Fr. Emmanuel was ordained 26 May 2012, on the eve of Pentecost. He arrived at St. Dominic’s in early September 2012 to serve as Associate Pastor. On a recent, busy Saturday, he made time to further introduce himself to us. The words below are his own.

On the Ordination

I like liturgical sensibility, connecting things to what’s happening in the church. And so Pentecost was a fitting time to be ordained; with all the apostles, with Mary, with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. I feel very much inspired by the idea that everyone in church has a vocation, that the Holy Spirit is working through everyone, in particular through their gifts. I am excited to be at St. Dominic’s because we are so intentional about this aspect. Everyone always asks what your gifts are.

On Role at St. Dominic’s

Fr. Xavier is a great model. If someone has a gift, he’ll let them use it, and he’ll make a place for them. I am here at St. Dominic’s first and foremost to learn pastoral skills, which is to learn to bring forth the gifts of the community.

We need more people to share their gifts, we can’t just rely on the priests. I am the chaplain for the 3040’s Group and I am on the Spiritual and and Liturgical Life Commission. I’ve come to realize how beautiful the liturgy is because it shows us Christ; it’s supposed to set our hearts on fire. I’ve come to see that power. And so, being on this commission is a perfect match. My top 5 StrengthsFinder talents are intellection, ideation, input, connectedness, and strategic and my charisms are teaching, encouragement, voluntary poverty, preaching, missionary, and wisdom. With these combinations, I am teaching some RCIA classes and I want to teach Dominican philosophy, which can be used in any field. I am also collaborating with Fr. Xavier on We Celebrate, which will focus on the meaning and purpose of the liturgy post-Vatican II. I know about liturgy and Fr. Xavier knows about the history. This is my first big project and it’s fun because Fr. Xavier is a master teacher. Fr Xavier said to me, “Here are books to read.” He just dumps stuff on you. I really feel blessed to be here at St. Dominic’s. Fr. Garry [Cappleman] was big on the talents and charisms, and I have the strengths and intellectual gifts to carry on from him, to continue where he left off. Fr. Garry has passed the spiritual baton on to me. I don’t think anything will be dropped.

On Oceanography, on Discernment of the Priesthood, and on the Dominicans

Oceanography is my background. I like ocean currents, how they mix, the sound waves, how they propagate. I started off as an electrical engineer as an undergraduate at (cont’d)
PROFILE: FR. EMMANUEL TAYLOR, O.P. (cont’d)

New Mexico State because it was the most flexible degree. After that, I spent a year at Lockheed followed by 1.5 years in oceanography working on the submarine Alvin and exploring the sea floor, 10,000 feet deep where there were hydrothermal vents and alien worlds. When the ship docked in Seattle, there was a big church (Blessed Sacrament) there much like St. Dominic’s, a Dominican parish offering a lot of opportunities for faith formation. I was attracted to this intellectual aspect and, by extension, to the Dominicans. I first had an inkling that the priesthood was my vocation when I heard the refrain of being called in the hymn Here I Am, Lord. That really moved me; tears of joy were coming from nowhere. One of my friends said, “What happened to you?” But I didn’t know what to do with that and put it out of my mind. And then over time, I was having a calling on the ship, at sea, 1,000 miles away from the church. I started my first year of graduate school in oceanography at the University of Washington. This was a time of discernment. Doing science was giving glory to God, and I would have been very happy doing it. But I heard the Lord speak in my head to let go of anything that held me back and to just say yes. And I felt free after saying yes.

On Travel

I have the missionary charism. As a Dominican student, I spent a year in Kenya. And the first mass I celebrated was in Cameroon where my family has connections. It was a homecoming! This is also the tension between parish life and Dominican life. When deciding on which religious order to enter, the only model I had was the parish priest. That is good in its own right but that’s not for me. I was made to be an itinerant preacher; I’m spiritually made to go anywhere, to be ready to go at any time. Christian life is like a pilgrimage. The Lord spoke to my heart: I feel called to be on pilgrimage. I travel with my family to do teachings in different parishes on the weekends. My most joyful childhood memories were in Hispanic parishes. At St. Dominic’s, I will be supporting Fr. Stephen Maria in the Spanish ministry (Fr. Stephen Maria will be transferred to Holy Rosary Priory in Portland in January 2013). I want to have more care for the Spanish community, to make sure that they have what the rest of the St. Dominic’s community has.

On Saints

There are two saints with whom I have a special affinity. The first is St. John Chrysostom who is known as a great preacher. I feel an affinity with him since preaching is (cont’d)
one of my charisms. A great preacher is one who very much proclaims in His word, one who can both be strong and reprimanding and pleading and loving and drawing people to Christ. The second is St. Albert the Great, patron saint of scientists. I realized that the intellectual quest I had, he also had. He also loved traveling, and when traveling, he would stop and do scientific enquiries. He’s very much an inspiration. He’s also a teacher, a teacher of St. Thomas Aquinas in fact, and a Dominican. +

MINISTRY: FAMILY & CHILDREN FAITH FORMATION, CONFIRMATION, AND YOUTH MINISTRY

Sunday is the busiest day of the week for Michael Smith, Director of Religious Education at St. Dominic’s since 2009. The day begins no later than 8 a.m and ends no earlier than 7 p.m. Upon arrival at St. Dominic’s, Michael readies all rooms in the pastoral center (the school building) for the later arrival of the volunteer catechists. He then puts up signage outside the pastoral center and in the parking lot that is directional or interest-piquing. He also brews up a large vat of coffee in the pastoral center basement for parents, as well as for parishioners, interested in a spot of faith formation as they await their Sunday school-attending children. “This adult faith formation is Practical Faith, and it is offered in both English and Spanish. Fr. Xavier wanted a parent component to Sunday school because the strengthened faith of the parent helps with the faith formation of the child,” explained Michael.

Children’s Liturgy of the Word (open to ages 3 through 9) is concurrent with the Liturgy of the Word during the Family Mass at 9:30 a.m. and is each Sunday’s first instructional session. On an early November Sunday morning, about 35 children, at myriad points along the spectrum of attention to distraction, crowded into the Sacristy, kneeling or sitting around tables of various heights. To the question posed by Michael of how do we love God with our whole strength, several voices piped up in response, “Eat vegetables!” “Drink milk!” “Exercise!”

Michael relies on a cadre of about 20 volunteer teachers to help execute Children’s Liturgy of the Word and the host of other programs and classes that fall under Family & Children Faith Formation (FCFF), Confirmation, and Youth Ministry (YM). The longest serving volunteer is Margaret McCracken at 15 years (see eNewsletter Issue 1 for writeup in Profiles in Faith). Individuals are drawn to volunteer for different reasons. Some have their children lead them to the ministry. Others want to lead the children with their faith. Elizabeth Skelton, who co-teaches the First Communion class, was herself a recent Catholic convert, “I want to bring the excitement of being Catholic and the love of the faith to the children.” Said Michael, “The volunteers are a good combination of the older and the more stable and the younger and the more energetic. I try to cultivate a sense of community amongst them to get them to stay.”

At the close of the Family Mass at 10:30 a.m., with small hands clasped within adult ones and children bounding down the church side steps, the hive of activity moves from church to pastoral center as about 100 children (number fluctuates weekly) from pre-kindergarten to 7th grade pour into their respective classrooms for an hour. Each class has its own character. On one end is the Montessori-based Atrium for those aged 6 and below. Children touch objects and engage in activity according to their individual interests and development stage in order to develop motor skills and concentration and as a way to learn of God’s creation. A quietude predominates. “It is in the silence that you hear God,” a volunteer explained. On the other end is the much rowdier Year I of Confirmation. Here, theological concepts such as the meaning of “the Father Almighty” in the Nicene Creed are wrestled with Socratic style. In the constant interchange between (cont’d)
teacher and student and student and student, moments of insight emerge. “I like it because we can say what we believe without being judged. We have the freedom to ask questions,” a 7th grader said. “I measure success by the nature of the kids’ questions,” said Lance Johnson who is in his third year of teaching Confirmation. “Are they asking the same questions over time or are the questions of increasing depth.” YM, the other aspect of the Confirmation program (friends and high schoolers all welcomed), takes place Sundays at 4 p.m., with the underlying goal of building community. “YM is about trying to engage the kids through the use of clothes, music, friends; things that are important to them,” said Valerie LaPointe, a YM volunteer who spearheaded a session of movie-making Pixar-style to illustrate the Gospel message of the wooden beam and splinter. On a different week, YM involved dressing up to reflect the lesson titled Freaky Catholic Saints.

Michael summed up this ministry that he oversees: “At St. Dominic’s, we believe that any child, whatever age he or she is, needs to be welcomed because the church needs them. We are not just about imparting knowledge, we are also about teaching the culture of prayers, rituals, gestures, saints; a whole array of practices. But the teaching of Catholic culture ultimately starts at home. We have a very solid program from pre-kindergarten to 6th grade: About half of the kids who went through their First Communion 3 to 4 years ago are still around. And for the first time this year, we have a pipeline! There are kids in Year 1 of Confirmation who came up from the lower grade system. Our next goal is to form a vibrant YM community. The barometer of success would be the number of 7th graders who are still in YM in their sophomore year. But I believe in the idea that if you build it, they will come.”

MINISTRY: GARDENING & LANDSCAPING

Start at the front of St. Dominic’s on Steiner and walk clockwise, rounding the corner. Low-lying on your right, with Bush Street on your left, see the white yule interspersed with the purple of the lavender and sylvia and lavatera. Amidst these bedding plants, see the olive and plum and evergreen trees. Along with Mary’s grotto, this entire stretch represents the primary gardens of St. Dominic’s. Walk by any third week of the month, and you’ll spot a core group of about 8 volunteers, including Peter Mandell, Tim Irving, Bonnie Behre, and Madeline Camisa who have devoted many a year to upkeeping this area of green. For Peter, the gardens are “the outward and public invitation to come see what St. Dominic’s is all about. The gardens are our welcome mat, the first sign of what we are about: our respect for the earth, beauty, and nature, all gifts from God. The gardens are the product and offering of the people’s time who work on them.” The openness of the gardens can sometimes have unforeseen consequences. Several years back, some of the donated cobblestones that marked a path through the garden on the Church’s left entrance were stolen.

Said Peter, “With the refurbishing of the pastoral center (school building), we will be getting even more areas to landscape. In the nearer term, at the start of the new year, we will be installing an improved irrigation system. We would then love to replace some of the older plants with those suited for a Mediterranean climate in order to be more environmentally sensitive. It would also be nice to have an iron fence down that stretch on Bush and uplighting to show off the front of the Church.” “But most importantly, we always need more hands. No experience needed.”

The Administration Commission thanks Fr. Emmanuel, Peter Mandell, Tim Irving, Bonnie Behre, Michael Smith, and all volunteer catechists and Confirmation class participants who so warmly welcomed us and generously gave us their time. We Celebrate will start 15 January 2013. Gardening queries can be directed to Peter Mandell at petermandell@comcast.net. FCFF, Confirmation, and YM queries can be directed to Michael Smith at dre@stdominics.org. The Administration Commission also welcomes feedback on the newsletter. Please write to st.d.comm.committee@gmail.com.