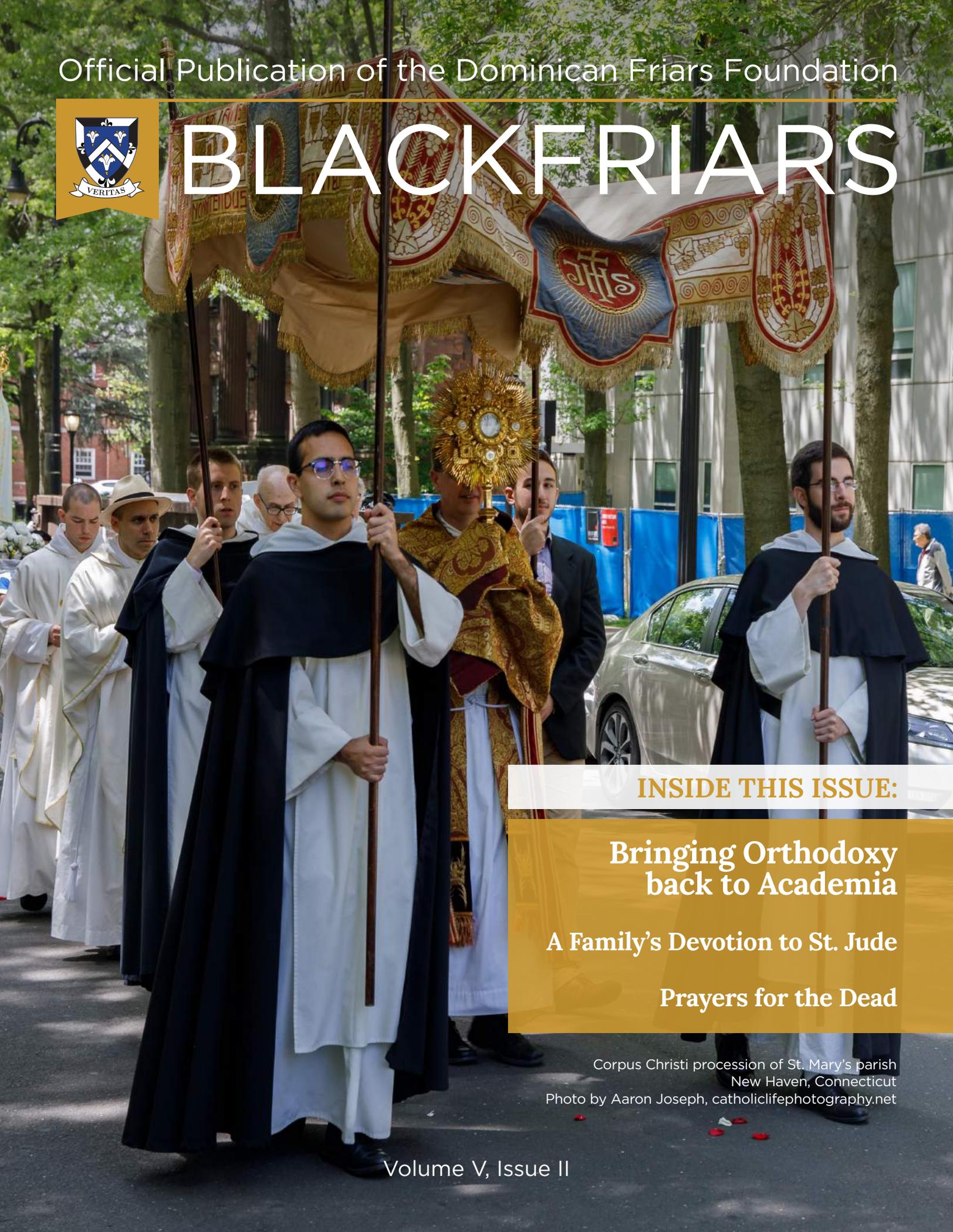


Official Publication of the Dominican Friars Foundation



# BLACKFRIARS



**INSIDE THIS ISSUE:**

**Bringing Orthodoxy  
back to Academia**

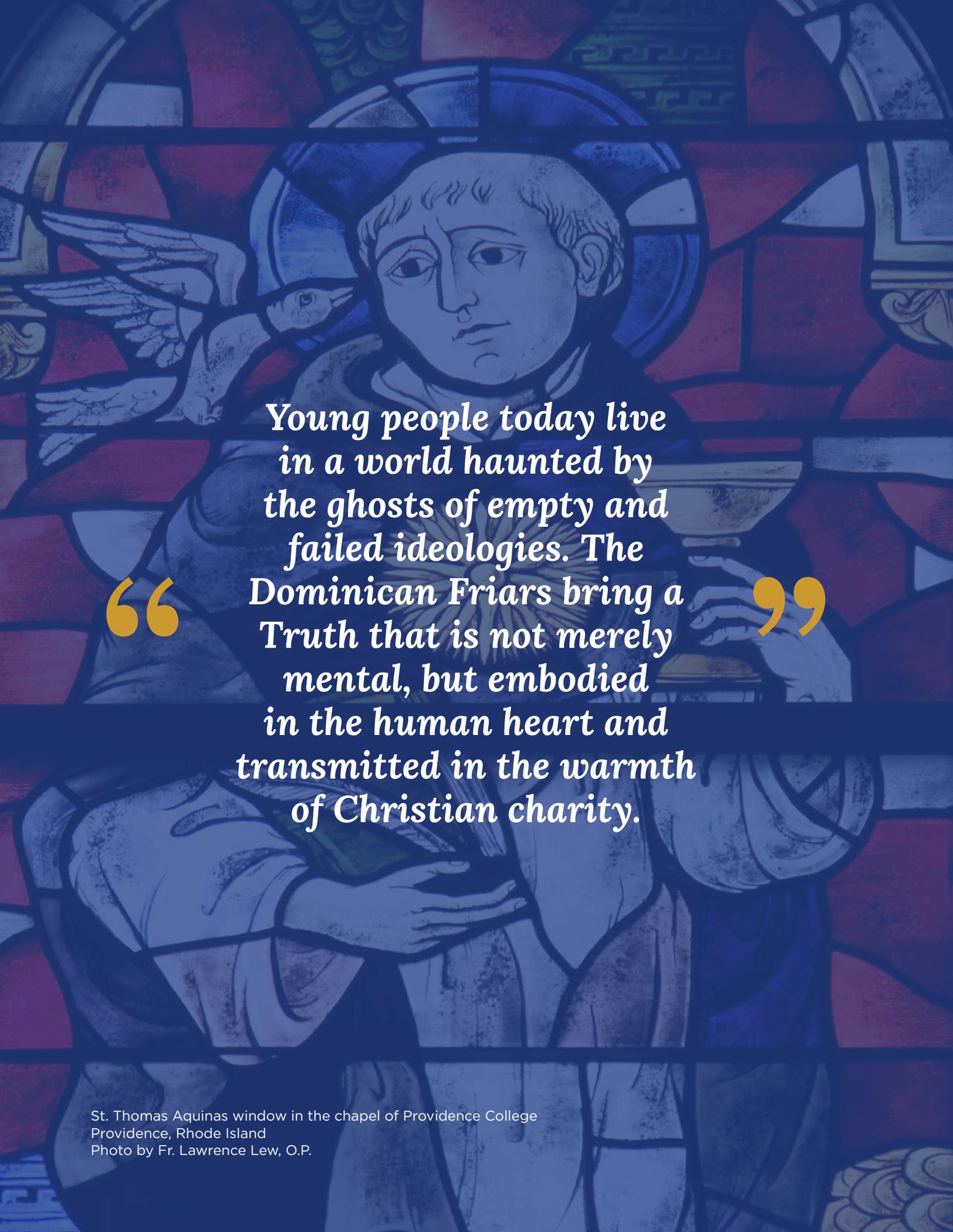
**A Family's Devotion to St. Jude**

**Prayers for the Dead**

Corpus Christi procession of St. Mary's parish  
New Haven, Connecticut

Photo by Aaron Joseph, catholiclifephotography.net

Volume V, Issue II

A stained glass window depicting St. Thomas Aquinas. He is shown from the chest up, wearing a blue habit with a white sash. He has a halo around his head and is holding a book in his left hand and a chalice in his right. To his left, a dove is shown in flight, symbolizing the Holy Spirit. The background is a mix of red, blue, and white panels.

*Young people today live  
in a world haunted by  
the ghosts of empty and  
failed ideologies. The  
Dominican Friars bring a  
Truth that is not merely  
mental, but embodied  
in the human heart and  
transmitted in the warmth  
of Christian charity.*



Letter from the Director

**Dear Friends,**

I was recently asked the question, “why is St. Thomas Aquinas depicted with a sunburst over his heart? Wouldn’t the brow be more fitting, since it points towards the brilliance of his mind?”

The sunburst on the breast of St. Thomas is most certainly a symbol of his teachings, which—themselves illumined by divine truth—bear forth light for the whole world. In fact, “*Lumen Mundi*” is one of his ancient titles.

The sunburst is also a sign of St. Thomas’ purity of heart. EWTN will soon air a BlackFriars Media documentary about our Angelic Warfare Confraternity, a spiritual community devoted to imitating St. Thomas’ legendary purity. (Include your email address in the attached envelope to receive a link to the video once it has aired).

The best reason for the location of the sunburst, however, is found in St. Thomas’ writings on the Eucharist. Normally bread is transformed into the one who eats it, but the opposite happens when we receive Holy Communion: we are incorporated into this Living Bread. We don’t consume the Eucharist as much as It consumes us and transforms our hearts into the heart of Christ! Aquinas did not simply hold this teaching in his mind but lived it out with his whole heart.

Thanks to your generosity, we Dominican Friars receive years of training in the thought of our elder brother St. Thomas Aquinas. As with him, this training penetrates not only our minds but our hearts as well. This is why—each year on the feast of Corpus Christi—friars take to the streets of New Haven, Connecticut;

New York City; and Charlottesville, Virginia bearing aloft the precious Body of Christ. We are eager to share this Truth that has transformed our hearts with a world hungry for true spiritual sustenance.

This is also why, as you’ll read in this issue, the friars are having success preaching the unity of faith and reason on secular campuses. Young people today live in a world haunted by the ghosts of empty and failed ideologies. The Dominican Friars bring a Truth that is not merely mental, but embodied in the human heart and transmitted in the warmth of Christian charity.

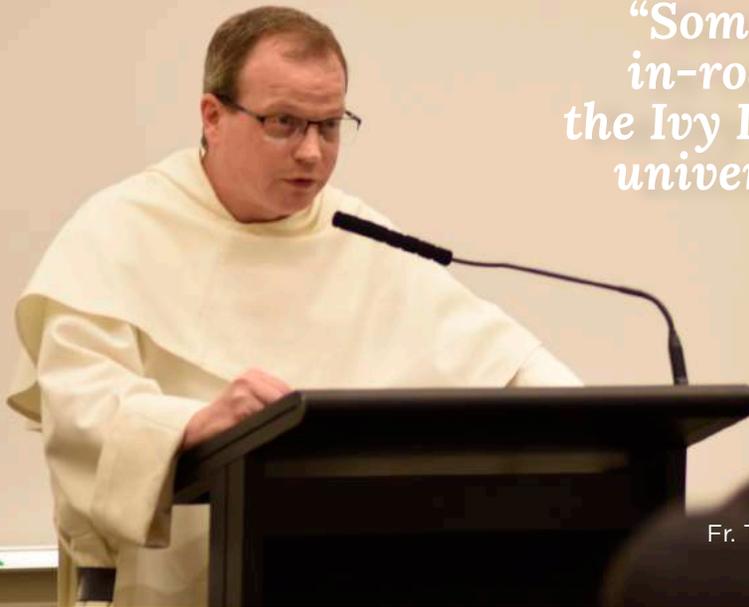
I also invite you to read the uplifting story of a family’s devotion to their patron saint told by a Providence College senior who is the product of a lifelong Dominican education.

Finally, I prepared a special essay on the Dominican tradition of praying for our deceased friends and benefactors; because as Our Lord taught, “I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world.” (John 6:51)

*Father Gabriel*

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

“Some of their most significant in-roads as of late have been in the Ivy League: those storied, elite universities that are ubiquitous with progressive politics.”



Fr. Thomas Joseph White, O.P., lectures at a Thomistic Institute event at NYU. Photo by George Goss.

## HOW THE DOMINICANS ARE BRINGING ORTHODOXY BACK TO ACADEMIA

THE ORDER IS CHALLENGING THE SECULAR CONSENSUS AT ELITE UNIVERSITIES

by Michael Davis

This article originally appeared in the *Catholic Herald*. Reprinted with permission.

The fight for America’s soul is being fought – and, it seems, lost – on university campuses. According to a 2017 survey by the Pew Research Centre, Millennials are more likely to identify as Democrats than Republicans by a 20-point margin. An even more astonishing poll, conducted in 2016, found that only 37 per cent had a “very unfavourable” view of communism. Fully 64 per cent agreed with the Marxian mantra, “From each according to his abilities; to each according to his needs.”

Christians struggle to confront this looming leftward tilt. The Evangelical Right has forged strong political alliances with politicians like Donald Trump (who can hardly be called a traditionalist) in the hopes of securing concessions on religious liberty. Others have advocated a retreat from mainstream society, as does Rod Dreher in his bestseller *The Benedict Option*.

But the Order of Preachers are redoubling their efforts to retake academia. Ten years ago, the Dominican House of Studies (DHS) in Washington, DC, established the Thomistic Institute in order to bring their charism to American and British students. What is that charism exactly? “To share with others the truth about the God whom we contemplate in our hearts.”

And so they have. The Thomistic Institute has student-run chapters on 30 campuses, including Oxford, in partnership with the English Dominicans. According to Fr. Thomas Petri, the dean of the DHS’s Pontifical Faculty of the Immaculate Conception, the Institute encourages “intellectual formation on substantive topics and issues at play in society today.”

In fact, some of their most significant in-roads as of late have been in the Ivy League: those storied, elite universities that are

ubiquitous with progressive politics. That doesn't surprise Fr. Dominic Legge, the Institute's new Director. "Contemporary secular universities don't always do a good job at addressing students' most important existential questions," he told me via email. "We've found that students feel very empowered when they can bring a speaker to campus who addresses the questions that other professors don't touch, especially if it is done in an intelligent and responsible way, drawing on the riches of the Christian intellectual tradition."

I attended a Thomistic Institute symposium at Harvard in March on the subject of "Liberalism and Christianity". The speakers included some major (and controversial) names on the American Right, including R.R. Reno of First Things and Julius Krein of American Affairs. I expected disruptions, or at least protests. Yet the conference went off without a hitch. There wasn't a single jeer—not one rude, pointed question during the Q&A.

What's their secret? The Thomistic Institute doesn't need to rile up left-wingers in order to generate a buzz. Their brand of gentle-yet-intellectually rigorous Catholicism is so foreign to the experience of many students that they can't resist the chance to meet them. According to Legge's predecessor, Fr. Thomas Joseph White, students often come to their university's chapter with questions to ask about the Faith. "Questions we typically encounter concern the compatibility of science and religion, and the nature of objective moral truth claims, but there is also a strong interest in basic Catholic dogma," he told me.

The Dominicans—the most intellectual religious order except, perhaps, the Jesuits—are uniquely suited to evangelize in this climate. "Most students have little formal training in theology or in some cases even



Thomistic Institute Director Fr. Dominic Legge, O.P., speaks with a student following a lecture.

basic catechesis, but they are intellectually sophisticated," Fr. White continues. "We try to give introductions to theology appropriately pitched to their level. This has proven quite popular."

In fact, the TI's rigour is itself part of the appeal, according to [Harvard Law School professor Adrian] Vermeule. "There is no comparable group, in my experience," he told me. "No forum or venue comes close to the Institute's unique combination of the highest academic and intellectual quality and the deepest, most vibrant Catholic faith. The only word for it is 'inspirational.'" So, even non-Catholic students are grateful for this remnant of Cardinal John Henry Newman's idea of a university. In his book by

*"No forum or venue comes close to the Institute's unique combination of the highest academic and intellectual quality and the deepest, most vibrant Catholic faith. The only word for it is 'inspirational.'"*



Fr. Raymond Snyder, O.P., of the Thomistic Institute speaks at the Institute's annual philosophy conference.

the same name, Newman wrote that tertiary education “gives a man a clear conscious view of his own opinions and judgments, a truth in developing them, an eloquence in expressing them and a force in urging them.” We should note that Newman’s “idea” isn’t about discourse for its own sake. Those who decry left-wing biases on campus often do so in the name of a kind of relativism. Christianity or Marxism, conservatism or socialism – all should be treated as equally valid. It’s another thing entirely to provide a forum for debate whose goal is to shun error and affirm truth. Then the TI steps into the fray – like Xenophon, outnumbered in a hostile country – prepared to do battle on behalf of the Faith.

*“Few other institutions are willing to stand against this new academic culture, which increasingly shies away from debate for fear of offending one party or another. So long as the Thomistic Institute remains in the fray, the war for America’s campuses will continue.”*

The intellectual Catholic renaissance these Dominicans are leading is indeed astonishing. It could very well prove a working model for Catholic universities, too: instead of watering-down the Faith, they may embrace it with thoughtfulness and charity.

But the Institute’s mission has implications for non-Catholics as well. Few other institutions are willing to stand against this new academic culture, which increasingly shies away from debate for fear of offending one party or another. So long as the Thomistic Institute remains in the fray, the war for America’s campuses will continue.

**Thank you for partnering with the Dominican Friars to restore right reason and an openness to faith at our nation’s colleges! The struggle will be a long one, however. Secular professors will continue to attack the Church’s teachings. We rely on your help to train new generations of men to win the hearts of young people by fervent prayer, clear reason, and the example of the apostolic life.**



Kelli Jenney with Fr. Gabriel Gillen, O.P.

## A FAMILY'S DEVOTION TO ST. JUDE

By Kelli Jenney

**Providence College senior Kelli Jenney has been Dominican educated since kindergarten. She attended high school at St. Vincent Ferrer in Manhattan and is active in campus ministry at PC, where she assists the friars chaplains. We would like to share with you her family's remarkable journey of faith.**

When my father was in second grade he was diagnosed with polio. It was the early 50's, so there was no cure or vaccine yet. My grandmother, Philomena, was very faithful and had heard about St. Jude. In Fall River, Massachusetts, not far from their home, was a shrine to St. Jude where a lot of miracles were happening, especially for the sick.

For two years, they travelled to the shrine every Sunday and prayed to Saint Jude, the patron saint of lost causes, for my father's healing.

At this time my father had monthly doctor's appointments and wore a leg brace.

After two years of prayer, at an appointment on Good Friday, the doctor started crying. My grandmother thought this meant the news was bad and she became really upset. Finally, the doctor stopped crying and said, "It's a miracle. Your son is cured of polio. There's no trace of the disease anymore, he's completely fine."

My grandmother attributed my father's recovery to St. Jude, and my whole family has been devoted to St. Jude ever since. My older sister and I both chose St. Jude as our confirmation saint in thanks that our father was able to live. We wouldn't be here without St. Jude.

Since then, my father has had many encounters with St. Jude. For example, when he was a bus driver in New York City, someone walked onto the bus, handed him a relic of St. Jude, and walked off. There have been many other little reminders for us to stay faithful to St. Jude and to continue to pray to him as our family's patron saint.



Kelli Jenney's father as a young boy



Would you like the friars to remember a departed loved one in prayer year round?

To enroll a name in our purgatorian society, visit:  
[dominicanfriars.org/purgatorian](http://dominicanfriars.org/purgatorian)

Photo: Praying for deceased friars, friends, and benefactors is an important part of the Dominican tradition.

## PRAYERS FOR THE DEAD

By Fr. Gabriel Gillen, O.P.

For years Hollywood has portrayed purgatory as something it is not. Movies like *What Dreams May Come* and *Gabriel* depict purgatory as a place in-between heaven and hell. But as Catholics, we believe that “all who die in God’s grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation...after death, they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven” (CCC, 1030).

Confirmed by the Councils of Lyons, Florence, and Trent, our belief in purgatory and the practice of praying for the dead has been around for thousands of years.

We read in the Old Testament that Judas Maccabeus “made atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin” (2 Macc. 12:46). In the New Testament, Saint

Paul offers petitions for a man who died. “May the Lord grant him to find mercy” (2 Tim. 1:18), he prays for Onesiphorus.

The greatest gift Dominicans offer our departed benefactors is the Mass. What makes this yearly September 5th Mass so special is that we pray for all donors since 1805! Their generosity lives on in our lives and works. The Order and its benefactors are united in the gifts offered. These men and women have offered us their material assistance— which helps us avoid being buried in anxious thought concerning the things of this world. For our part, we have offered them our spiritual assistance— which helps them avoid being buried in anxious thought concerning the things of the world to come.

Of course, their gift is not a ticket to heaven. Nor is our own offering some kind of escape from the world. The two offerings need each other in order to be sanctified. Our prayers and preaching assure them of God’s blessing, while their material support makes it possible for us to continue praying and preaching.

Executive Director  
Associate Executive Director  
Director/COO  
Planned Giving Director  
Marketing Director  
Editor

Father Gabriel Gillen, O.P.  
Father Thomas More Garrett, O.P.  
John Lacorazza  
Diana Kilarjian  
Barry Clark  
Matthew Kirby

Tune into **Sirius XM129** every Friday at 1:00pm ET for the Dominican-hosted *Word to Life* radio broadcast (now also available as a podcast).

### Dominican Friars Foundation

141 East 65th Street  
New York, NY 10065  
Phone: 212-535-3664



[www.dominicanfriars.org](http://www.dominicanfriars.org)



[facebook.com/dominicanfriars](https://facebook.com/dominicanfriars)



[vimeo.com/blackfriarsmedia](https://vimeo.com/blackfriarsmedia)



Blackfriars Media App