

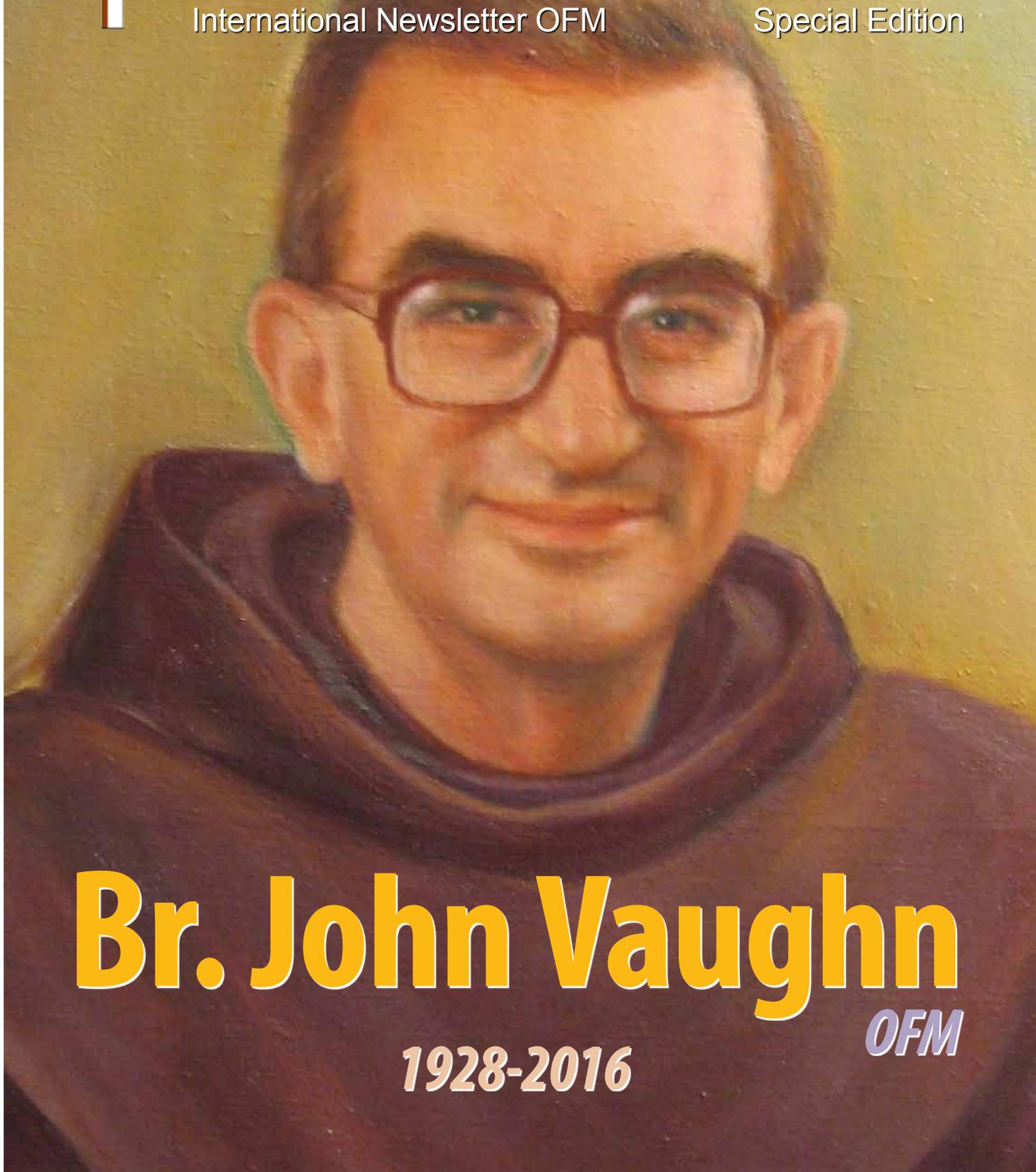
VOLUME XLVII • EDITION 237

NOVEMBER 2016

Fraternitas

International Newsletter OFM

Special Edition



Br. John Vaughn

1928-2016

OFM

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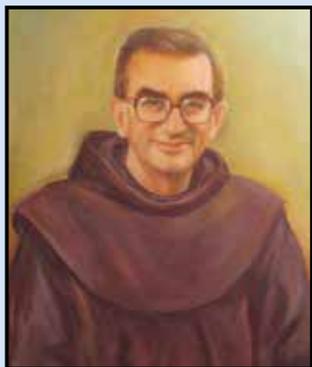
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Father John Vaughn, OFM, passed to eternal life on October 10, 2016 in Santa Barbara. He was 88 years old, 67 years professed in the Franciscan order, and 61 years a priest. A quiet, humble friar, he was beloved and admired by all who knew him, especially in his home Province of St. Barbara, in the western United States.

John David Vaughn was born in Santa Ana, CA, the son of Morgan Leonard Vaughn and Jane Stack. He attended the Los Angeles College Seminary before entering St. Anthony's Seminary, Santa Barbara, CA, for one semester. He received the Franciscan habit, becoming a member of the Order of Friars Minor at Mission San Miguel CA, on July 11, 1948, and he was given the religious name of Manuel. He would later return to his baptismal name, John.

Following his profession of simple vows, he completed his college years at Mission San Luis Rey, and he professed solemn vows there on July 12, 1952. Friar John was known for his fine singing voice during his student years. After theological studies at Mission Santa Barbara, he was ordained to the priesthood by the Msgr. Timothy Manning, auxiliary bishop of Los Angeles, on December 17, 1955.



COPERTINA "FR. JOHN VAUGHN, OFM"

EDITOR/SETTING/RICERCA:

FR. MANOLO FIGUEROA OFM, FR. ALVIN TE OFM,

FR. LUIGI PERUGINI OFM

TRANSLATOR: EUNAN McMULLAN OFM

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eMAIL: FRATERNITAS@OFM.ORG

WWW.OFM.ORG

WHO WAS FR. JOHN VAUGHN?

Fr. John's first assignment was to St. Francis' Church in Sacramento, CA, for several months as a parochial vicar. Then, after a few months of study in Guadalajara, México, he began work at St. Anthony's Seminary as a teacher, librarian and vice-prefect of formation (1957-1962). The Province then appointed him to be assistant Master of Novices and associate pastor at Mission San Miguel (San Miguel, CA).

Recognizing his talents and spirit, Fr. John's superiors asked him to do post-graduate studies at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. Upon his return in 1969 he was assigned to St. Francis Friary in Sacramento, CA, as Master of Novices for the province, local superior, parish pastor and director of the local Secular Franciscan Order fraternity, all at the same time. In 1973, while still in Sacramento, he was elected Vicar for the Province of St. Barbara.

On May 25, 1976, Fr. John was elected Provincial Minister for the Province of St. Barbara, with headquarters in Oakland, CA.

However, his term of office in the province was cut short, because on June 3, 1979, he was elected Minister General of the Franciscan Order of Friars Minor, the order's highest office, and moved to the order's headquarters in Rome. After 6 years he was elected for a second term of 6 years.

In his visits around the world as Minister General, friars found Fr. John to be open, friendly, and encouraging. He was willing to wash dishes and do other manual chores. He was always patient, respecting each friar as an individual. When he had to make hard decisions in some very difficult situations, it was always for the good of the friars.

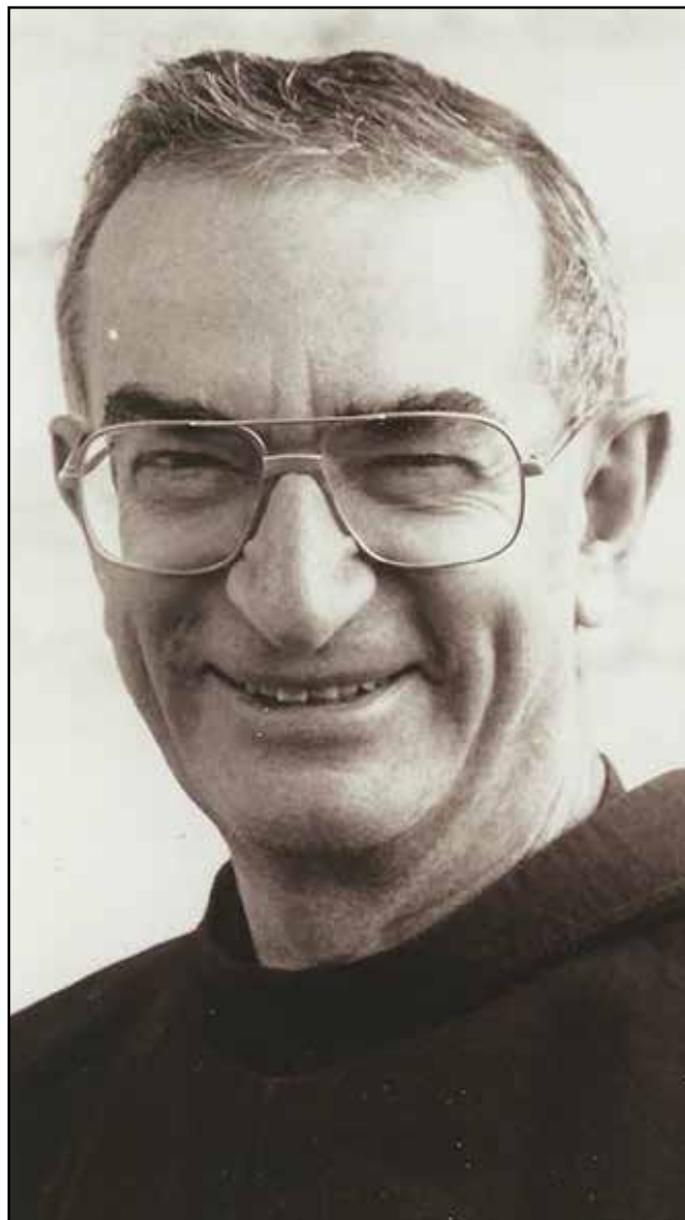
In 1991, after finishing his second term as Minister General, Fr. John took some time to rest in the San Francisco Bay area before accepting assignment as Master of Novices again at Mission San Miguel in July, 1994.

In 2003 he was assigned to Mission Santa Barbara where he assumed leadership of efforts to have Fr. Junípero Serra officially declared a saint, and to minister in the parish and to the Poor Clare sisters. Gradually becoming blind, Fr. John continued to be an active presence in the community and an inspiration to all.

Regardless of the important offices that he held, Fr. John was always himself—gracious and thoughtful of others, reluctant to be stern, and always a brother to all the friars of the order.

"In paradisum deducant te Angeli; in tuo adventu suscipiant te martyres, et perducant te in civitatem sanctam Ierusalem. Chorus angelorum te suscipiat, et cum Lazaro quondam paupere æternam habeas requiem."

"May the angels lead you into paradise; may the martyrs come to welcome you and take you to the holy city, the new and eternal Jerusalem. May choirs of angels welcome you and lead you to the bosom of Abraham; and where Lazarus is poor no longer may you find eternal rest."





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3 December 1979 (from a Letter to the Order)

In our service to the Order we intend to highlight particularly, the inspiration that is the core of our Franciscan lifestyle. Jesus is our Way, our Truth and our Life. By becoming a man he affirmed the dignity of every man. We must pursue the same aim, recognizing the dignity of every friar and encouraging each of them to have respect for every individual. We need to respect everyone's culture, which is an integral part of human personality. That is particularly important nowadays if we consider how much both the person and human dignity are threatened by structures and institutions. We need to be near to the men and women of today, sharing their living conditions, their problems, learning from them, encouraging, inspiring, protecting as required, in such a way that all may live in an environment of justice and peace. We want to be close to every friar who is engaged in the promotion of true values.

The message of peace and love is our message. "We look to Him" who can guide us in our service to

humanity, in our promotion of the Father's kingdom. Certain that we are interpreting our fellow friars' feelings, we commit ourselves to be always faithful to the Church of Rome and to the teaching of Christ's vicar on earth.

It will be our constant concern to clarify our Franciscan role in the local Church, and in the Universal Church, in today's world.

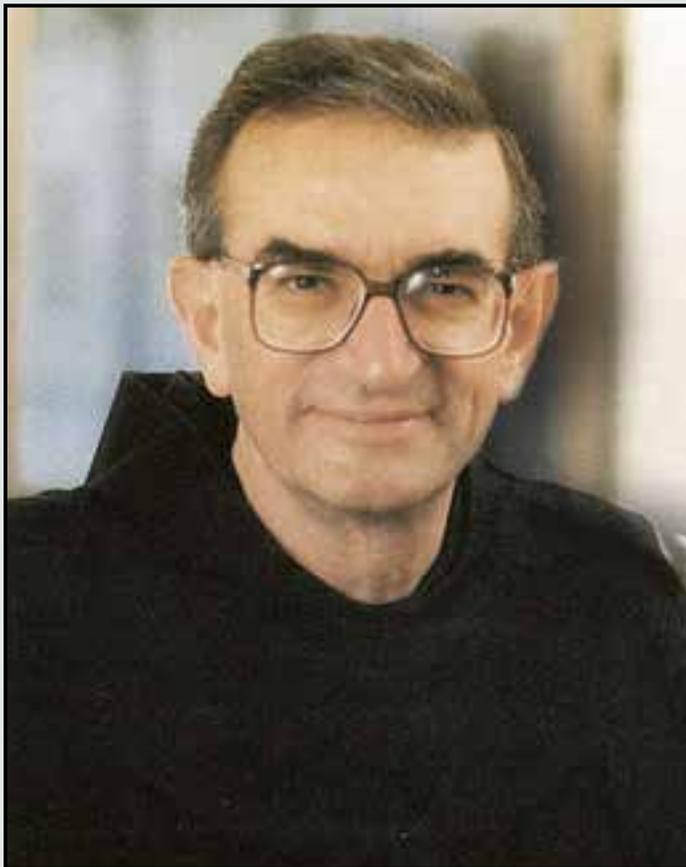
We consider, that by so doing, the Order will continue to spread through the world in its diversity and multiplicity. We attribute great importance to each individual Franciscan and to each Franciscan community, whether it be large or small.

16 January 1982 (from a Letter to the Order: «Africa is calling us»)

The 2,000 young people that have arrived in Assisi from all over the world to celebrate the 8th centenary of the birth of St. Francis, and the 15,000 that gathered in the Basilica of St. Peter in Rome, to sing and pray during the vigil, were a sign for all of us, to look forward with great confidence and a lively hope for the Franciscan witness in the present day world.

To give concrete expression to this confidence the central Governance of the Order has decided to set out before all the friars of the Order a concrete missionary plan. It will be called the Africa Project and has as its aim the establishment of a new Franciscan presence in Africa. It is a long term project whose fruits will have permanent effects on the development of our fraternities in Africa and in the whole Order. We consider that the Centenary of the birth of St. Francis is the most suitable moment to involve the whole Order in this challenge. It seems to us a propitious occasion to prepare our Order to encounter the third millennium. The specific choice of the youngest continent, we consider, demonstrates clearly our confidence in the future of the fraternity which Francis initiated in the little town of Assisi.

We present this project on the occasion of the 8th centenary of the birth of St. Francis because we have seen many indications that this celebration has attracted many people's attention both inside and outside the Order. We are very grateful for the things which many friars have organized to celebrate this Centenary in their communities, Provinces and



Nations. We have encouraged the friars involved in the organization of international celebrations. A special mention of the historical Congresses held in Rome, (see "Fraternitas" May-June 1988 p.8), in Paris, and the Missiological Congress of 1982 (see "Fraternitas", April 1980, pp.1-2) is warranted. We hope that the plan for a meeting of the friars involved in Islamic countries can be realized this year. We desire to thank once again all those who made the Youth Congress of Assisi-Rome in 1981 such a success. We recall with great joy the enthusiasm of the hundreds of young people who visited our Curia after the vigil in St. Peter's, and we are grateful to the fraternity in the Curia for the warm welcome which they afforded.

Now we wish to set before you the Africa Project. After a brief sketch of our history in Africa we will outline the plan and subsequently explain the motivation behind this initiative and the difficulties involved in its realization. Some indications will be given as to what we can expect in some African countries and on how we consider we ought to proceed after the publication of the plan.

We are confident that all of you will study it, and reflect seriously on it. We ask you also to pray to be sure that whatever we undertake in the future will have the guidance and the protection of the Holy Spirit. Siamo fiduciosi che tutti voi lo studierete riflettendoci su molto seriamente. Vi Chiediamo anche di pregare per essere sicuri che qualsiasi cosa intraprenderemo in futuro abbia la guida e la protezione dello Spirito Santo.

6-25 June 1983 (The Gospel challenges us. Document of the Plenary Council of the Order)

1. The Plenary Council of 1983 assembled in the town of Salvador di Bahia, where the friars first arrived in 1500.



We came here to reflect on the working document "Evangelization and mission in the Order" in a third world context, in Latin America, where, as Minister General Fr. John Vaughn said: "Creativity and innovation in evangelization have had such a rich development".

2. Brazilians, speaking of Bahia, call it "the land of happiness". We found ourselves however in a town of strident contrasts: modern office buildings tower above centuries old structures; scattered amongst the condominiums for rich people are hundreds of pockets of squalor. In a town of one and a half million inhabitants, six hundred thousand live in shanty town, and these constitute only a small percentage of millions of persons obliged to live in similar agglomerations of huts in other Brazilian towns. The statistics in Brazil are a mirror of the poverty suffered in many other countries: 1% of the population is extremely rich, 4% rich, 15% middle class, 40% poor and 40% live in misery

3. We visited the favelas with their very poor shacks, with open sewers and foul smells, where children and parents live without hope. We spoke to the people, to the friars and others who live and work in that squalid environment. Many of those people have been forced into the city by drought or worse, for having been expelled from their own land. They came to search for work where there was no work. The efforts to improve their lives have as a result been frustrated. It is the context of such abject poverty that we have matured our reflections.



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of the richest. Their action has taken on an effective and well defined consistency through a realistic and verifiable pastoral plan in all of the country. At the heart and soul of this plan are the one hundred thousand "basic church communities" from which we too could learn many things.

[...]

8. In his opening speech at the Plenary Council of 1981, our Minister General, Fr. John Vaughn, stated with direct simplicity "our vocation calls us to go to announce the Gospel to the nations.... the people expect us to repudiate war, the arms race, hunger and injustice in the world; they

expect us to do something in order to realize that for which we pray and preach... they expect us to transmit the values of the Gospel in the present day culture and society

9. In his opening speech of this Plenary Council he repeated his call: "Now we have the information. Now we have the documentation. We have the inspiration of so many apostolic friars who have opened a path for us. What appears necessary now today is the imagination and the motivation.... We can do great things with the help of God and his grace, but we must stand up now and begin to work!

10. Our message «THE GOSPEL CHALLENGES US» is intended as a response to his words. We believe it constitutes a step towards our own evangelization. We believe that we possess the Good News! With these reflections we offer a little of the Good News to you, our brothers spread throughout so many parts of the world., where you live and work in the midst of the people of God

11. We are thankful to the poor who are our masters. We are grateful to those who joyously serve the poor and the abandoned. Finally we are joyful to offer to you our brothers, these reflections which are grounded in the Gospel and our Franciscan charism and which can be useful to our personal evangelization and to the evangelization of this world which we love so much...

4. What we saw in Brazil, we know very well, reflects the poverty which exists in other parts of the world. Each of us referred to more or less identical situations which occurred in our own countries: from north, south, east, and west. The same shacks, unemployment, underdevelopment, violence and repression, and misery caused by natural disasters. They have been present to our minds as well as in our prayers during the sessions: stories of forced abortions, unjust imprisonment, and today's martyrs, the 15 million or so displaced people who drift here and there throughout the world

5. We have tried to do what Pope Paul VI asks in the «Evangelii nuntiandi»: that is to look at the concrete realities in the social, economic and political spheres in which people live. Although we have seen the face of poverty in other places, here in Brazil we have experienced a very disconcerting reality, that has helped us to see, we may hope, with the eyes of Jesus and Francis. We have reflected on the realities that are in front of us, on the Gospel and on our Franciscan mission. With faith and conviction we tell you what we have seen and heard and what we have re-discovered: our need to be evangelized first before evangelizing anyone else.

6. Cardinal Fra Aloisio Lorscheider spoke to us about the conversion of the Brazilian bishops who took on the burden of a strong commitment to the poor: a preferential option for the poor which certainly does them no favours, with either the government or many

13 January 1985 (from the Report to the General Chapter)

It seems to me opportune to present this report to the Chapter in these terms: the Word of God must be the base of our Christian life as Franciscans, the Word Incarnate which St. Francis appreciated and loved. It is the Word of God that must feed and inspire our fraternal life of prayer, of communion and service. We are called to imitate Christ, poor and crucified, the Word made flesh. The Word of God is the inspiration and the content of what we must do as Friars Minor: our life is to preach the Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, living it and announcing it, when and in the fashion the Lord inspires us.

Our special vocation as Friars Minor is to evangelize, receiving first the Good News ourselves, in faith and in the way which our father St. Francis did, beginning to convert and to do penance "leaving the world" (see Testament).

The word that calls us to change our lives makes itself heard particularly as we prepare for the General Chapter: we wish to look at the state of the Order today in the light of the Holy Spirit, and then take our decisions. This means that we must examine what we have sought to do and what in fact we have really done. Thus we must discern in order to correct that which was a mistake and confirm that which was right to do. We hope that this reading of our reality in light of the Gospel may help us to understand better where the Lord wishes us to go in the future.

[...]

I hope that we will examine our call, submit ourselves to correction and renew our enthusiasm as Friars Minor. I hope that we will leave the Chapter, feeling that we have been sent by St. Francis himself to go into the world, together with our fellow friars, to spread Peace and Good which the world has the right to expect from us on the basis of that which we declare ourselves to be.

Our preparation: in a prayerful spirit we wish to reflect on what our Order should be at this point in its history, what ideals should be encouraged? Which challenges lie before us? What do we have to avoid, correct or change?

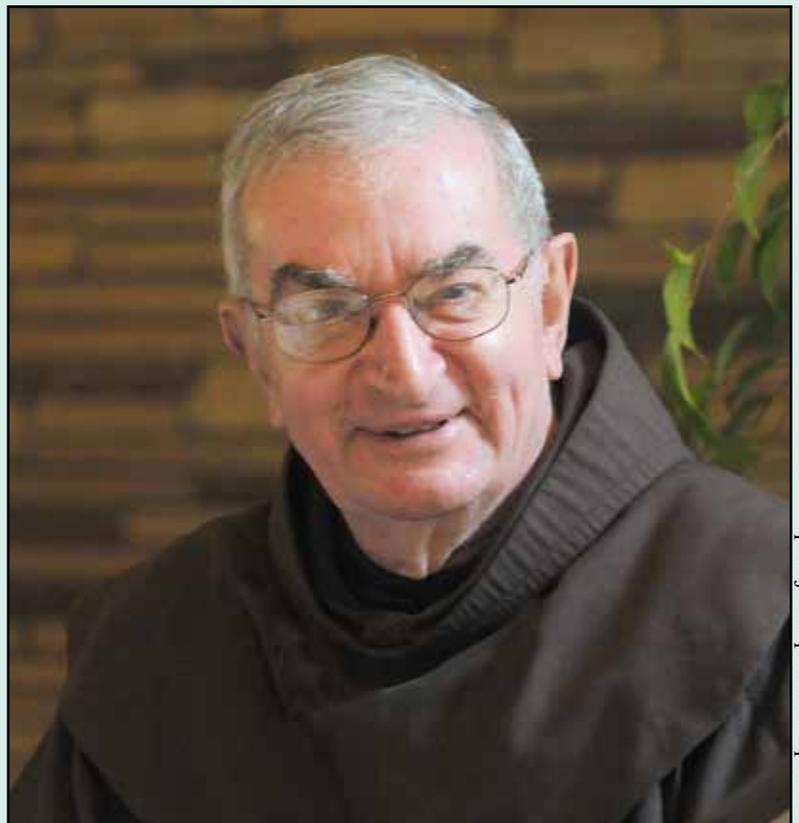
What have we learned from the experience in our Provinces and countries in the six-year period that has passed?

During the Chapter we will have the opportunity to reflect together on what we have prepared individually; we want open minds, free to accept new ideas and capable of listening to what the Holy Spirit wants to say to us. We ask for a new heart and a new spirit to bring to our brothers.

8 November 1986 (from the Message on the Feast Day of Duns Scotus)

Scotus shows from the start that one can be an excellent Franciscan at the same time as being a creative and original academic. He demonstrates that study does not detract from simplicity and there is no conflict between study and Franciscan poverty; study is a Franciscan way as authentic as that of manual work or apostolic activity.

The Subtle Doctor was a great academic with a unique critical and methodological rigour, but also a great religious spirit with an intellectual and existential



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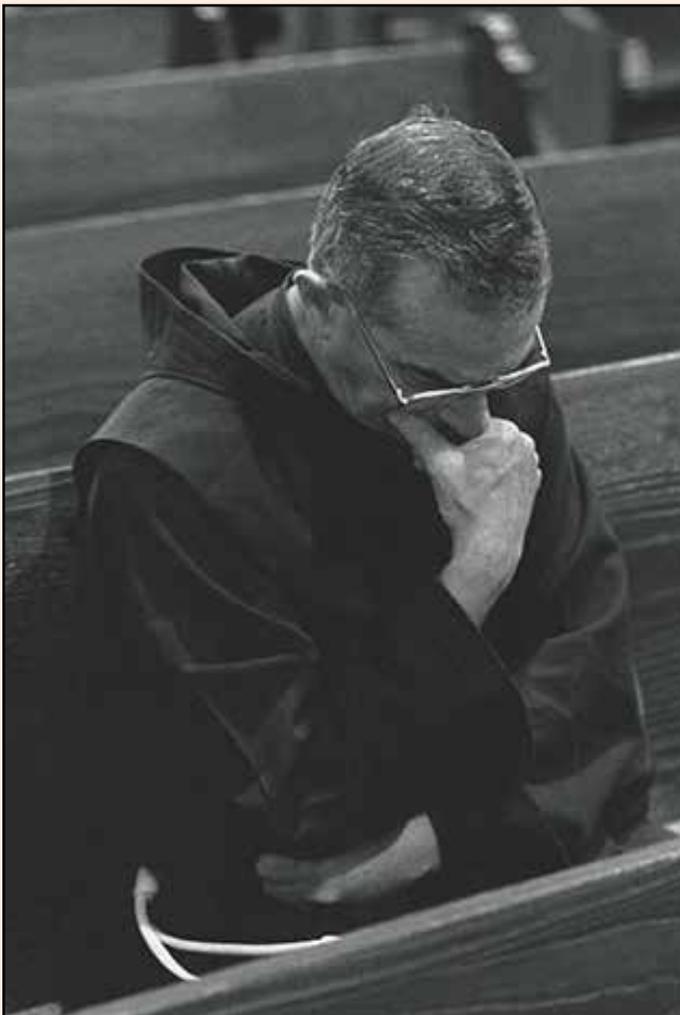


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structure formed in the school of Francis. Moreover, the experience of the Poor Man of Assisi placed as the foundation of the elaboration of a system is the characteristic of the great masters of Franciscan thought. Both in the Scotist conception of man and that of Bonaventure human existence is profoundly imprinted with the yearning for God, directed as it is towards "that infinite sea of Being". (Ox. I, d. 13, q. un, n. 16).

9 November 1987 (from the Message at the inauguration of the Academic Year of the PAA)

I am convinced that it is truly the Franciscans who are the heirs and responsible for one of the richest experiences springing from the Middle Ages. In St. Francis of Assisi an extraordinary encounter



occurred between the demands of the Gospel and the demands of the people of his time. St. Francis presents to the people of his time and people of all times one of the most authentic ways of following the God of the Gospel. The profound originality of St. Francis in wishing for a pure and simple return to the Gospel is a consequence of his equally profound sensitivity towards the aspirations, ambitions and unstoppable changes going on in his time.

Faithfulness to the Gospel and sensitivity in responding to the challenges of our time bring us to a new conception of humanity and creation. Thus Francis enters definitively into the heart of history, the beginning of a new society the validity of which is still discernible today.

The experience of St. Francis of a poor and humble God brings a fraternal and human relationship with all creatures. It is still valid today as a response to the great needs of humanity, especially for the poor and insignificant. It contains the real questions of humanity and the secret of the future of the world.

The present day relevance of St. Francis of Assisi, above all as a reference point for peace, justice, ecology, respect for human rights and universal fraternity indicates that it is the Middle Ages which is the fertile land in which, particularly we present day Franciscans, need to put down deep roots in order to better understand our inheritance.

This inheritance is our duty to today's world: rebuild the Lord's house (cf. LM II 1), construct the world of today sensitively and with Gospel simplicity of St. Francis.

Thus there is a twofold reason for studying the Middle Ages, above all as Franciscans: firstly, to understand our own identity better; secondly, to be capable of responding to the Gospel, as the demands of our time require.

1 May 1988 (from the Opening Speech at the Plenary Council of Bangalore)

The Plenary Council is an opportunity to celebrate and bolster our union and common inheritance as Friars Minor. We can do this in an excellent fashion if we allow ourselves to be inspired, to be evangelized

by the Word of God, speaking to one another with that brotherly trust which St. Francis says should characterize spiritual brothers. We want to listen to one another with respect, knowing that we will be enriched by this more than anything else when it is time to part.

First of all I want to start by making some observations, some of which are taken from discussions that we have had in Definitory; whilst others are more personal and taken from my meeting with the Friars in these last few years.

24 August 1989 (from the Letter to the Order on China)

We, Friars Minor, like many others in the world, read the newspapers and journals and look at television programmes on China. All of this information however, elicits in us a lively fraternal concern for that people to whom we feel a true friendship. The news concerns China, a land which has fascinated us as friars from the first moments of our history. What we witness through the media touches the life of our fellow friars for whom China is their homeland and of a people with whom we share our faith. That which begins with a habit to remain abreast of current affairs in the world turns into prayer for the Chinese people and into a desire to stretch out the hand of friendship and embrace them in the faith.

Our Order was the first religious community to enter into China when Giovanni da Monte Corvino arrived in Peking in 1294. We took part in the evangelization of this great people and its culture in 4 stages of the history of the Church in China: in the Middle Ages, in the period of Christian expansion from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, in the period of unequal treaties from the nineteenth century up to 1945, and in 1949, with the emergence of the Socialist Republic of China. This continuous commitment of the Franciscans is of considerable significance to the Church. The historians have collected the data and continue to put these in order so that the theologians and faithful can reflect upon the way in which the Spirit of the Lord operates amongst the peoples.

Today the Franciscan community continues its commitment to the Chinese people. A group of



forty-seven friars spread throughout the continent, seeks to live the Franciscan life in a genuine Chinese and Catholic way. Everyone must confront the reality of their own country in so far as it impacts on their vocation and their ministry. Some have avoided all contact with the Patriotic Association, an element of the religious reality; others have assumed the role of guide in the Association; others again participate there to the point considered necessary and prudent. Some of our brothers have accepted consecration or Episcopal ordination both inside and outside the ambit of the Association. In China the desire is there to know about Saint Francis and the Franciscan life.

4 October 1989 (from the Letter to the Order)

In the Franciscan charism, as in a "tree planted near streams" (Psalm 1), right from the very beginning, the marvellous fecundity of the seed and fermenting strength of the Gospel yeast, inherent in the grace conferred upon Francis of Assisi, called to rebuild his Church, was manifest. From that call was born a "new, small and poor" people that Jesus asked of the Father "in this last hour", distinguished from those that had preceded it by its poverty and humility (cf. FF 1617).



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This tree, that like a “chosen vine” extends its shoots through the entire earth (cf. FF 494), immediately on its appearance, manifested the novelty of the Gospel (cf. FF 1212) and the richness of its branches, leaves, flowers and fruits. The author of the Little Flowers of St. Francis (cf. FF 1889), amazed by this thriving tree, contemplates its growth, beauty, aroma and virtues and declares his desire to entrust the mystery of its innovative and creative capacity to the future.

Sixty years have now passed, from 26th December 1929, when a new shoot sprang from the tree: “La Piccola Famiglia Francescana”. In its very name, approved by the Church, the new shoot carries within it the flavour of the origins and the attractiveness of those virtues, which spring forth like clear water from the root: poverty, humility and the sought and desired smallness for love of Him who deprived himself of his omnipotence for us and made himself small and a servant.

14 October 1990 (from the Report to the International Congress for Masters of temporarily professed friars)

The aim of Franciscan Formation in the period of temporary profession, is set out in our General Constitutions, art 157: “During the period of the

temporary profession, formation is carried out in such a way as to render the Friar suitable to carry out in a more integrated fashion the life of the Order, and to better realize the mission and prepare himself to make his solemn profession”.

I consider it to be of fundamental importance to understand clearly and precisely “the essence” of formation during the period of temporary profession, as it is defined in our General Constitutions.

Article 157 of the General Constitutions declares that this period is the time of the “formatio perficitur”, that is of the “formation which perfects”. We know however, that one can only perfect something if the process has already started and this only reaches its fullness by completing a journey which has already started. In other words, what must be perfected or completed is the formation already begun in the Postulancy and Novitiate. For this reason we need to focus upon understanding what really is the Franciscan formation in this stage of the temporary profession.

This formation does not have a generic and non-specific sense of a cultural-humanistic formation but rather a specific sense with priorities, it has the sense of being formed to follow Christ according to the style lived and suggested by St. Francis of Assisi.

More than one will ask why all this insistence in respect of Franciscan formation, something that is so obvious. Precisely because that which seems obvious is, so often, forgotten or not taken sufficiently into consideration, giving rise to a superficial and incorrect understanding of Franciscan formation.



11 March 1991 (from the Ratio Formationis Franciscanae)

In line with the directions of the General Constitutions of the Order of the Friars Minor and of the Instruction "Legal regulations on formation in Religious Institutes", and having obtained the deliberative vote of the General Definitory in the congress celebrated on 26th February 1991, within the meaning of art. 62 §3 of the General Statutes, using the faculties conferred on us by office, with the present decree we approve and promulgate RATIO FORMATIONIS FRANCISCANAE And we declare it to be binding for the all of the Order.

Moreover, we declare within the meaning of art. 65 §§1-2 of the General Statutes, that each Province and competent Entity has this as its fundamental orientation in the preparation of its own "Ratio Formationis", assuring the unity and continuity between initial and permanent formation with the due adaptations for various necessities and particular situations.

23 April 1991 (from the Report to the General Chapter 1991)

Having come to the end of these six years of service as your Minister General, I want to present this report dealing with the principal activities of the general governance of the Order during this period. I have divided my report into three parts: the first is an account of how the General Definitory has managed the aims that were set for it during the six-year period in respect of the fulfilment of the decisions of the last General Chapter; the second part sets out other projects that were begun in the same period; the third part offers some personal reflections about the Order to day, based on my visits to friars all over the world, particularly in the areas of mission, as well as through my contacts with other religious leaders in Rome.



2 July 1991 (The Order and evangelization today. San Diego General Chapter document)

1. We friars minor, assembled in the General Chapter in San Diego, California on the occasion of the 5th Centenary of the evangelization of the Americas, are convinced that the Gospel and faithfulness to the charism of St. Francis emboldens us to act and to speak prophetically as evangelizers with renewed enthusiasm, in our role as consecrated men of the Church. Evangelization is the *raison d'être* of the Order.

2. By reason of our vocation, we are an evangelizing Fraternity sent into the whole world as the Son is sent by the Father (Cf. Jn 17,18), to announce, as an envoy and in the name of the Church (Cf. Message of St. John Paul II at the General Chapter 1991, n. 5), as minors and through the action of the Holy Spirit, that Kingdom of God is present (Cf. Mk 1,15; CCGG. 83-84) and to collaborate in its building.

3. Convinced that our evangelizing vocation is essentially prophetic, we feel the urgency to announce Jesus Christ throughout the world and in every culture, and denounce all that is opposed to God's project. Our prophetic condition requires that we bring the Good News to all classes of humanity and through its renewing influence, transform humanity into a new creature. (cf. 2 Cor 5,17).

4. Our evangelizing vocation expresses itself in a privileged way when the friars, "by divine inspiration, wish to go among the Saracens and others without



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faith" (Rb 12,1), in order "to bring to peoples or groups, to whom the joyful announcement of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ has not yet come and to help those who have already accepted the Gospel to construct the local Church" (CCGG 117,2).

5. We are conscious that the Franciscan way of evangelization requires the witness of the Fraternity, the experience of God in contemplation, intellectual preparation and discernment of the "signs of the times".

**Witness of the Fraternity:
our original way of evangelizing.**

6. We recognize that the first and principal way to evangelize is the "silent proclamation of the Kingdom of God" (CCGG 89,1) through the work of all the friars together, "pilgrims and strangers in this world" (Rb 6,2). Such evangelical witness involves the whole Fraternity, without distinction between lay and clerical, and places at the centre of our concerns, not the methods,

the institutions nor the pastoral structures, but rather the evangelical quality of our live. "United by same Rule, the same form of profession, the same name and wearing the same habit" (Address of Cardinal J. Hamer at the General Chapter n. 6), we, as Friars Minor, share the same responsibility of proclaiming the Gospel, not alone in word but by example, together with all of the Franciscan family, that is with the Sisters of the Second Order, the Sisters and Brothers of the Secular Franciscan Order and the Franciscan inspired Secular Institutes. (cf. CCGG 55-63).

7. Our experience here, with friars from all over the world, has allowed us to become more deeply aware of the universality of the Gospel. The conviction of being brothers on a mission propels us to interdependent relationship with all the sisters and brothers, and indeed all of creation. In conclusion this universal call is an integral part of our Franciscan way of evangelizing in our times. He sought sainthood for Serra



© Br. Dick Tandy, OFM

HE SOUGHT SAINTHOOD FOR SERRA



©H. Lorren Au Jr., The Orange County Register

(This article first appeared in The Orange County Register by Gary A. Warner on July 11, 2011).

A Santa Ana native waits patiently in Mission Santa Barbara for news of a miracle wrought by a Spanish missionary dead for more than 200 years. A miracle strong enough to persuade the Vatican to proclaim a new saint.

Bo. John Vaughn, 82, has dedicated the past 13 years to the cause of his fellow Franciscan, Junipero Serra, the 18th-century mission-building monk. Sainthood would spread word of the “Apostle of California” around the globe.

“He’d be a saint for all the world, not just California,” Vaughn said.

Vaughn is vice-postulator, a kind of campaign manager, for the cause of Serra’s sainthood. By some counts, Serra has more streets, schools, mountains and parks named after him than any other Californian. His statue represents California in the U.S. Capitol.

In a way, all of Vaughn’s life seemed to point to this role promoting Serra.

Vaughn grew up on Washington Street in Santa Ana and recalls working in a local market, making tortillas to ship to troops during World War II.

“I also helped with the tamales, and along the way I learned a lot of Spanish,” he said.

Choosing a monastic life

Asked if he could remember first hearing the story of Junipero Serra, Vaughn gave a wry smile.

“Like everyone else in California, he said”. In school. You learn about Junipero Serra and the missions. They still do.”

But the story of how Serra built the first nine of 21 missions in California stuck with him. He was an altar boy and would attend picnics at Mission San Juan Capistrano, home of the only surviving chapel where Serra performed Catholic rites.

“We drove almost every day on streets built over the old El Camino Real”, Vaughn said, naming the path followed by Serra that linked the missions to each other.

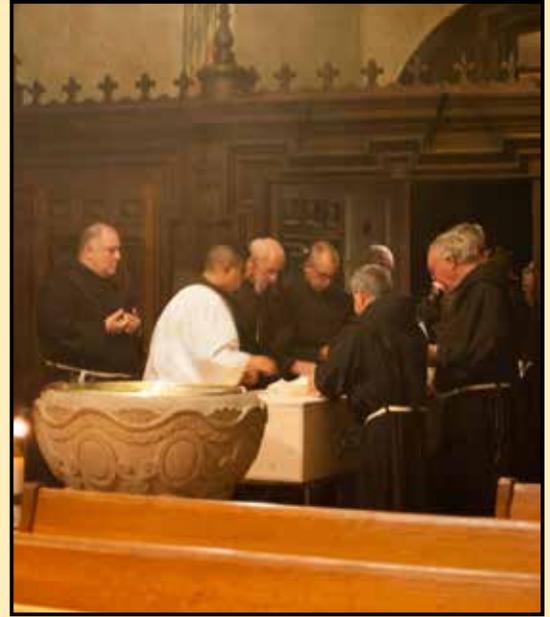
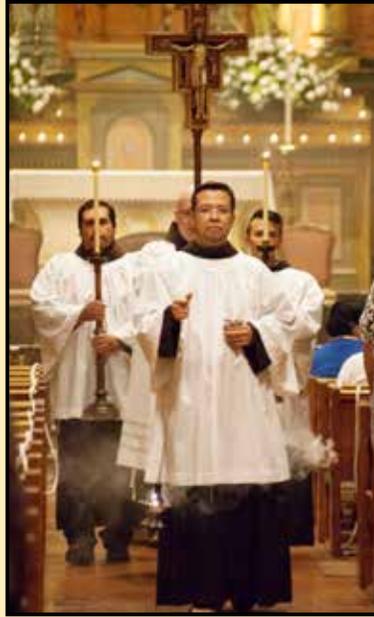
After St. Joseph’s elementary school and Willard Junior High School, Vaughn found himself drawn to the simple life extolled by St. Francis of Assisi. He began taking the steps that would lead to his joining the Franciscan order in 1955.

Vaughn has lived, taught and prayed throughout California and Mexico, and worked 14 years in Rome. From 1979 to 1991, Vaughn was minister general for the Franciscan order, its worldwide leader. His religious life came full circle in 1998 when he took on the job of promoting the cause of Serra, the figure so important to his childhood.

Complete story: <http://www.ocregister.com/articles/serra-307755-vaughn-miracle.html>



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EULOGY

by Br. William Short, OFM

(This is an edited version. The full text will be published in the next edition of the ACTA).

“May the Lord give you peace.”

With these words, we are told, St. Francis of Assisi began his address, every time he preached. Let us wish for each other today that we may know the Lord’s peace in this place. And let us pray that our brother, uncle, friend, mentor, novice-master, Father John Vaughn, may know that same peace: may he rests in the Lord’s peace-filled love.

When I first received the news from Fr. David, our Provincial Minister, that Fr. John, my novice master and friend had gone to God, I did not feel shock or anguish or even great sadness. Rather I sensed a quiet, gentle letting-go, with a twinge of that Celtic melancholy that Fr. John knew so very well. We had talked at length this past August about leaving, letting go. And I knew that John faced that reality squarely, serenely, and without fear. I think we both knew at that time we were saying “goodbye.” ...

Our Brother John was a great man, a wonderful friend, an inspiring friar, a figure of great dignity mixed with a touching humility. His accomplishments were many, and he was very modest about them. His whole life expressed an appreciation of what it means to wash the feet of others. ...

On the Eve of Pentecost the Chapter’s members elected Minister General of the Order, much to the surprise of many, including himself! I was serving as a translator there and he asked me that evening if I would serve as his secretary. I told him, “I don’t know anything about being the Secretary of the Minister General!” And he said, “And I don’t know anything about being Minister General.” Of course, I then had to agree, and we were soon joined by other brothers helping John – Raymond Bucher, Bob Brady, and the late Tomás Zavaleta, his collaborators Cristoforo Tomatis and Peter Williams.

Fr. John, as 116th successor of St. Francis at the helm of the Order he founded, moved the Order into new directions. He visited, sometimes even in clandestine ways, the friars still suffering under totalitarian governments in Eastern Europe. He heard the insistent requests for an expanded Franciscan presence in Africa and Asia. ...

There is a famous parable told by St. Francis called “Perfect Joy,” in which, late on a dark and stormy winter night, Francis imagines to his companion Br. Leo that they are turned away from the door of their usual home, St. Mary of the Porziuncola in the plain below Assisi. The same thing nearly happened to this Californian successor of Francis.

Fr. Chris Tomatis and Fr. John were travelling together from northern Italy to Rome and were near Bologna one winter night when an unexpected snowstorm closed down the major highway on

which they were travelling. Driving into the city, Fr. Chris managed to find the friars' house in the dark and snowy night. Dressed in secular clothes, the two made their way through the storm to the front door and rang the bell. After a long wait, a small light was turned on above the door, and a friar opened the door. Fr. Cristoforo wanted to announce that he had brought the Minister General. But Fr. John insisted that he say only that they were friars from Rome and unable to continue driving because of the storm. The brother asked "What do you do in Rome?" Fr. John answered, perhaps with a twinkle in his eye, "Oh we do office work in the Curia." With a suspicious look still on his face, the brother let them in, and said, "I suppose you want something to eat." As they said Yes, he led them to the kitchen and began to put out some bread and cheese, but then told them that he would have to call the Guardian. Shortly afterward, awakened late at night, the Guardian came into the refectory as the two visitors were about to eat their frugal meal. Then another friar and another began to arrive, awakened by the sounds of doors opening and closing. As the Guardian questioned the two about exactly what kind of work they were doing, one of the friars noticed that the man sitting at the table looked like a photograph hanging on the refectory wall. With a quick nod to the Guardian and a finger pointing up at the picture on the wall, the mystery was solved: the two visitors were the

Minister general and his secretary. Immediately, with kissing of hands and expressions of "Reverendissimo," the light supper transformed itself into the boiling of water for pasta, a bottle of good wine from the cantina, very much to the delight of Fr. Cristoforo, who thought things should have started out this way. Fr. John's comment, however, was telling: "Cristoforo, remember that the brothers allowed us to come in, offered us food and a place to sleep before they knew who we were." ...

As I was wondering how to give an appropriate conclusion to these remarks, I received an e-mail message this morning from Fr. Romain Mailleux in Brussels, John's former Vicar General and friend. He sent his condolences along with a copy of the eloquent words of farewell he delivered at the General Chapter of 1991, as John was leaving office. Let Br. Romain's words serve as a fitting farewell also today:

"Dear Brother Minister, you are for us the complete Friar Minor, after the image of Saint Francis. And you encourage us to become that in turn, because you have always believed in each one of us. In this way you gather in yourself the virtues of all the friars of the Order, and your face is radiant with the beauty you discover and evoke in others. Saint Francis must be proud of you, as all of us are. Thank you for who you are among us, and for us, both yesterday and today, both today and tomorrow. May the Lord bless you and keep you always, Thank you, Brother John."





Thank You
Br. John Vaughn, OFM