

The Newsletter of the Dominican Friars Foundation



# BLACKFRIARS

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Newly ordained priest, Fr. Christopher Daniel, O.P., kneels before Archbishop Christopher Cardone, O.P., ordaining bishop of five new Dominican priests at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, DC. Photo by George Goss.

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Letter from the Executive Director

## Dear friends in Christ,

We have much for which to be thankful!

This year we thank God for the ordination of five Dominican friars to the priesthood of Jesus Christ. Throughout their lives each of these men will preach the saving truth of Jesus Christ, baptize, absolve sins, and celebrate Mass for many thousands of souls.

On the same date these men were ordained—May 25, 2024—the eastern (St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Route) route of the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage for the Eucharistic Revival passed through New York City giving public witness to the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist.

These two great mysteries—the Eucharist and the Priesthood—are intrinsically linked. As Pope St. John Paul II wrote, “There can be no Eucharist without the priesthood, just as there can be no priesthood without the Eucharist.” Through the Eucharist and the ministerial Priesthood Jesus is present and continues his saving work in the world today.

I am thankful for all of you who through your prayers and support have made possible the formation and ordination of these five new Dominican priests. Our

world is hungry for Jesus and through the participation of these men in his own priesthood, Christ will give himself—body, blood, soul, and divinity—as food for the salvation of souls in the Most Holy Eucharist.

Let us continue to pray for abundant graces to be poured out upon our nation throughout this Eucharistic Revival, including this summer’s National Eucharistic Congress. I also encourage you to make time to go to Eucharistic Adoration. The Eucharistic Presence of Jesus is such a tremendous gift. Please know of my prayers and the prayers of all of the friars for you and your loved ones.

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



# FIVE FRIARS ORDAINED TO PRIESTHOOD

By *Blackfriars Staff*

Five Dominican friars were ordained to the priesthood by Archbishop Christopher Cardone, O.P., on Saturday, May 25, at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, DC: Fr. Luke Neitzke, O.P., Fr. Christopher Daniel, O.P., Fr. Cornelius Avaritt, O.P., Fr. Charles Rooney, O.P., and Fr. Cyril Stola, O.P.

In his homily, Archbishop Christopher Cardone, O.P., a Dominican friar of the Province of St. Joseph and archbishop of Honiara in the Solomon Islands, told his newly ordained brothers to stay close to Mary because she will help them be faithful friar preachers, to be men of prayer, and that the sacrifice of the Mass should be the heart of their day.

Archbishop Cardone reminded them of the stained glass window near the door of the Dominican House of Studies where these men were formed these last six years. The image is of Jesus sending the apostles out to the world. He told the newly ordained

that they, too, have been trained to be sent out to God's people and to always remember that Holy Father Dominic wanted his friars to be apostolic preachers. "Brothers, Christ and the Church will be sending you out today, to an uncertain world. Be apostles of hope and mercy. Be men of prayer. Be friends of Jesus who bring light and life and the good news of the Gospel to all people, conscious with great certainty that the love of the Lord is the fruit that endures, and the fruit that lasts forever."

See **ORDAINED** on page 4

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Photo: Newly ordained Dominican priests: Fr. Christopher Daniel, O.P., Fr. Cornelius Avaritt, O.P., Fr. Charles Rooney, O.P., Fr. Luke Neitzke, O.P., and Fr. Cyril Stola, O.P. Photo by George Goss.

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*“I was drawn to priesthood and the Order of Preachers by witnessing the evangelical and authentic preaching of the friars. As a priest and friar consecrated to sacred truth, I desire to communicate this truth with the love and mercy of the Father.”*

Fr. Cornelius Avaritt, O.P.

*“In college, I came to discover the truth about God’s love through the liturgy and through several classes that I took in philosophy and theology. Deeply enamored, I wanted to share the saving truth of Christ with others—first as a friend and teacher through my words and deeds, and then in an even more significant way, as his priest through administering his sacraments. The path forward soon became clear: the life of a Dominican priest is a life consecrated in total service to the truth of Christ—in word and in deed and in sacrament. It was a perfect fit in the way only God can arrange.”*

Fr. Charles Rooney, O.P.

*“The good example of Dominican college chaplains showed me the vitality and joy of the priesthood. Those chaplains led me to Jesus, and Jesus drew me to the priesthood. As a priest, I’m excited to bring Christ’s Body and Blood to his people and to witness his grace at work within souls.”*

Fr. Cyril Stola, O.P.

*“I was drawn to the preaching, to the charism of sharing with others the riches of the revelation given to us by Jesus, and that the Dominican Order supports that charism through a holy way of life lived in community. I’m excited to give people Jesus in the sacraments, to help them to know and to believe in his love for them.”*

Fr. Christopher Daniel, O.P.



*“Initially, it was a sense of duty that drew me to the priesthood. Being raised in the military and being in the Navy myself, fulfilling your duty, to God, country, and family, was something that your honor depended on. But this sense of duty changed into love; the longer I fulfilled my duty, the more my love grew. Now I stay, and seek ordination, so that I can continue to grow in this love and bring the love of God to those who do not know him.”*

Fr. Luke Neitzke, O.P.



# A HIDDEN MINISTRY

By *Blackfriars* Staff

Fr. Frassati Davis, O.P., baptizes a new parishioner at St. Dominic's Parish in Youngstown, Ohio.

It was 1977 when the steel mills began closing down in Youngstown, Ohio. Since then the city, once a locus of steel in America, lost more than half its residents. That means half the homes are occupied. Half as many schools are needed. Many of the remaining inhabitants travel 50 miles for work in greater Pittsburgh or Akron, sometimes as far as Cleveland.

Though half of Youngstown's inhabitants left town, the Dominican friars stayed. In fact, St. Dominic Parish just celebrated its 100th anniversary. In this gem of a church in this rust belt city, Catholic life endures. One could say it even thrives—with four Sunday Masses, weekly bible study, religious education, a men's fellowship group, and a prayer cenacle.

And while that list of ministries runs the gamut of typical parish ministries, there's a particular ministry at St. Dominic's that spans many, and it's a growing need not only in Youngstown but in many Catholic parishes across the country: ministry to Spanish-speaking Catholics. There aren't that many Hispanics in Youngstown, maybe 500 in the whole diocese, said Fr. Frassati Davis, O.P., but he figures he sees half of them every Sunday for Mass at St. Dominic's. "They come from all over the diocese because they want to speak their language. They want to hear Mass in Spanish and have their children baptized in Spanish." As parochial vicar, Fr. Frassati also says Mass in English and works with English-speaking parishioners, but because he is the only one that speaks Spanish, that's the priority because those skills are not interchangeable.

He finds himself doing a lot of marriage prep, convalidations, baptismal prep, and house blessings in Spanish too. Fr. Frassati said it goes a long way when someone speaks your language. "To be a priest who's able to communicate in their language is to see that there is a care." This past winter, he hosted a couples retreat for Spanish speakers. His goal was for five couples to show up and 22 couples attended. He and a visiting friar, Fr. Raymond La Grange, O.P., gave conferences and heard confessions throughout the day-long retreat, all in Spanish. He saw in these couples a hunger for this kind of offering and he plans to do more.

Fr. Frassati told another story about a recent visit to someone who was very ill and his wife told

him she had not received the sacraments for 60 years because she doesn't speak English and has been waiting for someone to understand her. She did want Fr. Frassati to know she still prays the Rosary every day though. Seeing her faithfulness in praying a daily Rosary, Fr. Frassati asked them, "What if both of you could receive the sacraments today?" She and her husband received the Eucharist and they were in tears, as he recounts the story. "And I'm thinking, why has it taken so long for people to know that God's grace is available to them, his mercy and love?" He thinks there's a fear of being misunderstood and an anxiety that people are not going to be taken care of when they're immigrants. "Even if the only reason I came here to Youngstown was for that couple to receive the sacraments, it was worth it."

Fr. Frassati first learned Spanish during his Dominican formation. In his second year of studies in Washington, DC, he was asked to spend the summer learning Spanish. In fact, that summer there were nine student brothers studying Spanish. The thinking behind this is simple—access to the sacraments for a growing population in the Church. "As future priests, it's important to be able to celebrate Mass and hear confessions in Spanish."





# IT'S EUCHARISTIC REVIVAL TIME

By *Blackfriars Staff*

“What is the Lord about to do in our country? Are we receptive to what the Lord wants to do in this National Eucharistic Revival?” These are questions Fr. Peter Martyr Yungwirth, O.P., pastor of St. Vincent Ferrer and St. Catherine of Siena Parish in New York, asked himself as he was helping plan part of the eastern route of the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage (one of four routes) which passed through Manhattan, making a stop at St. Vincent Ferrer on May 25.

As you may know, the US bishops called for a National Eucharistic Revival largely in response to a 2019 Pew study which found nearly 70% of Catholics do not believe in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. The three-year Revival has several dimensions aimed at building (or rebuilding) a fundamental understanding of the Eucharist, first on the diocesan and parish level, culminating with a National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis this July. Many Dominican friars from the Province of St. Joseph have been involved in the Revival, helping Catholics learn more about the Eucharist and deepen their love

and devotion of the Eucharistic Lord through their preaching, but a couple of our friars are central to the planning and execution of this year’s cross-country pilgrimage and the National Eucharistic Congress.

Fr. Peter Martyr was tapped as point person for the northern Manhattan leg of the eastern Eucharistic Pilgrimage route, known as the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Route. The theme of the pilgrimage through New York is “the Saints of New York” so the Eucharistic procession stopped first in northern Manhattan at Mother Cabrini’s Shrine, wended its way through Central Park, and ended the day at St. Vincent Ferrer for Adoration, preaching, and compline celebrated by Bishop Colacicco, auxiliary bishop of New York and a third order Dominican. With Rose Hawthorne being named a venerable a few

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Photo: Fr. Peter Martyr, O.P. processes with pilgrims and the Eucharistic Lord through Central Park in New York City. Photo by Jeffrey Bruno.

months earlier, this is perfect timing to celebrate this saint of New York, said Fr. Peter Martyr. He noted a special connection—it was on the recommendation of a Dominican friar from St. Vincent Ferrer that Rose Hawthorne, daughter of Nathaniel Hawthorne, founded the Hawthorne Dominican Sisters in 1900.

From St. Vincent Ferrer Church, the Eucharistic Lord processed to St. Patrick's Cathedral where Venerable Pierre Touissant is buried, to St. Elizabeth Ann Seton's Shrine in lower Manhattan, then to the Brooklyn Bridge where there was Benediction as the monstrance was passed from the Archdiocese of New York to the Diocese of Brooklyn. The Eucharistic procession through New York highlighted the saints who made New York their home, Fr. Peter Martyr noted.

The eastern route continues through New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio, as it makes its way to the National Eucharistic Congress this July where Fr. Joseph-Anthony Kress, O.P., is overseeing the logistics of 18 official liturgies at 8 sites over the course of the five-day National Eucharistic Congress.

Fr. Joseph-Anthony, Catholic chaplain at the University of Virginia, has as his primary focus the liturgies taking place at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis which, at capacity, seats 55,000 people. The challenge for him and the Eucharistic Congress liturgy team is to make Lucas Oil Stadium into an environment that is prayerful, beautiful, and that evokes the sacred. "We're thinking through all the details of how to make the liturgies intentionally sacred, so whether it's Mass or evening prayer or Adoration, it needs to be set apart from other programming of the Congress," Fr. Joseph-Anthony said.

He is also tasked with overseeing a 1.5-mile Eucharistic procession through downtown Indianapolis, starting at the Indianapolis Convention Center, through the streets of the city, including the city's well known Monument Park, ending with benediction. He expects between 1,500 to 2,000 priests to process while 40,000 pilgrims line the streets. And as the Lord processes by, pilgrims will follow behind, joining the procession. "When we walk behind the Lord, through the streets of a city, it communicates something different to our humanity," Fr. Joseph-Anthony said. "To truly be a disciple of Jesus and to walk behind him as he leads me ultimately to a place of benediction. Eucharistic procession through a city or any location is not just about publicly

showing off, but has a deep spiritual meaning for each pilgrim, each disciple, to walk behind the Lord, to follow him to a life of blessedness."

Fr. Joseph-Anthony gladly takes on this task of thinking through logistics and complications of large-scale liturgies for the Eucharistic Congress so that others don't have those distractions and are able to pray. Drawing on his vast experience for these types of liturgies, he recalls moments where he'd be in crisis mode trying to figure out why there's a bottleneck in the communion line and then he sees someone deep in prayer. "I see them having that peace come over them, knowing that they've just received our Lord. Those are the moments that I'm here for and that's why I do this—because our Lord desires to be with his children. This is why he's given us the gift of his presence in the Eucharist."



Fr. Peter Martyr leads Benediction at the Naumburg Bandshell in Central Park. Photo by Jeffrey Bruno.



## DOMINICAN ROSARY PILGRIMAGE

SEPTEMBER 28, 2024

[rosarypilgrimage.org](https://rosarypilgrimage.org)





# FRUITS OF CONTEMPLATION

By *Blackfriars Staff*

As he tells the story, it simply dawned on Fr. James Brent, O.P., one Christmas Octave several years ago that God wants to raise up contemplative souls in the Church—people who have truly heard, and take seriously, the universal call to contemplative prayer. His sense was confirmed two months later when he gave a talk on the topic through the lens of St. Elizabeth of the Trinity. He witnessed a large turnout and a real hunger in people to learn more. Several came forward wanting to meet regularly to learn the ways of contemplative prayer. So was born the “Contemplative Souls” discussion group still going years later, and so too were planted the seeds of his new podcast: *Contemplata*.

Fr. James is not alone in his thinking. He points to the recent popularity of the writings of Fathers Thomas Dubay, Jean LaFrance, Jacques Philippe, Donald Haggerty, and Timothy Gallagher as evidence of this deep hunger for prayer. He concurs with Fr. Haggerty’s view that there is a “contemplative revolution” underway right now in the Church. “In a world of scientism, the human heart still thirsts for a drink from the fountain of Light on high,” Fr. James said.

The term “contemplata” is at the heart of our Dominican life and mission of preaching, he explained. “Our motto is ‘*contemplata aliis tradere*’ – normally translated as ‘to give to others the fruits of contemplation.’ Contemplata are things contemplated deeply, the mysteries of God pondered with love and

understanding in divine light, and are now ready to be put into words for others to receive.”

The purpose of this podcast is to provide food for contemplative souls, and that means, first, letting people know there is a universal call to contemplative prayer. Once they hear the call, people need practical instruction on how to proceed. “They need to learn the pathways to the top of Mount Tabor, so to speak, so that by walking they might come to behold the radiant face of Christ with the eyes of their hearts.” Second, they need actual food for meditation and prayer. “People need to hear the mysteries of faith all over again, and hear them more deeply than on the level of catechetics or common homilies, and hear them in a manner suitable to contemplative prayer.”

Fr. James wants to bring his listeners to a better understanding of the indwelling Trinity, which he deems is the best kept secret of our faith. However, in order to fully receive the teachings on the indwelling Trinity, the healing and transformation of our hearts by grace has to take place, he explained. “The eyes of our hearts have become blind to the Presence, and the fire of love has grown cold if it has not altogether been extinguished. In order to illumine the eyes of the human heart anew, and transform the heart into a burning furnace of charity, God has sent his Son and Spirit into our hearts on invisible missions of renewal.” In this podcast, Fr. James will talk about the dynamics of that process and ask, “What is God doing in our hearts?” and “What is he calling us to do?”

Fr. James begins this podcasting project by examining three fundamental Catholic practices: listening to the Word of God; practicing personal prayer, especially the Rosary; and receiving the Eucharist in a worthy manner. These three practices, more than anything else, serve the healing and transformation of our hearts, he said. But the most important of these is the Eucharist. In the first 15 episodes of *Contemplata*, Fr. James shares the fruits of his contemplation on the Eucharist as food for listeners’ own meditation and prayer so that they may more fully appreciate the gift of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, make him the center of their lives, and receive the abundant graces the Lord desires to give them through the Eucharist. The timing of the podcast, launched in February, couldn’t be better—Fr. James hopes these 10-minute reflections will serve to reinforce the ongoing Eucharistic Revival.



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