



Franciscan Vocations

July 2007

Friars gather in Dayton for an All-Province Assembly

May 21—25, 2007 approximately 150 friars of Saint John the Baptist Province gathered at the Virginia Kettering Hall on the campus of the University of Dayton for a week of fraternity, prayer, and a little work. Since the mid-1980s, the friars gather every third year for what has come to be called an *All-Province Assembly (APA)*. Unlike a *Chapter*, which also occurs every third year on the



Richard Goodin (now a novice) and Fr. Alex Kratz, O.F.M.

year following the *APA* and involves elections and policy decision making, the *APA* is designed to foster fraternity in the context of prayer with some input from outside speakers.

This year three speakers focused on various aspects of living the Franciscan charism. Fr. Jack Clark Robin-

son, O.F.M. of Our Lady of Guadalupe Province presented a dynamic history of the founding and growth of Saint John the Baptist Province in the United States. Sr. Margaret Carney, O.S.F., the President of Saint Bonaventure University, talked on the present-day aspects of Franciscanism as lived among all branches of the Franciscan family. Dr. Avis Clendenen, Chair of the Religious Studies Department of Saint Xavier University in Chicago, rounded out the discussions with a challenge to the friars to live their Franciscan charism in creative ways so as to address the needs of the Church in the new century.

Perhaps the most moving experience of the week was a memorial of the deceased friars of the province that took place on Tuesday afternoon. Beginning with a very simple prayer, the friars spent a few hours in silence meditating and praying over the lives of those who have gone before them in

faith. The gathering room was quiet except for an audio listing of the names of the deceased. Five memorial stations were set up around the room where the friars could gather for various visual records of some of the lesser known friars who spent their



Fr. Tod, O.F.M. leads the group in Eucharist

lives living and ministering in the province—some at locations no longer associated with SJB Province. The afternoon concluded with

the celebration of the Eucharist.

Thursday afternoon the friars addressed what little business needed to be addressed and then retired to the Immaculate Conception Chapel on the university campus for the Jubilee Eucharist and banquet honoring all the members of the province observing major mile-stones in their Franciscan and/or priestly lives.

The general comments overheard on Friday as the gang dispersed back to their home friaries was that the week had been a good experience

Dates for 2007-2008 *Come and See* weekends and Admissions Board Meetings

***Come and See* dates:**
September 28-30, 2007
November 9-11, 2007
January 11-13, 2008
March 7-9, 2008
May 2-4, 2008

Admissions Board
Dates:
January 26, 2008
March 29, 2008
April 26, 2008

Participation in a *Come and See* weekend is an essential event in the discernment process for any man wishing to join Saint John the Baptist Province. Meeting with the *Admissions Board* is the final step in the entry process.

Anyone thinking about possibly joining the community in 2008 who has not yet participated in a *Come and See* weekend will need to plan on attending one of the first three weekends.

Formation News

Franciscan formation programs experienced a good deal of change during June and July. On June 3 Dennis Geib (right) and Richard Goodin (left) began their vocation having completed their Postulancy year. They entered the Novitiate in Cedar Lake, IN on June 24 and were officially received by Provincial Minister, Fr. Fred Link, O.F.M.



Thomas Olsen, O.F.M. made his First Profession of Vows on June 15. Tom will be taking some summer classes at St. Bonaventure University and then move on to Chicago.



July 1 marked the beginning of a new Postulancy Program at St. Anthony Friary in Cincinnati, OH. The five new Postulants were formally received by Provincial Minister, Fr. Fred Link, O.F.M. on July 6.

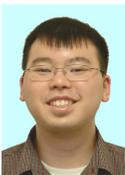
The new Postulants are:



Dennis Helfrich



Roger Lopez



Tim Tran



Joshua van Cleef

Clifford Hennings



Our final man in formation is Andrew Stettler, O.F.M. Andrew is in his third year of Temporary Vows and will be spending this year in ministry in Cincinnati and then a few months in Pakistan.

Note from the Vocation Office

I realize that I have not sent out a Newsletter since March. I have been relying to some extent on the Blog to communicate with all of you, but I have come to realize that the Blog cannot take the place of a written communication. A number of men with whom I am in contact tell me that they enjoy following the Blog, but they also like to receive something occasionally in the mail. So, I will attempt to be more faithful to this written medium. (And I will continue to publish the newsletters on the Blog, however, for those who do not receive them by mail.)

One “excuse” for not having printed a newsletter sooner is the fact that the Vocation Office has been very busy. Of course, this is *great* news; no Vocation Director is ever going to complain about having too many contacts. I am impressed with both the number of young men interested in our way of life, and the prayerfulness with which they are discerning a possible call in their life. This is a strong sign of hope for the Church in general and for the Religious Life in particular.

As I look at the nine men pictured on this page I am encouraged. Each one brings a unique set of gifts and blessings to our community. The same can be said for the many young men with whom I have visited and those who have participated in a *Come and See* weekend. God is blessing our province with good brothers and brothers-to-be.

Each of you receiving a hard copy of this note have expressed at least some interest in joining us. My prayers—and those of the whole province—are with you as you discern your life’s call. We cannot predict who will and who will not become a friar, but we can and do support your search and invite you to listen to your heart. God’s voice is often gentle, but insistent. It is in the quiet of a man’s deepest heart and soul that he can hear that voice and generously respond.

The year’s schedule of *Come and See* weekends is published on the front side of this newsletter. If you feel called, please contact me at the Vocation Office to see about participating in a weekend. It costs you nothing but a little time and transportation to and from Cincinnati.

Ours is a well-grounded community built on the vision of Saint Francis in the heart of the Church. We’ve been around for almost 900 years and look to be here for many generations to come. Is the Lord calling you to be a part of that future? You are more than welcome to “come” and “see.”

Peace,

Upcoming Franciscan Feast Days

August 2 is the celebration of Our Lady of the Angels of Portiuncula. The “portiuncula” or the “little portion” is one of the chapels that Saint Francis rebuilt and it became the birthplace of the Order of Friars Minor.

August 8 is the celebration of Saint Dominic, a contemporary of Saint Francis who founded the Dominicans. The Franciscans and the Dominicans observe each other’s founding.

August 11 is the Feast of Saint Clare, a contemporary of St. Francis and the foundress of the Poor Clares.

September 17 is the observance of the Stigmata of Saint Francis. The biographers tell us that Saint Francis was on Mount Alverna in 1224 around for the feast of the Triumph of the Cross (September 14) when he received the wounds of Jesus in his own body.

October 4 is the Solemnity of Saint Francis. The evening of October 3 the Franciscans observe the Transitus of Saint Francis, his passing from this life to the next.