



# A PLACE AT THE TABLE

NEWSLETTER OF THE UNITED STATES SUB-CONFERENCE (ESC)

April | 2014

## **CALIFORNIA PROVINCE OVERWHELMINGLY APPROVES NATIONAL PROPOSAL FIRST PROVINCE TO VOTE YES TO BE PART OF NATIONAL CONVERSATION**

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA – The Province of St. Barbara is the first U.S. Province to vote YES to be part of the national conversation on reconfiguration of the U.S. Provinces that will result in the reduction of the number of Provinces.

And they did so overwhelmingly. Of 95 friars voting on the Proposal,  
**91 friars voted yes favoring the proposal.**

“We were so happy to be participating in discussions as to the future of Franciscans in the US,” said **California Provincial Minister John Hardin, OFM**, commenting on the results from his Province. “It was an overwhelming vote of approval to have a ‘place at the table’ As many of us have said, this is a very historic moment in the life of the friars in the United States. We want to be part of forming that future in collaboration with the other six provinces.”

Headquartered in Oakland, St. Barbara Province maintains a broad range of ministries that cross ethnic, cultural and economic boundaries throughout California, Washington, Oregon, Arizona and New Mexico; as well as in missions in the Holy Land, Mexico, Russia and Peru, as well as minister among Native American peoples of the southwestern United States. The Province has 162 solemnly professed friars.



The Franciscan presence in the California Province reaches back to 1539 when friars established numerous missions among the native peoples of what is now southwestern United States. When Spain authorized the colonization of California in 1769, Blessed Junípero Serra, OFM, arrived to serve as president of new missions in Alta California. Their more contemporary presence dates to the official founding of the Province of St. Barbara which took place on December 4, 1915.

The next Province to weigh in on the Proposal will be St. John the Baptist Province of Cincinnati. They will be holding their Provincial Chapter May 19-23.

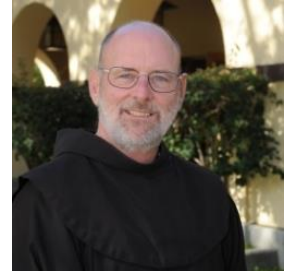
Fr. Hardin is hopeful that the other U.S. Provinces will also choose to be part of the process, “I encourage our brother Provinces to be at the table. Many minds led by the Spirit can do incredible things,” he said.

# REFLECTION: “BUILDING ON FOUNDATIONS LAID BY THOSE WHO CAME BEFORE”

BY JOHN HARDIN, OFM  
PROVINCIAL MINISTER | SAINT BARBARA PROVINCE

*This originally appeared in Ad Vestrum Servitium, a publication of the St. Barbara Province.*

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA - May the Lord give you peace. I wanted to express my gratitude for your thoughtful participation in the conversations leading up to the vote at the spring regionals. I thank Anthony Garibaldi for facilitating the discussions at all four Regionals and I thank those who designed and led the prayerful voting ritual.



Provincial Minister  
John Hardin, OFM

At the present time we have 162 solemnly professed friars in the St. Barbara Province. Of the 95 solemnly professed friars who voted at the spring regionals, 91 voted YES. The friars have spoken, we will now commit to participate in an interprovincial process to renew and revitalize Franciscan life in the United States. It will take time, energy, personnel, and finances to engage in this conversation over the coming years. Regardless of how we might re-configure, it is necessary that the structure support our ministries and not the other way around.

I believe that we will be setting the future of our Franciscan vision and life in the United States for many years to come. We will be building on the foundations that were laid by the friars who have gone before us. We must not let fear and anxiety paralyze us, we must move forward by "walking by faith and not by sight." Since the Holy Spirit is really our Minister General, we will be led to renew many of our present communities and ministries and hopefully open the door to new and exciting ventures. As Pope Francis continues to remind us that we are all evangelizers and missionaries knowing that if we surrender our will to God, we will be filled with a sense of joy which will become leaven for the people we will encounter in our lives.

Once again thank you to your faithful commitment to our way of life and may the Resurrected Christ be our model, guide, and inspiration proclaimed in the Gospels.

May the Lord give you peace!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Hardin, OFM". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John Hardin, ofm  
Provincial Minister

# FAQ – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

NEW YORK – As a service to the brothers in this process, we seek to answer questions as they are emerging across the country. You can see previously asked questions on our website at: [www.escofm.org](http://www.escofm.org). Friars are invited to send in any questions they may have to: [exec@escofm.org](mailto:exec@escofm.org) and they will be answered in future additions of this newsletter.

**1. While the friars in each Province may vote on the various issues regarding realignment, is it not true that only the Provincial Ministers will have ‘a place at the table’ to vote on the crucial issues? If yes, then by how much are the Provincials bound by the vote on those issues within their own Province? If no, then how are the friars to be instructed regarding issues and alternatives and how is the voting to take place?**

- ✓ Of course, by nature of their role of leadership, the Provincial Ministers have a particular role of leading and guiding this national conversation. However, that is not to suggest in any way that the table will only have seven chairs and that their voices will be the only ones heard or the only ones that matter. As an example, in the first week of August, all of the members of the Provincial Administrations who choose to be a part of the process will gather in Racine, Wisconsin to discuss how this process will move forward from here. That meeting alone could approach 70 friars at the table. And, as has been the process thus far, the goal has been to include as many voices as possible all along – voices of the young and the old, voices of formators and those on the front lines of ministry, voices of wisdom from our retired and the fresh voices of our men in formation – this process will continue to have that goal of including as many voices as possible. As has been said many times by the Provincials themselves, “this is a process of brothers.” And, of course, when we eventually have a concrete proposal for the reduction of the number of Provinces in the U.S., every voice will be involved because that Proposal will require the approval of each Province gathered in Chapter. Provincials acting alone would not be able to make that decision; each Province would have to make it at Chapter.

See a complete list of all questions follow this link:  
<http://www.escofm.org/uploads/2/0/6/0/20604054/faq.pdf>

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## EACH PROVINCE IS BEING ASKED TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

### PROPOSAL

We, the friars of \_\_\_\_\_ Province, COMMIT TO PARTICIPATE IN A PROCESS that will reduce the current number of Provinces in the United States by creating one or more new Provinces that better serve our Franciscan fraternal life and mission.

# SCHEDULE OF PROVINCIAL GATHERINGS

**May 19-23, 2014**

St. John the Baptist, Provincial Chapter

**June 1-6, 2014**

Holy Name Province, Provincial Chapter

**June 2-6, 2014**

Our Lady of Guadalupe Province, Provincial Chapter

**June 8-13, 2014**

Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Province, Provincial Chapter

Sacred Heart Province, Provincial Chapter

**June 23-25, 2014**

Immaculate Conception Province, Extraordinary Chapter

**August 3-6, 2014**

Gathering of Provincial Administrations participating in the continuing process

Siena Retreat Center, Racine, Wisconsin



ENGLISH SPEAKING CONFERENCE | ORDER OF FRIARS MINOR

**UNITED STATES SUB-CONFERENCE**

*Thomas Washburn, OFM | Executive Secretary*