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Capuchin Vocation Update Province of St. Joseph

Diego Sierra to join Colombian Capuchins

After working with the Vocation Office of the Midwest Capuchins for more than a year, candidate Diego Sierra has decided to return to his native Colombia to join the Capuchin province there. The Capuchin provincial minister of Colombia, Alirio Rojas Ortiz, has already indicated that Diego should be able to join Colombia's current postulant class which began only recently.

Diego entered the United States about five years ago with the hopes of making a new start in life by distancing himself from some of the negative influences in his life in Colombia. He settled in the Chicago area where distant relatives already lived. Within a very short time, Diego experienced a religious conversion through the Charismatic Movement he encountered in Chicago-land. Diego was raised Catholic, but reports that religion was not a strong force in his life. The conversion which occurred in Chicago changed everything about his life, including the goals for his future life.



Diego Sierra

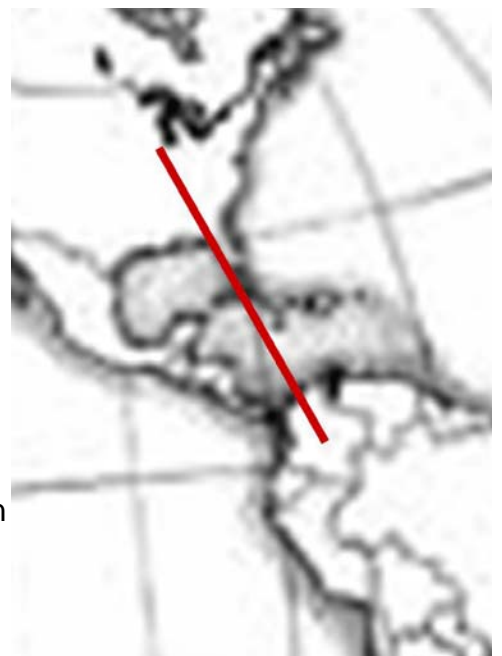
capuchinfranciscans.org
1-773-475-6206

Diego eventually moved to the southwest side of Chicago because of a job opportunity, making St. Gall Parish on Pulaski and 55th Street his place of worship. Soon, he was like the right hand of the pastor, doing whatever was needed for the parish. In a matter of months, he was elected leader of the parish charismatic group, which quickly identified his devotion and leadership qualities.

Diego developed the habit of spending some time each day before the Blessed Sacrament in prayer. Eventually, he discovered that nearby St. Clare of Montefalco Parish maintained a Blessed Sacrament chapel for prayer twenty-four hours a day. This drew Diego to St. Clare of Montefalco where he came to know its Capuchin pastor, Michael Sullivan. As Diego began to talk more and more about a religious vocation, Michael brought him to a vocation event at St. Clare of Assisi Friary, also in Chicago. Diego became a diligent Capuchin candidate, attending nearly every weekend offered by the Vocation Office. He learned about Capuchin ministries in Detroit, Milwaukee, and at St. Lawrence Seminary in Mt. Calvary, Wisconsin.

... it is more important to be a Capuchin now than to possibly be an American in the future.

—Diego Sierra



Vocation Update

Diego also became a regular visitor to St. Clare of Assisi Friary which houses the province's postulancy and postnovitiate programs. Very quickly, Diego organized a vocation support group for men and women thinking of vocations in religious life or priesthood. While members enjoyed these meetings very much, many were frustrated by their inability to realize their dreams in the United States because they had no legal status here. This was also true of the group's leader, Diego, who asked the Capuchin vocation directors to help him achieve a legal status.

As immigration reform was in the air back in 2006, the vocation directors committed themselves to helping Diego achieve a legal status and join the Midwest Capuchins. When hopes for reform were dashed in 2006, Diego began to seriously consider returning to Colombia to join the Capuchins there. However, since his religious conversion occurred in Chicago, it was clear that his first choice was to stay in the place of his religious awakening. So, Diego waited and waited again. He was about to return to Colombia when a unique task force including U.S. senators, representatives and the White House announced a compromise immigration reform bill on May 17, 2007. His hopes raised once again, Diego came to realize that the final form of the bill is still unknown and that, even if the most favorable bill passes, he likely still would have to wait one or two years before being able to enter the Midwest Capuchin formation program.

Diego decided that his time is now. In short, he decided that it is more important to be a Capuchin now than to possibly be an American in the future. The Capuchin vocation directors, John Holly and Bill Hugo, the other friars of the province, and all our candidates wish the best for Diego, and promise their prayers and to keep in touch.

*Lord,
no one is a stranger to you
and no one is ever far from your loving care.
In your kindness watch over refugees and exiles,
those separated from their loved ones,
young people who are lost,
and those who have left or run away from home.
Bring them back safely to the place where they long to be
and help us always to show your kindness
to strangers and to those in need.*

—The opening prayer from
the mass for refugees and exiles

U.S. Capuchins' 150th Jubilee

Candidates are invited to join the Capuchins as they celebrate 150 years at Mt. Calvary, WI.

Student dorm accommodations available

Come either or both days.

Reservations required, contact:
Vocation Director Bill Hugo
313-595-2182
williamhugo1253@yahoo.com

Sunday, June 24th

3pm Postulants ask senior friars about old days.

6:30 Procession from Mt. Calvary to Mt. Carmel
for Evening Prayer
with School Sisters of Notre Dame

Monday, June 25th

11am Eucharist
lunch and reception follows
6:30pm procession
to blessing of renewed friars' cemetery

Begin to look for *Vocation Update*
on Tuesday instead of Monday mornings!