

The Newsletter of the Dominican Friars Foundation



# BLACKFRIARS

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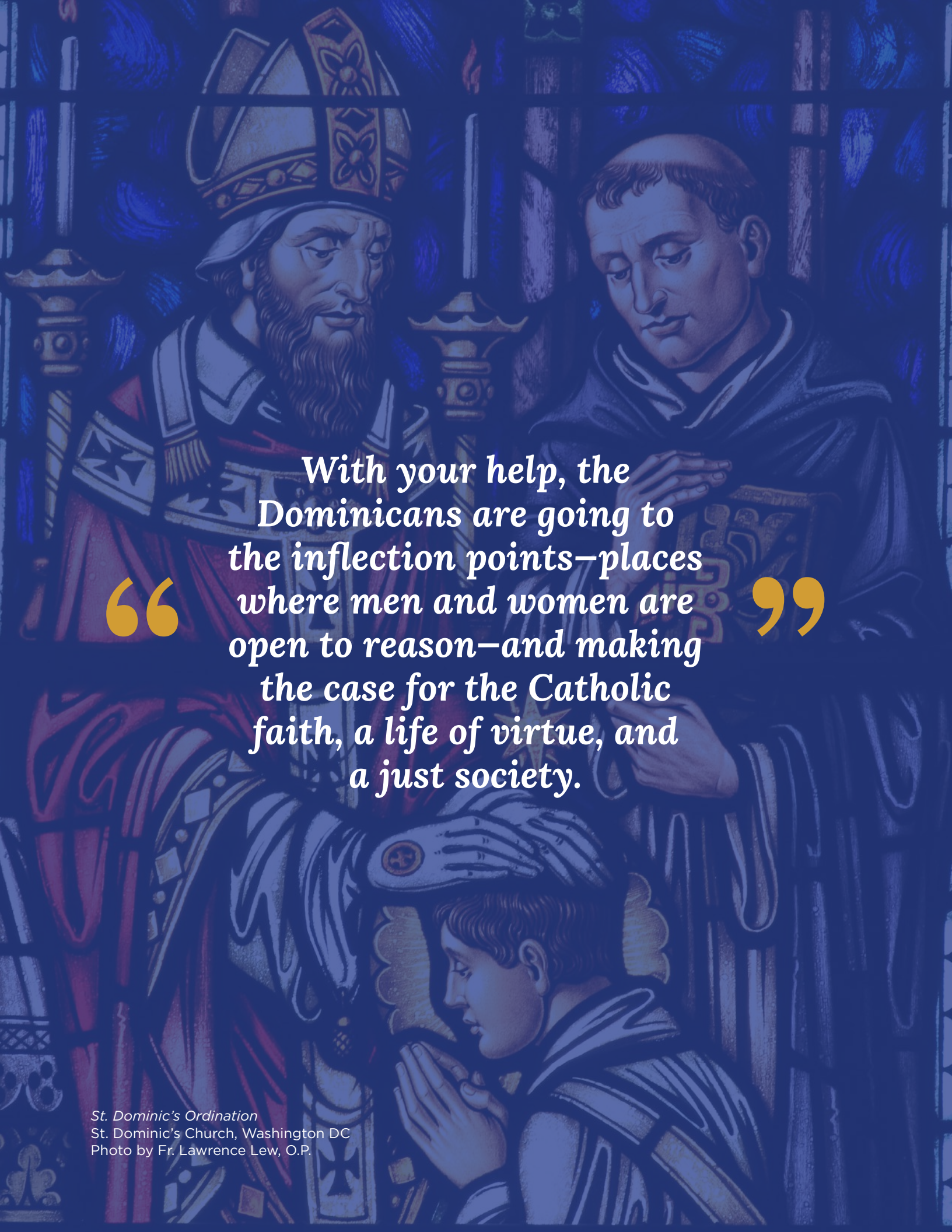
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Bishop Robert Barron ordained Fr. John Paul Kern, O.P., and five other Dominican friars to the priesthood in his first priestly ordination at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception this May (see page seven).  
Photo by Jaclyn Lippelmann

Volume VI, Issue II



A blue-tinted photograph of a religious ceremony, likely the ordination of St. Dominic. The image shows a bishop in ornate vestments and a mitre on the left, and a man in a Dominican habit on the right. In the foreground, a young man is kneeling in prayer with his hands clasped. The background features architectural details like columns and a large cross. A quote is overlaid in the center, flanked by large yellow quotation marks.

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Dominicans are going to  
the inflection points—places  
where men and women are  
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a just society.”

*St. Dominic's Ordination*  
St. Dominic's Church, Washington DC  
Photo by Fr. Lawrence Lew, O.P.



Letter from the Director

**Dear Friends,**

I recently had the privilege of having lunch with Bishop Robert Barron after he ordained six of our friars to the priesthood at the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception in Washington DC, his first ordinations as bishop. I asked him about a line from his homily that struck me: “Dominicans, this is your moment.”

The Bishop elaborated on what he calls the biggest crisis in evangelization: people are now more interested in *constructing their own identities* than in seeking Truth. They are turning in on themselves definitively—and they expect the full acceptance of society in doing so. But at heart, Bishop Barron said, they are deeply unhappy.

They need preachers bold enough to rescue them from their self-constructed prisons by directing their eyes to the greatness of Truth, preachers whose life of poverty and reliance on Providence command respect. This is exactly what St. Dominic founded the Order of Preachers to be, and Bishop Barron was astute enough to call us back to the charism of our founder.

The Order of Preachers was formed at a time of real crisis in the Church and the west. St. Dominic saw a need for a return to the basics of poverty, trust in God, and preaching the Gospel for the salvation of souls.

When St. Dominic died in 1221, there were about 300 friars. Growth during the next 35 years reached the phenomenal high water mark of 12,600 friars. Dominicans Bl. Innocent V and Bl. Benedict XI reigned as popes, twenty-eight Dominicans became cardinals, and many more served as bishops. Together, these men were known for addressing urgent questions of the day with dynamic comprehension and offering balanced and moderate solutions.

Like Bishop Barron himself, they earned the trust of their hearers even as they challenged them. Most importantly, they convinced their fellow men that the wisdom of the Church really contained answers to the most pressing questions of every age. As you recognize, the situation has come full circle. Rejecting reality and its Creator, men have attempted to invent their own substitutes, first in materialistic philosophies and now—straying in the opposite direction—in “gender ideology” and other fictions that deny material realities like biological difference.

With your help, the Dominicans are going to the inflection points—places where men and women are open to reason—and making the case for the Catholic faith, a life of virtue, and a just society.

In this issue of *BlackFriars*, you’ll hear how Fr. Peter Cameron, O.P., is reaching young people just as they’re questioning the cultural narrative, and how Fr. Humbert Kilanowski, O.P., is making advances in scientific research while preaching the compatibility of science and faith. Fr. Jonah Pollock, O.P., draws on his own experience with cancer to share a Dominican spirituality of openness to Providence with hospital patients.

We couldn’t continue to train men in the charism of St. Dominic without your support. If this is a “Dominican moment,” it’s also your moment.

*Father Gabriel*

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





Photos courtesy of Hard as Nails Ministries

## WE MUST TEACH YOUNG PEOPLE THE VALUE OF SUFFERING: Q&A WITH FR. PETER CAMERON, O.P.

By Vladimir Mauricio-Perez for the *Denver Catholic*. Reprinted with permission and edited for brevity.

**Father Peter Cameron, O.P., founding editor-in-chief of *Magnificat*, serves as the Director of Formation for Hard as Nails Ministries, a nation-wide apostolate for young people. Fr. Cameron recently gave a talk titled “Evangelizing Youth Today” as part of the St. John Paul II Lecture Series in Denver.**

**Based on your experience, what would you say are some of the greatest needs of young people in the Church in the United States?**

I would say one of the greatest needs facing young people in the United States is loneliness. Loneliness isn't simply the result of being without people in our lives or being solitary. It's possible to succumb to loneliness when we have people around us, when we have family. Part of the problem comes from the fact that young people don't have someone to give

*“If evangelization starts with presenting arguments or theological judgments, it’s possible that people will not pay attention. But when someone speaks about their own sufferings, how they overcame them, how that led them to Jesus Christ, etc., this is something that nobody can gainsay.”*

them that gaze of love and appreciation, and similarly, they have no one that maybe listens to them.

Sometimes young people can be carrying very hefty burdens and even their best friends don't know what they're going through. These issues are never talked about and these young people feel completely isolated with this burden that they're forced to carry along. I think that's really the principal issue. In reading the document of the Synod on Young People, I noticed that that was one of the principal concerns listed, as well.

**What aspect from the Synod on Young People do you think can be especially useful in evangelization?**

One of the points is that nobody can evangelize a young person like another young person. As the document points out, when young people speak about their experience, it is something that can't be discounted or debated. So, if evangelization starts with presenting arguments or theological judgments, it's possible that people will not pay attention. But when someone speaks about their own sufferings, how they overcame them, how that led them to Jesus Christ, etc., this is something that nobody can gainsay.

*“Once a young person is paid attention to and their dignity is shown to them and they're cared for, something breaks open and you just see them radiate.”*

And secondly, that it is important to implement new methods for listening to young people. It means being willing to suffer with them and not be intimidated by their problems. I think



there's a tendency to give up too easily on young people because of their struggles. But I think the job of the modern-day evangelist is primarily to walk with the person and love them, bring them to the awareness that they're amazing, that they're valuable, not because of what they have or what they have accomplished, but simply because God has loved them into existence, that the person is a child of God and there's nothing anyone can do to ever change that.

**Is there anything else you would like to add?**

I give a lot of talks to priests and they are very often fatalistic about the possibility of evangelizing young people. And I think that they consider the lure of the world to be greater than anything that we or the Gospel can propose to them, and it's simply not so. Once a young person is paid attention to and their dignity is shown to them and they're cared for, something breaks open and you just see them radiate. It's not difficult to do that with a young person. So, I hope that the talk will be an encouragement to anyone who listens to it to be certain that they can be that message of grace for youth, especially those who are suffering – that the love of Jesus Christ that we have is exactly what they're waiting for, and that we're courageous, authentic, and obedient enough to offer it to young people.





## FAITH AND REASON ON THE BALL FIELD: AN INTERVIEW WITH FR. HUMBERT KILANOWSKI, O.P.

By *BlackFriars* staff

**Fr. Humbert Kilanowski, O.P., is assistant professor of mathematics at Providence College and holds a PhD in Mathematics from Ohio State. His recent publication on polymers in the *Journal of Statistical Physics* has implications for modeling the behavior of DNA molecules and proteins in solution, and he has written on the compatibility of evolutionary theory with the Catholic Doctrine of original sin. Fr. Humbert will be conducting a statistical analysis of the Cape Cod Baseball League this summer and teaching a class on baseball statistics at PC in fall.**

**How does your career in mathematics relate to your life as a Dominican priest?**

People always ask me how I went from being a mathematician into the Order. I say there's nothing a mathematician values more than Truth, and our motto and our way of life as Dominicans has been to preach and teach the Truth for eight hundred years.

**Some people present science as somehow opposed to faith. How do you reconcile the two?**

The modern scientific method grew out of Christianity, and many early modern scientists were Catholic priests and religious. Science was used as a means of coming to know the truth about creation, to know the world that God made and our place in it.

When I was in college, I thought of science in a deterministic way: you can make a few measurements and know exactly how the universe is going to be at any given time. Then I took a class in quantum mechanics that showed how limited our knowledge actually is. Deeper investigation into the sciences shows us the limits of human reason and opens us up to more profound knowledge of God.

**What's the goal of the baseball research you'll be conducting this summer?**

There's a lot of dispute about how player performance should be calculated and how to use it. My idea is to try to get a more accurate measurement by looking at data from a league where all the players are at about the same age and ability level. We'll study the Cape Cod Baseball League, a top tier league for college players in summertime.

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Photo: Fr. Humbert Kilanowski, O.P., sits with students who will assist his statistical analysis of the Cape Cod Baseball League. Photo by Justin James Muir for Providence College



# SIX FRIARS ORDAINED TO THE PRIESTHOOD BY BISHOP ROBERT BARRON

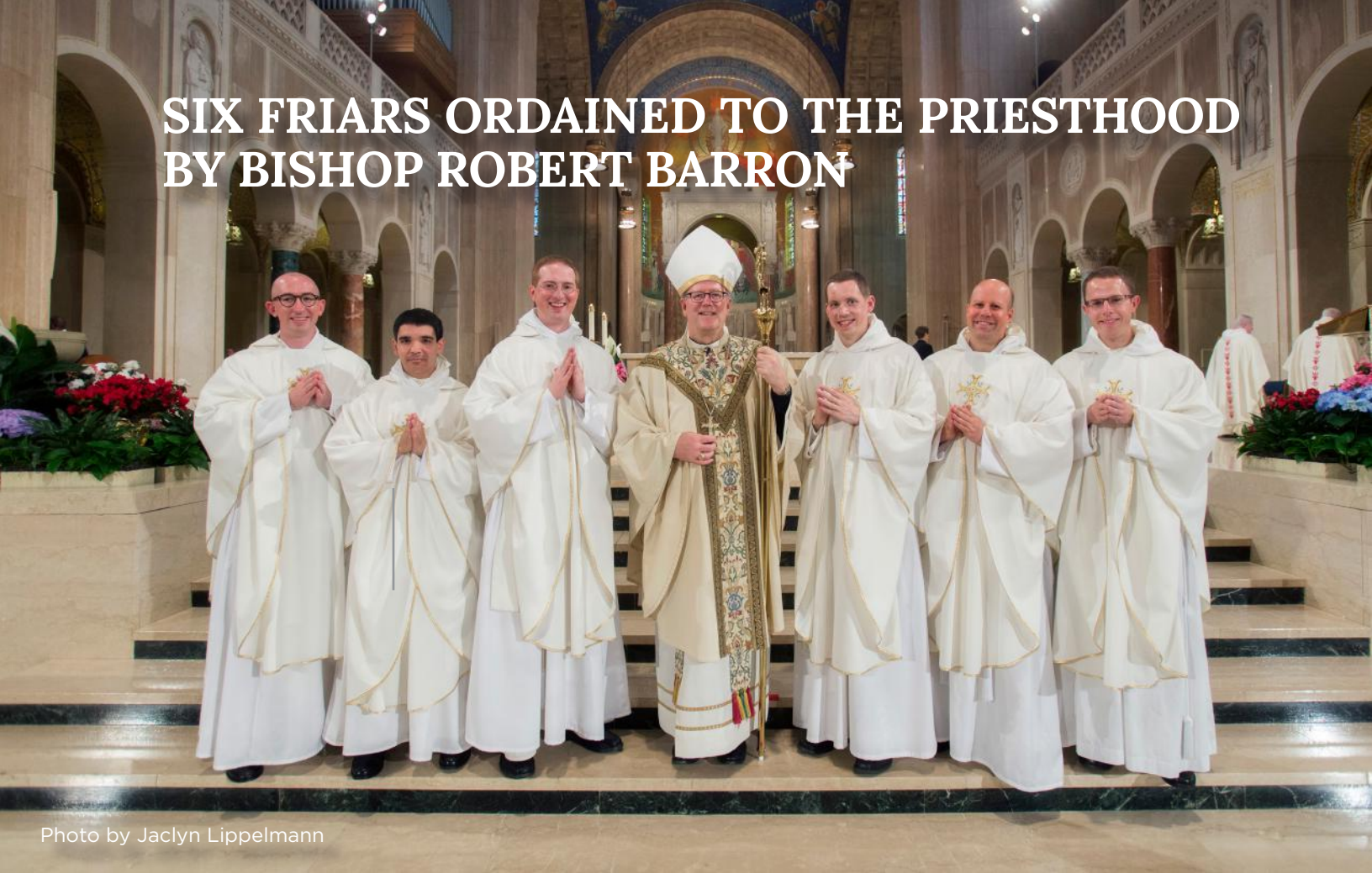


Photo by Jaclyn Lippelmann

Thanks to your support of our formation program, six outstanding men were ordained priests of Jesus Christ by Bishop Robert Barron in his first priestly ordination at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate

Conception on May 25. They are, from left: Fr. Paul Mary Clarke, O.P., Fr. Antoninus Maria Samy, O.P., Fr. Joseph Martin Hagan, O.P., Fr. Norbert Keliher, O.P., Fr. John Paul Kern, O.P., and Fr. John Mark Solitario, O.P.



## WHAT WILL YOUR LEGACY BE?

**YOU** can ensure the Gospel of Jesus Christ is preached to future generations by leaving a gift to the Dominican Friars in your will—and become a member of the Saint Dominic Legacy Society!

To learn more, contact planned giving director **Diana Kilarjian**.

Phone: 646-350-0108

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Fr. Jonah Pollack, O.P., stands outside Hospital for Special Surgery. Photo by Gabriella Cerqueira

## A VOCATION INTERRUPTED: FR. JONAH POLLOCK'S BATTLE WITH BRAIN CANCER

By *BlackFriars* staff

**Fr. Jonah Pollack, O.P., is Executive Director of the Dominican Friars Healthcare Ministry of New York, which makes over 60,000 patient visits a year at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, Hospital for Special Surgery, and New York-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center.**

**While discerning a call to the priesthood and religious life with the Dominican Friars, Fr. Jonah was diagnosed with medulloblastoma, a malignant brain tumor.**

### How did you realize you had cancer?

I went to Notre Dame to visit my brother, who was a law student there. I was playing basketball with him when I mentioned I was experiencing momentary dizziness. He made me promise to get it checked out, and I did. Very much to my surprise it was a tumor the size of a golf ball in my brain stem.

### How did your call to the priesthood develop during your illness?

They got most of [the tumor] out surgically, but about fifteen percent remained. It was too close to key nerves to remove. I had six weeks of radiation after that, which was tough: I lost a lot of weight and got very sick. During that hard time, I remember going to Mass and thinking, 'I hope I survive so I can become a priest.'

The day I was diagnosed, I had a strong experience in prayer—reading the prologue of the Gospel of John. The eternal life of Christ that is given to us put things in perspective: the life I live in this world, whether it's short or long, is not much compared to the eternal life that Christ lives and shares with us.

*“The life I live in this world, whether it's short or long, is not much compared to the eternal life that Christ lives and shares with us.”*

### Do you draw on your battle with cancer in your ministry?

My experience of cancer as a person of faith, the questions and prayer it inspired, and the ways God brought me through it, have been extraordinarily beneficial for my ministry, especially at the [Memorial Sloan Kettering] Cancer Center.

God brought good out of my illness. God can be trusted to always bring good out of evil, not just in a cosmic sense, but for each person.

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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).



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