

POSTULANCY 2003 – 2004

30 December 2003

St Conrad's Leichhardt

Postulants with Guardian, Br Michael O'Dwyer (left)
with the Provincial Br Julian Messina (right)



Postulants presented with the San Damiano Cross by the Director Br Robert Stewart (below):





James Grant

I was on my lunch break from work, walking down a Melbourne Street, pondering where God was leading me in my life. When I heard my name 'James' being called out. I turned around and saw Father Robert Stewart, the Capuchin Vocations director, whom I had met briefly a few times before. Father Robert proceeded to tell me about his own vocation story, which I felt I could definitely relate to. He then told me about the Capuchin spirituality, which truly inspired and amazed me. It felt like someone had read my heart and was putting into words, my own spirituality and my deepest hearts desire.

To live humbly, simply and joyfully the Catholic faith, in a more radical way. This was me. I just hadn't been able to work it out for myself. A deep inner peace came over me and later, when I visited the Friars in Hawthorn, I had a real sense of belonging. I felt I had finally found my brothers.

Yet, it had taken quite a while for me to get there. I was nearly 28 and I had first thought about priesthood in my early primary school years. At the age of 18, I believe I received my first calling but at that time, I didn't feel I was ready and ended up choosing a different path. I chose a more secular path and for a while I almost got lost. At the age of 22, I began considering my calling again. I seriously contemplated Diocesan priesthood but also looked at a few Religious Orders. Yet, nothing worked out, so I happily began building the foundations for marriage. For three years I built, yet little did I know that the Lord had other plans for me. He knew my deepest heart's desire. And all I can say now is - thank you Lord. Thank you for being so patient and persistent.



Tom McFadden

I thank God for the gift of the Blessed Virgin Mother who drew me into a special relationship with Christ when I flirted with the *"ways of the world."* It was through the rosary that I began to know Jesus more intimately. And then, once I started attending Holy Hours of Adoration, I began to develop a love of prayer and come to know more fully that God is the source and end of my life.

One of the priests from my parish encouraged me to become more active in parish life. I started out by occasionally reading at Mass, soon I became involved with R.C.I.A., then St Vincent de Paul and then as catechist.

As I became more active in my parish I saw how the Salesians (the Order running my parish) lived their religious life. The love of prayer and service that had developed within me made me wonder if God was calling me to religious life.

It was while I was pondering this thought that I stumbled across an advertisement for a Capuchin enquiry evening at Plumpton. I decided to go and was impressed by the kindness and generosity of the friars as well as the peace I experienced in the friary. Hence I kept in contact with them. At the completion of my engineering studies, I decided religious life more than anything but I had not made a decision between the few Orders I had been speaking to. I spent 2003 doing a teaching degree and discerning where God was calling me.

Being inspired by the lives of St Francis and St Pio, and through my contact with Fr Robert and the Capuchin Friars and seeing the way the Capuchins balance prayer and apostolic work, it seemed that Divine Providence was leading me to them. I thank God for his countless blessings in my journey of faith thus far and pray that the Blessed Virgin will keep me faithful to His will.



Kieran Hackett

The path that led me to the postulancy with the Capuchins may seem circumstantial to some, including me at times, but I don't really believe in coincidences, but trust in God's providence.

I first started considering seriously a vocation to priesthood at the beginning of this year when I was training for youth ministry. I had thought about it before, but it wasn't a decision I thought I had to make immediately, and besides there were lots of things I wanted to do before considering any-thing as final as priesthood. However, this was all to change when one of the *Supports* on the youth ministry training team introduced me to a guy who flipped all my thinking around; *St Francis of Assisi*.

I had never read anything about St Francis' life before, and the only information I had was from an explanation I was given about a *tau cross* a friend bought back for me from Assisi. All I had was a small arbitrary collection of stories from Francis' life but these struck me so profoundly,

that I began to understand more deeply those words of Jesus I love "*not my will but your will be done*".

I then started a mass learning of the life of St. Francis and a desire grew within me to follow him and give everything over to God. I went on the internet and searched for Franciscan Orders and the Capuchin site was the first to come up. I was very impressed when I began to read about them and thought I'd give them a closer look.

Reading stories on St Francis always nourished my desire to be like him, but I just didn't consider myself worthy of a calling to his order – God obviously had other plans. Half-way through the year, while visiting some friends in Sydney, I met my first Capuchin, Fr. Robert Stewart, who also happened to be the vocation director. I didn't say anything to him at the time and let it go but, a short while later I went to a vocations weekend in Adelaide where Fr. Robert and I happened to stumble into each other again. All this had to be more than just coincidence. I decided then to track down Fr. Robert and we organised to meet next time he came down to Adelaide – which happened to be for the Feast of St. Francis.

Now I know that I am not worthy of God's call to serve Him as a Capuchin, but for that reason more glory to Him if He makes it possible. All I can do is trust and wait on the Lord and work with His grace. Praise be to God!