

Franciscan Alumni Association

Established May 28th, 1989

Serving Provinces of Our Lady of Guadalupe and St. John the Baptist

www.franciscan-alumni.org

Volume 25, Issue 1

Spring 2014

2014 Chapter: June 19 - 22 in Washington, D.C.

Please join us for the 2014 Chapter in the nation's capital! This is the annual reunion for all members of the Alumni Association, plus their families and friends. It is going to be an unforgettable experience as well as a truly won-



derful opportunity for fellowship and spiritual connection.

The reunion agenda includes Thursday evening socializing at the hotel, Friday sightseeing in the capital city, Friday evening dinner at the restaurant on the 17th floor of the hotel, with a spectacular view of Washington DC! On Saturday there will be a tour of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception and the Blessed John Paul II Shrine, followed by Mass and dinner at The Franciscan Monastery of the Holy

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Attractions in the D.C. Area

Museums, including Smithsonian, Air and Space, American Indian, Art, Natural History

National Mall, Washington Monument, Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials, WWII, Korean and Vietnam Veterans Memorials

White House, Capitol Building, Ford's Theater, Spy Museum, Botanical Gardens, National Zoo, Georgetown, Mount Vernon, Old Town Alexandria

Franciscan Spirit Is Alive in Alumni

His former students are horsing around, but Savio Russo resists the urge to take them to task. "I was kind of a stinker growing up myself," says Savio, who taught many of the teens who timidly pushed open the massive doors of St. Francis Seminary to begin their Franciscan education. Today those kids – forever young in his eyes – are 50-plus years old, but they never forgot this place, the things they learned, the friendships that stuck.

Savio, a religion teacher and Dean of Students from 1971-'81, is back at the seminary, now a retirement

community, for the Franciscan Alumni Association Reunion in Cincinnati. The group was formed in



Don Miller, Celebrant at Mass in Aubert's Peace Garden

*By Toni Cashnelli, SJB News Notes
with photos by Frank Jasper '64 and Dave Imhoff '71*

1989 so that those who contemplated or entered religious life but chose another path could gather to revisit the past. And as happens at most school reunions, they have reverted to the youthful, boisterous behavior that got them into trouble with teachers like Savio. Go figure: "The ones who were the biggest troublemakers are the most successful," he says, shaking his head.

Clustered around folding chairs in the tree-lined Peace Garden while they prepare for Mass, these guys are clearly having a blast. A conversation typically starts, "This is my

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Reconnecting with Fr. Gil '53

By Dennis Sweeney '66

Steve Engelhardt '66 and I spent a pleasant and enlightening afternoon chatting with Fr. Gil Wohler. As most of you know, the "Farm" is now a retirement community and Fr. Gil lives there. He is the Chaplain of the community.

The reason for our visit was to hear about Gil's years in South Africa. He taught church history at a seminary in Pretoria. When he arrived in the country in 1990, Nelson Mandela was still in jail and apartheid was the law of the land. Pretoria was an all-

white city and black people were allowed in only to work! He told of times he'd been called to bail seminarians out of jail.

"For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others"

Nelson Mandela

In time Mandela was released and there was a free election. Gil stood in line with his students for six (or was it eight?) hours to vote in that first free election. He was there

making history. He recommended Mandela's book, "Long Walk to Freedom," which I will surely read.

We also reminisced a bit about our time at the seminary. Gil said he remembers our class very well because we were the first class he taught there. These many years later I could kind of see that time from his vantage point, a young priest being "thrown to the wolves"!

Not really. We were harmless.

2013 Pre-reunion Activities

By Paul Landers '76

Although the main events of our annual Chapter include tours, Mass and dinner on Saturday, the official start of the reunion is the Friday evening social. It's enjoyable to kick back and chat with other alumni over cold beverages and appetizers.

Nearly 40 of our members attended the party at the Hampton Inn in Fairfield, Ohio, including a few who were not going to be available for the Saturday activities.

There was no formal program that evening, but the conversation, anecdotes, and laughter lasted long into the night as a good time was had by all.



2013 Christian Life Award

By Tom Shumate '77

Fr. Dan Kroger '64 is the 2013 recipient of the Christian Life Award from the Franciscan Alumni Association.

Dan possesses many admirable qualities, including love for the poor, a servant heart, a brilliant intellect and a calm, generous and caring approach. Over his many years of service he has worked as a teacher at Roger Bacon High School, a missionary in the Philippines, a professor at Our Lady of Angels seminary, theology department chairman at De La Salle University, and is currently the chief executive officer and publisher of Franciscan Media (formerly St. Anthony Messenger Press).

Dan received a BA in Philosophy from Duns Scotus College, a Master of Divinity from St. Leonards, a master in theology from the University of Dayton, and a PhD in Christian Ethics from the University of Notre Dame.

As a high school teacher, Dan was very much loved by the students and had a great influence in the lives of many youths. Deacon John Gerke, a Roger Bacon grad and former Duns Scotus seminarian, describes Dan as the father that he never had.

After faithfully serving at Roger Bacon High School, Dan was approved to serve as a missionary in the Philippines, which he did from 1979 to 1986. During that time he



worked with the poor in sometimes dangerous situations, both from natural threats such as typhoons as well as man-made threats. Years later someone once asked him if his job at Franciscan Media was stressful, to which he replied, "This is nothing compared to having a gun pointed at your head."

In a pastoral role in the barrios, Dan's heart was with the people. He approached them on their level and took it upon himself to become fluent in three Filipino languages: Tagalog, Cebuano, and Waray-Waray.

He lived with the poor in their primitive environment, void of many modern conveniences, including electricity. He was also subject to squalls as he traveled to work on various islands.

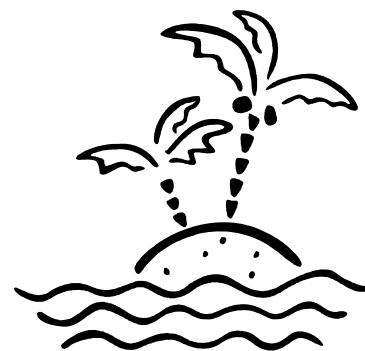
Dan sometimes talks of the injustices that occurred to the people under the Marcos regime. As a skilled ham radio operator, he was able to work with the people to acquire and report important infor-

mation, especially when the authorities were not truthful in their communications.

Dan left the Filipino missions in 1987 to earn his doctorate in Christian Ethics from the University of Notre Dame. His dissertation, which later became a published book, focused on the "Just War Theory" from the Filipino perspective.

After his doctorate work Dan returned to the Philippines in 1992 and took on the role as a seminary professor. Dan's influence in this role, and later as a professor and department head at De La Salle University in Manila, has had broad influence on many students and religious people throughout Asia.

Fr. Dan Kroger's devotion, virtue, selfless service and lasting impact reflect great credit on himself and the Franciscan Order. The Alumni Association is pleased to be able to honor him with the 2013 Christian Life Award!



2014 Franciscan Alumni Chapter Plan

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Land (hosted by Fr. Larry Dunham '65, Guardian). Fr. Larry is the former Provincial Minister of Our Lady of Guadalupe as well as a former faculty member of St. Francis Seminary in Cincinnati.

Please tell us if you will be able to participate in this event. You can send your response and any questions to 2014reunion@franciscan-alumni.org or by mail to the return address shown on the last page of this newsletter. Also let us know if you would like help with organizing or joining a car-pool for the trip to Washington D.C. or if you need any other assistance with arranging transportation or lodging.

Washington is a great place to have a reunion, perhaps combined with a summer vacation, as there are many things to do and see in the area. The Metro subway system allows you to move around the city conveniently and economically. Most attractions in the area are free or reasonably priced.

Itinerary

Thursday, June 19 — Evening social at hotel

Friday, June 20 — 9 am morning prayer, sightseeing in groups, 6:30 pm dinner at Vantage Point Restaurant atop hotel

Saturday, June 21 — 9 am morning prayer, 9:30 am depart for tours of Basilica and John Paul II Memorial, 12:30 pm lunch, 3 pm tour of Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land, 5 pm Mass, 6:30 pm dinner/social

Sunday, June 22—9 am morning prayer

Chapter Hotel:

Holiday Inn Rosslyn at Key Bridge
(<http://www.hirosslyn.com>)
Group name: FAA Phone: (703)807-2000
Price: \$119.00 plus tax per night, with free breakfast, free parking, swimming pool and close proximity to outstanding Washington D.C. sights. Book the hotel by May 19th to get this special group price. You may also want to check on discount prices available on the hotel website, such as AAA or senior

This is one of the easiest places to travel to in the United States, with three major airports (National, Dulles, Baltimore). One can often find great air fare and a direct flight. And by car it's less than eight hours from Cincinnati, with free parking at the hotel. If you fly into Washington National Airport (DCA), the hotel is just a few minutes away via the Metro subway (Blue Line) that goes directly from the airport terminal to Rosslyn Station, which is a block from the hotel.



Please see updates to this plan at franciscan-alumni.org/reunions/2014-reunion

Ted Gomez '72 and his daughter Rosie are the coordinators for this event. Ted is part of the southwest contingent that will be traveling to Washington for this reunion.

We hope to see you in D.C. this June!

Franciscan Spirit at 2013 Chapter

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wife [insert name],” and segues into, “Was he in your class?”

“They like to talk about the old times,” says Nancy Imhoff, married for 40 years to Dave Imhoff, past president of the group. “All these guys have different jobs, but there’s something very similar about them,” Nancy says, “The



Franciscan feeling is in them all. It’s in their hearts.”

Joe Edwards, class of ’79, calls it “a strong charism. Everybody ended up taking part of it with them.” Says Savio, “People talk about it as something you taught, something you caught.” The vibe here feels like any gathering of friars.

The June 22 afternoon Mass is part of a yearly reunion that is held at various locations – last year it was Bloomington, Ill. – and normally includes a bit of history. (This morning they toured the crypt at St.

Francis Seraph Church.) The minor seminary is always a big draw for former students and the friars who have stayed connected to their classmates.

When you come back, says Paul Kaelin, class of ’79, “There’s a feeling of home. It’s a ‘safe’ place.” At 86, Lester Morris, a 1945 grad, is the senior among 75 attendees. “I went to the novitiate and then Duns Scotus for three years,” says Lester, who has missed only two reunions since 1992. “I didn’t feel like I had the vocation anymore” is the reason he left, but “I took away a lot of good things.” Wife Barb agrees. “He still goes to Mass every day.”

Others are similarly up front about the

choices they made in high school or in the Order. “It was the celibacy thing,” Dave Imhoff says of his decision about religious life.



Paul Landers, Mike Niklas, Tom Shumate, Butch Feldhaus

“I pretty much decided the priesthood was not for me,” says Dave Gehring, class of ’72, who later taught math at the minor seminary to, among others, Tom Cruise.

“I decided God was calling the wrong number,” says Pat Findlay, here from 1970 to ’72 before he transferred to Roger Bacon.



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Franciscan Alumni Association

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Ironically, the celebrant for today's Mass is someone most of these alumni have not met. Don Miller introduces himself and explains that he recently attended his own high school reunion in Peoria. "The idea of these things is powerful, finding where we're coming from." And what's more powerful than the rite of passage memories evoked by such an occasion?

In lay life as well as religious life, "Discipleship is more than just saying 'Jesus is Lord,'" according to Don. What's important is "living the faith, each and every day." Those who were taught here have themselves become teachers. "Haven't you been doing the same thing, teaching the faith at work, wherever you are? Hopefully your faith will rub off."

When attendees noisily gather under the patio for a group portrait, Dave Imhoff looks around. "This is where I grew up, here with these guys at seminary. I met my best friends for life."

Savio is having as good a time as his students. "When we were here these knuckleheads weren't learning anything," he says in jest. In hindsight, "I



Savio Russo and Don Miller

The Franciscan Alumni Association newsletter is mailed to approximately 1,200 members for whom we have addresses. The only cost of production is the expense of printing and mailing. Additional stories and photos are available on the website. Thank you for your interest and support!

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