

The Newsletter of the Dominican Friars Foundation



BLACKFRIARS



Friars and students march under the Dominican standard at the 2020 March for Life in Washington, DC.
Photo by Chad Bartlett

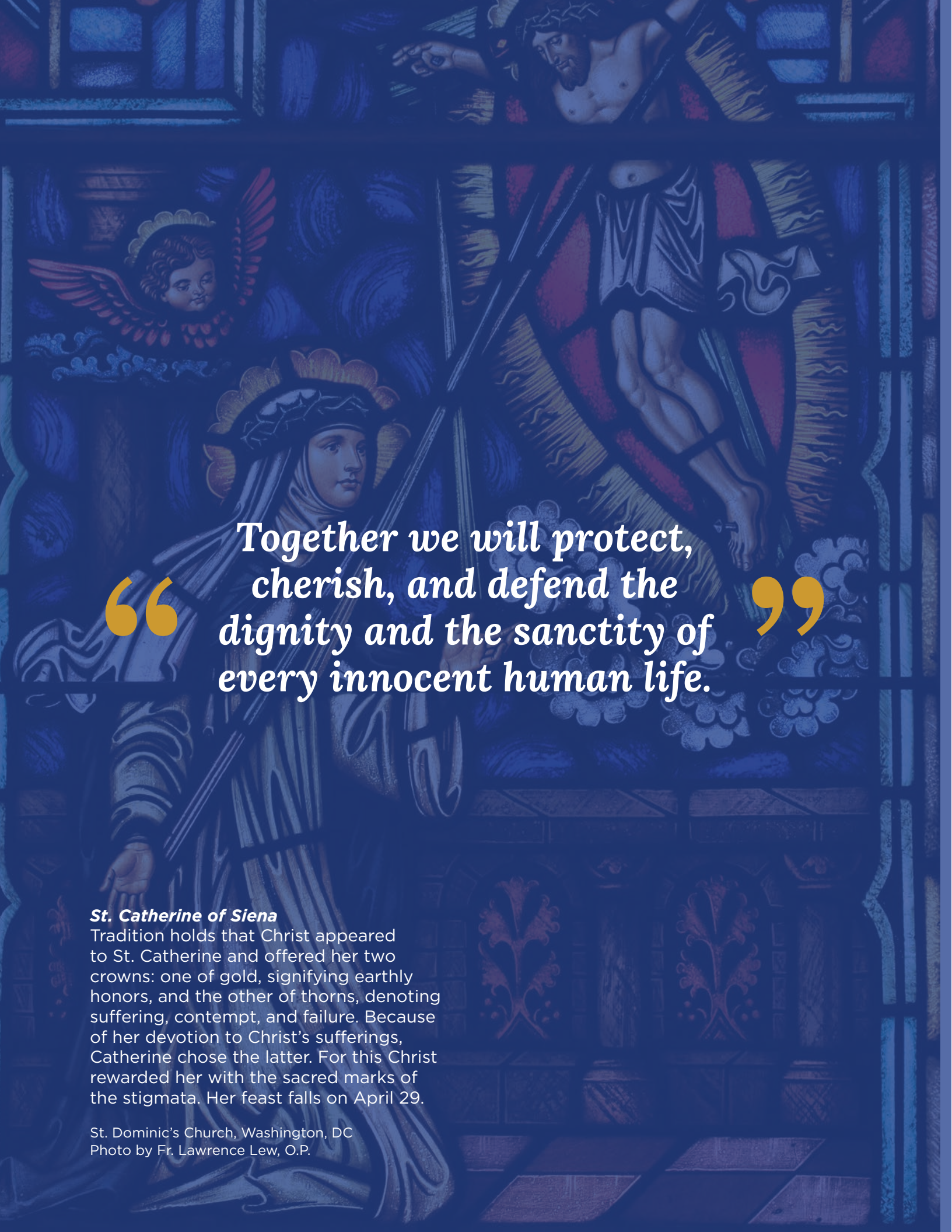
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“ Together we will protect,
cherish, and defend the
dignity and the sanctity of
every innocent human life. ”

St. Catherine of Siena

Tradition holds that Christ appeared to St. Catherine and offered her two crowns: one of gold, signifying earthly honors, and the other of thorns, denoting suffering, contempt, and failure. Because of her devotion to Christ's sufferings, Catherine chose the latter. For this Christ rewarded her with the sacred marks of the stigmata. Her feast falls on April 29.

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



Letter from the Director

Dear Friends,

In his play *Measure for Measure*, Shakespeare shows us what happens when a proud man is given a little bit of temporary authority and forgets what it means to be made in God's image. Instead, he does such incredibly grotesque things before high heaven which, if they were humans, would make angels weep. Even a liberal progressive like Bill Maher laughed at some of the crazy ideas being proposed by presidential candidates. He quoted Bernie Sanders saying we should let the Boston Marathon bomber vote and Elizabeth Warren, who wants taxpayers to cover sex-change operations for prisoners. But the most grotesque belief, which they all proudly hold in common, including Biden and Bloomberg, is the killing of human life through abortion as "angels weep."

I come from a long line of Democrats. My grandmother, Mary Gillen, was the first woman elected to serve in the New York State Assembly from Kings County, and to be fair 46% of Democrats today do not consider themselves progressives. But they have no champion in their corner when it comes to life issues, only advocates for a dictatorship of relativism who deny objective truth and seek to impose their will through brute legal force. My grandmother must be rolling over in her grave at the present state of the party.

Thankfully we have friends like you who refuse to accept this madness. And you are by no means alone—young people are joining our ranks who understand the eternal truth that every child is a precious and a sacred gift from God. Together

we will protect, cherish, and defend the dignity and the sanctity of every innocent human life.

By rejecting "progressive values" and sticking with our 800-year tradition, we have connected with a steady stream of vocations for almost a decade with an average of 70 men on the path to the priesthood. It is because of you that we have been able to maintain this unprecedented number of top recruits. These men join us from the best universities of our country and many have left promising careers in finance, law, medicine, and the sciences to answer God's call to preach the Gospel for the salvation of souls. Thank you for helping us to build a winning team that will rebuild a culture of life.

Together we will reach out to the next generation of leaders who yearn to hear a voice of reason amid the clamor of secular propaganda. Between our official campus ministries, university parishes, spiritual confraternities, and the many chapters of the Thomistic Institute, we now have a growing presence on over 50 college campuses across the country. Thank you for standing by us in this cultural battle. There is much more work to be done, and you play a crucial role in accomplishing it.

Father Gabriel

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



REPORT FROM THE MARCH FOR LIFE

By Bro. Frassati Davis, O.P.

Each January when the Dominicans return to the National Mall to defend life, we aim to give witness to the power of the light of Christ in the midst of darkness. Like the other participants in the March, we are there to affirm the truth that all have been made in the image and likeness of God. Every year, we march to acknowledge the precious gift of life and that every person deserves the opportunity to live in this world. Simply put, each Catholic must understand the importance of life and the call to defend the dignity of all human lives, born or unborn.

As a freshman in college, I went to the March for Life for the first time with the Catholic Chaplaincy from the University of Illinois. That year, the day of the March was unbearably windy and cold and I did not bring gloves or a heavy coat for the occasion. Unfortunately, I was not the only one in my group to be so irresponsible. My companions also did not look ahead at the weather forecast and we marched that morning with fingers like popsicles! Yet, even during that moment of self-inflicted discomfort, I remember the positive attitude of the group and of the March for Life

as a whole. We were marching for something much more important than our own comfort.

With an issue as emotionally-charged and controversial as abortion, it would be easy to think that the participants of the March for Life would be angry and fired up. But it was not like that. In the middle of winter, without coats and with the persistent clamor of a pro-choice opposition, half a million people were happy and proud to defend life. A contagious joy erupted on the National Mall that day, a change from the usual tourist



Bro. Frassati Davis, O.P., hoists the Dominican banner.

“Every year, we march to acknowledge the precious gift of life and that every person deserves the opportunity to live in this world.”

groups. The presence of so many young people transmitted a message of hope for the future. That year, we gave witness to the importance of human life with an attitude that points to the love of God, Who gives life.

On January 22, a day of prayer designated by the US Bishops for the legal protection of unborn children, the Mass's first reading from Colossians urges us to trust in the Lord: “We give thanks to the Father, who has made you fit to share in the inheritance of the holy ones in light. He delivered us from the power of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son.” (Colossians 1:12-13)

St. Paul teaches us to have confidence that Christ will deliver us from the darkness, especially in a world that offers us many things that take away our longing for the light of Christ. But God has the strength to show us the light of eternal life, even in the midst of opposition.

Although Roe vs. Wade is still in effect, the March for Life each year advances the hope of a future without abortion. It is one of many



All photos by Chad Bartlett

ways to combat the lie that some lives are not worth protecting. Each year, the energy of the participants in the March captures the joy of a life-affirming community that urges all who are anti-life to consider the unborn and protect their right to life, so that we may all share in the inheritance of the holy ones in light.

Let us bear witness to the joy of our faith and make a commitment to defend life.





“It’s more common than we think that youth are pro-life. There’s been a shift in this generation, Gen Z.”

PRO-LIFE ON CAMPUS: FRIARS INSPIRE COLLEGE STUDENTS TO DEFEND THE UNBORN

By BlackFriars staff

Each year, college students from campuses where friars serve make the journey to Washington, DC, to march in defense of innocent life under the Dominican banner.

Grace Berning, president of PC (Providence College) for Life credits the Dominicans with helping her find the moral courage to stand up for Catholic teaching. “The Dominicans made me realize that this is the truth and this is what life is all about. This is why God put me on this earth,” Grace says of her pro-life efforts.

According to Grace, respect for life is on the rise among her peers. “It’s more common than we think that youth are pro-life. There’s been a shift in this generation, Gen Z. We are respecting life more and more.” Publicly voicing pro-life views comes at a cost however.

“I’ve lost a lot of friends because of it, but they weren’t true friends if they don’t respect my opinions and my view of life. My popularity doesn’t matter because I know this is the truth,” Grace says.

Fr. John Baptist Hoang, O.P., marched with a group of students from New York University, where he is the Catholic chaplain. “It’s hard to be Catholic at NYU. It’s a hostile environment for Catholicism. But we do have a great community that supports each other in the Catholic life.”

According to Fr. John Baptist, participating in the March for Life helps students grow as Christians. “It’s a great teaching moment for these students who are still young and need to learn how to be witnesses to the faith.”

When asked what draws students to Dominican-led programs on campus, Fr. John Baptist cites the Friars’ commitment to study. “They love our intellectual life, that we’re serious about the truth. They see on their campuses that the culture has gone haywire, and to find a font of truth—that’s a refuge.”

Photo: Providence College and New York University students stand with friars in front of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception on the occasion of the March for Life.



SIX MORE MEN BECOME “FRIARS FOR LIFE” THANKS TO YOUR SUPPORT!

Prior Provincial Fr. Kenneth Letoile, O.P., stands with the men who recently made their solemn vows to follow Christ as Dominican friars until death.

The Province of St. Joseph currently has 59 men in formation, with an average of 8 friars being ordained to the priesthood every

year. Your support helps us train these men to become preachers who can draw on the Church's treasury of wisdom to combat the errors of our day.

*Thank you for everything you do for us.
You are always in our prayers.*

Did you know Congress just enacted sweeping changes to retirement plans with the SECURE Act?

You can still make gifts directly from your IRA to the Dominican Friars, and avoid taxes.

Learn more about how these changes may impact you and how you can use your IRA to spread Gospel values! Visit www.dominicanfriars.org/secure-act or contact **Diana Kilarjian**, Director of Gift Planning at Diana.Kilarjian@DominicanFriars.org or (646) 350-0108.



FAITH AND REASON: A CLIMATE SCIENTIST SPEAKS ABOUT HIS COMMITMENT TO LIFE

By *BlackFriars* staff

Lorenzo Polvani is a professor of geophysics and applied mathematics at Columbia University. His teaching and research focus on climate science, particularly as it relates to global warming and the ozone hole. Lorenzo serves on the Pro-Life Commission of the Archdiocese of New York, and his wife, Chiara, volunteers with the Sisters of Life. The Polvanis are parishioners at the Dominican Parish of St. Vincent Ferrer in New York City and supporters of the Dominican Friars Foundation.

How did you become involved in the pro-life cause?

My pro-life activities have been of a very personal character because both of my children were born with severe disabilities. We were given strong recommendations for abortion, but we decided there is no such thing as a child not worthy of life. And in fact we see their lives to be tremendously worthwhile, not just for them, but for ourselves and everyone they meet. It's remarkable how children with disabilities are able to bring enormous light and love and joy to those around them.

"It's remarkable how children with disabilities are able to bring enormous light and love and joy to those around them."



Lorenzo Polvani, his wife Chiara, and their children Benedict and Grace stand with Fr. Walter Wagner, O.P., pastor of St. Vincent Ferrer Church.

How does your work as a scientist intersect with your Catholic faith?

One doesn't find a lot of Catholic professors in today's secular universities, but many of them are in the sciences. The sciences deal with facts and with reality and the truth. Many people are confused about capital-T Truth, but scientists don't find it surprising that the Truth exists. The perception that science and religion don't go together—it's false.

Why do you support the Dominican Friars?

The friars were very welcoming and embraced my children and the whole family from the beginning, because they value every human life. Also, they are great preachers: not only with words, but with their lives. Their example is a great inspiration to us, and we want to support their mission. In the Dominican tradition, there's no disassociation between the heart and the mind: they reinforce each other and are both essential.

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