Well Done
Good and Faithful Servant

Brother Paul Joseph O’Donnell, fbp

Photo by Joe McDonald
The following was written by Br. Paul in mid-February as he prepared for this issue of our newsmagazine…

**Holiday Food Outreach**

We want to thank everyone who made our 2014 Thanksgiving and Christmas Food Assistance Programs a great success. We were able to provide food for six hundred families for Christmas.

In addition, we were able to run our emergency food programs for the first six weeks of 2015. May God bless you for your kindness and generosity to our brothers and sisters in need.

**Pro-Life Apostolates**

Our apostolates to international victims of torture, the Catholic Karen community, women and men experiencing an unplanned pregnancy, emergency food for poor families in need as well as a host of other pro-life apostolates are operating at full capacity. In addition, we were able to run our emergency food shelf at full capacity for the first weeks of 2015. May God bless you for your kindness and generosity to our brothers and sisters in need.

**Easter Season Giving**

We would like to humbly ask you to please consider a sacrificial financial offering to the Franciscan Brothers of Peace as part of your Easter charitable giving this year. All gifts are 100% deductible for income tax purposes.

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**Brotherhood Update**

_by Brother Joseph, Guardian Overall_

As many of you are aware, on the morning of February 20, 2015, our dear brother and Guardian Overall, Br. Paul O’Donnell, passed away peacefully in his sleep of natural causes. The Ramsey County Medical Examiner officially determined that the cause of his death was “atherosclerotic heart disease.”

As saddened and devastated as we were to find him gone that morning, we were comforted by the fact that at least our two Labs, Rocky and Ruby, were faithfully at his bedside during the night. Our dear friend, Father James Wolnik generously made a prompt visit to offer the post-mortem blessing for Br. Paul as he made the great transition to the next phase of his life in the Life and Love of God... the Kingdom of Heaven.

To describe the great service and sacrifice of love that Br. Paul gave to our small community, the Church Universal and yes, even humanity — would truly require volumes. He has been called a Champion of the Gospel of Life, a “Lion” and a “Warrior” fighting for the right to life of the most vulnerable of our society. And those of us who know and love him would certainly vouch for his dogged Irish determination and even stubbornness when it came to defending human life.

There’s an old Hebrew saying that “Whoever destroys a soul, it is considered as if he destroyed an entire world. And whoever saves a life, it is considered as if he saved an entire world.” In Br. Paul’s case, there is no doubt that there are countless people alive and flourishing today in the world because of his sacrifice and selflessness.

In keeping with the Magisterial teaching of the Catholic Church, Br. Paul would firmly and lovingly challenge even the Pro–Life movement, both locally and nationally, reminding us that we need to maintain a consistent life ethic, following the **entire** Gospel of Life — and not just a part of it.

This universal view of the sanctity of human life **fearlessly encompasses every vulnerability a person might encounter from conception to true natural death.** Therefore, Br. Paul would state that the Gospel obliges us as Christians to protect, as far as possible, every person not only from abortion, but also from euthanasia (medically imposed death) and care-rationing, homelessness, hunger, racism, abuse, torture, exclusion, any form of dehumanizing discrimination, and capital punishment.

In the limited space of this issue of our newsmagazine, we will attempt to give due honor to our valiant brother whom the Lord called to emulate His sacrificial love for the world.

During this time of grieving and transition, please continue to keep our community, Br. Paul’s family and friends in your prayers. We are truly grateful for the outpouring of love, support and friendship you have shown to us.

May our God — the God of Life and Love; Father, Son and Holy Spirit — welcome our dear Brother Paul into His Kingdom. We are forever grateful to Him for having given us, and the world, such a wonderful Champion, Lion, Warrior, Master Builder, Gentle Shepherd and Friend. Amen.

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The following was written by Br. Paul in mid-February as he prepared for this issue of our newsmagazine…

Photo by Dave Hrbacek

Photo by Brian Gibson
Friday morning — February 20, 2015 — began like any other morning at Queen of Peace Friary. The previous week had been quite busy with all of the preparations for Lent, on top of our regular ministries. With the memory of a joyous Mardi-Gras, the thoughts of what our Lent sacrifices would be, anticipation of our annual retreat at New Melleray Abbey, and a busy day of food shelf on our minds — the brothers all fought against fatigue to get to morning prayer and Mass. No one even noticed if anyone was absent, we were all so tired.

After Mass we attended our morning meeting. With nothing much different about this Friday, there really wasn’t much to discuss. We all went out, to our various ministries.

Around 11:00 a.m., Br. Dominic Michael noticed that nobody had seen Br. Paul all morning. As he had an appointment with Br. Paul, he called his cell phone to check up on him. The familiar ringtone “It’s gonna be a good life, It’s gonna be a good, good life” — the anthem of Br. Paul’s life — echoed down the silent hallway unanswered. Such a fitting ringtone for a man who lived his whole life defending the value of others’ lives.

After several attempts to rouse Br. Paul via his cell phone, Br. Dominic Michael knocked on Br. Paul’s bedroom door. Expecting the familiar “I’ll be down in five minutes Dominic!”, it was quite unsettling to hear no response. In fact, this was more than a lack of a response. There was no sound coming out of Br. Paul’s room at all.

On a usual night, walking by Br. Paul’s door would greet you with the sound of his snoring, the anxious whine of Rocky and Ruby (our two Labrador Retrievers) perhaps needing to go outside, and the hum of the CPAP machine. But, this morning there was nothing — no snoring, no CPAP, no dogs… nothing.

Br. Dominic Michael went to Br. Joseph who sent Bros. Pio and James to unlock the door and check on Br. Paul. As the door opened, neither brother was greeted by excited Labradors happy for the attention. Both dogs were at attention, lying at the foot of Br. Paul’s bed, guarding their master. As Br. Pio had worked in hospice at Samaritan House for many years, he was quite familiar with death — and knew immediately that Br. Paul was no longer with us.

Sometime that night, Br. Paul heard clearly for the first time that voice he longed to hear his whole life, telling him it was time to come home. Without even a second’s hesitation, Br. Paul got up and said “Amen!” He left behind the gathering brothers, mourning the loss of their leader, friend, and brother.

As the brothers were all called back from ministry, and the family of Br. Paul was notified, we all gathered in his bedroom. St. Crispin’s Friary, Queen of Peace Friary, and Barb and Bob McCann, Br. Paul’s sister and brother-in-law, all gathered around Br. Paul’s body. With tears in our eyes, we prayed a rosary and recited the Chaplet of Divine Mercy. Fr. James Wolnik graciously came to give the post-mortem blessing, and soon the coroner arrived to pronounce Br. Paul dead.

While we all mourned for our separation with our beloved Guardian, Br. Paul was being welcomed by countless people. Standing right at the front of the line to greet him was his best friend Br. Michael, a man he had taken care of for twelve and a half years until his death, living every day since then longing for a happy reunion. Along with Br. Michael there to greet him were his parents, whom Br. Paul loved so dearly, and countless brothers and sisters in Christ like Terri Schia-vo and Baby Joseph, whose lives Br. Paul had defended. The battle was done, time to take his rest.

After the coroner had left, the brothers took on the painful task of informing friends and colleagues. As all the phone lines and cell phones filled with outgoing calls, “Which Br. Paul?” was a common response. His passing was a surprise to everyone. All over social media, the message exploded out — even before any of the brothers could compose themselves to write anything down. At once, an outpouring of prayers and support flooded to our friary, strengthening us for the road ahead.

That evening and the next morning, Masses were said in our own chapel in honor of Br. Paul, and every brother attended. Crying together and supporting each other, the bond between us became stronger then ever. Br. Joseph, until Br. Paul’s death the vicar of the community and now overwhelmed with the mantle placed on him, humbly asked each of us for our prayers and support. Then he showed a leadership that could only have been graced from God. At that point, we all knew we would make it through.

Then Br. Seraphim pointed out the beauty of God’s timing: Br. Paul had finished everything before he died. His big vision was the completion of the spiritual center, St. Francis Friary in Northern Minnesota. Not only did he see it finished, but he got a whole year to enjoy its beauty. Many times he went out on the pontoon and enjoyed the sunshine. Br. Paul had also seen to the acceptance of our new Postulant, Ricardo, approved the upcoming profession of Br. Dominic Michael, as well as having finished the next begging letter (which was delivered to the Post Office before we knew he had died), and the next newsmagazine (which will follow this one). So not only were we
fine, but we also had nothing to worry about for quite a while. All we needed to focus on now was supporting each other, and preparing for the funeral.

Over the next week, our front door could have been propped open as people flooded in to show their support and love. Brian Gibson worked with Br. John Mary and Br. Pio to get an obituary out. Nicole Selleck briefed the brothers on how to handle the media if they chose to intrude on our grieving. Many others brought home-cooked meals, and offered support in so many ways we couldn't keep track.

Mid-week the rest of Br. Paul's family arrived, and our dining room table became a place of reunion and reconciliation. All of us, united in our grief, joined to support each other and enjoy the huge variety of different meals presented. Br. James worked diligently to keep the serving table neat, orderly, and full — something Br. Paul usually did — and something we are all grateful for.

The Reviewal and Wake took place next door at the Church of Saint Columba, with its pastor Fr. Hoang Nguyen presiding. Br. Paul, dressed in his habit and sandals, was placed at the entrance of the church. People flooded in to show their support, visit Br. Paul's body, and look at the two displays. Br. Conrad had put together a display board with pictures and some of Br. Paul's personal items. Pro-Life Action Ministries had put together a presentation with pictures of Br. Paul, and tribute statements that we had received.

The families of many of the other brothers also came to show their support for their grieving loved ones. As well as people from different Pro-Life organizations, different parishes throughout the archdiocese, and many of those who Franciscan Brothers of Peace have helped throughout the years.

The Wake was a beautiful service — from the music, all the clergy present, to the various eulogies given. Steve O'Donnell talked about being the elder brother, and what it was like growing up with Br. Paul. Brian Gibson had us all rolling on the floor with laughter, as he told many funny stories of Br. Paul. Bobby Schindler told about losing his "Wing Man,” how Br. Paul helped him find his wife, and his eternal gratitude for Br. Paul's support of his family in their efforts to care for his sister Terri. Everyone gave such depth and personality to a man who many knew about and respected, but who may never have had the opportunity to know personally.

The wake concluded with the brothers singing together one of Br. Paul's favorite praise songs, "Press On." Br. Joseph then shared a reflec-
Fallen Asleep in the Lord…
The Brothers, family and friends gather around Brother Paul’s body after the wake service for the all-night Vigil.

The brothers then processed with Br. Paul to Queen of Peace Friary chapel for the all-night vigil. We chanted compline with everyone who followed in the procession, and then began to recite all 150 psalms. The brothers broke into teams, mixing songs of praise and periods of silence between the psalms — each brother bringing their own personality into the prayer, exactly as Br. Paul would have encouraged.

The vigil ended with all of the brothers gathered for morning prayer. As prayer concluded, the casket was sealed for the final journey to the Cathedral and National Shrine of St. Paul, Br. Paul’s patron. There the pall-bearers solemnly brought him to the Chapel of St. Joseph for a final viewing.

Throughout the hour before the funeral Mass, the line to visit Br. Paul’s body stretched around the back of the church to the other side. So many people came to pay their respects that there were still people in line when it was time to close the casket for the last time.

The funeral Mass was beautiful. The cathedral’s center aisles were filled to the back of the church. Auxiliary Bishop Lee Piché presided, with our Archbishop Emeritus Harry Flynn, Bishop Paul Sirba of Duluth, Cathedral Rector Fr. John Ubel, Fr. Hoang Nguyen of St. Columba and other priests concelebrating. Being Br. Paul’s dear friend and former seminary classmate, Bishop Sirba gave a most heartwarming and beautiful homily during the liturgy. Deacon Phil Stewart of the Cathedral and Deacon Tom Stiles of the Church of Saint Columba also assisted with great dignity.

After the funeral, the St. Paul Police escorted us to Resurrection Cemetery, where Bishop Lee Piché gave the final blessing. The casket was then taken to the Brothers’ burial site for interment. In the bright sunlight of a frigid day, Br. Paul was planted into the ground to the right of his best friend. As the final prayers were spoken and the refrain of “Jesus, remember me, when You come into Your Kingdom” faded, with tremendous grief — yet in hope of the Resurrection — we departed for the reception at the cathedral, and a resumption of life.
And now I want to take a few moments to express and announce my everlasting gratitude to Paul for his love and leadership as my Guardian and Shepherd for these last, almost twenty-four years.

It was twenty-four years ago that I made my initial visit to the brothers, for Evening Prayer and supper, at Queen of Peace Friary. This was the one and only time that I met Br. Michael, briefly after Compline, before his grave illness. Br. Paul was not there that night. I think he was at Samaritan House caring for the men dying from A.I.D.S.

As long as I have known Paul, he has truly been “a man who lived for others,” putting their needs before his own. The first time I remember hearing about Br. Paul was approximately one month later when he discovered Br. Michael nearly lost to death and began breathing the breath of life back into him while another brother called 911. The paramedics quickly arrived and with their defibrillator woke up Michael’s heart, but as the ambulance began driving away, taking Michael to Hennepin County Medical Center (H.C.M.C.), it was Paul who gently lifted up his poor, vulnerable brother and carried him upon his shoulders — like the Good Shepherd. Day and night Paul stayed with Michael at H.C.M.C., and when Michael got transferred to Bethesda Hospital, Paul was there every day for six months.

Around All Souls Day, Michael was brought home to Queen of Peace Friary where — along with the brothers, his family and many caregivers — Paul tended to his severely disabled brother’s needs daily till his dying breath... twelve years later. Many brothers left during this time. But for us who remained, we became so strongly united in love and commitment to each other that I believe God has formed a foundation that He will continue to build on.

My accident occurred in 2001 when I fell off a bridge and broke my back, becoming paralyzed from the waist down. Again there was Paul at my side day and night at H.C.M.C., and every day at the rehab hospital, tending to another lost sheep.

And when Br. Paul heard about Terri (Schiavo) a few years later, he fought and advocated for her life alongside her family until her final breath. In the years following, he became an outspoken voice for the most vulnerable among us.

Now I’d like to focus more closely to home and speak about the Kind Shepherd Paul was to us brothers and those who came to live with us.

First let me begin by telling you about the survivors of torture who began residing with us in 1995. It was the Holy Spirit that prompted Br. Paul to take the many vacant rooms at that time in the Friary and somehow make use of them. Then he gets a call from the Center for Victims of Torture wondering if it would be possible to shelter someone who was one of their clients. With that, Paul said yes — and since then fifty-five men have come to stay with us (three or four men at a time). Paul and the brothers provided a safe environment for them to heal and start over. Most of these men remained one to two years, usually after they had attained political asylum status and worked for several months to pay for their first apartment. When the news of Paul’s death reached them, many were just devastated and came to offer their condolences because of the love Paul and the brothers showed...
them. You could see in their faces what love they felt for him.

Paul did much more than provide room and board, going way beyond this for many of our Residents. In his approach toward these men and countless others throughout the years, you could say that Paul was generous to a fault — but how that fault lifted up so many people, we won’t know until we arrive upstairs.

It is sad to say that it has only been at his passing that I have come to see Paul’s most shining virtues. His humility and pastoral ability allowed him to see the gifts and talents of each brother and allow them to use them for the Glory of God, the good of the brotherhood and those we came to serve. And when we sinned, even greatly — he showed such non-judgmental compassion and understanding and by such love, he brought us back to the right path!

One of Br. Paul’s most shining gifts I call the ability of the Master Builder. If Br. Michael was the “rocket” that got our community off the ground, it has been Br. Paul who laid the framework and foundation to live and realize Michael’s vision. I was told that Br. Paul raised — no let me clarify, it was by the Providence of God and the great generosity of our benefactors — that Paul was able to raise the money needed for the down-payment on Queen of Peace Friary. Then during the last twenty-two years, through his managing of funds, we have been able to pay off Queen of Peace Friary, purchase a mission friary in North Minneapolis (that I was able to live in for nine years), and through the great generosity of the Sweere Family Foundation (for which we are eternally grateful), Paul secured the funds to build the “Crown Jewel” of Michael’s vision — our Spiritual Center! Not only that, but he has kept us debt-free for the last twenty years while also being able to help thousands of families and individuals — that only God knows!

It is with sadness I relay that in recent years — with the loss of his two best friends, both of his parents and the long and wearying path of being our chief shepherd for nearly twenty years — I remember praying during this time for God to renew, refresh and reinvigorate him, but alas for us, He took him home instead!

At the end of today’s First Reading from Mass, from the Book of Esther, it states: “Turn our mourning into gladness and our sorrows into wholeness.” I pray that with Paul leaving his body, God has brought him to wholeness in His Kingdom.

I also received a card this week from one of my brothers that has a quote from St. Theresa of Avila. It says, “We always find that those who walked closest to Christ were those who had to bear the greatest trials.”

May God have mercy on Paul’s soul, and blot out all of his sins. And may He bless us and help us to learn from Paul’s life — how to carry on and follow in the path of Christ’s love. Amen.
**Brother John Mary**

Brother Paul to me was a model of pastorate. His daily schedule was often very full, yet still if I or any Brother had a personal issue that needed to be talked through, he would drop everything to be attentive, compassionate and very pastoral in providing for my and our personal needs. It is a trait about him which I will miss and hope that I may imitate as I assume more of a senior role within my community of brothers.

Brother Paul was a visionary and was always looking to where the Spirit was moving the Brothers next. Thank you Brother Paul for what you have done.

Brother Conrad

Brother Paul was one that always put the needs of others in front of his own. He was always at the ready, whether he was championing the cause of the most vulnerable in our society to helping a simple poor brother or sister who came to our friary door looking for assistance. On a personal level, Brother Paul had continuously supported me 100% when it came to aiding me when difficulty arose in my life. No matter the struggle, he was one who helped lighten the weight of my cross. Most of all, I will cherish Brother Paul’s lighthearted moments of laughter and merriment. I can almost hear him now, singing our Lord’s praises in the vocal style of Kermit the Frog. I believe he was once told that when he sang, he kind of sounded like Kermit, so on occasion, when he felt humorous, Kermit would sing out! May God’s everlasting peace be with you my Brother.

Brother Benedict Gerard

As I reflect on Br. Paul Joseph, many precious memories come to mind, especially memories of him patiently teaching me how to operate a boat, in the middle of Lake Wilson. His patience echoed throughout the three years that we knew each other. He was a man that believed in supporting one’s creativity, and insisting that you use your gifts for the greater good — of the community and the church. It was very inspirational to see his eyes light up as he spoke about protecting the dignity of life. Paul truly had the love of Jesus, and the power of the Holy Spirit burning in his heart! If I had to summarize this brief reflection by using a song that the great Mahalia Jackson sang long ago, I would use the refrain from the powerful song that says: “If I can help somebody along the way, then my living shall not be in vain.” Thank you for being a friend!

Brother James

My relationship with Brother Paul began sixteen years ago when I seriously began to discern my Vocation. I came to the Franciscan Brothers of Peace when Brother Michael was in an extremely handicapped condition. In time I became comfortable working with Brother Michael and assisting Brother Paul with his extraordinary care for our founder. I learned what I could from him throughout those years and continue to rely on his knowledge and experience of Religious life. We spent much time in our work and travels and his loss is still taking hold. Brother Paul and I had our moments and this caused many a spiritual director to work overtime but when it came time for the funeral that is where they were to be found. Thank you Brother Paul for what you have done.

Brother Seraphim

One of my most memorable moments with Brother Paul was on our trip to Rome for the canonizations of Saint John XXIII and Saint John Paul II. I recall how we waited in the streets of Rome for fifteen hours without sitting down and we only had eight ounces of water and a few crackers for nourishment. We made our way through the crowd of people to Saint Peter’s Square where we stopped next to a jumbotron screen to watch the canonization Mass. I recall being worried that Brother Paul was not going to make it, but we persevered through it together and obtained many graces for the Brothers. This was an important event for myself and Brother Paul and we had the opportunity to share it together. During this event, Brother Paul shared with me how he had the opportunity to meet Saint John Paul II in person a few times and being at the canonization was important to him. I remember also as a leader, Brother Paul was always open to the working of the Holy Spirit even if it was something he was not particularly interested in. Brother Paul and I shared often with each other about the possibilities for the future. He was a Brother with whom I could share openly. Brother Paul was a visionary and was always looking to where the Holy Spirit was moving the Brothers next. Thank you Brother for our time together and say a prayer for me and in guiding us on our new path.

Bogale

I have known Brother Paul O’Donnell since 1996 and I’ll never forget how he helped and guided me over the years, generously sharing his time and experience. Only on so very few occasions do you meet someone with such wisdom and kindness throughout your life! I can say that I am fortunate to have known Brother Paul and I can speak for all when I say he will be greatly missed.

Gary Gaworski

I will always be grateful to Brother Paul for the way he lovingly cared for Brother Michael [Gaworski] in his illness for more than twelve years, and lovingly cared for the Franciscan Brothers of Peace community for the past twenty-four years. Brother Paul Joseph O’Donnell was truly a Co-Founder of the Franciscan Brothers of Peace. Note: Gary is a blood brother of our late Founder, Br. Michael Gaworski, as well as a longtime co-worker of the Franciscan Brothers of Peace.
One of the sweetest, kindest men I have ever known passed away today. I can’t imagine that it was his time but God knows these things, not me.

Brother Paul was only 55 years old. He was the Superior at the Franciscan Brothers of Peace, a stalwart advocate for life throughout its spectrum, and he was my friend — for well over 25 years. He was also one of my heroes.

Brother Paul was a founder of the Pro-Life Action Ministries and served with them still. He was a board member of the Terri Schiavo Life and Hope Network, and a valiant spokesperson for life.

If someone was in need, any need, he was there. He was always there for the babies — front and center, from the time he was a teenager. Always.

When Terri Schiavo was being starved and dehydrated to death, ten years ago next month, he was there. He was there for Terri. He was there for the family, helping hold them together. And his presence at their side brought great comfort to all of us who knew him because we knew that if Brother Paul was on the scene, things would be as okay as they possibly could in such a situation.

More recently, Brother Paul was there for baby Joseph Maarachli and his family. He was there for Jahi McMath and her family. His ability to advocate for the medically vulnerable started decades ago when he was there to fight for and care for Brother Michael Gaworski, fbp, the founder of the Franciscan Brothers of Peace, and to save and protect him from the death movement and its care-rationing and euthanasia agenda. Brother Paul, himself, said it was because of Brother Michael that the Franciscan Brothers of Peace were on the forefront of the battle to save the life of Terri. Out of that tragedy, this good and gentle man learned to be the anchor others would need in similar times of need.

He would travel far and wide to spread the message of life. From the National Right to Life Conventions, to the Life and Hope Network, to Youth Camps — any gathering where he could speak on the life issues, he was there. One of our camp leaders referred to him as her “superhero in a habit.” And that fits.

What an honor and privilege it was to see him in action, taking a stand for the truth… for life.

We chatted on the phone often and I will miss hearing his voice. I will miss him at this year’s convention. I will miss him every day.

For now, I will picture him holding baby Joseph, hugging on Bob Schindler and Terri Schiavo, Brother Michael, and reuniting with his parents. Today, Heaven is a little more crowded, but we can be very certain that the words “Well done, thou good and faithful servant” are reverberating throughout heaven and, as Congressman Henry Hyde so eloquently spoke decades ago, “a chorus of voices never before heard in this world” will also be joining in that welcome.

We will miss you, our very dear brother and friend, but we will see you again. Until then, we will do everything we can to be worthy of the lessons you taught us about never saying “no” when there is a life to be saved.
NATIONAL PRO-LIFE ADVOCATE WAS NATIVE OF OMAHA

BY JOE RUFF
WEDNESDAY, 03/04/2015 | CATHOLIC VOICE, OMAHA

BROTHER PAUL O’DONNELL — An Omaha native who became a Franciscan Brother of Peace and nationally regarded pro-life advocate and speaker died Feb. 20 at his community’s residence in St. Paul, Minn. Brother Paul O’Donnell, 55, died in his sleep, and his death was unexpected, a family member said.

A funeral Mass was celebrated Feb. 27 at the Cathedral of St. Paul in St. Paul. He grew up in a family where religion was held in high regard, first in then-Holy Angels Parish in north Omaha before the family moved when he was about 8 years old to Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in south-central Omaha, said one of his three brothers, Stephen O’Donnell, who remains a member of Our Lady of Lourdes. Brother O’Donnell attended Our Lady of Lourdes School and then—Paul VI High School in Omaha.

“Religion played a very big part in our lives growing up,” O’Donnell said. “I had two uncles who were priests and an aunt who is a religious sister.” The uncles were the late archdiocesan Msgr. Edward C. O’Donnell and the late Father Ralph M. O’Donnell. The aunt is retired Sinsinawa Dominican Sister Marie Patrice O’Donnell of Sinsinawa, Wis. And the family grew up with a cousin in Omaha who became a priest, archdiocesan Father Ralph B. O’Donnell, now serving as associate director of the Secretariat of Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington, D.C.

Brother O’Donnell expressed his own faith early on in life, O’Donnell said, including a letter to their grandparents on his mother’s side that read in part: “Inside of me lives a secret life ... For deep within my soul lives God, the blessed Trinity.”

Brother O’Donnell first was interested in the priesthood, studying in St. Paul at St. John Vianney College Seminary from 1978 to 1982, and St. Paul Seminary from 1982 to 1984. But he became an early member of the religious community he joined in St. Paul, and professed his vows Oct. 4, 1987, five years after the community was founded. He led the order and the friary for more than 20 years and was a leader in its pro-life outreach.

Those pro-life efforts included fighting for the lives of people needing specialized medical care, such as Terri Schiavo, who died in 2005 after a court ordered her feeding tube removed, and Joseph Maraachli, a Canadian baby with a progressive neurodegenerative disease whose short life was extended by a tracheotomy performed at a St. Louis Catholic hospital.

Brother O’Donnell was preceded in death by his parents, Charles “Danny” and Mary Kaye. Survivors include his brothers and sisters-in-law, Stephen and Christene, Pat O’Donnell and Kelly of Omaha, Tim and Theresa of La Vista; and sisters and brother-in-law, Diane Nyberg of Omaha and Barbara and Roland McCann of Maple Grove, Minn.; and 20 nieces and nephews.
Thank You

Bishop Lee A. Piché, Auxiliary Bishop of St. Paul and Minneapolis
Bishop Paul D. Sirba, Bishop of Duluth • Archbishop Emeritus Harry J. Flynn
Fr. Hoang Nguyen, Deacon Tom Stiles and Staff and Parishioners of the
Church of Saint Columba • Fr. John Ubel, Deacon Phil Stewart and Staff and
Parishioners of the Cathedral of Saint Paul • To the Clergy and our
fellow Religious of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis • To our
sisters and brothers of Mary, Queen of Peace Secular Franciscan Fraternity
Mr. Brian Gibson and Staff of Pro-Life Action Ministries • Mrs. Mary Schindler,
Mr. Bobby Schindler, Mrs. Suzanne Carter and Staff of the Terri Schiavo
Life & Hope Network • To the many pro-life leaders and organizations that
Brother Paul was proud to work with • Mrs. Nicole Selleck, Media Consultant
and Manager • Ms. Vicki Zelinka, Catering • Mr. Dave Hrbacek and Mr. Joe
McDonald, Photography • Mr. Mark Sweere, Publishing
And to our countless friends and benefactors for your loving kindness and
support. May God bless and reward you all.

Profession of Perpetual Vows

With great joy, the Franciscan Brothers of Peace announce the
consecration of Brother Dominic Michael Hart, fbp to our Lord
Jesus Christ in perpetual vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.
His profession will take place on May 1st, 2015, Feast of Saint
Joseph the Worker. Please keep our brother in your prayers as
he fully reunites with us as a Franciscan Brother of Peace!

Ruby’s Beggin’ Box

We are in need of a reliable used car for a dear friend, a Religious
Sister who has no transportation.
Please call 651-646-8586.
Thank You for Your Consideration, & God Bless You for Your Support!

Franciscan Holy Hour

Every First Friday at 7:00 p.m.
Adoration + Franciscan Crown Rosary
Chanted Compline & Benediction
Refreshments and Fellowship follow + Queen of Peace Friary, 1289 Lafond Avenue, St. Paul, MN
And whoever saves a life, it is considered as if he saved an entire world.

— Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:9

As Br. Paul and Br. Michael were united in defense of Life, so Br. Paul’s body is laid to rest below, at Br. Michael’s right side in the Brothers’ community grave-site at Resurrection Cemetery, Mendota Heights, Minnesota.

Photo by Mark Sweere