



Franciscan Vocations

Saint John the Baptist Province

February 2014

Three make the *Come and See* weekend in January 2014



Compared to the rest of the month, the weekend of January 3-5 was a very pleasant weekend weather wise when (l to r) **Carlo Shivel**, **John Scafidi**, and **Patrick Kuhl** joined the Franciscan community at St. Anthony Friary in Cincinnati for a *Come and See* weekend. The three young men had come

to experience briefly our Franciscan way of life and to see if maybe this is the life to which the Lord is calling them to serve.

Carlo Shivel (18) grew up in London, KY and is presently a student at Morehead State University in Moorhead, KY. John Scafidi (35) is from Pensacola, FL and spent time in the military before looking into a religious vocation. Patrick Kuhl (19) was born and raised in Hamilton, OH where he presently attends the Hamilton branch of Miami University of Ohio.

Participation in such a weekend does not oblige these men to join the Franciscans, but it is an important step in their discernment. The opportunity to experience the life style even in very small ways often helps the prospectives discern whether or not this life is a "good fit." Do they feel that it fits them and their dreams? And does the community believe that they would fit in well? These are simple, yet profound questions that the weekend helps to answer.

So that the participants have a chance to meet and talk with some of our younger men in Initial Formation, Brothers William Estrellanes, O.F.M. and Michael Charon, O.F.M. assisted Vocation Directors Fr. Don Miller, O.F.M. and Bro. Bob Lucero, O.F.M. for the weekend along with Postulants Jeremiah Sauber and Nick Thorvaldsen and Postulant Directors Frs. Mark Soehner, O.F.M. and Frank Geers, O.F.M.

Our next *Come and See* weekend is March 21-23, 2014. While there is another weekend scheduled for May 9-11, the March weekend is the last one for anyone who plans to seek entry into the 2014 Postulancy class. We encourage any young man who is thinking about joining us this year to contact the Vocation Office soon.

Note from Fr. Don



The January *Come and See* weekend ended on Sunday, January 5, 2014. I celebrated the Eucharist at St. Anthony Friary, said goodbye to the participants of the week-

end and went home expecting to spend the afternoon relaxing and watching some NFL football.

As I was exiting the garage, however, my foot caught on a step and I fell on the sidewalk coming down hard on my knees. As I tried to get up I soon realized that I could not move my right leg. It was just too painful. Somehow, I managed to role into a sitting position, but was very aware that there was no way I was going to get up. Options of what to do ran quickly through my thoughts.

Just then a neighbor exited the house next door and I called asking for help. He came over quickly and lifted me up and helped me into the house where he proceeded to call "911." I was soon in the back of an ambulance being transported to Good Samaritan Hospital where they took x-rays and assured me that nothing was broken. They recommended I contact an orthopedic specialist the next day.

On January 14th I had surgery to repair a partially torn quadriceps tendon. For a full month I maneuvered in a wheelchair unable to put any weight on my right leg. As I write this column I am undergoing physical therapy and am not yet back to work.

What a wakeup call! I truly believe that the Lord has used this accident to my spiritual and physical benefit. I had been pushing myself very hard and had not been taken sufficient time for prayer and reflection. I had work to do!

Well, there is still work to do as young men continue to discern a vocation to our way of life. But it doesn't depend totally on me. It's God's work; not mine.

While I do not consider the accident something I would ever want to repeat, it has proven to be a gift giving me time to slowdown, refocus, and reevaluate my life. For that I am very thankful.

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Facebook page: [Franciscan Vocations; St. John the Baptist Province](https://www.facebook.com/franciscanvocations)

Franciscans Offer an Alternative to Christmas Shoppers

This past Advent the Friars and Postulants of Saint John the Baptist Province set up an alternative experience for shoppers at a mall on the north side of Cincinnati. When the Friars approached the officials at the mall with the idea of setting up a store-front presence a couple of vacant stores were recommended. As Thanksgiving Day drew near, a vacated shoe store just outside Macy's department store became the chosen site.

Two artistic and creative brothers went to work turning the space into a reception area where busy shoppers could step out of the hustle and bustle of Christmas shopping and find a little peace and tranquility—and possibly talk with some men in funny looking brown robes. The sales counter from the old shoe store became a place where visitors could get a donated Christmas cookie or two along with some hot chocolate or coffee—often served by a Friar. The walls were decorated with posters of the Friars' ministries in the Cincinnati area. These highlighted local parishes, Roger Bacon High School, Friars Club, etc with photos and printed materials describing the works that the Friars do at each location. A fairly good sized crèche graced one front window and an Advent wreath donned the other. Throughout the room easy chairs and a couple of tables gave the visitors a place to sit and chat or just relax in quiet.

Working in three-hour shifts, the Friars and the Postulants went two-by-two to the mall to just be a presence to shoppers. The goal was not to push religion or to make converts but to offer an alternative to the secularized atmosphere of the Christmas Season. The "store" was open from Brown Friday (the Franciscans named the day after Thanksgiving "Brown Friday" in reference to the color of their habits) through December 24th evenings and weekends.



Fr. Murray, O.F.M. holds a platter of cookies as he converses with Fr. Mark, O.F.M.

A good number of people stopped by. Some just out of curiosity, some to chat with a Friar or possibly celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation or to get an object blessed, some to ask questions (like what's the relationship between Santa Clause and St. Nicholas?), some to thank the Friars for the work that they did in the past and are still doing, some to tell of their experiences with the Friars over the years, and some to see what the place was all about after reading about it in the local and national papers or hearing about it on radio and television. People of varying faiths and some unchurched folks dropped in or walked by giving the place and the Friars an inquisitive eye. Many stopped to thank the Friars for being there and asked that they repeat the experience next year. Something that the Friars definitely want to do.

"The desire for God is written in the human heart, because man is created by God and for God; and God never ceases to draw man to himself. Only in God will he find the truth and happiness he never stops searching for." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, #27)

Friars' Plan a Chapter at St. Meinrad Archabbey

From May 19th through May 23rd the members of St. John the Baptist Province will gather at St. Meinrad Archabbey, St. Meinrad, IN for a Provincial Chapter.

A Chapter is an official meeting of the Friars at which the life of the community is discussed, legislation is passed, and the leadership team is elected. Such gatherings are held regularly for the entire Order, for each individual Province, and in each Friary. The Provincial Chapter is held every third year and all members of the province are welcome to participate.

This year the province will elect an entirely new leadership team. While many members of the present Council are eligible for re-election, all positions need to be filled. The newly elected Council will then meet to make assignments for the coming year.

In the governmental structure of the Order, Chapters are the highest authority making decisions for the good of the community. The Provincial Minister and his Council are the executive authority of the community that guide the day-to-day life of the friars in light of the Chapter discussions and decisions.

St. John the Baptist Province also sets aside one afternoon and evening to celebrate the Jubilees for those friars with major anniversaries.

Come and See Dates for early 2014

There will be two more **Come and See** weekends in early 2014. The dates are:

March 21-23, 2014

May 9-11, 2014

Anyone hoping to join the 2014 Postulancy Class should make arrangements to participate in the March weekend. Attendance at a weekend is required for admission to the community.

Please contact the Vocation Office at 513-542-1082 or 800-827-1082 for details.