



Franciscan Vocations

February 2007

Two Approved for Postulancy

Saturday, January 24th, the Admissions Board welcomed two men into our Provincial Postulancy Program. Approved for admission are **Daniel Helfrich** and **Clifford Hennings**.

Dan, age 31, presently lives in Sandusky, OH. He was born and reared in Litchfield, IL. He attended Eastern Illinois University briefly before entering the Navy in 1995 where he spent five years working in military avionics.



Dan presently works as an instructor, as well as in service and support for a company that manufactures machinery for cutting poultry using high pressure water. Dan is also a guitarist and is active in his parish's music ministry.

Clifford, age 21, was born in Lafayette, LA but presently lives with his family in Richmond, TX. He commutes to the University of Saint Thomas where he is studying theology. Clifford spent his first year of college at Louisiana State University.



Clifford teaches fifth grade religion class at his local parish. He is interested in writing, especially poetry.

In the coming months, four others will be meeting with the Admissions Board seeking acceptance into the Postulancy Program. Please remember them in your prayers as well as all of the men looking into the possibility of a vocation to the Religious Life.

What is the "Admissions Board?"

The Admissions Board consists of six friars whose sole task is to decide whether or not a man seeking admission into the Postulancy Program is ready to begin the process of formation. The members represent a cross section of friars including some who are involved in the training of new members in the Order. They convene usually three times a year in January, March, and May.

As a man progresses through the discernment process, the Vocation Director is his main contact with the friars. The Director gets to know him through visits, emails, telephone conversations, various forms of testing,

etc. Meanwhile, he compiles a file with the required documentation and records confirming the man's health, educational/employment background, commitment to the practice of the faith, and overall readiness for the Religious Life. When the Director and the man seeking admission feel that all is in place and the individual wants to seek formal acceptance into the Postulancy Program, the compiled information is passed on to the Admissions Board members who study it and then meet face-to-face with the prospective.

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Recent Events

If you have been following Fr Don's Vocation Blog on our provincial website, you may be aware of the fact that life in the Vocation Office and in the Postulancy Program is not dull.

Before Christmas, Fr. Don and our Postulants, Richard Goodin and Dennis Geib, participated in a vocation evening presented by the Archdiocese of Louisville. Fr. Don and Richard were also part of the 2006 Ohio Catholic Young Adult Conference held in Cincinnati. Both of these occasions offered a chance to share our Franciscan charisma with young people who may be thinking and praying about joining a Religious Community.

The snow fall near the end of January gave us the opportunity to enjoy the "saga" of Friar Snowman. His stay at the friary was very brief (warm weather contributed to his early demise), but we did have some fun and the comments from the blog posts confirmed that others entered into our fun as well.

The Postulants have also been a fantastic help with the *Come and See* weekends. Twelve men have participated in the weekends so far this academic year; five of whom are seeking admission this summer.

(You can find Fr. Don's Blog at <http://vocationvibes.franciscan.org>)

**There are two remaining *Come and See* weekends this year:
March 16-18 and May 4-6.**

If you would like to participate in one of them, please contact the Vocation Office at:

1-800-827-1082

or

sjbvocations@franciscan.org

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Stats and Facts

Presently there are 147 men looking into the possibility of joining our Franciscan Province of Saint John the Baptist. Of that group, 50 (34%) have contacted the office within the past five months.

Five of those interested are from countries other than the United States and two, who are United States citizens, are working as volunteers in Jamaica.

The other 140 are from:

AR	1	IN	10	NM	1
AZ	3	KY	7	NV	2
CA	6	LA	2	NY	4
CO	5	MA	2	OH	19
CT	1	MD	2	OK	2
FL	8	MI	7	PA	7
GA	5	NM	2	SC	3
IA	2	MO	1	TN	6
ID	1	NC	3	TX	15
IL	3	NJ	1	VA	5
		WI	1		

Besides Clifford Hennings from TX and Daniel Helfrich from OH, the other four prospectives for 2007 are from FL, MI, MN, and TX.

The age of the group ranges from 13 through 39.

39	1	30	4	21	11
38	2	29	5	20	9
37	1	28	3	19	7
36	1	27	5	18	9
35	1	26	8	17	4
34	3	25	9	16	3
33	1	24	17	15	2
32	1	23	6	14	1
31	4	22	8	13	1

The mean (average) age is 24.

(If you add up all the numbers you will reach 127 instead of 147 because we do not have the exact age of 20 of the prospectives.)

Male Sexuality/Spirituality Workshop



Nothing like human sexuality to hold a group's attention. ☺

January 16 through 19 of this year, 17 postulants and four friars gathered at Sacred Heart Friary in Chicago for a workshop on male sexuality and spirituality given by Fr. Donald Miller, O.F.M., our provincial Vocation Director. This is Father Don's third year offering this particular workshop, but a gathering on this topic has been happening for many years. It originally was held at St. John the Baptist Friary in Joliet, IL. It included the Postulants and Directors from the four Midwestern Franciscan Provinces and afforded the Postulants an opportunity to work together and to get to know each other before they arrived at the novitiate in June. In the last couple of years, the Conventual and Capuchin Franciscan Postulants have been joining in. So the workshop has become both interprovincial as well as inter-Order.

Drawing from both his theological and counseling background, Fr. Don integrated the psychological aspects of male sexuality (what it means to grow up as a man in today's society) with the rich Franciscan tradition which included both Franciscan anthropology and spirituality (how the Franciscan tradition

views the human person and our relationships with God and one another.).

Did he do a good job? Well, you'll have to ask the Postulants. But judging from the conversations and the evaluations, it seems fair to say that the workshop was a success—and Father got invited back to do it again next year.



Fr. Don holding forth.

Board . . .

The meeting takes place within the context of prayer and discernment. The Vocation Director presents the individual as one he feels is properly prepared and ready for formation. The Board's task is to examine that decision and to add their own insights and conclusions.

At the end of the meeting, the individual receives a summary of the Board's insights into his preparedness. The Vocation Director stays in contact with him to facilitate his continuing discernment and the Postulancy Director begins to inform him of the details of beginning a life as a Postulant.