



LIKE A KITE: REFLECTIONS ON LIFE AS A PRIEST
An Interview with Fr. Franklin Fong, OFM by Fran Anderson

[This past June, Dn. Franklin Fong, OFM was ordained as a priest at St. Francis of Assisi Church. The following article is based on an interview with Fr. Franklin 40 days after his ordination—Editor]

We all know how it feels to go from reading something in a book or learning it in a classroom to applying what we've learned in the "real world." Whether it's reading a manual on car repair and then facing an engine, or reading about caring for a newborn and then actually bringing one home, despite all our careful preparation, the experience is not quite what we expected. Fr. Franklin Fong, OFM is no different; he studied earnestly for the priesthood – read the books, attended the lectures, wrote the papers, earned a Master's Degree in Divinity. He thought that he was prepared.

And then came his first infant baptism. He found himself losing his place, missing his cues, "escaping into the words and the actions of the ritual." After all the preparation – meeting with parents, anointing their infants and rehearsing – he was surprised by "the affective moment of scooping up water three times, pouring it over the head of the baby and chanting, 'I baptize you...'"

"On the first dip of water, my mind instantly transported me to being in the river Jordan, from being with the baby to Jesus' baptism by John the Baptist. It seemed, 'though we were in 2005, that we were also back over 2,000 years ago, standing there with Jesus. The continuity of our spiritual heritage came upon me as I continued the baptism.'" His "sense of time



Ordination of Fr. Franklin Fong, OFM
Standing L-R: John Tran Nguyen, OFM; Ponchie Vasquez, OFM; Judy Miranda; Seated L-R: Very Rev. Mel Jurisich, OFM; Provincial Minister, St. Barbara Province; Most Rev. Richard J. Garcia, Auxiliary Bishop, Diocese of Sacramento; Kneeling: Franklin Fong, OFM

PHOTO: J.D. WARRICK

disappeared."

What was happening? Fr. Franklin describes this experience as a "mystical moment," both powerful and worrisome. What to do when you feel "at one with the ritual and the Eucharistic experience" and yet still have a central role to play in that ritual?

One answer is repetition: after practice comes facility. Once we learn to ride a bike, we don't have to think any more about where to put our hands or feet. As Fr. Franklin admits, he is "still learning the rhythm." Another answer is to rely on the *Sacramentary* and the script for each liturgy: "It's as if I'm the kite, and there's this tiny string that grounds me. That's my connection to the present moment," he says. He also feels grounded by the community of St. Francis Parish. "I don't do this alone," he says. "I do this with each one of you."

Fr. Franklin takes "that sense of relationship," the "presence of gathered community" with him when he is called to minister to strangers. When he is called to the hospital, to the jail or prison, he feels that "all of you are there with me in spirit." He believes that he has been "commissioned by this parish to go out and minister to absolute strangers and that's okay. It's by the grace of God that we're not the person who's not in the circle. It wasn't that long ago that we were all outside the circle. That is what has brought us together, and that's why we're so open to commissioning people."

What was his experience of being ordained a priest? "I didn't remember anything of it," he admits, except "when I put my hands into the bishop's hands and he anointed them, when the friars stood and sang the blessing of St. Francis, and when they finished and the congregation stood and sang the blessing of St. Clare. I had to watch the DVD to see what happened." That was a mystical experience for Fr. Franklin indeed!

Fr. Franklin is now serving as Parochial Vicar for St. Francis of Assisi Parish, presiding at liturgies (Sunday Mass, baptisms, weddings, and funerals); assisting with sacramental preparation; visiting the homebound, the imprisoned, the sick and the dying; and ministering to parishioners and to others in need. "God is persistent," Fr. Franklin reminds us, "and calls us to deepen our faith journey." How fortunate we are to have Fr. Franklin ready to walk with us on that journey! ❖



WILKOMMEN, BIENVENUE, WELCOME!

By Jerry Moore

“... We respond to the command of Jesus to love by welcoming all, evangelizing, supporting spiritual growth, and being Eucharist to each other. Challenged by the Holy Spirit, we reach beyond ourselves to care for our neighbors, the poor, the marginalized, and those alienated by our Catholic Church. . . .”¹

These clear and lovely words soothe our hearts. That’s one of the reasons we’re Franciscans.

In his New Year’s greeting² to us this year, Father Anthony chose these powerful, yet utterly simple, words to say it even better: “... Welcome. Join us. Pray.” His invitation accompanied his parish Sunday Bulletin letter in which he told us of his chance encounter with a stranger in the Parish Center who “... asked if it was O.K. to pray in our Church.” One doesn’t need to guess what Fr. Anthony’s reply was.

This reminded him, as it reminds all of us, of a continuing need to let folks who are not yet familiar with our Church, or the parish it represents and serves, know that they are warmly welcomed here and invited to share their spirituality with us. So, about a year ago, a committee formed to investigate the advisability and assess the likely effectiveness of a welcome banner for the church. “... Yeah! Plaster it across the front of the church so nobody can miss it! Subtlety need not apply,” said some. Others said, “Now wait a minute.”³

Well, they got their heads together. And they reasoned with one another. Rumor has it they even let themselves be “influenced”

¹ From the Mission Statement of St. Francis of Assisi Parish

² St. Francis of Assisi Parish Bulletin, January 1, 2006, pg 1.

³ Just kidding, folks.

by the Holy Spirit. It surely looks like it, because . . . **Look what they’ve given us!!!!**



Front of Church with preliminary banner design

PHOTO: CATHY FLORES

“They” are Judy Wegener, Deborah Jones, Cathy Flores, Jean Iacino and Fran Anderson. This Welcome Banner Committee got together following discussions by the Parish Staff and the Parish Council, both of which groups concurred that we needed some sort of overt, highly visible welcoming invitation outside our Church.

The concept of having a banner do this for us was something of a follow-on to the banners Ardis Bow designed and painted for our parish’s 100th anniversary celebration in 1995. Inspiration also came from anniversary banners displayed at the San Damiano Retreat Center near Danville.

To furnish the banner production team an inspiration boost and to make sure the rest of us parishioners got to have our say, they encouraged parishioners to think about this concept and submit their ideas and comments via the parish website. And comment we did. That gave the banner team some “welcome” input and helped them settle on a design direction for the banner. Banners, actually. A banner will hang on each of the two large pillars outside the main doors to the church. One banner says what we are—St. Francis of Assisi Parish. The other will say “welcome” in several languages—English, German, Spanish, Tagalog, and Chinese are several that have been proposed. (The only thing missing is a “translate” button.)

Judy Wegener’s pencils flew, brushes dipped and design talents soared, giving us this compelling, inviting proclamation for one and all . . .

Welcome. Join us. Pray.” ❖

MASS APPEAL

Publisher

Fr. Anthony M. Garibaldi, OFM
Pastor, St. Francis of Assisi Parish

Communications Committee

Fran Anderson
Ernie Barbeau
Cathy Chenu-Campbell
Cathy Flores
Fr. Franklin Fong, OFM
Jerry Moore
Bob Reid
J.D. Warrick
Judy Wegener

Mass Appeal and our parish website are published by the Communications Committee of the Parish Council of St. Francis of Assisi Parish

www.stfrancisparish.com



October 14 Mini-Retreat with Br. Bill Short, OFM

By Fran Anderson



“My great passion is to help others unpack the revolutionary insights of Francis and Clare of Assisi. It is amazing to realize that these two friends had a vision of an inclusive Church community 800 years ago.” – Br. Bill Short, OFM



PHOTO: WWW.FST.EDU

On Saturday, October 14, Br. Bill Short, OFM will lead a mini-retreat for our parish on Franciscan spirituality. Taking his book, *Poverty & Joy: The Franciscan Tradition*, as a starting point, he will consider such themes as the Incarnation, poverty as a way to God, suffering and healing, and creation—humanity & nature—in harmony. To register, be sure to pick up a flyer in the church literature racks or register online at www.stfrancisparish.com. Choose one session to attend; both are identical. The 9:30AM session will include a Continental breakfast; the 6:30pm session will include a spaghetti supper immediately after 5:15PM Mass.

Br. Bill Short, OFM is on the faculty of the Franciscan School of Theology in Berkeley. He is a scholar equally comfortable in the fields of spirituality, Christian history and the Franciscan tradition, as well as a popular leader of retreats and workshops.



St. Francis of Assisi Parish

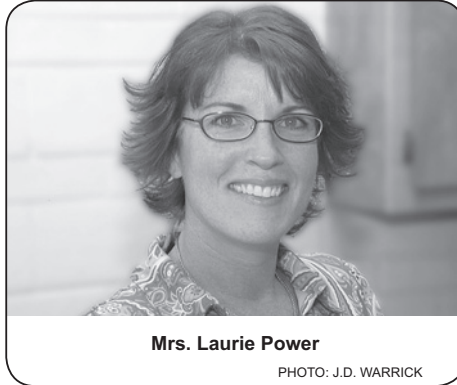
MEET MRS. LAURIE POWER

By J.D. Warrick

But Jesus called the children to him and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." -Luke 18:16

It has been a long, busy summer for Fairfield resident Laurie Power. Since the first of July she has been making the commute from her home in Fairfield to St. Francis Elementary School in Sacramento, where she has joined the staff as Principal. July and August were filled with planning meetings, "in-service" time, School Advisory Commission meetings, and an update to the Emergency Plan. Not to mention getting a fresh coat of paint for her office.

And it has been a long and winding road which brought Mrs. Power to our school. From childhood she was drawn



Mrs. Laurie Power

PHOTO: J.D. WARRICK

to teaching, although God seemed to point her in another direction for awhile. Instead of teaching a room full of students, she became a stay-at-home Mom for her three children, Kelly (now 21), Tim (now 20) and Ellyse (now 19). Then, one day many years later, her life changed when, after attending a school Mass at Holy Spirit Church in Fairfield, she experienced an overwhelming

sensation that she should become a Catholic schoolteacher. And so began a journey that would see her spending six years teaching second grade and two years teaching fifth grade, during which time she also served as Vice-Principal at Holy Spirit School in Fairfield before coming to St. Francis to share her love for the Church and her passion for nurturing children.

When asked about public versus private schools, Mrs. Power noted that faith was the difference. That "throughout the day, in any situation, you can talk about God or Jesus or the Gospel." Her ideal for a Catholic school teacher is someone who is compassionate, has a great vision, makes people feel welcome, is not afraid to take risks, and who teaches the message of Jesus

continued on back page

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

By Bob Reid, Parish Council Chair

The Parish Council welcomed recently elected members and elected officers at the July 11, 2006 meeting. Returning members elected to a second term are: Stephen Tholcke, David Sundquist, Janet Vitt, Jeff Fields and Bob Reid. Newly elected members are Rosalie Rashid and Eloise Anderson.

Also new this year is Judy Guardalabene who was appointed at the June meeting to fill the term of Sandra Nelson, who resigned.

New officers are Bob Reid, Chair; Stephen Tholcke, Vice Chair; and Cathy Chenu-Campbell, Secretary.

Mike Falasco and Paul Rieschick are co-chairs of the Picnic Committee.



Members of the Parish Council

Top L-R: Marianne Grisez, Paul Rieschick, David Sundquist, Janet Vitt, Betty Podzius, Eloise Anderson; Front L-R: Jean Iacino, Rosalie Rashid, Judy Guardalabene, Bob Reid, Father Anthony, Cathy Chenu-Campbell, Jeff Fields; Not Pictured: Jerry Hollis, Stephen Tholcke

PHOTO: J.D. WARRICK

St. Francis Parish Council members and Staff held a joint **planning session** on June 21. Topics included: Whole Community Catechesis; a Fall mini-retreat on October 14 to be led by Br. Bill Short, OFM; and a week-long Lenten Retreat in March 2007. A detailed report is available from PC Member Janet Vitt, who can be reached at Janet.Vitt@gmail.com.

Paul Rieschick, PC Fund Development Chair; Rich Csaposs, Chair of the Finance Council; and Father Anthony worked together on a presentation about **parish finances** given at all Masses the weekend of September 9 & 10. Council members were available after all masses to discuss this topic with parishioners. ❖

Save these Dates...

>>>><<<<*

Annual Parish Picnic
Sunday, October 8
After 9:30AM Mass

in the park
across from the Church

>>>><<<<*

- **Parish Council Meetings:**
2nd Tuesday of the month,
7-9 PM in Brunsmann Hall
- **Meet Your Parish Council:**
1st weekend of the month,
outside Church

MASS APPEAL



St. Francis of Assisi Parish
1066 26th Street
Sacramento, CA 95816

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Sacramento, CA
Permit No. 330



“Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.”

1 Peter 4:10

MEET MRS. LAURIE POWER

continued from page 3

by living faith daily. She was drawn to St. Francis Elementary because she found “lots of life and happiness here.”

Her immediate goals at St. Francis Elementary are to observe and plan, to “take what’s here and build upon it.” Although, she admits, the first year will be largely observation, two priorities are updating text books and school security. She recognizes that some of the staff members have been with the school for 20 years or more, and she has a genuine appreciation for the current staff, saying she “supports the team 110%.”

For Mrs. Power, working with the Franciscans will be a new and welcome experience. Let us all be sure to take a moment whenever possible to extend to her a warm Franciscan welcome. ❖

Information: Ministries & Events

Please check the weekly bulletin on our website at www.stfrancisparish.com, or call the parish office at (916) 443-8084 if you would like more information about, or would like to become involved with, any of our ongoing ministries, or for information about any of our scheduled events.

Mass Schedule

- Saturday Vigil—5:15 PM
- Sunday—7:30 AM, 9:30 AM, 12 NOON
- Daily Mass Monday-Friday—12:10 PM in Chapel (Monday & Friday are Communion services)

Reconciliation

- 2nd & 4th Saturdays—4:00-5:00 PM and by appointment

MASS APPEAL

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Fr. Franklin Fong, OFM
- Parish Welcome Banner
- Mini-Retreat: Bill Short, OFM
- Meet Mrs. Laurie Power
- Parish Council News

ST. FRANCIS WELCOMES NEW PARISHIONERS

- | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| - Linda Ashley | - Michael Fiesel Jr. & Faith Dayoan | - Arthur Pereira, Sr. |
| - Patricia Baker | - Brian Gleason | - Brian & Karen Perone |
| - Jana Boccalon & Derick Taylor | - Laura Gomes | - Patricia Pon |
| - Randall Born | - Phyllis A. & Robert R. Hipps | - Sophia Ramirez & Jerry Hernandez |
| - Barbara Brown | - Tanya and Roman Hustad | - Scott & Amy Rigby |
| - Geronimo & Sray Campanile | - Asha Jennings | - Myrna Rodriguez |
| - Perrie Carlson & Rick Taylor | - Bridget Kurtt & Keith DeJong | - Elizabeth Rodriguez & Ruben Salazar |
| - Martine Carlton | - Linda Lee | - Patrick & Jaclyn Samulewski |
| - Virginia Carrizales | - Alma Lopez & Justin Montgomery | - Thea & Matthew Smith |
| - Nieves & April Chavez | - Patricia & James Macias | - OJ Solander |
| - Scott Davis | - Derrick & Judy Marion | - Chad & Roxanne Stellmacher |
| - Mark De Cell & Rachel Arruda-De Cell | - Shari & Gavin McHugh | - Jason Tarman |
| - Jodel & Maria Deauna | - Myles & Monica McMahon | - Joshua Utter & Angela Hanly |
| - Marilyn Delgado | - Elias & Marisol Mendoza | - Delia & Bernard Villafior |
| - Trisha Eckard-Casillas & TJ Casillas | - Ignacio Ochoa | - Steve Yee & Carlota Gutierrez |
| - Jetty Escobar | - Chinyere A. Okoro | - Greg & Kristina Zumstein |
| - Greg Ferguson | - Greg & Jennyfer Osecheck | |