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Capuchins honor longtime employee with affiliate status

by **Robert Delaney of The Michigan Catholic**
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DETROIT — For Brenda Boatman, the Capuchin friars are "like my second family – I've come to think of them as my extended family." And the friars feel the same way about her.



They recently made it official when they accepted her as an affiliate of the Detroit-based Province of St. Joseph in a ceremony in the chapel of St. Bonaventure Monastery.

"For over 30 years you have served us in a variety of ministries and offices; and you have embodied many of the values that are at the core of our mission, especially hospitality, joyful service, partnering and compassion," Fr. John Celichowski, provincial minister, said in his homily at the March event.

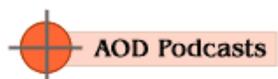
Affiliate status is a rare designation the Capuchins confer on individuals who somehow distinguish themselves in service to the order or support of its work. Boatman becomes one of only about a dozen people to have received the honor from the Province of St. Joseph.

"You not only do your job well, Brenda, you do it as a ministry – a service to others in the name of Christ," Fr. Celichowski added.

Currently responsible for doing the province's payroll and processing employee benefit matters Boatman, 53, began working for the Capuchins in 1978.

"I started when I was 21, and they were all so wonderful that, after I had been there a little while, I just never thought about working anywhere else. And as long as I am able, I don't plan to go anywhere else," Boatman said.

With the office situated within the monastery in those early days, she saw firsthand "the work that they do for the poor, and how they would





never turn people away," she recalled.

"I've never seen another group dedicate themselves the way they have," Boatman added.

Being named an affiliate of the province was something she never expected. "I thought, because I wasn't Catholic, I could never become an affiliate," said Boatman, a non-denominational Christian.

But now that she is an affiliate, "it means that I'm officially part of the family that I always called my family," she added.



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