

The Newsletter of the Dominican Friars Foundation



# BLACKFRIARS

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In post-Roe America, the work to defend life continues as the Dominican Friars March for Life.  
Photos by George Goss.

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Letter from the Executive Director

## *Dear friends in Christ,*

We praise God for the gift of life and his gift of eternal life in Jesus Christ!

Our savior, Jesus Christ, the eternally begotten Son of the Father, became man and was born in time of the Virgin Mary, so that all of us, descendents of Adam and Eve and born of human parents, may also be born again in him, sharing in his own divine life by grace as a foretaste of eternal life in glorified union with him in heaven.

In light of this marvelous truth, the Dominican Friars are both pro-life and pro-eternal life. Our work to build a culture of life and our preaching for the salvation of souls are intrinsically connected.

The dignity of the human person and the right to life stand upon the fundamental truth that every human person is created in the image of God. God has given each of us a marvelous

human nature capable of knowing and loving him. Every human person is offered the grace to be redeemed, healed, perfected, and elevated to friendship with God by the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and invited to enjoy the perfect bliss of the beatific vision for all eternity. We invite you to join us in sharing this wonderful truth to help build a true culture of life and to raise hearts and minds to God in hope of eternal life.

We thank God for the seven Dominican brothers who recently professed their solemn vows, committing the rest of their lives to God according to our Dominican way of life as their path to heaven. The recent reception of the Master of Sacred Theology honor by two of our Dominican friars highlights our continued commitment to assiduous study and faithful



# ONE SMALL STEP

Br. Clement Greenspan, O.P.

In the summer of '69, the world heard, "One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind." Stepping off the lunar lander over two hundred thousand miles from earth, Neil Armstrong accomplished a feat unthinkable fifty years prior. Yet this was not a solitary action. More than four hundred thousand Americans worked tirelessly to ensure a successful mission. Years earlier, when questioned by President Kennedy about his role at NASA, a janitor replied, "I'm helping put a man on the moon, Mr. President." He understood the significance of his small task.

Over fifty years later, in the summer of 2022, the United States accomplished another milestone—Roe was overturned. A victory for the pro-life movement that seemed implausible a decade earlier, this decision is built upon years of dedication by countless Americans advocating for the unborn and counseling women in crisis pregnancies. Since 1974, thousands have marched in Washington, D.C., through the bitter cold. In post-Roe America, that work continues and we still march. While the *Dobbs* decision has had major effects on America, it was only one small step forward.

Now that the focus has turned to the state and local levels, many wonder whether the national March for Life is still necessary. Attending this year's March, I was nervous. When I arrived with a few friars, attendance on the Mall seemed sparse. Obscured by the snowfall, the U.S. Capitol even seemed to absent itself. I feared a flop. Yet it was still early. Within a couple of hours, the ankle-deep snow was completely trampled and our banner was surrounded. The March was growing and I soon feared we might be stuck at the back of the line!

Under our Dominican banner, friars, sisters, students, and families from across the world marched, including a grandmother, who has been marching since the first demonstrations after Roe, and multiple infants, who already proclaim the goodness of life

preaching and teaching of the fullness of the truth about God and the human person.

The recent retreat hosted by the friars of the *Godsplaining* podcast shows one of the many creative ways we are sharing this sacred and saving truth to feed hungry souls today. The centenary celebration of our thriving St. Gertrude parish reminds us of the Lord's promise to give us shepherds after his own heart and his steadfast faithfulness to his people.

We are so grateful for your partnership in our Dominican mission of preaching for the salvation of souls. We thank God for the gift that you are and pray that you may know ever more deeply the riches of life in Christ, now and forever.

In Christ and St. Dominic,

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

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by their very existence. They are a sign of contradiction against the culture of death, and, in their littleness, they magnify the goodness of the Lord. While the world devalues the smallest among us, God works precisely in our littleness:

***It was not because you are more numerous than all the peoples that the LORD set his heart on you and chose you; for you are really the smallest of all peoples (Deut 7:7).***

This is a mystery of the Faith: through his Incarnation in the womb of a lowly virgin, Christ became a little child of Israel to save the world from sin. He entered our smallness and seeming insignificance to make us adopted children of God. In the footsteps of the Apostles, we should be impelled by the love of God to make him known to our neighbor and, by the love we have for our neighbor, to preach for the salvation of souls. Through the study of sacred truth and the common life, every Dominican is formed and orders his life to this mission, because “the object of our preaching is either to cause the faith to be born, or to allow it to penetrate people’s entire lives more deeply” (*Fundamental Constitutions*, V). Both in the Church and in the pro-life movement, each of us, utilizing the gifts God has given us, can promote the Gospel of life one small step at a time. #WhyWeMarch

***And how can men preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach good news!” (Rom 10:15).***



Prior Provincial, Fr. Allen Moran, O.P., welcomes seven newly solemnly professed Dominican friars: front row, Br. Linus Martz, O.P., Br. Basil Burroughs, O.P., Br. Bertrand Hebert, O.P.; back row, Br. Nicodemus Thomas, O.P., Br. Louis Bethea, O.P., Br. Gregory Santy, O.P., and Br. Titus Sanchez, O.P. Photo by George Goss.

# PATH TO HEAVEN

By BlackFriars Staff

***“By profession, we dedicate ourselves to God, following Christ to lead an evangelical life in the Order. In this way our baptismal consecration becomes more fully effective. By the profession of obedience we bind ourselves to live the evangelical counsels, renouncing certain things of undoubted value without detriment to true human development. We embrace Christ’s self-emptying while sharing in his life in the Spirit. So, by being faithful, we give a clearer witness in the Church to the values of the kingdom of heaven. We also promise in filial devotion to obey the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, the immensely caring mother of our Order. By professing obedience to St. Dominic, we also promise to be faithful to his spirit and project.” - The Book and Constitutions and Ordinations of the Brothers of the Order of Preachers, no. 189***

These were the words professed by seven Dominican friars as they made Solemn Professions to the Dominican Order in January. In making solemn vows, these friars consecrated the whole of their life to God.

In receiving these vows, Very Rev. Allen Moran, O.P., Prior Provincial of the Province of St. Joseph said the vows put these men on a certain path, a path concerned with the things of God, a path that sets aside earthly goods. This path is a life of prayer, study, and contemplation. And for Dominicans, it’s the path that will bear fruit in their preaching so that souls are saved.

But this path is not necessarily a self-evident one, Fr. Allen said. So it’s a matter of following those who have tread this path before them—like Our Lady, St. Dominic, St. Thomas Aquinas, and their brothers in the Province of St. Joseph. “It is a communal road,” he said. “And on this path of saints, we recall our ongoing profound need for God’s mercy, for a continued grace that he gives, that this path is walked with the shoes of humility.”

Fr. Allen pointed to where that path ends: union with God, the beatific vision. In a word, heaven. He gave thanks to God for these brothers and asked for the grace that each brother may reach this end, and do so joyfully.



# MASTERS OF SACRED THEOLOGY

By BlackFriars Staff



Fr. Basil Cole, O.P., was awarded Master of Sacred Theology by Prior Provincial Fr. Allen Moran, O.P., at a ceremony held at the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, DC in January. Photo courtesy of the Dominican House of Studies.

Fr. Basil Cole, O.P., and Fr. Thomas Joseph White, O.P., were both awarded the title of Master of Sacred Theology by Fr. Gerard Timoner, O.P., Master of the Order. This honor is an academic title within the Dominican Order and is given to friars who have noteworthy achievements in the field of theology and who have contributed to the promotion of studies in the Order.

Fr. Basil, who was awarded the honor at a ceremony in Washington, DC, is Emeritus Professor at the Dominican House of Studies and has authored numerous books including *Music and Morals* and co-authored with Paul Connor, O.P., *Christian Totality: Theology of Consecrated Life*. He has written articles for *The Priest*, *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*, *Reason and Faith*, and *Angelicum*, and has been a long-time collaborator for Germain Grisez's four-volume series of moral theology, *The Way of the Lord Jesus*.

Fr. Thomas Joseph, awarded the honor in Rome, is Rector of the Pontifical University of St. Thomas (the Angelicum) and author of various books including *Wisdom in the Face of Modernity: A Study in Thomistic Natural*

*Theology; The Incarnate Lord, A Thomistic Study in Christology; The Light of Christ: An Introduction to Catholicism; and The Trinity: On the Nature and Mystery of the One God*. With Matthew Levering, he is the co-editor of the academic journal *Nova et Vetera*.

Befitting Masters of Sacred Theology, both friars gave magisterial lectures to mark the occasion. Fr. Basil's talk, entitled "Spiritual Beauty and the Challenge of the Life of Virtue," elucidated the importance of the arts—particularly literature, painting, and music—in growing in virtue. And Fr. Thomas Joseph's talk, "Mariology and the Sense of Mystery: The Virgin Mary and the Spiritual Practice of Catholic Theology" examined the nature of the Virgin Mary's divine maternity in the order of grace, how that grace relates to the mystical body, and her role in the spiritual life of the theologian.

Fr. Thomas Joseph said this honor is an indication of the Dominican Order's commitment to the public intellectual life in service of the Church. He noted that the Province of St. Joseph has a long-standing commitment to higher studies in service of our key institutions—the Pontifical Faculty of the Immaculate Conception and Providence College. He also noted there are a number of friars serving at the Angelicum in Rome, "to the great good of the international life of the Church."



Archbishop Augustine DiNoia, O.P., conferred the honor of Master of Sacred Theology on Fr. Thomas Joseph White, O.P., at a ceremony held at the Angelicum in Rome in December. Photo by Cristian Gennari.



Archbishop Christopher Cardone, O.P., archbishop of the Solomon Islands and a friar of the Province of St. Joseph, helps St. Gertrude Parish kickoff the Centennial Year with Mass. Photo by Ron Diesslin.

# CELEBRATING 100 YEARS

By Michelle Dushensky

St. Gertrude Parish has been a beacon in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati for decades. Last November, the parish celebrated its 100th anniversary, wrapping up a year of festivities that began October 2022, with a kickoff Mass celebrated by Archbishop Christopher Cardone, O.P., archbishop of the Solomon Islands, a friar of the Province of St. Joseph and a former parochial vicar at St. Gertrude Parish.

Like most Catholic parishes, St. Gertrude has a humble beginning. In November 1923, “St. Gertrude’s Mission” was just a small group of Catholic families celebrating Mass each week in a private residence at the corner of Naomi and Miami avenues. Today, the parish is pastored by the Dominican Friars of the Province of St. Joseph and home to 1,800 families, a distinguished church building and campus, an abundance of opportunities to attend Mass and receive the sacraments, over 300 students, and the novitiate for the Province of St. Joseph.

St. Gertrude Parish held a variety of special events over the past year: a showing of an episode of *The Chosen* (with a surprise appearance from actor Jonathan Roumie), a talk entitled “Understanding this Catholic Moment” by Catholic intellectual George Weigel, an evening of live music performed by nationally acclaimed music group The Vigil Project, a pig roast, a father/son event with presentation from Hall of Famer Anthony Munoz, a historic Corpus Christi procession through downtown Madeira, and a black-tie Gala fundraiser.

The year culminated with a two-fold celebration: a solemn Mass celebrated by Archbishop Schnurr, archbishop of Cincinnati, followed by a candlelight procession around the parish (on the feast of St. Gertrude the Great and the founding of the parish); and a festive gathering in the Parish Center, featuring authentic German food, live music, and plenty of fun!



Fr. John Paul Walker, O.P., pastor of St. Gertrude’s gives hearty approval for the parish’s Centennial Year pig roast. Photo by George Kimura.

“Our centennial year was a year of profound grace,” said Fr. John Paul Walker, O.P., pastor of St. Gertrude Parish. “It gave us the opportunity to look back and thank God for the 100 years of blessings already bestowed upon us. It brought our parish together and more united us with one another—and, more importantly, with the Lord. It gave us the opportunity to reflect upon where we are now as a parish and what God is calling us to be in the future, so that we can embrace the great mission to which we are called.”





Fr. Patrick Briscoe, O.P., Fr. Gregory Pine, O.P., and Fr. Bonaventure Chapman, O.P., field questions at a recent Godsplaining retreat for young adults. Photo by Jeffrey Bruno.

# TRUTH CULTURE

By *BlackFriars Staff*

Over 60 young adults from across the country came to Malvern, PA, to spend a weekend on retreat with the Godsplaining friars this past November. Godsplaining is a popular podcast started by five Dominican friars—Fr. Patrick Briscoe, O.P., Fr. Bonaventure Chapman, O.P., Fr. Jacob Bertrand Janczyk, O.P., Fr. Joseph-Anthony Kress, O.P., and Fr. Gregory Pine, O.P.—all of whom entered the Dominican Order together. “From the beginning, we didn’t want our podcast to exist in a void,” said Fr. Patrick. He explained that so many Catholics, especially young people, feel alienated and isolated so their hope is that these Godsplaining retreats are a place where the friars can connect and encourage young people.

But before the young adults arrived for retreat, they were assigned homework—Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger’s *Truth and Tolerance*. The friars chose this book as discussion for retreat because, while the culture preaches tolerance, the contemporary world is not tolerant of

religious ideas. And that intolerance is what many young faithful Catholics experience as they live out their faith.

The two-day retreat, structured around talks by the friars on various aspects of Ratzinger’s work, also provided ample time for Adoration, confessions, fellowship, and Mass. In one talk on truth and culture, Fr. Bonaventure explained that as Christians, we inhabit a definite culture, but we have this kind of dual citizenship—the city of man and the city of God. “And these two cultures are not the same, but they must relate,” he said, “and how they relate is in truth.” The culture that Catholics have to give other cultures is the truth, he explained. “We need to bring the truth to others, not to destroy their culture, but to perfect it. Christian faith is always a transcendent culture, meeting human cultures, no matter what culture they are.”

Fr. Patrick said, “if Godsplaining is anything, it is radically committed to the truth. In a world where people face so much confusion, we work to offer clarity.” He indicated that listeners of the podcast love the fraternity of the friars and they can see we are brothers—it’s authentic. “And that authenticity flows from our fraternal life, our shared commitment to St. Dominic’s mission of preaching for the salvation of souls.”



Over 60 young adults joined the Godsplaining friars on retreat in Malvern, PA. Photo by Jeffrey Bruno.



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## Dominican Friars Foundation

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



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