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Brother Francis

by Andrew Oullette, Capuchin Candidate

(Andrew is currently a senior at Fishers High School just north of Indianapolis, Indiana. He has been accepted at St. Xavier University in Chicago and plans to live as resident candidate at St. Clare Friary in Chicago. St. Clare friary is the “student friary” for the Capuchins of the St. Joseph Province. Next fall, along with Andrew, there will be eleven student friars in temporary vows at various stages of studies and 6 friars in perpetual vows living at the friary. Andrew’s current parish is St. Louis de Montfort where he helps coordinate LIFETEEN youth group nights on Thursdays, attends Bible studies on Mondays, teaches catechesis for 6th -8th graders, and serves as Eucharistic Minister. Andrew’s attraction to Padre Pio is what drew him to the Capuchins.)



In the eyes of the world St Francis of Assisi was, and still is, seen as a fool. St. Francis’ foolish life involved darting after beggars, sprinting naked into the woods, rolling in the snow to defend his purity, and renouncing all the riches he had. Brother Francis did this because he “wished to follow the life of poverty of our most holy Jesus Christ and of His most holy mother.” St Francis of Assisi and his mission have become the inspiration of my life, a life which the world would look at as foolish.

St. Francis of Assisi had big plans for himself before he became “the little poor man from Assisi.” Before his foolish adventures, Francis was a wealthy young man with grand ideas of knighthood, chivalry, wealth, and power. One day Francis was riding on his horse when he saw a leper in the field, which struck him with much fear.

Francis told himself that if he wanted to be a “knight of Christ” he must first conquer himself and his fears. He leaped from his horse and embraced the leper, kissing him and giving him alms. When he mounted the horse again, he looked back only to find that the leper disappeared. After this conversion experience it seemed as if Francis was given a new set of eyes which allowed him to see creation enflamed with the goodness of its Creator. St. Francis began to call on not just humanity, but all creation to give praises and blessings to the Creator. In his famous work “Canticle of Brother Sun” Francis exclaimed, “Praise be You, my Lord with all your creatures, especially Sir Brother Sun, who is day and through whom You give us light.” For Brother Francis, every aspect of creation was, and is, good because God created it.



Andrew visiting the Capuchin Soup Kitchen in Detroit

capuchinfranciscans.org
1-773-475-6206

Vocation Update

Franciscan spirituality has become, for me, the major foundation of my spiritual life. The Franciscan tradition has transformed me into a completely different person. Everywhere I go, I cannot help but marvel at creation and the goodness of God. I am beginning to see that God is calling us all to be His hands and feet, to show others the mercy and love of a humble God who washes our feet and tells us to do likewise. Francis realized that if we are called to spread the Gospel, we must spread it using words only when necessary. Not only did St. Francis have a new vision of creation, but he also had an unbelievable beautiful devotion to the Eucharist, which he called “sublime humility and humble sublimity,” and to the Blessed Mother. These devotions have been an inspiration to me and my faith journey as I walk with my Blessed Mother Mary towards a God who humbly bends down to give Himself to me under the form of simple bread and wine.

I remember a beautiful quote by G.K. Chesterton in his work *St. Francis of Assisi*. He said that, “In appearance Francis must have been like a thin brown skeleton autumn leaf dancing eternally before the wind; but in truth it was he that was the wind.” Being inspired by Francis has changed me so much spiritually that it is almost as if I am being flung from a hose in slow motion. It seems as if I am on a journey, constantly seeking the God that brother Francis found. I am being slowly picked up by a beautiful wind that is being blown by Love itself, so that I may be swept to wherever our Creator desires me to be His hands and feet.



Andrew and his father, Larry, visited St. Clare Friary in Chicago last summer.



Andrew, right-center, sharing a few laughs with the guys while visiting the Capuchin's St. Ben's Meal Program in Milwaukee.

Upcoming Vocation Weekends

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!

Contact Fr. John Holly 920-915-4400

jholly1953@yahoo.com or

Br. Jerry Johnson 773-475-6206

vocation@capuchinfranciscans.org

or visit www.CapuchinFranciscans.org

and click on <How to Begin>



Andrew with his stepfather, John, and his mother, Teri while visiting St. Clare last fall.