



Order of Preachers

# DOMINICAN *Central*

NEWS from the PROVINCE OF ST. ALBERT THE GREAT

SPRING 2004

## From the Provincial

DEAR FRIENDS OF  
THE FRIARS,



From the beginning of the Order, Dominicans have always been committed to the mission of the Catholic Church. As part of our living tradition, we remember how Saint Dominic sent out his first brothers to preach the Gospel of Jesus, even though some did not feel ready and others did not want to leave the familiar surroundings of the community in Toulouse.

Yet go they did and with a spirit of joy. For Saint Dominic saw his friars as "apostles," men sent on a mission to share with others the good news of God's saving love. Mission, then, is at the heart of our life as Dominicans.

It is not surprising then that the Province of St. Albert the Great has always embraced the idea of mission. We have claimed the life of "apostles," brothers sent on mission for the sake of Christ and his church. For this reason, for more than 50 years we have been missionaries in the traditional sense, devoting ourselves to building up the church. In recent years we have increasingly directed our energy and resources to our mission in Bolivia, South America.

At present, we have 26 Dominican friars working and studying in Bolivia. Of these, three are Americans and one is from the Province of Belgium. By the standards of contemporary religious

*continued on page 2*

## Academic life continues to flourish in Bolivian Vicariate

**M**ARCH 2004 was a busy month for several members of the Vicariate as three friars defended their theses in front of various academic tribunals, earning advanced academic degrees with "grades of distinction." We hope that with these advanced degrees, the Dominicans of Bolivia will be known for our excellence in the intellectual ministry that has marked the history of the Order and particularly the Province of St. Albert the Great.

In early March, pre-novice Alfonso Caba Llanos successfully defended his licentiate thesis in Missionology. His work was an investigation of one of the shrines scattered throughout the country that attracts many pilgrims during their celebrations. It is at these shrines that one can see the encounter between Christian faith and indigenous culture.

His thesis, titled "The Seeds of the Word at the Shrine of Nuestro Señor de Maica," earned Alfonso a grade of "Cum Laude." Within two days of his defense, Alfonso left for Perú with four other pre-novices to begin his novitiate in Cuzco within the shadow of the famous Inca



ruins of Machu Pichu.

### Awarded Cum Laude

Later in the month, Father Jhony Luján Flores, finishing a two-year program at the prestigious Universidad Javarianum in Bogotá, Colombia, successfully defended his master's thesis in Biblical Studies. His thesis is titled "The Soteriological Action of Jesus Christ from the Semantics of 'Communion' with and in Christ according to First Corinthians." For his effort Father Jhony earned the distinction of

Friars Oscar Mendez (from left) and Edwin Gonzalez pursue the Dominican tradition of study.

*continued on page 2*

### IN THIS ISSUE

- |   |                        |   |                        |   |                  |
|---|------------------------|---|------------------------|---|------------------|
| 3 | The Bolivian Vicariate | 5 | Preaching              | 7 | Dominican Doings |
| 3 | O.P. Book Review       | 6 | Popular Culture        | 8 | Congratulations  |
| 4 | Vocation News          | 6 | Reflecting Like a Flag | 8 | Friars in Print  |
| 5 | Justice and Peace      | 7 | Featured Friar         | 8 | In Memoriam      |



continued from page 1



Evening prayer at the Formation Community in Cochabamba

“Cum Laude.” He is returning to Cochabamba where he will be director of our Pastoral Center of San Martín de Porres and will apply to the Faculty of Theology and Philosophy-ISET, which is one of the main centers for philosophical and theological studies in Bolivia.

## Priority in the Vicariate

At the end of March, Rafael Lino Alvarado defended his licentiate thesis in Bioethics. His work, titled “The Gift of Life in the Magisterium of the Church Concerning the Practice of Euthanasia,” is being considered for publication by Catholic University Press for its clarity in outlining the problem and could very possibly serve as a pastoral guide for presenting the teaching of the church in cases of euthanasia. Rafael received a grade of “with distinction” from the Faculty of Theology at Universidad Católica Boliviana. Rafael is currently living in the

stadium community in Cochabamba.

The students and pre-novices living and studying at our formation community, Casa Fray Antonio de Montesinos, are already responding to the challenge that these brothers have paved in striving for excellence in studies and obtaining advanced academic degrees. Among the five student brothers in initial formation, Deacon Edwin Gonzalez is leading the way by preparing a thesis in philosophy doing a hermeneutical study of the symbol of the cross according to the thought of Paul Ricoeur. The students are joined by 12 pre-novices who are taking their first steps in experiencing religious community and adapting to the rigors of academics.

Earning advanced degrees has been a priority in the Vicariate during the past several years and is seen as a way to manifest a presence in the church in Bolivia that reflects our Dominican heritage and charism. From the initial stages of vocational discernment through initial formation and continuing on through continuing education, the members of the Vicariate are trying to live up to the high standards of the intellectual life that marks the place of the Order in the church and is evident in the accomplishments of the members of St. Albert’s Province.

We wish to thank the members of the Province for their sacrifices in making these accomplishments possible. It is our hope that we will continue to make the Order of Preachers a viable presence in the Bolivian Church.

—Fr. Thomas Lynch, O.P.

## From the Provincial (continued from page 1)

life in the United States, our Bolivian brothers are young; most are in their 30s and 40s. They exude a spirit of hope for the future, passion for the gospel, and generosity toward the people they serve. Whether they are working among the poor in the parishes of La Paz or Pampa Grande, in the charismatic communities of Santa Cruz and at the Centro San Martín, at the Shrine of Cotoca, or among the homeless boys or university students of Cochabamba, they reveal the same joy and dedication to Christ and his church as those first “apostles” sent by Saint Dominic.

In Saint Dominic,  
Michael Mascari, O.P.  
Prior Provincial

## GRACIAS AMERICAN FRIENDS!

Brother Juan Carlos came to the U.S. to learn English and has returned to Bolivia—thanks in part to your generous donations!

1. Adopt a preacher in seminary education
2. Fund a *Come & See* Vocation Weekend
3. Support a retired friar
4. Help our Bolivian missions
5. Remember us in your will



Please send your donation today in the envelope enclosed.

Contact:  
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Director, Mission Advancement  
1909 South Ashland Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60608-2994

## MISSION STATEMENT

**THE DOMINICAN FRIARS  
OF THE PROVINCE OF ST. ALBERT THE GREAT  
COMMUNICATE THE WORD OF GOD THROUGH  
PREACHING, THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION,  
AND THE PROMOTION OF JUSTICE AND PEACE.**

**THIS MISSION IN THE BODY OF CHRIST DEMANDS  
A VOWED COMMUNITY LIFE, LITURGICAL PRAYER,  
AND LIFELONG STUDY.**

# The Bolivian Dominican Vicariate

THE BOLIVIAN VICARIATE of St. Albert the Great celebrated the 40th anniversary of its foundation last year. Fr. Ed Ruane, O.P. the past Provincial, visited the Vicariate for his final visit and to celebrate this joyous event. On that occasion Fr. Ed was accompanied by another past Provincial, Fr. Don Goergen, O.P., as well as Bro. Kevin Carroll and Fr. Jerry Stookey, who had both visited Bolivia several times as translators.

At present, we have 22 solemnly professed brothers (four of them are non-Bolivians), four brothers in simple vows, five novices studying at the Peruvian novitiate in Cuzco, and 13 pre-novices. Of the solemnly professed, 21 are priests and one is a deacon. This means we presently do not have any cooperator brothers. However, there might be some young men among the novices and pre-novices who will eventually decide to become cooperator brothers. The ages among us vary. Our four oldest brothers are in their 70s; two are in their 50s; thirteen are in their 40s; and two are in their 30s. The brothers in simple vows, the novices and the pre-novices are all in their 20s, which makes a well-balanced group of 44 persons presently in Bolivia.

The Bolivian Vicariate's manpower is distributed into six communities. Three of them are in the valley city of Cochabamba. In the city itself, the Vicariate's oldest building is the convent of St. Jude Thaddeus, whose

community of three brothers care for our chapel of St. Martin de Porres, besides teaching at Catholic University and high schools. Five miles away is the newest building, Fray Antonio de Montesinos, the students' residence. Here is where the pre-novices and simply professed live with four older brothers. Not too far from here is the smallest community of two brothers who attend a parish in formation.

Up high in the mountains, in the city of La Paz, de facto capital of Bolivia, there are three brothers who work in a quasi-parish in a very poor section of the city. In the city of Cotoca in the lowlands, four brothers attend the famous parish of Our Lady of Cotoca, which is a national shrine. Finally, in the nearby city of Santa Cruz, the most-developed and fastest-growing in the nation, we have the charismatic place of prayer called La Mansion, where four older brothers teach and celebrate with very large lay groups.

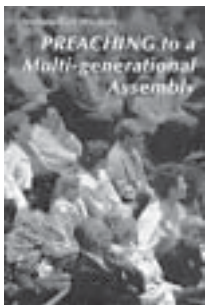
Is this development worthy of 40 years of growth? God only knows. But we Bolivian Dominicans feel that we have God's blessing, which manifests itself especially in the regular number of vocations that come to us each year. We also have the prayers of the three members of the Vicariate who have returned to God: Eduardo Zelaya, Chrys Gearets, and Walter Vargas.

—Fr. Oscar Uzín, O.P.



Dominicans of the Central Province currently work in the cities of La Paz, Santa Cruz, Cotoca (just outside of Santa Cruz), and Cochabamba.

## O.P. BOOK REVIEW—PREACHING TO A MULTI-GENERATIONAL ASSEMBLY



### Just off the presses

WITH THE acceleration of technological change, new and distinct generations are created faster than before. Generational boundaries become more fluid. Multiple age groups have different generational mindsets, distinct

worldviews, and varied spiritual needs. How, then, do preachers speak to congregations that comprise four to five separate generations? *Preaching to a Multi-generational Assembly* addresses how to effectively and credibly preach to all generations at the same time.

In *Preaching to a Multi-generational Assembly* Fr. Wisdom offers a credible, new homiletic model to make Catholic preaching more exciting, accessible, and effective for both the assembly and preacher by making it more generationally relevant. He reflects upon the current state of preaching through Catholic and Protestant voices. He argues from communication theory that generation is a subculture like ethnicity and race and should be seriously considered in homiletic preparation. He applies marketing segmentation theory to preaching in proposing a qualified "generational segmentation" of the Sunday assembly. Finally, he combines both theories to demonstrate both the opportunity and viability of intergenerational preaching in a Catholic context.

(Excerpt taken from the *Liturgical Press* at [www.litpress.org](http://www.litpress.org).)





## The journey from discernment to decision

**W**HEN WE OFFER our *Come & See* vocations retreat weekends in St. Louis, we always have several presentations by friars called “Why I became a Dominican” and at least one titled “Why I *remain* a Dominican.” At our last *Come & See* in St. Louis, we added a new talk to our program: “Why I *applied* to the Dominicans.”

One of our recently approved novice candidates, Jason Calvi, did a marvelous job of describing his own journey from discerning a religious vocation to arriving at the decision to pursue it as a Dominican. It was also quite humorous as Jason is a bit of a character. He started off his talk before the other retreat participants by announcing that he was a graduate of the “University of Perpetual Discernment,” and that it took a priest (whose name he would not mention, while looking directly at me!) to knock him off the fence! In truth, he said, becoming serious, he needed permission to make the very decision he wanted to all along.

This is one of the reoccurring dynamics for those of us in vocations ministry: when and how to move someone along from discernment to decision. An old vocation director gave me the advice early on: “Remember the person you bring in may be your prior or provincial one day!” Yet there is a point at which aspirants, either to religious life in general or to the Order in particular, must be challenged in one way or the other to move forward. One of my constant refrains to the aspirants is that “ours is not a God who emotionally jerks people around.” Often it is we human beings who put ourselves on the emotional treadmill through a game of mental gymnastics as a diversion from the real issues of fear of commitment or multiple self-doubts. These are real and I would not want to minimize them in any way. In the end, however, God has too much

*This is God's work,  
and the discerner  
in the end is  
really about the  
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that which has  
already chosen him.*

respect for us to coerce a decision, and it is in respecting our freedom to truly choose that we feel the weight of decision-making.



Fr. Chuck Santoro, O.P. shares a laugh with (L to R) Greg Willard and Jack McManus at the recent *Come & See*.

Yet if it is to authentically be the aspirant's choice, he must engage rather than evade this inner struggle of discernment if he is to know the liberating peace of a final decision. The vocation director must be prayerfully attuned to help him each step of the way, to read the signs of what is going on in the discernment, and to encourage and, yes, challenge them as needed. After all, this is God's work, and the discerner in the end is really about the business of choosing that which has already chosen him.

Michael Minuth is one of three aspirants to the Order preparing to come before our June Admissions Board. He has given considerable time to discernment and has now moved to a decision. Below, he shares the particular dynamic that helped him complete this stage of the journey.

—Fr. Andrew-Carl Wisdom, O.P.  
wisdomop@yahoo.com

### FROM THE PROMOTER OF VOCATIONS



“A Dominican is not just a nice friar but a brother.”

## A joyous “yes!”

**I** FIGURED that once I said “yes” to God's call to the religious life, everything else would be easy. I mean, the hardest part was over, right? Well, not exactly. Though it felt like a ton of bricks had been taken off my back, it seemed they were now dropping on my

head, one by one.

I was drawn to the various opportunities of religious orders but baffled by the many wonderful choices. I singled out orders with charisms in preaching, because that was

something I felt was very much in need today. I also wanted to find identity and inspiration in their history and mission.

Though Dominicans do things that many other Orders do, they always do it with their heritage of preaching. To me, visiting the sick or imprisoned, teaching a class, or running a youth group means little if you don't focus on spreading Christ's message. I found all this in the Dominicans and felt they deserved a closer look. I decided to apply, however, because of the Dominicans themselves. Just as God is not just an Almighty Being but a Father, so, too, a Dominican is not just a nice friar but a brother.

—Mike Minuth

## Did you know?

**I**NTERNATIONALLY, the Dominican Order has quite an extensive social justice network. This involves both the friars and the sisters and is a very collaborative venture. We even have representatives at the United Nations, where we have status as a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO). This allows us to speak about issues such as the death penalty, human trafficking, peacekeeping, war, and other international issues.

The Order has a promoter general for justice and peace who is based at the curia in Rome. There is also an international commission of peace, justice, and the care of creation, which is made up of the promoters or co-promoters for the continents. North America has two co-promoters. Most provinces of friars have a promoter of justice and peace, and many of the sister's congregations do as well. These people work collaboratively to promote justice and peace throughout the Order.

In the United States each province of friars has a promoter of justice and peace. He also serves as the friars'

representative for one of four regions: Eastern United States, Midwestern United States, Southern United States, and Western United States. The friar shares this responsibility with a sister who also works as a regional co-representative.

The regional representatives meet with the North American co-promoters usually on an annual basis to report on work and to write a "call to action," which is published every year. This helps the promoters keep in touch and to touch base. Regional meetings also occur on a regular basis.

This entire network helps the Dominican Order promote justice and peace throughout the world. Promoters are kept up to date on issues before the United Nations and various regions. Through this network we are able to more capably preach the just word.

*This entire network helps the Dominican Order promote justice and peace throughout the world. Through this network we are able to more capably preach the just word.*

—Fr. Dennis Woerter, O.P.  
Denop2003@yahoo.com

## Don't miss the website at the Center for Liturgy at St. Louis University

**I**THINK THAT SIMPLY one of the most useful and exciting websites for anyone preparing to participate or minister in the Sunday liturgy is The Center for Liturgy at St. Louis University at [www.liturgy.slu.edu](http://www.liturgy.slu.edu). As most of our readers know, Aquinas Institute of Theology is a ministry of the Province on the campus of St. Louis University. The Center for Liturgy is a ministry of the Jesuits of St. Louis University, and Paul Hasser, a graduate of Aquinas Institute with a master's of Pastoral Ministry in Liturgy, oversees this remarkable website.

This is how the page describes itself: "The Center for Liturgy at Saint Louis University warmly invites *all* members of the assembly to prepare for Sunday Mass by using this site. The site is definitely not just for clergy, not just for those who lector or play music. These pages, unlike most other web pages, presume that the user will want to slow down, to contemplate slowly and humanly the mysteries of the coming Sunday's Mass. By doing this they would be ready to join the assembly in communal prayer."

The page includes several sections and resources for the liturgy of the upcoming Sunday:

- Weekly scripture reflections and prayers for high school and college students;
- Meditation prayers for each of the lectionary scripture readings;

- A section on praying with Sunday's music, along with Sunday's music in several parishes and other guides and resources for music planning;

- Up-to-date and clear resources for bible study of each of the lectionary readings, including spirituality of the readings, the perspective of justice, and discussion questions—with commentaries by such noted biblical and liturgical scholars as Joyce Ann Zimmerman, C.P.P.S.; John Kavanaugh, S.J.; John Pilch; Larry Gillick, S.J.; Reginald Fuller; and John Foley, S.J.

Whether you are preparing to proclaim scripture as a lector, to accompany the liturgy as a minister of music, to preach the homily, or to participate as a member of the assembly, this excellent, free website can be a wonderful help as we seek together to enter into the liturgy with "full, conscious, and active participation."

—Fr. Greg Heille, O.P.  
heilleg@slu.edu



This website ([www.liturgy.slu.edu](http://www.liturgy.slu.edu)) can be a wonderful help as we seek to enter into the liturgy with "full, conscious, and active participation."





## Popular culture and *The Passion of the Christ*



Brother Reid, O.P. does movie reviews on-line at [domlife.org](http://domlife.org).

**T**HE TOPIC OF CHRIST'S Passion currently forms a significant "moment" in American popular culture. Mel Gibson's film, *The Passion of the Christ*, the source of this cultural synapse, combines extra-biblical legend with the gospels in telling its story. Receiving approval by large numbers of Christians and Moslems, it has also been warned against by comparably large groups of Christians and Jews. Like many cultural artifacts, whether someone likes or dislikes

it often tells more about the person than about the film.

Some notable comments:

John McDade, S.J., president of the Catholic Theologi-

cal Association of Great Britain and principal of Heythrop College, University of London said: "Gibson gives us profound themes from orthodox Christian faith in a popular medium; that, in itself, is remarkable . . . I do not think that this film will do evil; quite the reverse" (*The Tablet*, March 6, 2004).

The French Bishops' Standing Committee for Information and Communication commented: "In this film . . . the face of Christ shows through less than our contemporary obsessions: distress of evil, fascination for violence, search for culprits," and "even without knowing independently if the film is intentionally anti-Semitic, it could be used to consolidate anti-Semitic opinions" ([www.ccf.fr/catho/actus/communiqués/2004/commu20040330\\_passionduchrist.php](http://www.ccf.fr/catho/actus/communiqués/2004/commu20040330_passionduchrist.php)).

According to René Girard, French literary critic/anthropologist/theologian: "It is [revealing violence in all its injustice and its lie, everywhere where it is possible to locate it] that is the inspiration common to Judaism and Christianity, and it is the key . . . of their future reconciliation. It is the heroic tendency to be able to put the truth above the social order. It is with this exciting quest that the film of Mel Gibson endeavors to be faithful" (*Le Figaro Magazine*, 27 mars 2004).

Quentin Tarantino, director of *Kill Bill* and *Pulp Fiction*, said: "[*The Passion of the Christ*] is the most visual movie by an actor since Charles Laughton made *The Night of the Hunter*. No, this is 15 times more visual . . . [it] gives you this grandiose religious image . . . that's good directing!" (*LA Weekly*, April 16-22, 2004).

Cultural moments come and go, at times revealing something significant, but more often amounting to little. One troubling aspect of this one: It focuses exclusively on the remote past. Because of this, authors in both big-name news magazines and small-name journals have fought over speculative historical points as if something important were at stake. Journalistic posturing like this can only seem silly when taken in the larger context of Christianity and its call to a life of holiness. Regrettably, many times it is easier to think only of the Jesus who lived long ago and far away and forget the Jesus who suffers today right in front of us or the Jesus who instructs us to love and serve others in the here and now.

*Many times it is  
easier to think only  
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the Jesus who  
suffers today right  
in front of us.*

### *Reflecting Like a Flag*

On display; my life has come to that!  
To show myself,  
    my designs as God's work of art!  
To be unfulfilled before others  
And then sense in me a created joy  
and an overwhelming grace . . .  
Revealed to myself first in time and space.

Clouds hang over me,  
    creation speaks through me  
Not in vacuum or formless void  
I am present and willing  
To unfurl myself and . . . wave!

Justice would speak of how  
and sense would ask of why  
But boldness and courage would say  
How soon? and Why not?

So I reflect God. Yes . . . I reflect God!  
Part of created presence,  
    part of beauty unfurled  
I am open to wave and shake and lie still  
Reflecting then on the doldrums of existence  
and musing the gusts of God's reminders.  
I shudder to be God's choice in flight  
Free as on the wing yet as girded as a kite.

I reflect God! Forget not . . .

—Dwight Lewis, O.P. ©2003

—Br. John Reid Perkins-Buzo, O.P.  
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# Fond memories of Bolivia

**R**ESPONDING TO A JUNE 1995 provincial newsletter ad seeking formation assistance for our missions in Bolivia, Fr. James Spahn, O.P. knew that this was the opportunity he had been searching for—or rather, it was searching for him! Having completed a summer course in Spanish, both he and Fr. Thomas Lynch, O.P. boarded a plane to answer the invitation to build up the Dominican foundation of the Order in Bolivia. Although the Dominicans have been in Bolivia since 1963, most of our native Bolivian friars were in initial formation and not yet ready for leadership roles in our growing Vicariate.

After attending a six-month course for formation directors in Bolivia, he officially became the Student Master of novices in December of 1995, a job he held until his return to the States in early 2002. During the time he was in Bolivia, he also ministered at the Hogar San Martin, a home for abandoned and abused boys that was then sponsored by the Dominicans. “One of my fondest memories at the center was baptizing by immersion some 35 young kids from 5 to 15 years old at a big celebration held at the Hogar San Martin. I found one of the older boys in a complete daze after the baptism. All he could say was, Wow, what a baptism!”

As in other Latin American countries, Bolivia experiences daunting poverty issues. Many children are forced to work in dire labor conditions unheard of in the United States. Fr. Jim continues, “it is sad to see kids working in old silver mines in Potosi, doomed to an early death from accidents or respiratory diseases. They work in 15th-century conditions, using 15th-century methods from sunrise to sunset.” It is a memory that still haunts him today.

But there are also many happy memories for Fr. Jim. “I came to love their culture, the food, their simple way of life, the slow pace, the natural beauty, the siestas, but most



One of Fr. Jim’s fondest memories was baptizing by immersion the youngsters at the Hogar San Martin.



of all, the simple humbleness of the people. I learned that some things are definitely more important than others.”

Today Fr. Jim is the prior of St. Dominic Priory in Denver, which is, coincidentally, the American formation community for novices. He is currently employed by Catholic Charities in Denver as a marriage and family therapist. Having gained tremendously from his missionary experience in Bolivia, Fr. Jim is most gratified to have helped prepare so many of the Bolivian friars currently in leadership positions today within a Vicariate that has such a promising future.

Fr. Jim Spahn, O.P. with friends from the homeless boys shelter in Bolivia

—Lucy Sanchez

## Dominican Doings:

**BR. REID PERKINS-BUZO, O.P.** gave a talk on “Preaching via Film, Video, and Multimedia” at Concordia University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

DOMINICAN *Central* newsletter is a publication of the Dominican Province of St. Albert the Great (Central Dominican Province, U.S.A.).

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Meet us on the internet at:  
[www.op.org/domcentral](http://www.op.org/domcentral)

**Do you have any story ideas, news items, or photos? We welcome your suggestions. Please send them to:**

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## CONGRATULATIONS

**FR. THOMAS McDERMOTT, O.P.** was recently awarded an STL from the Angelicum in Rome.

**BR. REID PERKINS-BUZO, O.P.** was appointed chair of the Moving Images Section of Christians in the Visual Arts (CIVA). CIVA is the largest Christian Arts organization in the world and is dedicated to professional fine artists, educators, designers, architects, art historians, curators, photographers, and gallery owners from a wide variety of denominational affiliations.

## FRIARS IN PRINT

**FR. EDWARD CLEARY, O.P.**, professor of political science at Providence College, authored "Shopping Around: Questions about Latin American Conversions" in the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, v. 28, no. 2 (April 2004).

**FR. ANDREW-CARL WISDOM, O.P.** is the author of *Preaching to a Multi-generational Assembly*, published by Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN. See O.P. Book Review on page 3 for further information.

## IN MEMORIAM



**Brother Henry A. Denier, O.P.**  
BORN TO LIFE: March 26, 1912  
PROFESSED: July 25, 1938  
BORN TO ETERNAL LIFE: April 27, 2004

**Father Gerald Louis Bertrand Kroeger, O.P.**  
BORN TO LIFE: April 23, 1929  
PROFESSED: September 3, 1952  
ORDAINED: May 24, 1958  
BORN TO ETERNAL LIFE: February 23, 2004



For further information on these and other brothers who have died, go to:  
[www.op.org/domcentral/people/inmemoriam](http://www.op.org/domcentral/people/inmemoriam)

