

The Newsletter of the Dominican Friars Foundation



BLACKFRIARS

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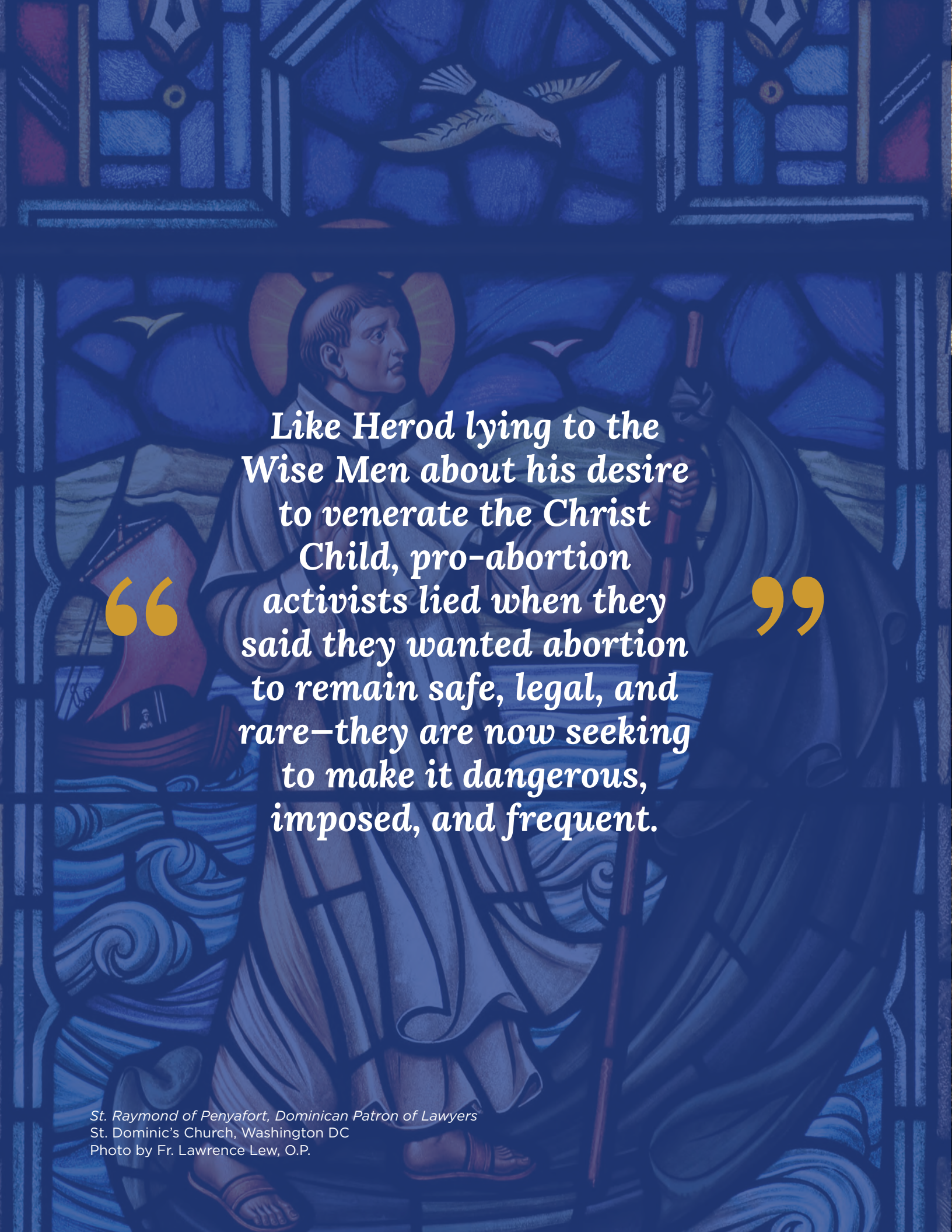
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Dominican Friars at the March for Life
Washington, DC
Photo by Chad Bartlett

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A stained glass window depicting St. Raymond of Penyafort, a Dominican Patron of Lawyers. The saint is shown from the waist up, wearing a white robe with a blue sash, and holding a wooden staff. He has a halo and is looking to the right. The background is blue with white lines. Above him is a white dove with outstretched wings. To the left is a red ship on blue waves. The entire scene is framed by a blue and white geometric pattern.

Like Herod lying to the
Wise Men about his desire
to venerate the Christ
Child, pro-abortion
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Letter from the Director

Dear Friends,

“Of course the Magi didn’t return to Herod. Anyone who comes to Christ cannot return the same way he came.”
—Ven. Archbishop Fulton Sheen

I’ve been told for years that visiting the Holy Land changes the way you pray and hear scripture. It’s true: you never return the same because you see everything through a new lens.

Being in Bethlehem for the first time a few days before the March for Life gave me a new perspective on the joyful and sorrowful moments in the life of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. I offered my prayers in the town where our Savior was born with a heartfelt thanks to God for you and for the many vocations He has sent to us. I also realized for the first time the pain Our Lady felt when she heard that Herod had ordered the massacre of all boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity two years old and under.

My thoughts turned to the million American babies killed last year by abortionists, with Planned Parenthood being responsible for over a third of the 2,700 innocent lives taken every day in our country. I felt urgently that we must go in haste, like Mary in her visitation of Elizabeth, to assist pregnant women in their time of need. In this issue, you’ll read how you make it possible for the friars to do just that. Sadly, thanks to modern day Herods, we have more work to do than ever!

It was shocking, upon returning home to New York, to see Governor Andrew Cuomo’s gleeful celebration of a law permitting the murder of children. Like Herod lying to the Wise Men about his desire to venerate the Christ Child, pro-abortion activists lied when

they said they wanted abortion to remain safe, legal, and rare—they are now seeking to make it dangerous, imposed, and frequent. Their true intentions are clear, especially in the barbaric laws they attempted to pass in Virginia.

Why are they ordering this to be done? Like Herod, they are furious because they realize they are being outwitted by reasonable men and women who see through empty words. The very word “infant” in Latin means one who cannot yet speak, which is why the Friars are preaching the truth for them. We are educating the youth that abortion is not a tidy, clinical procedure in which no violence occurs.

Young men and women “go beyond the mind they have” when you draw for them a picture of the procedures that are being legislated. It’s not waving a magic wand, and it’s not getting rid of a cluster of cells that means nothing. People of good will change their minds on abortion once they understand the reality of the slaughter being carried out on these holy innocents. No one returns home the same way.

Father Gabriel

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



PROTEST AND PILGRIMAGE: REPORT FROM THE MARCH FOR LIFE

By Br. Daniel Traceski, O.P.

This year the friars at the Dominican House of Studies and St. Dominic's Priory and Parish continued our tradition of receiving some of the hundreds of thousands of pilgrims who come to Washington, D.C. for the annual March for Life. They came for two reasons: for protest and for pilgrimage.

As citizens, they came to exercise their civic duty and constitutional right to "petition the government for redress of grievances." Their petition was a peaceable assembly on the National Mall and a protest down Constitution Avenue to the Supreme Court. Their grievance was the infamous decision of *Roe v. Wade*, barring lawful governments from protecting the vulnerable lives of unborn children.

We Dominican friars took our place with them to protest the injustice of abortion. In our traditional habits, we showed that religion belongs in the public square. The student brothers carried our banner, "Dominican Friars for Life," to the Rally for Life between the Washington monument



Fr. Stephen Ryan, O.P. (foreground), is Associate Professor of Sacred Scripture at the Dominican House of Studies. Photo by Chad Bartlett

and the U.S. Capitol building. There we were joined by Dominican sisters, members of our parishes, and others who have been moved through the preaching and ministry of the friars. Together we held banners, stood, and marched in protest as the massive gathering worked its way to the Supreme Court. When



“We Dominican friars took our place with them to protest the injustice of abortion. In our traditional habits, we showed that religion belongs in the public square.”

Photo by Chad Bartlett

we arrived, we paused to sing to our Lady the anthem we sing to her at the end of every day, the Dominican chant of the *Salve Regina*.

This prayer at the end of a protest points to the second aspect a Dominican sees in the March for Life. These thousands of pro-lifers came as members of the faithful to perform an act of religion, namely, a pilgrimage. This ancient practice is a way of giving worship to God and honor to his saints. It is also an act of petition, by which we beg God to send His graces and end abortion.

At the Dominican House of Studies, the friars are on the receiving end of this national pilgrimage. On the other side of our street, thousands came to pray for our nation in the national Shrine dedicated to our nation's Patroness, the Immaculate Conception, asking her to help us protect children from the moment of conception.

The night before the March, Dominican student brothers and priests joined hundreds of seminarians and priests from across the country for a Vigil Mass for Life attended by thousands of pilgrims. Many, including students from universities served by Dominican chaplains, came to visit the priory for tours and for the Divine Office prayers in our chapel of the Immaculate Conception.

Back at the National Shrine, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament continued during

the night until a final holy hour was lead by the Dominican students brothers. Throughout the city, Masses were attended by pilgrims; at many of these Masses, Dominican transitional deacons could be seen proclaiming the Gospel.

After the March, the student brothers returned to the House of Studies, the Priory of the Immaculate Conception, to continue our life of regular observance. In a Dominican chapel, contemplation flows into preaching for the salvation of souls. There too, Christ draws all to Himself and pours out His graces and blessings.



A Dominican student brother preaches at holy hour in the crypt of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception on the morning of the March.



MINISTERING TO MOTHERS IN CRISIS AT A PRO-LIFE PREGNANCY CENTER

By *BlackFriars* staff

For over 20 years, the Dominican House of Studies has assigned student brothers to the Northwest Center, a Washington, DC, pregnancy center that “seeks to promote the dignity of women and a respect for all human life” in accordance with Catholic teaching. Br. Frassati Davis is currently on assignment at the Northwest Center as he studies for the priesthood and practices Spanish.

“It is humbling to be in a ministry where I’m asked to take a step back, to listen, and specifically to listen in another language.

The universal need of these women is a problem that’s never going to go away,” says Br. Frassati, whose role includes taking notes at client appointments, handing out supplies to mothers with infants, and praying for expectant and new mothers.

Br. Frassati, who encountered the Dominican Order while attending the March for Life as a diocesan seminarian, sees the work of the Center as a complement to the pro-life cause. “What is it we can continue to do throughout the year to really be that pro-life generation we chant about? There are needs that women are not receiving. How, as a Church, can we respond to those needs?”

Because it is not officially religious, the Northwest Center receives life-saving referrals from secular institutions. “We had a fifteen-year-old come in a few weeks ago, referred by her public high school. She didn’t speak English. She had arrived in the U.S. within the past six months and became pregnant. That’s a lot for a fifteen-year-old girl to handle.”

According to Br. Frassati, such situations provide valuable formation for the priesthood. “You can’t be scandalized by these things. As a priest, you’re called to administer the sacraments and care for souls, but responding [to material needs] makes your message a lot clearer to people who wouldn’t normally hear it. It’s very Dominican, if you ask me.”

*“What is it we can
continue to do
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DONOR PROFILE

JAMES DONOVAN

By *BlackFriars* staff

James Donovan encountered the Dominican Friars at age ten, when he attended a Dominican-run boys' camp in Staatsburg on the Hudson, New York. He lasted a week until a bee sting and homesickness sent him back to Astoria, Queens, but he would reconnect with the Friars as a young man.

While studying at a Fordham University, James worked at Bloomingdales and made a daily visit to the nearby Dominican Church of St. Vincent Ferrer. "It reminded me of St. Patrick's Cathedral on a smaller scale. It was always warm and welcoming, and I liked the fact that they maintained the choir on the sides," James says. He was drawn to the personalities of the friars, who he remembers as "always working, always doing something, never idle."

James, a lecturer and middle school principal, met his wife, Patricia, on the S.S. United States the first day out of port en route to Bermuda: "Something inside me clicked and a voice said, 'She's the one.' I went over to her and said, 'Pardon me, madam, would you like a glass of strawberry champagne?' She said, 'Yes, I would.' The rest is history." The president of the United States Lines sent a scale model of the S. S. United States to James and Patricia as a wedding gift. It remains on James' bookshelf to this day.

James and Patricia were married at St. Vincent Ferrer and made it their safe harbor during a life of travels to five continents. They



James and Patricia Donovan were married at the Dominican Church of St. Vincent Ferrer.

were 'adopted' into an Indonesian family (with whom James maintains contact) and invited to Scotland by the Archbishop of Glasgow, Cardinal Thomas Winning, whom they befriended on a transatlantic cruise. Their marriage was blessed by Pope Saint John Paul II.

Patricia passed away in 2017, and remains in the prayers of the Dominican Order.

We are grateful to James and Patricia for their generous support. According to James, a daily reader of St. Catherine of Siena, whose *Dialogue* he keeps beside his armchair, "I like the fact the fact the Dominicans are on the front line when it comes to the youth. God knows we need preachers!"

HOPE AFTER ABORTION: AN INTERVIEW WITH FR. JAMES BRENT, O.P.

By *BlackFriars* staff

Fr. James Brent, O.P., leads retreats and administers the sacraments to participants in Project Rachel, a ministry to women who have had abortions and are seeking reconciliation with the Church. He also serves as chaplain for the US bishops' nationwide Project Rachel efforts. BlackFriars sat down with Fr. James to discuss this important ministry.

How does Project Rachel help women who have had abortions?

When a woman has an abortion, shame and self-hatred overwhelm her psychologically and emotionally. Most bury it under layers of defense mechanisms and go many years without facing it. The first step is contacting Project Rachel. It's a great grace when a woman can take that step. Gradually, if she continues the process and keeps going to meetings and retreats, defense mechanisms come down and she's able to accept God's love and mercy and heal in a serious way.

How has your Dominican formation prepared you for this ministry?

If I didn't have a strong Dominican sense of the power of the Word of God, the power of preaching, and the grace of Saint Dominic,



Fr. James Brent, O.P., prays the Rosary at a pro-life gathering.

I would be overwhelmed. I'd walk away thinking 'The devil has won; that child has been destroyed and so has the mother.' But the Word of God can cut through all this and give life, hope, and a way forward. I just preach the Good News: Jesus is Lord. He is risen from the dead. He has conquered sin and death. He is full of merciful love. He is radiating light. And this world in which we live is passing away.

What outcome have you seen from the program?

A lot of women who have had abortions and repented become amazing Catholics. They go to Holy Hours, they say the Rosary daily, they never miss Mass and go to daily Mass sometimes. They've come to learn, 'I need this; I'll just be lost if I don't have it.'

To contact Project Rachel, dial 888-456-HOPE (4673) or visit HopeAfterAbortion.com.

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