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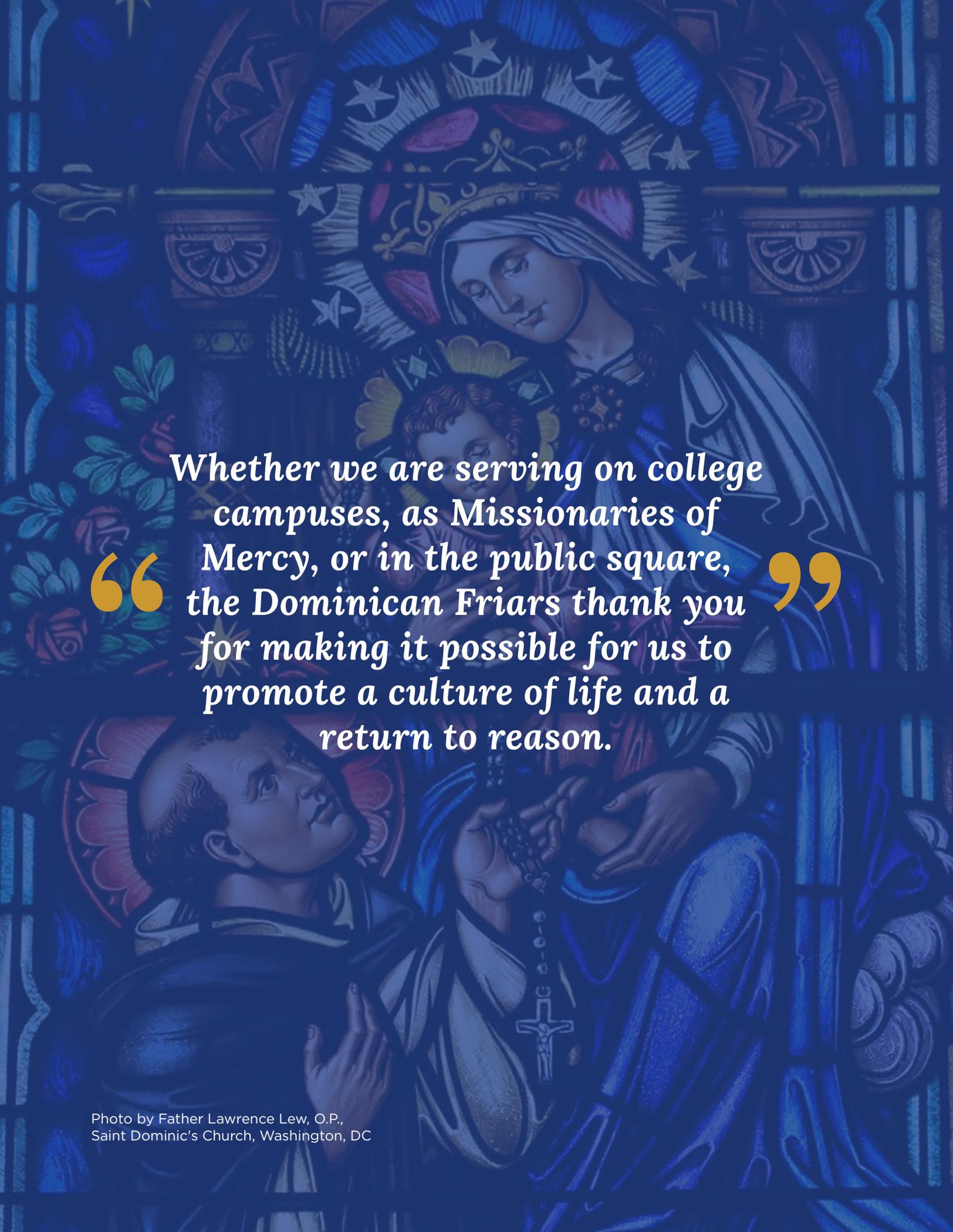
BLACKFRIARS

FRIARS FOR LIFE:

**Preaching Life,
Repentance, and the
Mercy of God with
Your Support**

Volume III, Issue I

Photo by Fr. Lawrence Lew, O.P.



“ Whether we are serving on college campuses, as Missionaries of Mercy, or in the public square, the Dominican Friars thank you for making it possible for us to promote a culture of life and a return to reason. ”

Photo by Father Lawrence Lew, O.P.,
Saint Dominic's Church, Washington, DC



Letter from the Director

Dear Friend,

“If you live today, you breathe in nihilism... it’s the gas you breathe. If I hadn’t had the Church to fight it with or to tell me the necessity of fighting it, I would be the stinkiest logical positivist you ever saw right now.” --Flannery O’Connor

In responding to Jesus’ call to be fishers of men, it is a challenge to haul aboard millennials because they have been exposed to a nihilistic culture that convinces them that truth is subjective. Relativism is like a red tide that causes water to become so depleted of oxygen that fish essentially drown.

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Young people today are immersed in these dark waters as this harmful tide is streamed into their lives, starving their minds of reason and causing a disregard for the givenness of things—an indifference that leads them to believe that nothing is really of consequence.

This is the ocean in which your children and grandchildren are now forced to swim. Saint Thomas Aquinas helps us to turn back the tide by teaching us that everything is of consequence, for the Son of God became incarnate, suffered, and was swallowed into the belly of the earth to redeem everything!

Because of your generosity, many young people are being saved from this sea of secularism. I hope you enjoy reading in this newsletter about some of the great catches of souls that you make possible, like the busloads of college students the friars bring to the Dominican House of Studies for the March for Life every year, or the women and men brought to repentance, conversion, and healing by Dominican pro-life preaching.

Whether we are serving on college campuses, as Missionaries of Mercy, or in the public square, the Dominican Friars thank you for making it possible for us to promote a culture of life and a return to reason. †

Father Gabriel Gillen, O.P.
Executive Director
Dominican Foundation

A DOMINICAN WITNESS TO THE SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE

By Br. Peter Gautsch, O.P.

Saint Dominic preached far, wide, and often about the goodness of creation. One way we friars continue to witness to the sanctity of human life—from its earliest stages—is to participate each year in various ways in the March for Life in Washington, D.C.

The night before the March, friars at the Dominican House of Studies pray Compline with as many visitors as the chapel will hold. Guests usually include Dominican sisters and various visiting college groups. We also host a Holy Hour in the National Shrine the morning of the March with music, preaching, and Morning Prayer.

In addition, the friars often act as deacons and acolytes for the Youth Mass at the D.C. Armory, and the House of Studies schola provides its musical talents. (This year Cardinal DiNardo jovially remarked, “I feel like I’m surrounded by Dominicans!”)

This year’s March was especially memorable because of the blizzard that descended on D.C.: the storm started minutes before the March began and continued for over a day, leaving two feet of snow in its wake. The friars, together with thousands of other marchers, were undeterred, coming out in force to witness not only that God “showers down snow like wool” (Ps 147:16) but that he “formed our inmost being, knit us together in our mother’s wombs” (see Ps 139:13). At the end of the March, in front of the Supreme Court, we gathered with our Dominican sisters to sing a hymn to Our Lady and St. Dominic, uniting our prayers with theirs for the legal and cultural recognition of the sanctity of human life. †



Photo by Fr. Lawrence Lew, O.P.
Br. Peter Gautsch, O.P., (2nd from left) and friars
singing a hymn at the March for Life

LEAVE A LEGACY OF LIFE

With your help, the Dominican Friars will continue to preach the dignity of human life to future generations of Americans. Your legacy will provide a strong antidote to life-threatening relativism in the lives of your children, grandchildren, and their peers: Dominican Preaching.

Contact Catherine Scalera in our Office of Planned Giving to learn more.



DONOR PROFILE

DIANA BANISTER:

The Pro-Life Movement and the Dominican Charism

Photo by Fr. Lawrence Lew, O.P.



Diana Banister is President of Shirley & Banister Public Affairs—the Washington-based firm that coordinates media outreach for the March for Life—and a member of the Dominican Foundation Board.

What is the state of the Pro-Life movement today?

The Knights of Columbus recently did a poll on what people believe about life issues, and 80 percent think there should be more restrictions on abortion. So we're winning young people. People are beginning to think of abortion as a human rights issue—that every human being should be given a chance for life and happiness. This is something all young people who are attuned to caring for others can understand.

What was unique about this year's March for Life?

The message of this year's March was that Pro-Life and Pro-Woman go hand in hand.

If you're Pro-Life, then you're Pro-Woman and if you're Pro-Woman, then you're Pro-Life. *Cosmopolitan* had a great article about the March that notes how we're actually turning hearts and minds on this issue and doing it in a joyful and positive way.

Why do you support the Dominican Friars?

I've always felt an attraction to the Dominican charism of teaching and preaching the Gospel because that's my business too: communication. To me, the Dominicans really embody John Paul II's call for a new evangelization. Their presence is growing here in DC, and they're reaching a lot of young people who want to learn more about their faith and more about the Church. †

PROJECT RACHEL MINISTRY: Healing the Trauma of Abortion

By Br. Pier Giorgio Dengler

For years—as an avid pro-lifer—I’ve known the “day job” of the Good Shepherd as He leads us to green pastures and guards us from the enemy. Through Project Rachel, I have come to know why He rejoices so greatly over the one who was lost and is found.

Project Rachel Ministry is a Catholic apostolate to those who have experienced the terrible loss of abortion and seek healing. It is active in nearly all 50 states at the diocesan level and restores hope to thousands of women and men stricken with the deep wounds of abortion. Through retreats, days of prayer, and support groups, participants embrace the forgiveness, healing, and hope that our Divine Savior extends to each of us.

In sessions with participants, my own role is to get out of God’s way. I sit with them and answer questions about the faith, the afterlife, and God’s mercy. I listen to women and men revisit the fears and despair surrounding their experience of

losing a child to abortion—and the anguish, isolation, and remorse that has pursued them since.

This past fall, I helped launch a broad outreach specifically to men inspired to counter the evil of abortion. We fast, pray, and offer spiritual works for each other and for those engaged with Project Rachel Ministry. Prayer, always vital for the Christian life, is paramount in the aftermath of abortion, since it is God’s grace moving in the hearts of wounded women and men that is the primary agent of healing. †

“This past fall, I helped launch a broad outreach specifically to men inspired to counter the evil of abortion.”

Br. Pier Giorgio Dengler, O.P. (right), at the 2015 March for Life



Q&A WITH FR. BENEDICT CROELL, O.P.: DOMINICAN MISSIONARIES OF MERCY

On Ash Wednesday, Pope Francis sent out over 1000 priests as Missionaries of Mercy, including 125 from the United States. Of these men, 18 are Dominican Friars from the Province of St. Joseph! BlackFriars spoke with Vocations Director Fr. Benedict Croell, O.P., about this initiative to bring sinners back to the Father through Jesus Christ.



Fr. Benedict Croell, O.P., at the March for Life

Why did Pope Francis call for priests to become Missionaries of Mercy?

The Pope's idea is to get people back into the Church. He's mandating Missionaries of Mercy throughout the world to preach a message of conversion and to hear confessions. Just by making ourselves available—my experience has been—if we preach God's mercy, people will go to Confession.

How can Missionaries of Mercy help those suffering from the sin of abortion?

In the United States, just about every diocese has already given priests faculties to absolve the sin of abortion, but, as Missionaries of Mercy, we might draw out those who may otherwise not have come. There are many people who are suffering the post-trauma of participating in an abortion. Some of them might feel so

terrible that they may be afraid to approach the sacrament of Confession or even enter a church.

Why did you apply to become a Missionary of Mercy?

I wanted to share that same mercy that I've experienced as a priest and to preach the message of the Gospel: that God the Father is all-loving and all-merciful and that Jesus is the face of the Father. God's grace working in the life of a person can liberate them. God is the one who acts. We're privileged to be part of the grace that God is bestowing on the Church right now, the grace of conversion. †

God's grace working in the life of a person can liberate them. God is the one who acts.



JESUS IN THE FLESH AND THE PROBLEM OF ABORTION

Adapted from a blog post on Dominicanajournal.com

By Br. Reginald Hoefler, O.P.

Restlessness seems ubiquitous today. People are uncomfortable with the stability of human nature and obsessed with the idea of personal autonomy. The abortion industry feeds on this discomfort because it offers us a way to pursue our bodily pleasures without being subject to their natural, biological consequences. Having children is an inherently selfless endeavor because it makes us give up our own freedom; but abortion provides us a way to avoid that.

Thus, for some, Church authorities seem to be trying to keep women from enjoying the kind of autonomy that is their “God-given right”: “A woman shouldn’t have to carry a baby to term if doing so would infringe upon her chosen lifestyle, should she?”

A few protesters on the steps of the Supreme Court sport signs like “Pro-faith. Pro-family. Pro-choice.” The newspapers show pictures of these “Pro-choicers” next to a few “Pro-lifers” but they often ignore the overwhelming presence of the March for Life. Why? The reality is that the activity

of the pro-abortion lobby and their media allies protects our cultural selfishness: it strives to ensure an autonomy such that we need not even be subject to our own biological processes.

God’s remedy for our restlessness was to become human and show us the goodness of our own nature. He renews this great act of mercy daily by giving us His own flesh in the Eucharist as healing for our unhappiness. He is infinite, and only He can fill our infinite longing for happiness. †



Tune into **Sirius XM129** every Friday at 1:00pm ET for the Dominican-hosted *Word to Life* radio broadcast.

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Director/COO	John Lacorazza
Planned Giving	Catherine Scalera
Marketing/IT	Barry Clark
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Editor	Matthew Kirby
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