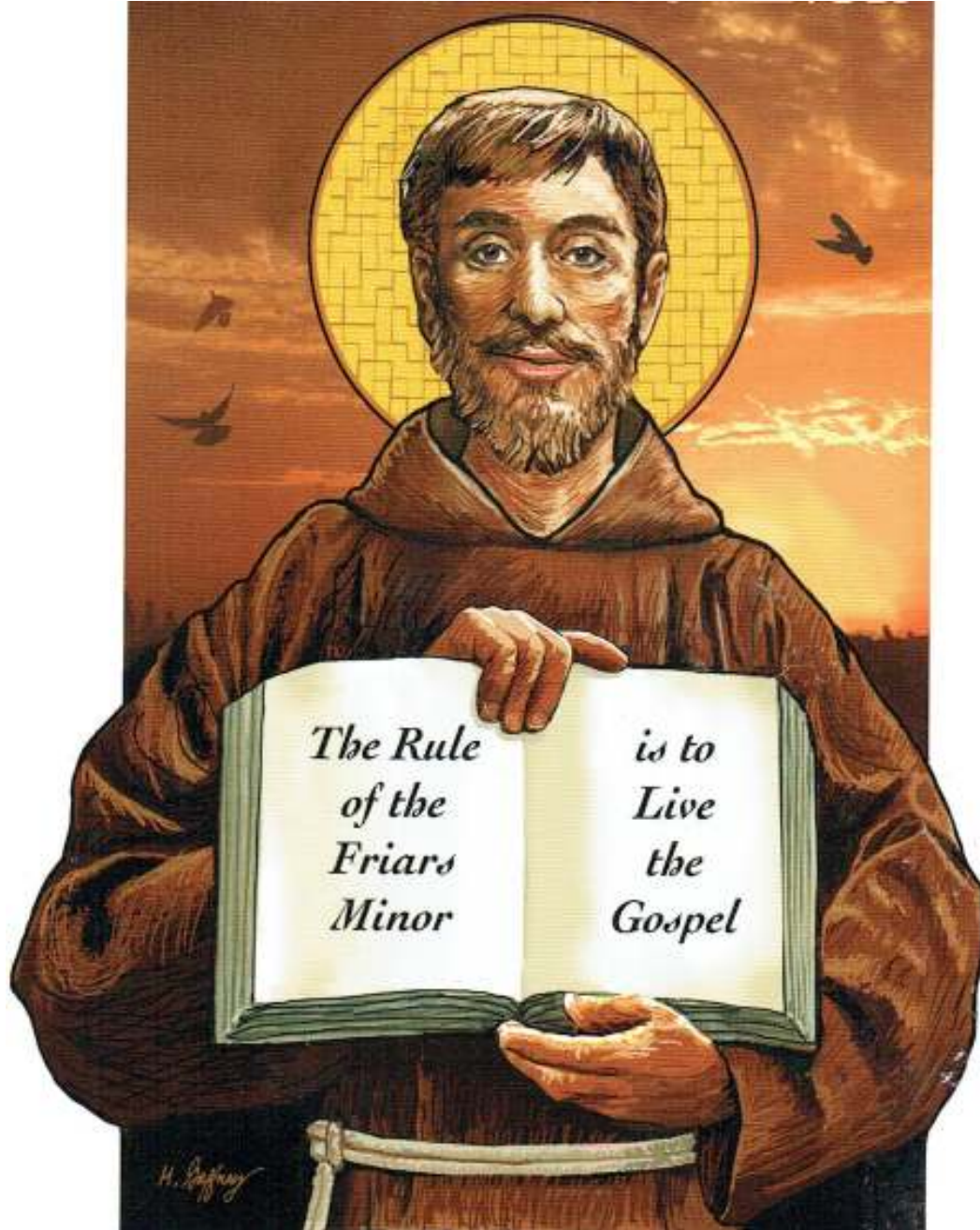


VOCATIONS PLUS+



Capuchins of Central Canada
Vocations Ministry

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Mission to El Salvador

Bro. Michael, Mascarenhas, OFM, Cap.

In March 2019, I went on a mission trip to El Salvador and with a group of ten people, we built ten homes for the poor. The circumstances were filled with extensive heat and dangerous working conditions given the poverty of the area around us. It was an opportunity to allow God to show His face to me in the poor of El Salvador and in their poverty. When St. Francis of Assisi spoke of renunciation, it was the act of surrender to God and allow himself to be evangelized by the poor and the lepers. This reflection came to my mind often throughout the trip.



At the tomb of St. Oscar Romero

There are many things we take for granted in North America, especially food and clean air. We are truly blessed in this Country. St. Francis taught his brothers to accept everything as a gift. This is the hallmark of a Franciscan vocation. As Capuchins, we take this mission to heart and offer the daily struggles to God and learn to view them as blessings given to us in disguise. The true act of faith is when one sees everything as a gift, and nothing belongs to them.

The poor in El Salvador have many hardships in their everyday life. Three barrels of water only lasts a family for a few days and the cost is six US dollars. This for us may not seem like much, but for them it is everything. Yet despite these setbacks, they are happy people. They teach us that happiness is not found in possessions but in the very life that we are given by God.

I arranged a trip to St. Oscar Romero's tomb on the last day of the trip. St. Romero was the bishop of San Salvador, the capital city in El Salvador. He spoke out against the government who were oppressing the poor, denying them rights and justice. Romero was shot during mass and is buried in the Cathedral in San Salvador. Pope Francis declared him a martyr on February 3, 2015 and canonized him on October 14, 2018 alongside St. Paul VI.



It was surreal for me to walk the streets where he prayed his rosary and his breviary. The word of God in the scriptures was his very heart which gave him life. This is what Romero taught me as I walked through his simple home and prayed at the Marian grotto, where his heart is buried.

Upon transporting his remains to the cathedral from the garden at his home, where his first-place of burial was, the Carmelite nuns who cared for him during his life, found his heart to be incorrupt and they buried it where the grotto to Mary is. This only shows how the heart of Romero remains

A local school Bro. Michael visited while in El Salvador

with the poor of El Salvador to this very day. He said, "If they kill me, I will rise again in the Salvadoran people." Truly Romero lives among the people of El Salvador for whom he gave up his life.

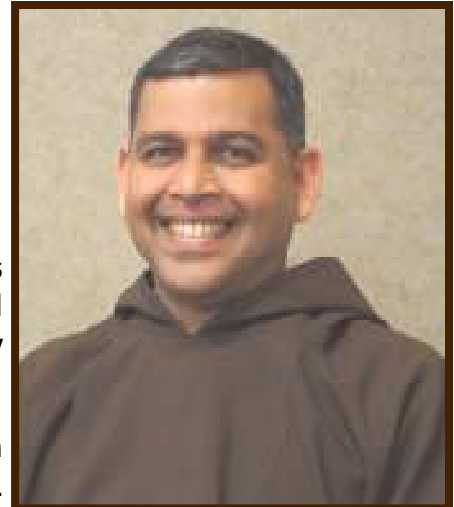


Second Renewal of Vows

“Continuing to Break In the Habit”

Br. Sunil D’Costa OFM Cap

It has been nearly two years since I professed first vows on July 23, 2017 as a Franciscan Capuchin brother. I renewed my vows in June 2018 and I am coming up for my second renewal of vows in June 2019.



The past year has been one of steep learning as I began studies in philosophy – the pre-Theology year at St. Peter’s Seminary in London, ON, as it was quite a while since I was in full-time studies. This past year was a very different experience compared to the tranquility of the year of integration spent in Blenheim, ON.

There was new learning in ancient, medieval and modern western philosophy besides Thomistic philosophy and the philosophy of St. Pope John Paul II. The faculty and staff at St. Peter’s Seminary were and are very helpful and supportive of all seminarians. They understand the pressures and workload of submitting essays, writing exams and constant catching up on readings. We had an exam literally every other month and assignments to submit in the midst of preparing for final exams! A seminarian is forced to plan his day with time management skills, and multi-task by juggling many deadlines at once.

Besides academic formation, there is spiritual formation with communal morning and evening prayer, besides daily Eucharist along with personal time for prayer, meditation and contemplation. I am blessed to be living with a supportive community of Capuchin brothers at St. Crispin Friary in London, ON who relate to the academic rigor that a seminarian has to go through.

After a year of academics, there was a silent retreat in Cobourg, ON. Over the spring, I volunteered at the London Cross Cultural Learning Centre (CCLC), ministering to refugee children from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Vietnam, and Congo. Over the summer, I am ministering at Poverello Charities in Toronto’s east-end; it was started by our Capuchin brother, Fr. Joseph Macdonald to provide a supportive residential environment to adults with mental health challenges anchored in a Christian way of life. A former Capuchin novice, Stephen Sobol is the current Director since Fr. Joe passed away last year. In addition, attending Spanish language classes in Toronto.

In the Fall, I begin theological studies - Master of Divinity (M.Div.) at St. Peter’s Seminary. Although the academic pressure will not let up over the coming two years, I strive working towards ordination and living the Franciscan way of life as a Capuchin brother. I seek your prayers and support in this journey. My prayers are always with you, your loved ones and families.

END OF NOVITIATE REFLECTIONS



BR. PETER POEL



Novitiate highlights:

The word "fit" comes to mind. Through my learning and experience this year I think the Capuchin way of life is a good fit for me which matches well with what I hold near and dear in life especially the community life.

Inspirational quote:

"How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity!"

- Psalm 133:1

Post-Novitiate destination:

St. Anthony Friary, Toronto
Province of Mary, Mother of the Good Shepherd - Canada

Temporary vows date:

July 21, 2019 - St. Philip Neri Parish Church, Toronto



Novitiate highlights:

Trips to LA and SF and time spent with brothers there; silent retreat and vow retreat which allowed me to re-encounter God through reflection and meditation; our Friday group sharings which allowed me to know deeper the brothers.

Inspirational quote:

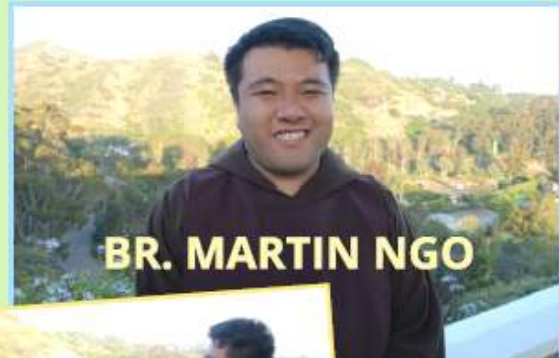
"My heart is ready, O God; my heart is ready,
And I will sing! Yes, I will sing praise!
Wake up, my glory! Wake up, harp and lyre;
I will stir the sleepy dawn with praise!
I will offer You my thanks, O Lord, before
the nations of the world;
I will sing of Your greatness
no matter where I am." - Psalm 57: 7-9

Post-Novitiate destination:

St. Crispin Friary, London, Ontario
Province of Mary, Mother of the Good Shepherd - Canada

Temporary vows date:

July, 21, 2019 - St. Philip Neri Parish Church, Toronto



BR. MARTIN NGO



A NOVICE'S JOURNEY

By Br. Javier Rodriguez

And God Gave Me Brothers!



The novitiate year is coming to an end. A year which by the grace of God has been edifying for me and from what I hear, for nine classmates. One of the blessings I have had this year has been writing this little "journal." In a unique way, it has been a great tool for my discernment.

In it, I have reflected about the life here at the novitiate. One question came to me as I was writing May's article and beginning to reflect on this year. What was all this about? What was the point of spending a year at San Lorenzo? What has been my take on what I have gone through the last 12 months?

The answer is easy - community, fraternity!

On my first entry back in September of last year, I wrote about our habit. I see it now as a "uniform" of grace, which identifies us across the world, to the world, as the Capuchin Franciscan community. I followed that with the concept of the "cave experience," which in my eyes it gives us an opportunity to have a closer relationship not only with God, but also with each other as the fraternal brothers that we are.

Communal prayer enhances that relationship spiritually, supporting each other regardless of how an individual feels at the time. The classes feed our minds and intellect with the theory and ideals regarding Capuchin fraternal life, the Church and our communal life with the people of God.

Finally, our fraternal work and ministry allows us to apply those theory and ideals as we serve each other and the people of God, according to each brother's talents and skills. More importantly, we learn how to recognize and accept the service of others within the fraternity and the ministries. And I didn't even write about our meal and recreational times, which gives us the chance to get to know each other in a more personal level.

This sums up my year in novitiate; the growing pains and graces of living community life. So, as I get ready to drive back to Chicago, I take with me the biggest blessing that God has given me so far: a life with a bunch of strangers who have become my brothers, my family. As St. Francis wrote in *The Testament*, "Then the Lord gave me brothers..."

Upcoming Vocation Events

- September 8—15, 2019 **MEGA-Conference of Franciscan Vocation Directors - Chicago, Illinois USA**
- September 21, 2019 **COME & SEE DAY**
St. Crispin Friary, 127 Friars Way, London ON
- October 12, 2019 **COME & SEE DAY**
St. Philip Neri Friary, 2100 Jane St, Toronto ON
- October 26, 2019 **COME & SEE DAY**
St. Francis Friary
9169 West Ridge Line, Blenheim Ontario
- November 24, 2019 **COME & SEE DAY**
St. Anthony Friary
1322 Queen Street W., Toronto ON

All Come & See Days begin at 9:00 am and end at 4:00 pm. If you or someone you know is interested in attending any of these events please contact

Bro. Louis Mousseau, OFM Cap.
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The novices performing
"The Canticle of Creatures"
dance routine...



...at the Serra Retreat St. Francis
Main Courtyard Fountain.



BECOMING A BROTHER

Do You Hear God's Calling?



The fab four novices...



...at the Junipero Serra Garden and Serra Retreat Chapel.

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