2-2-2001

Cut the Tail! Priest with Ponytail Raffles Off Locks to Send Students to Haiti

University of Dayton

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CUT THE TAIL!
PRIEST WITH PONYTAIL RAFFLES OFF LOCKS TO SEND STUDENTS TO HAITI

DAYTON, Ohio — You can’t miss the Rev. Ken Templin, S.M., at the University of Dayton. He’s the popular priest with a ponytail who lives and works in the middle of UD’s student neighborhood.

Some students affectionately greet him by tugging on the swaying tail. “Enjoy it while you can,” he tells them.

The campus minister is losing his trademark ponytail in a raffle that will help pay for 14 UD students to travel to Haiti over spring break to learn firsthand about life in a developing country. The winner will clip Templin’s ponytail at noon on Tuesday, Feb. 13, outside Kennedy Union, weather permitting. The event, dubbed “Cut the Tail,” will be Webcast live to interested alumni and friends around the globe.

UD’s Center for Social Concern is selling raffle tickets for $1 apiece after Templin’s standing-room-only 9 p.m. Mass on Sunday nights at the McGinnis Center on campus. Tickets are also available in the Center for Social Concern in room 107 in Liberty Hall or by e-mailing requests to organizer Alison Radelet at Aradelet@yahoo.com. The group is also accepting donations.

“We’re aiming high,” said Radelet, a Haiti Spring Break-Out veteran and co-coordinator of “Cut the Tail.” “We’re hoping to raise between $1,000 and $2,000.” In all, the students need to raise more than $10,000 to fund the trip.

Templin volunteered his locks after remarking to co-coordinator Emma Hayes that he
was "looking for change in his life." Hayes, another Haiti volunteer, suggested he cut the ponytail and eventually hounded Templin into submission. But Templin plans to grow it out again after the snipping, according to Radelet.

"I'm really doing it because the kids asked me to do it," said Templin, who's sported the ponytail for more than six years. "Spirituality is always about letting go. If I can let go of my trademark, it's an opportunity for me to maybe change and grow spiritually."

Some students have expressed disbelief that Templin will cut his hair. This is a priest who rarely dons a collar, enjoys wearing shorts until November and looks a bit like comedian George Carlin. His hair is part of his identity.

"We might have a mutiny on our hands. Some people say they won't cut it if they win," Radelet said of the drawing.

During the March 10-17 Spring Break-Out immersion in Haiti, students will stay at an orphanage for young boys in Port-au-Prince, visit schools and hospitals and offer a helping hand. The trip is one of 13 service trips sponsored by UD's Center for Social Concern. Instead of enjoying the sun and surf, 131 UD students will give up their spring break vacation to experience a different slice of life — from tutoring children at a rural elementary school in Pritchard, Ala., to serving in a soup kitchen and lobbying in Washington, D.C., to meeting civil rights leaders in the South. For more information, see http://www.udayton.edu/~csc/

"It's not exactly laying on the beach," said Radelet, a junior secondary education major from Detroit. "Often it's difficult to live in our culture and realize the reality of the world, the true poverty. We live with a distorted image (of the world). Trips like these help to remind us what our world really consists of."

The students traveling to Haiti have received donations to fund their trip through the Marianist communities on campus and their parishes at home.

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For media interviews, contact Alison Radelet at (937) 443-0024 or Aradelet@yahoo.com; Father Ken Templin at (937) 229-3570. For more information about Spring Break-Out, call Nick Cardilino, coordinator of community outreach and service clubs in UD's Center for Social Concern, at (937) 229-2524.