

Pursuing Happiness



Friar Paul Schloemer (far left) with friars in formation and vocation work

The Declaration of Independence of the United States holds as “self-evident” that we all have the right to the “pursuit of happiness.” And sometimes we indeed have to get off our backsides and pursue it! The accepting of our vocation (i.e. God’s plan for us) is, ultimately, the only way we will ever be happy in this world. Some of us are lucky and get clear signs about our vocations, others need to work a little harder to hear the will of God.

When I finally, after twenty-eight years, heard my call and decided I wanted to become a priest, I naturally called my parents to tell them. My father responded, “Well, I kinda always figured.” This surprised me, because I never recalled my father ever discussing this

topic with me (although I may have blocked it out.). But my dad’s precognition was confirmed by my Friar connection of choice, Fr. John Weber, when he related the following story to me. Apparently he was over at our house for dinner, and afterward was talking to my dad on the back porch while we kids were playing around in the yard. At the time, Fr. John was actively trying to recruit my younger brother Mark into the Franciscans (Mark is currently happily married with 7 children.). Fr. John was telling my dad what a great priest Mark would make to which my father replied, “Mark will never be a priest, Paul’s the guy.”

As I live out my current ministry as vocation director and am overwhelmed at the task of identifying and encouraging young(ish) men to also follow in the footsteps of St. Francis, I think of this story. Because sometimes other people know us better than we know ourselves, and a word of affirmation can make a world of difference. In this issue of *Vocation Views* you will read the stories of several of these men that have taken that word to heart and pursued their calling to the service of the Lord.

If someone has told you that you might make a good priest or religious, take that as a good sign. Even if, in the end, God is *not* calling you to religious life, it still should be a confirmation that religious life is an option for you. None of us are worthy, and we all have insecurities, so listen to the third party that says you’ve got something special, and at least look into talking to a Friar. You can do so right through our website www.franciscans.org.

And if, like me, your Dad (Mom, neighbor, whatever) never mentioned a vocation to you that surely doesn’t mean you don’t have one. Unfortunately, we humans are often too shy in talking about faith matters. Mike Hayes, the co-founder of BustedHalo.com and author of “Googling God” writes, “...many opportunities to invite young adults to consider religious life go untapped because we fear alienating (them) from our pews.” So if you’ve been feeling that tug of the Lord on your heart, why don’t you turn the tables and ask someone you trust what they think? If they really care for your happiness, they’ll be honest.

And in all things, may God bless you! **Friar Paul Schloemer, OFM Conv.**



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Inside this Issue:

Pursuing Happiness 1

Solemn Professions Across the USA 2

Life on a Mission 2

2008 OFM Conv. Candidates 3

Vocation for Life 3

Contact a Vocation Director 4



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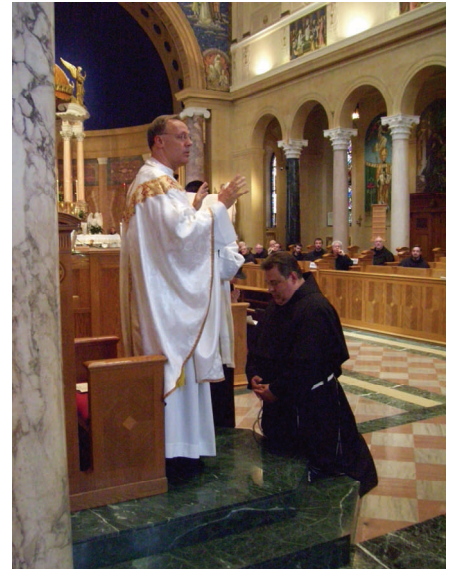
Solemn Professions Across the USA



Friar John Bamman (center)

The Conventual Franciscans have had a busy 2008, celebrating 6 Professions of Solemn Vows all across the country. A Solemn Profession is a ceremony in which a Friar recites the Rule and Life of the Friars Minor into the hands of his Minister Provincial, thus sealing his life-long commitment to the Conventual Franciscans.

On August 8, Friar John Bamman professed into the hands of Friar Jim Kent at the Our Lady of Consolation Shrine in Carey, Ohio. The shrine plays a very special role in Friar John's life. It was there that he first met the Conventual Franciscan Friars while on a high school retreat. Their way of life and devotion to God piqued his interest and he sought them out to learn more. Excited by what he learned, John began his discernment process, which took a number of years and concluded with his profession.



Friar Tom Hercegovics

The very same day that Friar John Bamman was professing in Ohio, Friar Tom Hercegovics was having his Profession of Solemn Vows at Marytown (The National Shrine of St. Maximilian Kolbe) in Libertyville, Illinois. Friar Tom is actually originally from Joliet, Illinois.

A week after Friar John's and Friar Tom's professions, Friars Matt Foley and Nick Spano professed their Solemn Vows at the Church of St. Anthony in Chicopee, Massachusetts. Both men are currently studying at the Washington Theological Union (WTU). Friar Matt Foley was also featured in the previous edition of *Vocation Views* for his popular blog on www.franciscans.org. A native of Quincy, Massachusetts, he celebrated his profession with his family, friends, and fellow Friars. His graduate studies at the WTU focus on theology.

Friar Nick Spano originally hails from Mechanicville, New York. The idea of religious vocation first came to Friar Nick in the course of his middle and high school career at La Salle Institute in Troy, New York. The Friars whom he met at La Salle and their Franciscan way of life inspired Friar Nick to live life as a follower of St. Francis himself. Friar Nick hopes to graduate from the WTU with a Master of Divinity degree in May 2009. He is also particularly fond of hospital ministry to which he hopes to return in the future.

The west coast of the United States celebrated the last two Professions of Solemn Vows this year. Both of these took place on October 4 at the St. Francis Korean Catholic Center in Torrance, California. Torrance is located in Los Angeles County. The two men professing were Friar Joseph Kim and Friar James Phan. The location where they professed is staffed by Conventual Franciscan Friars from Korea.

Life on a Mission



Friar Tony Droll and children from the St. Francis Community School

Mission life— the need to wander, spread the Word of God, and help the disadvantaged —started with St. Francis and remains with the Friars unto this very day. Take Friar Tony Droll. As a student at a seminary high school in the United States, he already wanted to go on a mission. The feeling stayed with him during his novitiate and later when he became a Friar.

In the 1960s, Friar Tony was working at a dairy farm in Minnesota. His mind, however, continued to focus on missionary work in Africa. When milk prices dropped and the dairy farm closed, Friar Tony's greatest wish finally became reality. It was 1964 and he was moving to Zambia. Forty-four years later, he is still there.

Missions can involve any type of activity. Friar Tony's mission in Zambia includes helping to run a banana plantation for the financial benefit of the Zambian people. Pastoral care for the local population is naturally also a major part of any missionary's life. At times, it incurs violence from authorities. Many governments consider devotion to God a threat. Friars in the missions, alas, do often put their lives on the line. And if religious or political oppression is not an issue, a severe climate or disease often are.

Visit our **Upcoming Events page**
 at <http://www.franciscans.org/events.cfm>.



For more on our Postulants visit
www.franciscans.org/2008Postulants.cfm.

2008 OFM Conv. Postulants



Stephen Gionta is from Lansdowne, PA, a suburb of Philadelphia. He is one of five children and attended both a Catholic grade school and high school. Steve received a BA degree in Communication from the University of Scranton.



Jeff O'Malley is from Island Lake, Illinois a small town a half an hour from the friars' shrine of Marytown. Although he was baptized Catholic Jeff had a conversion in his junior year of high school. This conversion prompted him to look into religious life in hopes of being ordained a priest one day.



Christopher Dudek was born and raised in Chicopee, MA where he and his family are members at our Conventual Franciscan parish of the Basilica of St. Stanislaus, Bishop and Martyr.



Rory Doyle is from County Wexford, Ireland. Although brought up a Catholic, he really only started taking his faith seriously after a personal conversion at age twenty-two. He was just starting higher studies in Belfast when he began attending different prayer groups.



Ian Bremar was born in Ohio, but has lived in Portland, TX since age 5 and calls that home. He has been thinking about a vocation since the 2nd grade.



John Clote is a native of St. Louis, Missouri. He has spent most of his adult life as a broadcast journalist and a filmmaker. After several years as a producer and writer at NBC News he began working in Catholic media, producing more than a dozen films and documentaries.



Paul Langevin grew up in Maumee, OH. When he graduated from high school seminary he pursued a degree in religious studies where he first encountered a Conventual Franciscan who served as his spiritual director and was a source of significant influence in his life.



David Gaines grew up in Spokane, Washington. David came to meet the Franciscans through the chaplain assigned to the local Air Force base, Fr. Kerry Abbott. Fr. Kerry encouraged and supported David's vocation throughout his years in high school and college.



Toby Longcore comes to Saint Joseph of Cupertino Province from Reno NV, where for many years he belonged to the cathedral parish administered by the Friars.



Sean Caruana is from San Diego CA and made contact with the Order through Br Chris Saindon OFM Conv., the vocation director of the California Province.



Arturo Saclolo, Jr. was born in Baltimore, Maryland. However, because of his father's Naval career, the family traveled a great deal.

Vocation for Life



When Friar Basil Heiser was born, Theodore Roosevelt was President and the USSR did not exist yet. The world was indeed a different place back on January 4, 1909, the day that Herman Francis Heiser entered the world in Terre Haute, IN. Possessed by the spirit to serve God, Herman joined Indiana's Mount St. Francis Seminary in 1921 and four years later became a Conventual Franciscan Friar, taking on the name Basil. A professor of theology and a former Minister General, Friar Basil's need to live as a Franciscan is as strong today as it was when he first entered the Order. The reason for this is his need to serve others. Friar Basil makes use of God's gift of service day after day.

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