

FRIAR JOHN DAVID VAUGHN, OFM

1928-2016

MINISTER GENERAL OF THE ORDER OF FRIARS MINOR

1979-1991



Franciscan Father John Vaughn, OFM, passed to eternal life on October 10, 2016 in Santa Barbara. He was 88 years old, 67 years professed in the Franciscan order, and 61 years a priest. A quiet, humble friar, he was beloved and admired by all who knew him, especially in his home Province of St. Barbara, a region of the Franciscans in the western United States.

John David Vaughn was born in Santa Ana, CA, the son of Morgan Leonard Vaughn and Jane Stack. He attended the Los Angeles College Seminary before entering St. Anthony's Seminary, Santa Barbara, CA, for one semester. He received the Franciscan habit, becoming a member of the Order of Friars Minor (or "Franciscan Friars") at Mission San Miguel CA, on July 11, 1948, and he was given the religious name of Manuel. He would later return to his baptismal name, John.

Following his profession of simple vows, he completed his college years at Mission San Luis Rey, and he professed solemn vows there on July 12, 1952. Friar John was known for his fine singing voice during his student years. After theological studies at Mission Santa Barbara, he was ordained to the priesthood by the Most Rev. Timothy Manning, auxiliary bishop of Los Angeles, on December 17, 1955.

Fr. John's first assignment was to St. Francis church in Sacramento, CA, for several months as a parochial vicar. Then, after a few months of study in Guadalajara, Mexico, he began work at St. Anthony's Seminary as a teacher, librarian and vice-prefect of discipline (1957-1962). The Province then appointed him to be assistant Master of Novices and associate pastor at Mission San Miguel (San Miguel, CA).

Recognizing his talents and spirit, Fr. John's superiors asked him to do post-graduate studies at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. Upon his return in 1969 he was assigned to St. Francis Friary in Sacramento, CA, as Master of Novices for the province, local superior, parish pastor and director of the local Secular Franciscan Order fraternity, all at the same time. In 1973, while still in Sacramento, he was elected Vicar for the Province of St. Barbara.

On May 25, 1976, Fr. John was elected Provincial Minister for the Province of St. Barbara, with headquarters in Oakland, CA. However, his term of office in the province was cut short, because **on June 3, 1979, he was elected Minister General of the Franciscan Order of Friars Minor, the order's highest office,** and moved to the order's headquarters in Rome. After 6 years he was elected for a second term of 6 years.

In his visits around the world as Minister General, friars found Fr. John to be open, friendly, and encouraging. He was willing to wash dishes and do other manual chores. He was always patient, respecting each friar as an individual. When he had to make hard decisions in some very difficult situations, it was always for the good of the friars.

In 1991, after finishing his second term as Minister General, Fr. John took some time to rest in the San Francisco Bay area before accepting assignment as Master of Novices again at Mission San Miguel in July, 1994.

In 2003 he was assigned to Mission Santa Barbara where he assumed leadership of efforts to have Fr. Junípero Serra officially declared a saint, and to minister in the parish and to the Poor Clare sisters. Gradually becoming blind, Fr. John continued to be an active presence in the community and an inspiration to all.

Regardless of the important offices that he held, Fr. John was always himself—gracious and thoughtful of others, reluctant to be stern, and always a brother to all the friars of the order.

*In paradisum deducant te Angeli; in tuo adventu suscipiant te martyres, et perducant te in civitatem sanctam Ierusalem. Chorus angelorum te suscipiat, et cum Lazaro quondam paupere æternam habeas requiem.*

*"May the angels lead you into paradise; may the martyrs come to welcome you and take you to the holy city, the new and eternal Jerusalem. May choirs of angels welcome you and lead you to the bosom of Abraham; and where Lazarus is poor no longer may you find eternal rest."*