



# Franciscan Vocations

## Saint John the Baptist Province

March 2011

### Three Admitted to Postulancy



Brandon Elliott, Jeffrey Schmitz and Matthew O'Hearn

On January 29, 2011, the Admissions Board of the Province of Saint John the Baptist met at Saint Anthony Friary in Cincinnati, OH and approved the request for admittance for the first three members of the Postulancy Class of 2011. They are: **Brandon Elliott**, 24, of Elwood, IN. Brandon was born in Circleville, OH but was reared in Indiana. He is a certified EMT and has held a number of jobs

while studying at Ivy Tech Community College, Peru State College, and Excelsior College. He lives with his parents and has a married sister and brother. He is active in his local parish where he has helped with the Religious Education of children.

**Jeffrey Schmitz**, 40, is presently from Silver Spring, MD, where he teaches in the Public School System. Jeff was born and reared in Lafayette, IN and has one younger sister. Jeff earned a BS in Civil Engineering from Purdue University and a MEd from the University of Texas at Austin. He has worked with the Peace Corps in Benin, Africa and as an engineer for the State Department. He has traveled extensively and picked up a working knowledge of French and Spanish.

**Matthew O'Hearn**, 36, of Cambridge, NY. Matthew is the youngest of five children, having an older brother and three sisters. He earned a BA in Philosophy from Wadhams Hall Seminary College and has taken classes in Theology from Christ the King Seminary. Having looked first at the Capuchin Franciscans, Matthew sought out the OFMs in 2009. Matthew has worked as a nurse's aide.

Three more meetings of the Admissions Board are scheduled to hopefully admit the seven remaining applicants for this year, which will bless us with the largest Postulancy class for our Province in recent history. God is blessing us!

### Workshop on Male Spirituality/ Sexuality

January 17-21, Fr. Don offered his annual workshop on Male Spirituality/Sexuality to the Postulants of five Franciscan Provinces. Hosted by Sacred Heart Province, the workshop covers male developmental stages and sexual integration within the context of Franciscan spirituality. The group met at the former motherhouse of the Sisters of Saint Joseph, who proved to be wonderful hostesses for the gathering. This was the first time that so many provinces participated.

With the upcoming interprovincial novitiate about to begin in August 2011, the provincial directors felt it best that the Postulants from all of the provinces receive similar input. It also gave the Postulants a chance to get to know one another.

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### Note from Fr. Don



The holy and joyful season of **Lent** begins this month, March 9 to be exact. I repeat, Lent is a holy and joyful season. What's so joyful about it? Isn't it a time to do penance? Can penance be joyful? In one very significant sense, yes. How?

So often we think of penance as suffering. And we think of the penance of Lent as "giving something up" I believe that Saint Francis offers us another way of looking at the role of penance in our life.

Francis spoke of a "life of penance." He didn't mean a life of suffering; he meant a life of opening himself up to God. The "penance" part was saying "no" to one's own self and saying "yes" to God.

So the penance of Lent need not be giving something up such as candy, cigarettes, foul language, etc. It could be a matter of looking into our lives, our hearts and asking: "What can I do to become more like Jesus?" What area of my life needs to be polished a bit. Then, if there is any "giving up," it is a matter of giving up the behavior or attitude that is inappropriate for a follower of Jesus.

The ideal would be that whatever is given up will not be resumed after Lent. That particular behavior is gone for good. This leads, then, to the joy and holiness of Lent – I become a new, more clear image of the God in whose image I have been created. I become a better Christian. And that is truly holy and joyful.



Some of the participants in the Male Spirituality/  
Sexuality Workshop

## Lenten Resources

Everyone on the Vocation Office mailing list is receiving a meditation booklet entitled: *Wondrous Encounters: Scripture For Lent* by Franciscan Father Richard Rohr. Fr. Richard is a well-known author and international preacher. He presently lives in Albuquerque, NM at the Center for Action and Contemplation. His book will challenge minds and hearts according to the message/theme of the daily Mass readings from Scripture from Ash Wednesday through Holy Saturday.

Many parishes offer various kinds of Lenten Services. Sometimes it is the *Way of the Cross* (also called *Stations of the Cross*), other times it may be a Penance Service in which one can receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Lenten speaker series are also a common occurrence in some parishes. Other places offer an extra evening Mass one or two evenings a week. Whatever the resources might be, they can be a good resource for our Lenten observance.

The goal of any Lenten resource is to help us be better followers of Jesus. Just as those about to enter into the Church through Baptism or a Profession of Faith during the Easter Vigil are in their final days of preparation, so all baptized Christians can use Lent as a time of spiritual growth and preparation to enter more deeply into the Christian life. As Fr. Don's note in this newsletter points out, the focus of Lent is not on giving something up or suffering; it is on growing in the likeness of Jesus. If this entails giving up anything, it means giving up selfishness and sinfulness and becoming more like Jesus.

Mass, adoration, Confession, prayers, reading Scripture, helping others, sacrificing for the poor, taking special care to be charitable toward others—especially those who irk us, various kinds of spiritual reading, etc. are all tools to help us literally die to ourselves and rise with Jesus through a serious, thoughtful observance of Lent.

## Province Prepares for May Chapter

May 23-27 the members of Saint John the Baptist Province will gather at St. Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad, IN for what is called a *Provincial Chapter*." A *Chapter* is a meeting in which the Friars elect new leadership, set policy for the next few years, and deal with any provincial matters that the administration or the membership bring up for consideration by the whole group. This May, the Friars of St. John the Baptist will elect a new slate of Councilors, but not a Provincial Minister or a Provincial Vicar—these two men have three more years to serve in their first term of office. The planning committee is presently setting the agenda by gathering proposals from the membership, looking into possible candidates for the office of Councilor and arranging for the liturgical and living/working needs of the community.

Please remember the Province in your prayers as we prepare and hold our Chapter.

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## Vocation Media Resources

Our Provincial website ([www.franciscan.org](http://www.franciscan.org)) continues to provide a wealth of information about our life and ministry as Friars. The Vocation drop-down menu on the home page is a particularly rich resource for finding out about our men in Initial Formation and what Formation is all about.

Besides the vocation blog (accessed directly at <http://vocationvibes.franciscan.org> or from the website) we now have 31 videos on YouTube. Our URL is:

<http://www.youtube.com/franciscanvocations>

## Richard Goodin, O.F.M. Prepares for Solemn vows



On August 27, 2011, Friar Richard Goodin, O.F.M. is scheduled to make his life-long profession of vows. (In the Franciscan tradition, this is called his *Solemn Profession*.) The ceremony is open to the public and will take place at St. Clement Church in St. Bernard (Cincinnati), OH.

Friar Richard made his First, or Temporary, Profession three years ago and has been studying in Chicago at the Catholic Theological Union and doing a year of training in our mission in Jamaica. After his Profession in August he will return to Chicago and CTU to finish his studies for ordination to the priesthood.



## Colin King, O.F.M and Adam Calder, O.F.M.



## Prepare for First Profession

On June 11, 2011, Friars Colin King, O.F.M. and Adam Calder, O.F.M. will profess vows for the first time as they complete their year of Novitiate. After a brief vacation at home with their families, they will join the other Temporary Professed Friars in Chicago and begin their studies at the Catholic Theological Union.

The two Friars will continue their initial formation for at least three years prior to making their Solemn Profession.