

The Newsletter of the Dominican Friars Foundation



BLACKFRIARS

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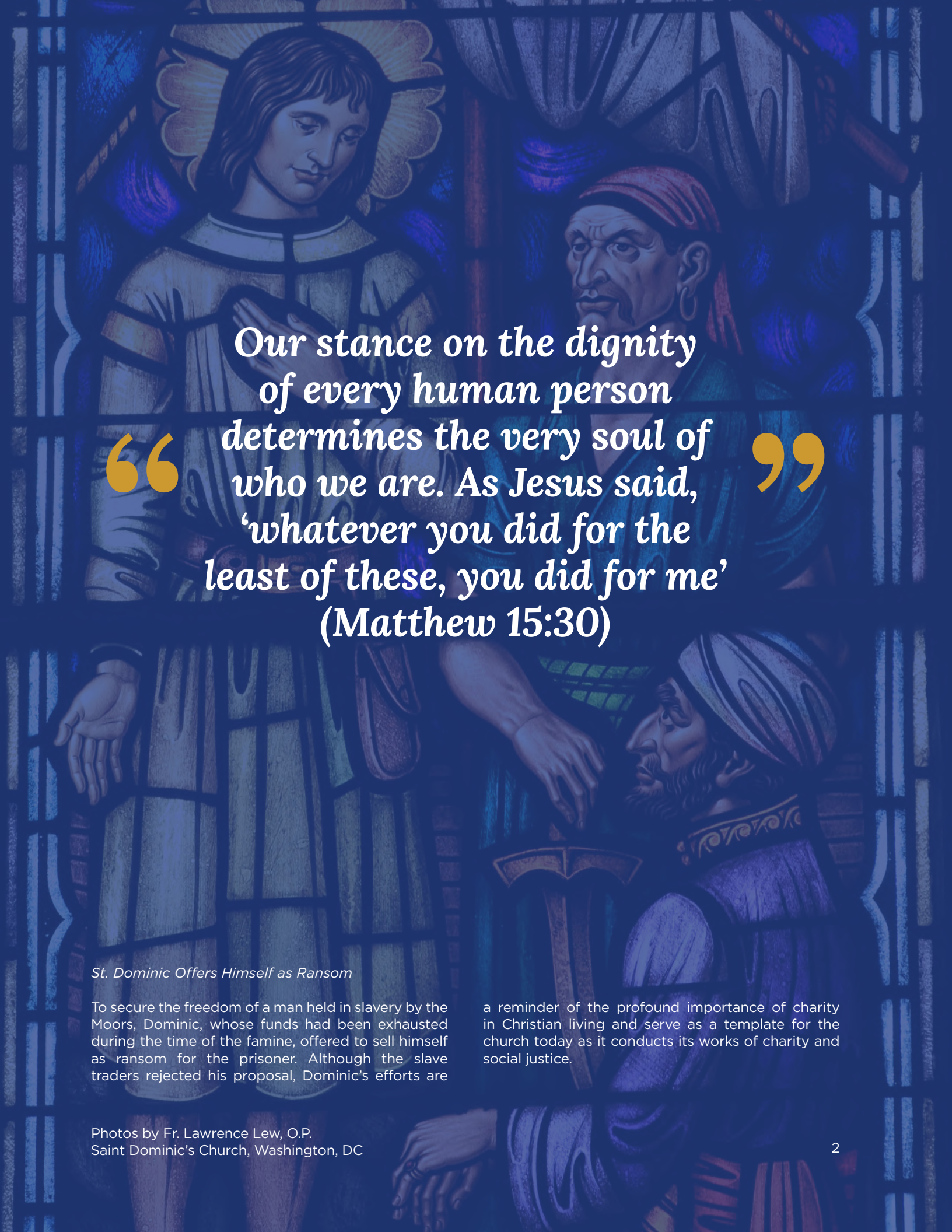
Remedy for a Common Evil

Dominicans Serving in NYC Hospitals

The Dominican student brothers at the March for Life in Washington, DC. Despite the overturning of Roe v. Wade, the Battle for Life rages on. Photo by George Goss



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A stained glass window with a blue and purple color scheme. On the left, St. Dominic, a man with a halo, stands with his hands clasped. On the right, a man in a turban and chain, representing a prisoner, looks up at him. The background shows architectural details of a window.

**“ Our stance on the dignity
of every human person
determines the very soul of
who we are. As Jesus said,
‘whatever you did for the
least of these, you did for me’
(Matthew 15:30) ”**

St. Dominic Offers Himself as Ransom

To secure the freedom of a man held in slavery by the Moors, Dominic, whose funds had been exhausted during the time of the famine, offered to sell himself as ransom for the prisoner. Although the slave traders rejected his proposal, Dominic's efforts are

a reminder of the profound importance of charity in Christian living and serve as a template for the church today as it conducts its works of charity and social justice.



Letter from the Executive Director

Dear friends in Christ,

This year is a historic moment for our country. This January, we gathered on the national mall in Washington, DC to March for Life for the first time in a post-Roe America. Many of us had faith that this day would come but didn't know if it would be in our lifetime. We must rejoice for the Lord has done great things for us!

We thank God for the victories he has achieved through the prayers and work of so many pro-life men and women. Thousands of lives have already been saved through the passage of many state laws protecting the lives of unborn children! Yet we also know that there are many battles yet to be fought.

As the changed route for this year's March for Life indicated, the work to establish legal protection for the right to life has moved from the Supreme Court to the Capitol and to the legislature of every state in our country. The court's overturning of the Roe decision marks not the end but rather a new chapter of our ongoing work to build a true Culture of Life.

This important work extends far beyond courtrooms and legislative assemblies, academia and the media, the ballot box and boardrooms. This is a mission for the heart and mind of every person in this country. Our stance on the dignity of every human person determines the very soul of who we are. As Jesus said, "whatever you did for the least of these, you did for me" (Matthew 15:30).

Pope St. John Paul II proclaimed, "The Gospel of life is at the heart of Jesus' message. Lovingly received day after day by the Church,

it is to be preached with dauntless fidelity as 'good news' to the people of every age and culture" (*Evangelium Vitae*). The preaching of the Gospel must always include the truth of the dignity of every human person made in the image of God and invited to participate in his divine life through adoption as sons and daughters in Jesus Christ.

I am thankful to partner with you in this mission of boldly preaching the fullness of the Gospel and looking for ways that we can live out the Gospel of Life by supporting mothers in need, families, children, the elderly, those with disabilities, and affirming their dignity. As we enter the holy season of Lent, I invite you to consider ways you can help build a true Culture of Life through your words, your prayers, and gifts of your time and energy, your talents, and the resources God has entrusted to you in thanksgiving for the beautiful gift of life he has given to each of us.

May the Lord bless you abundantly,

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



“...alongside these men and women of multitude charisms, the Dominicans marched, just as we have for fifty years.”



REPORT FROM THE MARCH FOR LIFE

by Br. Jeremiah Tobin, O.P.

Ever since the first March for Life in 1974, Americans of all walks of life have risen early in the morning, in the late-January cold, to witness to the dignity of life. And since that first march, consecrated religious have risen with them. This year's march was no different.

Franciscans, Jesuits, and Augustinians were present; as were more sisters' congregations than you could count. Benedictines, Carmelites, and Carthusians offered their secluded prayers for the cause. Other communities which have lent their endeavors directly to the apostolate of upholding human dignity: Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, Missionaries of Charity, Sisters of Life. American religious can proudly claim the label of life-obsessed, for the God to whom we all swore three vows said, *I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly* (John 10:10).

And alongside these men and women of multitude charisms, the Dominicans marched, just as we have for fifty years. The street—where prophets preached, where apostles journeyed—was where St. Dominic chose to situate his sons and daughters as heralds of the Gospel. It is fitting, then, that for fifty years we have marched the streets

of our nation's capital to witness to life. This year was different in one key way, however.

As every religious prays every morning of his or her life in the *Benedictus*:

*In the tender compassion
of our God
the dawn from on high
shall break upon us,
to shine on those who
dwell in darkness and
the shadow of death,
and to guide our feet into
the way of peace.*

A certain dawn has finally broken upon us: *Roe v. Wade* is on the ash heap of history at long last! As the Dominicans walked the last stretch up Capitol Hill, some of us prayed the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary. I thought of all the rosaries that have been prayed in the past fifty years for an end to abortion—oh how many! As proud custodians of so powerful a prayer, and armed with the mandate to preach Truth to the world, the Dominican has been, and will continue to be, one to *go before the Lord to prepare his way*.



REMEDY FOR A COMMON EVIL

By Br. Cyril Stola, O.P.

This article originally appeared in *Dominicana* and is reprinted with permission.

Abortion remains the most contentious moral debate of our time, yet the logic against abortion is astonishingly simple. It is always wrong to kill an innocent human being. Abortion kills an innocent human being. Therefore, abortion is always wrong.

Justice demands that abortion be abolished. Jesus longs for justice, and so Christians have long opposed abortion to defend unborn life and to help those tempted to this injustice. As Christians, we must fight the evil of abortion and we must do so wisely. Proclaiming hard truths requires us to grasp why anyone would deny such truth. We can learn a great deal from the way abortion's proponents discuss the act. When purportedly giving instruction about abortion, the first thing that several organizations supporting abortion mention is that "abortion is common." They do not begin by disputing pro-life arguments, justifying abortion ethically, or even describing what abortion is. They simply affirm the fact that abortion is common. Why?

Abortion's commonality garners support for the procedure. Since abortion is common, everyone knows women who have had abortions. Everyone knows men who

have fathered children with utter disregard for the responsibility it brings. These women and men do not glow red or grow horns. So many people who have been involved in an abortion are funny and friendly and contribute to society in admirable ways. To say that abortion is gravely wrong is to say that all those involved in abortion—including many whom we like and respect—have contributed to grave evil. It is hard to believe that a friend could be at all involved in killing. Yet so many are. Murder can be as nonchalant as swallowing a pill or a few minutes with suction implements. As it turns out, murder is common.

This is a very heavy truth. It is a truth that indicts and implicates our society, not only in regard to abortion itself, but also in the circumstances surrounding it. If abortion is wrong, justice demands that we come to terms with the fact that so much of the developed world has legally permitted the killing of tens of millions of unborn babies since the 1970s. If abortion is wrong, justice demands that we

Watching the Baby by Giuseppe Mazzolini,
painted in 1866



reject our culture of casual sex and learn the often-mocked virtue of chastity. If abortion is wrong, justice demands that we learn to see that so many things that are common—including habits that may be deeply ingrained in us—are evil. These consequences are not easy to accept, so it is no wonder that so few accept them. Many well-intentioned people consider abortion as morally legitimate simply because recognizing the truth would make the world look bleak and friends and neighbors seem evil.

Yet just as emotions can make us deny that abortion is evil, they can also mistakenly lead us to conclude that evil actions make ourselves or others irredeemably evil. In truth, no one is completely corrupt. Everyone can change, and everyone can become righteous. All sins, including abortion, are forgivable. “God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him” (John 3:17). Jesus did not come because we were already good. He came to make us good. After the resurrection, our Savior gave the apostles the power to forgive sins sacramentally so that all who confess their sins could be restored to justice (John 20:19-23).

Confident in this truth, we can recognize that abortion, while common, is wicked. When face-to-face with those who have had or been involved in abortion, we know that that act does not define them and that God longs to show them his mercy. Recognizing the truth about abortion stings—not with the sting of a weapon but with that of a remedy. Like an antiseptic it kills the infection of falsehood. The truth alone heals our illness. The truth alone offers redemption and re-establishes justice.

WHAT WILL YOUR LEGACY BE?

YOU can ensure that the Gospel of Life is preached to future generations by leaving a gift to the Dominican Friars in your will and becoming a member of the St. Dominic Legacy Society!

To learn more, contact our **Office of Planned Giving**:

Phone: 646-350-0116

Email: planned.giving@dominicanfriars.org

Web: dominicanfriars.org/legacy-society





LETTER FROM THE PRIOR PROVINCIAL

I am honored and humbled to assume the role of Prior Provincial for the Province of St. Joseph in 2023, and I have gratitude for the service of my predecessor, Fr. Darren Pierre, O.P., who recently stepped down. The responsibility of leading and providing pastoral care to the friars of our Province inspires me, as does your support in enabling us to preach the Gospel of Life in all of our ministries.

As Catholic Christians, we confess the Triune God as the origin of all that is, and the giver of life. Life is the most fundamental gift each of us receives. Its very fact is a sign of God's goodness. That which is owed to no one beforehand is given for our good. God is not made better by this gift, instead only the entire advantage of this creation is on the part of the one created.

We further confess that the human person is made in the image of God. By this we do not mean that God has two eyes, two ears,

a nose, etc., instead the word "image" refers to God's spiritual nature. God is love (1 Jn. 4:8). Furthermore, in the Gospel of John, Jesus tells us, "I am the way, the truth, and the light. No one comes to the Father except through me" (Jn. 14:6). We are made for love and truth, and this purpose or end of human life is there at the very beginning and it continues to its natural end. When we work to defend human life we honor the gift of God and give him glory. In some sense we become more godlike and open to love.

Fr. Allen Moran, O.P.
Prior Provincial

Dominican Friars at the March for Life on the National Mall. Photo by George Goss



RESTORING SPIRITUAL SIGHT IN SUFFERING

By Br. Luke Neitzke, O.P.

“While we cannot know why we must endure each particular suffering, we can know that every trial we face is meant to bring us closer and closer to Christ.”

For Dominican hospital chaplains, the most joyful visits are to patients who call out to us from their beds as we walk through the halls in our habits. During my healthcare ministry training, one of my most memorable visits was just like this.

A nurse asked me to step into a patient’s room because of the suffering that she was going through. As I approached, I could hear the patient moaning in pain and asking for help. When I entered the room and began speaking to her, she started to focus more on the suffering that she was experiencing in her soul and less on the bodily pain.

I gently explained that as Christ hung upon the cross, the suffering that he experienced in his soul—which arose from seeing his closest friends abandon him and

the knowledge that we would continue to sin despite his sacrifice—was also greater than the pain of being nailed to the cross.

On the Lord’s final journey to Jerusalem, he took a detour to Jericho to visit one blind man. When Christ asked him what he wanted, the man simply responded that he wanted to see. The patient to whom I was speaking was also seeking sight in the spiritual sense: she sought the reason why she was suffering.

While we cannot know why we must endure each particular suffering, we can know that every trial we face is meant to bring us closer and closer to Christ. The blind man followed Christ to Jerusalem after being healed. If he was never sick, he would not have needed healing and may have never become a follower of Christ.

It was the same for the patient that I was talking to. If she had not been in the hospital, she may have never asked to see a friar. She may have never received the healing of the soul that one receives through the sacraments and that is so much greater than the healing of the body.

Your generosity trains Dominican priests to restore spiritual hope to the sick and dying!



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