

The Newsletter of the Dominican Friars Foundation



BLACKFRIARS

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

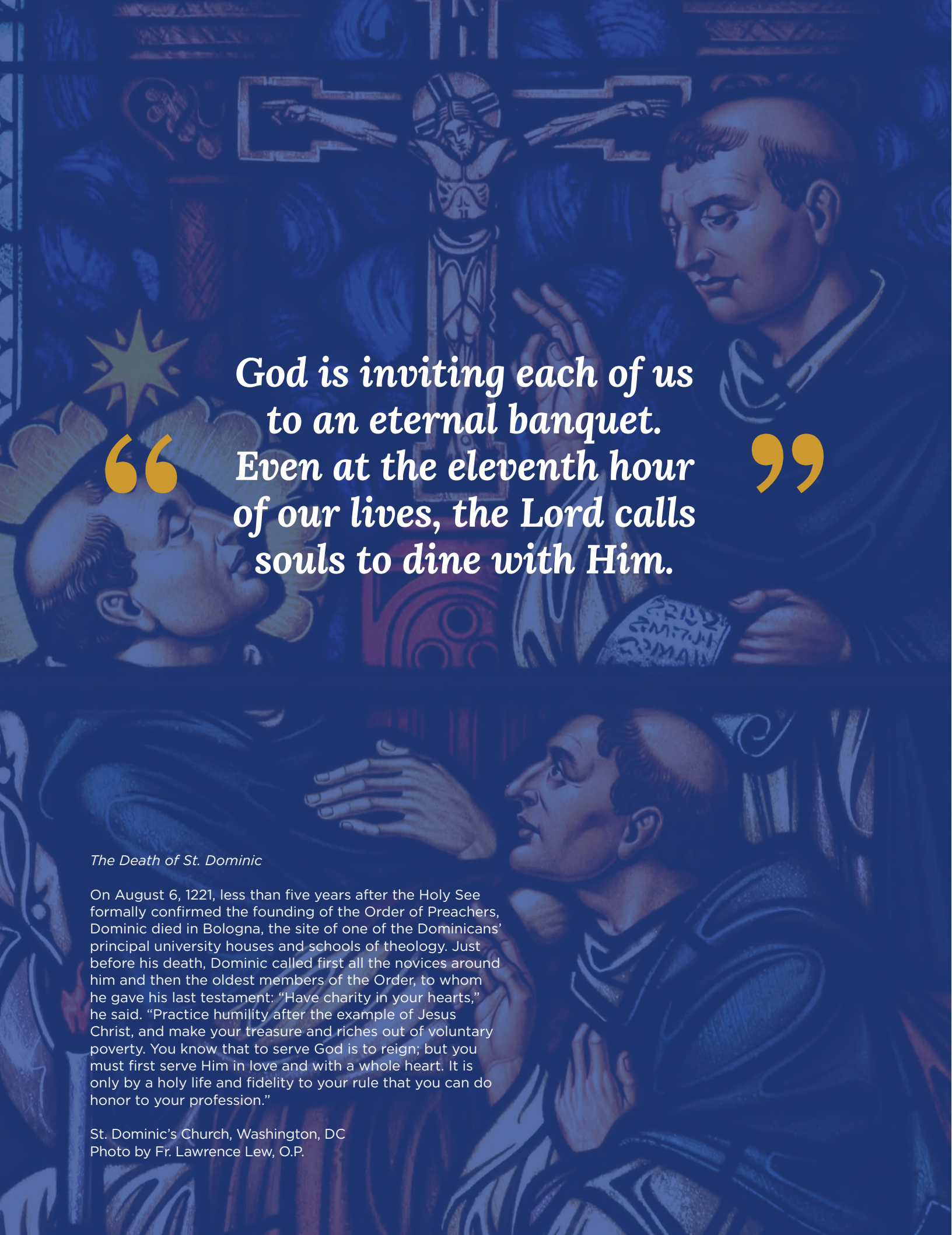
**Friars Cast a Wider Net
with “Godsplaining”**

**St. Joseph Province Friars Serve the
Universal Church at the Angelicum**

**Monthly Donor to Enter
Dominican Monastery**

Fr. Boniface Endorf, O.P., leads some 100 parishioners of St. Joseph's Church in a Corpus Christi procession through the streets of Greenwich Village, Manhattan. Photo by Jeffrey Bruno for *Aleteia*. Used with permission

Volume VIII, Issue III



God is inviting each of us
to an eternal banquet.
“ Even at the eleventh hour
of our lives, the Lord calls
souls to dine with Him. ”

The Death of St. Dominic

On August 6, 1221, less than five years after the Holy See formally confirmed the founding of the Order of Preachers, Dominic died in Bologna, the site of one of the Dominicans' principal university houses and schools of theology. Just before his death, Dominic called first all the novices around him and then the oldest members of the Order, to whom he gave his last testament: "Have charity in your hearts," he said. "Practice humility after the example of Jesus Christ, and make your treasure and riches out of voluntary poverty. You know that to serve God is to reign; but you must first serve Him in love and with a whole heart. It is only by a holy life and fidelity to your rule that you can do honor to your profession."

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



Letter from the Director *Dear Friends,*

Thank you for praying for vocations and being an instrument of Our Lord in supplying for our needs when there is lack! I recently thought of you in connection with the story of Bro. Rudolph, St. Dominic, and the miracle of loaves.

This year, the Order of Preachers celebrates the 800th anniversary of the death of St. Dominic, who died in Bologna on August 6, 1221. The first portrait of the saint depicts him sitting at a table with his brethren and performing a miracle of the multiplication of loaves. As Bro. Rudolph of Faenza described during the process of canonization in 1233,

“Whenever the house ran short of bread, wine, or any item of food, I used to go to Dominic and say: ‘We have no bread—or wine.’ He would answer: ‘Go and pray, for the Lord will provide.’ So I would go to the church to pray, often followed by Brother Dominic.”

I frequently find myself in the shoes of Bro. Rudolph. Everyone gets excited when there is another large class of novices—a blessing, to be sure—but then concerns creep into my mind. There isn’t enough bread in the pantry for all these men! So I pray to St. Dominic for help and I sometimes hear a still, small voice saying to me, “The Lord will provide.” I then imagine myself walking back with Bro. Rudolph from the chapel to my office to find that God has provided another generous gift from you to help meet our daily needs.

God is inviting each of us to an eternal banquet. Even at the eleventh hour of our lives, the Lord calls souls to dine with Him. He sends His servant to tell the invited ones to come, for everything now has been made ready.

In St. Gregory the Great’s interpretation of this Gospel passage, the servant is an ‘order of preachers,’ who must be sent, in the last times,



The table kept in the Church of Santa Maria della Mascarella in Bologna bears the earliest known painting of St. Dominic.

to bring souls back to the Lord’s table before the doors of the banquet hall are closed.

Each of us has a loved one who has not yet accepted this invitation—this also caused St. Dominic to weep. But on his deathbed, Dominic promised his brethren that he would be more useful to them after death than he had ever been in life.

I end each day, together with all the Friars, praying in thanksgiving for all the graces we have received and asking the Lord to ensure the salvation of the souls entrusted to us, including your loved ones.

Invoking St. Dominic, we pray, *“O wonderful hope, which you gave to those who wept for you at the hour of your death, promising after your departure to be helpful to your brethren: Fulfill, O Father, what you have promised, and help us by your prayers.”*

Yours in Christ,

Father Gabriel

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

Fr. Joseph-Anthony Kress, O.P., speaks at the Godsplaining young adult retreat in Huntington, New York. Photo by George Goss.



FRIARS CAST A WIDER NET WITH “GODSPLAINING”

AN INTERVIEW WITH FR. PATRICK BRISCOE, O.P

By Bro. Pius Henry, O.P.

In August 2019, Frs. Patrick Briscoe, O.P., Bonaventure Chapman, O.P., Jacob Bertrand Janczyk, O.P., Joseph-Anthony Kress, O.P., and Gregory Pine, O.P. launched a podcast, “Godsplaining.” By Holy Week of 2021 the program surpassed half a million downloads. BlackFriars sat down with Fr. Patrick to discuss this thriving ministry.

The Province has been blessed with many fruitful ministries; what made you want to start a new one in the form of a podcast?

Dominicans are first and foremost preachers. Podcasting, a platform which is chiefly spoken word, seemed a natural home for the exercise of our vocation! But importantly podcasts have the potential to reach audiences we’re not already talking to. According to one survey, as many as 56% of young people aged 12-34 listened to a podcast this January (2021). We’ve got to use every available technological means to reach out to them.

How do you see Godsplaining as a Dominican ministry?

We chose the name of the podcast, because it’s an imitation of St. Dominic. It was said of St. Dominic that he always spoke “to God or of God.” Our principle desire has been to inject something of God into the clamor of daily life. The goal of the podcast is to help people to think about God and to pray well. This is the goal of Dominican preaching, the work of every preacher: to raise hearts and minds to God.

Why do you think people listen to Godsplaining?

I think people listen to Godsplaining because they want to hear a lively, jovial investigation into the faith. It’s the same reason why people like coming to dinner in Dominican communities: it’s fun to hear Dominicans talk. Godsplaining is theological and sometimes quite dense. Above all though, it is a fraternal project, one where our friendship can be seen and experienced.

Godsplaining hosted a retreat recently, what can you tell us about it?

This July we hosted a retreat for 70 young adults at the Immaculate Conception Seminary in Huntington, New York. The friar hosts all preached conferences, led the chanted Liturgy of the Hours, presided at Eucharistic Adoration, heard confessions, and offered Holy Mass. The retreat was a successful first event and paved the way for coming new initiatives! Godsplaining has already begun to prepare to lead pilgrims on the Camino next Spring!

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ST. JOSEPH PROVINCE FRIARS BRING WISDOM OF AQUINAS TO THE GLOBAL CHURCH AT THE ANGELICUM

By Bro. Bertrand Hebert, O.P.

The Pontifical University of Saint Thomas Aquinas, called “the Angelicum” after its patron, serves the universal Church by forming “students as virtuous leaders, capable of evangelization and promoting integral human development, illuminated by the wisdom of St. Thomas Aquinas.” It has formed the minds of alumni like Venerable Fulton Sheen and Pope St. John Paul II, and continues to be a center for global Thomism. The once-esteemed university fell on hard times for many decades. By God’s providence, friars and scholars have recently taken momentous steps to restore the university’s reputation.

The influence of the Province of St. Joseph has become notable with the recent appointment of Fr. Thomas Joseph

Facade of the church at the Angelicum, Rome





Fr. Thomas Joseph White, O.P., has been appointed rector of the Angelicum. Photos courtesy of the Angelicum

White, O.P., as Rector Magnificus. Five friars from our province currently hold positions at the Angelicum.

Fr. Thomas Joseph, along with his appointment as rector, is an associate professor of the theology faculty, teaching courses in dogmatic theology. He is also the director of the Thomistic Institute on the Angelicum's campus. Apart from his duties at the university, Fr. Thomas Joseph is an academican of the Pontifical Academy of St. Thomas, an academy under the direction of the Holy See whose mission is to develop and disseminate Aquinas' doctrine to the modern world.

Frs. Ezra Sullivan, O.P., and Cassian Derbes, O.P., have been teaching

at the Angelicum for years. Fr. Ezra was invited to the faculty after completing his doctoral studies at the Angelicum. He is a visiting professor for the theology faculty, specializing in moral theology, and a lecturer on the philosophy faculty. Fr. Cassian is a lecturer for the theology faculty specializing in spiritual theology.

Our province's two most recent additions to the Angelicum are Frs. Benedict Croell, O.P., and Thomas Davenport, O.P. Fr. Benedict is the university's Director of Development & Mission Advancement, as well as the Director of Public Relations. Fr. Thomas is a visiting professor for the philosophy faculty and one of the directors of the Thomistic Institute's Project for Science and Religion.

Thanks to your generosity, these men formed in the charism of St. Dominic confidently preach to the wider Church with the doctrine of St. Thomas at their side. May God continue to bless all our benefactors, and may He continue to inspire men to preach "Caritas Veritatis"—The Charity of Truth (motto of the Angelicum).

LOOKING TO MAKE A POWERFUL IMPACT IN OUR GREAT COUNTRY? A gift from your IRA will make a difference!

Do you have a traditional IRA account?

If you are 70 1/2 or older, you may make a tax-free contribution of up to \$100,000 from your IRA directly to the Dominican Friars. Your gift from your IRA will help bring about the renewal of the church and culture through the faithful preaching of Jesus Christ.

For more information on an IRA Rollover, please contact Planned Giving Director Rossano Rovello at (646) 350-0108 or email him at rrovello@dominicanfriars.org.





LETTER FROM THE PRIOR PROVINCIAL

On August 6, the Order of Preachers celebrated the 800th anniversary of the passage of St. Dominic into eternal life, his *Dies Natalis*. Before he died in Bologna, Italy, at age 51, he preached his final sermon to the brothers at his bedside in these words:

“Do not weep. I shall be more use to you and bear more fruit for you after death than I ever did in life.”

We Dominicans refer to this promise as his *Spem Miram*, his wonderful hope. In the course of this anniversary summer, I had several occasions to witness the fulfillment of St. Dominic’s promise.



Bro. Paul Marich, O.P., makes solemn profession.



14 men entered our novitiate on August 8.

On August 7, I received the solemn vows of Bro. Paul Marich, O.P. Bro. Paul will be ordained to the diaconate on September 4 and will then serve a pastoral year at St. Patrick’s Parish in Columbus, Ohio, before his ordination to the priesthood.

On the Solemnity of the Assumption, at St. Gertrude’s Church in Cincinnati, I received the first vows of our six brothers who completed their novitiate year. They are now beginning their studies for the priesthood at our seminary in Washington, DC.

While I was at St. Gertrude’s, I met our 14 new novices who were clothed in the habit of St. Dominic on his feast day, August 8. One of the novices, Bro. Matthias Knox, was a monthly donor to the Dominican Friars before he entered!

The central moment in the profession ritual is especially meaningful. The provincial offers the Book of Constitutions of the Order of Preachers to the brother about to make vows. The brother accepts the book, then the provincial enfolds the brother’s hands with his as the brother proclaims the vows. I make it a point to securely grasp the hands of my younger brother to convey that, in this act of self-donation, he is not alone. He is surrounded and supported by St. Dominic, the Dominican saints and blessed who followed our Founder into Heaven, and the living brothers and sisters of the Order who continue St. Dominic’s mission today.

Please keep our recently professed brothers, our new novices, and all our student brothers in your prayers.

Thank you for helping us realize St. Dominic’s *Spem Miram* eight hundred years after he entered eternal life!

St. Dominic, pray for us.

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

Very Rev. Kenneth R. Letoile, O.P.
Prior Provincial

MONTHLY DONOR TO ENTER DOMINICAN MONASTERY

By Rebecca Derks

Rebecca Derks (left) visits the Dominican nuns of Summit, New Jersey.



Our Lord gave me my first real nudge toward religious life during a Latin exam at Christendom College. The exam required me to provide insights on St. Thomas Aquinas's commentary on John's Gospel. In this commentary, Aquinas discusses why St. John was so beloved of Christ.

One of the reasons, according to St. Thomas, was that John's purity as an unmarried man gave him a close friendship with our Lord. As I sat in class meditating on this passage from Aquinas, I realized that I desired the same kind of closeness with the Lord Jesus that the Beloved Disciple had, an intimacy especially achieved through a life of celibacy.

A few months after that exam, a class in monastic theology gave me a beautiful perspective on life in a monastery, a life lived totally for Christ. That same semester, I was received into the Order of Preachers as a Lay Dominican. Being a Lay Dominican gave me great joy; however, I knew that this life was not enough. I wanted to give more of myself to God.

At a party one night, I was captivated by a crucifix. Despite the music and conversation all around me, I was quietly meditating on the love of our Lord during His suffering on the cross. I realized at that moment

I was meant to love Christ in return in religious life.

I began looking into Dominican religious communities. A Dominican friar friend mentioned that he enjoyed visiting the Dominican nuns in Summit, NJ. I reached out to those nuns, and after several visits, applied to enter their community. They will welcome me to the postulancy in September of this year.

What drew me to the nuns of Summit is their dedication to the saving work of the Dominican Friars, especially through praying the Rosary. At Summit, the Rosary is prayed throughout the day and night before the exposed Blessed Sacrament.

I'm grateful to be able to join the nuns in praying the Rosary using the St. Dominic relic rosary, a gift from the Dominican Friars. I will be praying daily in a special way for the success of the Friars' mission to bring souls to our Lord.

Monthly supporters of the Friars (\$50 or more per month) receive a handmade St. Dominic relic Rosary. Visit dominicanfriars.org/monthly or use the enclosed envelope to set up your recurring gift.

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