

Local men profess vows as Dominicans

Two graduates of the University of Maryland College Park took a step closer to becoming Dominican priests after professing their solemn vows late in the summer of 2011 at the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, D.C.

Dominican Father John Langlois, vicar provincial of the Province of St. Joseph, received the profession of Brother Leo Checkai of St. Margaret in Bel Air and Brother Peter Martyr Joseph Yungwirth of St. Ann in Hagerstown, each of whom took lifelong vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.

Both entered the Dominican order in 2007. They will continue their studies and will be ordained to the transitional diaconate and then the priesthood in the coming years.

Brother Peter said he was drawn to the Dominicans because of the order's focus on community life. He had been involved in pro-life outreach and had been a lector and youth group member at St. Ann.

"The Dominicans pray together - the liturgy of the hours, community prayers, the rosary," said Brother Peter, who earned his bachelor's degree in history and who currently works with the chaplain's office at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda. "Doing all of these things in common really drew me. It fostered my spiritual life."

Brother Leo, who earned his bachelor's degree in physics, taught confirmation classes at St. Mary's School in Landover Hills. He now ministers with Project Rachel.

The Dominicans, known as the “Order of Preachers,” were founded in 1216 by St. Dominic de Guzman in southern France. The Province of St. Joseph, based in New York, has nearly 300 Dominicans who are engaged in parish ministry, campus ministry, foreign missions, retreat work and education. There are more than 6,000 Dominican friars worldwide.

Dominicans serve in Baltimore at Ss. Philip and James and The Johns Hopkins University.