Seraphim Wirth, fbp is Ordained to the Sacred Order of the Priesthood by Archbishop Bernard Hebda.

The ancient symbol of the imposition of hands is the effective sign of the permanent conferral of the priestly office by the successors of the Apostles.

A PRIEST FOREVER

Ordination Photography by Dave Hrbacek | The Catholic Spirit

Devoted to the Gospel of Life
Our Cover Story: A Brother–Priest
“The purpose of a Brother-Priest being ordained a member of the Institute (community) would be to serve the sacramental and spiritual needs of the Franciscan Brothers of Peace and their apostolates.”

— Excerpt from our Statutes

Since the beginning of our foundation in 1982, Brother Michael Gaworski, fbp, envisioned that there would likely be a minority of members called to Holy Orders to carry out what is stated above in our Statutes. Furthermore, it is a lifetime vowed member who would submit his request to the Community Servant, requiring his approval while seeking the consent of the Brotherhood Council.

What sets us apart from some religious communities of men who have members who are clerical (priest-brothers) as well as non-clerical (brothers), is that we perceive our primary vocation to be what communities were traditionally comprised of: non-clerical members. Even a vocation to religious priesthood — that of a priest who belongs to a religious community — knows that his foundational calling is to the vows (evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience) he professes.

We are grateful and give glory to God for bringing us to this suitable time in the history of our community, that one among our “band of brothers” has been called to serve his brothers sacramentally. Our warmest congratulations, and the promise of our fraternal love and prayers for our brother, Father Seraphim!

Veni Creator Spiritus! (Come Creator Spirit)
The brothers had a most joyous and blessed Easter Season as we celebrated with family, friends and those whom we serve. We pray that the Holy Spirit bestow an abundance of grace on all humankind, kindling in every heart the fire of His love, so that the face of the earth may be renewed.

Rosaries in the Rotunda
On February 19th, the Minnesota Catholic Conference held the 2nd Biennial Catholics at the Capitol, which enables Catholics from all over Minnesota to come together and be educated and energized about key issues and challenges facing our state, followed by pre-arranged meetings with our elected officials in order to effectively engage with them. An integral part of the day was the continual praying of the rosary in the Capitol rotunda which the brothers were honored to lead.

On May 5th the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis celebrated its 71st Annual Family Rosary Procession which began on the steps of the State Capitol and continued up to the Cathedral of St. Paul where Brother Antonio captured this remarkable photo. Although the beam of light in the photo was likely caused by the lens of the camera, one is reminded of the “Miracle of the Sun,” the culminating event of apparitions from our Lady of Fatima which began May 13th, 1917.

All Aboard for IRL
Brother Dominic Michael talked me into taking the train to Chicago (my first rail ride in the US) to attend the Institute on Religious Life Conference (IRL). It is the only way Brother travels so I acquiesced even though it would take extra time. I must say it was thoroughly enjoyable, due in large part to the wonderful people that we met along the way and the scenery could not be beat. The Conference, which was held on the weekend of Divine Mercy Sunday, was likewise enjoyable. We attended some good workshops, participated in beautiful liturgies and caught up with many fellow religious sisters, priests and brothers. Two familiar Minnesota faces
Breathing with Both Lungs

On May 11th, the brothers were invited to join the parishioners of Holy Trinity Orthodox Church in St. Paul to speak about our apostolates and how our groups may collaborate in outreach to those in need. We also joined them for Vespers in their beautiful church and shared a wonderful meal at Archangel Michael Hall. We are grateful to Father Jonathan Proctor, Rector of Holy Trinity, and Michael Lotti for inviting us to fellowship with our Eastern Orthodox brothers and sisters. Pope Saint John Paul II said it best when he stated, “The Church needs to learn to breathe again with its two lungs — its Eastern one and its Western one.”

Statue Appeal

“I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Christ Jesus.”
— Philippians 1:6

Some beautifying of our chapel has taken place here at Queen of Peace Friary. Within the past two years, we have painted the walls and ceiling, refinished the wood pillars and panelling, installed energy efficient lighting, and soon we will replace the outdated 1960’s color tinted glass. Besides some splendid religious icons that adorn our chapel, we have four statues that were given to us but are mismatched by style and proportion and if possible we would like to replace them with more befitting images. Then we may use the existing statues throughout other areas of our friaries where matching style and proportioned size is not as critical.

The patroness of our community is Mary, Queen of Peace — which is also the name of our mother–house friary. Well as they say, the rest is history. Thanks be to God, through Mary, Queen of Peace.

Venerable Pope Pius XII instituted the feast of Saint Joseph the Worker (May 1st) in 1955, witnessing the dignity and holiness of human labor. Later, Saint Joseph the Worker also became associated with Religious Brothers, being adopted as our patron saint. We strive to emulate the Saint’s strong, humble, quiet, and vital work in everyday life. The statue of Saint Joseph depicts him holding a carpenter’s framing square.

Lastly, the statues of Saint Francis and Saint Clare of Assisi need no explanation as to how they are “connected” to the Franciscan Brothers of Peace. We are humbled and honored to follow Jesus in the footsteps of these two great Saints of the Church.

We humbly ask you to consider contributing towards the culminating end of our beautification of Queen of Peace Friary chapel by helping us to acquire these beautiful three foot tall hand-carved, hand-painted wooden statues. We thank you ahead of time for your generosity and assure you of our daily communal prayers which are offered before the Blessed Sacrament, through the intercession of the holy women and men depicted in the icons and statues that adorn our friary chapels.
And now we beseech you, Lord, in our weakness, to grant us these helpers that we need to exercise the priesthood that comes from the Apostles. — from the Ordination Prayer

“What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you think of St. Francis of Assisi? If it’s the garden statue in your backyard or animals then I would encourage you to keep reading. St. Francis of Assisi had a deep love for the priesthood and the Holy Eucharist and he has left us writings that reveal this truth.

As I reflect on my journey to the priesthood, I can honestly say that it is an awesome gift. I am unworthy of such a gift as to hold Jesus in my hands. So I ask that you say a prayer for me as I enter a new journey in my personal vocation as a Franciscan Priest and also for the community of the Franciscan Brothers of Peace. May the Holy Spirit guide us in humility.

When I entered the community in 2007 I was inspired by the life of St. Francis and his docility to the movement of the Holy Spirit in his life. I strive to mirror that same docility in my own life.

The entire Franciscan order started from a small seed that was planted in the heart of St. Francis by the Holy Spirit and the amazing thing, is that this seed is planted in us all. The seed is the gift of faith in Jesus Christ in all its fullness.

If we water it with our sacrifices, charity and prayers, it becomes something beautiful in the world as it grows. It is beautiful because it is sustained by the grace of the Body of Christ which flows to us through the Holy Eucharist which is the supreme gift of Jesus in the flesh — making Himself available to us through the Holy Mass.

The following statements are from the writings of St. Francis of Assisi. I present them to you in order to show you the reverence that he had for priests and the Holy Eucharist. Perhaps they will inspire

“I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do.” — John 13:15

by Father Seraphim Wirth, fbp

“I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do.” — John 13:15
you to follow Jesus more closely in your life as they have for me.

"Man should tremble, the world should vibrate, all Heaven should be deeply moved when the Son of God appears on the altar in the hands of the priest."

Letter to the Friars: "I bid you all to show all reverence and all honor possible to the most holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom the things that are in heaven and the things that are on earth are pacified and reconciled to Almighty God. I also beseech in the Lord all my brothers who are and shall be and desire to be priests of the Most High that, when they wish to celebrate Mass, being pure, they offer the true Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ purely, with reverence, with a holy and clean intention, not for any earthly thing or fear or for the love of any man, as it were pleasing men."

A Letter to the Entire Order (1225-1226): "Kissing your feet, therefore, and with all the love of which I am capable, I implore all of you brothers to show all possible reverence and honor to the most holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in Whom that which is in heaven and on earth has been brought to peace and reconciled to Almighty God."

The Admonitions (undated): "Blessed is that servant who has faith in the clergy who live uprightly according to the rite of the Roman Church."
“Man should tremble, the world should vibrate, all Heaven should be deeply moved when the Son of God appears on the altar in the hands of the priest.”
— St Francis of Assisi

The five newly ordained concelebrate the Liturgy of the Eucharist for the first time with Archbishop Hebda, Auxiliary Bishop Andrew Cozzens, and clergy of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul & Minneapolis and the Archdiocese of Boston in the Cathedral and National Shrine of Saint Paul on Saturday, 25 May, 2019.
Archbishop Hebda kisses the hands of Fr. Seraphim after being the first to receive his priestly blessing.

“I am unworthy of such a gift as to hold Jesus in my hands. So I ask that you say a prayer for me as I enter a new journey in my personal vocation as a Franciscan Priest and also for the community of the Franciscan Brothers of Peace. May the Holy Spirit guide us in humility.”

— Fr Seraphim, fbp
“For Christ not only adorns with a royal priesthood the people he has made his own, but with a brother’s kindness he also chooses men to become sharers in his sacred ministry through the laying on of hands.”

— Ordination Liturgy Preface
MASS OF THANKSGIVING
Reception & Banquet, beautifully hosted by the
Church of St. Casimir in St. Paul, and
our dear friends, the Karen Catholic Community
Many memorials intersect with May 1st. In 1955, while many communists and labor movements were celebrating May Day, Pope Pius XII instituted the Feast of St. Joseph the Worker. He sought to Christianize the secular feasting by communicating the Christian dignity of the worker, using St. Joseph as the model.

In 2016, under the auspices of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men, a Think Tank was formed consisting of Religious Brothers who set out to discover ways of promoting the life and work of Religious Brothers and to make known this unique vocation in the Church. What better day is there than the feast day of our vocations’ patron, St. Joseph the Worker, to do just that?

On this May 1st, the third annual Religious Brothers Day, we decided to celebrate by gathering young men for prayer, food, and fellowship. We wanted to support their vocation journeys and at the same time point to St. Joseph, model of holy vocations and great example of virtuous manhood.

We began with Vespers at 5:00 p.m. and then were honored to have Father David Blume, the Archdiocesan Vocations Director, celebrate for us the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. We prayed for God to “prosper the work of our hands” (Psalm 90): as Brothers, discerners, students, workers, and men after God’s heart. In the words of St. Paul, Father Blume exhorted us to “work for Christ and not for men” in all we do (cf. Col. 3:23).

Then Brother Pio fired up the grill for some brats, and we had a feast! It was nice to run into a few “good” problems like not enough chairs at our triple table and running out of the brats (more next year).

After great dinner conversations, it was game time. Four-man foosball got intense. The ping-pong champ was Trenton. Talented sounds from musical instruments echoed through the friary.

To close the evening, we sang Compline before the Lord’s Tabernacle. We praised Jesus for “brother-ing” us, for sharing both His earthly foster father and His heavenly Father with us.

Happy Father’s Day to all the Dads out there who strive to give us a glimpse of the Father’s love!

St. Joseph, A Patron of Religious Brothers?

Yes, he is a patron of husbands and fathers in the married vocation. But Joseph is our patron, too, because he lived the three evangelical counsels heroically. As Religious Brothers, we are consecrated to Jesus through the counsels of poverty, celibate chastity, and obedience. We know of Joseph’s obedience to God and the angel’s revelations through his dreams… take Mary your wife into your home… Name the Child Jesus… depart for Egypt… return… but take a different route! We know of his poverty from his humble trade of carpentry in the
unpopular town of Nazareth. We know of his chastity, for he guarded the very Ark of the New Covenant, the Perpetual Virgin!

Joseph’s silence in the Gospels is a sign of the virtue of humility, a key virtue of our Religious Life. That he provided for his family as a carpenter is a sign of a faithful, skilled laborer and of his understanding of the call and dignity of work. Brothers develop skills to provide generously for the poor we serve. As a foster father he guards the Virgin and Jesus in a most direct way. We Brothers guard Jesus in the Eucharist, keeping watch at many hours daily.

In our Western tradition Joseph was not a biological father, but he was called on to be a father: to provide, protect, defend, love, and shepherd his family. We Brothers aren’t biological fathers, but we are spiritual fathers to many souls: the unborn, the homeless, the hospitalized, the medically vulnerable, the victims of torture, the Karen refugees. It is these souls we are called to “father” as we provide, protect, defend, love and shepherd them. St. Joseph the Worker, pray for Religious Brothers!

“Come and you will see.” — John 1:39
by Brother Paschal Listi, fbp

Among the groups of young people who have visited us, men from the Church of St. Bonaventure in Bloomington brought their serious teenage guys one Friday evening back in April to meet the Brothers. The young men helped feed Christ in the Hungry by bagging groceries followed by brothers sharing about our vocation. We then moved to the chapel for a time of Adoration, reflecting on the Call of the Disciples, and showed them our relic of St. Bonaventure. We look forward to hosting similar groups of guys in the future. Here is what an adult group leader had to say in an email over a month after their visit:

“I wanted to thank you again for letting our group from St. Bonaventure meet with you and the other Brothers of Peace over a month ago, and in particular, I wanted to thank you for your gifts at the end of the night...(Blessed Pardon Crucifixes, St. Benedict and Miraculous Medals)...Multiple people who attended that night, both teens and adult leaders, are continuing to wear these each day. One person even told me that they feel that wearing these medals is genuinely helping them to overcome the sin of pornography in their life. While our time together was short, I wanted to let you know that your impact is still affecting us in direct ways, even a month later. We are keeping you in our prayers, and hope that we will have the opportunity to meet again!”

For more information please contact us: vocation@brothersofpeace.org
Save the Date!

Thank God Ahead of Time:
A Drama about the Life and Times of Blessed Solanus Casey

Written and Produced by Molly Delaney Druffner • Directed by Mary Kratz
Performed by the John Paul II Players

Sunday, July 28th at 7:00 p.m.
St. Patrick Church (lower level)
1095 DeSoto Street • St. Paul, MN 55130

Plus, a special opportunity to venerate and receive a blessing with the relic of Bl. Solanus Casey and to hear from the Vice Postulator of his cause for Canonization.

Tickets at the Door
$10 Kids (12 and under)
$12 Seniors & Students
$15 Adults

Proceeds from the play will help the Brothers replace the roof of their new Novitiate, Bl. Solanus Friary, next door to the Church of St. Patrick.

www.brothersofpeace.org

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Portrait of Blessed Solanus by Br. Dismas, fbp