

Giles Bello and Ted McNally: 60 Years as Priests

By Wendy Healy

RINGWOOD, N.J. — While it's not a major 75th anniversary, or a milestone 50th jubilee, two friars at Holy Name's skilled nursing friary here are quietly celebrating 60 years with the Province and feeling good about it.

Giles Bello, OFM, and Theodore McNally, OFM, recently discussed their lives as Franciscans. And while they may be a little more arthritic and forgetful these days, one thing is clear: They remember joyful times with the Province and are grateful to God for the opportunities they have had.

Giles Bello Grateful for Friar Life

Giles, 80, a former Provincial Secretary, said the best thing about being a priest was the opportunity to work with families. "I liked weddings and wakes and working with schoolchildren." Professed in 1940, Giles also liked celebrating Mass.

When *HNP Today* caught up with him at the friary in rural North Jersey, Giles was enjoying an afternoon snack of cheese and celery in the cafeteria. One of his favorite foods is pizza, and he enjoys any kind of pasta.

Giles said he encourages young men considering the Order, saying it is a very worthwhile vocation. "It's interesting, you see a lot of people." In colloquial language, he said, "It's all good."

Giles joined the Order after one year at Fordham University, a Jesuit college in the Bronx, N.Y. After attending a retreat at Fordham, he discerned that he wanted to be a priest, so he packed his bags for the Province's seminary.

Assignments over the years included several parishes in New Jersey, the Bronx and Upstate New York, ministry at St. Francis of Assisi Church in New York City, and serving as the secretary and definitor of the Province.

He thinks back on the Province as his family, and wants his brothers to know that he has enjoyed being a friar. At the friary, going to Mass is the highlight of his day.

An avid reader of adventure stories back in the day, he now enjoys watching old movies on Turner Movie Channel. "As kids, we would spend the whole day at the movies, for 25 cents," Giles recalled.

A computer sits on his desk, a gift from a parishioner, which he said he uses occasionally.

He enjoys seeing his sister, who lives in Brick, N.J., near the shore, and his four nephews.

Theodore McNally Remembers Ministry

Down the hall from Giles is the room of Ted McNally, 81, who is also celebrating his 60th anniversary.

Born and raised in Philadelphia, Ted said he went to Catholic schools, and while he wasn't encouraged to be a priest, he wasn't discouraged either. "My parents never missed Mass," he said, and his aunt was a nun.

He was proud to share the fact that his father was from Baltimore, home of the *Baltimore Catechism*, the first catechism for the Catholic Church. Ted rattled off the history of the catechism effortlessly.

He credits his parents for steering him right, and is quick to tell stories of growing up as an only child of parents who had 10 and 12 siblings each. "My parents were wonderful people," he said.

After two years of Catholic high school, and the support of his parents, Ted joined the Franciscans. Like most student friars of the 1930s, Ted attended St. Joseph's Seraphic Seminary in Callicoon, N.Y.

His first assignment was at St. Francis of Assisi Church in New York City, mostly hearing confessions. Since the church had extended hours for confessions, Ted said the confessionals were so busy that priests used to joke about pulling the confessional sliders non-stop, one on the left, simultaneously with on the right. Because the church is located in the heart of Manhattan, Ted said, "We saw it all at that church."

His ministry also included parish work at several churches in New Jersey. He enjoyed his parish work, which he called "happy, comfortable and content with the people of God."

When an *HNP Today* representative stopped by to talk to Ted, he initially shied away, saying he didn't want to act self-promotional in any way. But he warmed up to the idea that he could discuss his ministry and let everyone know that he is happy.

He also enjoyed discussing athletics as a young man. "I was a pretty fair athlete. I bowled, and played football and baseball. I could swing a tennis club and hit a golf ball." Baseball and football were his favorites.

He also described himself as a great reader, and enjoyed an occasional good movie, like a musical.

At the friary, he enjoys the fellowship of his brothers. "I get along with everyone and enjoy their good company."

"I've been happy with the friars all my life; I hope they've been happy with me."

— Wendy Healy, a Connecticut-based freelance writer, is a frequent contributor to *HNP Today*.

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