

Guided by  
Francis and Clare



*An introduction  
to our Province*

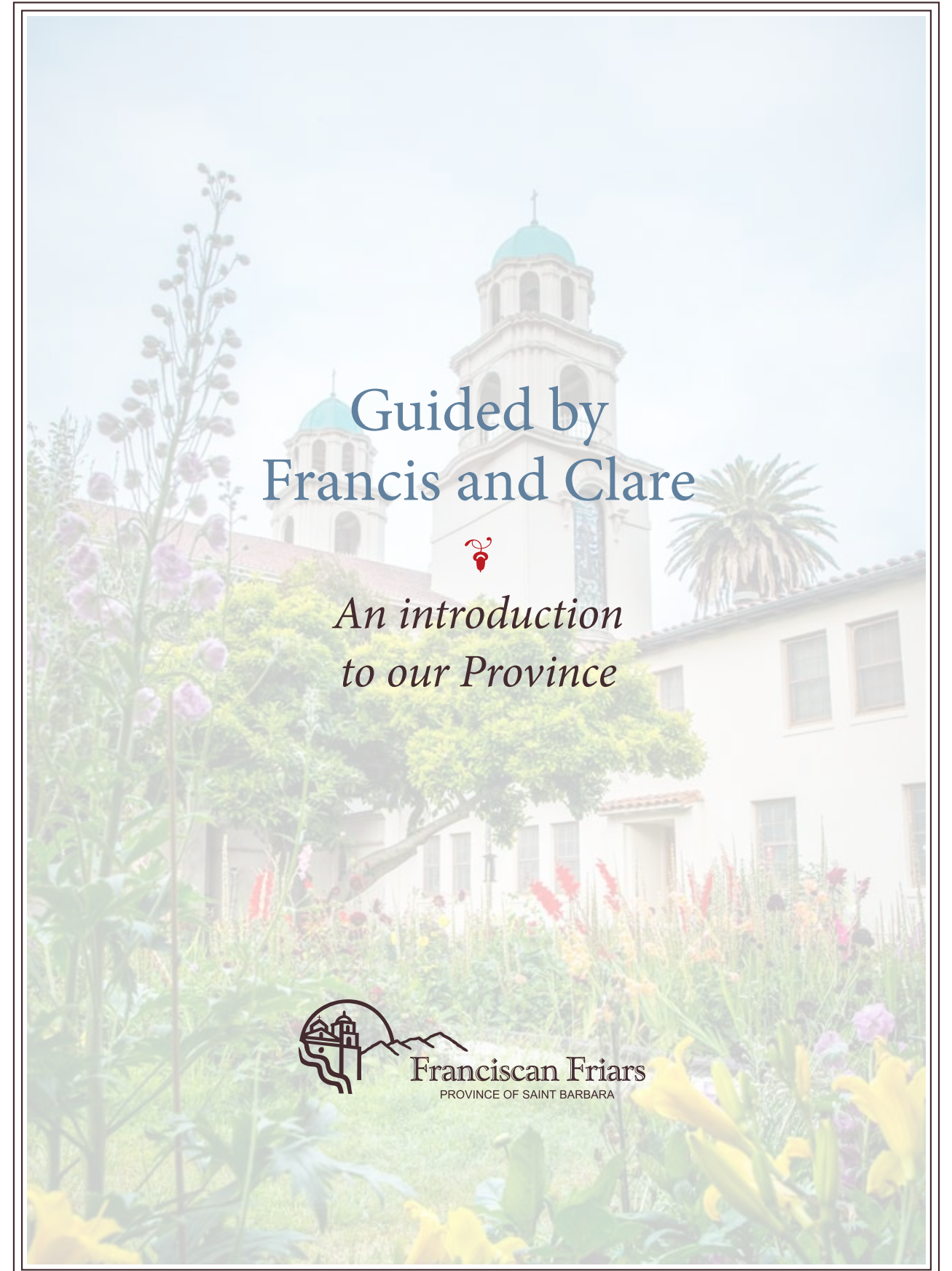


Franciscan Friars  
PROVINCE OF SAINT BARBARA

## Ministerial Vision Statement

*The Franciscan Friars of St. Barbara proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the Franciscan tradition through ministries that serve the poor, marginalized, and those spiritually in need of God's love. Through the ministries of our Province we provide food, shelter, counseling, healing, spiritual direction, education, and a connection for the people of God. We do this through the charism of St. Francis of Assisi and our values of prayer, fraternity, joy, and service.*

*Courtyard garden at  
St. Elizabeth Friary.*



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PROVINCE OF SAINT BARBARA





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# Welcome!

We, the Franciscan friars of the Province of St. Barbara, are grateful you have agreed to share your time, talents and treasure with us. You have become part of a province-wide, even worldwide, effort to serve in the spirit of Saints Francis and Clare. By serving as staff or board member, you join us on our journey which, for us friars, is to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ in our words and deeds. For that we thank you.

Through the lens of Franciscan values, we work, all of us, to keep the spirit of Saints Francis and Clare at the heart of our service. Sometimes that will seem countercultural. Your awareness of our Franciscan values will help steer things correctly.

This little booklet will introduce you to some of those Franciscan values, and give you a resource to refresh your memory from time to time. It also will introduce you to some general concepts that guide our governance.

While we serve in a world that often overlooks the broken and marginalized, whether material, spiritual or physical, our actions always should be guided by the little man of Assisi. In speaking to a gathering of Franciscans late in 2017, Pope Francis reminds all of us of that when he quotes Saint Francis' instruction that his followers, "Learn to be 'infirm with the infirm, afflicted with the afflicted.'" That spirit, he says, "far from being a vague sentiment, indicates a relationship between people so profound that, transforming your heart, it will lead you to share their destiny."

Let us learn from Saints Francis and Clare to be with people, to serve people, in a way that transforms our own hearts. That will bring the spirit of Saint Francis into the workings of all our institutions. Once again, welcome!

David Gaa, OFM  
 Provincial Minister, Province of St. Barbara

*(Clockwise) Friars and their partners, lay and religious, fulfill the Franciscan mission, whether it be at medical help in Guatemala (upper left), Sister Rita Louise OSC's praying for the good of all, service at the Old Missions, or Father Paul Evard's companions serving the poor at Francis Center in Spokane.*



The legend of St. Francis taming the wolf, which was terrorizing the villagers of Gubbio, is about a central aspect of Franciscanism. Franciscans seek ways to unite, to build peace, to help people see things differently.



IMAGE: ©DREAMTIME STOCK 2017

## The Franciscan Gift

Eight hundred years ago, Saint Francis of Assisi and Saint Clare of Assisi gave a gift that is still at the heart of all of our Franciscan ministries. Many today think of St. Francis as the lover of animals—indeed his stone figure, holding a birdbath, adorns many gardens. But Francis, along with his friend and early follower, Clare, were much more dynamic than that. Francis Bernardone and Clare Offreduccio, people like you and me, whom we know today as saints (models of holiness) saw, in all of creation, the fingerprints of God.

Creation is plants and flower, birds, fish and animals, the earth and beyond, sure, but creation, most important, includes women and men. All of creation, especially men and women, carries the dignity that only God bestows. People in poverty show us, within their brokenness, without worldly trappings, the handiwork of God. If we want to serve God, to know God, we must serve and know the poor. Jesus showed us that; Francis and Clare lived that. That is a key to working among the Franciscans today.

As we all know, *poverty* is a complicated term. First and foremost, the poor are those who are physically poor, who are without means, who are rejected somehow by society. But poverty includes a poverty that even people with means can carry: a poverty of the soul, that is, a sense that we lack in the things that we need spiritually. There is the poverty of physical limitation, of sickness. Our saints knew that all people, including themselves, are in some way poor.

Francis' and Clare's time, in a certain sense, was like our own: big changes were happening in the



Parishioners from Scottsdale's Our Lady of the Angels Conventual Church carry items used in the blessing of the altar new church's dedication. The parish is all part of nurturing spirituality at the Franciscan Renewal Center.

society around them. Today we see our economy becoming more and more divided into rich and poor, into haves and have-nots. More wealth is being gathered, while at the same time, more people are being left behind.

These two saints saw the same in their own day, albeit in a smaller way. In a time when new, material wealth was being discovered and cherished, it was Francis whose encounter with a leper, a truly feared and cast-off person, changed his entire outlook on life. It was Clare, once wealthy, who broke through her society's assumptions about the place of women—to be kept behind closed doors—and started a path for women to take their place among the dispossessed in the world. Both Francis and Clare saw in the most humble of people a key to understanding who God is, and who we are.

It's worth noting that, since the beginning, Francis and Clare were open to ways through which laypeople, like yourselves, could partner in their ministry.

In this booklet you will be introduced to the charism, or gift, given to Saints Francis and Clare, a gift lived among Franciscans and their friends ever since.

*Gift* is maybe too simple a word; *charism*, in the Christian tradition, refers to special gifts of God, given to us for our work on earth, among the people of God. These gifts always see their fullness in acts of charity, and in a bigger way, in works of justice, in bringing rightness to our entire society. The charism of Saints Francis and Clare, the gift of God that empowers all of our Franciscan ministries, is in some way animated, empowered, by our work among and on behalf of God's neediest. When we say, then, that we are a Franciscan ministry, we are saying that the Franciscan charism animates our work of service.

### SOME KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER:

- *Charism, animate, empower* are some key terms in Franciscan ministry.
- The Franciscan movement from the beginning has been for women and men, including lay women and men.
- Francis' and Clare's time was in some ways like our own.
- Work among the poor, of all types, is key to the Franciscan movement.



## Key Franciscan Concepts

St. Francis had a passion for the Gospel, a passion that consumed his entire life and spilled over into fires that would become lights for us all. These lights, or themes, had names that are key to understanding the Franciscan charism:

### A NEW FACE FOR GOD

God, for Francis, was not a terrifying dictator to be obeyed out of fear of being thrown into hell. God was rather someone personally close, the ideal father figure who gives each son and daughter the precious gift of life, a personality like no one else's, the talents needed to survive and grow in this world, and freedom to use or abuse those talents.

### THE HUMANITY OF CHRIST

There can be no doubt of Francis' love affair with Jesus Christ. It was Jesus of Bethlehem who became a human person; Jesus of the Last Supper who gave himself as food for spiritually starving people; Jesus

of Calvary who died as a sacrifice so that each person could be raised up from the darkness of collective and personal sin. In that humanity of Jesus, brother to us all, Francis found the connecting link to the God of creation.

### THE GOSPEL WAY

Francis was so overwhelmed at his discovery of God's love everywhere that his conversion was more like a love affair than a reluctant rejection of his former life. The words of Jesus in the Gospels now leapt out of the pages with a burning, driving force for hope, life, liberation from darkness. Here, in that discovery of God's love, was the destiny of the entire human race—and all of creation as well.

### BROTHERHOOD AND SISTERHOOD

Perhaps the most touching phrase in Francis' few writings is his description of his first followers: "And after that, the Lord gave me some brothers." For Clare, it was first her own sister and mother and other women in her area and some from afar. At the

time, class distinctions had become rigid. Yet Francis and Clare both were fine joining with brothers and sisters of all classes. They were to be equal, all were to be cherished, all were to be given affirmation and support, all were to be loved. Francis' and Clare's followers (Franciscans and Poor Clares) lived in separate communities of men and women; soon they were allied with committed lay followers who stayed among their own families, now known as Secular Franciscans. Eventually many other branches of the Franciscan family tree, Franciscan sisters, priests and brothers of all types, developed and are with us today.

### CREATION

Francis' interpretation of Gospel brotherhood led him to an even higher mystery: the brotherhood of creation. If Christ is brother and sister to us all and the firstborn of all creation, then the animals, the birds, the sun, moon, wind, fire, water, indeed everything created by God are our brothers and sisters. He spoke to "My sisters, the birds," to "brother" wolf—and they spoke back. It was as if God restored to him the original innocence lost by Adam and Eve. Francis totally broke through that mystery when he composed and sang one of the finest poems in religious history, "Canticle of the Creatures." Francis' reverence for creation was so astounding that in our day he was named the Patron Saint of Ecology.

### MINORITY

Francis chose to call his companions the little brothers and sisters. Littleness, or minority, for Francis was a rejection of the desire of power, prestige, and status. It is a longing to become like what the Bible calls the *anawim*—God's poor, helpless, and defenseless ones, the ones Christ said were blessed, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. To be minor is a decision to serve and not be served, a desire to be available, to help, to be connected, to share with, to suffer with, and to rejoice. It's a decision to overcome the most evil tendency in any person—that desire to have power and control over others.

### POVERTY

Wealth, affluence, personal property, and wanting more and more material goods—these were seen by



Friar Nghia Phan tending the garden at the St. Elizabeth Friary.

Francis as blocks to brotherhood and union with God. People whose lives are dominated by money and what money can buy tend to be more concerned with things than with people—certainly not God's plan in Francis' eyes. Franciscans hold that everything we have is a gift from God, to be shared with others.

### PRAYER

Prayer, especially contemplative prayer, was so important in Francis' life that at one point he wanted to retire to a hermit's life. But his mission, God told him in his heart, was otherwise. Wherever Francis was, though—in a cave or the marketplace, on a mountain or in a palace, with his brothers or at work or alone—he was always at prayer: sometimes contemplative, sometimes spontaneous, sometimes in common with his brothers, sometimes the prayer of work.

### PEACE

Francis' daring attempts at peace-making are legendary: in the disputes between the rich and the poor in Assisi, between the Christians and Muslims during the Crusades, between the nobles and their serfs in the matters of military conscription. Francis was accepted as a peacemaker, because he was filled with peace. "While you are proclaiming peace with your lips," he told his followers, "be careful to have it even more fully in your heart," he said.

### RESPECT FOR THE CHURCH

The Church at the time of Saints Francis and Clare was in serious trouble; we have our own problems today. In spite of its human shortcomings, Franciscans believe the love of Christ still animates the Church, still calls us and empowers us to live Christ's way, all together, with special attention, as we see in our own Pope Francis, to the poor.



The Gubbio Project opens Church doors to the homeless at the Franciscan's St. Boniface Church, in San Francisco.



*The work of justice is a basic part of being a Christian. Friar Martin Ibarra knows it is sometimes necessary to take to the streets in defense of human rights. This day he wears the sticker of the Oakland Community Organization, where advocates from all walks unite their voices.*



PHOTO: ©DICK TANDY 2017

## In Service to the World

*“For by His incarnation the Son of God has united Himself in some fashion with every man. He worked with human hands, He thought with a human mind, acted by human choice and loved with a human heart.”*

—CHURCH IN THE MODERN WORLD, VATICAN COUNCIL II

Ever since the words above inspired reform in the Church, two generations ago, in the 1960s, we friars of the Province of Saint Barbara have searched for a way to make this Gospel message of Francis of Assisi alive and vital in our contemporary world.

Along the way, we rediscovered something about Franciscan Gospel identity. Simply put, we cannot become friars by ourselves; we cannot fulfill our mission in isolation; we cannot witness to the fullness of the Gospel, nor to the vision of Francis and Clare of Assisi, unless we work together with others in a common mission. Long gone are the days when large numbers of Franciscans staffed schools, hospitals, dining rooms, and other ministries, with the support of lay staff. The decades after the 1960s saw a new opening for partnership among Franciscans and people from all walks of life. Now, in the 21st century, the Franciscans, increasingly, are depending upon lay people of goodwill to take key positions of leadership and operation that might previously have been served by priests and brothers.

None of this is bad news; rather it is born from the hopes and desires of revitalizing our way of life in service of the Gospel.

As we friars invite you to co-participate with us in a way of being human for our neighbor, may all of us keep in our minds and hearts the following desires:

- May we always treasure our God-given gifts of intellect, hope, practical skill, the desire to serve, as gifts to be given away.
- May we treasure the poverty in our own lives—limitations of insight, our fear of failure, our need for advice, our life of material dependency—as bridges to the poverty of all types in the people we serve.
- May we accept with graciousness and courtesy the all-too-human aspects of our Franciscan institutions. Handled with charity and solidarity, the tensions we live with and gently resolve in our organizations give real witness to our common struggle to become more fully human.
- May we never forget the central purpose of our work: always for others, so as to make the world a more humane place to live. Franciscan institutions always exist for the good of all.
- May we be open to growing spiritually. Franciscanism is a way revealed by God to Saints Francis and Clare of Assisi, affirmed by the Church as “following in the footprints of Jesus Christ.” 🙏



Friar Sam Nasada stops on a San Francisco street to offer a gentle ear—and a blessing.

# Governance Structures In Entities Owned by the Province of St. Barbara

## INTRODUCTION

The governance structures for the various ministries owned by the Franciscan Friars of the Province of St. Barbara are designed to respond to the new realities of society, the Church, the Order, and the Province. Most important, they are designed to promote the mission and values of the Franciscan friars who form an integral part of the Roman Catholic Church.

The Province of St. Barbara’s ministries are spread across a wide geographic area including California, Oregon, Washington, Arizona, and ministry locations outside the US, such as Russia and Mexico. They are as diverse as the areas they serve. Province ministry offerings include outreach, education, charitable activities, retreat centers, and Old Missions. These are commonly referred to as the institutions of the Province. Parishes are not included as part of this governance overview because the parishes are typically under the jurisdiction of the local bishop and the friars who work in those parishes are responsible to the bishop for the operations of those ministries.

## INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE: BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND BOARDS OF DIRECTORS

Governance in the Province of St. Barbara is accomplished through two bodies. First, is the Province trustees, a group comprising the the Provincial Minister, the Provincial Vicar and the friars who are members of the Definitorium (the Provincial Council that is elected by the friars to provide guidance to the Provincial Minister). Second, is an institutional board of directors that plays an important role in the governance process for the institution where they serve. Each individual institution has bylaws, which are approved by the Province trustees, that prescribe aspects of the local board activities such as size, composition, scope and decision-making powers. However, certain reserve powers remain with the trustees (examples include real estate transactions, approving the institution’s mission, and approving annual operating and capital budgets). Although these reserve powers are important, the majority of the institution-level governing process is empowered within the local board. Prospective and current board members are encouraged to familiarize themselves with their respective

institution’s bylaws to better understand their role in the Province governance model.

Some examples of where the trustees look to board members to play key roles are:

- Governing, with respect to establishment of policy, as opposed to managing the operational affairs of the institution;
- Ensuring that Franciscan values and principles of Catholic social teachings are evident in the culture and operations of the institution;
- Representing the trustees as stewards of the mission, Franciscan values and fiduciary responsibilities for the assets of the institution;
- Assuring the trustees relative to the financial soundness and integrity of the institution;
- Setting goals and assessing the performance of the executive director (where applicable) in furtherance of the mission;
- Recommending approval of annual operating and capital budgets to the trustees; and,
- Nominating and recommending for election or appointment members of the board of directors to the trustees.

The trustees have historically placed friars or other Franciscan representatives on an institution’s board of directors. That model has been further enhanced by the introduction of a trustee delegate.

## ROLE OF THE TRUSTEE DELEGATE

As a strong governance model is built on a foundation of trust and communication, the province trustees continue to try and look for ways to strengthen the relationship and make communications more seamless. The trustee delegate role was created to help improve communications and accelerate many of the approval processes at some select institutions (resource constraints limit the ability to install trustee delegates at all the provincial institutions at this stage). The trustee delegate also provides a source for ongoing input on Franciscan values and a province perspective on topical issues. The idea is to empower the trustee delegate with decision-making capability for some matters that normally are reserved and require a vote from the trustees (for example, approving new board members), and help champion local-institution initiatives during the prioritization process. 🙏

*The fountain in front of Mission San Luis Rey. Created in 1938 by German artist, Herman Schultheis.*



# A Brief History of the Franciscan Province of St. Barbara

The Franciscan (Order of Friars Minor) presence, which is so evident in the western United States today, had its beginnings in Spanish Mexico. The Franciscan friars had been working in Mexico for 200 years when, in 1786, they began to move north. They traveled throughout what is now New Mexico, Utah, and Arizona, eventually coming to Alta California, and to San Diego. Saint Junipero Serra, a Franciscan teacher in his younger years, established the Alta California missions and personally founded the first nine. His work is the foundation of the Province of St. Barbara, founded in 1915.

In those early days, the mission system was dependent on the goodwill of the Spanish government, a dependency that was mutual. Spain was anxious about Russia's colonization into the New World, coming down the Pacific Coast. The missions were established in their apparent leap-frog fashion as a result of the tension between Spain and Russia.

Serra's vision—its shortcomings now seen, in hindsight—was to establish agricultural mission communities for Native Americans. These would protect Native Americans from military powers, allow for them to grow in Christian faith, and provide for them a stable livelihood.

After a brief but successful history, the mission period was brought to a close in the 1820's by political upheaval in Mexico and Spain. The missions were seized by the newly formed Mexican government. Native Americans and Franciscans were dispersed, and the property was sold to private parties. With the exception of Mission Santa Barbara, where the new owner allowed the friars to remain, Franciscan presence in California ceased.

With the discovery of gold in 1848, California's fortune and demographics changed forever. At the same time, in faraway Germany, Count Otto von Bismarck expelled the Franciscans and many other religious orders. The friars from Saxony settled in St. Louis, Missouri. The unmet spiritual needs of German-speaking men among the gold miners in California caused the California Catholic bishops to seek help. The friars from St. Louis' Province of Sacred Heart obliged, and the Franciscans were once again in Alta California.

## A PROVINCE FOR THE WEST

The German-speaking friars from St. Louis set out to work in California with great zeal and determination. They established or took over parishes in San Francisco, Oakland, and Los Angeles, as well as an orphanage near Watsonville; they even ventured into Arizona, Oregon, and Washington.

Since the beginning, these friars wished to serve among Native Americans. At the first opportunity, the friars went to the only parish in Phoenix, Arizona, and began to work among the Pima and Tohono O'odham.

This period of time forms a glorious page of our history. With the needs of the future in mind, this "out West" branch of the Province of Sacred Heart set to building a novitiate and a minor seminary. Thus the friars were back in California for good. By 1915 this branch of the Province of Sacred Heart had enough friars and resources to be declared an independent province. The new province, officially named "St. Barbara, Virgin and Martyr" was established under the leadership of Joseph Hugolinus Storff, OFM.

The new province refined its formation and educational facilities, thus ensuring future generations of well-trained priests. A number of parishes were taken over and soon the banner of Province of St. Barbara was unfurled in Washington, Oregon, California, Arizona, New Mexico and Utah.

World War I resulted in anti-German bigotry toward these German friars, thus interrupting their work. The Province began looking ahead and toward the east, to China. Friars were soon in Kiangsu,

China, and then in Shantung. This was a glorious and providential time for the Province, with missionaries throughout the southwest and even in China. It was also a time of pain and difficulty, with friars imprisoned by the Japanese during World War II, and then again by the Communists after the war. Brother Benedict Jensen, OFM, was murdered by the Communists and is the proto-martyr (the first to be killed for his faith) of the Province of St. Barbara.

After World War II, the friars turned their attention to high school ministry with schools in Phoenix, Santa Barbara, Sacramento, Oakland, and later Salem, Oregon. This period also saw the establishment of the Franciscan retreat ministry, first with Serra Retreat in Malibu, and then centers at San Juan Bautista, Scottsdale, Danville, Three Rivers and Mesilla Park, New Mexico.

They also saw a need for more Catholic involvement in the communications industry so, in the 1940s "The Hour of St. Francis" radio program was established, with great success. It was followed by a TV program and other media productions under the name Franciscan Communications. (In the 1990s this communications ministry was absorbed.. into Franciscan Media, sponsored by the Province of St. John the Baptist in Cincinnati, Ohio.)

## MINISTRIES ABOUND

True to their founder, Franciscans have a long history of working with the poor. This tradition is evident in the origins of the St. Anthony Foundation, founded in 1950 during the post World War II economic boom—a boom that left behind the PTSD victims of the war. The creation of St. Anthony's Dining Room was an effort to move away from the bread lines, to recognize the dignity of the poor by inviting people to sit at tables in community. Additional St. Francis Centers in Portland, Seattle, Fresno, Phoenix, and Los Angeles were established. Moreover, there were (and still are) many places where Secular Franciscans (a worldwide order of lay people), with friar support, offer food and shelter to the poorest.

Caring for the poor evolved into a great and challenging social justice ministry in the Province. Members of the Franciscan family were leaders in what became the worldwide Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation movement. Friars protested the arms race, fought for better living and working conditions for farmworkers, and stood up for justice and peace whenever and wherever it was necessary.

Good people have always been attracted to the

friars. Our retreat centers offered a solid program for many devoted men and women to share in the ministry. Retreat ministry in the Province underscores the deep realization that places of healing, respite and prayer play a vital role in changing hearts. That is a key part of carrying on our Franciscan tradition.

Educational ministry with our Franciscan School of Theology has trained hundreds of friars and lay persons over the decades. To this day, that training plays a vital role in furthering Franciscan tradition and charism throughout the Province—to Church leaders, lay and ordained, who will serve in the future, and to Province institutions which carry the Franciscan mission. Educational ministry is also a key component of mission integration.

The Province of St. Barbara is smaller today than it was in the past. Demographics have changed—many of our friars who joined as baby-boomer teens are becoming elderly. The Church's rediscovery of lay ministry in the 1960s, along with any number of Church issues since that time, caused many who might have joined a religious order to choose Church leadership and service outside of religious communities.

The ongoing communications revolution has not only brought the world closer together, but has also caused many young people today to relate more cautiously with the institutions of their parents' generation. All of these factors mean, that at this particular time, the worldwide Franciscan community is changing, and, in wealthier parts of the world, growing smaller. We are no exception. We have been shrinking in recent time. Our ministries are fewer, and possibly will become even fewer in the future.

Francis' and Clare's world was smaller, too. But still they received their God-given mission, their calling. The friars of Province of St. Barbara along with our lay partners—women and men, young and old—in our parishes, schools, missions, soup kitchens, retreat centers, and other social ministries, follow in Francis and Clare's footsteps, enlivened by Jesus Christ, inspired and empowered by the charism of Francis, the *Poverello*, "little poor man," of Assisi.

Like you, we are saintly and not-so-saintly, we are dreamers, and quite a few of us are doers. Wherever we go, we have the same simple wish, one that Francis himself wished for his followers: The Lord give you peace! 🙏

*Much of this booklet is adapted from works of friars Melvin A. Jurisch, Roy M. Gasnick, Joseph P. Chinnici and Berard Connolly, OFM.*



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