Founder of Covenant House to speak

by Laine Mullen Staff Wrtter

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This Sunday evening, Elon will welcome Father Bruce Ritter, a Franciscan priest and founder and of Covenant House, an international child care agency, to Whitley Auditorium at 8:00 p.m.

Ritter was ordained in 1956. He received his doctorate in Medieval Dogma two years later.

After studying in Rome, Father Ritter returned to the U.S. and taught at a number of high schools, colleges, and seminaries. In 1968, it was a challenge from his Manhattan College students that got him involved with helping street youth. His students challenged him to "practice what he preached," and he soon found himself working with runaway and throwaway children on the streets of New York's Lower East Side.

Father Ritter opened his first Covenant House in New York State in 1972. Since then, his program has expanded substantially. Covenant House currently operates five 24-hour-a-day crisis centers in New York, Houston, Toronto, Fort Lauderdale, and New Orleans. Additionally, there is a long-term residence in Antiqua, Guatemala and shelters in Panama, Hondorus, and Mexico City.

With the help of friends and volunteers, Father Bruce began running small groups to get these children off of the streets and away from the pimps and drug dealers who were using them for profit.

Today Ritter's Covenant House program offers food, clothing, shelter, medical attention, and round-the-clock counseling to over 20,000 homeless and runaway youth every year all across the globe.

His work on behalf of the homeless has earned him numerous awards and citations and in 1984, President Reagan singled out Father Ritter as an "unsung hero."

Father Ritter's visit is sponsored by the Newman Society. All students, faculty, and members of the community are invited to attend.



Look at this, taxpayers! Debra Johnson and Denise Adams pass out leaflets during Monday's "protest." the community about federal spending. For more detail see page 4.

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