

Be A Franciscan

A publication of the vocation ministry of Holy Name Province

Welcome to Our Five Postulants

By Fr. Brian Smail, OFM

One of the most gratifying aspects of being vocation director is journeying with men discerning a call to our Franciscan way of life. It is a great privilege to come to know them and walk with them along the way as they consider their call. Then, there comes the point when they choose to say “yes” to God’s invitation and begin their Franciscan journey as postulants. This year, with great joy, I welcomed five new men — Dennis Bennett, Casey Cole, Sergio Ferrisi, Edgardo Jara Araya and Ramon Razon. (See page 2 for a brief biography of each postulant.)

On Aug. 25, the chapel of St. Paul Friary in Wilmington, Del., was the setting as we welcomed the postulants to Holy Name Province. Joining me for evening prayer were Provincial Vicar Fr. Dominic Monti, OFM, Br. Chris Coccia, OFM, postulant director Fr. Ron Pecci, OFM, assistant postulant director Br. Bill Herbst, OFM, and the Wilmington community.

Led by Fr. Ron, the service included Franciscan readings by several of the candidates and presentation of the traditional blessed tau crosses by Fr. Dominic. In his reflection, Fr. Dominic welcomed Dennis, Casey, Sergio, Edgardo and Ramon and pointed out that each had come with gifts



From left: Ramon Razon, Sergio Ferrisi, Dennis Bennett, Casey Cole and Edgardo Jara Araya

and talents that would be of great service in community and ministry. He also thanked them for their openness to exploring Franciscan life and willingness to further discern God’s call in the context of community living during the coming year.

Quoting St. Francis’ famous words, “and the Lord gave me brothers,” Fr. Dominic highlighted “community building” during the postulant year, and the importance of being brothers to one another.

Following evening prayer, the friars and postulants gathered for a festive dinner and conversation.

The Postulant Year

Postulancy is the first year of initial formation. The word “postulant” derives its meaning from the Latin word *postulare*, meaning “to ask” or “to request.” As they enter this year of discernment, which takes place at St. Paul Friary, the men ask to live among the friars to further consider their Franciscan vocation.

During the year, postulants learn what it means to live in community as brothers to

one another. They participate fully in the daily life of the friary, including prayer, meals, Eucharist and ministry. In addition, one day a week is spent at a ministry site in the local area.

The program also provides opportunities for spiritual and educational growth. Postulants deepen their relationship with God through private prayer, faith sharing and spiritual direction. They also take classes and workshops on Franciscan spirituality, human development and theology.

The year includes travel throughout the Province to learn more about our many and varied ministries and to meet our friars.

Several support structures are built into the postulant year. In addition to the friendship and encouragement they receive from the friars, postulants regularly meet with their formators, Fr. Ron and Br. Bill, and ministry supervisor to reflect on and discuss their experiences. They also participate in group meetings with a professional facilitator to support their integration into community life.

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Fr. Brian, a native of Stoneham, Mass., has been vocation director for the Province since 2007. Previously, he served as vicar of St. Anthony Shrine in Boston for nine years.



Meet the Class of 2011-2012

Dennis Bennett



A native of Rhode Island, Dennis was born in Newport and raised in Bristol. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in chemistry from Rhode Island College in Providence in 2008. After completing his master's in chemistry from Florida State University in Tallahassee in 2010, Dennis returned to Rhode Island College as an adjunct professor in the Department of Physical Sciences. He first met the friars through the Church of St. Mary on Broadway in Providence and was attracted to "the emphasis on fraternity and the wide range of ministries that Franciscans undertake." In addition to the field of higher education, Dennis is interested in working with the poor and disadvantaged.

Casey Cole



Born in North Wales, Pa., Casey graduated from Furman University in Greenville, S.C., earlier this year with a degree in theology. While a student at Furman, he was active in campus ministry and Club Baseball. Coming to know the friars through a student spirituality group led by Fr. Patrick Tuttle, OFM, pastor of St. Anthony of Padua Church in Greenville, Casey spent the summer of 2010 volunteering at St. Francis Inn in Philadelphia, Pa., one of the friars' ministries. Of the experience at the Inn, Casey said, "Communal life offered a joy and challenge that rejuvenated me after a full day's work, and fulfilled me more than I could have imagined."

Sergio Ferrisi



A native New Yorker, Sergio earned a bachelor's degree in history from the University of South Carolina in 2002. He also holds a master's degree in philosophy from USC Columbia and completed a master of divinity degree from Union Theological Seminary in Manhattan earlier this year. Sergio came to know the friars through his friendship with a priest in the Archdiocese of New York and has actively ministered at Holy Name of Jesus Church on the Upper West Side, an HNP ministry. Interested in higher education, he is drawn to Franciscan spirituality because it "emphasizes the gospel life, fraternity and solidarity in justice with the poor and marginalized."

Edgardo Jara Araya



Born in Costa Rica, Edgardo graduated from Costa Rica Catholic University with a degree in theology and humanities in 2004. He worked in a bank and as a high school teacher before entering religious life in 2010. Originally a postulant with Our Lady of Guadalupe Province, Edgardo came to know the friars of Holy Name Province while attending an interprovincial workshop. He is particularly drawn to educational ministry and working with young adults.

Ramon Razon



Originally from the Philippines, Ramon graduated from the University of Manila with a degree in development in 2001 and completed a master's degree in teaching of English from Columbia University in Manhattan in 2007. Before entering formation, he was an instructor at the English Language School for Community Leaders in Brooklyn, N.Y. Ramon came to know the friars through St. Francis of Assisi Church on West 31st Street in Manhattan. Committed to teaching, he is attracted to the Franciscans because, "I need a community of brothers to help me come up with my best response to love Jesus back."



New Blog!

Follow the Postulants During Their First Year of Formation

Join Dennis, Casey, Sergio, Edgardo, and Ramon on their exciting Franciscan journey. Share in their daily experiences, and learn about the life of a postulant.

Check out Casey's blog, *Breaking In The Habit* (BreakingInTheHabit.org).

Excerpts from *Breaking in the Habit*

“ I'm sure you're wondering what the heck I'm doing with my life. You've heard that I'm joining the Franciscans ... you're probably wondering why. ... To put it simply, it was the best way that I found that I could follow God and do his work. ... What put me over the edge was seeing and meeting the friars in action. It was one thing to like the ideals of an 800-year-old saint, and another thing to like the individuals upholding them; in this case, I could definitely see this group of men as brothers. ”

— “So ... What am I doing and WHY am I doing it?” Sept. 4, 2011

“ One of the great things about the formation process is that no one has to do it alone. As I move on from place to place, going from postulancy to novitiate to post-novitiate, the group of guys that entered at the same time as I did will do the same. ... I feel very blessed to have a group of guys such as this, and believe that they will all have a profound effect on my faith journey. ”

— “Meet My Classmates,” Aug. 29, 2011

Tenth Anniversary of 9/11: Franciscan Voices

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks that killed thousands of innocent people at the World Trade Center, at the Pentagon, and in Shanksville, Pa. To commemorate this tragic event, St. Anthony Messenger Press published the reflections of some noted Franciscans in Franciscan Voices on 9/11. Two friars from Holy Name Province, Br. Daniel Horan, OFM, and Fr. Joseph Nangle, OFM, have contributed to this publication. Below are some excerpts.

Visit HNP.org for information on how Holy Name Province ministries commemorated the 10th anniversary of Sept. 11 and to read a collaborative statement from English-speaking provinces.

A Franciscan Millennial and the Memory of 9/11

By Br. Daniel Horan, OFM

What does it mean to speak with a Franciscan voice in the wake of 9/11?

To speak with a Franciscan voice today is, as it has always been, a challenge for both the speaker and the hearer. To follow the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, which always and everywhere stands at the core of the Franciscan life, is no easy task. ...

We are most fully human when we love, forgive and work toward peace.

In a world that organizes its thoughts and responses according to the logic of violence and the possible, the Good News of Jesus Christ is communicated in the poetics of the Kingdom of God, which is an expression of the impossible experience of love, forgiveness and peace. ...

Francis' radical embrace of the Gospel, desiring nothing more than to follow in the footprints of Jesus Christ, is found starkly in what is likely his most famous piece of writing, *The Canticle of the Creatures*. ... (In it, he conveys that) we are most fully human when we love, forgive and work toward peace.

... To speak with a Franciscan voice, which is to be foolish for peace in the world that seeks violence, is to model a new way of living in the world. It is a way of living that needs to be embraced and so modeled for each generation to come.

Br. Dan was born in Pensacola, Fla., and grew up in Utica, N.Y. A graduate of St. Bonaventure University in Western New York, he professed solemn vows as a Franciscan friar on Aug. 27. He resides at Holy Name College in Silver Spring, Md., where he is preparing for ordination to the priesthood next spring. Dan blogs regularly at DatingGod.org.



A Decade of Tragedy Compounds a Day of Terror

By Fr. Joseph Nangle, OFM

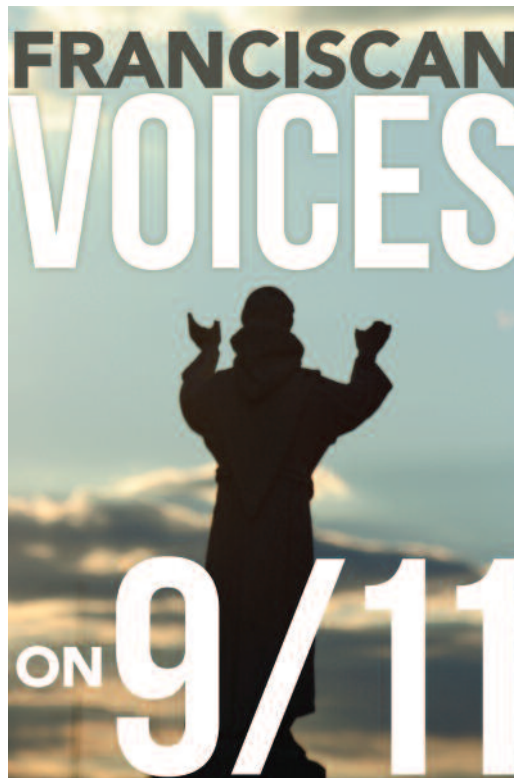
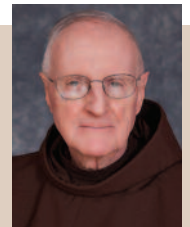
Fr. Mychal Judge's name appeared first on the list of 2,752 Americans killed in New York that day. ... Reports emerged of his attending to a dying person and being struck and killed by a falling beam. Others speculated he might have suffered a fatal heart attack. Whatever befell him, the ... picture we have is of four firemen carrying Mychal's body out of the building.

... A short time after the horrendous events, it was clear that the leadership of the United States had determined to take vengeance on those they believed caused 9/11 ... Some of us who knew Mychal well felt strongly that he ... would not want our country to start a war to pay back those responsible for his death. ... What is more, as Franciscans, we could not condone such an eye-for-an-eye approach even to this unspeakable crime against our country — against our brother friar.

... It seems appropriate on this tenth anniversary of Mychal's tragic and heroic death ... that we pray in his name for the courage to stand against the tide of revenge and vindication that has gripped our country ever since. This surely would

remain as the best sort of memorial to this good and decent man of God who lost his life doing what he has always done — minister to suffering people wherever he found them.

Fr. Joe was born in Lexington, Mass. Also a graduate of St. Bonaventure University, he professed solemn vows as a Franciscan in 1955 and was ordained to the priesthood in 1958. Among his many assignments, Fr. Joe served as co-director of the Franciscan Mission Service for 12 years. He currently resides in Washington, D.C., and serves as a member of the Provincial Council.





Feast of St. Francis of Assisi: Oct. 4

One of the most beautiful writings of St. Francis of Assisi is “The Canticle of the Creatures,” which he composed as a hymn in the year 1225. Francis wrote, “I wish to compose a new hymn about the Lord’s creatures, of which we make daily use, without which we cannot live.”

In his book, *The Reluctant Saint*, Donald Spoto calls the Canticle, “one of the great hymns to come down to us from medieval civilization — a song centuries ahead of its time in its mystical and, we might say, its ecological sensibility.” Adds Sr. Ilia Delio, OSF, in her book *Franciscan Prayer*, “With his marvelous respect for creatures of all kinds, for sun, moon, stars, water, wind, fire and earth, Francis came to see that all creation gives praise to God. It brings to our awareness that the entire creation is charged with the goodness of God.”

Francis composed the final lines concerning “Sister Bodily Death” as he was preparing to die.

The Canticle of the Creatures

*Most High, all-powerful, good Lord,
Yours are the praises, the glory,
and the honor, and all blessing.
To You alone, Most High, do they belong,
and no human is worthy to mention Your name.*

*Praised be You, my Lord, with all Your creatures,
especially Sir Brother Sun,
who is the day and through whom You give us light.
And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendor,
and bears a likeness of You, Most High One.*

*Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars.
In heaven You formed them clear and precious
and beautiful.*

*Praised be You, My Lord, through Brother Wind,
and through the air, cloudy and serene,
and every kind of weather,
through whom You give sustenance to Your creatures.*

*Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Water,
who is very useful and humble and precious and chaste.*

*Praised be You, my Lord, through Brother Fire,
through whom You light the night.
And he is beautiful and playful and robust and strong.*

*Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Mother Earth,
who sustains and governs us,
and who produces various fruit
with colored flowers and herbs.*

*Praised be You, my Lord,
through those who give pardon for Your love,
and bear infirmity and tribulation.
Blessed are those who endure in peace,
for by You, Most High, they shall be crowned.*

*Praised be You, my Lord, through our
Sister Bodily Death,
from whom no one living can escape.*

*Woe to those who die in mortal sin.
Blessed are those whom death will find
in Your most holy will,
for the second death shall do them no harm.*

*Praise and bless my Lord, and give Him thanks
and serve Him with great humility.*

The stained glass of St. Francis composing the Canticle appears in the windows of the chapel at St. Francis Friary in Manhattan. It was donated from the downtown chapel in Providence, R.I., through the kindness of Fr. Frank Sevola, OFM, who was the guardian at the time. The stained glass portrayals of “Brother Sun” and “Sister Moon” appear in the main chapel of St. Anthony Shrine in Boston.

Are you looking for more meaning in your life? Have you ever considered becoming a Franciscan?

Join us to learn about our way of life and discern your calling.

Experience the Transitus

When: Oct. 3, 2011, 6 p.m.
Where: St. Francis Friary, New York City



Enjoy dinner with our vocation director and other men discerning a vocation and attend the Transitus, a moving service commemorating the last hours of the life of St. Francis of Assisi. This event is part of Francis Week at St. Francis of Assisi Church. Register by Sept. 26.

Come and See Weekend

When: Oct. 14-16, 2011
Where: St. Francis Friary, New York City



Join us in Manhattan to see how we live and where we minister, and reflect on the Gospel life of joy, compassion and service inspired by St. Francis himself. The weekend includes an opportunity to serve clients of St. Francis Breadline. Register by Oct. 5.

Spend a Day with the Friars

When: Dec. 3, 2011
Where: St. Anthony Shrine, Boston



Not able to join us for a "Come and See" weekend? How about spending a day with us instead? Meet our friar community in Boston and get a glimpse of our life and ministries. The day concludes with Mass and dinner. Register by Nov. 23.

Registration is required for all vocation events. Space is limited, so sign up now! To register, contact the Franciscan Vocation Ministry at 1-800-677-7788 or vocation@hnp.org.

Formation Milestones



Br. George Camacho, OFM, professed simple vows in June at Our Lady of Lourdes Friary in Cedar Lake, Ind. He was one of nine novices from the interprovincial novitiate, a collaborative effort of several Franciscan provinces, participating in the year-end ceremony. George began his first year of graduate studies this fall at Washington Theological Union while residing at Holy Name College in Silver Spring, Md.

Pictured above, from left to right, are George, director of novices Fr. Ralph Parthie, OFM, Provincial Vicar Fr. Dominic Monti, OFM, and Fr. Joachim Studwell, OFM, of the novitiate team.



Jeffrey Upshaw, John Aherne, and Pedro Corces were received as novices on Aug. 15 at St. Francis Friary in Burlington, Wis. They were among a class of 15 entering the interprovincial novitiate, which this year was relocated from Cedar Lake. Entering this second stage of formation, the novices will receive their habits at a later date.

Pictured above, from left to right, are Fr. Dominic, Jeff, John, Pedro, and Provincial Minister Fr. John O'Connor, OFM.



Be A Franciscan is published quarterly by the Franciscan Vocation Ministry of Holy Name Province in conjunction with the Province's Communications Office.

Comments are welcome.



Franciscan Vocation Ministry HOLY NAME PROVINCE

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The **Franciscan Vocation Ministry** promotes vocations to the Franciscan way of life and the ministries of **Holy Name Province**. We offer:

- Information on our Order, the admissions process and the initial formation program
- Consultation and assistance with discernment to religious life
- Come and See weekends, discernment retreats and other events
- This newsletter highlighting vocation activities

Save the Date

We welcome you to join us for the following vocation events. For details, see "Upcoming Events" on page 5.

- Oct. 3:** **Experience the Transitus**
St. Francis Friary, New York City
- Oct. 14-16:** **Come and See Weekend**
St. Francis Friary, New York City
- Dec. 3:** **Spend a Day with the Friars**
St. Anthony Shrine, Boston

For further information, please contact:
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Did the articles in this issue get you thinking?

We'd love to hear your questions and comments.

**Post them at
blog.BeAFranciscan.org.**

