

SAINT JEAN BAPTISTE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Blessed Sacrament Novitiate

August 2009 Update on Novitiate

Brother Peter Harley professed first vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience on Sunday, August 2, and has moved to Chicago to begin seminary studies at Catholic Theological Union. Brother Johan Smit has returned to the Province of Saint Joseph following completion of the canonical year of novitiate and will continue his formation at the Congregation's European House of Studies in Brussels, Belgium.

Two novices of the American Province of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament began their novitiate at Saint Jean Baptiste on Saturday morning, September 8, 2007, in a simple ceremony during Mass in the community's house chapel, at which Father Norman Pelletier, Provincial Superior of the Province of Saint Ann, officiated and preached.

They are Brother Peter Harley, from Lower Manhattan, and Brother James Owens, from Albuquerque, New Mexico. Brother Peter taught for a dozen years in the New York City Public Schools, and Brother James practiced law. Their Director is Brother Michael Perez.

On Wednesday morning, August 20, 2008, Brother Johan Smit of the Province of Saint Joseph (Holland, Belgium, Germany, and Mozambique) began his canonical novitiate at Saint Jean Baptiste. Father Bernard Camiré, Superior, officiated at the service in the community chapel.

In welcoming Johan, Father Bernard commented on his coming to live and study in a part of the United States which, in the early seventeenth century, was colonized by Dutch nationals and still bears the imprint of the period, especially in prominent place names like Amsterdam, Harlem, and others. Brother Johan was accompanied to New York City by Father Aad Van Ruiten. He will attend the inter-congregational novitiate program weekly while Brothers Peter and James continue their novitiate formation as second-year novices. Both have become very involved in the local religious community and the parish.

The novitiate experience, which lasts two years, focuses on prayer, spirituality, the common life, the history of the vowed religious life, and the Eucharistic charism and mission of the Congregation. During the first year, known as the "canonical year," the novices take part in weekly classes with novices of other men's and women's religious orders from throughout the area as well as programming specifically designed for them as prospective members of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament. In the second year, they are sent on several short mission experiences elsewhere and return to New York City occasionally to process these. At the end of the novitiate, if they so choose and are accepted, they profess first vows of poverty, chastity in the celibate state, and obedience. These vows are renewed annually until final profession.

Saint Jean Baptiste was the first foundation of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament in the United States, opening in 1900.

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