



NEWSLETTER

Province of the Immaculate Conception

NEW YORK, NY

SPRING 2012

Maurus Muldoon: ‘Servant of the Church’

The Holy See, on February 2, 2012, accepted Bishop Maurus Muldoon’s formal resignation as Ordinary of Olancho, Honduras, and named Auxiliary Bishop Joseph Bonello his successor. Bishop Muldoon thus ended 29 years of service to the extensive diocese and 43 years in all as a missionary in Central America.

Two excellent publications – one in English (*Bishop Maurus Muldoon, OFM: Twenty Years*) and one in Spanish (*Iglesia Que Peregrina en Olancho: Memoria Histórica 25 Años*) - chart the recent history of the Olancho diocese under Maurus’ administration.

But a little background first. The ICP involvement in Olancho began in 1944, with the administration given us in 1949. Two other province bishops, Bernardine Mazzarella and Nicholas D’Antonio, and one territorial prelate, Celestine Pennisi, served there faithfully over the years, as did many other self-sacrificing pioneer friars. (This important period is covered in Leonard Bacigalupo’s *The American Franciscan Missions in Central America*, pp. 3-45.)

Bishop Maurus’ appointment in 1983 followed on the tragic Seventies in Olancho history. Social activism, human promotion, was often strongly opposed, especially regarding agrarian reform. Resistance culminated in the massacre, with military assistance, of 2 priests and 18

native (1972 and 1975). The turmoil also occasioned the temporary withdrawal of ICP leadership (1976).



Bishop Maurus with Pope Benedict XVI

Here is a description of what the new prelate found on arriving: “. . . a disintegrated church without leadership or structure. Church properties deserted, buildings taken over by others, absence of priestly and religious witness, whole parishes abandoned, apostolic movements collapsed and few committed laity, lack of social action. Also sharp divisions among the Catholic people, between the ruling class and the few qualified organized groups. Religious apathy was visible; there was no pre-sacramental catechesis.” (*Twenty Years*, p. 33.)

The accomplishments of 25 years are impressively chronicled in *Iglesia Que Peregrina...* A quick list:

16 diocesan commissions: 13 central parishes with numerous outposts (“barrios y colonias”); a minor seminary; a Christian formation center; an office of human development and Caritas; an extension campus of the Catholic University of Honduras; Card. Rodriguez High School; the

Little School of Nazareth for Special Needs Children; a trade school; an agricultural school and experimental farm; a radio station; a hospital; retreat houses; senior centers; orphanage; gyms; housing.

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Franciscan Mission Associates Celebrates Fiftieth



Twenty eleven marked the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of FMA – Franciscan Mission Associates, the fund-raising arm of our province. Over this period the income raised has enabled our friars to contribute significantly to the material and spiritual welfare of the people of Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador whom we

have been serving since 1944. Other world-wide causes have also been beneficiaries of the kindness of our donors.

FMA’s “founding friar” was the late Father Bernard Dazzi who directed the office from 1961 until his death in 1985. In the spring of 1961, he sent out people with “Catholic-sounding” names culled from telephone books and other sources a 25,000 mailing containing a holy card and a hand-painted shamrock medal of St. Patrick.

In the years that followed, with the invaluable help of an expert adviser named Jim Kane, Father Bernard’s faithful crew (Madeline Bonnici, present director, among them first as a volunteer and then as a hired staffer from 1963) familiarized themselves with mass-marketing techniques, expanded facilities and enlisted dedicated workers (Fr. Sixtus and especially Br. Angelo among them), and yearly issued literally millions of letters soliciting support and prayers for the missions.

A half century of activity has produced not only a windfall for the missions but an extraordinary publishing record. This literature is freely supplied and recipients are invited to ask for additional copies of prayers and booklets for themselves and for distribution to friends and faithful.

FMA’s house organ is called FMA FOCUS. It’s a publication aimed at the general Catholic public and promotes what is called, without apology, popular religiosity. This means that the

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Eventful Year in Rome

by Joseph Powell, OFM

After snow, spring. That's the common seasonal change in New York and New England, but to have it happen here in Rome is another story altogether. As we friars at Convento San Francesco prepare for Easter, the warmth and white buds of March stand out pleasantly against the memory of snowdrifts and snarled traffic of two months ago. It's the sudden change that makes the memory stronger. Not only the capricious weather but also the different events of the past year have helped us mark time in the midst of studies. Here are a few.

The Convento saw three more students added to the fraternity: Clive, Ramon, and Andrea, from Malta; and with Aaron, Conrad, Joaquin, Joseph, Br. Gabriel, Fr. Antonio and Fr. George, this brings the total number of friars to ten in the house at the corner of Nicoló V. We have our different schedules, work and study loads, but prayer and pranzo hold us together.

This past October 3rd we went to the General Curia to celebrate the feast of St. Francis with the local fraternity, the religious and laity in the neighborhood, and the Dominican friars who concelebrated the Mass and who provided an instrumental chorus for the liturgy. The Minister General added his own reflections at the end of the Mass: "We Franciscans and Dominicans might not always agree from the professor's chair, but in daily life we are united in friendship and collaboration." A fitting way to commemorate Dominic and Francis and their complementary visions.



Friars celebrated the feast of St. Francis at the General Curia: (L-R) Joaquin Mejia, Clive Camilleri, Ramon Farrugia, Conrad Fernandes, Min.Gen. Jose Carballo, Antonio Riccio, Frank Walter, Andrea Diacono, Aaron Abdillah, Joe Powell

Bishop Maurus (from page 1)

This apostolic work was made possible because of the outstanding generosity of donors the world over, our province especially prominent among them, and the cooperation of zealous priests, religious, and lay people. In 1983 there were only 7 priests, including Maurus, in all of Olancho (the size of Massachusetts). Over 25 years, ministry there has counted the assistance of 37 OFMs, 23 diocesan priests, 20 OFMConvs, and 2 Carmelites. Seven congregations of religious sisters, including Poor Clares, are represented as well.

Bishop Maurus would be the first to admit that he could not have done without these partners in ministry. He himself readily acknowledged, at his Boston episcopal ordination, that he was but a blunt instrument in God's hands, one, in his words, needing to

Cambridge Departure

On December 1, 2011, administration of St. Francis of Assisi Parish, East Cambridge, MA., was officially returned to the Boston Archdiocese, thus ending 94 years of Franciscan ministry there.

Service began on Palm Sunday, 1917, under the first pastor. Anselm Lenzi, in a former Protestant church which, down the years, was carefully repaired, restored (after a fire), and remodeled. Instrumental in the foundation of this Italian national church were Mary and Austin DeGuglielmo. They headed up the original committee and for the rest of their lives supported every parish endeavor. Their extended family preserved their legacy.

In November the Convento hosted (what else) Thanksgiving for several of the local friars and kept up the American-Italian cultural exchange with gusto. Antipasto and turkey – a marvel of international cuisine.

December: Advent and its preparations, culminating in Christmas Midnight Mass at the Curia and a Christmas Pranzo with the friars there on the day itself. The proximity of the Curia and the ability to share festivities with the fraternity there has been a convivial and colloquial experience.

Our New Year's Eve – Capodanno – passed amid an hour of Adoration, the traditional evening meal of lentil soup and meat (exquisite), a few rousing games of Tombola and the countdown to 2012 with a decent view of the scattered fireworks around the city from the Convento roof. Not long after the new year was born, snow surprised the Eternal city and covered everything in a magical whiteness.

Rome was a winter landscape for a few brief days.

Then studies, exams, the start of a new semester, and the start of Lent.

It has been an eventful year, between the snow and the studies, the get-togethers and the rhythms of the everyday. The changes help to keep the memories vivid, alive in the eye of the past: the events which allow us to mark time and which, like Lent and Easter, provide a meaningful variety to what we do. After snow, spring – and after Good Friday, Resurrection Sunday.

be "cleansed, refined, sharpened, and polished, and put to good use." Lucky for him that his name bode well from the start. "Mul-doon," in Gaelic, means "servant of the Church."

That he tried to be as he elicited a similar response from many others. His repeated message was that Olancho is part of the whole Church; and its people and pastoral ministers are called upon genuinely to live the teachings of the Gospel in their surroundings and work for the good of all others, near and far.

The years have taken their toll on this good friar-bishop. He battled cancer and survived to continue his work. Now, as an "emeritus" and retiree, he may choose a congenial place and reduced activity, always assured of a warm "welcome home" among his confreres.

The first parish school was housed in the former Gore Street School, purchased at public auction for the incredible sum of \$5000.00. Once repaired and furnished, the school opened in 1925 and was faithfully staffed by the Newton Sisters. Eventually a new building replaced the 1872 structure and served well until the general downturn in parochial school education.

Province vocations include: Antonine DeGuglielmo, Paul Bertolami, Michael DiPietro, Luke and Mario Ciampi. John Baptist Frisoli, Dismas Centrella (all deceased), Bishop Gerald Scarpone, and Gabriel Aceto.

Franciscans and the ‘New Evangelization’

(New Fervor, new methods, new expressions – John Paul II)

Over the past six years, European friars have seriously addressed the subject of the new evangelization of Europe and the Franciscan approach to this urgent and demanding task. Three seminars (2006, 2009, 2011) were held dealing with this subject.

After the 2006 one ex-general Minister Giacomo Bini was charged with setting up a fraternity to serve as a model (the subsequent “Palestrina fraternity”). The 2009 meeting reviewed the progress in the interim and, in a short document, outlined what were considered distinctive, desirable characteristics of the lifestyle of new fraternities.

Thus, the primacy of prayer and listening to God’s word; real and deep brotherly relations; a simple, sensible lifestyle; mobility (itinerancy); welcoming and sharing with the poor and the disaffected; service in the local church; openness to interprovincial and international cooperation; search for linkages among various fraternal experiences, with particular reference to the missionary fraternity of Palestrina.

Once again, at the third seminar (2011), evaluations of progress formed a starting point. Valuable input was received from four key figures.

GM José Carballo repeated the general view that the crisis of consecrated life is not solely a European one. He made particular comments on the differing situations in western and eastern Europe and offered what he called a “decalog” of elements that should characterize new “evangelizing presences.”

These are, briefly: 1) the primacy of God; 2) a meaningful and prophetic fraternal life; 3) a life of minority; 4) a life marked by the Spirit’s gift of power (*parresia*); 5) an existence lived in the gratuity and logic of the gift; 6) a reconciled life; 7) a beautiful and joyful life; 8) a life open to all others; 9) a wise life; 10) an itinerant life.

Bp. Rino Fisichella (president/Pontifical Council on New Evangelization), in a Q&A following his talk, indicated what is expected of male religious in the work of new evangelization: in a

St. Bonaventure and Justice

by *André Cirino, OFM*

On one of my first climbs up Mount Subasio from Assisi to the hermitage of the Carceri, I entered a tiny chapel dedicated to St. Mary Magdalene where Blessed Barnabas Manassei da Terni is buried. I had never heard of him before but later learned that he was the founder of the *Mons Pietatis* or *Monti di Pietá*, a lending institution which attacked and helped break the back of usury in the Middle Ages. The longer I pondered this friar, the more I wondered why a social activist was buried in a place of solitude and contemplation!

Calling to mind St. Francis’ Document on Solitude written for a stay in places like the Carceri, I remembered the words of scripture he quoted in line 3: “. . . and they should first seek the reign of God and God’s justice” (Mt 6:33). At first, this quote seemed out of place for guiding those who wanted to spend time in solitude. I would have expected St. Francis to quote Jesus encouraging the disciples to come with him to an out of the way place and rest for a while.

It was only when I connected Matthew 6:33 to St. Bonaventure’s definition of justice that I began to understand why St. Francis’ choice of this scriptural verse is so appropriate. In *The Six Days of Creation* St. Bonaventure defined justice as follows: “justice makes beautiful that which has been deformed” (1:34). It was then that a window of insight began to open for me.

We can apply this definition to what has been traditionally called the corporal works of mercy: to feed the hungry, give drink

word, much! More, in fact, is expected of women religious who, because of the esteem in which they are held, have an extraordinary opportunity to evangelize. He urged friars to assume an ecclesial outlook and not be overwhelmed by “vocational anxiety.” The values of religious life are “fundamental ones that can transform our world crisis.”

Father Maximus Fusarelli (ex-OFM secretary general of formation) ended his talk by saying it is necessary and “unprocrastinatable” to rethink in radical fashion our presences, our places, our mode of living, the steps that prepare one for the life of the Friars Minor in both initial and continuing formation. We must reflect on and anticipate the future in little but new signs.

Father John Freyer (ex-rector of the Antonianum) listed the causes of and the shared elements in any attempt at renewal. He also cited the dangers which are likely even today. There can be no nostalgic return to or imitation *sic et simpliciter* of the past. Neither should we be content with the status quo. Worse, we cannot move in directions that are completely unrealistic. European provincials plan a meeting on the “Europe Project” (Fatima) which will encourage the revitalization of our presence in all our European fraternities. Much can be expected as well from the upcoming synod on evangelization.

2012 Synod on Evangelization: Particular Attention

Will Be Paid to Four Historical Periods

250-300: Vast sections of the Roman Empire were converted through the efforts of **bishops**.

500-800: **Monks** reevangelized Europe following the barbaric invasions.

1500s-on: Discovery of the New World and conversion of its peoples through the apostolate of **friars**.

Our Own Day: The Church is committed to reevangelizing the secularized West through the commitment of **lay faithful**.

to the thirsty, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, visit the sick and the imprisoned, bury the dead. One can see that people with these obvious deformities – impoverishment, homelessness, illness – are restored to beauty by carrying out any of these works of mercy.

We can also take St. Bonaventure’s meaning of justice and apply it to the gospel commandments of love. St. Bernard says that there are not two great commandments of love, but three: love of self, love of others, love of God.

St. Bernard asserts that we must first love ourselves before we seek to love our neighbor or even God. When a person has a poor self-image – or in Freudian terms, an inferiority complex – that deformity urgently needs to be restored to beauty. It can be done through therapy or counseling. As a person begins to face this deformity of personality, whatever it may be, the conversation can begin to raise the person’s self-image to see the goodness of who he or she is as created by God. Restoring to beauty one’s self image, for Bonaventure, would be doing justice unto oneself.

A healthy love of self draws us to a genuine love of neighbor. At times our relationship with others – be they relative, friend or enemy – gets frayed and becomes deformed. Scripture advises us



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St. Bonaventure (from page 3)

to leave our gift at the altar and first go be reconciled with our brother and sister. This reconciliation requires meeting with the other to discuss the deformity so that the relationship can be restored to its original beauty or transformed from enmity to love. Restoring to beauty a broken or obstructed relationship by reconciliation with another, for Bonaventure, would be doing justice unto the other. Reconciliation with ourselves and with others opens us to fully loving God. Sometimes our relationship with God gets deformed because of carelessness or sin. One can deal with this deformity either through spiritual dialogue/direction or the sacrament of reconciliation. Restoring the beauty of our relationship with God, for Bonaventure, would be doing justice unto God.

Perhaps I could demonstrate more clearly Bonaventure's wisdom about the concept of justice with an experience of my own. For about eight years I worked in a retreat house – The Little Portion – in the south Bronx where we gave retreats free of charge to the poor. One day I received a phone call from a priest in Harlem who asked if he could bring street people, as he called them, for a retreat. We were accustomed to receiving retreatants from parishes and other social groups working in the poor areas of New York City, so we presumed the person setting up the retreat knew the people who were coming. This priest, however, did not know who would be coming until the very day he gathered people from the streets to bring them to us. Nevertheless, we told him to come. We teamed up with some Secular Franciscans to conduct the retreat. When the retreatants arrived on Friday evening, we gave them a room, a meal, and began the retreat. We went all through Saturday with input sessions and prayer. And it was during the evening meal on Saturday that we discovered it was the birthday of one of the male retreatants.

Since we always had volunteer cooks for our retreats, that weekend a Franciscan Missionary of Mary was cooking because

Franciscan Mission Associates (from page 1)

quarterly steers clear of controversial issues (given enough space even in the secular press) and concentrates on what will enhance and increase the faith of its many readers.

The remarkable figures given below for all publications (supplied specifically for TPC) represent the first official tallying of the total published output of the last fifty years—all sent gratis to benefactors and friends. The record speaks for itself.

FMA FOCUS	83,984,130
FOCUS Inserts	3,782,740
FMA Calendars	26,062,930
Devotional booklets	169,629,481
(of this quantity 68,760,481 – St. Anthony)	
Holy Cards	121,326,654
Prayer Folders	233,323,640
Christmas Enrollments Cards	27,353,356

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that very day was her 50th anniversary of vows, and since she had been a cook her entire life, she wanted to spend her anniversary cooking for the poor. I went to the kitchen and told her of the birthday and that we needed a cake. She, with a bit of an accent, said, "I no make cake!" So I told her I had a cake in the freezer which we microwaved and she covered with icing, topping it off with a candle. She carried the cake out and held it before him. While all sang happy birthday, he was in tears. So Sister said to him: "Why you cry?" "Because no one ever before in my life has given me a birthday cake," he answered.

For that one moment, a deformity of his life had been dealt with, and that "naked" cake restored beauty to that man.

"Justice makes beautiful that which had been deformed," says Bonaventure. Why would it be of any importance to restore a deformity to beauty? When we look at God, as the One who is Beauty itself, we can see that restoring any deformity to beauty is to make that person more like the One who is Beauty itself. And that, according to Bonaventure, is to do justice! It is part of the process of divinizing humanity.

To return to Blessed Barnabas buried at the Carceri, we can now see why Francis chose Matthew 6:33 as a guiding verse for time in solitude. His Document on Solitude was written for his brothers who were itinerants, on the road two by two, preaching to the people. Upon their return to Assisi, he invited them into solitude fully aware that any ministry that is done without a backdrop of prayer and contemplation becomes a "noisy gong" or "my" ministry. But those who approach ministry in their lives drawing on the wellsprings of prayer – meditation and contemplation – in solitude, become fountains of living waters themselves and, according to our brother Bonaventure, do justice when they help make beautiful that which had been deformed.

The Evangelical Counsels in the Writings of Francis and Clare of Assisi

Mentor: Rick Martignetti, OFM

July 2 - 6, 2012
Mon - Fri. 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM
St. Bonaventure University



The writings of Francis and Clare of Assisi reveal the heart of a man and a woman who were full of life in the Spirit of the Lord and resolute in their commitment to follow closely in the footprints of Jesus.

This short and intensive program will invite participants to study reflectively, critically, and prayerfully our saints' writings for insight into a better "Franciscan" understanding of what it means to embrace the evangelical counsels as poor brothers and sisters.

Program Fee: \$225.00 plus In-Residence Fees: \$125.00
(townhouse accommodations)

Meals may be purchased at the Hickey Dining Hall.
University, graduate and senior discounts do not apply.

For more information: www.sbu.edu/writings
e-mail: writings@sbu.edu Phone: 716-375-2105
Register by June 15, 2012