

SACRAMENTO DIOCESAN ARCHIVES

Vol 5

Father John E Boll, Diocesan Archivist

No 16

Father Michel John Gagnon, OFM

Native Son of Los Angeles

Franciscan Friar of the Saint Barbara Province

Director of the Sacramento Newman Center

March 5, 1931 – March 17, 2008

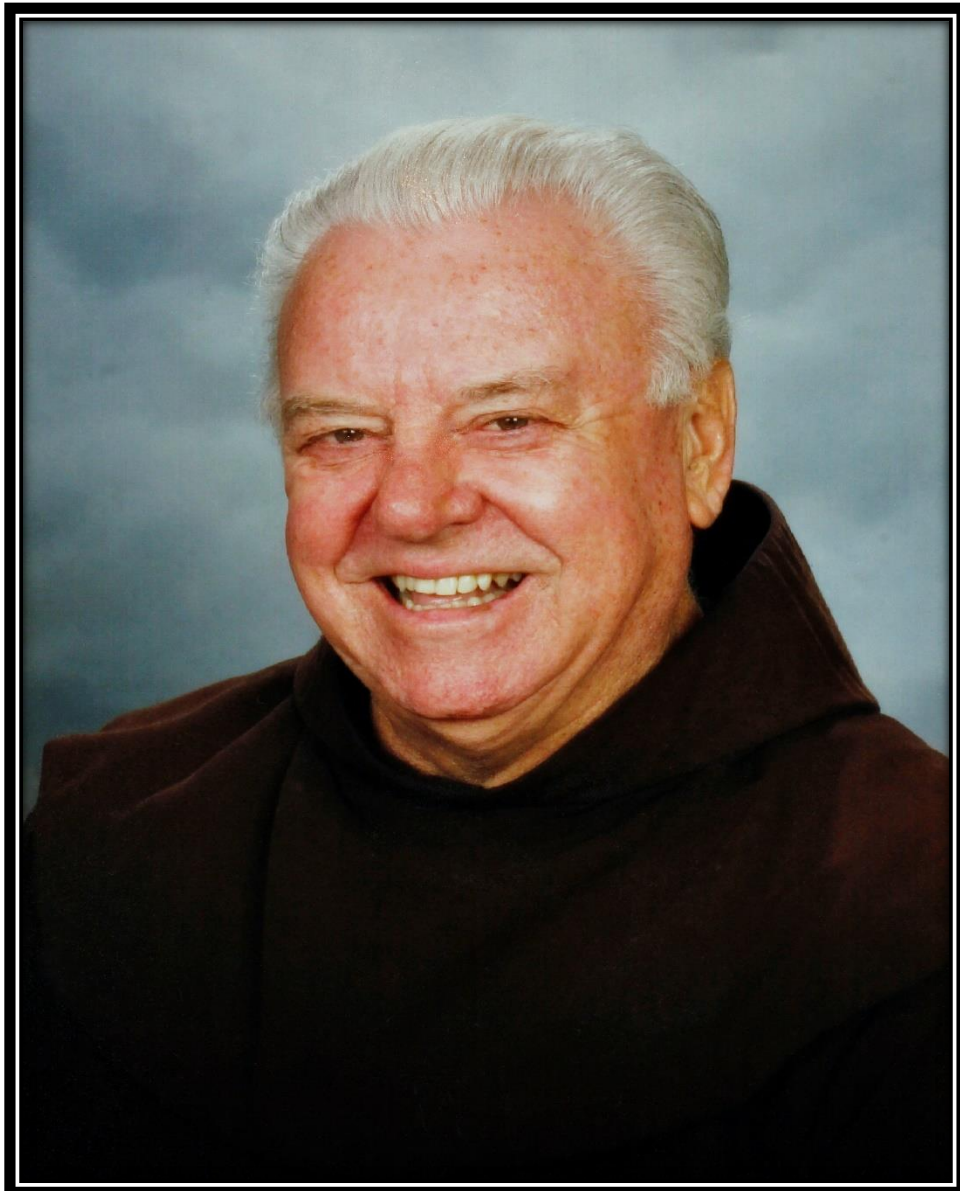


Photo courtesy of the Franciscan Provincial Archives for the Province of Saint Barbara

Michel John Gagnon was a native of Los Angeles, born on March 5, 1931. He met the Franciscan Friars at Saint Joseph Parish in Los Angeles where he and his family were parishioners. After he graduated from grammar school, he entered Saint Anthony Seminary in Santa Barbara in 1944 and was invested in the friar's habit in 1950 at Mission San Miguel. After his theological education, he was ordained to the priesthood in 1957 as a member of the Franciscan Order of Friars Minor in the Province of Santa Barbara, California.



Saint Anthony Seminary, Santa Barbara

FATHER MICHEL BEGINS HIS PRIESTLY MINISTRY



Photo from the parish website

Saint Elizabeth Church, Oakland

Father Michel began his priestly ministry in Portland, Oregon at Ascension Parish where he would later serve as pastor from 1981 to 1988.

His next assignment was as associate pastor of Saint Elizabeth Parish in Oakland and then as a teacher and dean of boys at Saint Mary High School in Phoenix, Arizona from 1961 to 1968.

NAMED CHAPLAIN OF SACRAMENTO NEWMAN CENTER

Father Michel was selected to be the chaplain of the Newman Center in Sacramento from 1970 to 1977. He also served as the diocesan director of campus ministry while serving in Sacramento. His next assignment was associate director of formation at the Franciscan School of Theology in Berkeley from 1977 to 1981.

PASTOR OF MISSION SAN LUIS REY



Photo by John E Boll 2016

Mission San Luis Rey, Oceanside, CA

After serving as pastor of Ascension Parish in Portland, Oregon for seven years, Father Michel was appointed pastor of Mission San Luis Rey in Oceanside, CA from 1988 to 2002. During his tenure as pastor of the Mission, a new parish center was built behind the Mission where most of the parish Sunday liturgies are now celebrated. In 2003, he returned to Sacramento to serve as parochial administrator of Saint Francis of Assisi Parish for five months.

FATHER WARREN ROUSE, OFM, REFLECTS ON FATHER MICHEL'S MINISTRY

“Throughout his life as a friar and priest, Michel was a man of action, having little patience with meetings and paperwork,” said Franciscan Father Warren Rouse, director of the Franciscan Retreat House in Malibu and a classmate of Father Michel. “Some might brand him as having a streak of the maverick, and he would certainly not deny this. Always active, he had a great love of the province and the friars. Loyalty even under adverse situations was a hallmark of this friar.”

FATHER MICHEL'S DEATH

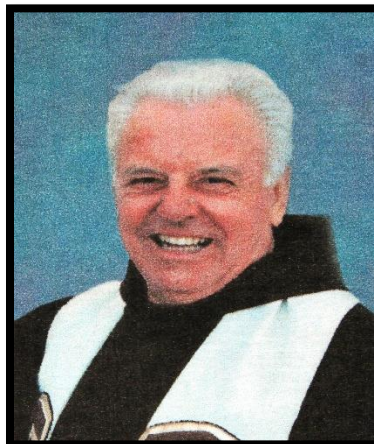
Father Michel died on March 17, 2008 at the age of 77. A Memorial Mass was celebrated for him at Saint Francis of Assisi Church in Sacramento on April 16 so his many friends from the Sacramento Newman Center and diocese could celebrate his life.

Father Michel was buried next to his sister, Gloria Hanby, at the parish cemetery of Mission San Luis Rey in Oceanside where he had served as pastor. Now he is resting in peace at this beautiful Mission north of San Diego that he loved so much.



Photo by John E Boll 2016

**Grave Marker of Father Michel Gagnon, OFM and his Sister Gloria Hanby
Mission San Luis Rey Cemetery, Oceanside, CA**





San Luis Rey Cemetery, Oceanside, near Father Michel's Grave