

The Alexians

The Love of Christ Compels Us

*Immaculate Conception
Province of the Congregation
of Alexian Brothers*

Mission Statement

Strengthened by community, prayer, commitment to the poor and the legacy of our founders, and in partnership with others, we Alexian Brothers witness the Healing Christ by a holistic approach to promoting health and caring for the sick, dying, aged and unwanted of all socioeconomic levels.

Values

*Compassion
Dignity of the Person
Care of the Poor
Holism
Partnership*

New residence facilitates prayer, reflection, meditation

The Alexian Brothers of Elk Grove Village, Illinois, have moved into a newly constructed residence custom-designed to facilitate prayer, reflection and meditation.

The 7,400-square-foot residence sits on a 2.5-acre site on Martha Street in Elk Grove Village, across the street from the Alexian Brothers Hospice Residence and a short distance to the west of AMITA Health Alexian Brothers Medical Center Elk Grove Village.

The Brothers' new home features a Japanese-style Zen garden/courtyard highlighted by a fountain with three 6-foot-tall stone slabs, as well as an interior cloister walk with windows facing the garden/courtyard. The curved cloister walk, which recalls the cloister walk at the Alexian Brothers' 15th century monastery in Aachen, Germany, is adorned with artifacts from the Brothers' former residence in Elk Grove Village and the Alexian Brothers Archives.

A chapel located at one end of the cloister walk reflects the residence's warm character and contemplative atmosphere. The chapel features four wooden benches, two three-person choir stalls, a wood-beam ceiling that rises more than 25 feet, and stained-glass windows from the



The cloister walk at the new Alexian Brothers residence in Elk Grove Village recalls the cloister walk at the Alexian Brothers' 15th century monastery in Aachen, Germany.

chapel in the Brothers' former residence.

"The residence is a beautiful facility that presents many opportunities for prayer, reflection and meditation," said Brother Dan

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Founder's Day events spotlight work of Brother Bonaventure Thelen, C.F.A.

A MITA Health Alexian Brothers Behavioral Health Hospital in Hoffman Estates, Illinois, and Alexian Village in Milwaukee marked the 152nd anniversary of the Alexian Brothers' U.S. ministry with Founder's Day events focusing on the Brothers' history, mission and values.

The events spotlighted the work of Brother Bonaventure Thelen, C.F.A., who founded the

U.S. ministry on June 12, 1866, when he opened the Brothers' first American hospital in a small frame house at Dearborn and Schiller streets in Chicago.

The Founder's Day events at the behavioral health hospital and

Alexian Village "allowed employees and others to learn more about how we started here in the United States, our mission and values, and Brother Bonaventure," said Brother Torch Acosta, C.F.A. He attended both events, handing out information about Brother Bonaventure and talking with guests about the Brothers' history, mission and values.

Brother John Howard, C.F.A., director of the Alexian Brothers Community in Milwaukee, and Brother Patrick McCabe, C.F.A., who was assigned to the Milwaukee community earlier this year, joined Brother Torch at the Milwaukee event, which was open to Alexian Village associates and residents. Alexian Village is an independent-living and long-term-care community operated by Ascension Living, a division of Ascension, the nation's largest nonprofit health system and parent organization of Alexian

Brothers Health System. The June 12 event occurred at the Brothers' residence on the Alexian Village campus, and Brother John and Brother Patrick led guests on tours of the residence and its chapel.

Dozens of people attended the open-house-style events, which featured food and refreshments. "I was glad to see many of the employees take time in their busy day to learn about Brother Bonaventure from Brother Torch," said Kim Dombrowski, regulatory administrator at the behavioral health hospital, who attended the June 11 event there. "Overall, I thought it was a fun, successful event."

Susan Skalon, a data assistant at the hospital, said: "I am highly drawn to the Alexian Brothers' mission and core values and enjoy seeing how they are applied here at the hospital. It's important to recognize who started and continued such values."

Added Katie Torres, clinical director of the hospital's Center for Anxiety and Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder: "The Alexian Brothers established a great legacy here. Their legacy continues, and it is befitting that all of us learn about Brother Bonaventure and get a better understanding of how that legacy began."

The employee spirit committees at the hospital and Alexian Village organized the Founder's Day events. "All the guests enjoyed Founder's Day Open House as this event gave them a chance to learn not only about the Alexian Brothers' history in the United States, but also how they originated in 13th century Europe," said Katy Griffin, social and volunteer coordinator and a Spirit Committee member at Alexian Village.

Brother Torch said: "I greatly appreciate the spirit committees for planning and organizing the events. On behalf of the Alexian Brothers, I truly recognize their collaborative efforts, and I'm delighted to have met and spoken with all the wonderful people who participated."



Brother John Howard, C.F.A., (second from left), and Brother Patrick McCabe, C.F.A., (third from right), welcome guests to the Brothers' residence chapel during the Founder's Day event at Alexian Village in Milwaukee.

Provincial's Letter

Dear Alexian Friends:

A great deal is happening throughout the Immaculate Conception Province of the Alexian Brothers.

AMITA Health, including its legacy Alexian Brothers Health System, has expanded to include Presence Health, making AMITA the largest Catholic health provider in Illinois. We have come a long way from the small frame house at Dearborn and Schiller streets in Chicago, where Brother Bonaventure Thelen, C.F.A., founded the Alexian Brothers' first U.S. hospital in 1866. What was a single Brother at the bedside giving direct patient care has morphed into a health-care conglomerate helping thousands of the needy and poor. In Chattanooga, Tennessee, the Brothers' newest ministry, St. Alexius Outreach Ministries, is developing innovative ways to reach out to fragile at-risk seniors. We also have rededicated the Brothers' residence at Alexian Village of Milwaukee and have a viable community there. Many of the Village's residents were tearful when they were told that the Brothers were back.

In the U.S., Hungary, the Philippines and East Timor, Brothers are finding ways to provide new methods of direct care. More important, we are discovering ways to empower others to care for themselves. We have joined with Ascension, the nation's largest Catholic and nonprofit health system and co-parent of AMITA Health, to participate in community organizing in remote Guatemalan villages to provide clean, potable water. Brothers are examining ways to participate with other ministries in Bolivia. Throughout the Province, the Holy Spirit is finding access to the hearts of the Brothers. In response, the Brothers are saying, "Come Holy Spirit, renew the hearts of your faithful!"

We are invited not only to renew, but also to go deeper. We are called to open the door to that space in our hearts where only the Spirit and our true self ever have ventured. For some of us,

entering that space is a new experience. For others, it's like summer vacation to grandmother's house: We go once a year and are familiar only enough to be comfortable, like we might be on a yearly retreat. Still others — wiser and humbler than I — live continually in that space of peace and surrender to the Spirit.

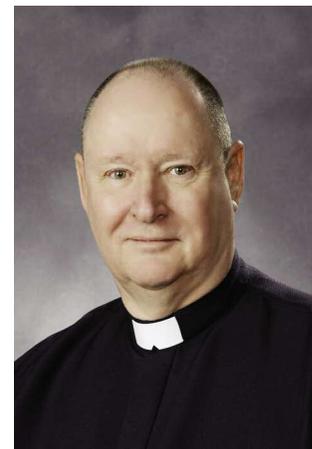
I believe with all my heart that we do, indeed, stand on the verge of a brave new world. God has blessed the Brothers with the awareness that allows us to see and to acknowledge the needs of the world around us. A close friend reminded me recently that it is good to be aware, but what do we do then? Do we possess the grace and the courage to step into that space of risk and chance? I have a trusted friend and mentor who is famous for challenging everyone he meets with this statement: "Do you trust the Holy Spirit? I do!"

The message I share with my fellow Brothers is that there are thousands of opportunities in the world for us to serve. Each opportunity has benefits and risks. If we truly want to attract new men, we must be willing to trust God, Jesus, our Mother Mary and the Holy Spirit, and to continue to take leaps of faith to perpetuate our centuries-old tradition of caring for the poor, the sick, the elderly, the mentally ill and others on the margins of society.

May God Bless You and Yours,



Brother Daniel McCormick, C.F.A.
Provincial
Immaculate Conception Province of the Alexian Brothers



Did you know?

Editor's Note: "Did you know?" provides brief glimpses into the rich, 800-year history of the Congregation of Alexian Brothers.

In 1634, Father Etienne Binet, a Jesuit author, wrote about his impressions of the Alexian Brothers.

"The Alexian Brothers are so secluded and surrounded by death, by coffins and the pest-stricken that the remembrance of their merits also seems to be buried and forgotten with the dead," he wrote. "But the day will come that will bring to light the value of these noble-minded warriors of Christ, who have waged battle against death, the plague and the most incurable diseases."

The Brothers trace their origins to the 13th century, when small groups of men and women banded together in the Low Countries of Europe to carry out Christ's commands by tending the sick, feeding the hungry and burying the dead. During the Black Death, a pandemic that struck Europe in the 1340s and lingered for centuries, the Brothers risked their lives to care for plague victims and to bury them when they died.

Brothers reflect on religious commitment as they renew vows

Brother Torch Acosta, C.F.A., Brother Steve Fogt, C.F.A., and Brother Patrick McCabe, C.F.A., renewed their Temporary Vows this summer, reaffirming their commitment to the Congregation of Alexian Brothers.

Brother Steve renewed his vows July 16 during a Mass in the chapel at St. Alexius Hospital, formerly known as Alexian Brothers Hospital, in St. Louis. Father Damian Dougherty, O.F.M., officiated at the Mass, and Brother Warren Longo, C.F.A., director of the Alexian Brothers Community in St. Louis, accepted Brother Steve's renewal of vows.

Brother Torch and Brother Patrick renewed their vows July 17, the Feast of St. Alexius, during ceremonies, respectively, in the chapel at the Alexian Brothers residence in Elk Grove Village, Illinois, and in the chapel of the Alexian Brothers residence on the campus of Alexian Village, an independent-living and long-term-care community in Milwaukee. Brother Dan McCormick, C.F.A., provincial of the Immaculate Conception Province of the Congregation of Alexian Brothers, accepted Brother Torch's renewal of vows, and Brother John Howard, C.F.A., director of the Alexian Brothers Community in Milwaukee, presided at Brother Patrick's ceremony.

Brother Steve serves as comptroller of Alexian Brothers Community & Ministries, the nonprofit organization of the Immaculate Conception Province. He also is assistant director of the Alexian Brothers Community in St. Louis. Last

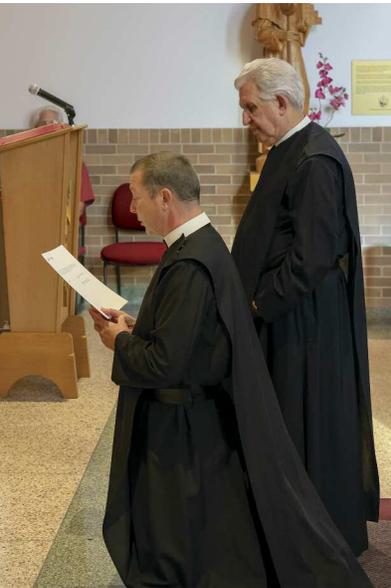
April, he ministered to the poor in Sucre, Bolivia, during an outreach mission authorized by Brother Dan and the Provincial Council.

Reflecting on and renewing his vows of poverty, chastity and obedience help him stay committed to religious life, Brother Steve said. He added that the vow of poverty enables him to empathize more with the poor; the vow of

chastity is liberating because it lets him commit himself to working totally for the Kingdom of God; and the vow of obedience to Church teachings and the directives of the Alexian Brothers gives him certainty that he is "following the path of truth" and assurance that "God's providence is at work."

Brother Torch leads the Alexian Brothers' Chicago-area presence ministry, which provides comfort, support and spiritual guidance to patients, residents and family members at several of the Alexian Brothers' namesake facilities in the city's northwest suburbs. Renewing his vows serves as an important reminder of the daily commitment an Alexian Brother must make to serve God and the Congregation successfully, Brother Torch said. "Renewal of vows is annual," he said. "But my promises to serve God and the Alexian Brothers through a continued relationship with and learning from Christ are to be done daily."

Brother Patrick and Brother John lead the Alexian Brothers presence ministry at Alexian Village. Brother Patrick also serves as associate vocations minister for the Immaculate Conception Province. His renewal of vows was "very meaningful," especially because it occurred during a weeklong celebration of St. Alexius at Alexian Village, he said. Inspired by his devotion to the Blessed Mother, his favorite prayer has become a simple "yes" to serving God and the people of Alexian Village. "Each year of temporary profession brings with it a deeper understanding that God and Jesus are much closer to me than I can ever imagine," Brother Patrick said. "A simple 'yes' is all it takes to allow the blessings to flow and awareness to begin. I am forever grateful to my Alexian Brothers and the people whom I serve in my vocations and presence ministries, as they give me unending opportunities to see God in each and every moment. Another year means more chances to say 'yes' over and over again."



Brother Steve Fogt, C.F.A., (left), renews his Temporary Vows as Brother Warren Longo, C.F.A., (right), watches.



For Brother Patrick McCabe, C.F.A., (left), and Brother Torch Acosta, C.F.A., (right), renewing their Temporary Vows each year carries special meaning.

Hungarian Brothers help parish celebrate Feast of Corpus Christi

The Alexian Brothers of Hungary played key roles in a procession through the streets of Győrújbarát, Hungary, in celebration of the Feast of Corpus Christi.

People prayed and sang during the June 3 procession, which began after a Mass at the Divine Mercy Church next to the Alexian Brothers mission in Győrújbarát.

Father Andrew Bausz of Divine Mercy Parish held aloft a monstrance containing the Blessed Sacrament as he walked along the



Girls sprinkle flower petals during the Feast of Corpus Christi procession in Győrújbarát, Hungary.

procession route. The route featured a series of six small altars, each representing Jesus Christ's body and blood. Father Andrew stopped at each of the altars and delivered a gospel reading and recited prayers, and he and procession participants sang hymns specific to each altar.

Brother Leó Vendrey, C.F.A., helped to lead the procession, and Brother Alexius Siska, C.F.A., prepared the altars. "My duty was to put the 'pallium corporale' (an altar linen) on the little altars before the procession reached each one, and then to light the candles and to give the prayer book to Father Andrew," Brother Alexius said.

The Feast of Corpus Christi, also known as the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, honors the presence of the body of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. Bishop Robert de Thorete established the feast in 1246 in the Belgian diocese of Liège at the suggestion of St. Juliana, an Augustinian nun who was prioress of

a convent near Liège. In 1264, Pope Urban IV established the feast as a universal feast of the Catholic Church.

In other Hungarian mission news:

- Brother Leó represented the Alexian Brothers at a beatification ceremony for János Brenner, a Hungarian priest martyred in 1957 during the retaliation that followed the failed anti-Soviet uprising in Hungary in 1956. More than 15,000 people attended the May 1 ceremony in Father János' hometown of Szombathely. During the ceremony, Cardinal Angelo Amato, prefect of the Vatican's Congregation for Saints Causes, read a message from Pope Francis in which he approved Father János' beatification. The pope last November acknowledged the priest's martyrdom. Brother Leó traveled to the ceremony with his brother, Father Gábor Vendrey, S.D.B., a Salesian priest.

- Vida Jánosné, a resident at St. Elizabeth of Hungary Home for the Elderly at the Alexian Brothers mission in Győrújbarát, donated a statue of the Virgin Mary to the Alexian Brothers. "It is a very popular portrayal of the Virgin Mary as the patron saint of Hungary," Brother Alexius said. The statue will be displayed in the Divine Mercy Chapel at the home for the elderly.



Brother Leó Vendrey, C.F.A., helps to lead the Feast of Corpus Christi procession.



Father Andrew Bausz of Divine Mercy Parish holds aloft a monstrance containing the Blessed Sacrament during the Feast of Corpus Christi procession.

New residence facilitates prayer, reflection, meditation

(continued from page 1)

McCormick, C.F.A., provincial of the Immaculate Conception Province of the Congregation of Alexian Brothers. The chapel, he added, “invites you to prayer” with its quiet atmosphere and lack of ornamentation. “You sit and allow the Holy Spirit to flow into you, over you and around you,” he said.

The outside of the residence also is conducive to spiritual pursuits. In addition



The Alexian Brothers' new residence in Elk Grove Village, Illinois, features a Japanese-style Zen garden/courtyard highlighted by a fountain with three 6-foot-tall stone slabs.

to the Zen garden/courtyard, a substantial portion of the property has been dedicated to walking paths surrounded by prairie grass and wildflowers. Plans call for installing Stations of the Cross along the paths in time for Lent next year.

“We have Stations of the Cross in the chapel for bad weather,” Brother Dan said. “But we also can walk the Stations outside if the weather allows, and we can invite employees of the medical center and our Alexian Brothers Associates to join us.” (The Alexian Brothers Associates are non-vowed Christian laypeople who assist the Brothers with a variety of activities.)

Alexian Brothers who live elsewhere and need some time away from their duties are welcome to visit the new residence, stay a few days and take advantage of its serene environment, Brother Dan said. “It wouldn’t necessarily be a formal retreat,” he said. “They could join us for meals or could eat privately. They could spend time reading, praying in the chapel or meditating in the garden.”

The residence includes eight bedrooms,

and every two bedrooms share a private patio featuring a traditional Japanese fountain. The facility also has a living room, dining room, kitchen, exercise room, laundry area and an administrative office. A large plaque of St. Camillus, patron saint of the sick, hospitals, nurses and physicians, hangs on a wall in the living room. The plaque previously was displayed at the Brothers’ former residence, and they had it restored to fix some minor damage before bringing it to their new home.

Brother Dan, Brother Torch Acosta, C.F.A., Brother Patrick McCabe, C.F.A., and Postulant Zeke Mapa moved into the new residence during the first week of April. Brother Patrick later was assigned to join Brother John Howard, C.F.A., at the Alexian Brothers Community in Milwaukee, and Postulant Zeke entered the Alexian Brothers Novitiate in the Philippines in July. (See related



The chapel at the new Alexian Brothers residence reflects its warm character and contemplative atmosphere.



The new Alexian Brothers residence (above) includes eight bedrooms, and every two bedrooms share a private patio (below right) featuring a traditional Japanese fountain.

article on page 8.)

Unlike many other religious orders, the Brothers have enjoyed modest success in adding new members in recent years, and Brother Dan is confident that new Brothers will be moving into the residence in the years ahead. “We always plan for success in the Immaculate Conception Province, and we were planning for increases when we designed this residence,” he said.

At the same time, the Brothers recognize that an overall decline in religious vocations has made large residences a thing of the past. “We’re not building houses of 25 or 30 rooms anymore,” Brother Dan said. “We’re building more practically, but we’re building with an eye toward the future.”

The Brothers’ previous residence in Elk Grove Village had 25 bedrooms, and by 2016, only three Brothers were living there. Recognizing it had become financially impractical to continue to own the building, the Brothers sold it to AMITA Health, which converted it into a residential treatment center for people with obsessive-compulsive disorder, anxiety and addictions – a purpose that has furthered the

Brothers’ centuries-old commitment to serving the marginalized. “AMITA Health’s behavioral health people have turned it into an absolute miracle with the way they can change lives through residential care,” Brother Dan said.

He praised Mary Ann Magnifico, AMITA Health vice president, construction and facilities, Walter Eckenhoff and Hannah Davenport of Eckenhoff Saunders Architects in Chicago, and Brian Barry of Intrinsic Landscaping

in Glenview, Illinois, for their efforts in helping the Brothers customize their new residence to suit their needs.



Brother Dan also expressed his gratitude to AMITA Health for transferring ownership of the Martha Street site to the Immaculate Conception Province, and to the Provincial Council and the Brothers who moved with him into the new residence for their input into its design. “It has been a group project, and everyone made suggestions and had a role to play,” he said. “The end result is a home that is a real gift.”

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**Alexian Brothers
Community & Ministries**
600 Alexian Way
Elk Grove Village, IL 60007

Brother Lawrence Krueger, C.F.A.
Superior General, Congregation of Alexian Brothers

Brother Dermot O'Leary, C.F.A.
Vicar General, Congregation of Alexian Brothers

Brother Daniel McCormick, C.F.A.
Provincial, Immaculate Conception Province of the Alexian Brothers, Director of the Alexian Brothers Community, Elk Grove Village, Illinois

Brother John Howard, C.F.A.
Director of the Alexian Brothers Community, Milwaukee

Brother Richard Lowe, C.F.A.
Director of the Alexian Brothers Community, Signal Mountain, Tennessee

Brother Warren Longo, C.F.A.
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Brother Alexis Siska, C.F.A.
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Brother Raphael Fallado, C.F.A.
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Director of the Alexian Brothers Matina Community, Davao City, Philippines

The Alexians

The Love of Christ Compels Us

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Three postulants become novices

Three postulants were initiated into the Alexian Brothers Novitiate during a Mass on July 17, the Feast of St. Alexius.

Brother Warren Longo, C.F.A., postulant director, presented a copy of the Alexian Brothers' "Way of Life," the rules and constitution of the Congregation of Alexian Brothers, to postulants Joe Pense, Robert Podjarsky and Marc Rizzo, and Brother Jeffrey Callander, C.F.A., read an excerpt from the book. Brother Warren also conferred upon the postulants the title of "Brother."

Father Damian Dougherty, O.F.M., officiated at the Mass, which occurred in the chapel at St. Alexius Hospital, formerly known as Alexian Brothers Hospital, in St. Louis. Superior General Edward Walsh, C.F.A., and Brother Thomas Keusenkothen, C.F.A., also attended the Mass.

The new novices will spend the first year of the two-year novitiate program at the Alexian Brothers mission in the Philippines before returning to the United States for their second year of formation. They will be joined by Zeke Mapa, who previously completed his postulancy



(Front row, left to right) Novice Brothers Robert Podjarsky, Joe Pense and Marc Rizzo join (back row, left to right) Brother Edward Walsh, C.F.A., Brother Warren Longo, C.F.A., Brother Jeffrey Callander, C.F.A., and Brother Thomas Keusenkothen, C.F.A., for a photo after the three novices were initiated into the Alexian Brothers Novitiate.

and has returned to the Alexian Brothers.

During their year in the Philippines, the novices will develop their prayer life while participating in ministries that harken back to the work of the earliest Alexian Brothers, who cared for the poor and sick in the Middle Ages.