

The Newsletter of the Dominican Friars Foundation



# BLACKFRIARS

Fr. George Schommer, O.P. (left),  
and Fr. Timothy Danaher, O.P., greet parishioners  
outside of St. Patrick's Church in Philadelphia.

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

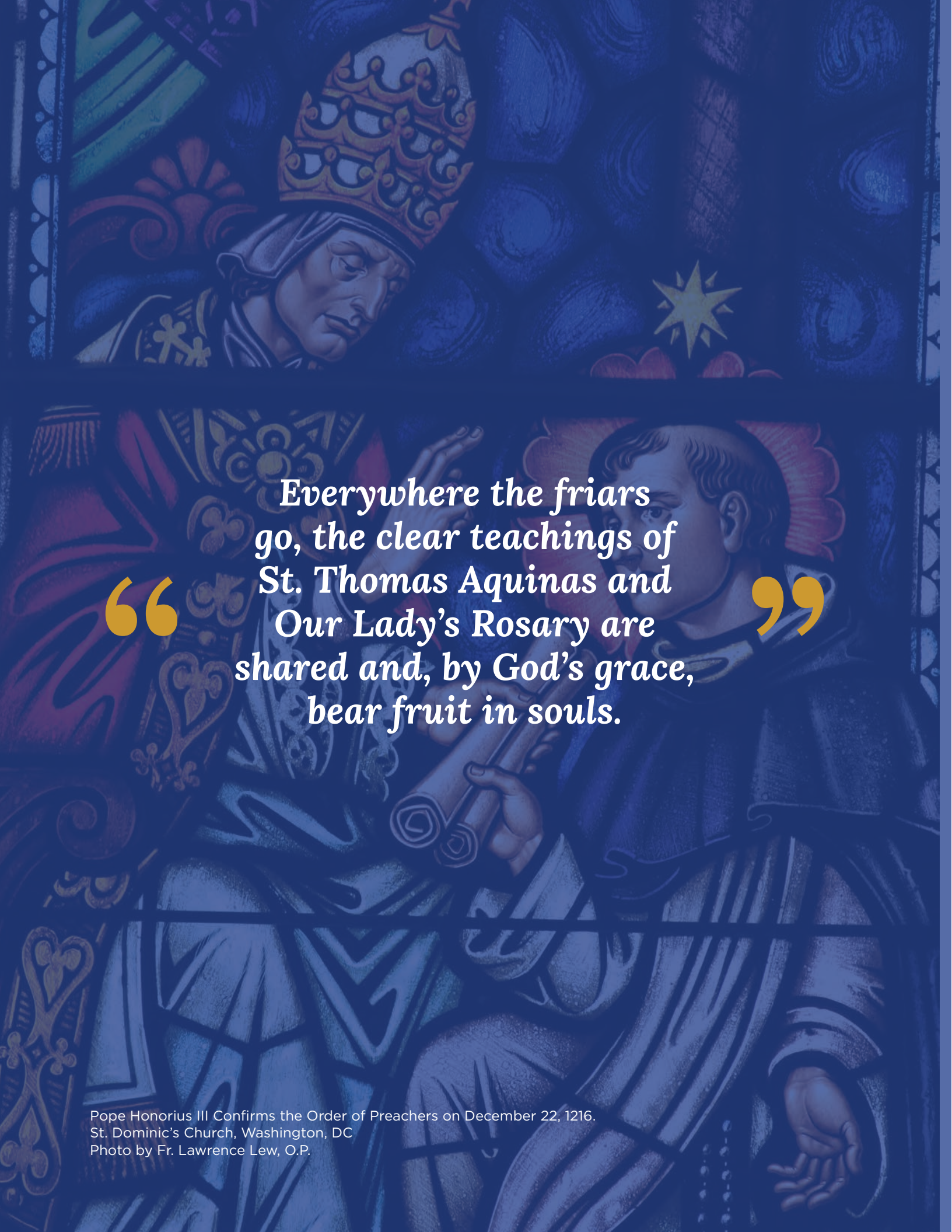
**Dominican Community  
Founded in Philadelphia**

**New Campus Chaplaincy at  
University of Louisville**

**Letter from the Prior Provincial**

Volume V, Issue III





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St. Thomas Aquinas and  
Our Lady’s Rosary are  
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bear fruit in souls.”

Pope Honorius III Confirms the Order of Preachers on December 22, 1216.  
St. Dominic’s Church, Washington, DC  
Photo by Fr. Lawrence Lew, O.P.



Letter from the Director

**Dear Friends,**

Thank you for never giving up! Being a Catholic today certainly isn't easy, which is why I thank you for continuing to fight the good fight with us. On my recent visit to our new apostolate in Philadelphia, I was reminded of the words of G.K. Chesterton on why we have a good reason to remain hopeful in the face of darkness: "Christendom has had a series of revolutions and in each one of them, Christianity has died. Christianity has died many times and risen again; for it had a God who knew the way out of the grave."

St. Dominic not only raised the son of a widow from the dead, but he also helped resurrect the Church in his own day by establishing, near the world's great universities, centers of sacred preaching—communities whose members were devoted to study, teaching, and prayer. The persistent efforts of the early Dominicans brought a new life of clarity to the Church at a time of confusion and contradictory teachings.

In this issue, you'll read about the friars faithfully following our founder's charism. The seeds of hope, which you have helped us plant, are now taking root near several major universities in Philadelphia along with our new campus ministry at the University of Louisville. Everywhere the friars go, the clear teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas and Our Lady's Rosary are shared and, by God's grace, bear fruit in souls.

Philadelphia has endured trying times in our country's history. As the Revolutionary War broke out, it fell under British occupation. When the British abandoned the city after the entrance of the French navy into the war, Benedict Arnold, the man who would become a notorious traitor to the American cause, became its military governor.

The people of Philadelphia, however, never gave in to discouragement. "With the blessing of Heaven, we have strength sufficient, if we will only exert it," one pamphlet decrees. "Let us then rise, like men, in earnest; let us not fall behind the other parts of the continent, but let the force of Pennsylvania be once more felt and acknowledged, as it often has been, by the enemy."

The church in Philadelphia still has this fighting spirit for freedom along with a Franciscan archbishop—Charles J. Chaput—who has a track record of renewal. By placing the Sacraments, the Rosary, and the theology of St. Thomas Aquinas at the forefront of their efforts, our friars in Philadelphia are wasting no time in teaching young minds the true liberty that can be only found outside of the dictatorship of relativism.

The devil rejoices every time he thinks his revolution has brought about the death of the Catholic Church. But he keeps forgetting one thing: we have a God who knows the way out of the grave.

*Father Gabriel*

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



# PROVINCE LAUNCHES NEW DOMINICAN COMMUNITY IN PHILADELPHIA

By *BlackFriars Staff*



From left: Fr. Timothy Danaher, O.P., Fr. Giles Dimock, O.P.,  
Fr. Edmund McCullough, O.P., and Fr. George Schommer, O.P.,  
at St. Patrick's Church in Philadelphia. Photos by Kathryn Norbeck



At the invitation of Archbishop Charles Chaput, the Dominican Friars have established a new Dominican community in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. The four founding friars will serve the parish of St. Patrick in Philadelphia's centrally located Rittenhouse Square neighborhood.

According to Prior Provincial Fr. Kenneth Letoile, O.P., the move "comes at a providential moment for us: vocations to our Dominican province have been increasing over recent years, and we have long wanted to return to Philadelphia in order to serve the vibrant local church there." Dominicans of the Province of St. Joseph previously served the Archdiocese as faculty members at institutions of higher learning and at Holy Name of Jesus Parish in the Fishtown neighborhood.

Fr. George Schommer, O.P., who was installed as pastor of St. Patrick's Church on September 30th, is optimistic about the opportunity: "My hope is that we can bring our Dominican charism for preaching, our love of the liturgy, and most importantly our love of the Lord, to bear on everything that we do."

In addition to Mass, confessions, and a Thursday night holy hour, the friars make themselves available to the community through a variety of initiatives. Parochial Vicar Fr. Timothy Danaher, O.P., leads a monthly Rosary Walk, is giving a five-part lecture series



Fr. Timothy Danaher, O.P., delivers "All of Aquinas" lecture at St. Patrick's parish hall.

on the theology of St. Thomas Aquinas, and serves as a volunteer chaplain at two area hospitals. Fr. Giles Dimock, O.P., senior priest in residence, facilitates a parish book club, which is currently discussing Rod Dreher's *The Benedict Option*. Fr. Edmund McCullough, O.P., teaches theology to juniors at St. Hubert's Catholic High School for Girls.

The friars are scheduled to meet with Archbishop Chaput in December. "He's a voice of orthodoxy. We also try to be that, so there's going to be some collaboration and good rapport," says Fr. Danaher, who was ordained a priest in May.

## MEET THE PHILLY FRIARS



**Fr. George Schommer, O.P.**

"Because Dominican formation happens in community, you're always relating with other people; you learn to respect their views and to be compassionate about their challenges and struggles. I think community life helps us in the end to be charitable in our ministry because we have to practice charity in community."



**Fr. Timothy Danaher, O.P.**

"The priesthood is a beautiful life—accompanying people, administering the sacraments, praying for and with them. A real part of the calling to the priesthood is to have joy! It's not only work: it has to be joy in God, joy in people, and joy in ordinary, daily life. And that's real for me."

According to Fr. Schommer, the sustained increase in vocations gives the Province a chance to broaden engagement: “We now have the opportunity to expand our presence in the Church in the United States and to be strategic about where we are and what contribution we can make to the local church.”

## MEET THE PHILLY FRIARS

**Fr. George Schommer, O.P.**, first encountered the Dominican Order as an undergraduate at Franciscan University Steubenville through his teacher, Fr. Giles Dimock, O.P., After asking Fr. Dimock about the Dominican life, he went on to read more about the Order, and eventually discerned that God was calling him to be a priest and a Dominican. Fr. Schommer

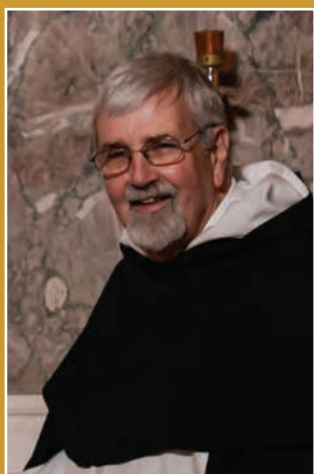
*“We now have the opportunity to expand our presence in the Church in the United States and to be strategic about what contribution we can make to the local church.”*

previously served as parochial vicar of St. Gertrude’s in Cincinnati, Pastor of St. Dominic’s in Washington, DC, and founding director of the Dominican Friars Foundation.

**Fr. Timothy Danaher, O.P.**, began considering a vocation to the priesthood as an undergraduate at the Franciscan University of Steubenville. He knew he was interested in the religious life through his exposure to the Franciscans, but was drawn to the Dominicans through two friends who had entered the Order, and by reading reflections by Dominican friars in *Magnificat*.

**Fr. Giles, Dimock, O.P.**, wanted to enter religious life since eighth grade, when he fell in love with St. Francis of Assisi by reading books about him at the local public library. A cousin who attended Providence College suggested he investigate the Dominicans. Impressed by the life of study, prayer, and preaching, Fr. Dimock entered the Order of Preachers after graduating from Providence College. Upon completing his formation, Fr. Dimock went on to teach theology and liturgy at Providence College, the Angelicum in Rome, Holy Apostles Seminary in Cromwell Connecticut, and Franciscan University of Steubenville.

After becoming more serious about his faith during college at Mount St. Mary’s University in Emmitsburg, Maryland, **Fr. Edmund McCullough, O.P.**, became a FOCUS missionary and was sent to New York University. There he met the Dominicans, who serve the NYU Catholic community as chaplains, and entered the novitiate.



**Fr. Giles, Dimock, O.P.**

“Philadelphia tends to be a more traditional diocese, and the fact that our seminary, which is also rather traditional, has received so many vocations—I think people notice that.”



**Fr. Edmund McCullough, O.P.**

“After getting to know the Dominicans in New York, I knew I wanted to be a Dominican. They combined the evangelical zeal of FOCUS and the intellectual engagement I had encountered in college. In Philadelphia, I hope that we can be a center of preaching, confessions, and outreach to young adults and families, as well as a place of vigorous Catholic intellectual life.”



## LETTER FROM THE PRIOR PROVINCIAL

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the Dominican Friars of the Province of St. Joseph, I extend to you our prayers for a grace-filled Advent season.

This beautiful time of hope-filled anticipation is especially significant for us Dominicans. On December 22, 1216, St. Dominic received from Pope Honorius III the Church's official approval for his new community with these inspiring words: *"Considering that the religious of your Order will be the champions of the faith and the true lights of the world, We confirm your Order."*

This anniversary never fails to arouse a profound sense of gratitude to God for raising up the Order of Preachers and Jesus's call to us to participate in this 800-year mission of bringing the Light of Faith to the nations.

The anniversary has a special resonance this Advent as the Church faces its messianic longing with a renewed urgency. St. Dominic's desire to found a new order came from his realization that the clergy of his time were not effective in responding to contemporary societal challenges. The Holy Spirit raised up the Order of Preachers in response to this crisis.

St. Dominic, however, never held himself above others, but grounded his preaching in a daily examination of his own faults. Imitating our founder, we as a Province are engaged in our own journey of repentance, transparency, and renewal. (To read a statement on child protection within the Dominican Province of St. Joseph, visit [opeast.org/about/child-protection/](http://opeast.org/about/child-protection/).)



Prior Provincial Fr. Kenneth Letoile, O.P., with Dominican novices

Reflecting on the origins of the Order illustrates an important point: guided by the Holy Spirit, the Church emerges purified and stronger after times of crisis.

Thank you for your prayerful remembrance of us this Advent season. We will be remembering you in our prayers as we prepare to welcome into our hearts God's Word made Flesh, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

St. Dominic, Pray for us,

*Very Rev. Kenneth R. Letoile, O.P.*

Fr. Kenneth Letoile, O.P.  
Prior Provincial



# UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE BECOMES LATEST DOMINICAN CHAPLAINCY

In September 2017, Fr. Martin Martiny, O.P., became the first Dominican chaplain of the University of Louisville, which has an estimated 7,000 Catholics in a student body of 22,500.

In the past year, the chaplaincy has organized volunteer excursions with Catholic Charities and Habitat for Humanity, a weekly theology course, lectures by a Vatican astronomer and other speakers, and a freshman retreat. Fr. Martiny offers daily Mass, adoration, and confessions on weekdays. The chaplaincy has been accepted by the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS), who sent missionaries to the campus in summer 2018.

"These elements promise to strengthen the Dominican approach embodied in 'Sow an act, reap a habit. Sow a habit, reap a character. Sow a character, reap a destiny,'" says Fr. Martiny.



According to Fr. Martiny, the students have "a real need for truth, and the stability that comes from knowing the truth about God and about themselves as human beings made in His image and likeness." To that end he asks that supporters of the Dominicans pray that the friars would "assist each member of the university to reap a destiny in Jesus Christ."

**With your support, the Dominican Friars are bringing a faithful Catholic perspective to a growing number of campuses and communities throughout our country. Thank You!**

Executive Director	Father Gabriel Gillen, O.P.
Director/COO	John Lacorazza
Planned Giving Director	Diana Kilarjian
Marketing Director	Barry Clark
Editor	Matthew Kirby

## **Dominican Friars Foundation**

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

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