

**Brother Athanasius Thompson, O.P.**

Br. Athanasius was born in Long Beach and grew up in La Habra, California, one of three children and a fifth generation Angeleno. As a child, Br. Athanasius was a precocious reader of science books, and whenever asked what he wanted to be when he grew up, his answer was always “scientist.” In addition to his love of books, he also fell in love with baseball, he is a huge L.A. Dodgers fan like his father Randy, and he eventually acquired several thousand baseball cards.

As a youth Br. Athanasius’ childhood love of baseball was replaced first by skateboarding, and then by the bass guitar. Through the bass guitar (and “normal” guitar as well) Br. Athanasius discovered a deep passion for music of every genre, playing in his high school jazz ensemble for four years and later studying music theory in college.

Although he excelled at mathematics and considered a career in science, he developed a keen interest in language and linguistics. He studied German with a native German speaker at his high school. Later this interest in linguistics would blossom into a lifelong passion for classical philology, and especially for Greek and Latin literature.

In his second year of college, after reading a biography of Padre Pio of Pietrelcina, Br. Athanasius experienced a profound reversion to the Catholic faith and discerned a call to the radical poverty of religious life. He joined the Norbertines of St. Michael’s Abbey in 2007, and there learned the habits of prayer, study, and community that would guide him for the rest of his life.

He later moved on from the Norbertines to pursue an undergraduate degree and to discern a more academic vocation. A year at Thomas Aquinas College introduced Br. Athanasius to the classical liberal arts tradition. He earned a B.A. in philosophy from Cal State Los Angeles which gave him the opportunity to consider this classical tradition alongside modern and contemporary thought.

After seriously considering a career as a philosophy professor, Br. Athanasius began working as a freelance web developer (in addition to music and languages, a third mostly self-taught skill). His work and proficiency as a developer resulted in a job as a software developer at The Boeing Company in Dallas, Texas. He found considerable success in software development, but he felt compelled and now ready to reenter religious life and that his vocation was most closely found in the Dominican motto: *contemplari et contemplata aliis tradere*: “to contemplate and to share the fruits of contemplation with others.” In order to pursue such a life of sharing the fruits of contemplation, Br. Athanasius joined the Western Dominican Province in 2016.

As a Dominican friar Br. Athanasius deepened his study of German, Latin, and Greek, while adding proficiency in Ancient Hebrew to his list of languages. For the past several years, Brother Athanasius has been the Order's lead Latin teacher. More importantly, Br. Athanasius immersed himself in the in-depth study of the Scriptures and Sacred Theology in the context of community, and to share the fruits of this theological learning in a broad variety of ministry situations.

Br. Athanasius' experience in formation as a Dominican helped him discern a more specific vocation as a teacher and a Dominican cooperator brother. As a brother, which is to say a Dominican who does not seek ordination to the priesthood, Br. Athanasius will devote his undivided energies to imparting knowledge in the classroom and fostering the intellectual development of Nativity's students.

Br. Athanasius is deeply enthusiastic about the classical tradition of philosophy, theology, and literature, and the ancient languages in which this tradition has been handed down. He considers it vitally important that this knowledge be preserved and transmitted to future generations, and hopes to make Nativity students as passionate about classical learning as he is.

Brother Athanasius will teach Latin and Geometry, will play a significant role in Campus Ministry efforts, and is happy to provide skatepark or bass guitar instruction as well!