

Official Publication of the Dominican Friars Foundation



# BLACKFRIARS

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Dominican Friars at the 2017 March for Life  
Washington, DC  
Photo by Fr. Lawrence Lew, O.P.

Volume IV, Issue I



Letter from the Director

**Dear Friend,**

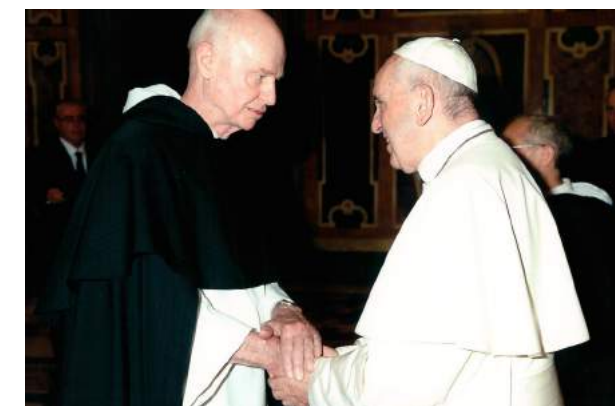
One of our traditional Dominican hymns begins with the words “O *spem miram*,” or “O wonderful hope.” The phrase refers to the promise of continued assistance that Saint Dominic left his brethren as he passed on to his eternal reward. Friars throughout the world chant the hymn in grateful expectation of his fostering from heaven his Dominican friars on earth.

A visible sign of our founder’s constant intercession was on display recently in Rome, where Pope Francis joined over 2,000 Dominicans to celebrate a Mass marking the closing of the Order’s 800th anniversary on January 21st. In his homily, the Holy Father contrasted the salt and light offered to the world through the preaching of the Gospel with the “carnival of worldly curiosity” constantly on offer in a modern society that lacks “solid and stable references” for navigating an increasingly complex environment.

The pope’s words remind us that we Dominican friars must see that this salt does not lose its taste so that the Gospel can shine ever more brightly. Whether through prayer or through preaching, our expanding province aims to cultivate within the world a taste for the Gospel. Your help fortifies us for the task. Through your heartfelt assistance, we are able to offer alternatives to the carnival of worldly curiosity.

In this issue, I invite you to read about the passion and dedication of our friars on display throughout the 2017 March

for Life as well as a touching account of one friar baptizing and confirming a new-born baby clinging to life in a New York City hospital and how our ancient confraternities are renewing the spiritual lives of Catholics in the modern world.



Our work in seasoning life with the salt of the Gospel represents a concrete expression of your contributions to our efforts. Together, we can continue to flavor our sometimes despondent and distracted world. We invite you to join our wonderful hope and continue to provide for those willing to ‘taste and see,’ a fixed point that aims squarely toward heaven.

Wishing you all the blessings that I can give,

*Father Gabriel*

**Photo:** Prior Provincial Fr. Kenneth Letoile, O.P., meets with Pope Francis in Rome during the Dominican General Chapter

“Whether through prayer  
or through preaching, our  
expanding province aims to  
cultivate within the world  
a taste for the Gospel.”



Photo by Fr. Lawrence Lew, O.P.



## REPORT FROM THE 44TH ANNUAL MARCH FOR LIFE

By Br. Henry Stephan, O.P.

**As students swarmed the National Basilica Shrine of the Immaculate Conception for the Vigil Mass for Life, across the street at the Dominican House of Studies, preparations were underway to receive hundreds of students as guests for Compline (Night Prayer), and then a pizza reception. What began some years ago as a way of welcoming students from our own Providence College has grown into a tremendous event, with a variety of colleges and universities seeking to join in the prayer and fellowship with the friars.**

How do so many different groups hear about the House of Studies as the place to be after the Vigil Mass? Some come from campuses where our friars teach or serve as campus ministers, while others were moved by a retreat or mission given by one of our preachers. For still others, student brothers invited members of their alma mater to join in the evening.

No matter what brought them in the door, once these young people crammed into the Chapel, they experienced a slice of the vibrant liturgical life of the Dominican Order: the ancient chanted prayers of the Divine Office, the steady rhythms of the Rosary, and the beautiful polyphony of our friars' schola. After Compline, many of the students waited to get pizza—surely a work of grace!—in



Friars with March for Life pilgrims at the Dominican House of Studies, Washington, D.C.

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*“The March for Life is always something of a Catholic reunion, and the Dominican banner serves as a rallying point for the many different parishes and groups associated with our province.”*

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Photo by Fr. Lawrence Lew, O.P.

order to be enrolled in the Angelic Warfare Confraternity, a Dominican apostolate dedicated to growth in chastity through the intercession of the Angelic Doctor, St. Thomas Aquinas [see page 7].

The friars' work for the March was just beginning as the hungry hordes polished off box after box of pizza. The student brothers were responsible for the final Holy Hour of the overnight vigil in the National Basilica Shrine, leading students in prayer and song, as one of our first-year brothers preached on the spiritual importance of reverence for life. Straight from there, many of the brothers quickly made their way down to the D.C. Armory to sing and serve the Rally Mass

immediately preceding the March.

The March for Life is always something of a Catholic reunion, and the Dominican banner serves as a rallying point for the many different parishes and groups associated with our province. Members of Dominican parishes from near and far mingled on the March, and many made their way to the House of Studies for a tour and Mass that evening or the day after.

Dominican black and white, from sisters and friars alike, always makes a strong impression. Aside from the witness of fraternity and God's goodness in providing many vocations, the March for Life offers an opportunity for the friars to show what we're all about: fidelity to the truth, contemplative prayer, theological preaching, a vibrant common life, and a deep commitment to serve the Universal Church. In just a few days, the outpouring of zeal and charity touches hundreds of souls, and opens the door for many to draw closer to Christ in the path of St. Dominic.

**Between now and May 31, donations to the Friars' pro-life ministries will be matched by an anonymous group of benefactors committed to promoting respect for the dignity of human life.**

# BLESSED ARE THE PURE OF HEART: Pilgrims Invoke St. Thomas at the Dominican House of Studies

Photo by Fr. Lawrence Lew, O.P.



## THE ROSARY CONFRATERNITY: SOLIDARITY IN PRAYER

An interview with Fr. Athanasius Murphy, O.P.

**Through the Confraternity of the Most Holy Rosary (also known also as the Rosary Altar Society), the friars offer the laity a way of participating in the Dominican form of life. Members commit to praying the 15 decades of the Rosary each week. BlackFriars sat down with Fr. Athanasius Murphy, Promoter of the Confraternity, to discuss this enduring devotion.**

**What effect does regularly praying the Rosary have on a person's life?**

Praying the Rosary allows one to dwell within the mysteries of Christ's life through the lens of Mary. The more we pray the Rosary, the more we see how transparent Mary became to her Son, Jesus, and we begin to see our own lives in a similar way. We see ourselves not as independent from God, but dependent upon Him and how He wishes to change us through his grace.

**What does membership in the Confraternity add to the practice of praying the Rosary?**

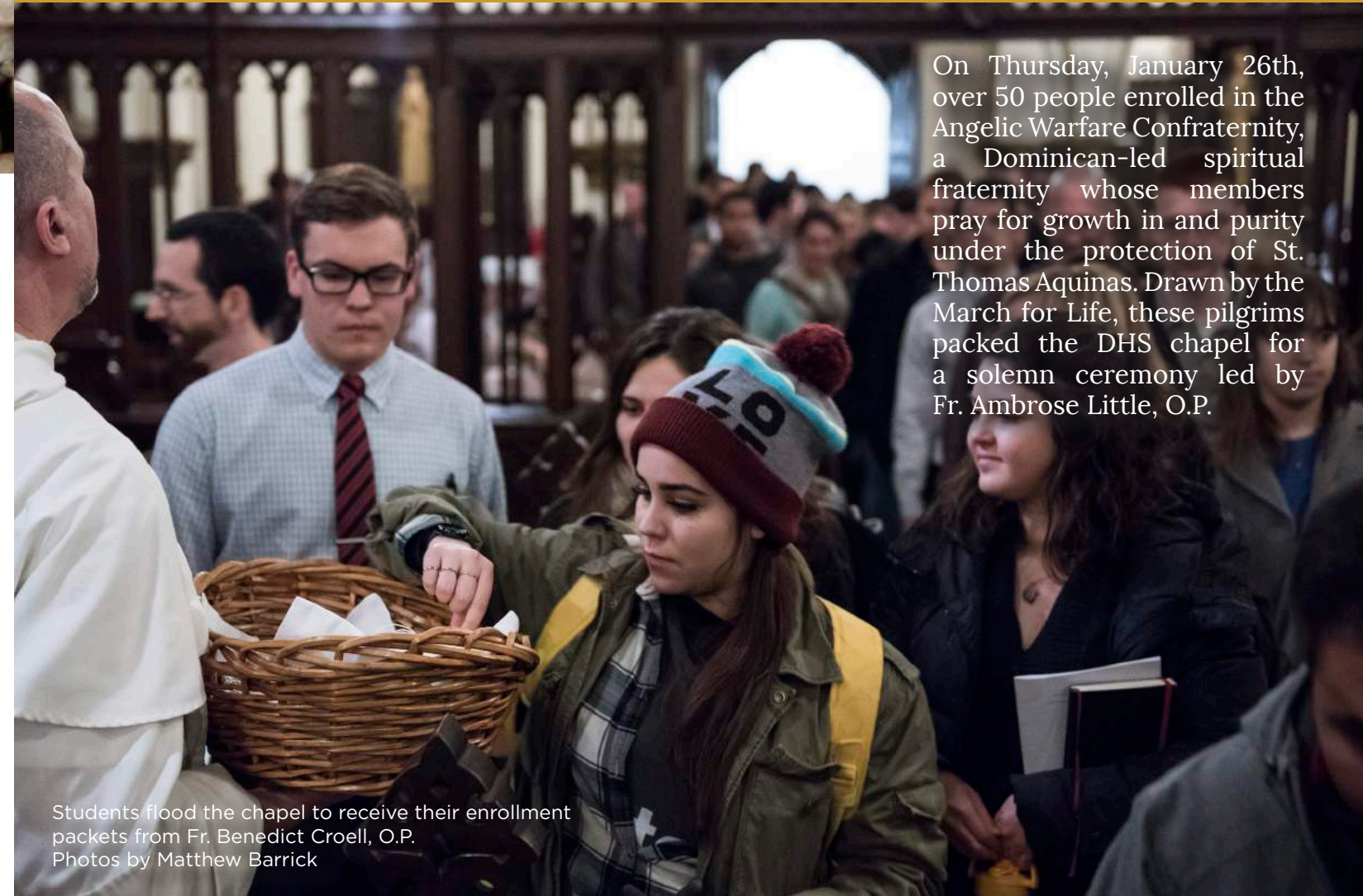
The Confraternity allows us to be a part of a community of the faithful who are intentionally praying for each other

throughout the entire world, a community that has been established by the Catholic Church for this reason. It's a bit like a Google doc of grace, where you can have multiple people contributing at the same time. In the Confraternity, each member contributes prayers for the others, so that there is a treasury of grace that God is giving to all.

**What significance does the 100th anniversary of the Fatima apparitions have for the Rosary Confraternity?**

One of the meanings behind the appearance of Our Lady of Fatima was to encourage all Christians to pray the Rosary daily for the conversion of souls and to foster peace among warring nations. The same message of Our Lady is applicable to our own day and age. The Confraternity hopes that more Christians will take up the Rosary as a spiritual weapon that promotes the conversion of souls and the end to unnecessary and harmful conflict both at home and internationally.

**To join the Rosary Confraternity of the Province of St. Joseph, visit [RosaryConfraternity.org](http://RosaryConfraternity.org)**



Students flood the chapel to receive their enrollment packets from Fr. Benedict Croell, O.P. Photos by Matthew Barrick

On Thursday, January 26th, over 50 people enrolled in the Angelic Warfare Confraternity, a Dominican-led spiritual fraternity whose members pray for growth in and purity under the protection of St. Thomas Aquinas. Drawn by the March for Life, these pilgrims packed the DHS chapel for a solemn ceremony led by Fr. Ambrose Little, O.P.



A young woman receives her blessed medal of St. Thomas from the altar.



Listening to the preaching of Fr. Ambrose Little, O.P.



# BAPTIZING A BABY ON THE BRINK OF DEATH

By Fr. John Maria Devaney, O.P.

In hospital work as a priest, you never know what is going to happen each day. The other day, as I walked in the door of the pastoral care office at the hospital where I am finishing my Clinical Pastoral Education internship, the overnight chaplain blurted out he had an emergency call for a baby just born in the maternity ward who was about to draw its last breath. The parents were Catholic and wanted baptism. Without taking off my coat, I took the referral and headed straight up.

As I entered the room, I met the mother, father, and an older sibling holding the newborn baby, who was born with heart issues that could not be resolved. The baby was still breathing, and we wasted no time in baptizing her Josephine Felicity. I then realized we must also give her the Sacrament of Confirmation. However, in a quiet panic, I remembered I did not have the sacred Chrism oil on me, so I rushed back to the office.

After help finding the Chrism from an elderly priest who still volunteers at the hospital, I rushed back across campus, and back up the elevator to labor and delivery, quickly confirming her Maria and then, at the mother's request, giving her the Commendation for the Dying.

In the moments right after her becoming a Catholic, despite the sorrow of knowing that Josephine Felicity Maria was only

going to live a few hours on this earth, we all remarked what quiet joy and deep peace filled the room because of the gift of life from God this child was.

A little while later, as I was preparing to fill out the sacramental certificates after Josephine Felicity Maria had died, it dawned on me that ironically the date was January 22nd, the 44th anniversary of Roe v. Wade. Yet, an even deeper sign of the power of life was the striking words of the Old Testament prophet Isaiah in St. Matthew's Gospel from that same day: "The people who sit in darkness have seen a great light, on those dwelling in a land overshadowed by death light has arisen" (MT 4:16). Amen.

**Rest in peace Josephine Felicity Maria. And pray for us.**

(This story is shared with the permission of Josephine Felicity Maria's parents. The names have been changed to protect privacy.)



Outside St. Dominic's Cell, Santa Sabina, Rome  
Photo by Fr. Lawrence Lew, O.P.

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