bamboo.*

Despite this change in my life, God is still at work, leading me to expend His love and mercy to the poor. I feel very much like St. Francis of Assisi who lived as a poor person among the physically and spiritually poor.

The COVID-19 situation in the Philippines is a very difficult situation, yet I'm trying to continue to live my Religious life and search for new ways to serve the people of God.

I'm currently staying with my family, and am taking care of my Dad who is suffering from Alzheimers. Although I'm away from the community life of the Franciscan Brothers of Peace, God is sustaining me with His grace during this time. I'm starting to work with the Katutubo—indigenous Catholic people in Bacao Palayan City. The mission is organized by Chaplain Fr. Chito Beltran, a Filipino priest who has worked with indigenous Catholics for fifteen years. The mission is located in the Diocese of Cabanatuan City.

The Katutubo people have many similarities to the Karen community that we serve in St. Paul, Minnesota, so I feel well-equipped to work with this new group in the Philippines. These faithful people live in the mountain regions, and as part of their tribe and cultural lifestyle they work so hard to keep the mountain free from illegal logging, and they also work to replant the forest.

During my stay at the mission I share my knowledge and skills with the people, to build good relationships with each other and with Jesus. I introduce more teachings about Jesus to their families and teach them to put God first before everything else. The basic catechism I give them is truly rooted in the charism of St. Francis of Assisi, who loved Jesus and nature, and taught people to build community on a strong foundation of faith.

I pray for you all, and please pray for me.

*Br. Antonio visiting families at the Catholic mission in the Philippines.*



*Br. Antonio going to the river to find fish for dinner.*