



Week ending 5 May 2017

Issue Number 1098

## *More than food and clothing*



*David Hirt facilitates the poetry class*

The House of Peace (HOP) in Milwaukee, a ministry of Capuchin Community Services (CCS), distributes the traditional items that other direct service ministries offer: food, clothing, bus tickets, health care articles, etc. But lately, the clients who frequent this 50 year-old service center has begun offering what some are calling “food for the soul:” poetry class!

David Hirt, who serves at both the HOP and St. Ben’s Ministries, now directs a workshop for clients who can discover how to express their emotions, frustrations and joys in a way that might surprise many of the wonderful benefactors who support the Capuchin’s ministries here.

The workshop meets in the Booker Ashe Room, named after the ministry’s founder. David has been interested in poetry since high school, and continued that interest in his college curriculum. Now he’s sharing that interest with folks who initially frequented the HOP for basic material necessities.

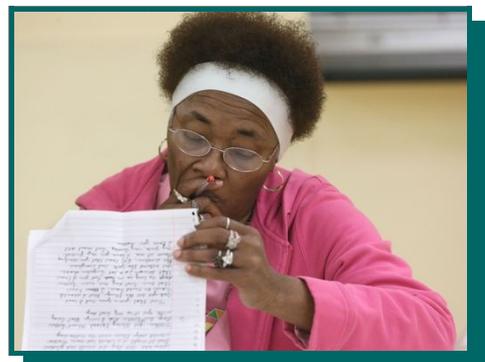
[This] “is a community that often had its voice silenced or ignored in the city. It is also a community with plenty to say. It’s more than the sum of its pain and problems,” said David. His class now meets every two weeks on Thursday afternoons. The results demonstrate exactly that the people who come to the HOP have, as he said, “plenty to say.”

One of his students, Vanessa Baldwin, wrote: “They came too early this year, too white for my sight, always looking like they swallowed something larger than they could eat. Small legs, small heads. Walking, talking, looking for this and that. Have you ever stood by one? (*The Seagull*)

Bernadette “Ms. B” Williams expressed her longing: “One day I’ll find a lover, someone who loves me for me. One day I’ll find a lover, only God knows who this will be.”

*“Every heart sings a song, incomplete,  
until another heart whispers back.  
Those who wish to sing always find a song.  
At the touch of a lover,  
everyone becomes a poet.”*

— Plato



## ***“Community life” surprises friar***



*Biju Parakkalayil*

“The biggest surprise since my arrival in the USA is our community life. I really do enjoy it. Community life here is much better organized. What I had heard about American life was that it was totally individualistic, and I expected the same thing in our Capuchin communities, as well. But the way that is lived here took me for a total surprise.”

Biju, one of several friars participating in our province’s fraternal collaboration, was recently interviewed by Robert Wotypka. He told Robert that one important aspect of community life is mutual understanding. Since each of the brothers is unique, there will be difficulties. “What I find fascinating,” he said, “is that when there is a difficulty between two brothers, the very moment they are willing to talk about it and finish, *the sunset does not find anger.*”

At St. Conrad Community in Milwaukee, where the province hosts our postulancy program, ages range from the 20s to the 80s. “It’s adorable living with postulants bubbling with life and enthusiasm, and elders to whom I can reach at any time with any questions or doubts.”

As the postulants arrive in the fall, he said, “they are reserved, perhaps because they don’t know each other well; but as time passes they become more acquainted with each other, and then [the community] becomes a smooth family.”

“Our prayer life has given me a lot of joy. In India, we sometimes keep aside our community prayer and other community activities for the sake of our external ministries. I am very happy that our community organizes the prayer well, and gives importance to it. That’s our Capuchin identity, as well.”

Milwaukee was Biju’s first experience in the U.S. “Though there are some anti-social elements, generally this area is good, and the people of Milwaukee are really beautiful, and I just love it!”

## ***Sanctuary supporter to be remembered***



+ Darlene Nicgorski

Rob Roemer, director of Capuchin Community Services, recently received information regarding Darlene Nicgorski who died recently. The information included an invitation to a memorial in her honor because St. Ben’s “was a Sanctuary supporter in the 1980s. It was a time of courageous, heart warming, ethical, hardworking, loving response to refugees in our churches. It is still an inspiration after all these years.”

Darlene was born in Milwaukee and for many years was a School Sister of St. Francis. A gathering will be held at the St. Joseph Center in Milwaukee to honor Darlene and her work in the Sanctuary movement. She carried on her involvement for the rest of her life. The event organizers have invited folks who have been involved with Sanctuary and refugees in the past and those today who carry on the religious, ethical, loving concern for refugees and immigrants. The service will be held on Saturday, 6 May at 2 pm.

***“In the 1980s, there were more than 500 sanctuary churches and synagogues, at least 19 sanctuary cities, 20 universities, and one state — New Mexico. How will we encounter the divine in the face of refugees today?” — Darlene Nicgorski, Sojourners Magazine, July 2016***

## *Friar works his magic at the Achilles Residence*

The Achilles Residence and Guest Quarters sits just a block from St. Conrad Community in Milwaukee, and offers hospitality to friars, provincial employees and other partners-in-ministry who travel to Milwaukee for meetings or provincial events. In an effort to make the residence more welcoming in this central city area, Kent Bauer offered to landscape the front yard, as he did for St. Conrad Community. *And landscape he did!*



1. Preparing!



2. Designing!



3. Planting!



4. Voilà!

*Thanks, Kent, for making our neighborhood more inviting!*

## *Triduum retreat*



*Friars attending the annual Triduum Retreat in Mt. Calvary WI*



Erico Ortiz, a member of our provincial Liturgical Commission, recently underwent surgery to remove a tumor in his stomach tissue.

Gerri and Jim LeFave (sister and brother-in-law of Larry LaCross), both of whom were hospitalized: she with breathing difficulties and he with a bowel obstruction.

Thank you all for your emails, prayers, cards, and your presence at my father in law's (Otha Howard) home-going funeral celebration. It meant so very much to my entire family. Your prayers and acts of kindness helped us during a very difficult time. — Gerri Sheets-Howard

My brother Bill Sullivan and his wife Suzanne want to express heartfelt thanks for all the prayers and kind emails they received from the friars. Both are doing well. — Michael Sullivan

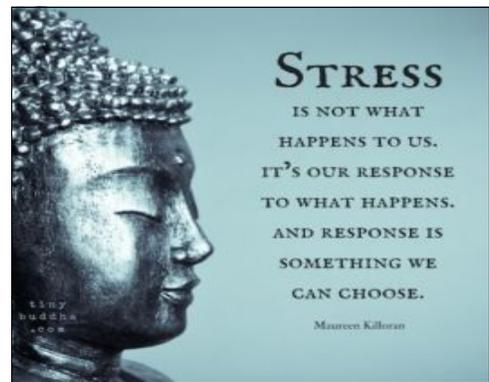
The blood clot in Jim Wegner's lung has dissolved and he was released from the Intensive Care Unit. All of the prayers and good wishes are very much appreciated. — Gary Wegner

Mike Crosby's esophagus surgery was a success in that the surgeons reported they were able to remove all the cancerous areas and all went as planned. He and Dan thank you for all your prayers.



**May is Asian American & Pacific Islander Month**

- 3 ..... **Public Relations Zoom/Video Conference**  
**Philip Naessens (N)**
- 5 ..... **Solanus Center Min Council**
- 7 ..... **Lawrence Webber (B)**  
**Alphonse Pushparaj (B)**
- 8 ..... **Treasurer's Zoom Conference**
- 9 ..... **Investment Comm Teleconference**  
**Fred Cabras (B)**
- 10 ..... **Public Relations Zoom/Video Conference**



**Asian American & Pacific Islander Heritage Month**



Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) are the fastest growing racial group in our country, growing over four times as rapidly as the population of the United States. As one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse groups in America, the AAPI community reminds us that though we all have distinct backgrounds and origins, we are bound in common purpose by our shared hopes and dreams for ourselves and our children. Our nation's story would be incomplete without the voices of countless Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders who have called the land we all love home. This month, we honor the irreplaceable roles they have played in our past, and we recommit to ensuring opportunities exist for generations of AAPIs to come.

Today, AAPIs lend their rich heritage to enhancing our communities and our culture. As artists and activists, educators and elected officials, service men and women and business owners, AAPIs help drive our country forward. Yet despite hard-won achievements, AAPIs continue to face obstacles to realizing their full potential. One in three AAPIs does not speak English fluently, and certain subgroups experience low levels of educational attainment and high levels of unemployment. AAPIs also often experience heightened health risks, and millions of AAPI men, women, and children in the United States live in poverty.

*(Presidential Proclamation, Barack Obama, 2016)*