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Capuchin Vocation Update

Province of St. Joseph

Crow and Capuchin

by George Real Bird, Capuchin Postulant

I LIVE IN TWO WORLDS. It is the life that I choose to live. I am an American Indian who grew up on the Crow Indian Reservation. I am Crow Indian, Northern Cheyenne, Hidatsa, as well as European. Culturally, I am Crow. The cultures, traditions, and beliefs from the Crow Way will always follow with me and be a part of me. My upbringing on the reservation was in a family that is different from most others. My family is made up of politicians and educators. I would have entered my family's professions had I not had an interest in the religious life. Some wonder why I would choose a religious life.

Now, I am a Franciscan Capuchin. Living the religious life, changes many things. I am and will always be Crow. So, it will be challenging to respect my Capuchin lifestyle and be a Crow Indian. However, the beauty of my life from the beginning was that I live in two worlds. My background usually brings up many questions. I enjoy the conversations because I am educating people about my lifestyle, outlook, and culture.

I ALSO THINK I AM MODERN. Last year, I was a college student at Loyola University Chicago. Interestingly, it is fun to see how I, an Indian boy, live in a city of 3,000,000 people, when I grew up in Lodge Grass, Montana, a town of 500 people. After my fourth year of college, I knew that everything was going to change because I decided to become a postulant for the Franciscan Capuchins.

The interesting fact about most of the friars in the St. Joseph Province is that they have some experience working with Indian people. The Franciscan Capuchins have served for over 40 years on my reservation. So growing up in my Crow Catholic family, I was baptized, received first communion, and made my confirmation with a Capuchin at my Catholic church, Our Lady of Loretto.

The Franciscans had me from the beginning. My grandparents were secular Franciscans, the sisters at the local Catholic school were Oldenburg Franciscans, and I

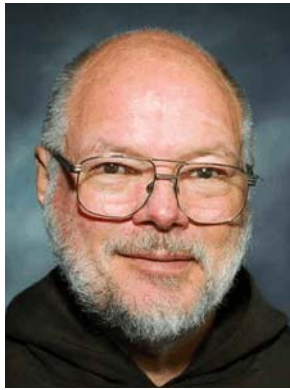


George Real Bird at the confirmation and First Communion of his Godson and nephew Emilio Small.

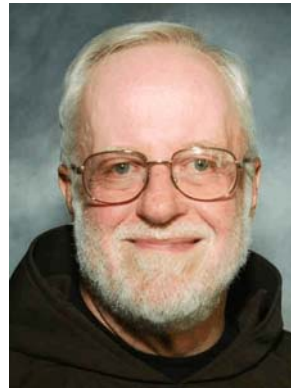
Vocation Update



Jim Antoine ministers at Our Lady of Loretto in Lodge Grass, Montana.



Charles Robinson ministers at St. Dennis in Crow Agency MT.

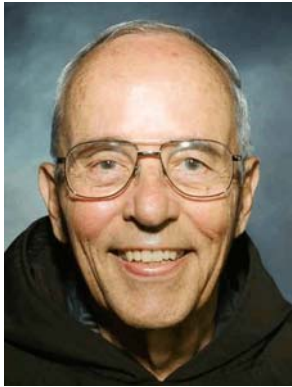


Randolph Graczyk ministers at St. Charles in Pryor, Montana.

The Midwest Capuchins have ministered on the Crow Reservation in Southeastern Montana since 1964.

Three currently serve there. Jim Antoine is pastor to George Real Bird's family.

Two Capuchins also work on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation in the same region.



Paschal Siler is retired at Lame Deer MT.



Randy Knauf is pastor of St. Labre in Ashland.

graduated from St. Lawrence Seminary High School in Mt. Calvary, Wisconsin, a ministry of the Midwest Capuchins. Interestingly, the Capuchin who gave me my diploma at St. Lawrence (Fr. Dennis Druggan) started my education at St. Labre Indian School in Ashland, Montana. I can safely say that I grew up Franciscan! Now another change is occurring because, hopefully and if it be God's desire, someday I will be a professed Capuchin friar.

However, the one thing in our lives that we cannot change is the family that we are born into. The Crow Way speaks of the importance of family. A person without family is poor; a person born into a large family is truly a wealthy person. The Capuchins are new family members so I have gotten richer!

THE CHALLENGE IS THE BLESSING. In the beginning, I stated that I live in two worlds! In truth, I live in many cultures. What brings them together? First, I am a human person created in the image and likeness of my God, First Maker or Creator God. Secondly, as a creation of God, I share equality with all of God's creation. Thirdly, I am a baptized Christian so I am a brother in Jesus Christ. Lastly, I will always be a Crow Indian living the traditions of my people as a Franciscan Capuchin. So all the worlds fit into each other! This is a small slice of a larger world.

(George Real Bird will be invested as a Capuchin novice on July 29th.)

Calling all candidates!
Join us in welcoming new candidates
who recently graduated from SLS.

BBQ on Tuesday, May 22nd
Chicago
RSVP to Fr. John Holly: 920-915-4400
jholly1953@yahoo.com