

**Diocesan Convention 2009**  
**Vocational Discernment Program**  
**The Rev. John Crean, Director**

The Vocational Discernment Program (VDP) exists to prepare and screen *aspirants*, those persons wishing to discern the next stage of God's call on their lives. This next call may be discerned as to an *enhanced baptismal ministry*, to *consecrated religious life*, to the *vocational (permanent) diaconate* or to the *priesthood*.

The VDP staff consists of a director and three other faculty members. The director and two other faculty members teach courses in three complementary subject areas of spirituality; another faculty member conducts group spiritual direction. VDP faculty meet about ten times a year with frequent e-mail and telephone contact.

The 2008 VDP session met every two weeks from the weekend of August 22/23 through the weekend of December 5/6 at The Franciscan Center in Lowell. The format has included Friday evening and all day Saturday for a total of eight weekends. In 2008, four aspirants and three spouses participated, i.e., three married couples and one single person. 2008 marked the fourth year of the program. Participants and faculty shared all meals and common worship together, creating a congenial learning and worshipping community.

We hope to have at least six aspirants in the 2009 VDP Class, which will also meet at least some of the time at The Franciscan Center in Lowell. The program is currently in revision. An updated program description with application blank may be found on the EDWM Website.