



Franciscan Vocations

Saint John the Baptist Province

November 2014

Brothers Michael Charron, O.F.M. and Colin King, O.F.M. make Solemn Profession

Family and friends of **Bros. Michael Charron, O.F.M.** and **Colin King, O.F.M.** gathered with the Friars of St. John the Baptist Province at St. Clement Church in Cincinnati, OH on August 23, 2014 to witness and to celebrate the life-long commitment of Brothers Michael and Colin. Many years of preparation and of living the Franciscan way of life under a number of differing circumstances throughout their initial formation led to the joyous event often referred to as a Solemn Profession. It marked the final stage of incorporation for these two men into the Order of Friars Minor.



Bro. Michael, O.F.M.



Bro. Colin, O.F.M.

Brother Michael came to the Friars in 2007. A graduate of the University of Cincinnati, Michael had worked in the legal field and had developed an interest in living a simple life of service to the poor. He has one sister and was raised in Cincinnati. He is presently in Chicago finishing up a Masters in Divinity degree at the Catholic Theological Union.

Brother Colin is from the Columbus, OH area. He came to the Friars in 2008 as a teacher of special education. He also has one sister and is a graduate of Xavier University in Cincinnati. He also is in Chicago and is finishing his studies for the priesthood at the Catholic Theological Union.



(Left) Just before those making vows make their profession, they prostrate themselves before the altar as the entire congregation calls of the Saints of our faith to be with them as all chant the Litany of the Saints.

(Right) The Provincial Minister prays for the two about to make profession. It is his privilege to accept their profession in the name of the Order and the Church.



Note from Fr. Don



I ended my reflection in the last newsletter stating: "I've learned not to presume and anticipate results. Healing has its own timetable and I have nothing to say about it." Little did I know at that time how true that would turn out to be.

That second surgery was not as successful as I and the doctor had hoped and I returned September 29 for a third surgery with a new doctor and a new post-operative protocol. At this point I want to say that all is well and that it worked this time, but . . . I'm skittish about presuming anything. But the evidence thus far is that it worked this time and by Christmas, I hope, I will be rid of the leg-brace and working on strengthening the leg.

The Vocation Office has been hobbling along as well. Bro. Bob Lucero, O.F.M. has been forced to resign due to declining health issues. With me unable to travel, this has posed a bit of a problem. But, true to our fraternity, other Friars have stepped in and helped with some of the responsibilities—especially those that require travel.

I appreciate the help I have received both personally and with regard to the office. This is what community is all about and, once again, I have been reminded that I belong to a great province of wonderful brothers. I can assure you that this is what we want to offer to you as a prospective should you discern to join us.

Come and See Dates for 2015

We are planning two *Come and See* weekends for the spring of 2015. They will be held at St. Anthony Friary in Cincinnati, OH on:

January 30–February 1

and

March 13–15.

Check with Fr. Don for details at 513-542-1082.

5000 Colerain Ave • Cincinnati OH 45223-1213 • 1-800-827-1082 • 513-542-1082

website: www.franciscan.org • email: sjbvocations@franciscan.org

YouTube channel: [franciscanvocations](https://www.youtube.com/franciscanvocations)

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Virtues, Vows, and a Cord

Fasten your seat belts because this article begins with a fast and furious philosophical review of the virtues. It's heavy, but hopefully serves as a good background for what follows.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* defines a virtue as "an habitual and firm disposition to do the good. It allows the person not only to perform good acts, but to give the best of himself. The virtuous person tends toward the good with all his sensory and spiritual powers; he pursues the good and chooses it in concrete actions." Wikipedia defines it as "moral excellence. A *virtue* is a positive trait or quality deemed to be morally good and thus is valued as a foundation of principle and good moral being." Another way of looking at a virtue is as a strength of character.

Our faith tradition has singled out four virtues as "cardinal," meaning they are the "hinges" upon which all other virtues hang. These are: prudence, justice, fortitude, temperance. Since the practice of every virtue involves choosing the good and rejecting the bad it is an act of prudence. Each virtue has God as its ultimate goal so it is an act of justice in the sense of giving to God what is his due. Every virtuous act involves some difficulty as well as reward so it is an act of fortitude. Finally, every virtuous act is a choice of the middle road between two vices so it is an act of temperance. Every baptized person is called to live all of the virtues in whatever way is appropriate to his or her lifestyle on his journey to God. To assist us on this journey, God infuses the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity at baptism.

Thus ends the philosophical "dissertation."

So what about the three virtues of poverty, chastity, and obedience which all Religious vow to live? Well, first of all they are virtues that apply to the lives of everyone. But, of course, because of their unique lifestyle, Religious apply them differently than do others. For instance, chastity is the virtue (strength) that helps us direct our sexual energy appropriately toward God and others. It doesn't suppress our sexuality nor does it allow it to run rampant (temperance). It directs it according to an individual's chosen lifestyle (prudence). So Religious are not asked to live a sexless life, but a life in which one's sexual energy is appropriately directed to the service of God and others in warm, loving, but non-genital ways (prudence and justice). Similarly, chastity directs the sexual energy of a married couple toward mutual love and support in a warm, loving, and genital way as is appropriate for a married person.

Obedience is the virtue that directs our sense of independence and self-will. Again, obedience applies to everyone

since everyone has some authority in their life to which they are responsible. But Religious choose to live a life of accountability to the Church and their community. One is not free, for instance, to change ministries or to move to another location without consultation with the local and/or provincial authorities. As a "middle road" experience, obedience neither chooses to live life independently of others with little or no regard for them, nor does it choose to live a life of dependency allowing others to make life choices for oneself which, in effect, would amount to an abdication of personal responsibility.

Finally, the virtue of poverty helps a person control the desire for and use of possessions. Being a choice made in temperance, the virtue is not a choice to live in abject poverty nor is it a choice to amass great quantities of goods. It is the virtue whereby one simply uses what is necessary and is satisfied. For Religious it means owning and/or using things in common limiting the amassing of wealth and power.

Our desire for possessions and all that that can entail, our desire to be independent and accountable only to ourselves, and our desire to misuse our sexuality are three very basic urges of human nature. Thus Religious vow the virtues of poverty, obedience, and chastity as a form of evangelical witness in the world pointing to a different way of living among others. The vow states that the Church and society can hold the individual Religious as well as the community to a higher standard which points to the Gospel life and to life in the Kingdom of Heaven. It is not a way to reject human life, but an attempt to purify it and raise it to the standards of the Gospel. Just as marriage witnesses to the union between God and creation and Jesus and the Church, so Religious Life witnesses to the life of the world to come. Both vocations support one another. Without either, the life of the Church would be depleted of an important element.

Finally, the Franciscan Cord has three knots; each knot representing one of the vows that the Franciscan has taken. It is a constant reminder to the Friar or Sister that he or she has publically committed him or herself to live a life of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance in three essential areas of human desires that points to the Kingdom Jesus came to establish. The vows are a public statement of an interior choice to follow the Gospel in a very unique way. The Franciscan Friars live that choice in light of the Rule and Constitutions of the Order of Friars Minor.

And what a beautiful life it is.

Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience