



Franciscan Vocations

Saint John the Baptist Province

November 2013

Four make a *Come and See* weekend in Cincinnati



From Friday, February 8th through Sunday, November 10th, four men participated in a *Come and See* weekend at Saint Anthony Friary in Cincinnati, OH. The weekend began with Evening Prayer and supper with the local community on Friday and ended with the Eucharist on Sunday morning.

Those attending the weekend were (left to right):

Angel Garcia (30); an apartment manager and parish Religion Teacher from Albuquerque, NM.

Andrew Wisniewski (27); a security guard and liturgical minister from Gahanna, OH.

Alex Godbey (19); a student from Hebron, KY who is attending Eastern Kentucky University.

Ulises Lozada (18); a senior at C. E. King High School in Houston, TX.

Helping Fr. Don Miller, O.F.M. and Bro. Robert Lucero, O.F.M, the Provincial Vocation Directors, were Temporary Professed Bros. Michael Charron, O.F.M. and William Estrellanos, O.F.M.; Postulants Jeremiah Sauber and Nickolas Thorvaldsen; and Postulant Directors Frs. Mark Soehner, O.F.M. and Frank Geers, O.F.M.

The *Come and See* weekend is an opportunity for men who are thinking about possibly joining our community to experience our fraternity, to observe some of our ministries, and to meet our Postulants and some of the Friars. They also have an opportunity to meet others who, like them, are still looking and discerning their vocation.

Participation in the weekend does not necessarily involve any commitment, but it often leads to a better understanding about whether or not the Franciscan way of life is a good "fit" for the individual. Discernment is all about finding where one "fits" in the bigger picture of the Church according to God's call. For where the Lord calls is where a man will find his deepest peace.

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

Note from Fr. Don



The weekend of November 17th I got word that my older sister was hospitalized with, what turned out to be, a serious medical condition.

As I prepared to drive to Peoria, IL to be with her and my family, I received a call from my younger sister asking where I was. It so happened that I was still at the Vocation Office attending to a few items I wanted to take care of before I left knowing that I would be away for an indeterminate amount of time. She mentioned that my being there was good since Peoria and the surrounding area was under a tornado warning.

As I drove along Interstate 74, I encountered some rain and wind but nothing very notable. That is, until I arrived in the Crawfordsville, IN area where I ran into torrential rain and high winds for a number of miles. As I approached Danville, IL the weather improved but the winds remained strong. Then I came across an 18-wheeler on its side blocking most of the two west-bound lanes. I'm not sure how the accident happened but I presume it was weather related.

As I arrived in Peoria, I heard news of a major tornado in the area. An FE4 tornado hit Washington, IL which sustained major damage as did other areas in central Illinois and Indiana.

I couldn't help but think of the readings for that morning's Eucharist. Jesus spoke of calamities and wars and disasters as a part of the reality of life before the end would come. But he warned us not to go here and there looking for answers, but to remain focused on our faith and on his kingdom. Jesus is the rock of security we are to stand on in the midst of chaos.

Whether we face personal/family illnesses and difficulties, whether we face natural disasters and wars, whether everything around us seems to be coming apart and disintegrating we are to remain strong in our faith trusting in the Lord's never-ending presence and care.

That's a tough message and yet it is our faith. Jesus is the port in every storm.

Franciscans Attend NCYC Conference in Indianapolis

A group of nine Friars and Postulants led by the Vocation Team of Fr. Don Miller, O.F.M. and Bro. Bob Lucero, O.F.M, witnessed to our way of life at the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) held in Indianapolis, IN November 21st through 23rd. Joining Religious Men and Women from across the country, they were part of a concerted effort to highlight the role of Religious Sisters, Brothers, and Priests in the Church. Working in teams of men and women Religious, they gathered in the **Nook** to informally meet with young people and their parents in a relaxed atmosphere to answer questions and to offer counsel and information about our way of life. The **Nook** (a comfortable room where one could relax, grab a snack, and move out of the fray of the conference) was the inspiration of the planners of the conference and the leadership of the National Religious Vocation Conference (NRVC) who are always looking for new ways to help young people (and the Church in general) to be aware of and to appreciate the role of Religious in the Church.

The province also had a booth where young men could talk with the Friars and Postulants and pick up information specifically about our Franciscan way of life.

Nearly 22,000 youth participated from as far away as Alaska and Hawaii. The largest group was from the Diocese of Dubuque, IA which numbered 1500 members.

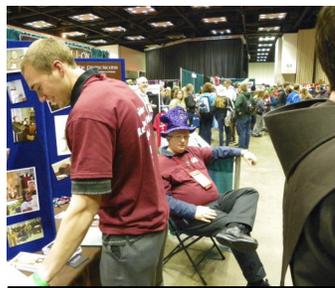


Prayer often included dance and movement featuring the talents of many young people from across the country.

The general sessions took place in the Lucas Oil Stadium (home of the Indianapolis Colts). Each day included prayer and the Eucharist, talks, time for the sacrament of Reconciliation, entertainment, and time to experience the many booths and activities. This year's focus was on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit with hands-on projects appropriate to each gift.

Near one of the booths was a life-size cardboard cutout of Pope Francis. One morning before the doors were opened in the arena Bro. Bob, Postulant Nick Thorvaldsen, and Fr. Don managed to meet up with his Holiness who *agreed* to posed for a picture.

The National Catholic Youth Conference is held every other year and welcomes young people and their parents and youth directors from every diocese and archdiocese of the country. Because of its central location and the excellent accommodations offered by the Indianapolis Convention Center, Indianapolis will be the site of future conferences.



Postulant Nick Thorvaldsen grabs a brochure as Postulant Jeremiah Sauber takes a break donning a hat he received from a student. Swapping headgear is a favorite pastime of the event.



Advent is a season of **Hope** and **Expectation**. We await the graces of the Solemnity of Christmas but also of the end of time and of each and every moment of our day. May we make the most of this holy season of waiting for the **Coming of Jesus**.

Friars' Plan a Religious Presence in the Cincinnati Mall

In an effort to witness to the true meaning of Christmas and to spread Yule-tide peace and joy, the Friars in the Cincinnati area intend to be a physical presence in the Northgate Mall on the north side of the city. They have rented a store and plan to be there in person (at least two Friars at a time) evenings and weekends from Thanksgiving through Christmas.

Hospitality and Christmas cheer will be the aim as the Friars offer a bit of a different feel to the season of frenzied shopping. They are hoping that a unabashedly religious presence will help people remember that there is more to "the Holidays" than spending money and frantic shopping.

The list of Friars grew rapidly once the schedule was announced. Young and old alike have agreed to volunteer their time to spend a few hours at the mall greeting people, offering snacks, and spreading cheer.

A few of the more artistically inclined members of the community will decorate the store and create an appropriate ambience for this "experiment" in Christian witness to the deeper meaning of Christmas. Even the local Auxiliary Bishop has opted to join in the fun.

How will the general public respond to such an effort? No one knows but all feel that it is a worth-while thing to try.

Come and See Dates for early 2014

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

January 3-5, 2014

March 21-23, 2014

May 9-11, 2014

Anyone hoping to join the 2014 Postulancy Class should make arrangements to participate in either the January or 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.