



DOMINICAN FRIARS

Province of the Most Holy Name of Jesus

December 2016

Dear Friends of St. Dominic,

It is with a heavy heart that we announce our province will be returning the following ministries to their respective dioceses effective June 30, 2017: the Newman Catholic Community at the University of California San Diego, the Saint Andrew Newman Center at the University of California Riverside, and Saint Mary Magdalen Church in Berkeley.

As you can imagine, this is a sad announcement to make, and one that affects the friars and laity alike. This decision has not been made lightly, and comes after nearly three years of intense prayer, consultation and discernment with friars and lay advisors about the future of our province. We would like to share why this decision was made, and ask for your prayers and understanding.

Simply put, our province has been forced to address serious staffing shortages that have persisted for the last 10 years. This has placed incredible burdens on our Dominican communities, the health of individual friars and our province as a whole. Thus, we have been compelled to take the step of returning some ministry sites back to their respective dioceses.

We currently have 143 friars in our province. Accounting for those who are retired or infirm, in initial formation, or assigned to academic studies, internal ministries, missionary work or other specialized apostolates, we have 41 available friars to staff 45 ministry assignments.

This means our Dominican communities (the houses and priories where the friars live together) are struggling. Thus, the friars are increasingly unable to serve you and your loved ones with the attention and care you deserve.

Though we are experiencing an increase in vocations, the larger classes of brothers will not be ready for active ministry for another six to eight years, with even more years of training needed before a friar could serve as a pastor or director of a ministry site. And not all of those friars will ultimately be called to serve as priests in a parish or Newman Center.

Please understand, this is not a simple case of having too much work to do. It is a multifaceted challenge of staffing shortages, retirement and formation trends, and the individual and collective health of our brothers and Dominican communities.

As Dominicans, we are called to a certain way of life that also requires a deep commitment to prayer, study and common life with other friars. This is what St. Dominic intended for us, and what has given the Order of Preachers strength and life for 800 years. When we drift from this tradition, our ability to serve you with our unique Dominican charism suffers.

(over, please)



We understand that these decisions may be seen as a sign our province is diminishing. However, we ask that you try to recognize that by these decisions we are, in fact, securing the future. We are building up our Dominican communities to enable us to be faithful to our vocation.

If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact us by letter or email (info@opwest.org). We will endeavor to reply as quickly as possible.

What has not changed, nor will ever change, is our appreciation, love and prayers for you. We are so grateful for our years together and for your support. We ask for the wisdom of the Holy Spirit to guide us during this difficult moment, and remain confident in God's providence and infinite love for us all.

In Christ and St. Dominic,

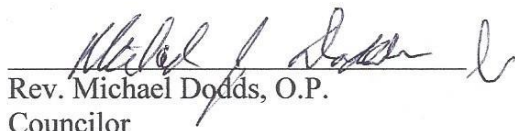
The Provincial Council Members of the Dominican Province of the Most Holy Name of Jesus



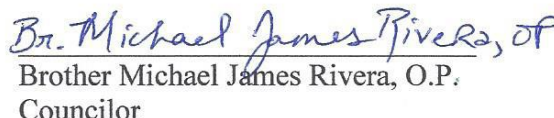
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Provincial



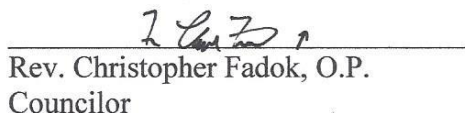
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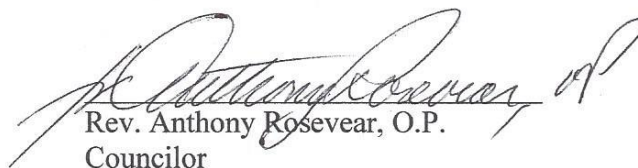
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Brother Michael James Rivera, O.P.
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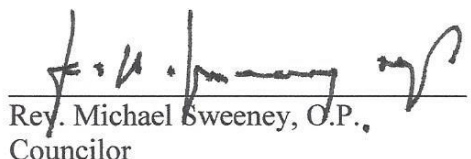
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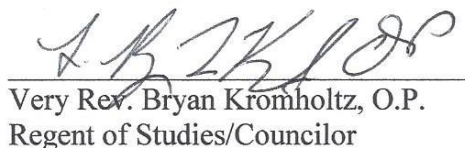
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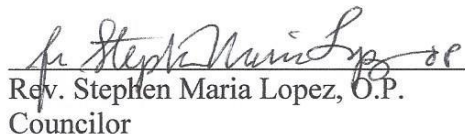
Rev. Michael Sweeney, O.P.
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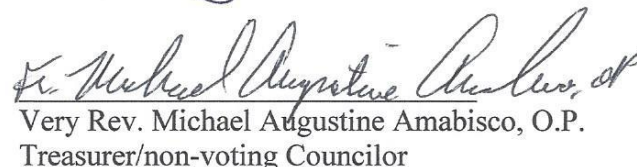
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