

The Newsletter of the Dominican Friars Foundation



BLACKFRIARS

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Building the Kingdom?**

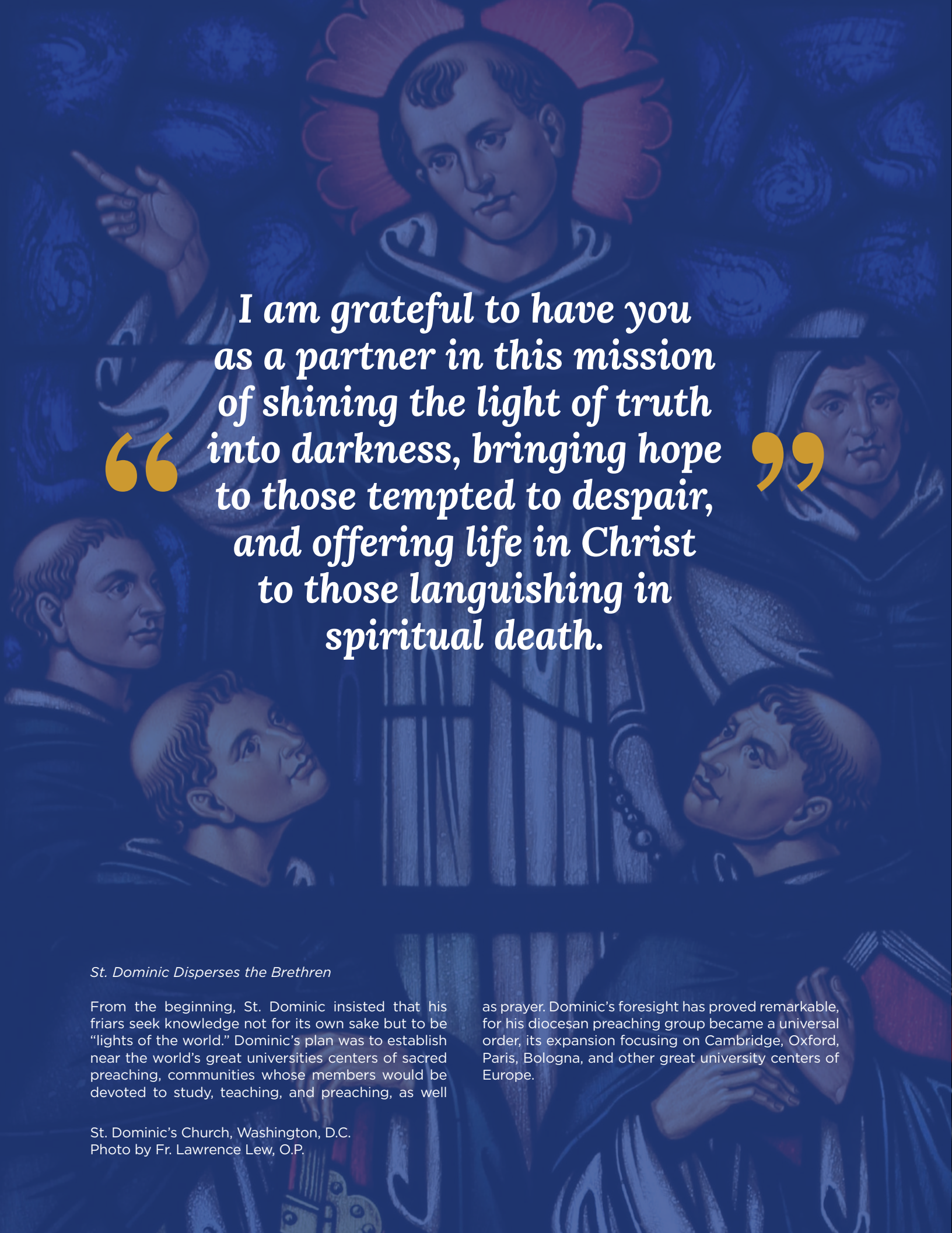
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Fr. Joseph Martin Hagan, O.P., rallies Catholic University of America freshman on retreat. Learn more about Dominican preaching on campus inside. Photo by Danielle Schmitz



Volume IX, Issue IV



I am grateful to have you
as a partner in this mission
of shining the light of truth
“ into darkness, bringing hope ”
to those tempted to despair,
and offering life in Christ
to those languishing in
spiritual death.

St. Dominic Disperses the Brethren

From the beginning, St. Dominic insisted that his friars seek knowledge not for its own sake but to be “lights of the world.” Dominic’s plan was to establish near the world’s great universities centers of sacred preaching, communities whose members would be devoted to study, teaching, and preaching, as well

as prayer. Dominic’s foresight has proved remarkable, for his diocesan preaching group became a universal order, its expansion focusing on Cambridge, Oxford, Paris, Bologna, and other great university centers of Europe.



Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

I hope that you and your loved ones are well during this holy season of Advent. We wait in joyful expectation for the coming of Christ, our newborn King, and we are invited to “prepare the way for the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God” (Isaiah 40:3).

This fall, Dominican Friars have been at work preparing the way for the Lord on campus and in media outreach to students and young adults. Between our official campus ministries, university parishes, spiritual confraternities, and Thomistic Institute chapters, the Dominican Friars are now preaching the Gospel on over 50 college campuses across the country.

Two of my Dominican brothers, Fr. Gregory Pine, O.P., and Fr. Jacob Bertrand Janczyk, O.P., have launched a new podcast through *Ascension Press*. “Catholic Classics” has quickly reached number one in Religion and Spirituality in the USA on Apple podcasts!

This issue of *Blackfriars* highlights some ways in which Dominican Friars are bringing Jesus to campus through their faithful preaching, teaching, and celebration of the sacraments. As the bishops of the United States have called for a 3-year Eucharistic Revival to renew the Church, Dominican Friars bring Jesus Christ in the Most Holy Eucharist to university students through the celebration of Mass and Eucharistic Adoration. This Eucharistic ministry forms and empowers students, even in the harshest of secular environments, to keep Jesus Christ at the center of their lives.

You make this kind of life-changing ministry possible. I am grateful to have you as a partner in this mission of bringing the saving Word and True Presence of Jesus Christ to university students. He alone enlightens and empowers them to walk in the true way of



Fr. Jacob Bertrand Janczyk, O.P., and Fr. Gregory Pine, O.P., on the set of *Godsplaining*. Their new podcast, *Catholic Classics*, has topped the charts in Religion and Spirituality on Apple Podcasts in the US.

life and freedom found in Him, even amidst the darkness and confusion so prevalent on college campuses, and sustains their souls by His grace.

I thank you, our benefactors, who share in our zeal to win souls for Christ, for your support and partnership in our Dominican mission of preaching for the salvation of souls.

Please know of my prayers for you, that as a partner in mission you may be spiritually renewed during this Advent season and empowered to proclaim the amazing truth of Christmas, that God is with us. May the Lord bless you and your loved ones abundantly.

Fr. John Paul Kern, O.P.
Executive Director
Dominican Friars Foundation



BUILDING KINGDOMS OR BUILDING THE KINGDOM?

by Fr. Patrick Briscoe, O.P.

When I went to visit my classmate, Fr. Joseph-Anthony Kress, O.P., and catch a football game in Charlottesville, Virginia, this weekend, I was looking forward to seeing a taste of his ministry. I was astonished by what I found.

Fr. Joseph-Anthony is the Catholic chaplain at Mr. Jefferson's university, the University of Virginia. The ministry there – part of the outreach of the Dominican-run parish of St. Thomas Aquinas – has exploded in recent years. In spring of 2020, the chaplaincy sponsored 12 Bible studies. They began the fall semester of 2022 with 32 and will continue to grow. Twenty-seven of those 32 Bible studies are student-led and bring together over 250 participants, including a significant number of student-athletes.

Our day began with Saturday morning Mass. The front rows included a young boy and his family (he made his first holy Communion at Mass) sitting opposite an impressive group of clean-cut, well-dressed young men. I later discovered this was a group of leaders of the campus ministry. Over 100 people attended, including two dozen students and FOCUS missionaries. The Mass

included the recitation of morning prayer, from the Church's Liturgy of the Hours, and I was delighted in noticing many people had parts of the psalms and canticles memorized.

After the Mass, we adjourned for an espresso and then ventured out to visit a few tailgates. As we walked about in our Dominican habits, student after student spotting Fr. Joseph-Anthony waved or called out, "Hi, Father!" As we stood among students taking in the game, a steady stream of undergrads came by, having spotted their priest in the crowd. Their delight in seeing their chaplain out and about on gameday was evident.

Prying a bit more into his strategy, Fr. Joseph-Anthony stressed the importance of making it clear that the ministry needs people. "Without any context, it's insulting to suggest that they need the ministry." He pointed out that it's easy for a student to pass on an invitation to an event; college

Top: Fr. Joseph-Anthony Kress, O.P., speaks with the Catholic community at the University of Virginia.

“We don’t make invitations to events or things, we make invitations to people, to community.”

students have plenty to do. “But when you ask them for help, when you invite them to come meet someone, to friendship, that’s something different.”

And this ministry is a long cry from being a mere social club. Last spring, Fr. Joseph–Anthony began hearing confessions before the 9 p.m. Sunday night student Mass. He would head to the confessional and make himself available for a few confessions. After a little catechesis and preaching, students now readily avail themselves of the sacrament. Now, two friars begin hearing confessions an hour before Mass and often conclude after hearing for well beyond an hour.

In his homily at the beatification Mass of Blessed John Paul I, Pope Francis emphasized the Lord’s invitation to discipleship. Blessed John Paul I lived “in the joy of the Gospel, without compromises, loving to the very end.” John Paul I recognized that “we are the objects of undying love on the part of God.” Only this kind of love for another can allow the disciple to make an authentic invitation, to reach out and offer something more.

Pope Francis said: “Jesus asks us precisely this: live the Gospel and you will live your life, not halfway but to the full. Live the Gospel, live life, with no compromises.”



That’s a good summary of what I found at the Catholic Hoos ministry at the University of Virginia. Life there is lived to the full, without compromise.

That these students have found the vibrancy, the fullness of joy of the Gospel, is unquestionably due to the leadership of their chaplain, who is a true shepherd of souls. “I don’t want to build kingdoms,” Fr. Joseph–Anthony insists. “I want to build the Kingdom here.”

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For more information on an IRA Rollover, please contact our Planned Giving Office at (646) 350-0108 or email plannedgiving@dominicanfriars.org.





Fr. William Holt, O.P. Photo by Humans of New York.

FRIAR SPREADS HOPE THROUGH ‘HUMANS OF NEW YORK’ INTERVIEW

By *BlackFriars* staff

Fr. William Holt, O.P., shared down-to-earth wisdom with hundreds of thousands of social media users through an appearance on *Humans of New York*, a multimedia photojournalism project that has produced two *New York Times* bestselling books.

Fr. Bill, as he is affectionately known by parishioners of St. Vincent Ferrer Church in Manhattan, delivered the following off-the-cuff testimony in a street interview:

“From all sour faced saints, deliver me O’ Lord. I don’t want to be with a grouch, a crab, a crocodile in a moat. The grumps are a small minority. But they’re vocal. Yes, the grumps are vocal. They have unresolved things, maybe from their childhood. They’re not disconnected from God. But they’re wrestling with him. Not a bad thing, mind you. Not a bad thing. But I want to hang out with

people who enjoy life. At home I have a sunshine file; it’s just a plastic box. Inside are all the letters people have written me over the years: teenagers in the youth group, widows who lost their husbands. People who I was able to make a difference in their life. For two years I was chaplain on the children’s ward of the cancer hospital. What can you say? You can’t explain why some things happen. Only that it’s a mystery. And a mystery is reality, imbued with God’s presence. One Christmastime there was a ten-year old girl from Ireland, dying of leukemia. All this girl wanted was a Cabbage Patch Doll. Ugliest doll you’ve ever seen in your life, seventy-five dollars. Seventy-five dollars! And sold out everywhere. The mother told me: ‘I’ve looked in every store.’ That same day a family from my parish asked what I wanted for Christmas. I say: one Cabbage Patch Doll, and two walkie talkies. They said: ‘Father, are you sure?’ I told them: ‘Yes I’m sure. I was a kid once too!’ The Cabbage Patch Doll went to the little girl. Then I gave one walkie-talkie to her, and one to her twin brother. So they could speak while she was in isolation. After she passed away the mother wrote me a letter. I keep it in my sunshine file. It said: ‘Those walkie-talkies were the best medicine she ever had.’”

Fr. Bill’s remarks elicited an outpouring of goodwill from the largely secular followers of *Humans of New York*. “Where is your parish, Father? Your presence, your outlook, your optimism and kindness...that’s the type of religion that I want to be part of,” said one commenter, echoing the sentiments of many.

Your support helps fund the retirement of Friars like Fr. Bill Holt, O.P., who have given their lives to preaching the Gospel!



BRINGING CHRIST TO CAMPUS: NEW ADORATION CHAPEL AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE EMBLEMATIC OF DOMINICAN APPROACH TO CAMPUS MINISTRY

By *BlackFriars* staff



The presence of Christ in the Eucharist is central to all Dominican campus ministry efforts. Fr. Frassati Davis, O.P., a member of the Dominican chaplaincy at the Catholic University of America, celebrates Benediction at a freshman retreat. Photo by Danielle Schmitz

The University of Louisville's Dominican-run Catholic Campus Ministry brought Christ to the secular campus by constructing a Blessed Sacrament Chapel in a former office of the campus Interfaith Center.

According to Catholic Chaplain Fr. John Baptist Hoang, O.P., the chapel's construction, initiated by his predecessor, Fr. John Paul Kern, O.P., is a fitting contribution to the nationwide Eucharist Revival.

"This chapel is in line with what the universal Church desires: to make the Blessed Sacrament present, available, and known to people."

Following the chapel's consecration by Archbishop Shelton J. Fabre on October 18,

University of Louisville students have begun visiting the Lord in prayer in the midst of their busy school days.

"It's a place for students to come and rest, not just when they're bombarded with studies, but by the culture," says Fr. John Baptist, who notes that, through the presence of the Lord in the tabernacle, "students are able to encounter what they believe."

The location of the chapel in the Interfaith Center makes it a witness to the wider campus community. "We're in the Bible Belt. The Catholic students here get even more questions about their faith from their Baptist friends than they do from the secular culture. This chapel provides a witness to the Church's teaching on the Real Presence," Fr. John Baptist says.

"In his homily at Mass before the consecration, the Archbishop spoke about the power of mystery. As a Catholic, all you can do sometimes is point to the mystery. I think of St. Thomas Aquinas, how his love for the Real Presence overflowed into the Eucharistic hymns he wrote. There are plenty of good arguments for the Real Presence, but the physical, real encounter with Christ in the Eucharist makes all the difference."

Top: University of Louisville students attend Mass before the consecration of a new Adoration Chapel on campus. Photo by Ruby Thomas



The Dominican Friars thank Lynn and Richard Wyvill for their support. We keep all those caring for loved ones in our prayers.

“Caregiving was the Lord’s way of helping me grow, humbling me, and teaching me to rely on and trust Him more.”

Why was God asking me to do this work? I told Him that my heart wasn’t big enough, and my spirit wasn’t generous enough. I knew that the Lord was always with me, but too many days my faith felt smaller than a mustard seed so I asked God to strengthen me.

I prayed for guidance when I had no idea how to help my parents. I prayed for empathy to understand aging from their perspective. I asked for patience when I had to repeat many times what I just said because they didn’t hear or understand. I prayed for strength and an increase in selflessness when I was weary and overwhelmed. When all of us were overcome with sorrow, I prayed for hope. I prayed with gratitude, too, for every day that no one cried or was in pain, for every day that Mom and Dad could enjoy their food or a stroll in the garden, for every day we could be together.

God heard those prayers and provided all that I needed. Caregiving was the Lord’s way of helping me grow, humbling me, and teaching me to rely on and trust Him more.

A CAREGIVER’S LESSONS

By Lynn Wyvill, a Faithful Supporter of the Dominican Friars

I closed my business in August 2011 and was looking forward to retirement. My plans changed when Mom took a serious fall in September that started the downward spiral of poor physical health and dementia of both my parents.

I moved them to a Continuing Care Community and became their long-distance caregiver for eight years, managing every aspect of their lives. I was not prepared for how demanding, physically and emotionally exhausting, and difficult caregiving would be.

Lynn Wyvill’s book, *Abundant Strength: A Caregiver’s Prayers*, is available through Amazon.



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Dominican Friars Foundation
141 East 65th Street
New York, NY 10065
Phone: (212) 744-2410



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