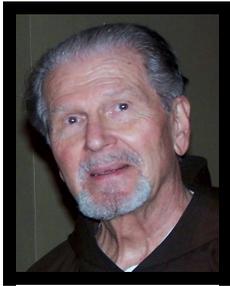


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Carmel Flora
1926 - 2017



Our brother Carmel was born, on the 19 September 1926. The family rented an apartment in Harlem New York. He was called "Rudolph" at his baptism in the Church of Our Lady of Mt Carmel, New York City.

Rudolph was the last child of Francesco Paolo Flora and Carmela Verderose. Both of his parents were born in Italy, but they immigrated to the U.S. and were married in New York. Rudolph was the youngest of five children: James, Joseph, Edward, Helen, and Rudolph. All the family spoke both English and Italian and played musical instruments from an early age.

Their father "Frank" worked as a caretaker in a police station. Carmel went to St Paul's Primary School for eight years. Then attended Peter Stuyvesant High School in lower Manhattan for four years.

Carmel met the Capuchins as a boy in a nearby parish where he would go for confession. He put his calling to be a Capuchin in a few words. *"One old friar, Constantine, encouraged me to become a Capuchin."*

He traveled to Wisconsin to join the Capuchin Order when he was 18 years old. He did his novitiate in Huntington Indiana, being invested with the Capuchin habit in 1945 taking the name "Carmelus of New York City." He made first profession in 1946. He then returned, in 1950 to New York for a four-year university course in philosophy living at Mary Immaculate Friary, Garrison, NY. He did another four years of theology at St Anthony Friary, Marathon, Wisconsin.

He made his perpetual profession in 1949 and was ordained a priest at Marathon, Wisconsin on the 27 August 1953, and celebrated Mass of Thanksgiving in St Juliana's Church West Palm Beach, to where his parent had moved.

From 1954 to 1958 he was assigned as a professor at the Capuchin novitiate at St. Felix Friary at Huntington, Indiana. From 1958 to 1964 he was local minister, director of the Third Order and prefect of studies for a pastoral course at St Francis Friary, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. From July 1964 until 18 August 1969, he was assigned in Detroit, Michigan at St Bonaventure Monastery as the vicar of the house and the director of the Third Order.

When a request for assistance to help establish the Capuchin Order in Australia came to the provincial minister of Detroit in 1969, Rupert Dorn, asked for volunteers. Roland Dusick, Carmel Flora, Darren O'Rourke, and Bede Luzon and John Myers accepted the challenge and

took a ship from San Francisco to Sydney arriving on 19 September 1969. It was Carmel's birthday; he was 43 years old.

Carmel was appointed local minister and novice director, at Wynnum North, Brisbane and arrived in Wynnum in January 1970 to set up the new novitiate. He was local minister and novice director at St Laurence Monastery (Wynnum) from the beginning of January 1970 until 1977. Because of his fluency in Italian, his previous experience as a professor working in formation of Capuchin students, and his innate kindness and prudence, the friars elected him councilor of the vice province from December 1970 until December 1973 and then councilor from December 1973 to 1977. He very quickly began to understand the history and situation of the order in Australia.

In 1977 Carmel was elected vice provincial minister of Australia and re-elected three years later. In 1981, the jurisdiction became a province and Carmel was asked to become provincial minister. He remained in office until 1987, a total of almost 11 years.

Joseph Oudeman at that time wrote: *"Our fledgling province owes much to the dedication and conscientiousness of Carmel Flora, who almost from the beginning until the present, has assisted us on the council and as novice director. The last 11 years he has ministered to us as vice-provincial and as provincial. His contribution, esp., in steadiness and politeness, during this turbulent time, has been invaluable."*

Carmel Flora had an excellent spirit of fraternity and a fine gift of courtesy towards others. He was completely committed to his life as a Capuchin. He would spend almost every night after the evening meal pacing up and down in the chapel saying his rosary. He was calm, measured, prudent, humble and positive. He always had a listening ear for the friars. This generosity to attend to others was also extended to other religious. Above all, he was available to lay people. They would ring him constantly and want to visit to speak to him in person. Towards the end of his life this became a great burden, even though he never complained and was always courteous. His faith was such that he navigated his way through the upheavals of the church after Vatican II with a steady positive outlook. He was very much respected in Australia.

Finishing his ministry as provincial in 1987 he accepted the position as novice director again, but in June 1998 he took a sabbatical in the USA. When he returned to Australia in 1999, he went to live at Assumption Seminary, Plumpton. Then later he moved to Leichhardt in Sydney. After that, he moved back to Wynnum to a new friary of Our Lady of the Angels. In 2009 Carmel became a resident at Nazareth House at Wynnum North.

One of our brother Carmel's extraordinary gifts was his ability to play the piano and organ. Because he had perfect pitch, you only had to sing, hum or whistle a song and he would play it for you. His so called "music notebook" had only the titles of over 2000 songs in it, all of which he could play from memory. He wrote four Masses while he was novice director.

On 15 October 2012, accompanied by the Australian provincial, he returned back to the Detroit province USA. There he resided at St Fidelis Friary, Appleton, Wisconsin. Up until the end of his life he was still saying his prayers and playing the piano. He died on 19 January 2017 at the age of 91.

The Liturgy of Christian Burial was on Saturday, 28 January 2017. The provincial minister of Australia served as homilist. Our brother Carmel was a great witness to the many Capuchin brothers with whom he lived, prayed and ministered to for 72 years.

~ John Cooper (Australian Province)