

Be A Franciscan

A publication of the vocation ministry of Holy Name Province

Two Friars Ordained to Priesthood

Two Holy Name Province friars were ordained to the priesthood on May 22 at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Manhattan. For Larry Anderson and David Phan, this joyful event was the culmination of years of personal, spiritual and educational development and the beginning of serving in full-time priestly ministry.

The 11 a.m. Mass was celebrated by Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, archbishop emeritus of Washington, D.C., with the assistance of Provincial Minister Fr. John O'Connor, OFM, Provincial Vicar Fr. Dominic Monti, OFM, and Fr. Francis Di Spigno, OFM, director of post-novitiate formation.

An affiliate of Holy Name Province, Cardinal McCarrick called Larry and David “fine men” and spoke of “the wonderful service of the Franciscans.” He added, “We have some great leaders, and we need more like them.”

Family and friends of the newly-ordained priests participated in the celebration along with friars from throughout the Province. They were joined by parishioners of St. Mary’s Church in Pompton Lakes, N.J., and Our Lady of Vietnam Church in Silver Spring, Md., two of the ministries where Larry and David, respectively, have served.

Shown in the photo are: (front) Fr. Larry, Fr. David, (rear) Fr. Dominic, Cardinal McCarrick, Fr. John and Fr. Francis.



Meet Our Newly-Ordained Priests

Fr. Larry Anderson, OFM

Born in Geneva, N.Y., Larry holds a bachelor’s degree from Wadhams Hall Seminary and College in Ogdensburg, N.Y., and a master of arts degree in pastoral ministry from Christ the King Seminary in East Aurora, N.Y. Prior to joining the friars, he was a disc jockey at a radio station in Alaska through the Jesuit Volunteer Corps. He also worked as a high school campus minister at Aquinas Institute in Rochester, N.Y., and director of youth ministry for the Diocese of Ogdensburg.

Larry came to know the friars while a student at Christ the King, where the friars served, and joined the Order in 2003. He completed a master’s degree in social work at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., and served as director of senior high youth ministry at St. Mary’s Church in Pompton Lakes, N.J. For Larry, “Ordination is the culmination of my path as a Franciscan. As a priest, I will have the opportunity to enter into people’s lives, which is humbling.” He continues to minister at St. Mary’s as parochial vicar.

Fr. David Phan, OFM

David was born in the village of Ban Me Thuoc, Vietnam, and came to the United States when he was 15 years old. He graduated from high school in Portland, Ore., and, before joining religious life in 2000, was a technician and supervisor for 10 years at Japan Aviation Electronics in Oregon. He first encountered the friars when he was 10 years old, and his family sent him to live with a Vietnamese friar in Nha Trang, Vietnam.

Since entering the Province’s formation program, David has earned an undergraduate degree at The Catholic University of America and received a master of divinity from Washington Theological Union in Washington, D.C. He has been involved in a variety of ministries, such as parish ministry, prison ministry, hospital chaplaincy and serving the poor. David will serve as parochial vicar at St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Long Beach Island, N.J. His family has been very generous to the Church — four of his siblings are committed to religious life, three as Franciscans.

Inside

Four Steps to Hearing Your Call	2
My Vocation Story	3
Recommended Reading	3
Clare of Assisi	3
Post-Novitiate Formation	4
Upcoming Event	5
Ask the Vocation Director	5

Discerning God's Call in Your Lives

By Sr. Anita Louise Lowe, OSB

How do you hear God's call in your lives? How do you understand what you hear? These questions have been asked throughout the ages and continue to be asked by all who seek to discern God's presence and call in their lives. If you look at scripture, you will find several examples of people struggling to understand God's call to them.

Consider the story of the call of Samuel (1 Sm 3:1-10). Samuel was a young boy serving in the temple when he heard a voice calling his name. He assumed this voice was that of the priest, Eli. Eventually, Eli realized that Samuel was hearing God's voice calling to him and instructed him to respond, "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening." Samuel needed Eli to tell him that the voice he heard was God's. He didn't recognize God's voice on his own.

Or consider the story of Andrew and the other disciple when they were with John the Baptist. John sees Jesus walking by and points out, "Behold the Lamb of God." With that the two disciples of John follow Jesus and become his disciples (John 1:35-40). They needed John the Baptist to point out Jesus to them. Then, they could follow and respond.

When you seek to discover God's call in your lives you enter a time of discernment. The dictionary defines discern as: to separate, to sort out, to sift through. Discernment, then, is a time of sifting and sorting. Religious discernment is also a time to see with the eyes of your heart so that you can choose life in God. It is a time when you allow yourselves to be open to God's will, and it is an

opportunity to allow your hearts to guide your mind more than trusting your own reasoning.

If you are to listen to God, then prayer is essential. You need to take time to be in conversation with God, to ask God for help and guidance. You have only to look to the life of Jesus to see the prominent place of prayer in discernment. As you read the gospels you find that before every major decision Jesus went off alone to pray. He did this prior to choosing the 12 apostles, and he spent much time in prayer as he prepared for his passion and death.

While you need time alone, you also can find God's voice in the voices of those around you. Your call is not for you alone. While you may grow personally and your relationship with God may develop as a result of your call, your vocation is always a call from others, a call to be of service to others, a call to pray for others.

Discernment takes a lot of energy. Listening is not easy! Like Samuel, you are likely to hear God's call several times before you realize who is calling. But, with the help of your friends, your families, and your communities of faith, you can find where God's call is leading you. Your task is to listen, to listen well, and, once you've heard God's voice, to follow it as did the disciples of John the Baptist — following Jesus who asks each of you, "What are you seeking?"

While discernment has many parts, I would like to suggest four basic steps in any time of discovering one's vocation. Throughout this process, you are called to listen to God, to yourselves, and to those around you.

Follow the Four-Step Process

1 Become Aware

Ask yourself: Has anyone ever suggested that I might want to become a brother, priest, or sister? Has someone invited me to be active in ministry? Has anyone recognized gifts and talents in me and called them forth? Do I acknowledge that these voices may be the voice of God leading me toward my vocation in life? How do I discern God's voice in the midst of the cacophony around me? What do I hear? To whom am I listening? How much time do I spend in prayer? Have I asked God for assistance as I strive to listen to my vocation in life? What do others have to say to me, about me?

2 Gather Information and Investigate the Many Available Options

Ask yourself: What are my gifts? Where am I best suited to serve? What motives are driving me in my choices? Where am I resisting God's invitation? Discerning a call to religious life is a two-way street. It calls for mutual discernment — on the part of the individual as well as the community. During this step it can be extremely helpful to have a spiritual director, someone with whom you can share your prayer, your relationship with God, your questions, and your fears. A spiritual director can help you sort and sift and discover where God may be leading you.

3 Choose What You Understand to be God's Will

Ask yourself: What is the most loving choice I can make? What is the choice that will help me be most fully myself? This step calls you to choose what you sense to be God's will as you can best understand it at this moment. You are called simply to make the decision that you believe will lead you to become the most loving person you can be, to become the person God created you to be. This is a time of making a choice.

4 Look For Confirmation of Your Choice

Ask yourself: What is happening within me? Is there peace, even in the midst of doubts? What happens when I share my choice with other people? Do others say, "Oh, I can see you as..."? How do I understand negative responses that occur within me? How do I interpret negative responses that I receive from family members or from friends? How do I listen to these guides? Do I seek to find God's voice in the voices of those who know me and who love me? Do I take any criticism or concern as an opportunity to examine my motivations and find myself strengthened rather than weakened in my resolve?



Sr. Anita Louise Lowe, OSB, is director of liturgy for her community, the Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand, Ind., where she had previously served as vocation ministries director.

Br. Paul O’Keeffe, OFM

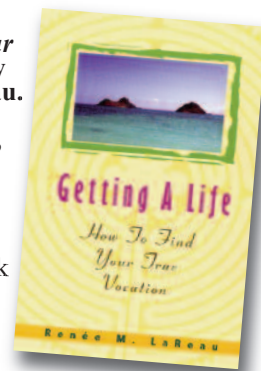
Date of Birth: May 9, 1969
Hometown: Burlington, Mass.
Graduate Education: Theological studies at the Washington Theological Union (2008), social work at Howard University (2009)
Hobbies: Cooking, genealogy, writing and painting
Immediate Plans: Professing solemn vows this summer; serving as a clinical social worker



Vocation story: I got to know the friars while working as a missionary with the Franciscan Mission Service in East Africa. I was attracted to the friars’ dedication to working for peace and justice and their commitment to living simply. Additionally, my time in Africa made me appreciate community life. I wanted to be a part of the healthy, natural and happy fraternity I saw in Holy Name Province.

Recommended Reading

Getting a Life: How to Find Your True Vocation by Renée M. LaReau. Orbis Books, Maryknoll, N.Y., 2003.



Drawing on the best of spiritual tradition, this book offers practical tips to help young adults — or seekers of any age — figure out life’s big questions about career, relationships and self.

Clare of Assisi: ‘Sister Light’ of Francis

By Sr. Liliane Alam, FMM

The life of Clare speaks about light, poverty, simplicity, contemplation and radiation. Who is Clare for us?

Clare of Assisi was born of nobility in the town of Assisi in 1193, and grew up with the privileges of wealth. When only 18 years old, she ran away from home and joined St. Francis in his new way of living the Gospel call to religious life. As a woman, she couldn’t follow the itinerant Francis and his brothers, but she decided to live his radical form of poverty. In the monastery of San Damiano, she refused to accept for herself and her sisters any form of property which would prevent her from depending on the Providence of God.

From the very beginning, Clare attracted many young women to follow her in a radical way of monastic life. Her heart was offered to God, whom she loved completely, confident in his love for her. She was always reminding her sisters to “love him totally, who gave himself totally for your love.” The sisters of the monastery of San Damiano were called “The Ladies of Christ.”

Co-founder with St. Francis of the Franciscan movement, Clare of Assisi



Painting by Sr. Maria van Galen, FMM, of Palm Island, Australia, who works with aboriginal artists. Painting has always been an integral part of her missionary work, which has included assignments in Rome, Papua New Guinea and Holland. For Sr. Maria, “art is a means to enter the deeper place of contemplation inside myself ... where I meet God and where I can step into the different faith experiences of my life.”

is the feminine expression of the ideals of Francis. Her ideals are the expression of a genuine feminine approach to the Gospel. Clare often called herself “*piantarella*,” or “little plant of the most blessed Francis.” Francis was her inspiration, mentor and model. Her pursuit of St. Francis’ ideal of most high poverty made her understand that all is gift from God.

Eloi Le Clerc, a French Franciscan scholar, wrote, “In the fullest meaning of the word, Clare was truly Francis’ ‘sister light,’ not only by her advice and prayers, but also by the transparent beauty of her life and her whole being. When everything seemed to be crashing down around Francis, she was the living example of fidelity to his primitive ideal, to pure Gospel simplicity. She lived in God’s time, like the stars, ‘clear, lovely and beautiful.’ Without many words, she made Francis understand that peace of heart was the highest form of poverty, the peace that comes from total surrender of self to God.”

Clare became known throughout Italy as a woman of profound wisdom. Long before she was formally canonized, she had already become a saint in the hearts of the people of Italy and Europe.

Sr. Liliane Alam, a Franciscan Missionary of Mary, was born in Lebanon and was missioned to the U.S. in 1995. After 17 years of teaching economics and statistics at St. Joseph University in Beirut, Sr. Liliane received her master’s degree in spirituality of theology from Milltown Park College in Dublin, Ireland. She has ministered in leadership and formation in the Middle East and has also served in France, Morocco, Rome, Egypt and, in the U.S., New Mexico, El Paso, Texas, and New York City. Sr. Liliane speaks five languages.



Post-Novitiate: Continuing the Journey

By Fr. Francis Di Spigno, OFM

As we have read in previous issues of this vocation newsletter, the postulant year introduces the man aspiring to the Franciscan way of life to the various dimensions of our common life. This initial year helps the discernment process of each candidate as he is asked to integrate the different aspects of human formation with the life of our Franciscan community of Holy Name Province.

Upon successful completion of the postulancy, the discernment process continues in the novitiate when the candidate is officially received into the Province and Order of Friars Minor. This novitiate year allows for an in-depth exploration of our rich Franciscan history and spirituality.

The novitiate year ends with the profession of vows for a period of one year. At that point, the newly-professed friar is welcomed into the post-novitiate. This phase of the formation program integrates the already-emphasized human development and Franciscan spirituality with the goal of preparing the friar for ministry in the Church.

The vows of poverty, chastity and obedience taken at the end of the novitiate year are renewed on an annual cycle for, typically, the next four years. These vows, taken for a period of one year, are referred to as “simple” vows. The years of simple vows are used to continue the process of discernment toward the ultimate goal of the profession of “solemn” vows, meaning for the period of one’s lifetime, to the Franciscan way of life.

Generally speaking, the first two years of a simply-professed friar’s life are spent at Holy Name College, our formation house in Silver Spring, Md. Here, the friar is given the opportunity to study theology in preparation for his expected future ministry. If he feels called to serve the Church as an ordained minister, the friar is enrolled in a master of divinity program at nearby



Washington Theological Union. Those not seeking ordination have the opportunity to expand their already-acquired academic background or venture into a new academic field if complimentary to the needs and mission of the Province.

Along with academic preparation, the friar in simple vows participates in monthly sessions discussing different Franciscan themes and topics constitutive to our life as Friars Minor. The active prayer life of the Holy Name College community is complemented with a Day of Recollection in Advent and Lent, as well as a week-long retreat at the end of the academic year.

Holy Name College consists of a fraternity of simply- and solemnly-professed friars of Holy Name Province as well as friars from throughout the world. This blending of different cultures, ages, and experiences helps foster our fraternity and encourages our common and individual dreams, ministry and Franciscan identity.



Fr. Francis Di Spigno, OFM, originally from New York, joined the Franciscans in 1989 and was ordained to the priesthood in 1996. He has ministered as associate pastor at St. Francis of Assisi Parish on Long Beach Island, N.J., and vocation director for Holy Name Province. Currently director of post-novitiate formation and guardian of Holy Name College. Fr. Francis has served on the Provincial Council since 2005.

My Post-Novitiate Experience

“The focus of post-novitiate formation is on the balance between fraternity, studies and ministry. The key to our Province has always been hospitality, and — here at Holy Name College — it has become a benchmark of who we are as a community. The door is always open, and the motto of ‘peace and all good’ is shared and lived to its fullest.”

— Br. Frank Critch, OFM, is completing his third year of graduate studies at Washington Theological Union in Washington, D.C. He will serve at St. Mary’s Church in Pompton Lakes, N.J., this summer.



“When one is immersed in a cauldron of cultures, the post-novitiate experience becomes a divinely delicious banquet of savoring the stories, spices and spiritualities of friars from all over the world. Because I like to think of myself as someone obsessively interested in all things culinary, this is truly foodie heaven — the only place where kimchi meets curry, codfish and cuy!”

— Br. Dwayne Fernandes, OFM, is working toward a graduate degree in spiritual direction at Washington Theological Union. He will begin his internship year at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Raleigh, N.C., this fall.



Upcoming Event

Do you feel called to be a Franciscan?

A Day with the Friars

Come and see what life is like as a Franciscan friar

When: Summer 2010
Where: St. Francis Friary
 New York City

If you are interested in Franciscan life, join us for a day of hospitality, prayer, discernment and fraternity. Share a meal, celebrate the Eucharist and learn about the various ministries and programs available through St. Francis of Assisi Church. You'll also have an opportunity to visit one of our downtown ministry sites.



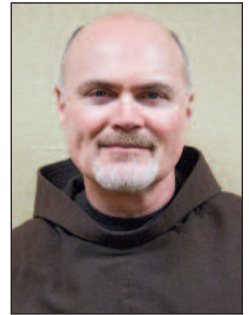
More information about this event will become available in the next few weeks. To register, contact the Franciscan Vocation Ministry at 1-800-677-7788 or vocation@hnp.org.

Ask the Vocation Director

Q What is a typical day in the life of a friar?



There are as many different days as there are friars! In short, there is really no "typical day," which makes our life all the more



Fr. Brian Smail, OFM

interesting and challenging.

Friar life does have some common threads: Friars pray the Liturgy of the Hours together as a community in the mornings and evenings. Friars are also committed to community living, which means not only praying together but sharing time together as a fraternity with common meals, recreation, etc.

However, a "typical day" is usually different for each friar. It really depends on the ministry in which a friar is engaged. For example, following morning prayers and breakfast together, friars in a community may go off in different directions to teach, do parish work, work in a food pantry or soup kitchen, perform administrative duties, study, etc. Part of the richness of our friar life is our sharing experiences of ministry together.

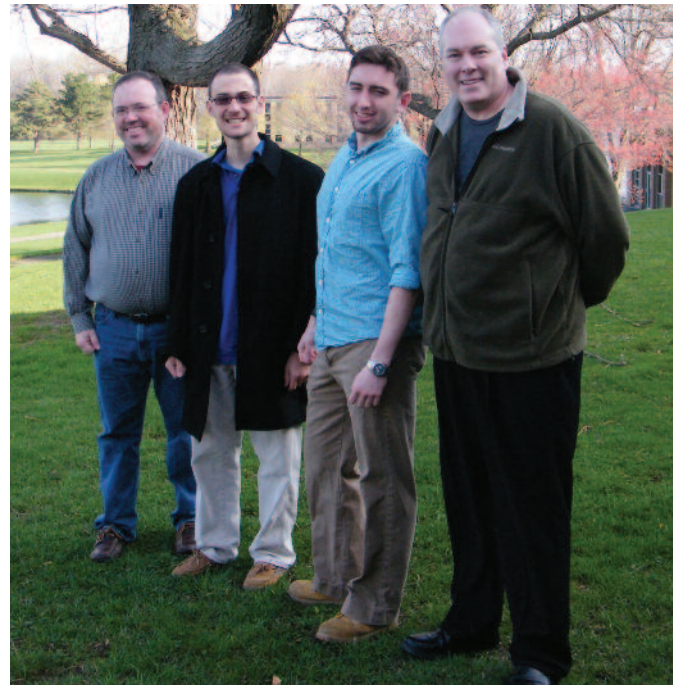
SBU Students Discern Their Call

Several students of St. Bonaventure University took time out of their studies to attend an April retreat at beautiful Christ the King Seminary near Buffalo, N.Y. Under the direction of retreat organizers Br. Basil Valente, OFM, and Fr. David Blake, OFM, both of SBU, students Patrick Alfonso, Michael Gargano and Edmund Lazzari participated in a variety of activities, including reflection and group discussion, to discern God's call for their lives. Other friars participating in the retreat included Br. Timothy Dauenhauer, OFM, Fr. Michael Putich, OFM, and Br. Maurice Swartout, OFM, of St. Patrick Friary in Buffalo, which the students also visited.

Michael, class of 2011, said the retreat was helpful on several levels. "In the gospel from the Mass that we celebrated, Jesus asked his disciples to 'Come and follow me.' The retreat showed me that we are part of this greater reality. When faced with my vocational struggles, I always return to that reading and ask: 'How am I to follow you, Jesus?' Although I am not sure what the exact response is yet, it helped to be with others who are thinking and praying about the same questions."

Another benefit of the retreat was the experience of fraternity. Michael said, "Spending time with other students in a Franciscan discernment retreat helped me immensely. I felt like I was a part of the Franciscan brotherhood. It was great to hear seasoned friars share their vocation stories. It made me realize that we are all on the same path, but with different journeys intersecting everywhere."

The retreat was one of several activities of a vocation group led by Br. Basil and Fr. David. During the school year, the students join the friars one Friday a month for evening prayer and dinner, followed by a presentation and discussion. Students also attend an annual fall retreat at Mt. Irenaeus in nearby West Clarksville, N.Y. Through participation in the group, students receive support in discerning their vocation and gain a better understanding of Franciscan life and ministry.



Pictured from left to right, Fr. David, Michael, Patrick and Br. Basil on the grounds of Christ the King Seminary.



Be A Franciscan is published quarterly by the Franciscan Vocation Ministry of Holy Name Province in conjunction with the Province's Communications Office.

Comments are welcome.



Franciscan Vocation Ministry HOLY NAME PROVINCE

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The **Franciscan Vocation Ministry** is called to promote vocations to the Franciscan way of life and ministries of **Holy Name Province**. We offer:

- Information on our Order, the admissions process and the initial formation program
- Consultation and assistance with discernment to religious life
- Come and See weekends and discernment retreats
- This newsletter highlighting vocation activities

For further information please contact:

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BeAFranciscan.org
BeAFranciscan.WordPress.com
Facebook.com/BeAFranciscan

Save the Date

We welcome you to join us for the following vocation events and joyous celebrations of our friar life.

June 24: **Jubilees of Profession Celebration**
St. Francis of Assisi Church, New York City
A commemoration of our brother friars who are observing 25 and 50 years as professed Franciscans

Summer: **A Day with the Friars**
St. Francis Friary, New York City

Aug. 21: **Solemn Profession of Vows**
St. Francis of Assisi Church, New York City
A joyful liturgical celebration of our brothers making their final commitment to our Franciscan fraternity

We hope you like our new name and look!

This publication replaces the former newsletter of the Vocation Ministry, *Insight & Wisdom*. For electronic versions of this newsletter and archives of *Insight & Wisdom*, visit us on the Web at BeAFranciscan.org.