

Br. Khai Huu Tran

Khai was born on February 20, 1964 in Chau Thanh, Vietnam, which is approximately 80 miles southeast of Saigon at the height of the infamous Vietnamese War. He was the oldest of seven boys and one girl. Growing up on a farm he learned the meaning of manual work, working the rice fields, collecting fresh fruit and catching fish. Un-exploded land mines, bombs and grenades were a fact of life in war torn Vietnam. One day while working in the fields Khai found a grenade, picked it up and tossed it against a boulder, thinking it to be a dud. The grenade exploded sending shrapnel's everywhere. One piece landed in Khai's throat while other pieces could be seen beneath his skin. He was rushed via a motorbike to a hospital some thirty miles away. Though the medical technology offered was primitive and unsanitary, Khai was fortunate to survive.

When his 18th birthday approached, he left his family and went into hiding for two years in order to avoid being forcibly recruited into the army of the invaders from the north. He finally was able to make his way aboard a ship sailing for Malaysia where he hoped to find freedom and a new life. The 13 day journey was a hair-raising one. These boat people had to contend with pirates who would board their ship, demand all their valuables and threaten their very lives. In Malaysia, he would spend the next one and half years confined to a refugee camp. He met in the camp a German Franciscan who worked among the refugees and he was impressed by him. His good Franciscan uncle in Vietnam had also had a profound effect on him. Khai arrived in Canada as a sponsored refugee in 1987 and soon after he met the Capuchins.

Having completed Postulancy in Toronto, he was sent to Victoria, Kansas for novitiate in 1991. After profession of first vows on August 9th 1992, Br. Khai would dedicate himself for a year of service to the poor and sick in Toronto. Khai made Perpetual Profession of Vows on August 2nd 1996. He would enroll at the University of Toronto to study Theology hoping to minister one day as an ordained friar.

In May of 1997, after a persistent ulcer problem, Br. Khai was diagnosed with terminal stomach cancer. As a last request, he asked that he might be allowed to fulfill his dream of priesthood. Br. Khai was ordained a priest on July 17, 1997 by Bishop Terrence Prendergast S.J. Titular Auxiliary Bishop of Toronto, two full years before finishing his theological studies.

Br. Khai Huu Tran ofm. Cap. was called by Sister Death on August 11, 1998, the feast of St. Clare of Assisi. He is buried in the Capuchin section of Evergreen Cemetery in Blenheim, Ontario.

