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ENGLISH SPEAKING CONFERENCE OF THE ORDER OF FRIARS MINOR

NEWSLETTER

October 2013 • San Diego, California

Conference meets in San Diego

The Provincial Ministers of the English Speaking Conference gathered from October 7-11 in San Diego for the 89th meeting of the Conference. The Province of St. Barbara served as host of the meeting which took place at the University of San Diego. Fr. **John Hardin**, OFM, serves as Provincial Minister of the St. Barbara Province.



Provincial Ministers of the English Speaking Conference along with General Definitors Francis Walter, OFM, outside of Founders Chapel at the University of San Diego.

The meeting was held at the University of San Diego to highlight the recent move of the Franciscan School of Theology from Berkeley, California to its new home at Mission San Luis Rey in Oceanside, CA, and its new collaborative relationship with USD.



A highlight of the meeting included a joint presentation by Friar **Joseph Chinnici**, OFM, FST President and **Mary E. Lyons**, Ph. D., President of the University of San Diego highlighting the process that led to the affiliation between the two schools. Dr. Lyons also hosted the Provincials for a festive dinner at the campus following the presentation.

Mary E. Lyons, Ph. D.

You can learn more about the St. Barbara Province by visiting their website at: <http://www.sbfranciscans.org>. Franciscan School of Theology can be found at: <http://www.fst.edu>.

U.S. Provincials receive “historic” report of Interprovincial Commission

Since the first of its kind meeting of all seven U.S. Provincial Administrations in Milwaukee last December, friars across the country have been meeting diligently at the tasks set forth there to envision what our common Franciscan life might look like as we head into the future.

Chief among those group of friars has been the Interprovincial Commission, made up of members of all seven Provinces, who were tasked with exploring the question of the mission, vision and values which will enable us to face the challenges of the 21st century in the United States. The Commission was asked to explore new areas of collaboration to advance the fraternal life, mission and ministry of friars in the U.S.; and to propose possible models of restructuring for the fraternal governance of the friars.

On Monday, October 7, members of the Interprovincial Commission were present to give the results of their monumental and historic report to the U.S. Provincial Ministers.

Making the day-long presentation were Commission chair, **Jack Clark Robinson, OFM** (Our Lady of Guadalupe) along with Commission members **Regan Chapman, OFM** (St. Barbara Province), and **Dominic Monti, OFM** (Holy Name Province). Not present for the presentation were Commission members **Michael Della Penna, OFM** (Immaculate Conception), **Dan Anderson, OFM** (St. John the Baptist), **Craig Wilking, OFM** (Assumption BVM), and **Michael Jenrich, OFM** (Sacred Heart). Also present was Dominic Perri, who has served as a facilitator throughout the process.



The U.S. Provincial Ministers then had opportunities throughout the week to continue to unpack and discuss the results presented to them by the Commission. The end result was a letter issued on October 15 by all seven U.S. Provincials to every friar in the United States along with a summary of the Commission’s report.

U.S. Provincials approve digital media strategy

Among the tasks set forth by last December’s Milwaukee meeting of all seven U.S. Provincial Administrations, was the desire to create a new approach to our online Franciscan presence with a focus on the evangelization of youth and attraction of vocations.

Working with the Conference Communication Directors Committee, a new Digital Media Strategy was created that will include the eventual hiring of a Digital Media Director to guide this new plan.

The Provincial Ministers approved the strategy and put the first pieces of it in place by appointing Friar **Michael Surufka, OFM** (Assumption BVM Province) to chair a committee that will be tasked

with the creation of a U.S. Franciscan website, social media presence, and smart phone app development. Friar **Alvin Te, OFM** (Immaculate Conception Province) was also appointed to the committee. Other friars with expertise will be invited to participate in the process as well.

The Digital Media Committee will also begin the process of finding someone to serve in the role of Digital Media Coordinator who will be the coordinator and animator of the U.S. Franciscan internet, digital, and social media presence.

Conference approves Social Media Guidelines

As websites like Facebook and Twitter increasingly become normative ways of communication along with the ever increasing number of apps and other digital and social media forms of communication, the Provincial Ministers of the Conference have approved “Preach the Gospel at All Times: Guidelines for Evangelizing Through Social Media.”

The introduction to the guidelines explains their purpose:

“Since the time of St. Francis himself, Franciscans have been on the cutting edge of spreading the Gospel message in new ways and to new places. It’s no wonder, then, that so many in the Franciscan family have found the modern tools of electronic communication to be a fruitful and powerful way to continue that tradition of evangelization. Social media and electronic communication provide friars and partners-in-ministry with a way to exchange information and ideas faster and farther than ever before. Because this electronic frontier is also one with its own dangers and pitfalls, it is the hope that this Social Media Guideline can help navigate that new territory so that Franciscans might make the best use of these exciting tools of communication and evangelization.”

The full text of these Social Media Guidelines can be found on the ESC website: www.escofm.org

New Roman-Seraphic Missal nearer to completion

The American Franciscan Liturgical Commission reported to the Provincial Ministers that work on the new *Roman-Seraphic Missal* supplement is steadily moving forward. Commission Chair Friar **James Sabak, OFM**, (Holy Name Province) reported to the Provincials that the initial translations are complete and the Editorial Board (made up of friars **Gil Ostdiek, OFM**, **Bill Short, OFM**, and **Tom Washburn, OFM**) will complete their work this month.

With final texts in hand, the next task will be getting approval of the *Missal* and then having it printed. The new *Roman-Seraphic Missal* will be a supplement to the *Roman Missal Third Edition*. It will include all of the prayers needed to celebrate Franciscan feasts, but will not contain feasts and celebrations that are not on the Franciscan liturgical calendar.

The AFLC is made up of members from the Order of Friars Minor, Capuchins, Conventuals and Third Order Regular friars.

Proposed Conference Convocation of Lay Brothers moves forward

Provincial Ministers met with members of the planning committee for the proposed Convocation of Lay Brothers of the Conference tentatively set for August 2014.

Responding to an initiative that began among the lay brothers of the Province of St. Barbara, the ESC agreed to support a proposal to sponsor a Conference-wide Convocation of the Lay Brothers of the Conference.

The gathering would address the issue of the ongoing decrease in the percentage of Lay Brothers in the Order since 1965. Several General Ministers have commented on this phenomenon and have expressed their concern. The purpose of this gathering would be to study the reasons for the decline as well as review of places in the Order where the Brothers' vocation remains strong.

Provincials met with Friar **John Gutierrez, OFM**, and Friar **Rami Fodda, OFM**, (both St. Barbara Province) on the progress of their work organizing the convocation. Thus far, the planning group has made contact with all lay brothers of the conference and conducted a survey among them all with good results. They are excited about the responses and will move forward with the planning. The convocation would take place in either Denver or California.

Conference meets with members of Mexican Provincial Administration

On Wednesday, October 9, Conference members traveled to Mission San Luis Rey to tour the new facilities of the Franciscan School of Theology, which moved there over the summer.

During their time there, they celebrated a beautiful liturgy with members of the local friar community coordinated by Friar **Rufino Zaragoza, OFM**. Members of the Mexican Province of Junipero Serra in Tijuana were also guests of the Conference for Mass and dinner.



Provincial Ministers of the ESC at Mission San Luis Rey in Oceanside, CA along with the local friar community and members of the Provincial Administration of the Mexican Province of Junipero Serra.

Franciscan Mission Service' Kim Smolik updates Provincials

It has been four years since Executive Director Kim Smolik has updated the Provincial Ministers on the work of Franciscan Mission Service, so they were very grateful to hear about the good work taking place at FMS.

In the last four years, FMS has doubled its staff and its budget and expanded its missionary programs to include not only its traditional long term missionary experiences (30 months), but to also allow for a wide variety of short term experiences (as short as a week or a few weeks). They have also greatly expanded their online and social media presence seeing them as not only forms of promotion, but also as forms of evangelization and ministry.



Kim Smolik, FMS Executive Director

FMS has done all of this while remaining within its budget, but as a non-profit, donation-dependent organization, is always in need of new and increased sources of funding.

You can learn more about Franciscan Mission Service at: www.franciscanmissionservice.org