

# FRANCISCAN BROTHERS OF PEACE

Newsmagazine A.D. 2009 Volume 23 / 3rd Edition



*Brother Michael,  
pray for us!*



Photo by Richard L. Graner

*Celebrating the Ordination of  
Bishop Lee Piché and  
the 25th Jubilee of Brother Paul*

# Brotherhood Update

by Brother Paul, Guardian Overall



## Twenty-Five Years as an FBP Brother

I have heard it said all my life; my parents told me, my teachers told me, and my friends have told me, "Life passes so quickly." In what seems like the blink of an eye, twenty-five years have passed. It has been quite an adventure for me so far and I hope that the Good Lord will let me stay here on earth a little while longer to bring it to a marvelous completion!

Like family life, and life in general, I have experienced great joy, beauty and fulfillment in my life as a Franciscan Brother. I have also experienced great pain, sorrow, betrayal and loss as a brother. Over the years, especially in leadership areas, I always prayed Psalm 90, "Oh Lord grant us joy to balance our afflictions." However, as I reflect on my twenty-five years in religious life I must say that the times of pain or sorrow have helped make me a better man of faith, love, compassion, and forgiveness. It is for this reason I would not change a thing even if I could, and as I told the Lord twenty-five years ago, "I'm Forever Grateful."

I admit there were times when I have struggled and have thought about doing something else in life. Believe me there would be some aspects that would be

so much easier and one could still lead a good Christian life. Purely and simply, it is only the love and grace of God that have led me to this wonderful moment in time.

As I celebrate my 25th Jubilee as a Franciscan Brother and as I turn 50 years of age within the next several months, I want to thank everyone who has been there with me and supported me in my life's vocation. May God bless you abundantly! However, there are two persons I want to thank most of all: my parents, Danny and Mary Kaye O'Donnell. Both of them suffered long illnesses over the course of many years and both died in the last 18 months, with my Mom passing away last Fall on October 4 — the Feast of Saint Francis. Their love for each other and their children, their perseverance through illness and hardship, and their trust in God have been the greatest examples of Christian love and fidelity given to me in this wonderful life. Thanks Mom and Dad!

## Brotherhood Apostolates

In the past month we have had another survivor of torture come to live with us at Queen of Peace Friary in Saint Paul. We currently have five residents who are international survivors of torture. Please pray for these men as they heal and for their loved ones back home who so often remain in grave danger. Our emergency food shelf for families in need is also operating at full capacity. However more food is always needed. As you can see from the articles in this newsletter our Pro-Life apostolate is also keeping us very busy these days. Thank you for helping us to help others in need! May God bless you richly for your generosity.

## Brother Anthony Sweere, fbp Requests Leave of Absence

On June 17, 2009, Brother Anthony Sweere, fbp requested a leave of absence from the Franciscan Brothers of Peace to discern his future and religious vocation. He intends to remain close to the brothers and will be assisting us with some publishing projects in the future. Please pray for Brother Anthony during this time in his life.



The road is long  
With many a winding turn  
That leads us to who knows where  
Who knows when  
But I'm strong  
Strong enough to carry him  
He ain't heavy, he's my brother.



### Father Tim Vakoc Dies Unexpectedly

On June 20, 2009, our dear friend and beloved Army Chaplain, Father Timothy Vakoc, died from an accidental fall while being transferred out of bed at the nursing home where he was residing. His death came very unexpectedly and as a shock to all those who knew and loved him. He was 49 years of age.

Father Tim served in the Army as chaplain from 1996 to 2004. On May 29, 2004, he was gravely wounded by an IED roadside bomb in Mosul, Iraq, suffering a severe brain injury. Father Tim received the title of Major and was awarded the Purple Heart, the Bronze Star and the Combat Action Badge for his service to our country. Since his injury the Franciscan Brothers of Peace visited Father Tim several times each week, assisting him with some of his daily activities. He became a close friend and a part of our community life (Brother Paul, fbp, has been friends with Father Tim's sister Anita Brand for the past 28 years).

"There is a great void in our life now and he will be missed dearly" said Brother Paul. He further noted that just a few days prior to Father Tim's death, Pope Benedict the XVI declared it to be the "Year of the Priest", to be celebrated throughout the Roman Catholic Church. Father Tim was indeed a great example of the priesthood today, so very worthy to go to his eternal reward in the Year of the Priest. Several of the Franciscan Brothers of Peace were privileged to be at his bedside when he died.

More than 2,000 persons, including several hundred priests and deacons, attended Father Tim's funeral on June 26, 2009, at the Cathedral and Shrine of Saint Paul, in Saint Paul, Minnesota. Archbishop John Nienstedt was principal celebrant at the Mass of Christian Burial.

Eternal rest grant unto Father Tim, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him!

## M. Rev. Lee Anthony Piché New Auxiliary Bishop for Saint Paul & Minneapolis



On Monday, June 29, 2009, the Feast of Ss. Peter and Paul, in accord with ancient tradition, our good friend and Br. Paul's former seminary classmate Lee Piché was consecrated for service as Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis.

The liturgy of episcopal ordination was celebrated in the Cathedral and Shrine of Saint Paul in Saint Paul, Minnesota. Archbishop John Nienstedt presided at the liturgy. Archbishop Emeritus Harry Flynn of St. Paul and Minneapolis and Bishop John LeVoor of New Ulm co-consecrated Bishop Piché.

Bishop Piché replaces the Most Reverend Richard E. Pates, who was installed as the Bishop of the Diocese of Des Moines in May of 2008.

"I am honored and humbled by the Holy Father's confidence in me," Piché said of his appointment earlier this year as bishop-elect by His Holiness, Benedict XVI. "This is a great Archdiocese, with many blessed and talented individuals, parishes, and institutions, and with some significant challenges, too. I am grateful to God for calling me to serve in this way. Since receiving this news, I have been praying that God will strengthen me to be faithful in the ministry of bishop."

Archbishop Nienstedt said in his homily, "It is... appropriate that we gather today on this wonderful feast of these two great apostles to ordain through the laying on of hands a successor in that apostolic college. It is through this unbroken succession that the work of Our Savior continues in our own day and age."

In his remarks to the faithful, newly consecrated Bishop Piché said, "Both St. Peter and St. Paul would have been overjoyed — are overjoyed from their place in heaven as they witness this assembly here today. I hope they are happy I was ordained a bishop to succeed them and the other apostles, but I know they would be very happy to see this massive throng of believers, united with one heart and one voice."

Indeed, we unite our voices to that of the whole Church, and express our joy by proclaiming "Many Years!" to you, Bishop Piché!

"Ad Multos Annos!"

*Information for this article was drawn from **The Catholic Spirit***

**On August 22, 2009, a beautiful sunny day in the Twin Cities, Brother Paul O'Donnell, fbp celebrated his 25th anniversary as a Franciscan Brother of Peace.** A Mass of thanksgiving was held at the Church of Saint Columba at 4:30 P.M. with Father Paul Sirba, Moderator of the Curia and Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis presiding. A barbeque reception was held at Queen of Peace Friary located next to the church immediately following the Mass. A great time was had by all, with good food, fun, and Irish and accordion music.

More than 500 guests were on hand to celebrate with Brother Paul and the brothers, including his five siblings and their spouses, many nieces and nephews, and his aunt Sister Marie Patrice O'Donnell, OP, a Sinsinowa Dominican for 65 years.

***Many thanks to ALL who made this day possible!***

August 13, 2009

Dear Brother Paul:

Heartfelt congratulations on the occasion of your 25th Anniversary with the Franciscan Brothers of Peace.

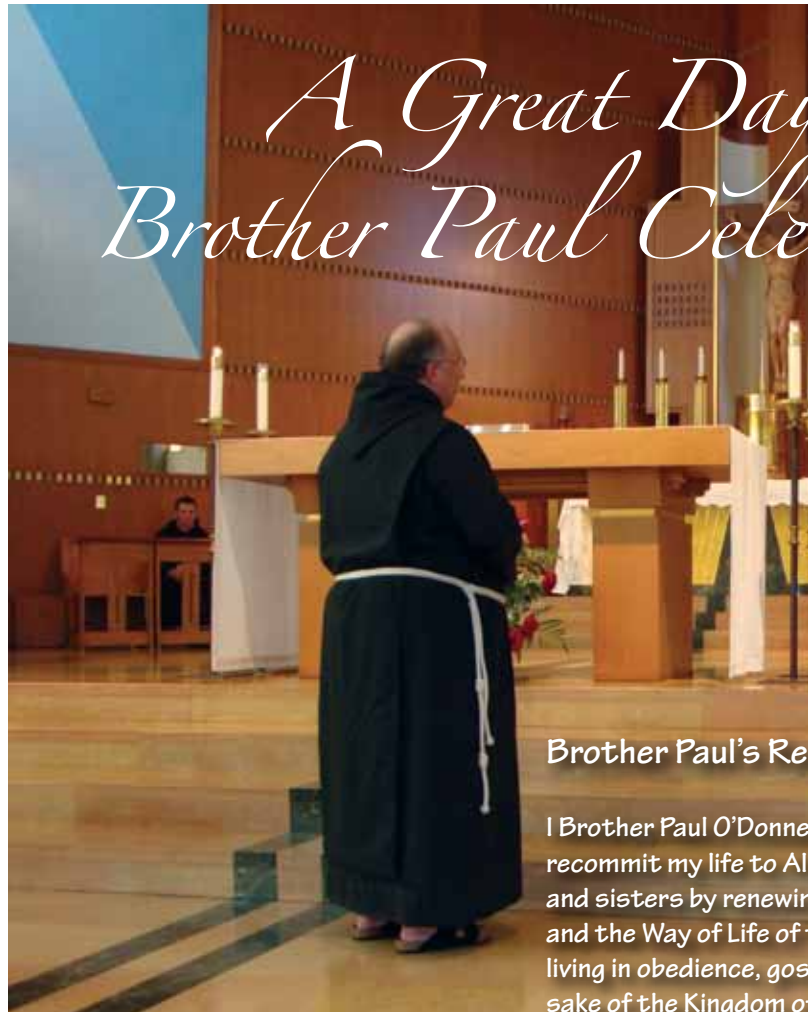
We are all grateful to you for your very generous service to the community and to the broader church in witness to the service of charity and the priority of life.

I regret that I cannot be with you on Saturday, August 22 for the celebration. I assure you of my prayers and very best wishes on this occasion.

With kind personal regards, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

The Most Reverend Richard E. Pates  
Bishop of Des Moines



# *A Great Day Brother Paul Cele*

## **Brother Paul's Re**

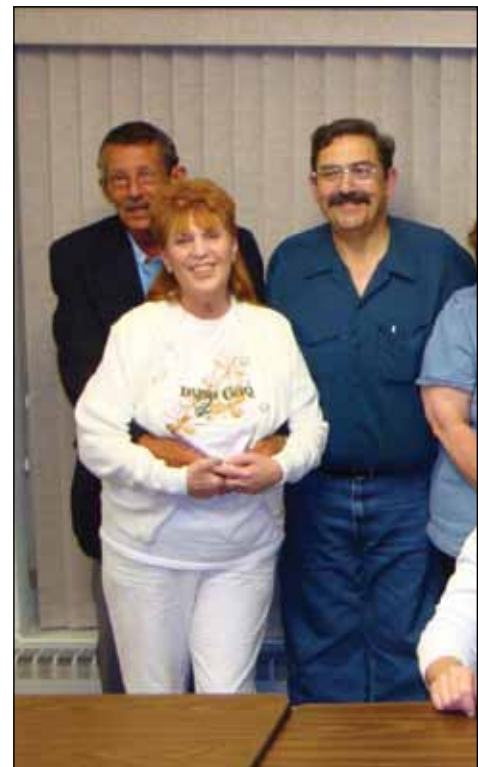
I Brother Paul O'Donne  
recommit my life to AL  
and sisters by renewin  
and the Way of Life of  
living in obedience, gos  
sake of the Kingdom of  
Ever-Virgin, our Holy F  
Founder, Brother Mich  
you, my brothers and s  
our God. Amen!



*Left: Br. Paul with some of his nieces and nephews.*

*Above: Br. Paul addresses those attending his Jubilee Mass.*

*Right Br. Paul with his five siblings and their spouses.*



# ... of Rejoicing: ...brates 25th Jubilee



## ...commitment Prayer

...ll, fbp, striving for perfect charity,  
...mighty God and to you my brothers  
...ng my vows to follow our Statutes  
...the Franciscan Brothers of Peace;  
...pel poverty and in chastity for the  
...f God. And I ask the Blessed Mary,  
...ather Saint Francis, our beloved  
...ael, all the angels and saints, and  
...sisters, to pray for me to the Lord



With Sister Marie Patrice



2005 Anthony Lane South  
Suite B7  
Lafayette, MN 55418  
(507) 484-1042  
www.humanlife.org

### Changing Hearts, Saving Lives.

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August 22, 2009

Brother Paul O'Donnell  
Franciscan Brothers of Peace  
1327 Laford Avenue  
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101

Dear Brother Paul,

Congratulations on the 25th Anniversary of your profession of religious vows and outstanding perseverance for life!

Many valiant individuals have poured out their lives in service of others and our great cause. Champions such as you help everyone respect the sanctity of life at every stage of development—from fertilization to natural death.

You have been particularly instrumental in the growth and effectiveness of our educational outreach. You, Br. Paul, are responsible for encouraging Human Life Alliance's development of our end of life publication, *Imposed Death*, with over half a million people reading this edition around the world.

Your support of the Terri Schindler-Schiavo family has been an inspiration to us all. When others turned away, you stood by them, helping with both their spiritual and physical needs.

In a culture that needs pro-life leaders who stand up with courage, you are a most excellent model for us all. You have encouraged us to stand up for truth, the Gospel and life.

On behalf of Human Life Alliance's board, staff and volunteers I present you with our Champion of Life Award to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of your profession of vows.

Congratulations on your many years of service. We pray God will bless you with every good thing and allow you to enjoy the fruits of your efforts and establishment of respect for life of all peoples in your lifetime.

In Life,

*Melanie A. Freimuth*

Melanie A. Freimuth  
HLA Board President

Enclosure

July 10, 2009

Dear Bro. Paul,

Thank you for the invitation to your 25th Jubilee Celebration. Congratulations. Thank you for all of the good work you have done over these years, especially recognizing the face of Christ in the poor and the marginalized.

I will not be able to come for your celebration, but I will remember you especially in prayer. Please find a check for (\$) enclosed for the work of the Brothers of Peace.

+ John M. LeVair  
(Bishop of New Ulm)



## Brothers Speak at 2009 National Right To Life Convention

The Franciscan Brothers of Peace were once again asked to participate as workshop speakers at the 2009 National Right To Life Convention held at the Blake Hotel in Charlotte, North Carolina, from June 18 to 20, 2009.

Brother Paul, fbp, presented a workshop on medical advocacy and the dangers of assisted-suicide and euthanasia. He also spoke on the legacy of Terri Schiavo with Terri's brother Bobby Schindler and their work at the Terri Schindler Schiavo Foundation. Brother Paul serves as vice-chairman of the Board of Directors of the foundation. He also addressed a general session of the National Teens for Life Convention on various life issues with the theme of "Having the Courage to be Pro-Life."



*Congressman Chris Smith, NJ, Bobby Schindler and Br. Paul.*

Photo by Bill Molitor

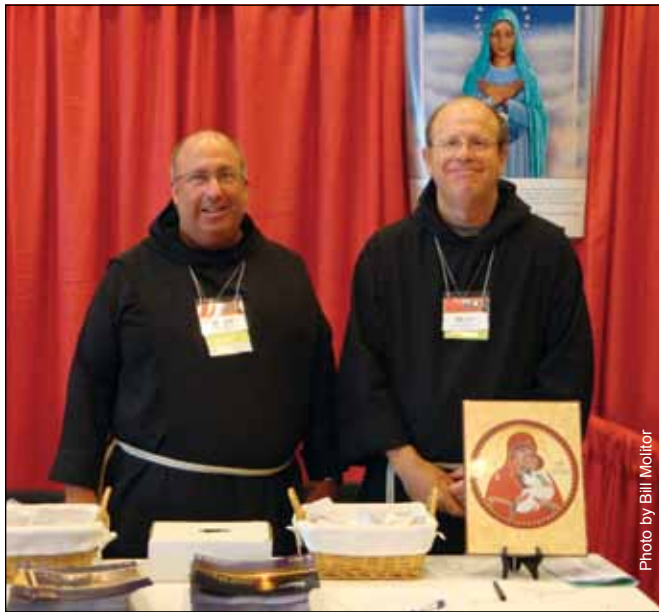


Photo by Bill Molitor

Brother Pio, Brother Seraphim and our postulant Matthew Connolly also attended the event and not only had the chance to experience the convention but also to meet and collaborate with Pro-Life leaders from around the country. The brothers also had an exhibit booth at the convention and were able to meet many of the more than 1,000 people attending this year's event.

For the past four years during the summer months, as almost an extension of the national convention, the Franciscan Brothers of Peace also speak at four mini-summer camps for pro-life teens and young adults sponsored by Wisconsin Right to Life. This year Brother Pio and Brother Paul presented several workshops and participated in various camp activities.

Please continue to pray for us as we strive to defend and promote the Gospel of Life, and speak out for those who cannot defend themselves.



*2009 National Teens For Life Conference, Charlotte, NC.*

Photo by Bill Molitor

## 200 Attend 2nd Annual Donum Vitae Conference in Hankinson, ND

by Sister Sara Marie, OSF

The second annual Donum Vitae (Gift of Life) Conference took place in Hankinson, North Dakota on May 2, 2009, at St. Francis Convent Gym. This year's conference was co-sponsored by Hankinson Chapter Right to Life and the Catholic Communities of Southeast North Dakota. The featured speakers were Bobby Schindler and Brother Paul O'Donnell, fbp, of the Terri Schindler Schiavo Foundation in St. Petersburg, Florida. Mr. Schindler spoke from the very personal position of a family member who wanted only to take care of his brain injured sister, but was not allowed to do so; Brother O'Donnell provided a moral approach to the care of disabled persons and offered positive actions we can all take to prepare ourselves for the possibility that any one could find themselves in a similar situation.

The main themes of the 3-hour conference were euthanasia, medical advocacy for vulnerable persons and the need to learn about and complete advance directives for health care. All participants were provided with two advance directive forms from the ND Catholic Conference website. Attendees indicated their appreciation of the conference and many stated that they left the conference with a corrected understanding of the five-year Schiavo case so broadly covered by the media between 2001 and 2005.



Mrs. Connie Brandt and Sister Sara Marie with Br. Paul and Bobby Schindler at the conference in Hankinson, ND.

Photo by Danielle Kelly

Terri Schindler Schiavo died by court-ordered starvation and dehydration on March 31, 2005.

Mr. Schindler recalled that one of the most frequently asked questions he was called to respond to during his sister's fight for life was, "Would you want to live like your sister? Would you want to be a vegetable?" He said that that is the wrong question. The question we need to ask ourselves is, "how can we love these people who have suffered such terrible injuries?"

Organizers of this year's conference were encouraged by the attendance of a broader audience this year than last. More teenagers and more medical professionals came this year, and persons from greater distances such as Bismarck, Grand Forks, Graceville, and St. Paul, Minnesota. They hope to continue to offer similar opportunities for education for life every year and will begin planning soon for next year's conference.

Sister Sara Marie, OSF  
Sisters of St. Francis  
PO Box 447  
Hankinson, ND 58041-0447  
701-242-7196  
phxnd@rrt.net



Photo by Danielle Kelly



# FRANCISCAN BROTHERS OF PEACE

As Catholic Religious Brothers, we are united in reverence for the Father's gift of life to all and seek to honor His Son, Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, by sharing the Good News of Life, Love, Mercy and Compassion.

We invoke the Holy Spirit — Lord and Giver of Life, the Infinite Font of light and life, strength and consolation.

Inspired by the life of Saint Francis of Assisi and of our beloved founder, Brother Michael Gaworski, fbp, we dedicate our lives to advancing the Gospel of Life as proclaimed by our Holy Father of blessed memory, Pope John Paul the Great and in union with His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI and his successors.

We recognize the inestimable value of each and every human life from conception to natural death.

We pray for God's grace and strength as we strive to give witness to the sanctity of life.

And we pray that all we do, both in word and in action, will be holy, true, and according to His most perfect will.

May Father, Son and Holy Spirit — the GOD of LIFE reign in our hearts forever! Amen.

*"The Gospel of Life" by Eric Menzhuber.*

## Begging Box

Please remember our families in need by sending your donations of both perishable and non-perishable food to our emergency food shelf at Queen of Peace Friary.

Do you have a used car in good reliable condition? If so, please consider a car donation to the brothers. Your gift is completely tax deductible.

Donations and Gift Certificates are always needed.

Thank you for your support!

For more information please call 651-646-8586.

## Franciscan Holy Hour



Every First Friday at 7:00 p.m.  
Adoration + Franciscan Crown Rosary  
Chanted Compline + Benediction

*Refreshments and Fellowship Follow.  
Free-will offerings gratefully accepted.*