

FRANCISCAN BROTHERS OF PEACE

Newsmagazine A.D. 2013 Volume 27 / 1st Edition

*Brother Michael,
pray for us!*



A Journey of Faith

From the Mountains of Burma to America:
The Inspiring Story of Kai Blud



Three Men Enter the FBP Novitiate

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a Culture of Life

Holiday Food Programs a Great Success

Devoted to the Gospel of Life



Brotherhood Update

by Brother Paul, Guardian Overall

Christ is Born!

We had a wonderful Christmas season as a brotherhood. We celebrated together with prayer, holy Mass, Christmas caroling, and some wonderful meals on Christmas Eve and Day. The celebration continued until the end of the Feast of the Epiphany. Some of our former residents and family members also joined us in our celebration. The Chapel was beautifully decorated and Queen of Peace Friary was in all its Christmas splendor.

A Time of Rest

After our very busy Thanksgiving and Christmas food programs the Brothers took a little down-time. Some Brothers were on retreat in northern Minnesota, some made family home visits, while others just enjoyed a little free time. However, a Brother was always available to help those who would come to our door.

Go Down Moses Retreat

On December 27-31, 2012, Brother Benedict Gerard traveled to Washington D.C. and joined other African American friars and friars involved in various African American apostolates at the Josephite seminary for the "Go Down Moses" retreat. The event introduces young African American Catholic men to the wonderful life and ministry of St. Francis. It is also a time of pilgrimage to various locations that played a major role in the history of African American Catholics.

Apostolates Restart

All of our apostolates went back into full operation at the beginning of the new year of 2013. We thank you for your ongoing prayers, donations and support as we house international victims of torture, operate our emergency food shelf for those in need, assist women in unplanned pregnancies, work with refugees, visit the sick and promote and defend the Gospel of Life.

May God bless you for your generosity!



The Franciscan Brothers of Peace, Christmas 2012



Br. Benedict Gerard beautifully decorated our chapel for Christmas.

Three New Novices

for the Franciscan Brothers of Peace



From L to R: Bros. Bonaventure, Benedict Gerard & Charbel.

On December 8, 2012, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, three men entered the Novitiate of the Franciscan Brothers of Peace. The Novices were received by Brother Paul O'Donnell, fbp, Guardian Overall of the community.

During the ceremony, each man received the traditional ancient signs of his entry into religious life in the Catholic Church and his "departure" from the world — the *tonsure* or removal of some hair from the head and *investiture in the religious habit* of the Franciscan Brothers of Peace, which symbolize the death to self one accepts to follow Christ; his *new religious name* indicating a new creation — a further revelation of his identity in Christ; and *the presentation of the baptismal candle* to acknowledge that his vocation to religious life is rooted in the Sacrament of Baptism.

Joseph Markin of Boaz, Kentucky received the religious name Brother Charbel, Troy Kelley of Chicago, Illinois received the religious name Brother Benedict Gerard, and Nathan Rider of Seattle, Washington received the religious name Brother Bonaventure.

These three men have now entered a time of formation with the Franciscan Brothers of Peace with the intention of one day professing the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience in fraternal solidarity with the other members of the community. Please pray for them as they begin this journey to strive to live out the rest of their lives as Franciscan Brothers of Peace.

The Brothers humbly ask you to continue to pray for our community and that more good men like these will join us in our Franciscan way of life. We thank you in advance for your ongoing prayers and support. May God bless you and give you His peace.



A Journey of Faith

From the Mountains of Burma to America: The Inspiring Story

By Brother Seraphim, fbp

For the past three years, the Franciscan Brothers of Peace have served as spiritual advisors and catechists for the Karen Catholic refugees from Burma now living in the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis.

The Karen people are an ethnic minority in Burma, which is engaged in the longest running civil war in world history. The Karen have been brutalized by the Burmese military and driven from their villages. They have suffered many horrendous civil and human rights violations in their native land.

I have been blessed to come to know these beautiful, faithful Catholic men and women. However there is one man that stands out as a true servant of the Church. His name is Kai Blud.

When I first met Kai Blud I thought he was about forty years of age. I could hardly believe it when he told me he was sixty two. He is a devout Catholic man. I have found his story to be inspiring and would like to share some of it with you.

Kai Blud was born in Ta oo in Burma, a Karen mountain village. There were twenty five families in the village, ten of them being Catholic. Kai Blud was in charge of their little Catholic church which was made out of bamboo. He was a rice and vegetable farmer. Life was much different than life in the United States. Everyone in the village worked together. If a family had no rice to eat, others would share with them not expecting anything in return.

The Catholics would meet every Sunday morning for 8:00 A.M. morning prayer and Sunday school. Later on Sunday evening they would gather for evening prayer and pray the rosary. In a small, peaceful village that was surrounded by war.

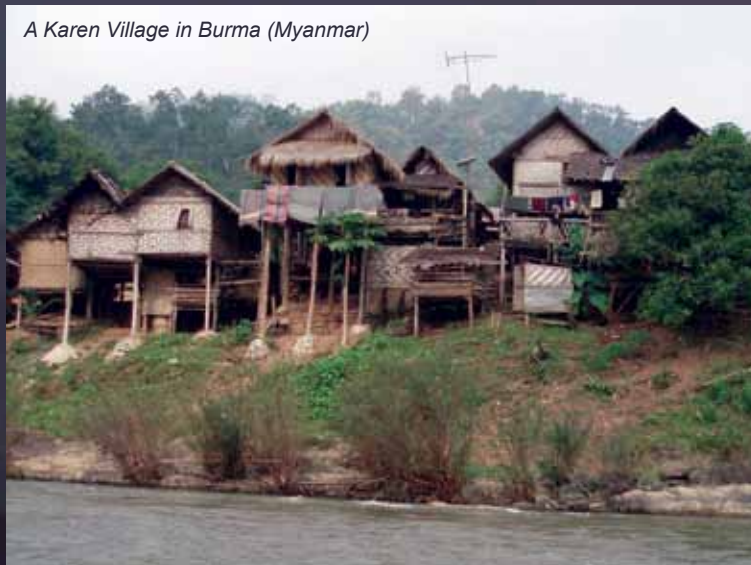
The Karen army and the Burmese army made their way to Ta oo village. The Burmese army destroyed everything, forcing the people to leave their village rich with fertile land and go to another village down the mountain. The new village had poor soil and nothing would grow there. The Karen people began to starve. Kai Blud says that the Burmese, having taken over their rice and vegetable farms, would sell them bad rice and old fish at a very high price. They had no choice but to buy the food or they would all die.

Because of the remoteness of the village, the Catholic priest was only

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A Karen Village in Burma (Myanmar)



allowed to come into the area once every two years. When the priest arrived Kai Blud would escort him around to all the Catholic homes. The people received religious instruction and the sacraments, and were encouraged to stay true to God and persevere in the Catholic faith.

In the new village the Karen language was not to be spoken. People who did so were in danger of being put to death. The children could go to school but had to be taught in the Burmese language.

At the age of twenty seven, Kai Blud married MaTa oo (Amy) and together they had three boys and a daughter. Kai Blud continued to serve the Catholics in the village as a catechist and choir teacher. He traveled to other villages, visiting Catholic families. Kai Blud gave

Life of Kai Blud



free, wholehearted service to his Catholic brothers and sisters and did so for the love of God. He especially gave special attention to the children, teaching them the faith and how to pray.

Nine years after he was married, Kai Blud's wife developed a severe flu that would take her life. He now had to raise his children alone. In an effort to support his family he started to make trips and travel five days by foot to Thailand to buy some cattle to sell in the village. On one of his journeys Kai Blud was captured by the Burmese military and was accused of working with the Karen army. He was not permitted to go back to the village. His oldest daughter who was in fifth grade at the time had to care for the other children. Eventually some of the Catholic villagers helped to board the children in various homes.

Kai Blud was troubled and distraught about being separated from his family. He felt helpless. He was again forced to be exiled to another village. He wondered if he would ever be reunited with his children. There were about two hundred people in this new village where he was the only Catholic. Clinging to his faith and his Catholic roots, he would hang a picture of the Blessed Virgin Mary on a tree and on his knees pray the rosary.

After two years Kai Blud left the village and made his way to the refugee camps along the Thailand border. He spent fifteen years in the refugee camps in selfless service to the Catholic Church. He was allowed to travel to several other refugee camps to work with the formation of Karen choirs, give religious instruction and lead prayer services.

After fifteen years in the refugee camps, now being away from his children for twenty years, he applied for refugee relocation. His name came up on the list for relocation four years ago. He was going to be allowed to come to the United States of America. He was so happy. As his papers were getting in order to come to the United States, he found out some of his children were being admitted to the refugee camp where he was located. After twenty years, he was reunited with them briefly before coming to the United States. He is in regular contact with his children in the refugee camp and wishes he could do more.

Today Kai Blud resides at Mary's House, owned by the Church of St. John the Evangelist in Little Canada, Minnesota, which is a transitional housing home for the Catholic Karen and is a collaborative ministry with the Franciscan Brothers of Peace. Kai Blud continues

Kai Blud visiting Catholic families in the refugee camps in Burma and along the Thai border.



"The Catholics would meet every Sunday morning for 8:00 a.m. morning prayer and Sunday school. Later on Sunday evening they would gather for evening prayer and pray the rosary. In a small, peaceful village that was surrounded by war."



“And we know that in all things, God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.”

— ROMANS 8:28

A Cemetery of the Karen Faithful
Karen Mountains, Burma

A Journey of Faith

Continued...

to serve the Catholic Karen people located in Blessed Sacrament Parish in East St. Paul Minnesota. At Blessed Sacrament Kai Blud, with about fifteen other Karen, participates in perpetual Eucharistic adoration at the parish. He is also the choir director for the Karen choir at Blessed Sacrament and teaches catechism there with the Franciscan Brothers of Peace and with volunteers John Paul and Sharon Gille, and Anne Keller, SFO. At present there are about one hundred Karen Catholics at Blessed Sacrament parish.

I have been inspired by this devout Catholic man of faith, especially given his suffering, pain, and hardship. He is truly an example of giving to others and the Church. The Karen Catholics here in Minnesota, as well as the entire Church, are blessed to have Kai Blud with us and have benefited from his selfless service to God and the Church.

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Donations to assist the ongoing apostolate of the Franciscan Brothers of Peace to the Karen community are greatly appreciated.



Father David Kohner, pastor of St. John the Evangelist in Little Canada, Minnesota, presents Kai Blud with the key to Mary's House as Brother Max and Brother Seraphim represent the Franciscan Brothers of Peace.



Mary's House is a transitional housing home for the Catholic Karen people and is a collaborative ministry between St. John the Evangelist Church in Little Canada, Minnesota, and the Franciscan Brothers of Peace.

Pro-Life Advocates Vow to Press On to Build a Culture of Life

40th Anniversary of Roe vs. Wade Abortion Decision Marked



On January 22, 2013, the United States marked the sad 40th anniversary of the Roe vs. Wade abortion decision which legalized abortion throughout the entire nine months of pregnancy. Hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets at the nation's capital as well as hundreds of cities across the country, vowing to continue their efforts to build a culture of life.

There have been great gains for the pro-life movement and public opinion on abortion has shifted over the years in favor of the pre-born child's right to life. Hundreds of pregnancy help centers now can offer tangible assistance to women and men faced with an unplanned pregnancy. Legislation and pro-life direct action, like sidewalk counseling and peaceful prayer in front of abortion clinics, have saved lives. So we continue to march on until the day comes when a preborn child will always be able to rest safely in their mother's womb.

Those wishing to defend and promote the Gospel of Life must also defend the rights of our disabled, chronically ill and cognitively impaired brothers and sisters — and must do so with the same zeal and resources as they do for the child in the womb and their mothers. If we are truly Christian, if we are truly pro-life, then we must embrace the entire Gospel of Life. Our vulnerable brothers and sisters depend on it!

The Franciscan Brothers of Peace are committed to embracing the entire Gospel of Life and invite you to join us. We pray for God's grace in this endeavor. We also are asking the intercession of four special people that have touched our lives and who are now in heaven: "Holy Terri, Brother Michael, Baby Joseph and Pope John Paul the Great... Pray for us!"





Thanksgiving & Christmas Food Program... A Great Success!

By Brother Pio, fbp

Thank you to all staff, parents, students of many Catholic schools, families, parishes, and individuals for your abundant generosity in food, financial and volunteer assistance! This made our Thanksgiving and Christmas food programs for our brothers and sisters in need very successful again this year. Over 625 grateful families were helped for both Thanksgiving and Christmas. Thanks be to God!

Many families come to our doors experiencing unemployment, chronic health problems, disability, low income, deaths in the family and many levels of poverty and need. The human and spiritual interaction when these friends are welcomed as Christ at the friary, along with food and material goods, were a blessing to all parties involved. Thank you for your love in action and partnership with the Brothers. Have a blessed New Year of 2013!



Ruby's Beggin' Box

- Please remember our families in need by sending your donations of perishable and non-perishable food for our emergency food shelf.
- Please consider donating your used car to the Brothers ...it's a big help to us and a great tax deduction!
- Warm hats, gloves, coats and blankets are always appreciated this time of year by our families in need.

Thank You & God Bless You for your support!
For more information, please call 651-646-8586.

FRANCISCAN holy hour



Every First Friday at 7:00 p.m.
Adoration + Franciscan Crown Rosary
Chanted Compline + Benediction
Refreshments and Fellowship follow.