We lovingly remember our brother
Bernard Smith, O.F.M. Cap.
1937—2010
In Celebration of the Life of Bernard Smith, O.F.M. Cap.

**Thomas Smith**, the youngest of six children of Thomas F. and Mary Currie-Smith was born on 18 November 1937 in King Park [Long Island], NY. He along with his siblings Mary, Hugh, Patrick, Janet, and Kathleen happily grew up in the country-like setting of Kings Park. The Smiths were faithful members of the parish community of Saint Joseph where Tom was baptized, confirmed and would later say his first Mass in 1964.


Thomas was invested at Saint Lawrence Novitiate, in Milton, MA on 31 August 1955 receiving the religious name Celestine. He would later ask to change his name to Bernard.

Along with Celestine, twenty two cleric candidates and one brother were invested with the Capuchin habit. Aidan Neenan was celebrant of the Solemn High Mass and invested the candidates. The deacon of the Mass was Myles Parsons and Ronan O’Brien was subdeacon. The following were invested: Barry [McMahon], Stephen [Benevente], Kenneth [Grady], Thomas [Mellitt], Paschal [Maddock], Benedict [Chapman], Gregory [Reisert], Howard [Navan], Kieran [Ahearn], William [Matchekosky], Gary [McKeon], John Joseph [Burke], Louis, later Gordon [Combs], Philip [Fabiano], Gerard [Bell], Evan [Lang], Raphael [Iannone], Ronald [Spillett], Killian [Lenehan], Marion [Santafede], Rian [Carson], and Gerard [Basta]. [Bulletin, Vol. II, No. 2]

Bernard professed first vows on 01 September 1956. He began his undergraduate studies at St. Anthony Friary in Hudson, NH graduating in 1960 and where he professed perpetual vows on 01 September 1959.
19 January - The Scrabble board game debuts.

25 January - The Province of Saint Mary celebrates its third Anniversary.

01 February - Joseph Yakimovich is born in NY.

28 February - Bids for the construction of our new Clericate at Hudson, NH were let today.

3 March - Elvis Presley appears on television for the first time.

12 April - The polio vaccine developed by Dr. Jonas Salk is declared safe and effective. On that same day, fraters John, Knute, Bruce, Douglas, Cullan, Louis, Darius, Donan, LaSalle, Richard and Joseph received tonsure and the first two minor Orders at Garrison, NY. Fraters Lee, Jeremiah, Zachary, Dacian and Peter were ordained subdeacons.

21 April - Br. Raymond [Snowden] of St. Thomas, VI pronounces solemn vows at Mary Immaculate Friary in Garrison.

02 May - The Immigrant Industrial Savings Bank gave the Province a mortgage loan on Garrison to the amount of $800,000 to finance the building of the new friary in Hudson, NH. It was the same bank which gave a loan of $30,000 to Bonaventure Frey in 1891 to finance the building of Sacred Heart Friary.

18 May - Eight communist bloc countries, including the Soviet Union, sign a mutual defense treaty called the Warsaw Pact.

02 June - Paulo Kosaka is born in Ito, Japan.

16 June - Pope Pius XII excommunicates Juan Perón.

26 June - Leo Lesko, Lanny Blomberg, Terrence O'Toole and Glenn Herzog are ordained in Sacred Heart Church in Yonkers.

04 July - The first Provincial Chapter of the province began at Mary Immaculate Friary in Garrison, NY.

05 July - The chapter body in Garrison elected our new superiors: Seraphin Winterroth as provincial, Bertrand Scully, Lambert Roessner, Finian Sullivan and Bruno Luechinger.

10 July - The new friary of St. Fidelis was dedicated in Agaña Heights, Guam.

11 July - The phrase In God We Trust is dedicated to all US currency.

02 August - The friars assembled in great numbers at Sacred Heart Church for the departure ceremony of Roy [Richter]. Bishop Flannelly, auxiliary bishop of NY presided at the ceremony. A few days later, Roy left to join our friars in Guam.

19 August - In the Northeast US, severe flooding caused by Hurricane Diane, claims 200 lives.

Following graduation, Bernard began his theological studies at Mary Immaculate Friary, Garrison until 1964. He was ordained to the priesthood by the Most Rev. John M. Fears, Auxiliary Bishop of New York on 11 January 1964 at Sacred Heart Church, Yonkers, New York. His classmates included Thomas Mellitt, Paschal Maddock, Gregory Reisert, Kieran Ahearn, Gordon Combs, Philip Fabiano, Raphael Iannone, Ronald Spillett, Rian Carson, Andrew Orozco, and Dennis Dooner.

During his one year assignment as associate at Our Lady Queen of Angels in East Harlem, New York City, Bernard began his graduate studies in music at the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC. He would continue his studies from 1965-1967 residing with the Capuchin friars at Capuchin College in Washington, DC receiving his degree in 1967. Bernard also studied liturgy and music at Notre Dame University in Indiana during the summers of 1967 and 1968.

For the next three years Bernard served on the faculty of both the Capuchin Theological Seminary, and his alma mater Saint Mary Minor Seminary in Garrison, New York. He was an active member of the Church Music Association of America and the National Catholic Music Educators Association.

From 1970-1977 he ministered at Sacred Heart Church in Yonkers as assistant pastor, vicar of the friar community and in 1973 Administrator of Sacred Heart High School.

In 1977, Bernard Smith was appointed first Capuchin pastor of Saint Joseph parish in Portland, ME where he also served as guardian of the friar community until 1981.

Fr. Bernard returned to Sacred Heart in 1981 and ministered as pastor and guardian of the friar community until 1987. During these years he also served as a provincial counselor for two terms.
From 1987-1990 Bernard served as the Catholic Chaplain at North Shore University Hospital in Manhasset, New York. In 1990, he was again elected provincial counselor and served as the guardian of the friar community of St. Francis in Garrison, NY.

Bernard began a long association with the Parish Community of St. Patrick in Yorktown Heights, NY where he had offered his many ministerial talents until the time of his death.

For the next nine years Bernard would serve full time in provincial administration as vicar provincial minister [1993-1995]; acting provincial minister [1995-1996]; and provincial minister [1996-2002]. He also served as a member of the CMSM [Conference of the Major Superiors of Men]; president of the NACC [North American Capuchin Conference]; and guardian of the friar community of St. Conrad in White Plains.

During his administrations as provincial, Bernard had the opportunity of visiting our brothers in Central America, Japan, Guam, as well as the Capuchin Provinces in India and Warsaw, Poland.

After an educational sabbatical, Bernard continued his active ministry as guardian of the friar community of St. Lawrence in Beacon, NY [2003-2005]; parochial vicar at St. Joseph the Worker in East Patchogue, NY [2005-2006]; and fraternal vicar and co-director of the province’s postulancy program at St. Michael in Brooklyn, NY [2006-2008].

In 2008 Bernard joined the friar community of St. Joachim in Beacon, NY. Although he considered himself of retirement status, Bernard generously continued to offer his services as one of the province’s Property Supervisors and at his much loved ministry at St. Patrick parish in Yorktown Heights.

Bernard was survived by three siblings: Sr. Mary P. Smith, OP from Huntington Station, NY; his brother Patrick Smith [deceased-Arlene] and their children; Kathleen Smith-Healy, her husband John and their children from Kings Park; the children of his pre-deceased brother Hugh Smith [living-Janet] and his sister Janet Smith-Lohmann [deceased-Frederick] and their large extended families.

A Rite of Reception was celebrated on Thursday, 04 March 2010 at 2:00 p.m. at Sacred Heart Church Yonkers, NY followed by a wake until 9:00 p.m. The funeral liturgy was celebrated at Sacred Heart Church in Yonkers on Friday, 05 March 2010 at 11:00 a.m.
A table.
Long hewn butcher block
Honed with suspicious shine
In a monastery of memory.

A table.
Smaller, covered with beer and wine and
Pretzels. We teased your smoky tenor voice
Incessantly, your face red with can’t breathe laughter
Until we all had to dry our eyes.

A table.
God’s altar; you a stern and proper presider.
Your brotherly love folded into a stiff envelope of
Provincial decorum.

Table leader, you probably didn’t realize how pivotal
You were to us.
You took away our monastery
Our address
Our ersatz vow of stability:
Probably came in the hold of
Some nineteenth century ship from Europe.

Many felt then the stress of being pulled apart
As one pulls weeds in a garden. Had we given up too much?
But you were resolute. We needed to be insecure
If we would be sure of our ties to Francis.
You knew that.

A table.
Long, utilitarian, a shelf for caskets.
How many times had you blessed with water
Brothers’ lifeless bodies past.

Now Bernard, we bless you and sing our ‘Ultima,’
Our song... our good bye until we can
Once again sit with you

At table.

ROBERT PHELPS, O.F.M. CAP.
BERNARD SMITH

Remembrances & Words of Condolence

I offer my sincerest condolences to Bernard’s family and members of our fraternity. I will remember him at Mass. Requiescat in pace! ANTHONY S. APURON, O.F.M. CAP.

We offer our condolences to you and our brothers in the Saint Mary Province. JOHN CELICHOWSKI, O.F.M. CAP. PROVINCIALATE—DET

We send our condolences to you and the brothers at the death of Bernie. The brothers of the Stigmata will keep him in their masses and prayers. He made a great contribution to our brothers in Beacon. BRIAN TOMLINSON, O.F.M. CAP. PROVINCIALATE—NJ

I am glad to hear that Bernard died peacefully. God rest him! Again, my prayers are with the brothers. MATTHEW ELSHOFF, O.F.M. CAP. PROVINCIALATE—CA

On behalf of our friars, I offer you all our deepest sympathy on the passing of a truly great brother. May our brother Bernard, rest in the peace of God. JOHN PAVLIK, O.F.M. CAP. PROVINCIALATE—PA

My condolences at the death of our brother Bernard Smith. I can’t believe it. Please be assured of the prayers of all the friars in the Vice province. God be with you. JOSEPH ENGLISH, O.F.M. CAP. VICE PROVINCIALATE—GUAM

Thanks so much for including us in Bernie’s funeral by sending us the video tribute. It was kind to remember us. I will miss Bernie very much. Bigger than life and full of opinions and energy—he will be greatly missed. God bless. WAYNE BERNDT, O.F.M. CAP. CUSTODY OF JAPAN

Aloha from Ewa! I just wanted to send you some prayerful support on the sudden death of Bernard. I was shocked when I read the news. All of us have lost a dear brother and friend. MICHEL DALTON, O.F.M. CAP. EWA—HAWAII

Dear Brothers: I am sick at heart over the news of Bernard’s passing. I am enveloped in sadness. He was such a good friend to me and to so many. I will miss his ready laugh and warmth of heart; few among us could match his compassion. I will miss his beautiful singing voice and his unmitigated gall at asserting his talent! I shall miss his phone calls prompting me to come for a visit, reminding me that “you owe me”. He always solicited my thought and opinion and was most respectful of anything that I offered; even if he didn’t agree.

I shall miss his wonderful initiative; he was never afraid to act, to do; and almost never for himself; he was so generous with time, talent and treasure.

I expect that his larger-than-life Spirit will hover over Gilgo for just a while before he sails westward. I’ve lost, a brother and friend, and heaven has gained a handful. I hope the Lord doesn’t mind some honest direction; but it won’t matter if He does, he’ll give it anyway. Our brotherhood was so enriched by him and he will be so sorely missed by me and so many who grew to love him for just being Bernie. How can we help but give thanks! I am so grateful to my brothers in the Saint Mary Province for sharing his life and talent with us. Be assured of my tender thoughts and prayers for you all, as we mourn the loss of one of the great ones.

DANIEL FOX, O.F.M. CAP.—PROVINCE OF ST. JOSEPH

We are very much saddened to hear the about the sudden demise of Bernard Smith who has befriended many in our province. He attended two of our Chapter gatherings. Certainly he is a worthy candidate to receive the eternal reward. Please accept our hearty condolences to you and to all the friars of the St. Mary Province.

VINCENT FURTADO, O.F.M. CAP. PROVINCIALATE—HOLY TRINITY PROVINCE—INDIA

I came to know about the sudden and unexpected demise of Bernard from our brother Namdev Dagam. Bernie was an elder brother to me and a good friend of mine. I had a few occasions to visit him when he was provincial minister. May God grant him eternal rest and heavenly bliss.

THOMAS SEBASTIAN, O.F.M. CAP. PROVINCIALATE—MARYMATHA PROVINCE—INDIA

We are so sorry to hear the sad demise of Bernie Smith. We have prayed that God receive him in heaven. May Bernie’s soul rest in peace. With love and prayers.

STEVE RODRIGUES, O.F.M. CAP. VICE PROVINCIALATE—GOA—INDIA

My sympathy and prayers are with you as you mourn the passing of Fr. Bernard Smith to the Lord.

BP. RICHARD M. ERIKSON, VG
ARCHDIOCESE OF BOSTON

Dear Brothers: Peace to you! When I heard of the death of Bernard Smith I was shocked and saddened. I won’t be able to be with you for his wake and funeral, but I wanted you all to know that I am “with” you in care, concern, and sadness at your lost. Please know that I am with you in prayer.

I got to know Bernie during those six years I spent in St. Mary Province collaborating in initial formation work and when Bernie and your vicar would join the NACC meetings. I really liked Bernie and will miss him.

PERRY MC DONALD, O.F.M. CAP. PROVINCE OF ST. JOSEPH

My condolences on the death of Bernard Smith. I thought he was a real character [in a good sense] and enjoy my many times with him. My prayers and thoughts.

PATRICK MC SHERRY, O.F.M. CAP. PROVINCE OF ST. JOSEPH

I was shocked to hear of Bernie’s death. Please know we will be keeping all of you in prayer these days as well as his family. I remember him for his good work and wonderful sense of humor. I’m sure you are all feeling a great loss.

ROB ROEMER, O.F.M. CAP. AND ALL THE FRIARS OF SAINT FIDELIS FRIARY—APPLETON, WI PROVINCE OF ST. JOSEPH