

The Newsletter of the Dominican Friars Foundation



BLACKFRIARS

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Fr. Gregory Pine, O.P., preaches to 3,200 people at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, DC, for the first Dominican Rosary Pilgrimage.

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Letter from the Executive Director

Dear friends in Christ,

As we journey through the Advent season, we find ourselves in the company of the Blessed Virgin Mary, preparing to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Our Lady accompanies us in each moment of our lives and she who accompanied her son throughout his earthly life leads us closer to him as we contemplate the mysteries of his life in the Rosary and throughout the liturgical year.

This year the Dominican Friars of the Province of St. Joseph celebrated the Month of the Rosary by hosting the first national Dominican Rosary Pilgrimage on September 30, 2023 at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, DC. It was a great joy to welcome pilgrims from across the country to honor Our Lady and seek her intercession. The sound of thousands of voices praying the Rosary together was a powerful experience and the preaching of Fr. Gregory Pine, O.P., Fr. Lawrence Lew, O.P., and Fr. James Brent, O.P., helped us to appreciate how Mary leads us to her son through the Rosary.

At the end of the Rosary, we pray that “by meditating upon these mysteries of the Most Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we may imitate what they contain and obtain what they promise.” On August 15, 2023, twelve young men imitated Mary’s “yes” to God, by offering their lives to God through professing first vows in the Dominican Order. To give one’s life to God for the salvation of souls is indeed a joyful mystery, and one that came for these men, as it does for all friars, after deeply contemplating the mystery of the Annunciation aided by the daily community recitation of the Rosary throughout their novitiate year.

We give thanks to God for these men’s vocations, for we know that this joyful response to God’s call is a work of grace. I pray that you may also experience great joy in following God’s will in your own vocation and in knowing that your support for our Dominican formation programs makes it possible for these men to follow God in theirs and to be formed as faithful preachers of the Rosary.

Thank you for partnering with us in our Dominican mission. May the Lord bless you abundantly during this Advent, Christmas, and in the new year to come.

In Christ, Our Lady, and St. Dominic,

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

Fr. Patrick Briscoe, O.P., led the prayer and procession of the Most Holy Rosary through the Basilica at the Rosary Pilgrimage. Photos by George Goss



PREACH MY ROSARY

By BlackFriars Staff

The Dominican Friars not only pray the Rosary, they preach the Rosary! The preaching of the Rosary was one of the many graces received by those present at the first national Dominican Rosary Pilgrimage held September 30 at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, DC. A perfect blend of prayer and preaching, the Dominican Rosary Pilgrimage served to ground, and undoubtedly deepen, the faithful's understanding of Our Lady's desire to bring souls to her son, Jesus.

Modeled after the Rosary Pilgrimage in Lourdes, this pilgrimage was born out of prayer and began to take shape in January 2023 with a 9-month novena which was prayed every month. Fr. John Paul Kern, O.P., Executive Director of the Dominican Friars Foundation, said that the "Dominican Friars have been promoting the Rosary for 800 years, and today there's a great need for unity and for drawing us to Jesus through Mary. So, we took this opportunity at the beginning of the month of the Rosary to invite everyone in the United States to join us in prayer with Our Lady—she's the one who prayed with the Apostles at Pentecost for the coming of the Holy Spirit—and so we're gathered here with her and ask for her intercession for the graces that we need to draw close to Jesus today."

Over 3,200 people from all over the country joined the friars for a day-long pilgrimage in DC, with talks by Fr. Gregory Pine, O.P.; a 15-decade Rosary with a procession; a fervorino by Promoter General of the Rosary Confraternity, Fr. Lawrence Lew, O.P.; and Holy Mass celebrated by Fr. Paul Marich, O.P., and preached by Fr. James Brent, O.P.

Fr. Gregory Pine, O.P., principal preacher for the Rosary Pilgrimage, opened the day with the question, "Is Marian devotion an inordinate love?" He said objections to Marian devotion fall along the lines of loving too much, but that "Marian devotion isn't overkill, it's overflow. Our Lady doesn't set herself up as an idol, so much as an icon. And she doesn't upend the place of Christ in our life, she extends it, with motherly care."

God is glorious in his saints, he said. "And if God is made glorious in his saints that is true above all of she who is most conformed to her Son. And we see in the life of Our Lady that even though she was given exalted graces, she disappears—becoming an icon for us to see the graces of Our Lord."

Fr. Gregory urged us to pray the Rosary with a *contemplative stance*. "We're all called to be contemplatives and the only prerequisite for this is the life of grace." So, all baptized Christians have what it takes to contemplate the mysteries of God. And this contemplative stance gets at our deepest identity because we will only be fully ourselves when we get to heaven. But this life of contemplation can start here. "In fact", he said, "some of the Fathers of the Church use this word 'heaven dwellers' to describe our time even while here on earth—that even as we make

pilgrimage through the difficulties, the various trials and temptations of this life, that we remain throughout the course of it, heaven dwellers, because the life of grace is the life of glory.”

In praying the Rosary, he counseled us to go toward the mysteries because they put us in living contact with Christ. Christ actually comes for us, “taking on our humanity, from top to bottom ... so that we might have assurance in his flesh that he is present. Christ wants us to lay hold of him. He wants us to beg for him because he wants to give himself through his mysteries.”

Finally, Fr. Gregory directed us to pray in union with Mary, our heavenly mother. Recounting a story about his own mother beside him as a 19-year-old in the hospital undergoing wound care from frostbite, his body wracked with pain, he could see the anguish in his mother’s face because of his suffering. In one way, seeing her suffer deepened Fr. Gregory’s anguish. But, somewhat paradoxically, it lightened his anguish because he wasn’t alone. “It was almost as if my mom had increased my capacity to both feel the pain and to feel the love,” he said. Shifting our attention back to Our Lady, standing at the foot of the cross, he said “think of the pain and suffering she witnessed—a pain made more acute by the union and sympathy which she enjoyed with her beloved son. And yet she was able to bear it up, all within the setting of the divine plan—which knows, which believes,



Fr. James Brent, O.P., preached about Our Lady and the Apostles in the Upper Room at the Vigil Mass.

which hopes, which loves—the fact that glory lies in store, that the unleashing of salvation lies in store, that depth of intimacy lies in store, that perfection of sympathy lies in store, for all those who would turn to him, who would profit from the offer of grace.”

The Most Holy Rosary was a focal point of the day as Fr. Patrick Briscoe, O.P., led friars in procession to different chapels in the Basilica, praying 15 decades of the Rosary with thousands of the faithful and chanting the newly composed Dominican Rosary Litany, ending with the Salve Regina chanted by 80 Dominican friars in the nave of Our Lady’s Basilica—a visually moving experience.

In his homily at the Vigil Mass, Fr. James Brent, O.P., lifted hearts and minds to the Upper Room and asked, “Why have so many come so far to Our Lady’s Basilica in Washington, DC? Isn’t it because we, too, know our need to join with Mary in prayer? The Rosary is our link to the Upper Room,” he said. “Surely, the historical moment of the Upper Room has long since come and gone, but the mystery of the Upper Room still abides in the heavenly places.”

And pilgrims traveled from near and far! Kyle Myers, a graduate student at Loyola Marymount in Los Angeles who met the Dominicans through the Thomistic Institute, said he felt called by God to come to the pilgrimage, so he got in his car and drove for five days. “I think the fulfillment of the pilgrimage is supposed to be a symbol of your life as a Christian—this journey ultimately to this church dedicated to Our Blessed Mother. So, when I arrived here, I felt I had completed some sort of penitential task. And I felt so relieved to get here. Spiritually, I spent a lot of time praying for the friars who were going to be here.”



Fr. Michael O’Connor, O.P. and the Dominican Schola Cantorum led the faithful in chanting the Dominican Rosary Litany and in singing at the Vigil Mass.

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Laying down their lives, 12 men profess first vows at St. Gertrude parish in Cincinnati this past August.

SHAPED BY GOD

By Fr. Michael Dosch, O.P.

Fr. Michael Dosch, O.P., served as novice master for the men who just made their first profession. We asked Fr. Michael to give some insight on the novitiate, in general, and on these men he helped form as novices.

A Dominican friar is a man who is always open to being shaped by God into a holy priest in imitation of St. Dominic, so the beginning of our life has to be one of learning how to be molded and to learn all about the Order and our founder. As men dedicated to Truth, we have to know the truths of what the Order is and what God is calling us to in order to pursue this high calling. It has been wonderful to see so many enthusiastic young men respond to God's call and then open themselves up to a life of being molded by God.

The novitiate touches on every aspect of life, fully immersing them into living it. The life rotates around the liturgical life of the priory with Mass, Liturgy of the Hours, Rosary, quiet meditation in common, and *lectio divina*. The community life is everywhere, with common recreation and shared meals at the monastic-style refectory table, shaped as a giant "U" where everyone faces each other. The intellectual life is nourished by regular classes, special workshops, regular times scheduled for study, and the deep everyday conversations around the table. Since apostolic ministry is integral to being a Dominican, they all have weekly apostolates.

One of the radical differences that novices first need to become accustomed to is silence. It is the guardian of prayer, study, and religious life. Coming from a noisy world, the component of silence is something to become used to, to embrace, and to cherish. From this newfound peace, the novices have to learn to pray in a new setting, which takes some adjustment. There are many ways of praying, to which they are exposed. There is, of course, a communal dimension, so the schedule has a half hour of quiet meditation in the morning, at a time they do not decide, where everyone is in their choir stall praying silently as they see fit. They also have to find at least another half hour during the day of silent prayer, typically *lectio*

divina. This allows them time to experiment and gives God the opportunity to show them the best practices of prayer for themselves.

The one type of prayer that is particularly Dominican is liturgical prayer. The highlight of the day is the conventual Mass, typically sung and, of course, preached by a Dominican priest. The divine liturgy is extended throughout the day with the Office of Readings (Matins), Morning Prayer (Lauds), Midday Prayer (Sext), Evening Prayer (Vespers), and Night Prayer (Compline). The Rosary is prayed in common daily, sometimes for a common intention such as the weekly Rosary for our benefactors, both living and deceased.

Prayer is a bond that unites, but of course much of the novitiate focuses on community life. The novice master's plan for the novitiate is extensive in this area, but much of it happens spontaneously. Most of every day is shared with their brothers!

My hope for the men who just professed first vows is that they become saints. May they be excellent Dominican friars and priests, ever being open to God's invitation to be his supple instruments and to draw closer to him.



Letter from Provincial

Dear friends in Christ,

Despite all of the chaos, violence, and uncertainty in the world, the light of faith allows us to see reasons for hope and occasions for gratitude. In January 2023, I was elected Prior Provincial of the Province of St. Joseph and had to resign my post as President of the Dominican School of Philosophy & Theology.

Despite the abrupt start and the sadness of saying goodbye to colleagues with whom I had developed a rapport, serving the Dominican friars in the Province of St. Joseph these past ten months has brought with it many blessings and privileges.

A prior provincial in some way acts as a pastor to the other members of the province, and so where a pastor might share the joy of the new life in his parish through the conversions he witnesses and baptisms he administers, the prior provincial has the privilege of welcoming new members into the province, witnessing professions, and approving friars to be ordained. In February of this year, I had the joy of receiving the solemn vows of three brothers. In March, we celebrated the ordination of five friars to the diaconate, and in May, nine friars were ordained priests for the Catholic Church. In June of this

year, I had the joy of approving seven men to test their vocations by entering our novitiate, and in August, I received the simple profession of twelve brothers who had completed their novitiate year. For each of these vocations, I give thanks to God and pray that he will receive God's mercy and be an effective voice for that mercy.

The Dominican Rosary Pilgrimage is an excellent example of effectively proclaiming God's mercy at work through the mysteries of our salvation. It was such a joy to be present in Washington, DC in late September to celebrate with the thousands of you who were there in person.

Thank you for your support for our Dominican mission of preaching for the salvation of souls. We remember you in our prayers and we appreciate yours.

Gratefully,

Very Rev. Allen Moran, O.P.
Prior Provincial



Fr. John Paul Kern, O.P., and Br. Finbar Kantor, O.P., with Richard Salat.

FACEBOOK'S UPSIDE

By Richard Salat

My first contact with the Dominicans Friars was, believe it or not, through Facebook. I watched their informative videos and was truly impressed by their dedicated work. I wanted to learn more about the Dominican Order so I decided to take a walk to St. Vincent Ferrer church in New York City. Standing on the front steps of the priory was Fr. Bill Holt, O.P. We exchanged greetings and continued our conversation inside.

In that initial conversation with Fr. Bill, I learned so much about the Dominicans and the outstanding work they do in hospitals and on college campuses. Fr. Bill suggested I meet and talk with Fr. John Paul. We set up a lunch date and had an amazing discussion, learning about the life and ministry of the friars.

I asked how I could help out through a gift to the Dominicans. I learned about their robust education program and the student brother scholarships. I set up a scholarship through the Dominican Friars Foundation to

support the tuition and living expenses of the student brothers studying at the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, DC.

That summer, I received a lunch invitation from Fr. John Paul. He mentioned that Br. Finbar, one of the student brothers currently in formation who was serving in New York City for his summer ministry assignment, would be joining us. We had a wonderful lunch and meeting. Br. Finbar is a remarkable young man and will make a wonderful priest. I made the right choice for my gift.

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Another pilgrim, Glenn Dupont, walked from Providence, RI to the Basilica in DC—a 600 mile trek—and he estimated he walked over 400 miles of the journey! Glenn, a lay Dominican, said it's been on his heart for a long time to promote the Rosary, particularly the Rosary Confraternity, so, as he sees it, this Rosary Pilgrimage is just the beginning and he's looking forward to promoting the Rosary back at his home parish, (aptly named) St. Pius V.

Francesca Cuddeback, also from Rhode Island, traveled with her husband Matthew and their three children. As a family they are devoted to praying the Rosary every day, and it's been such a gift to their family, she said. "For those who haven't experienced what it means to really be faithful to the Rosary every day, I hope they receive that grace on this pilgrimage. We're praying for that today. I know that it has given our family so many gifts of joy and peace in our home."

Concluding the pilgrimage by reciting the Dominican Rosary Pilgrimage novena prayer, Fr. Allen Moran, O.P., Prior Provincial of the Province of St. Joseph, thanked the thousands of pilgrims who joined the friars in kicking off the month of the Rosary, and announced next year's Dominican Rosary Pilgrimage date: September 28, 2024. More information is available on the Dominican Rosary Pilgrimage website: rosarypilgrimage.org



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