



Four Friars Have Died

by Jim McIntosh | May 27, 2016 | News | 1 comment

Four Franciscan friars have died in the last month. Here are their stories. Please remember them in your prayers.

Alex Manville, OFM

Without doubt, Friar Alexander was a truly memorable friar, not just because of his height but because of his trust in teaching and lay involvement in parish life with, it must be said, his genius for revisionist history. He was comfortable and delightful in any environment and could hold forth on virtually any topic with or without previous study!

Friar Alex decided to change address to heaven on April 29, 2016, at Eden Hospital in Castro Valley, Calif., surrounded by friars, including a classmate, Friar Barnabas Hughes, OFM. True to his character, he planned, in monumental detail, exactly how his funeral service would be celebrated. This covered multiple pages of instructions. Unfortunately, the L.A. Philharmonic was not available.

However, he had asked for his final farewell, as befitted his dignity, to be at Sts. Simon and Jude in Huntington Beach, Calif., where Provincial Minister David Gaa was the celebrant. Friar

Alex was 89 years old, 69 years professed and 63 years ordained. Inurnment was at Mission Santa Barbara.

Early Years

Our friar was born in Santa Monica, Calif., the son of Clarence Manville and Sara Maclsaac on Nov. 6, 1926. It was still the Depression Era and the family, according to their son, lived all over in Los Angeles. After attending Loyola High School and the archdiocesan seminary, he entered St. Anthony's Seminary where he was usually on probation and, at the very same time, president of the student body. He could have been a great politician in another life.



Alex Manville, OFM

After the usual program of studies, which he considered necessary, to a degree, he was invested in the habit at Mission San Miguel on July 14, 1946. Ordination was at Mission Santa Barbara on Dec. 19, 1953.

Ministry

During the following years he was a high school professor at St. Mary's High School, Phoenix, where (with the skill taught by his father, a golf pro) he majored in English and golf. Then it was to St. Elizabeth's High School in Oakland for 2 years, reaching his teaching skills and discipline as principal of the newly founded Bishop Garcia Diego High School in Santa Barbara for 11 years.

A man for each and all adventures, and diagnosing himself as burned out, he traveled to Augsburg, Germany. Since there was no war to direct, he settled for the post of teaching military families along with studies at the university (when this was convenient).

But he reached his peak and justifiable admiration as pastor of Sts. Simon & Jude in Huntington Beach. He modestly noted that he believed that he was the first to involve lay people both in the parish and the school from 1982 to 1994. He also noted that his was the first parish to establish a Grieving program (which actually was not the first in the diocese).

After an assignments at the Franciscan Renewal Center and then Serra Retreat (1999-2001 where he was titular guardian), he was involved in a serious auto accident while turning into Serra Road from the grocery store. He was taken for his very first helicopter ride, and later lamented that he could not remember the trip to the hospital.

Following surgery in the UCLA hospital (where he no doubt instructed the attending physicians and surgeons), he first recuperated in Santa Barbara and then moved to Serra Retreat and presided as guardian. But in 2003, it was back to SSJ as a parochial vicar (part time) until he moved to Serra Retreat in August of 2009. It became necessary in 2012 for him to enter Mercy

Care Center in Oakland. By this time he was losing his eyesight and regally accepted an electric chariot which lacked only an air horn.

Friar Alex was a colorful person with a renaissance nature, and loved both reading historical works and classical music. At Serra Retreat he chose to learn Russian. He was a great addition to the community and to the province, with numerous anecdotes of his heroic past deeds and sure-fire plans for the future of the province.

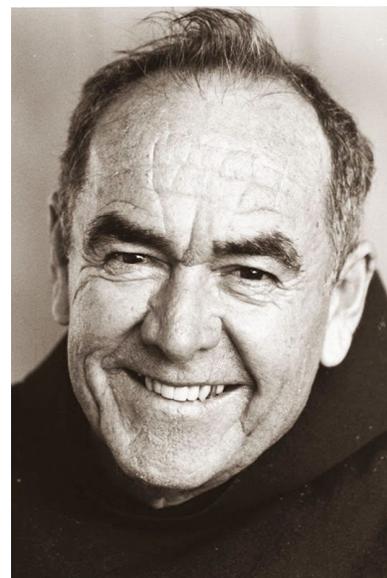
Mario Vasquez, OFM

If ever there was a friar who only had an 7th grade education but an A+ in his life as a friar, it was Friar Mario.

Mario passed to his eternal rest at the Mercy Retirement and Care Center on May 4, 2016. The Mass of the Resurrection was prayed there with the Provincial Minister David Gaa, OFM, as the celebrant. Internment followed at Mission Santa Barbara. Friar Mario was 85 years old and 55 years professed.

Early Years

Born and raised in Los Angeles, he was the son of George Vasquez and Eleanor Rodríguez. Little is known of his early life until he received the Tertiary habit in 1954 and worked on the farm at Mission San Luis Rey for 3 years.



Mario Vasquez, OFM

He entered the First Order at Mission San Miguel on July 7, 1957, with simple and solemn vows at the same Mission.

Ministry

Following his profession, Mario had short assignments at Mission San Luis Rey and Santa Barbara. For the next 2 years he was at Holy Cross Retreat in Mesilla Park, N.M., as a maintenance person.

But Friar Mario's principal ministry was at the Franciscan Renewal Center in Scottsdale from 1980 to 2013. Quiet, always smiling and hard-working, he was also dedicated to golf! He even had a small putting green at the Center.

The staff and all those who attended the functions at the Center came to love him as an ideal Franciscan brother. He was the heart of the Center just by his presence and dedication to his work as a gardener and wherever he was needed.

It was sad, but timely, that he entered the Mercy Retirement and Care Center in 2013.

Jim Perluzzi, OFM