Special Ingredients
Light the Way
WRITTEN BY MARJORIE CAMPBELL

Have you tasted Brother Greg’s sought-after shortbread cookies? Then you know they have a secret ingredient which makes them a favorite purchase after Sunday Mass. What you probably don’t know is this: Brother Greg’s shortbread is the secret ingredient to St. Dominic’s recently installed outside lighting project. “I was told to follow the recipes exactly,” Brother Greg recently reflected, “but I didn’t like that so much. I found it was more fun to add a little of this or a little of that.”

Brother Greg joined the Dominicans as a mere lad of 18, from Visalia, California, south of Fresno. For the last 60 years, he has lived and served within Dominican communities from Eagle Rock to Reno to Seattle to Antioch to San Francisco—with more than one tenure in some locations. For each community, Brother Greg has prepared meals, a seasoned cook long before he undertook baking shortbread cookies for St. Dominic’s.

When he wasn’t cooking, Brother Greg had other responsibilities, like teaching physical education at the parish school. It was here at St. Dominic’s that Brother Greg undertook his greatest labor of love.

“I met Father [Felix] Cassidy in Reno,” Brother Greg recalled. “Everything I cooked Father Cassidy told me was the best he ever tasted.” Brother Greg was in residence at St. Dominic’s when Father Felix became ill and the community made plans to move him to a care facility. However, Brother Greg objected.

“I told them, ‘No, I’ll take care of him,’” Brother Greg explained, wiping tears and quietly adding, “And I did, until the day he died.”

In his grief following Father Felix’s death, the introverted brother found he needed a project, something to help him move through mourning his beloved friend.

“That’s when a friend from the Cathedral suggested proceeds from my shortbread cookie sales might help with the lighting problem in the front of the church,” Brother Greg recalled.

Long a concern to the parish, the unlit area between Steiner Street and the front steps of the church building posed a hazard when dark. Finding funds to install lighting became a priority.

“We had a very generous donation from Kevin and Anne Ryan,” Parish Administrator Michael Rossi said. “We are so grateful to them for helping with this much needed project,” he added. But it took another secret ingredient to complete the funding – proceeds from the sale of Brother Greg’s shortbread cookies.

“I make the cookies in 10-pound batches,” he began. “I sell a carton of 15 cookies for $10 after the Masses and always sell out pretty much.” Brother
On May 20 at 10am in St. Mary’s Cathedral, San Francisco, Jimmy Salcido and Dino Ornido were ordained as “permanent deacons”, making vows of obedience to the Archbishop of San Francisco, Salvatore Corleone.

Jimmy and Dino will perform their first homilies as ordained deacons at St. Dominic’s regular masses on May 27 and May 28.

Father Michael says it beautifully, “Here at St. Dominic’s we are grateful for the role of our deacons, who have been icons of service, and we are expectant that Jimmy and Dino will continue to carry this torch of service for many years to come.”

On May 20 at 10am in St. Mary’s Cathedral, San Francisco, Jimmy Salcido and Dino Ornido were ordained as “permanent deacons”, making vows of obedience to the Archbishop of San Francisco, Salvatore Corleone.

Jimmy and Dino will perform their first homilies as ordained deacons at St. Dominic’s regular masses on May 27 and May 28.

Father Michael says it beautifully, “Here at St. Dominic’s we are grateful for the role of our deacons, who have been icons of service, and we are expectant that Jimmy and Dino will continue to carry this torch of service for many years to come.”

In 1999, after 40 years—a period he refers to as his period in the desert—Jimmy returned to the St. Dominic’s community where he enrolled in RCIA and worked as a private duty nurse. He was confirmed in 2002, married that year, and has since thrown himself into serving the St. Dominic’s community as usher, lector, Mass coordinator, Liturgy Board member, and chair of the Pastoral Council.

Through guidance and encouragement from Sister Anne Bertain O.P., Deacons Mike Curran and Chuck O’Neil, Jimmy entered the five-year, Permanent Deaconship Formation Program in 2012. Deacon Mike Curran will vest Jimmy at the ordination May 20.

As a Deacon Jimmy plans to help lost and troubled juveniles, counseling youth at the Juvenile Detention Center. He also plans to launch a comprehensive senior ministry at St. Dominic’s focusing on the seniors in The Second Spring Group.

When asked where he wants to serve as a Deacon he replies, “If you’re seeking to hear the Lord’s voice, I don’t think there are any better places to be than St. Dominic’s.”

Dino Ornido

Dino Ornido did not grow up wanting to be a deacon. Before 2008, he had fallen away from the Church. He and his wife Katharine were enduring rough times in their marriage.

One morning, the couple’s young son Michael shared with his parents that he had had a dream about Jesus. He saw Him sitting at the right hand of the Father. Katharine—then an Atheist—turned to the Bible to help interpret her young son’s dream. It was this curiosity that instigated the entire family’s shared journey into the faith.

The marriage healed as Dino became involved in St. Luke’s Church in Foster City. He immersed himself in service there while Katharine went through St. Luke’s RCIA Program.

Katharine, Michael and daughter Elle were baptized together in April, 2010 at St. Luke’s Church. It was Fr. Jonathan Paala there who suggested to Dino that he look into the Diaconate and in 2012, Dino was accepted into the Deacon Formation Program. He reflects, “The more my faith grew stronger, the more I wanted to love more and love is all about self-giving”.

Jimmy Salcido

“I was born here,” shares Jimmy Salcido, born in San Francisco, baptized at St. Dominic’s Church, and raised a stone’s throw away. Even as a child he could feel the presence of the Holy Spirit sitting in the pews of St. Dominic’s. He also reminisces about how Sweet Maple Restaurant—a couple of blocks from St. Dominic’s—used to be the Uptown Theatre, where his great grandmother took him to see the Ten Commandments starring Charlton Heston.

Jimmy travelled a long hard road before being called to the Diaconate. At age 15 he dropped out of high school and was sent to Juvenile Hall, then “Log Cabin Ranch”, a reform facility for 86 boys.

In 1999, after 40 years—a period he refers to as his period in the desert—Jimmy returned to the St. Dominic’s community where he enrolled in RCIA and worked as a private duty nurse. He was confirmed in 2002, married that year, and has since thrown himself into serving the St. Dominic’s community as usher, lector, Mass coordinator, Liturgy Board member, and chair of the Pastoral Council.

Through guidance and encouragement from Sister Anne Bertain O.P., Deacons Mike Curran and Chuck O’Neil, Jimmy entered the five-year, Permanent Deaconship Formation Program in 2012. Deacon Mike Curran will vest Jimmy at the ordination May 20.

As a Deacon Jimmy plans to help lost and troubled juveniles, counseling youth at the Juvenile Detention Center. He also plans to launch a comprehensive senior ministry at St. Dominic’s focusing on the seniors in The Second Spring Group.

When asked where he wants to serve as a Deacon he replies, “If you’re seeking to hear the Lord’s voice, I don’t think there are any better places to be than St. Dominic’s.”
In 2013, Dino took over the Marriage Preparation Ministry from Deacon Mike Curran. He and his wife Katharine run the classes together.

Their son Michael is now 18 years old and finishing his freshman year at UC Berkeley. Their daughter Elle is 16, in the 11th grade and pursuing ballet. You might see them passing out programs and helping parishioners at the Sunday 5:30pm Mass.

Concludes Dino about this new chapter as a Deacon, “It’s an open path for me, but I’m ready.”

Becoming a Deacon

In the Catholic Church—as well as Anglican, Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Churches—the diaconate is one of three ranks, or “Holy Orders”, of ordained ministry: bishop, priest and deacon. The deacon reports to the bishops, specifically the Archbishop of San Francisco.

The role of a Deacon is to liaison between the clergy and parishioners by focusing on the Word—or preaching of the Gospel—the Liturgy—ministering over various parts of the Mass such as Holy Communion and chalice—and Charity—serving the poor and marginalized and helping parishioners to serve.

As of the fifth century AD the role of the permanent diaconate began a gradual decline in the Latin church. At the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), based on the recommendations in the Lumen gentium, 29, in 1967 Pope Paul VI issued the motu proprio “Sacrum Diaconatus Ordinem”, restoring the practice of the permanent diaconate. These men are known as permanent deacons in contrast to transitional deacons, who continue their formation to become priests and who take the vow of celibacy.

St. Stephen was the first Deacon, cited in the Acts of Apostles between 100 and 200 AD. The apostles sought men to go out and minister, taking care of the sick and delivering Communion.

Per Father Michael Hurley, “Since the first preaching of the Gospel, deacons have played an essential part of the life of the Church. Historically, the formation of the diaconate came forth from a need in the Church to minister to those on the margins of the community. In the Gospel, Jesus boldly says that he came ‘not to be served, but to serve.’ This vocation of service is the call of every Christian but in a special way gives identity to the role of the deacon.”

Diaconal candidates are instructed in philosophy, theology, study of the Holy Scriptures (the Bible), homiletics, sacramental studies, evangelization, ecclesiology, counseling, and pastoral care and ministry before ordination. The Program is run by the Archdiocese of San Francisco, out of the Chancery across the street from the San Francisco Cathedral. Fr. Michael Sweeney, O.P. is currently the Permanent Diaconate Formation Director.

Special Ingredients

Greg saved the proceeds from his bi-monthly sales and then donated the full amount to the outdoor lighting. With the project fully funded, installation of the lights took place in January.

If you ask Brother Greg what makes his cookies so delicious, he concedes, “a 10-pound batch has four pounds of butter and about 15 cups of flour.” But he won’t divulge the full recipe.

“There’s a secret ingredient, too,” he said with a smile, “but I promised the person who gave me the recipe never to tell.”

We may never know the special ingredient in Brother Greg’s shortbread, but the parish knows he is the secret ingredient in St. Dominic’s outdoor lighting.
Three parishioners from St. Dominic’s and several activists from the San Francisco Coalition on Homelessness went to Modesto in February. Their goal was to put homelessness on the agenda at the U.S. Regional World Meeting of Popular Movements, a gathering of more than 600 grassroots organizers.

“Our goal was to make sure that homelessness was part of the dialogue,” said Kelley Cutler, a St. Dominic’s parishioner and human rights activist for the Coalition. “Everyone that went is either currently or formerly experiencing homelessness. What we were saying [at the meeting] was specific to San Francisco because we know the details, but the same thing’s happening across the United States.”

They succeeded in drawing the meeting’s attention to the issue, but said it will be hard to overcome popular misconceptions and political stagnation to address the worsening homelessness crisis in San Francisco.

“A faith-based group organizing is almost unheard of, really, but it’s such a basic teaching of ours,” Kelley said. “It’s so basic and people just assume that it’s being done, especially here, but it’s not.”

Pope Francis wrote a letter to the meeting that centered on the parable of the Samaritan, and the Lord’s Commandment to take care of our neighbors.

“The economic system that has the god of money at its center, and that sometimes acts with the brutality of the robbers in the parable, inflicts injuries that to a criminal degree have remained neglected,” wrote Pope Francis. “One looks at those who suffer without touching them. But they are televised live; they are talked about in euphemisms and with apparent tolerance, but nothing is done systematically to heal the social wounds or to confront the structures that leave so many brothers and sisters by the wayside.”

Kelley Culter and Sister Colleen Mc Dermott, St. Dominic’s director of community services, organized the trip. Kelley was joined on the trip by Tim Pursell and another parishioner, both of whom have experienced homelessness and volunteer with the Lima Center, a ministry located in the parish hall which provides meals, laundry services, showers, and a place to rest.

While charity can provide critical services to the homeless, attendees said, charity is not enough. The legal system must also be reformed to protect human rights and not block the path off the street and into housing.

“My experience at the conference was eye opening,” said a parishioner who attended. “I did not know there were so many levels of poverty. I did not know I have it easy compared to others in different places.”

Kelley hopes that faith-based organizations may come to understand homelessness not just as a target for charity, but a social justice issue. Tim Pursell agreed that social justice needs to be part of the church’s conversation about homelessness.

“Everybody sees homeless people as an object of charity instead of talking about homelessness being criminalized,” Tim said. “So you’re a criminal because you don’t have a house, which is a much more problematic stance, and that’s where the church has fallen down on the job.”

“It takes a lot to shock me,” said Kelley. “But what we’re seeing now is stunning, actually. Because people are so much older and so much sicker. There’s over 3,300 homeless children in our public school system in San Francisco, in a city with such obscene wealth. There’s over 1,200 people on the shelter wait list, and yet it’s against the law to sit or lie down. You can literally get a ticket for sitting down, but there’s nowhere to go.”

Current Needs of the Lima Center:

- Men’s jeans/dark kahki pants
- T-Shirts (not dress shirts)
- Warm and weather-resistant coats/jackets
- New socks
- New underwear

*Space constraints limit the Lima Center to only accepting these items. Donations can be dropped off at either the Lima Center or the parish office.*