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Capuchin Vocation Update Province of St. Joseph

Living the Dream

by Br. Kent Bauer, O.F.M. Capuchin

(Last summer Kent celebrated 25 years since his First Profession as a Capuchin Friar in 1984. He came to know the Capuchins that were stationed at Saints Peter and Paul in beautiful Huntington, IN. Following - and even during - his Capuchin Formation, Kent began a long career in direct service ministry to the poor and marginalized. He served in Detroit on the "Team for Justice" - an advocacy service for inmates, both adult and juvenile - and at the Capuchin Community Center (Capuchin Soup Kitchen). He also served in Milwaukee for eleven years at the St. Francis and St. Benedict Meal programs as a director, chaplain, social worker, and advocate. After completing his ministry in Milwaukee, Kent served on the pastoral team of two parishes in Michigan: St. Therese of Lisieux in Lansing and St. Joseph in Saginaw. While in Saginaw, Kent was asked to serve as the Pastoral Administrator of St. Joseph from 2004 to 2008. He is currently on the Initial Formation team for the Province and resides in Chicago. As a Capuchin and a minister of formation, Kent offers a word of advise and inspiration to those considering religious life: "I would encourage them to trust their heart and take the next step to discern what God is calling them to do. If it is a good fit they will know it and if not it may help them further discern what God wants them to pursue. It is a wonderful way to live your faith in the company of others. I'm happy to be called 'Brother'.")



If you wish to follow Christ as a Capuchin, you may be surprised where a mere "yes" can lead you. I was not sure what I was getting myself into when I said "yes" when asked to go on a ministry and discernment weekend but I am glad that I did. Back then I did not like the thought of making changes in my life and moving beyond what I was doing and what seemed comfortable for me at the time. I was employed

full-time as a shipping clerk and earning a substantial income. I owned a car and was living in a house that I had purchased. I belonged to a Catholic group of single adults at church. I was enjoying the finer things in life and living the American dream, so I thought. I had reached success and yet it seemed something else was missing. What was it? I pondered everything I had achieved and wondered why I still felt a void in my life. Frequently in the night hours, I lifted my concern in prayer. I also consulted with a spiritual director to seek the guidance I desperately needed. All of this drew me closer to God. What I had equated as success was not fulfilling my heart. In my reflection I realized that what was missing in my life could be found in the church. I found myself taking a deeper interest at my parish and became more involved as a lector, server, cantor and a member of our parish council. I appreciated the opportunities to serve God and the people of God in various ministries.

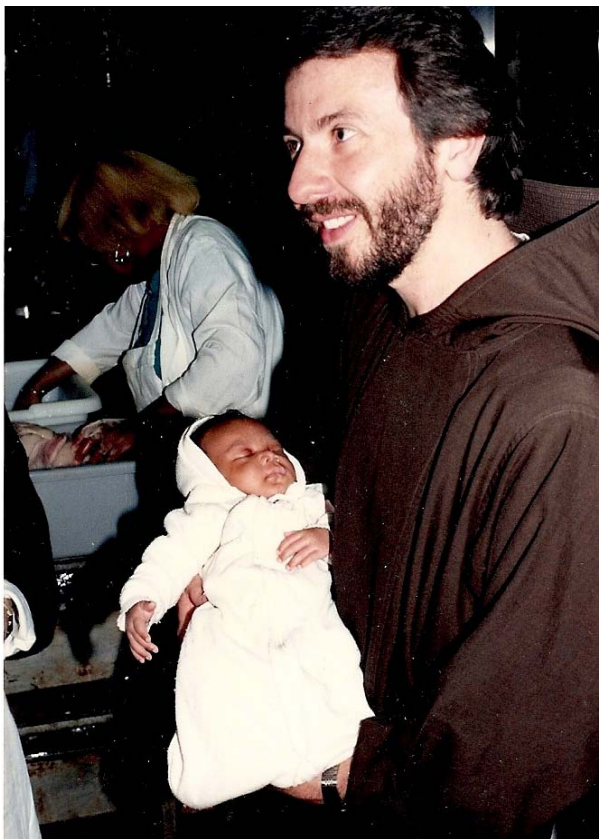
I became an active Catholic but I never envisioned myself being in a religious order until I met the Capuchins who came to minister at my home parish after a beloved diocesan pastor died of Lou Gehrig's disease. There are several attributes that drew me to the Capuchin Order. I have experienced the spirit of community they bring with them in their lifestyle and ministry.



Outside of St. Ben's Meal Program, Kent is helping with a hunger walk known as C.R.O.P. (Communities Responding to Overcome Poverty)

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Vocation Update



At the Capuchin Detroit Soup Kitchen, Kent is shown holding a baby of a client while they are getting their meal.

They also seem more inclusive at welcoming both women and men in serving the church. I liked the way Capuchins are often involved in systemic change in the areas of equality and justice. After befriending the friars and going to a cook-out at the rectory they invited me to a discernment retreat. That mere “yes” prompted me the following year to apply for novitiate. My application was accepted and since my profession I have gratefully continued living the dream within the Capuchin Community. The love, support, and the challenges, I received from the Capuchins have helped me to grow in my faith. In the Capuchins I have found what was missing in my life. I have had the privilege of traveling outside of the farming community where I was raised to meet people from many cultures. These relationships continue to develop my circle of friends and have enriched my spiritual life.

All of this happened because I was willing to take a chance. Doors were opened that were once closed; opportunities offered which before were not accessible. I never thought I would be helping with clean water projects in Honduras and Guatemala, Central America a few years ago. Nor did I dream until recently that I would be living in Chicago and be back in school. The Capuchin Province of St. Joseph encourages and supports us in our personal and spiritual development and gives us access to continuing education opportunities. Indeed I have been extremely blessed to have God and the guidance of the friars in my life. I am particularly inspired by what St. Francis said: **“We are called to heal the wounds, to unite what had fallen apart, and to bring home those who have lost their way.”** This I believe is what we are all called to do.

Sometimes a mere “yes” can help us to further discern our vocation in life. When we consent and leave the rest in the hands of God as the early disciples did, we will discover the best way to live out our dreams.



Novitiate 1983. How time flies!

Upcoming Vocation Weekends

Feb. 26-28 Milwaukee Ministry and Discernment Weekend

March 12-14 Pre-Postulancy Information Weekend, Milwaukee, WI

April 1-4 Triduum Retreat
St. Lawrence Friary and Seminary
Mt. Calvary, Wisconsin

Reservations are required.

New inquirers are welcome!

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or visit www.CapuchinFranciscans.org

and click on <How to Begin>