



Insight & Wisdom

Franciscan Vocation Ministry

"O Most High, Glorious God, enlighten the darkness of my heart and give me a right faith, a certain hope and a perfect love, insight and wisdom, O Lord, that I may carry out your holy and true command." St. Francis of Assisi, Prayer before the Cross



The novices from Holy Name Province and Christ the King Province. Back row (from left to right) Br. Frank Critch, OFM; Br. Joe Macaluso, OFM; and Br. Tyler Piccini, OFM. Front row (from left to right) Br. Antonio Cornier, OFM; and Br. Mario Gómez, OFM.

"Christianity must not be relegated to the world of myth and emotion, but respected for its claim to shed light on the truth about man, to be able to transform men and women spiritually, and thus to enable them to carry out their vocation in history."

- Benedict XVI

Postulants' Year Provides Spiritual Growth

Capping off a period of discernment, three men are continuing their Franciscan "journey" after being received into the novitiate of the Holy Name Province on June 13 at St. Paul's Church in Wilmington, Del., by Fr. Dominic Monti, OFM, provincial vicar.

The ceremony, sometimes called "investiture" for those novices receiving the holy habit of the Order of Friars Minor, was attended by many friars from Wilmington as well as Holy Cross parish in the Bronx, N.Y., where two of the new novices had spent the last year as postulants.

It was an important ceremony for the men as they enter another phase of their initial formation as Franciscan friars. As novices, the men will seek to deepen their relationship with God through their studies and their activities.

They will learn more about the Rule of Life of the Friars Minor and the history and traditions of the Franciscan order.

The new novices, who come from a variety of backgrounds, have spent time examining their life goals. Their diverse experiences have strengthened their desire to dedicate their lives to God.

Two of the new novices, Br. Antonio Cornier, OFM, and Br. Mario Gómez, OFM, spent the last year as postulants at Holy Cross Friary in the Bronx, N.Y. During this time, they participated in various aspects of the Franciscan communal life and work. They agree that the year was a positive one, an experience filled with prayer, sharing, and growth.

(Continued on page 2)



The postulants served in diverse ministries in New York City. Mario Gómez prepared meals at one of the “hotels;” Antonio Cornier ministered at St. Vincent’s Hospital; and Peter Viccione ministered at the CREATE Young Adult Center (Peter is shown here at the parish mission in Potsdam, N.Y.).

(Continued from page 1)

The postulancy is best described as a year of transition, according to Fr. Ronald Pecci, OFM, director of the pre-novitiate program for Holy Name Province. Fr. Ron explains that “the transition is from ‘secular’ life to religious life in the Roman Catholic Church and, in particular, in the Franciscan order.”

The postulancy program directors modify the ministry sites in which they place the postulants from year to year depending on the talents, needs and desires of the postulants, Fr. Ron says.

Antonio, a physician from south Florida, ministered as a postulant at St. Vincent’s Hospital in Manhattan where he taught clinical pediatrics to medical students and also worked in the pastoral care department.

He explains that the past year helped nurture his vocation and helped with his discernment. It also helped him slow down. “I had been working in a busy emergency department for the previous 10 years, and slowing down was an important element in beginning a more contemplative attitude,” he says.

Mario, who is originally from Lima, Peru, ministered at the St. Francis Residences in Manhattan. The “hotels,” as they are commonly known, are residences for the mentally ill homeless that are sponsored by Holy Name Province. As part of his ministry, Mario aided in the social activities of the residents, accompanied them to appointments, and helped them in the challenges of daily living with chores such as housekeeping and laundry. The “hotels” were founded by Holy Name Province friars in the early 1980s to meet the needs of the homeless.

According to Mario, he found the postulant year to be one

filled with prayer and growth. “Growth is a complex process,” Mario explains. “It starts off with knowledge. My postulancy year represented the perfect opportunity in time and space to get to know myself better, and, therefore, to start growing.”

“I have been able to deepen the knowledge of who I really am - to know my strengths, weaknesses - as well as to deepen the discernment of my religious vocation: my calling to be a true Christian man and, become a Franciscan friar.”

Mario had been part of Holy Name Province’s postulancy program a year earlier and had moved into the novitiate last summer; however, after consulting with the director of novices, Mario requested to spend a second year as a postulant to further discern his vocation.

“My second year as a postulant was great,” Mario says. “As the old saying goes, if it’s nice, do it twice.”

“During the year, I had the opportunity to deepen my prayer, and my ministerial and community life,” he says. “I was able to share in and with a new group of classmates and friends, and to get to know better my community in the Bronx and many of the several communities of friars in the Province.”

To Mario, the growth process, though personal, is not private. It has a communal aspect, he says.

“I not only deepened my knowledge of my own self but I also deepened the knowledge of who I am in the context of the community of friars I lived with. This taught me what my gifts are and who I am in community.”

Another postulant, Peter Viccione, who worked at the CREATE Young Adult Center, an agency in Harlem founded by the Franciscan friars, said that the year's "focus on ministry, community and prayer brought forth a strong foundation and a healthy understanding of what it means to live in the likeness of St. Francis."

Peter's work involved helping young, homeless men aged 18 to 25 to earn their GEDs (General Education Diploma), write resumes, and find jobs and permanent housing. Though Peter decided not to continue with the novitiate program, he said that he found the postulant program to be "excellent."

*"... a calling that was not coming from us,
but from God."*

- Br. Mario Gómez, OFM

"This was an experience that will not be forgotten," Peter says. "The year helped me to begin to discover who I am as a man and as a Christian. Though I will not be continuing on to the novitiate this year, I know I have received a strong basis of continued discernment that will assist me throughout life. I hope to bring what I learned to whatever endeavors the Lord leads me to. And, I hope to strengthen my understanding of what it means to have a Franciscan heart."

According to Fr. Ron, the postulant process is a gradual and experiential one.

"We slowly introduce the postulants to our patterns and rhythms," he explains. "They live with us and live the life of the friars while we explain our history, customs and why we do the things we do. They also adapt to ministry as a more or less 'full-time' endeavor. Most are experienced volunteers but now the ministry is the major component of what they do each day."

Making the transition from secular life to religious life is a challenge, Antonio adds, "but Holy Name Province is aware of this and designs the year not just for us to get used to a different routine but for us to grow personally and as future friars."

The year also was comprised of seminars for the postulants. Antonio said "we learned much this year in terms of Franciscan history, theology, and Franciscan charism."

The program included some preaching by the postulants, an activity which both Antonio and Mario said they found valuable.

"I was happily surprised when we were given the opportunity to preach this year," Antonio says. "We did this not only for our small community but also for a parish mission. It brought home the fact that friars were preachers from the earliest days of the Order."

Mario added that though he knew the Franciscan order was known for its preachers, "I never pictured myself preaching in the first year of formation."

The formation team encouraged the postulants to give a reflection once a week during their Wednesday Mass and to preach during a Lenten parish mission in Potsdam, N.Y.

Mario says his postulant year was a grace-filled one.

"To become a Franciscan friar is not one's decision alone," he said. "My classmates and I decided to experience this way of life because of a calling that was not coming from us, but from God. Vocation is a grace, a gift from God. And, as a gift, it grows and is strengthened by graces."

Peter's advice to men who may be considering joining the Franciscans is to give it a try.

"The opportunities offered to you as a postulant can be endless," he says. "There are many things that can hinder

(Continued on page 5)



Antonio Cornier and Mario Gómez prepare to be vested with the Franciscan habit.

Come and See

If you are interested in finding out more about the Franciscan way of life, then consider coming to one of our Hospitality Weekends or Discernment Weekend Retreats. They offer the opportunity for you to join one of our Franciscan communities for a few days of hospitality, prayer, discernment, and fraternity. You will get a chance to see how we live and where we minister, as well as to pray with us. During the weekend there will be time for you to meet personally with the Vocation Director and with other friars about our Franciscan life.

If you believe God might be calling you to be a Franciscan friar and you are interested in attending one of these vocation weekends, check out the Franciscan Vocation Ministry on the web at www.vocation.org or call us at 1-800-677-7788.

2007-2008 Vocation Weekends

September 7-9, 2007

Hospitality Weekend
St. Francis Friary
Beach Haven, NJ

October 19-21, 2007

Discernment Retreat
Holy Peace Friary at Mt. Irenaeus
West Clarksville, NY

November 16-18, 2007

Hospitality Weekend
Siena College Friary
Loudonville, NY

December 7-9, 2007

Hospitality Weekend
St. Anthony's Shrine
Boston, MA

February 8-10, 2008

Hospitality Weekend
Holy Name College
Silver Spring, MD

March 20-23, 2008

Holy Triduum & Easter with the Franciscan Friars
Holy Name College
Silver Spring, MD

April 25-27, 2008

Discernment Retreat
Holy Peace Friary at Mt. Irenaeus
West Clarksville, NY

Mark your Calendar.
Save these Dates!



(Continued from page 3)

you from taking a step forward but if you don't try, you may always wonder whether you should have taken the chance."

Mario adds that the postulancy year "is an invitation to stop, sit still, reflect, question, and find answers."

Joining Antonio and Mario in the Holy Name Province's novitiate are Br. Joseph Macaluso, OFM, who recently rejoined Holy Name Province's initial formation program and was received into the novitiate with Antonio and Mario, and two novices from the Christ the King Province in western Canada: Br. Francis "Frank" Critch, OFM, and Br. Tyler Piccini, OFM.

"The novitiate represents an invitation to deepen the growth taking place within me," Mario says. "I hope to integrate the growth of my spiritual life and the call to serve into the Franciscan spirituality. I'd like to find myself touched by the handiwork of God in my own life, as St.

Francis did, and to perhaps be able to draw others into a greater appreciation of a way of life that really fulfills."

Antonio hopes that his upcoming novitiate year will be "a year of genuine growth as we focus on the Gospel and our response as followers of St. Francis."

These five men, from varied backgrounds but with a similar calling, spent the first weeks of their novitiate on a retreat at Mt. Irenaeus Franciscan Mountain Retreat in West Clarksville, N.Y., and at a study program on the campus of St. Bonaventure University in Allegany, N.Y. After they complete their summer program, the new novices, along with Fr. Thomas Gallagher, OFM, novice director, and Fr. Flavian Walsh, OFM, assistant novice director, will head back home to complete their novitiate at St. Paul's Friary in Wilmington.



Our Newly-Ordained Friar Priests



Two friars of Holy Name Province were ordained this spring at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Raleigh, N.C., before a congregation of many friends, relatives, and parishioners. In the above photo, the new priests, Rev. George Corrigan, OFM, bottom left; and Rev. Emerson Rodriguez Delgado, OFM, top right; join the Very Rev. John O'Connor, OFM, provincial minister; Most Rev. Michael Burbidge, Bishop of Raleigh, center; and retired Raleigh bishop, Most Rev. F. Joseph Gossman.

Pax et
Bonum

Fr. Greg Jakubowicz, OFM
Vocation Director
135 West 31st Street
New York, NY 10001

(212) 924-1451
(800) 677-7788

vocation@hnp.org
www.vocation.org

