



The Alexians

The Love of Christ Impels 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*

Alexian Brothers in Hungary celebrate religious milestones

Superior General Brother Edward Walsh, C.F.A., and Assistant General Brother Warren Longo, C.F.A., visited the Alexian Brothers mission in Hungary recently to celebrate milestones in the religious lives of the mission's two Alexian Brothers.

During the visit, Brother Alexius Siska, C.F.A., Director of the Alexian Brothers Community in Győrújbarát, Hungary, professed his Perpetual Vows as an Alexian Brother, and Brother Leó Vendrey, C.F.A., renewed his Temporary Vows. Both milestones occurred on Dec. 8, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

Brother Edward received Brother Alexius' Perpetual Vows during a Mass at the Church of the Immaculate Conception, a parish church near the mission. Father Andrew Bausz, the church's Pastor, celebrated the Mass, assisted by concelebrants Father Thomas Dori Horváth, O.S.B., and Father Gabriel Nemeth.

About 100 people filled the church during the Mass. The worshipers included Brother



Brother Alexius Siska, C.F.A., (left), professes his Perpetual Vows as an Alexian Brother during a Mass at the Church of the Immaculate Conception in Győrújbarát, Hungary. Superior General Brother Edward Walsh, C.F.A., (middle), received Brother Alexius' profession of vows.

Alexius' mother, parishioners of the church, and staff members of St. Elizabeth of Hungary Home for the Elderly, an assisted-living and skilled-nursing facility at the Alexian Brothers mission.

Brother Edward delivered the homily, with Sister Susanne Czupy, F.M.V.D., serving as translator. Brother Edward spoke about Brother Alexius, his commitment to religious life, and the meaning of Perpetual Vows. Brother Edward

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IN MEMORIAM: BROTHER MAURICE WILSON, C.F.A.

‘He truly lived a commitment to the poor and powerless...’



Clockwise from upper left: Brother Maurice Wilson, C.F.A., as a young Alexian Brother, in his later years, posing for the camera with children in the Philippines, and serving as a negotiator for the Alexian Brothers during the 1975 takeover of their Gresham, Wis., Novitiate by armed Native Americans.

Brother Maurice Wilson, C.F.A., an Alexian Brother for nearly 70 years who played a key role in the development of the Alexian Brothers mission in the Philippines, died Jan. 5 after suffering a stroke.

Hundreds of people, including fellow Alexian Brothers, physicians and employees of the mission, and other friends, packed the chapel at the Alexian Brothers Health & Wellness Center in Davao City for Brother Maurice's funeral Mass on Jan. 9. Archbishop Romeo Valles, D.D., Archbishop of Davao, celebrated the Mass, assisted by seven concelebrants.

Brother Maurice was laid to rest in the Alexian Brothers cemetery at the mission, the first Alexian Brother to be buried there.

“Maurice chose to be buried next to his family – his Filipino family,” says Brother Dan McCormick, C.F.A., Provincial of the Immaculate Conception Province of the Congregation of Alexian Brothers.

Brother Maurice, 91, was a revered elder statesman at the mission, which was established in 1981. Assigned there in 1982, he was respected for his wisdom and his commitment to serving the poor, Brother Dan says.

“Maurice always felt called to live at the margins with the people who are marginalized,” Brother Dan says. “He truly lived a commitment to the poor and the

powerless wherever he found it. He did the work, he was faithful to his vocation, and he was present to the people.”

Brother Maurice joined the Alexian Brothers in 1946, graduated from the Alexian Brothers School of Nursing in Chicago in 1952, and professed his Perpetual Vows in 1954.

He served as Director of the Alexian Brothers School of Nursing for 15 years during



the 1950s and 1960s, championing the cause of men in nursing at a time when nursing was considered a female profession in the U.S. A total of 438 men graduated from the all-male school under his leadership, including many who later became nurse anesthetologists and doctors.

In 1969, Brother Maurice became Director of the Alexian Brothers' Mobile Health Project in Walterboro, S.C., where he helped care for the poor for more than two years. During much of that time, he served on the Provincial Senate, a leadership role to which he returned in the mid-1970s while also serving as Director of Postulants.

In 1975, he served as a negotiator and spokesman for the Alexian Brothers during a takeover of their Gresham, Wis., Novitiate by armed Native Americans calling themselves the Menominee Warrior Society. His kind nature and calm and patient demeanor were key factors in defusing the takeover without loss of life, according to Brother Warren Longo, C.F.A., Assistant General of the Congregation of Alexian Brothers, who joined Brother Maurice for a peace pipe ceremony with the Native Americans after a settlement was reached.

In the Philippines, Brother Maurice worked with the poor in the Alexian Brothers' mobile outreach clinics and at the Alexian Brothers Health & Wellness Center. He relished his direct personal contact with patients, as well as the warmth, humor and spirituality of the Filipino people. “It is easier to see and concentrate on our charism here,” he once said.

Brother Maurice, who also served many terms as an Alexian Brothers Community Director in the Philippines, was a true missionary who willingly sacrificed Western comforts such

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Provincial's Letter

Dear Alexian Friends:

As friends can attest, I have been known to use more than my share of adjectives. They can be useful elements of speech and writing, adding context, flavor and richness to conversations and other communications.

But when it comes to how we view and treat other people, adjectives can be a hindrance. They can mask the humanity and uniqueness of each individual. They can cause us to categorize people and to stereotype or condescend to them without really knowing and understanding who they are.

Brother Maurice Wilson, C.F.A., who passed away Jan. 5 after nearly 70 years as an Alexian Brother, understood this notion. A fixture at our mission in the Philippines for the last 33 years, Brother Maurice was dedicated to serving the poor and living in community and prayer with his fellow Alexian Brothers. (See article on page 2.)

While perpetuating the Alexian Brothers' 800-year-old healing mission, Brother Maurice never saw those he served as "poor people." He saw them first and foremost as people – people who happened to be poor. He respected, cared for and got to know them individually, seeing each as a reflection of God.

Similarly, Brother Maurice never categorized his colleagues at the mission as Filipino people. He saw them first and foremost as people – as colleagues and fellow Alexian Brothers united in

a common mission, and as individuals with unique personalities, talents and dreams. He worked to build relationships with all of them.

Brother Maurice intuitively grasped what Søren Kierkegaard, the 19th century existentialist philosopher, meant when he said: "Once you label me, you negate me." It's an important perspective to keep in mind as we go about our daily lives in the United States, where people are inculcated with the need to categorize each other. When we do, we miss the Gospel message, "You are my son or daughter, and I am proud of you."

People in the Philippines tend to share Brother Maurice's interpersonal approach. Many are extremely poor, living with their families in ramshackle lean-tos and barely scraping out a living. Yet everyone seems to get along – even the bicyclists, motorists and pedestrians negotiating Davao City's complex traffic circles and intersections.

There is nobility in their behavior toward each other, just as there was nobility in Brother Maurice's life as a missionary. That's something for all of us to consider as we hope and pray for greater harmony in our world.

May God Bless You and Yours,

Bro Daniel McCormick CFA

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



In Memoriam: Brother Maurice Wilson, C.F.A.

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as air conditioning and hot water to serve the Church and the mission of Jesus Christ, Brother Dan says. "His goal was to teach as much as he could and to bring the light of Christ into other people's lives," Brother Dan says.

Brother Maurice's death was "a great loss to us and to the Congregation," says Brother John

of God Oblina, C.F.A., Director of the Alexian Brothers Matina Community in Davao City.

"He was a great example to the Filipino Brothers of a life lived in fidelity to God and service to the Church. ... He will be remembered and will always live in our memory and the history of the Brothers. ... We are very grateful for the gift that he was to us and to the Church."

Alexian Brothers looking seriously at expansion to East Timor



Above: Brother Romie Duriman, C.F.A., plans to travel to East Timor this spring to investigate possible locations for Alexian Brothers ministries. Below: Provincial Brother Dan McCormick, C.F.A., (far left), consults with fellow Alexian Brothers during his December visit to the Alexian Brothers mission in the Philippines.

The Alexian Brothers in 2016 will be stepping up their investigation into the possibility of establishing a community in East Timor, after initial research in the Southeast Asia nation showed strong potential for religious vocations there.

Brother Romie Duriman, C.F.A., of the Alexian Brothers mission in the Philippines, visited East Timor last fall and plans to travel there again in the spring of 2016 for a six- to eight-month stay.

"Romie will be going back to do a serious investigation of places where we might enter into ministries," says Brother Dan McCormick, C.F.A., Provincial of the Immaculate Conception

Province of the Congregation of Alexian Brothers.

Brother Dan traveled to the Philippines in early December to receive an update from Brother Romie about his initial research in East Timor and to visit with other Brothers at the Philippine mission.

Much of East Timor's population is Catholic and poor, "and vocations tend to be stronger," Brother Dan says. With poverty so widespread, the need for the Brothers' healing ministry appears strong, although they have not yet identified a specific ministry to pursue.

"The danger in defining yourself too early in the process is that you begin to eliminate other possibilities," Brother Dan says. "I have asked Romie not to go over there with a dotting-the-'i'-and-crossing-the-'t' mentality, because there are things we haven't seen or

thought about yet."

One advantage of expanding to East Timor is that the language there "is relatively easy to learn," Brother Dan says. "They use the English alphabet, which would be an advantage for Romie and whoever else might join him in establishing a community there."

If the Brothers decide to expand to East Timor, the new community would be their third in Southeast Asia. It would join the Brothers' communities in the Bajada and Matina sections of Davao City in the Philippines, setting the stage for a possible new Alexian Brothers province in Southeast Asia.

Under Congregation policies, a region of Alexian Brothers communities can qualify to become an autonomous province when it has three communities and can be financially self-sufficient, Brother Dan says. Although neither condition exists now, "the potential and opportunity are there for that to happen," Brother Dan says.

Filipino Brothers now manage the mission in the Philippines and "are as autonomous as they can be while still having a U.S. provincial," Brother Dan says. With the recent death of Brother Maurice Wilson, C.F.A., (See article on page 2.) the mission for the first time is staffed entirely by Filipino Brothers. "They are now totally responsible for the mission's future," Brother Dan says.

The Brothers in the Philippines continue to enjoy vocations success, with three new postulants expected to join the order there early in 2016. "They are going strong in vocations," Brother Dan says. "I can't commend them enough for their tireless efforts to get the word out."

To accommodate the growing number of Brothers in the Philippines, the Brothers' community in Bajada is building a second residence, which is expected to open this spring, just a short walk from the existing residence.



Alexian Brother teams with others to support global literacy campaign

Brother Ron Lau, C.F.A., and two associates from the Provincialate Office and AMITA Health participated this past fall in a global campaign to increase support for high-quality early learning by encouraging adults to read to children.

Jumpstart's Read for the Record® campaign celebrated its 10th anniversary on Oct. 22 with worldwide readings of the campaign book, "Not Norman: A Goldfish Story," written by Kelly Bennett and illustrated by Noah Z. Jones.

Brother Ron, Mary Ann Magnifico, AMITA Health Vice President of Facilities and Construction, and Colette Reid, Executive Secretary for Magnifico and the Provincialate Office, visited the Alexian Brothers Child Care Center on the campus of AMITA Health Alexian Brothers Medical Center, Elk Grove Village, to read the book to kids at the center. Many hospital associates enroll their children at the center, which also is open to children from the community.

Brother Ron read the book to about 50 pre-school and pre-kindergarten children, and Reid read the book to 22 2-year-olds, says Amy Magnus, Director of the center, which is operated by Bright Horizons. Magnifico also was scheduled to read the book but instead photographed the event after deferring to the grandfather of a child at the center who wanted to read to the children.

"It was a great day – a wonderful experience," Brother Ron says. "I made it a point to wear my habit so I didn't look like someone just coming in off the street. The kids were amazed. I don't think they ever had seen anyone dressed like that."

In the book, Norman is a goldfish, and a little boy at first is disappointed when he receives the fish as a birthday gift instead of a pet that can run, catch and do other things. But the fish gradually endears himself to the boy, who ultimately decides there is no pet he rather would have. Brother Ron, who never had read to a

group of children, enhanced the story by making fishlike bubbling noises and flapping his arms to simulate swimming. His audience quickly began to imitate him.

"He had some trepidation about it, but we knew he would be a good fit," Reid says. "The kids just loved him. He was a wonderful representation of the Alexian Brothers. The kids were very comfortable with him, took to him immediately and really enjoyed having him read."

When Brother Ron finished reading the book, a teacher asked if the children had any questions. A boy in the back of the room raised his hand and asked if he could give Brother Ron a hug. Granted permission, the boy "starts hugging me, and within five seconds, every child in the room is climbing on me," Brother Ron says. "I was shocked. ... I didn't see it coming. I couldn't stop laughing. It was amazing."

Participating in Read for the Record was a way not only to put the Alexian Brothers' values into action, but also to show appreciation for hospital associates and their efforts to perpetuate the Brothers' healing mission, Reid says.

Brother Ron says he was happy just to play a small part in the global effort. With his initial trepidation swept aside by his audience's enthusiastic response, he is eager to do it again.

"It's exciting," he says. "It shows one person can make a difference, because with each person at participating facilities doing the same thing that day, we were part of a worldwide experience helping kids with literacy."



Colette Reid, (left), displays "Not Norman: A Goldfish Story," a book read to children at facilities participating in the global Read for the Record® campaign. Reid, Brother Ron Lau, C.F.A., (middle), and Mary Ann Magnifico, (right), supported the campaign at Alexian Brothers Child Care Center in Elk Grove Village, Ill.



Brother Ron Lau, C.F.A., interacts with children at the Alexian Brothers Child Care Center in Elk Grove Village, Ill., as part of the global Read for the Record® campaign.

Research sheds new light on founding of U.S. province

The staff of the Alexian Brothers Provincial Archives has determined the name of the ship that carried the founder of the Immaculate Conception Province to the U.S.

in the 19th century, putting to rest an unconfirmed story that he was involved in a shipwreck during his journey from Europe.

Using Ancestry.com, the staff determined that Brother Bonaventure Thelen, C.F.A., was listed as Hubert Thelen on the passenger list of the *Europa*, a Cunard Line steamship that departed for the U.S. from Le Havre, France. Brother Bonaventure was listed as 40 years of age and of German origin, with the occupation of priest. The ship's departure date was not listed, but the arrival in New York was shown as Jan. 2, 1866.

The captain of the *Europa* was listed as A. Hulshizer, and on this trip, his ship carried 107 passengers. Among them were six children, four priests, 13 Franciscan Sisters of the Poor, one physician and one lawyer. At the time, Cunard steamships

were designed primarily to transport mail, and could accommodate about 140 passengers, all in first- or second-class cabins. There were no steerage passengers.

The discovery of the name of the ship that carried Brother Bonaventure to the U.S. lays to rest the story that he was involved in a shipwreck. The records on Cunard Line steamships are quite complete, and they show that the *Europa* was not involved in a wreck in 1866. In 1849, *Europa* collided with and sank the emigrant ship *Charles Bartlett* outside of New York. In 1858, *Europa* collided with and sank the *Arabia* off Cape Race, Newfoundland. But those are the only two incidents that involved

the *Europa*.

The shipwreck story first surfaced in a 1916 Golden Jubilee booklet published in connection with the 50th anniversary of the founding of Alexian Brothers Hospital in Chicago. It is not known where the story originated, and Brother Ignatius Wieggers, C.F.A., did not mention it in his book, "History of the Aachen Alexian Brothers." The book said only that Brother Bonaventure's voyage was very stormy. Through the years, the shipwreck story has been repeated but never has been substantiated.

The Archives staff also has discovered additional information about Brother Paul (Mathias) Pollig, C.F.A., one of the first Alexian Brothers sent from Germany to assist Brother Bonaventure with the hospital he founded in Chicago. In the Chicago City Directory of 1870, Brother Paul is listed as Mathew Pollig, Vice President of Alexian Brothers Hospital, 547 N. Franklin. He became a naturalized U.S. citizen Nov. 3, 1873.

The records of the Provinciate show that Brother Paul co-founded Alexian Brothers Hospital in St. Louis and was Rector there from 1869 to 1870. He served as Provincial from 1870 to 1874. When he was appointed as Provincial, he also was named Rector of the Chicago hospital and Novice Master of the province.

Brother Paul left the Congregation in 1877 and was readmitted to the Congregation shortly after founding a hospital in Oshkosh, Wis., in 1879. He left the Congregation again in the summer of 1880.

Information obtained from Ancestry.com shows that he applied for a U.S. passport in 1884 and 1889. He was listed as Brother Paulus Pollig, Clergyman, a second-class passenger on the steamship *La Normandie*. The ship departed from Le Havre, and it arrived in the U.S. on Feb. 5, 1890. Brother Paul then headed to Chicago. He died Aug. 18, 1893 and left his entire estate to the Alexian Brothers of Chicago.



The staff of the Alexian Brothers Provincial Archives reports they have discovered the name of the ship that carried Brother Bonaventure Thelen, C.F.A., (above), to the United States. The discovery puts to rest a story that Brother Bonaventure, the founder of the Immaculate Conception Province, was involved in a shipwreck during his journey from Europe.

Alexian Brothers take pilgrimage to Rome from Hungary

Brother Alexius Siska, C.F.A., and Brother Leó Vendrey, C.F.A., joined staff members from St. Elizabeth of Hungary Home for the Elderly on a four-day pilgrimage to Rome in connection with the Catholic Church's Year of Consecrated Life.

During the trip last October, the group visited Vatican City, Saint Peter's Basilica, Vatican City, the Colosseum and the Basilica of Saints Boniface and Alexis. Visiting the latter basilica, named in part after the patron saint of the Congregation of Alexian Brothers, was the most memorable part of the trip, says Brother Alexius, Director of the Alexian Brothers Community at their mission in Hungary.

Pope Francis proclaimed 2015 the Year of Consecrated Life, encouraging men and women



Brother Alexius Siska, C.F.A., (third from right), Brother Leó Vendrey, C.F.A., (right), and staff members from St. Elizabeth of Hungary Home for the Elderly visit Vatican City during a four-day pilgrimage to Rome in connection with the Catholic Church's Year of Consecrated Life.

in religious life to look to the past with gratitude, to live the present with passion, to embrace the future with hope, to be witnesses of communion, joy and the gospel, and to go to the peripheries to proclaim the Good News.



Brother Leó Vendrey, C.F.A., (left), and Brother Alexius Siska, C.F.A., pose for a photo inside the Basilica of Saints Boniface and Alexis in Rome. Behind the Brothers is a relief of St. Alexis and the staircase under which legend says he died.

Alexian Brothers in Hungary celebrate religious milestones

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acknowledged Father Andrew and Brother Alexius' mother and thanked them for the support they provided to Brother Alexius as he discerned his religious vocation.

Brother Edward also told the story of how Brother Alexius introduced himself to the Alexian Brothers. "He was out one day on his bike, which he rides frequently, and he came by the Brothers' house, came to the front door and rang the doorbell," Brother Edward says. "Brother Joseph (Francis Czébán, the mission's late founder) answered the door, and Brother Alexius said, 'I would like to become an Alexian Brother.'" Brother Joseph invited him into the house, and Brother Alexius, who had worked previously as a teacher and a social worker, soon became a postulant.

Before the Mass, Brother Edward accepted Brother Leó's renewal of his Temporary Vows

during the Alexian Brothers' Morning Prayers in St. Bernadette Chapel at St. Alexius Monastery, the Brothers' residence at the mission. It was a small ceremony, also attended by Brother Warren, Brother Alexius and Sister Susanne, who served as translator.

Brother Leó, who joined the Alexian Brothers after working as a boat builder and a chef, assists Brother Alexius with administrative matters at the mission and teaches the Scripture to residents at the home for the elderly.

Brother Alexius and Brother Leó took on the day-to-day tasks of sustaining and growing the mission following Brother Joseph Francis' sudden death in May 2013. Under their leadership, the 13-year-old mission has continued to grow, with the home for the elderly operating at full capacity and maintaining a waiting list.



Brother Leó Vendrey, C.F.A., (right), renews his Temporary Vows as an Alexian Brother. Superior General Brother Edward Walsh, C.F.A., (left), accepted Brother Leó's renewal of vows in St. Bernadette Chapel at St. Alexius Monastery, the Brothers' residence at their mission in Hungary.

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The Alexians

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Two Brothers renew Temporary Vows

Brother Andrew Dinegar, C.F.A., and Brother Tom Klein, C.F.A., renewed their Temporary Vows during a Mass in St. Alexius Chapel at the Alexian Brothers residence in Signal Mountain, Tenn.

Rev. Joseph Thomas, C.M.I., a chaplain for the Alexian Brothers and Alexian Village of Tennessee (AVT) in Signal Mountain, presided at the Mass on Dec. 10. Brother

John Howard, Director of the Alexian Brothers Community in Signal Mountain, received Brother Andrew's and Brother Tom's one-year renewal of vows following the homily, which focused on the Consecrated Life. Fellow Alexian Brothers and a few daily Mass attendees witnessed the ceremony. "It was very low-key," Brother John says.

Brother Andrew, who joined the Alexian



Brother Tom Klein, C.F.A., (left), and Brother Andrew Dinegar, C.F.A., (right), join Brother John Howard, C.F.A., for a photo after Brother Tom and Brother Andrew renewed their Temporary Vows.

Brothers in 2010 and professed his First Vows in 2012, works with St. Alexius Outreach Ministries, a ministry that the Alexian Brothers are developing in Chattanooga, Tenn., to address senior hunger and isolation.

"He has helped to bring service agencies together, but more importantly, he has gotten Alexian Village of Tennessee residents more

involved in helping the poor," Brother John says.

Brother Tom, who joined the Alexian Brothers in 2009 and professed his First Vows in 2011, ministers to residents at Alexian Village of Tennessee in Signal Mountain.

"Brother Tom ministers in the assisted-living center, and from there he reaches out to the health-center and independent-living residents," Brother John says.