

# Dominicans serve at St. Vincent de Paul

By: Jessica Able / The Record

Dominican Brother Frassati Davis has spent his summer with the sole purpose of pointing others to Christ.

He and Dominican Brother Bartholomew Calvano have attempted to fulfill that mission during their summer assignment at the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

The two young Dominicans are students at the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, D.C., where they are in formation to be priests. While in Louisville, they are residing at St. Louis Bertrand Church, which is administered by the Dominicans, and serving at St. Vincent de Paul.



**Brother Frassati Davis assists a friend in need at the Society of St. Vincent de Paul's food pantry. Brother Davis and Brother Bartholomew Calvano, both students at the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, D.C., are spending their summer living at the St. Louis Bertrand Church and working at St. Vincent de Paul. (Photo: Jessica Able)**

Brother Davis, 25, said if he can help point people to Jesus, “then I have fulfilled my call to serve as a religious.”

Brother Calvano, 26, said his experience so far this summer has helped him to see Christ in the poor.

“My hope is that it will help me to keep in mind the church’s preferential option for the poor in whatever ministry I end up in.

“Most of all it helps me to see that there is nobody that God does not love and that is the main message that as preachers we need to have,” said Brother Calvano, who is from Chesapeake, Va.

God, he said, is a father who loves his children and wants them to come home to him.

Each summer while Dominicans are in formation, they are sent to one of the Dominican houses in their province to live and work in the community. During the first two years, Brother Calvano said, the assignments are related to the corporal works of mercy.

The two Dominicans arrived in late May and jumped right into the ministries and programs offered at St. Vincent de Paul, said Donna Young, St. Vincent de Paul director of volunteers and conference affairs.

“Just their presence of being here gives our clients and those we serve an idea of religious,” Young said. “To see young people that are so down to earth and with a willingness to be of assistance says a lot about the Catholic faith and what we do.”

Each day for the brothers is a little different. In an attempt to understand the breadth of the programs offered by St. Vincent de Paul, Brothers Davis and Calvano take part in a variety of ministries.

They lead a Bible study group for anyone who is interested. The two eat lunch with guests at the Open Hand Kitchen. They also assist in the Food Pantry, visit with women at the St. Jude Women's Recovery Center and play with children at the Family Success Center.

Brother Davis, a native of Omaha, Neb., said the commonality he sees in each program that St. Vincent de Paul offers is the desire to recognize the dignity of the human person.

"They (clients) want to be validated. They seek companionship," he said.

In order to address their spiritual needs, Brother Davis noted, material needs must first be tended to.

"St. Vincent de Paul has given us a crash course in seeing how the church is able to meet the needs of others.

"Homelessness is tragic. Alcoholism and addiction are destructive and messy. But the St. Vincent de Paul Society is able to carry out the work of the church by willingly going into the lives of these people with courage and trust in providence.

Brother Davis said that knowing God is present, even in these "messy situations," is important to his formation and future ministry.

Dominicans in formation have been coming to St. Vincent de Paul for the last 12 or 13 years, Young said. Long-time clients at St. Vincent de Paul look forward to their return each summer.

"Our goal is just to expose the brothers to the work they are going to be doing when they become priests, to expose them to some of the problems they are going to encounter," she said. "And it gives our clients and people on campus a whole new understanding or exposure to religious."