



# Provincial PORTER

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a newsletter of the Capuchin Province of Mid-America

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## Visions and Dreams

*Renewing and Re-envisioning in the Capuchin Province of Mid-America*

by Fr. Charles Polifka, O.F.M.Cap., Provincial Minister

In 1873, Capuchins from Germany came to America to live the Capuchin life among German immigrants and to serve their spiritual needs. In 1882, the Province of St. Augustine, sometimes referred to as the “Pennsylvania Province”, was established with a territory that extended from Maryland and

*“...our old men shall dream dreams,  
your young men shall see visions...”*

(JOEL 3:1)

Washington, DC, to Colorado. It was an incredibly large expanse. It seemed that the friars stationed in “the west” of the Province were in exile, and often, were jokingly referred to as such. Nevertheless, beginning with two Capuchins who began ministering in Ellis County, Kansas (Victoria and Hays), the western territory was developed, eventually extending into northwest, southwest and southeast Kansas and in 1968, into Denver, Colorado. The friars in the west seldom saw their Provincial Minister whose office was in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Governing such a territory was difficult. The possibility of forming another Province was raised many times, but it was never taken seriously until the mid 1970s. In 1977, two Capuchin province territories were established: one that extended from the Atlantic to Indiana, and one that included Illinois, Missouri, Kansas and Colorado.

In the many tedious discussions that preceded the creation of two provinces, the friars gave several reasons for a new and independent Capuchin jurisdiction in the west: (1) A smaller territory would allow the friars greater access to fraternity and to a more personal government; (2) Having a western

jurisdiction would allow the friars the freedom to make decisions based on a better understanding of the people’s needs; and, (3) Friars in the west wanted freedom from many of the structures, institutions and traditions that arose through the years and over which they had no control. In other words, a smaller jurisdiction meant more freedom to go where the friars were needed and to live a Capuchin life with all its values and inspirations.

When the western Province was established, the name “Capuchin Province of Mid-America” was chosen and the jurisdiction was placed under the patronage of St. Conrad of Parzham, a Bavarian Capuchin lay brother who dedicated his life to fundamental Capuchin values and who focused on prayer and service to the poor.



The friars of the Capuchin Province of Mid-America. This photo was taken in front of Thomas More Preparatory School in Hays, Kansas at the first Provincial Chapter meeting of the newly formed Province in April 1979.

Since 1977, the men of the Capuchin Province of Mid-America have lived out those values. We serve people as needed, from immigrants to homeless, from rural to urban, from unchurched to those who are strongly committed Catholics. We preach the Gospel in parishes and at the Citadel Mall in Colorado Springs, in parish missions all over the country, to the people of Papua New Guinea, to the homeless, to prisoners, to those

preparing for priesthood, and to those searching for meaning in life. We have left certain areas (like Kansas City and northwest Kansas) to better serve needs in other areas (like Lawrence and Colorado Springs). We spend time learning how to be better brothers to one another. We spend time learning to pray better and more contemplatively. We continually examine our commitment to simple living. We want to preach the Good News of Jesus Christ and to witness living the Gospel in the way and the spirit of St. Francis, St. Clare and the early Capuchins.

In 2007, and in the years immediately preceding, the Province began to take an inventory of our 30 years as Mid-American Capuchins. We survived the upheavals of Vatican II. We survived a famine in vocations. We were aging. Our numbers were not as strong and abundant as they had been in 1977. The Church was headed in new and exciting directions. We decided it was time to “re-envision” the original vision that ignited us in 1977, to replant it, and to renew ourselves and re-capture our fervor, our freedom, and our direction. The Provincial Council elected in 2007 began this task by listening to friars’ reactions to several “scenarios” for the future.

Today, in 2009, the Capuchin Province of Mid-America is opening itself to a new and exciting future. We returned to the freedom we embraced in 1977 and recaptured our itinerant and simple spirit. We chose to bring friars together rather than be stretched over 900 miles. We moved from St. Louis where we had ministered for decades. We placed all of our men in initial formation in Denver and chose St. John Vianney Seminary as our theology school. It was a bold move. We rededicated ourselves to recruiting men to the Capuchin life. We strengthened fraternities in Kansas and Colorado and made our presence more visible. We were gifted a new administration building in Denver which completed a Capuchin campus begun in 1993. We established a new friary, San Damiano, for our young men who have completed their novitiate training and are preparing for ministry. Another new friary, Our Lady of the Angels, was founded between Denver and Colorado Springs to be a “beacon” of prayer and simple living in our Province. It serves as a symbol and model

of who we are — Capuchin friars who treasure simplicity, pray fervently, live fraternally, and minister with energy and spirit from that kind of life.

All our fraternities from Lawrence to Colorado Springs are challenged to live these values. Francis began his brotherhood at Our Lady of the Angels in Assisi. It was nicknamed, “the Portiuncula.” It was a place where simplicity and poverty were treasured, where prayer was vital, and where fraternity was cherished. Friars were sent out to minister from there. The Province’s new Our Lady of the Angels friary north of Colorado Springs is our “Portiuncula” — our little portion. It was founded on the ideals of St. Francis and of the first Capuchins.

We have exceptional young men who have begun a new life with us and exceptional older men whose dedication and commitment have carried us through 30 years. We have devoted and enthusiastic men who want to see new life in our Province. We are seeing the needs of people with a new vision, with dreams, and with new hopes. We are seeing our lives of prayer, fraternity, and simple living as hope for new life in our Province.

“Renewal and Re-envisioning”: Today, this is what the Mid-America Province is about. We pray every day not only for vocations, but for enlightenment, faith, hope, generosity, and charity as we renew and re-envision the life and ministry of our Province. This is the right time. God will make it happen as He has done in the past.



Our Lady of the Angels Friary outside Colorado Springs serves as a retreat center for the Capuchin friars of the Province of Mid-America and is a model of Capuchin values: simplicity, prayer and fraternity.



In 1984, Fr. Bill Kraus and Fr. Didacus Dunn became the first Capuchins to serve at Samaritan House, a homeless shelter in Denver, Colorado. Several Capuchins still work at Samaritan House as the shelter’s chaplain, as a case worker and in health ministry at the medical clinic.

# New Brothers Train for Future Ministry

by Bro. Larry Bowers, O.F.M.Cap.

In the last year, several Capuchin brothers have been called home to heaven. It is difficult to watch brothers and friends age. However, the future for the Province is witnessed by six young, enthusiastic men participating in the Capuchin formation program. They are men who are committed to serving their fraternal brothers, the poor and the disadvantaged in our communities. They are men living the Capuchin charism.

In a limited capacity, these friars in formation participate in ministries that serve others. Once a student has completed his postulancy, novitiate and post-novitiate years, his main external ministry focuses on preparation for full-time outreach ministry. This is usually achieved by devoting time to studies at St. John Vianney Theological Seminary in Denver, Colorado.



Bros. Larry, Joseph Mary, Ryan, Christopher and Barnabas are professed friars in the Capuchin Province of Mid-America's formation program. Not pictured: Anthony Monahan is a postulant in the formation program and is currently studying in Denver and periodically in Colorado Springs.

Bros. Barnabas Eichor and Joseph Mary Elder are solemnly professed and in ministry formation and full-time studies. Bros. Christopher Gama, Ryan Tidball and Larry Bowers are in temporary vows and are involved in full-time studies. Each of these five men also assist at two lower income Capuchin parishes in Denver: Annunciation and Sacred Heart churches. Anthony Monahan is in the postulancy program, the first stage of formation to the Capuchin life.

Bro. Barnabas, 47, is from New Mexico and came to the Catholic Church from a Baptist background in 2000. Bro. Barnabas made final profession with the Capuchins in March 2008 in Victoria, Kansas and is preparing for his ordination to the diaconate in 2010.

Bro. Barnabas works with Sacred Heart's parish and financial councils. In addition, Bro. Barnabas teaches young adult and adult confirmation classes and religious education. Recently, Bro. Barnabas began assisting with a new Sacred Heart stewardship program. He is a second year theology student.

Bro. Joseph Mary, 31, also made final profession with the Capuchins in March 2008. He is from St. Louis, Missouri and last May earned a bachelor of philosophy degree at St. John Vianney through Rome's Lateran University.

Bro. Joseph Mary ministers at Annunciation parish. He teaches first and second year English confirmation classes and regularly attends planning meetings with the parish staff. Having completed his philosophy degree, Bro. Joseph Mary recently started the first of four years of theology studies at St. John Vianney. In addition to his work at Annunciation, Bro. Joseph Mary also dedicates many hours to the design and maintenance of the Capuchin Province of Mid-America's website: [www.capuchins.org](http://www.capuchins.org).

Bro. Christopher, 28, grew up in Pueblo, Colorado and is finishing his last semester toward a bachelor of philosophy degree. Bro. Larry, 33, is from Delia, Kansas; he will finish his philosophy studies later this year.

Bros. Christopher and Larry work in ministry at Annunciation by helping teach the second year Spanish confirmation class. The brothers also assist with the youth group, Amigos de Jesús, and attend parish planning meetings. Bros. Christopher



Bro. Larry Bowers jokes with children at a Christmas gathering after Mass at Annunciation Church. Who ate all the cake?

and Larry will start their first year of theology studies in September at St. John Vianney. Bro. Larry has a background in Information Technology and also spends time assisting the Province with computer networking and technology.

Bro. Ryan, 30, recently finished his post-novitiate year of formation. He grew up in Fort Pierre, South Dakota and received his bachelor of philosophy degree from John Carroll University in Cleveland, Ohio before taking temporary vows with the Capuchins. Bro. Ryan has started his first year of theology studies at St. John Vianney and teaches an adult Spanish RCIA class at Sacred Heart.

Postulant Anthony, 37, is from Altura, Minnesota. He attends weekly classes and participates in a program tailored to introduce him to the Capuchin way of life. He ministers three to four days each week at Fr. Woody's Haven of Hope, a day shelter for the homeless in Denver, Colorado. In addition to the many encouraging words and prayers he offers at the shelter, Anthony also assists with lunches and distributes bus tokens to those in need.

# New Friary for Mid-America Capuchins in Formation

by Bro. Joseph Mary Elder, O.F.M.Cap.

In 2007-2008, the newly elected leadership of the Capuchin Province of Mid-America challenged its brothers to take concrete steps toward renewal. Of course, this process involved growth, change and the pain of leaving familiar surroundings and established friendships. The closure of two friaries in St. Louis and the loss of the Capuchin presence in the “Show Me State” was a heart-rending experience for many of the friars. Such are the traumas and travails of many hopes which labor to bear new life. It was the friars’ courage in embracing this difficult task that allowed the Province to focus its initiatives westward and establish two new communities in Colorado.

The first step was to lease an antiquated building, a former Redemptorist rectory, on the outskirts of downtown Denver. Standing in the shadow of the equally time-worn church of St. Joseph Parish, the building was renamed San Damiano Friary. It is the third Capuchin community in the Denver area. The inspiration for the name finds its origins in the early days of St. Francis’ own conversion. Kneeling beneath an image of the Crucified Christ in the crumbling remains of San Damiano Church, the young Francis heard a divine voice, “Francis, rebuild my Church which, as you see, is in ruins.”

The brothers took up residence in the new friary in the summer of 2008 and moved out much of the existing furniture, wall hangings and assorted knick-knacks in favor of a simpler, more Capuchin environment. The setting is an ideal locale for the Capuchins. Connected by a brick walkway to St. Joseph’s



The entry door to the new San Damiano Friary in Denver, Colorado.

Church, the friars are the newest members of one of the diocese’s largest Hispanic parishes. Just outside the rear entrance of the friary is the back door to the Broadway Assistance Center where, every Thursday, the poor and homeless line up all around the corner of San Damiano in anticipation of a hot meal. In the adjacent building, Blessed Mother Teresa’s Missionaries of Charity set up their shelter for homeless women, “House of Mary,” in a re-designed section of the old St. Joseph School building.

San Damiano Friary is a large, two story brick building that looms over the busy intersection of 6th Avenue and Fox Street in one of the city’s poorest neighborhoods. In typical Franciscan fashion, the olive terracotta roof serves as a landing pad and nesting ground for the brother birds so beloved of Francis. Visible through the gated archways, passersby can glimpse



The interior courtyard of the San Damiano Friary.

the stone statue of Assisi’s saintly son standing beneath a cherry tree in the friary courtyard.

Seven friars currently reside at Denver’s newest Capuchin community. These are Frs. Christopher Popravak and Regis Scanlon as well as Bros. Barnabas Eichor, Joseph Mary Elder, Christopher Gama, Larry Bowers and Ryan Tidball. The latter five friars are students in various stages of the Capuchins’ formation program.



In a November 2008 ceremony, Archbishop of Denver Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M.Cap. blessed the new San Damiano Friary. Pictured: Fr. Bill Kraus, Archbishop Charles Chaput, Bro. Ryan Tidball, Fr. Regis Scanlon, Bro. Larry Bowers, Fr. Charles Polifka, Bro. Christopher Gama, Postulant Anthony Monahan, Bro. Joseph Mary Elder, Bro. Barnabas Eichor and Fr. Christopher Popravak.

The establishment of the Province’s newest friary provides an exciting opportunity for the friars in post-novitiate and ministry formation. When elected, the new Provincial Minister, Fr. Charles Polifka, asked the brothers of the province to give concrete expression to the core Capuchin values of poverty, austerity and prayer, values that characterize the spirituality of their fraternal life. For the friars in formation, the move to San Damiano Friary has been an opportunity to respond. Together, the friars of this fraternity communally determine the application of the Capuchin ideals.

## Fr. Valentine's Planned Move Eastward

by Fr. Blaine Burkey, O.F.M.Cap.

In the last 16 months, since the previous edition of the *Provincial Porter* was published, Sister Death has been a frequent visitor to the Mid-America Province. She has come to take five of our 57 professed brothers to the Father.

Fr. Joe Schreck was the first to leave us on February 9, 2008. In rapid succession he was followed by Fr. Malachy McBride on May 1, Bro. Gene Pellegrino on May 3, and Fr. Thomas More Janeck on June 8. Recently, on February 6, 2009, another of our Capuchin brothers, Fr. Valentine Young, joined the Province's Eternity Fraternity. Fr. Valentine was the retired pastor of St. Patrick's Church, administrator of St. Joseph's Shrine, and director of the Catholic Information Center, all based in St. Louis, Missouri.

In subsequent issues of the *Provincial Porter*, we will remember each of our departed brothers at greater length. For now, we focus on Valentine, whose departure is still so fresh in our memory.

Val brings so much to mind. The Province honored him for his outstanding service to the poor in St. Louis by awarding him its highest recognition for ministry, the Conrad Key, in 2001. Val's own favorite memory was the week in 1978 when he hosted Blessed Mother Teresa.

His prowess on the golf course frequently led to his being photographed with the likes of Arnold Palmer, Nancy Lopez, and Chi Chi Rodriguez. During his time in St. Louis, Val also cultivated an outstanding collection of rose bushes.

After serving a dozen years on the faculty and staff of his alma mater, St. Fidelis Seminary in Herman, Pennsylvania, Val was stationed in St. Louis for over 47 years during which he deeply touched the lives of thousands. He brought many into the Church, many others he baptized or married. For still others, he prepared their loved ones for death.

In 2008, the Mid-America Province made the decision to close two friaries in St. Louis, ending 64 years of Capuchin presence there. Nine friars moved to friaries in Kansas and Colorado, where all of them had earlier been stationed. However, Val's only experience westward had been the two years he studied philosophy in Victoria, Kansas as a post-novice in the mid-1940s. Therefore, when faced with a move from St. Louis, his sights turned eastward to friaries in the Pennsylvania Province where he would be closer to family members.

Hundreds of Val's friends said goodbye throughout his last months in St. Louis, without knowing the finality thereof. To prepare for the painful and looming departure from St. Louis, a Jubilee Mass was celebrated at the Shrine of St. Joseph on October 5, followed by a magnificent banquet. Over 500 close friends and many family members gathered to celebrate Val's 60 years as a priest, his 25 years as spiritual administrator of the Shrine, and his 86th birthday. Unbeknownst to most of the celebrants, six days earlier Val had learned that he had esophageal cancer, which later proved to be inoperable. Val underwent a series of radiation treatments which seemed to offer promise he would be able to return to a normal life.

Before Val had recovered enough to move east, St. Patrick's Friary closed, so he moved west to Denver for rest and rehabilitation. In an unexpected turn of events, however, the cancer reappeared aggressively and Val went home to heaven.

Val's passing is presently our most vivid memory. His blood brother and best friend, Fr. DeSales Young of the Pennsylvania Province, spent the entire afternoon of February 6 with Val, helping him prepare for his final voyage. But, Bro. Augustine Rohde, Val's dedicated caretaker for his last three months, was the only one present when Val breathed his last around supper time that evening. Only Val's body went eastward, where it was buried in SS. Peter and Paul's Cemetery in his hometown, Cumberland, Maryland. He was buried on St. Valentine's Day.



A shared moment between Fr. Valentine Young and the Blessed Mother Teresa in 1978 when Fr. Valentine hosted her visit to St. Louis, Missouri.

# Porter glimpses

## St. Fidelis Friary, Victoria

The St. Fidelis friars welcomed Fr. Simon Conrad to their fraternity in December 2008. Previously, Fr. Simon lived in St. Louis, Missouri for 20 years.

The Capuchin Center for Spiritual Life continues to sponsor retreats and recollection days for various groups. Director of the Center, Fr. Michael Scully, is offering retreats and adult education talks at the Center and around the Diocese of Salina. These retreats and talks focus on the Catholic Church in the United States, the Life and Writings of St. Paul, and Catholicism 101.

Fr. Michael has released his latest book, “The Message of Youth”. It is being distributed throughout the United States by St. Fidelis Parish.

Bro. Joseph McGlynn cooks for the friars and for guests of the Capuchin Center for Spiritual Life. His culinary artistry has been praised throughout the state of Kansas.

## St. Conrad Friary, Lawrence

When the Chief of Chaplains at the Colmery-O’Neil Medical Center left this Kansas VA hospital to accept another position, Fr. Jim Moster took on interim administrative duties for four months. Relieved that the VA has hired a new Chief, Fr. Jim is grateful to return his focus to patient care.

Fr. John Schmeidler has been selected by the Teens Encounter Christ (TEC) organization, a national movement of Catholic spirituality for older adolescents and young adults, to be a presenter in training leaders in Nicaragua. After brushing up on his Spanish, Fr. John flew to Managua in mid-March and spent several days helping establish TEC in Nicaragua. Fr. John has been active in TEC for years, and currently participates in the movement in the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas.

Fr. Earl Meyer is presenting a six-part series of Lenten reflections, the Passion Narratives of the Four Gospels, at St. John the Evangelist parish in Lawrence, Kansas. Fr. Earl has also been basking in the sweet glow of Super Bowl victory. His beloved hometown Pittsburgh Steelers did not disappoint him!



Fr. Earl Meyer proudly shows his support for his beloved Pittsburgh Steelers.

Fr. Duane Reinert recently co-authored an article with Dr. Carla Edwards, professor at Northwest Missouri State

University, titled “Attachment Theory, Childhood Mistreatment, and Religiosity.” The study appeared in the inaugural issue (February 2009) of *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*.

## St. Joseph Friary, Hays

Fr. Canice Froehlich moved from St. Patrick’s Friary in St. Louis, Missouri to St. Joseph’s in December 2008 and has settled in nicely. Now a fraternity of five, Fr. Canice’s presence has been a blessing and has added greatly to St. Joseph’s fraternal life.

Fr. Curtis has also settled into his new ministry as pastor at St. Mary’s Church in Ellis, Kansas and is enjoying his new assignment. The Capuchins served the parish for many years before returning its care to the diocese in the early 1990s.

## Our Lady of the Angels Friary, Colorado Springs

Our Lady of the Angels friars have been supporting their Bro. Felix Shinsky in wake of his mother Stella Shinsky’s death on February 20 at the age of 93. Bro. Felix was with his mom in Latrobe, Pennsylvania when she passed. The local friars’ celebration of Bro. Felix’s 50th anniversary of profession, scheduled for February 22, was postponed but Mass was offered for him that day.

Frs. John Toepfer and Frank Grinko concelebrated at the diocesan Mass for the World Day for Consecrated Life on February 21. Colorado Springs Bishop Michael Sheridan presided. The Mass was celebrated at Mount St Francis.

## Solanus Casey Friary, Colorado Springs

The Christian Foundation for Children and Aging (CFCA), for which Fr. Cyrus Gallagher preaches regularly, invited him to India to participate in a two-week Mission Awareness Trip (MAT) in January 2009. The MAT offered first-hand experience of the mission of CFCA as a sponsoring agent for more than 310,000 needy children, youth and elders in 27 countries. Fr. Cyrus’ participation gave him valuable experience of the day to day benefits of CFCA programs. “What struck me first and strongest was the gratitude and sincerity of the persons sponsored,” Fr. Cyrus said.

Fr. Cyrus is also pursuing the renewal of his ministry to those incarcerated at the Federal Prison Complex in Florence, Colorado. Fr. Cyrus looks forward to the possibility of reclaiming this ministry at this “Super-Max” federal prison where some of the nation’s most dangerous felons are held.

## San Damiano Friary, Denver

Fr. Regis Scanlon recently printed new program brochures with the goal of attracting new volunteers to minister with him at prisons and jails across northern Colorado.

In his role as a member of the General Commission for Capuchin Constitutions, Fr. Christopher Popravak travels to

## Porterglimpses (continued)

Rome approximately every three months. This Commission is tasked with reviewing the text of the Capuchin Constitutions and proposing changes or updates to the General Chapter in 2012.

### Fraternidad San Antonio, Denver

Bro. Augustine Rohde has returned to Denver after living in St. Louis, Missouri for several months while caring for the health needs of Fr. Valentine Young. Bro. Augustine is a registered nurse and has resumed his health ministry at Sacred Heart Church in Denver on the weekends. In addition, he works in health ministry at Denver's Samaritan House.

Fr. Francisco Ramirez has initiated a stewardship program at Annunciation Church. The program is focused on faith renewal as well as cooperation and collaboration in building the Annunciation community. The Church will celebrate 125 years as a parish in 2009. Capuchin pastors have shepherded the parish since 1970.

### St. Francis of Assisi Friary, Denver

As "host" friary of the Province, St. Francis recently welcomed many visitors including: Capuchin Cardinal Sean O'Malley of Boston, Massachusetts; Capuchin Bishop John Corriveau of Regina, British Columbia; Franciscan Bishop Luis Morao Andreasza of El Salvador; two Capuchin friars from Eritrea, Africa and two Capuchin missionaries to Papua New Guinea.



Fr. Charles Polifka, Provincial Minister, accepts Anthony Monahan into the postulancy program. Fr. Gene Emrisek, Postulancy Director, stands ready to bestow a pendant Franciscan Tau cross as a symbol of postulancy.



The Denver-based Capuchin friars, the Capuchin Poor Clare Sisters and several guests enjoyed a fabulous cookout after Anthony Monahan's Postulancy Acceptance Ceremony.

Anthony Monahan was "Tau-ed" into the postulancy in September 2008 during Evening Prayer at the friary chapel. Following the ceremony, special guest, Capuchin Bishop and former Minister General John Corriveau, the Capuchin Poor Clare Sisters of Denver and the Denver-based friars enjoyed a wonderful cookout.

In October, the administrative and development offices of the Capuchin Province of Mid-America moved out of the friary into the new Capuchin Administration Building. As a result of the move, the friars appreciate the decrease in traffic flow through their home.

Last fall, Fr. Blaine Burkey underwent a medical procedure involving the placement of three stents. Fr. John Lager recently had eye surgery to repair a detached retina. He was temporarily assigned to bed rest and is healing nicely.

### Capuchin Poor Clares, Denver

The Capuchin Poor Clare Sisters of Denver will host a conference at Denver's Loretto Retreat Center in June. Led by Fr. Juan Maria Castro, delegate of the Minister for Capuchin Poor Clares, the conference will include the sisters of the Our Lady of the Angels Federation from monasteries in Wilmington, Delaware; Amarillo, Texas; Alamo, Texas and Pueblo, Colorado.

### General Curia, Rome

In February 2009, Delhi Media House published Fr. Julian Haas' book, *Mark's Gospel: Catechumenal Way of the Lord to the Father*. The book is 422 pages and, as noted in the book, guides "believers in any household of the ecclesial community in a religious experience of the Gospel according to Mark."

## Have an Old Car to get Rid of?

Do you have you had an old car, truck, van or boat taking up space in your garage? Now's the time to take action!! The Capuchin Province of Mid-America can help you clear out those old jalopies. The Province has partnered with Vehicles for Charity ([www.vehiclesforcharity.org](http://www.vehiclesforcharity.org)) to accept donations of vehicles from anywhere in the United States. Vehicles should be in running condition and will be towed by Vehicles for Charity. Vehicles will be sold at an auto auction or to a salvage company. Proceeds benefit the Capuchin Province of Mid-America and Metropolitan Association for Retarded Citizens. For additional details, contact Meghan Curtis at 303.433.0296 x106 or visit the Capuchins' website at [www.capuchins.org](http://www.capuchins.org).



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The *Provincial Porter* is a quarterly publication of the Capuchin Province of Mid-America. The *Provincial Porter* is named for St. Conrad of Parzham (1818-1894), a Capuchin lay brother who spent most of his life as the friary's porter, or doorkeeper, in Altoetting, Bavaria. As the porter, St. Conrad welcomed people into the friary, received supplies and generously prepared and offered food to Altoetting's poor who would come to the friary door daily. Similar to St. Francis, he treated everyone with love, patience and a kind heart.

In many different ways, the Capuchin Province of Mid-America serves as a "porter"—welcoming everyone and providing for those in need. The *Provincial Porter* strives to keep our relatives and friends informed about the lives of the Mid-American friars.

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## VOCATIONS Update

In July 2007, Fr. John Lager was assigned as the Director of Vocations for the Capuchin Province of Mid-America. Since then, many young men have come forth to express an interest in the Capuchin life and charism.

In the past six months, the Province has hosted three Rebuild My Church retreats in Golden, Colorado and Victoria, Kansas. Thirteen men attended these retreats that focus on prayer, fraternity and reflections on Capuchin spirituality. Visits to Capuchin ministries to the poor are also a central part of the weekends. Recently, five men from across the country gathered at Mother Cabrini Shrine in Golden to attend one of the Province's Discernment Weekends. Currently four young men are preparing applications for the Province's postulancy program.

"I continue to be humbled by the dedication of the young men seeking admission to our Capuchin way of life. They are committed to the Church and want to live the Gospel as a witness in our modern world," reflects Fr. John. "Every day I ask the Lord in prayer to give these men the radical courage and grace to embrace the example of St. Francis of Assisi."

A Holy Week Discernment Retreat is planned at the Mother Cabrini Shrine April 8-12. Men interested in registering can do so by accessing the Vocations page on the Province's website, [www.capuchins.org](http://www.capuchins.org) or by contacting Fr. John at 303.981.1111.

The Province counts on the prayerful support of others for the four men who are applying to the postulancy program and for all young men who are contemplating a life of Capuchin fraternity and service to the poor.



Fr. John Lager and three attendees to a recent Capuchin Rebuild My Church retreat at Mother Cabrini Shrine in Golden, Colorado.