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## **Father Christensen professes poverty, chastity, obedience**

Tanya Watterud

Bishop Samuel Aquila established a new religious order in the Diocese of Fargo during a May 31 Mass at the Cathedral of St. Mary in Fargo. He accepted the Third Order Franciscans of Mary Immaculate and Father Joseph Christensen into the order through his profession of vows.

"You are called to give witness to the kingdom of God in a radical way . . . a witness that our world radically needs," Bishop Samuel Aquila told Father Christensen.

The bishop spoke of the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience that Father Christensen was professing. "We live in a society that is consumed by materialism," Bishop Aquila said, noting that Father Christensen's vow of poverty would demonstrate to others "that all depends on God." "We live in a world that gives in to the passions so easily," the bishop said. "In living chastity you are a reminder that true happiness is found only when one's sexuality is ordered to the will of God."

In Father Christensen's vow of obedience, "you must be totally attuned to what God is calling you to do," Bishop Aquila said. He used Mary's obedience as an example, noting how she trusted completely in God. Bishop Aquila spoke of St. Francis. "Francis is one who lived the Gospel, he is one who suffered greatly . . . one with whom both the crib and the cross were united."

The shield, or logo, of the Third Order Franciscans of Mary Immaculate includes the crib of Christ, the cross of Christ and the crown of glory symbolizing the resurrection of Christ. The motto of the religious community is "We are with Christ at the Crib in adoration; through the Cross in dying to self; and in dying with Christ, sharing his glory with the Crown of eternal life."

Also during the Mass, Father Christensen enrolled candidates Dennis Narlock, Michael Pelletier and Kevin Wanner in the Miraculous Medal. "Candidacy begins the first year of formation," Father Christensen told New Earth. "Being enrolled in the Miraculous Medal is a way of marking the beginning of their formation and welcoming them as candidates to the community."

The friary for the new religious community is called St. Francis Friary and is at the St. Stanislaus Rectory in Warsaw, N.D. Those who wish to provide financial support for this new religious community or send prayer requests may mail them to: St. Francis Friary, 6098 County Road 4, Minto, ND 58261. The phone number is (701) 248-3020.