Franciscan philosophy returned to the Mission four decades after the closing of San Rey College. The US bishops recently upped the pre-theology units in philosophy to 30, while at the same time the retrieval of our Franciscan intellectual tradition has provided many wonderful pedagogical resources for deepening our charism. Joe Chinnici forged a partnership between the St. Barbara Province and the University of San Diego - Division of Continuing Education in 2008, and we have offered seven courses in philosophy since 2009, most of them during summers at Mission San Luis Rey. Tom Herbst, Ray Bucher, Joe Chinnici, Bill Short, Mary Beth Ingham (an honorary Franciscan), and yours truly have served as instructors.

These courses have a very different flavor than any other educational programs available. They are taught by Franciscans to Franciscans about our Franciscan tradition within the context of living religious life (e.g., shared life in fraternity, meals, prayer, recreation). This distinct approach is consistent with that practiced by the early friars at medieval universities, and thus the program is named “Franciscan Philosophy Studium.” These classes help our men in formation learn how to think within the context of our spirituality and charism, while fulfilling the philosophy requirements for those aspiring to ordination.
Thus, they are ideal for all brothers in formation with the academic skills for a BA. Some solemnly professed friars have enjoyed them as ongoing formation opportunities.

This past summer Tom Herbst taught “Greek Foundations of Franciscan Thought” to 11 students, and I taught “Franciscan Philosophy of Nature” to 20. This year, for the first time, two other provinces joined us: the St. John the Baptist Province and the Holy Name Province. In addition to taking three-hour courses every day, the men participated in the parish’s multicultural talent show, helped host a vocational discernment event, body surfed at the beach, and took a weekend trip to the Poor Clares in Maneaderos, Baja California. The hospitality of the friars and staff at the Mission was terrific.

The Director of the Interprovincial Post- Novitiate in Chicago, Bernard Kennedy OFM, wrote: “The Franciscan philosophy classes offered through St. Barbara Province were beneficial to our friars in initial formation here at St. Joseph Friary in Chicago. Our friars enjoyed the mix of education, fraternity and adventure in a historic setting. Some who participated this year would like to return and have encouraged other friars to seriously consider this experience.” The Secretary of Formation for the Holy Name Province, Dominic Monti OFM, wrote: “Our men were unanimous in their compliments for the course - the professors and the work that went into the course packets. They also very much liked the opportunity to be with young friars from other provinces. This is a major plus – as the future of the Order in the US is going to be more collaborative.”

The photo on the left captures a multigenerational moment in Franciscan philosophy. John Vaughn and Kenan Osborn, distinguished alumni of San Luis Rey College, preached at all the parish masses on behalf of our Province’s Fraternal Care Trust, and the students staffed the tables to meet and greet the parishioners. From right to left: Richard Goodin (SJB), Kenan Osborn, Jeffrey Jordan (HNP), Mike Reyes (HNP), Louis Khoury, Michael Charron (SJB), Sam Nasada, John Vaughn, George Camacho (HNP), Gerald Hopek (HNP), Michael Minton, Keith Warner, John Aherne (HNP).

**OUR MISSIONARIES**

‘MY LIFE IN THE PHILIPPINES”

Erwin Schoenstein, O.F.M.

(Subtitled “Challenges Met With God’s Help,” Friar Erwin has written an absorbing history of his life in the Philippines which must be recorded for the history, inspiration and benefit of our Province. Because of its length, his story will be serialized beginning with this issue. WJR)

**Initial Challenges**

In Holy Week of 1958 the Provincial Council had a meeting at Mission San Antonio, California, USA, where I was stationed. During a coffee break, our Provincial, Fr. David Temple, asked me if I was still willing to go to the missions. I had volunteered for the missions in 1950 and again in 1954, and my answer was, “Yes, I am.” Then, at lunch time, he informed me that the Council had decided to send me to the Philippines and that I should get there by the end of May. Wow!