

praedicare

SPRING 2025 • VOLUME I • ISSUE I



THREE DAYS

with my Brother Thomas

A Magazine for the Friends of the Dominican Friars Province of Saint Joseph

Dear friends in Christ,

It is with great joy that I share with you the good news of many blessings that the Lord has bestowed upon us as we begin a new year!

The first blessing is the launch of *Praedicare*, our new quarterly magazine for the friends of the Dominican Friars, which will take the place of the quarterly *Blackfriars* newsletter. The word *praedicare* (pronounced Pray-dee-CAR-ay) comes from the Latin motto of the Dominican Order—*laudare, benedicere, praedicare*—which means, “to praise, to bless, to preach”—a fitting description of our Dominican life and mission. The early constitution of the Order of Preachers refers to each Dominican community as a “holy preaching” and to live as a Dominican friar is, simply put, “to preach.” I hope that you are abundantly blessed by the fruits of our contemplation shared in the pages of *Praedicare*.

Many of our parishes were blessed to host the major relics of St. Thomas Aquinas in December 2024, to commemorate the 750th anniversary of St. Thomas’ death and to prepare for 2025, the 800th anniversary of his birth. During the tour of his relic, we were brought into contact with the physical reminder that God invites us—as he invited St. Thomas—to participate in his own blessed life and to be transformed by his grace. May the Lord pour forth upon all of us abundant wisdom through the intercession of St. Thomas Aquinas.

I am very excited to welcome Fr. Joseph-Anthony Kress, O.P., who will serve as the Associate Director of the Dominican Friars Foundation and the Promoter of the Holy Rosary for the Province of St. Joseph. He brings great zeal to our preaching and will oversee the largest annual apostolic event of the province—the Dominican Rosary Pilgrimage in DC, which will fall this year on September 27, 2025. Don’t miss our interview with him on page 18 of this issue!

As St. John Paul II frequently reminded us, “Jesus Christ reveals man to himself.” We believe that our Dominican preaching of the saving truth of Jesus Christ is essential to awaken the minds and hearts of men and women today to the marvelous truth about the dignity of every human person created in the image of God. It was a joy to join many of our student brothers and other friars in DC for this year’s March for Life, adding our prayers and voices to those of a great host of pro-life witnesses. This great reunion seems to be a foretaste of heaven, which is our goal. We are not only pro-life but also pro-Eternal Life!

We are so grateful for you, our partners in the Dominican mission of preaching for the salvation of souls. Please know of my continued prayers for you and your loved ones.

In Christ, Our Lady, and St. Dominic,



FR. JOHN PAUL KERN, O.P.
Executive Director
Dominican Friars Foundation



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*A Magazine for the Friends of the
Dominican Friars Province of Saint Joseph*

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On the Cover
*Photo by Jeffrey
Bruno. Read more
about the Relic
Tour on page 4.*

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Aquinas at the HOUR OF DEATH

BY FR. JONAH TELLER, O.P.

It is March 7, 1274, and Thomas Aquinas is dying. He had been on the road, traveling to a Church council, when he struck his head badly on a tree branch. He tried to keep going, but illness quickly followed injury, and he was eventually taken to a Cistercian abbey. There he lies now, dying. The end is near.

The Cistercian monks gather in the room. You can imagine their reverence for their guest, undoubtedly the greatest thinker living in the entire world. He had spent his life teaching, teaching, teaching and writing, writing, writing. Eight million words is a conservative estimate of his written output in theology and philosophy—and here he is dying before reaching fifty!

Lately, though, a peculiar silence has blanketed his life. Just a few months earlier, on December 6, 1273 (as he was nearing the end of his magnum opus, the *Summa Theologiae*), Thomas experienced something in prayer. Returning to his room after Mass that day, he did not turn to his work as he usually did. Prompted by his assistant, Br. Reginald, he finally admitted: “Compared to what I have seen, everything I have written is as so much straw.” And so the great man kept his silence. The *Summa* was never completed.

Back to the Cistercian abbey. The Eucharist is brought into the room for Thomas to receive his Lord as Viaticum—food for his final journey.

Veiled in the appearance of thin bread, Jesus Christ comes to Thomas. Thomas looks at Jesus. All is still. Then Thomas speaks:

I receive you, price of my soul's redemption, receive you, viaticum of my pilgrimage, for love of whom I have studied, watched, labored; I have preached you, I have taught you; never had I said anything against you, and if I have done so it is through ignorance and I do not grow stubborn in my error; if I have taught ill on this sacrament or the others, I submit it to the judgment of the Holy Roman Church, in obedience to which I leave now this life.

It is easy to mistake Thomas Aquinas for a dry scholar, an absent-minded nerd. But he was a man fully alive. He was a man in love. As his death neared, he spoke plainly to Jesus, his dearest friend, and we are privileged to overhear him. May we imitate him.

St. Thomas Aquinas, teacher of us all, pray for us. May we have the same sincere and open love for Jesus now and at the hour of our death.

Amen. ✠

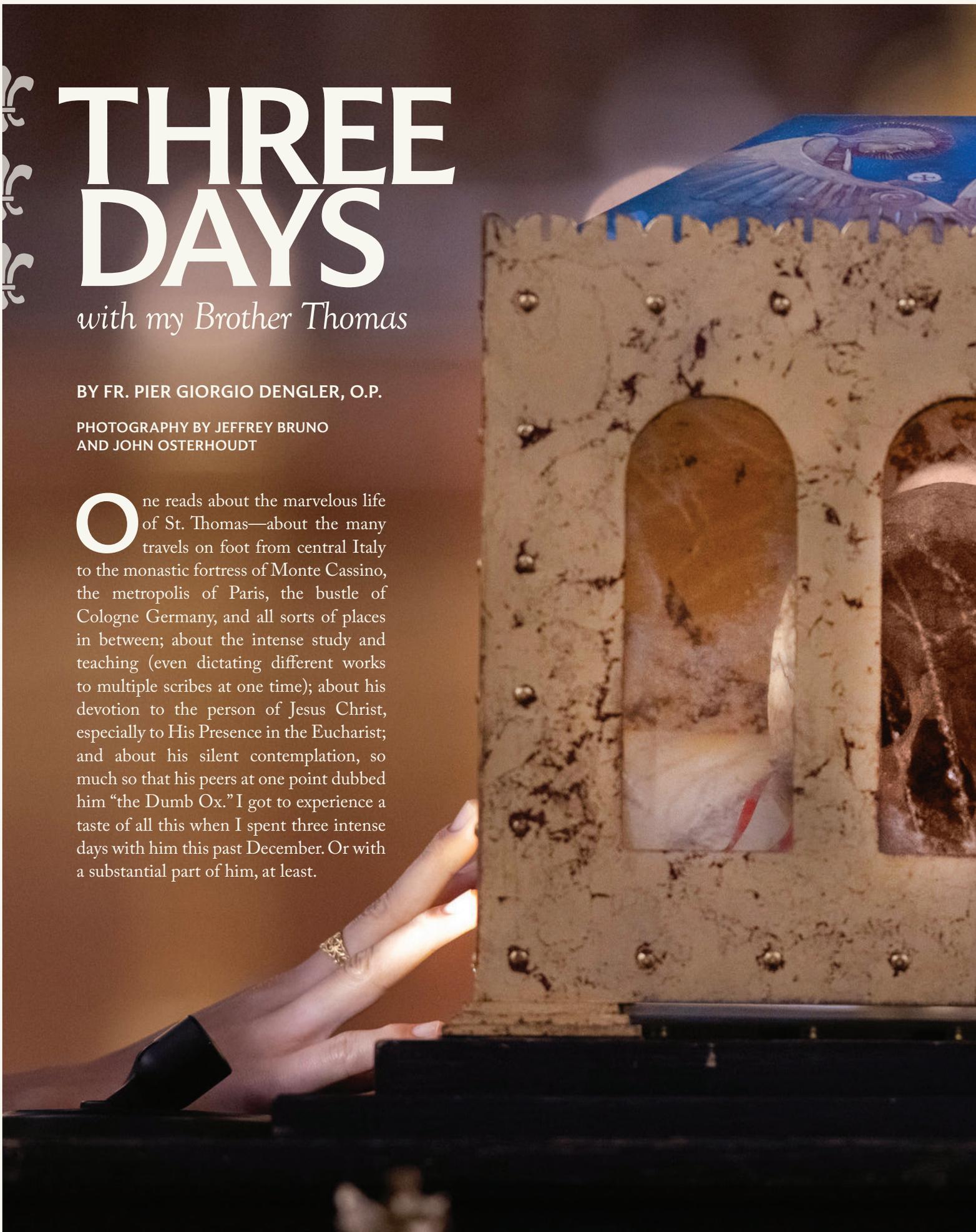
THREE DAYS

with my Brother Thomas

BY FR. PIER GIORGIO DENGLER, O.P.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFFREY BRUNO
AND JOHN OSTERHOUDT

One reads about the marvelous life of St. Thomas—about the many travels on foot from central Italy to the monastic fortress of Monte Cassino, the metropolis of Paris, the bustle of Cologne Germany, and all sorts of places in between; about the intense study and teaching (even dictating different works to multiple scribes at one time); about his devotion to the person of Jesus Christ, especially to His Presence in the Eucharist; and about his silent contemplation, so much so that his peers at one point dubbed him “the Dumb Ox.” I got to experience a taste of all this when I spent three intense days with him this past December. Or with a substantial part of him, at least.







From late November until mid-December, the skull of St. Thomas Aquinas came to America as part of the celebration of major anniversaries of this saintly Dominican friar and Doctor of the Church. In the 800 years since his birth, it was St. Thomas' first time on the American continent and for security reasons, as much as for hospitality to our brother, he was always to be in the presence of a Dominican on his visit here. Early in the morning of December 11, a friar from St. Louis Bertrand and I carefully hefted a crate with our brother's noggin into the back of my car. I'd then take him to the countryside of Kentucky, once the American frontier and the birthplace of the US Dominican provinces.

St. Thomas was a hit everywhere he went. A few hundred school children from St. James Elementary School in Elizabethtown and St. Dominic's in Springfield visited the relic. Reactions of the students ranged from a wide-eyed, "that's spooky," to a hand-drawn double-thumbs-up smiley-face emoji. Others related that they experienced a remarkable sense of peace in the presence of this saint. One student wrote, "Venerating the relic was an incredible experience, I really was able to slip into the tranquility of the moment and . . . reflect deeply." This sense of calm and order would likely have warmed the heart of St. Thomas, whose scholastic mind saw order as evidence of God's guidance of creation, and whose contemplative soul rejoiced to rest in the Lord.

The Dominican sisters of St. Cecilia, who teach at St. James in Elizabethtown, were moved to pray, chant, and also casually congregate around their revered "older brother." Catholics from all around the region and from other states—as far as Georgia and Arkansas—arrived, kneeling silently and touching rosaries, medals, scapulars, and holy cards to the beautiful reliquary.

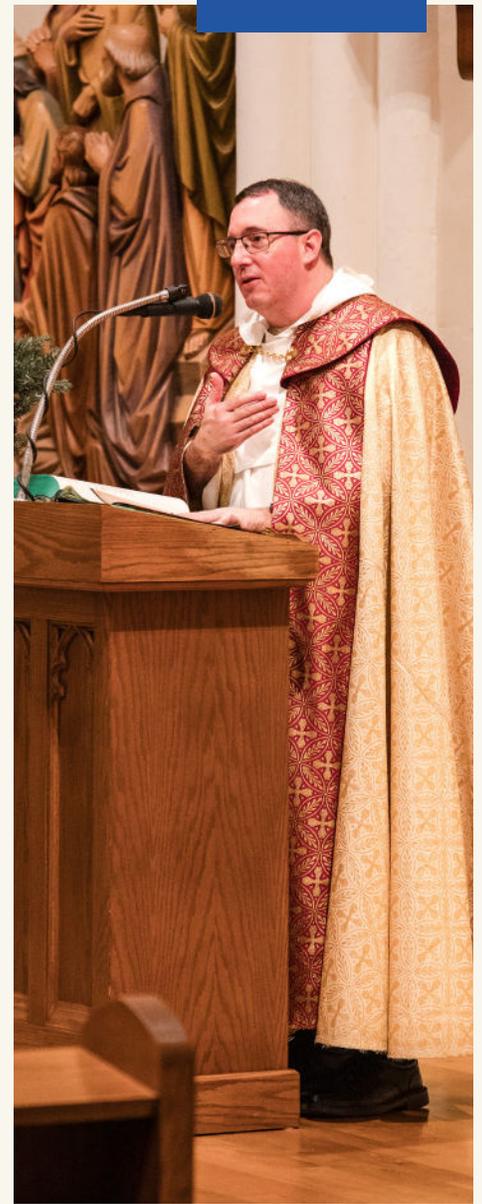


One especially informed and talented group quietly ascended to the choir loft and offered an impromptu choral concert of St. Thomas' Eucharistic hymns, including *Adoro te Devote* and *Pange Lingua*.

What those who venerated the relics of St. Thomas encountered was the wonder of holiness lived in human flesh and blood. Saints are living treasures of man fully alive with the glory and love of God. Their relics—bone, flesh, blood, or other memento of the actual saint—connect us with the personal reality of that love. They are a human anchor here on earth, unforgotten by and related to the soul that even now beholds the radiance of the Beatific Vision of God himself in heaven. To be in the

presence of a relic—especially one so significant—draws us closer up and farther into the thrill of the salvation won for us by Jesus Christ. Relics are sensible and irrefutable proof that holiness is possible and salvation is real.

The saints know first-hand the fulfillment of Jesus' words to the apostles in chapter 14 of John's Gospel: "I go and prepare a place for you, [and] I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. You know the way to the place where I am going." Relics are proof that real people came to know and walk in Jesus' Way. Miracles associated with relics of the saints prove that God loves to act through human intercessors—not just in incidents recorded in the Bible,



but today! In fact, during the veneration of the relic of St. Thomas at St. Rose, I shared a story of a local priest, Msgr. Joseph Gettelfinger, who, in the late 1950s, was miraculously cured of cancer thanks to a relic of St. Martin de Porres—another Dominican saint. We still need miracles, healings, wisdom, and grace today and the saints continue to be instruments of those divine graces.

Over the nearly forty hours of St. Thomas' stay with me in central Kentucky, I found myself with the opportunity to preach about the life and legacy and faith of St. Thomas. Of course there's his scholarship and marvelously clear explanations of Catholic teaching, but I also introduced people to stories of his devotion—such as his resting his head

on the tabernacle in a wordless plea for help to receive, comprehend, and hand on the mystery of the Eucharist. Or his legendarily bold defense of his

What those who venerated the relics of St. Thomas encountered was the wonder of holiness lived in human flesh and blood.

chastity and purity when held prisoner in his family's own castle. Our world still struggles to comprehend God (in part because it has ceased to take seriously St. Thomas' Catholic faith, let alone read the *Summa Theologiae*), and the rampant abandonment to lust destroys the purity of countless lives today. In our day and age, St. Thomas—his way of life, his priestly vocation, his sound theological teaching, and his piety—are sorely needed. No doubt God's grace set in motion the tour of his major relic to unleash a champion of holiness into the fray.

All these ideas seeped into my head as I embarked on the next phase of my adventure with St. Thomas—a 12-hour, overnight drive to bring the relic from St. Rose in Kentucky to St. Vincent

Ferrer in New York City. The night's voyage with fellow friar, Fr. Raymond Lagrange, O.P., gave me the chance to converse about the experience as well as long stretches of contemplative silence to let it all sink in.

We chose the desperate drive because Fr. Raymond wanted to allow the high-schoolers of St. Vincent Ferrer Academy (yet another school run by Dominican sisters), where he serves as chaplain, to be able to welcome St. Thomas into their school for the second half of their school day the next day.

Sped along by empty roads with a focus on a simple mission, we made such good time in the dark, that we were able to divert to a nearby monastery of cloistered Dominican nuns shortly after dawn. As their daily Mass ended I gassed up the car, and Fr. Raymond delightfully sprung the news to the nuns that a fellow Dominican they might know just happened to drop by. These saintly women took the news in perfect stride—delighted, but not at all surprised. “Oh, good, I had prayed for this,” the portress said with the natural calm born of a contemplative's unshakeable faith. While the relic was carried into their chapel for an hour's visit, Fr. Raymond and I were treated to a hearty breakfast in their visitors' wing. There we chatted with the parents of one of the most recently professed nuns, who hailed from Australia. Their daughter being a convert, our coffee-mates were experiencing a faith-fueled adventure of their own, visiting a monastery within the greater New York metropolitan area, and hosting a medieval saint and his two younger brothers from the current century. Part evangelization, part cultural exchange, and part caffeine, we departed for our final destination with full stomachs and satisfied Dominican hearts.

As we reached the far side of Jersey City, the Manhattan skyline rose before us, clawing upward like a confused steel-and-cement cacophony of Babel, still vainly trying to project man's own ego into the heights of immortality. Our route brought us humbly downward instead. Crossing the Hudson River dry-shod by means of the Holland Tunnel, I reflected on a symbolic closeness between the golden square reliquary of St. Thomas' skull, and the Ark of the Covenant (even more so if your last visual image of it was encased in a wooden crate and wheeled through a warehouse of government secrets from the movie Indiana



Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark). Indeed, as we surfaced in New York City, our progress ground into gridlock and with a glazed numbness, we became an identity-less cog in the wheels of the uncaring juggernaut of downtown traffic.

Undaunted, Fr. Raymond turned the potential disappointment of delay into an occasion to heighten anticipation among the high-schoolers. He snapped pictures of landmarks as we headed northward—Broadway, Madison Square Garden, Grand Central Terminal—and he shared our progress step-by-agonizing-step as we fought relentlessly, ever closer, to the Upper East Side. Rolling along the viaduct through the Helmsley building and breaking out onto Park Avenue, our electronically-informed followers grew more expectant, and as I pulled up alongside the school's back door on East 65th Street, a

[continued on page 14](#)





Fr. Pier Giorgio Dengler, O.P., pastor of St. Rose parish in Springfield, Kentucky, prays with his flock before the relic of his brother Thomas.





Sharing in Your Master's Joy

By Br. Gerard Rosario DeAngelis, O.P.

Photography by Jeffrey Bruno

Try as you may, whatever you are inside will eventually show itself on the outside.

Reflecting on my third time marching for life as a Dominican, this simple nursery school truth has been on my mind.

The accusations against the March for Life or those who attend it are well known: pro-lifers are anti-woman and against reproductive rights, or they do not care about women who are poor, victims of rape, or are not ready to have a child. Yet, looking at the history of the March for Life, I cannot help but think that the inner character of the pro-life movement has by this time shown its true colors.

One brother reflected with me when walking back to the priory after the March: "It's funny, the March never really feels like a protest, though I guess it technically is. Everyone is having too much of a good time." I had never thought about that before, but it is rather peculiar that at a rally protesting an unjust law, there are no fights with cops, no tires being burned, no curse words lobbed towards the Capitol, and hardly any signs mocking the other side. Rather, one finds smiles, families with children, peaceful prayers, and signs with almost entirely positive messages for child and mother. An air of bitterness —though some might think justified from a people standing up for millions of innocent people

killed—is not welcome at the March for Life.

What does this all, then, say? It means that at the heart of the March for Life and the pro-life movement in general is not a message of hate but of love. On the whole, people march not because they want to force more babies into the world, but because they want to protect babies who are already in the world, yet only visible by sonogram. People do not march because they want to force their beliefs upon others, but because they refuse to believe that we do not all deep down want to protect innocent life. Lastly—and would that every pro-choice person know we really mean it—people do not march because they want to control women, but because they believe that women deserve better than making a decision that will hurt them for the rest of their lives. If this were not the case, I cannot see how pro-lifers have been able to fake it so well at the March for Life for the last fifty-two years.

The March for Life, in short, does not put on an angry face because it is really about love—especially for mothers who feel their only way out of a hard situation is the wrong choice of abortion.



This is an attitude which took me a while to fully understand. I first became involved in the pro-life movement in college when I was asked to be the treasurer for my college's pro-life club. For my first year or so in the club, I honestly believed that we could easily convince pro-choice people to become pro-life simply by presenting the facts and asking them to think carefully about them. While this is, in theory, all you need, in fact, it seldom is.

Luckily, though, through years of experience, the guidance of many wise women who led the club, and through many speakers we had on our campus such as Serrin Foster, Joyce McCauley-Benner, and Destiny Herndon-De La Rosa, I began to more clearly see what is at the center of the true pro-life cause: care for the whole of the issue. Caring for the whole of the issue means recognizing that women do not necessarily choose abortion because they are selfish, do not care about the life of their child, or even are not intellectually convinced that a real child is in their womb. Rather, many women choose abortion because they are afraid of what will happen next, lack the support they need, or are trying their best to figure out what to do amidst the conflicting advice of boyfriends, parents, and doctors.

When framed this way, the anti-bitter, pro-love approach of the March for Life begins to show its wisdom: we will not heal the wound of abortion in our country unless we heal the wound that is in the heart of women who choose abortion—the same wound which we all have in our hearts from the Fall. Yet, wounds are never healed with vinegar but only with oil.

As a friar, these reflections have only deepened. It strikes me that emphasizing the good is a particularly Christian, and especially Dominican, approach. For example, St. Thomas Aquinas was quick to point out that people do not do evil because they want to do something evil, but because they see some good in doing the evil thing. No one gets (or encourages another to get) an abortion because he or she wants to be an evil person. So, if we are to stop a woman from getting an abortion, we need to help her understand there is a greater good in sacrificial love than in whatever material or personal good she is hoping to preserve through abortion. If you think about it, God himself takes this approach. He sent his Son to offer his life on the cross not to condemn the world, but to draw it close to himself with bands of love. When he welcomes the blessed into heaven, he will say “Come, enter into the joy of your master” (Mt. 25:21).

The call that the March for Life issues to the world, then, is not to disparage pro-choice people as wicked, stupid, or disingenuous. Rather, it is a call to enter into the kind of joy possible when self-sacrificial love fills your life. Such a call cannot help but be attractive. And such a call resounding in the heart of every person is the only thing that will put abortion to rest for good. ✠

“
THE MARCH
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Fr. Allen Moran, O.P., Prior Provincial of the Province of St. Joseph, receives the solemn vows of Br. Pius Henry, O.P.

“Though it is true that on the day of solemn profession I consecrated myself to God, the deeper and far more wondrous reality is that on the day of solemn profession God consecrated me to himself forever.”

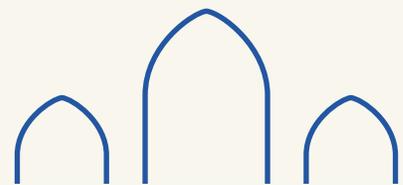
BR. RAPHAEL ARTEAGA, O.P.



Br. Pius Henry, O.P., and Br. Raphael Arteaga, O.P., prepare to make solemn vows this past February at the Dominican House of Studies.

“In Solemn Profession I became all the more aware of God’s love and mercy for me and for the Church which he seeks to manifest in my life and through the Order of Preachers.”

BR. PIUS HENRY, O.P.



A Radical Faith

TWO PROFESS SOLEMN VOWS

BY PRAEDICARE STAFF

Comparing the life of St. Dominic to the patriarch Abraham, Fr. Allen Moran, O.P., Prior Provincial of the Province of St. Joseph preached that “the life St. Dominic set out on was a life of faith,” as he received solemn vows from two Dominican friars.

Abraham left everything behind to follow a voice speaking to him and St. Dominic, too, left the land he knew to serve who he was called to serve and to establish this way of life, Fr. Allen preached. In doing so, St. Dominic, like Abraham, “also abandoned all of the support mechanisms he was familiar with and set up this, our way of life, laboring for years with little success, but always trusting in the goodness of God who called him and inspired him to establish our Order.”

Fr. Allen told Br. Pius Mary Henry, O.P., and Br. Raphael Mary Arteaga, O.P., that by their actions of making solemn vows this day, they, too, will enter this radical form of life—a life of faith.

Pointing to the reredos above the altar at the Dominican House of Studies to a scene that depicts the saints of the Order under the mantle of the Blessed Virgin and the presence of her Son, Fr. Allen told the brothers that this image reminds us of our end—the goal of our life. He preached to Brothers Pius and Raphael that we don’t raise ourselves up there by our own efforts and our own designs. “Instead, as we look at it [the scene above the altar], it is Our Lady’s Rosary which drops down into the carved wood and finds itself on the altar of sacrifice, the celebration of the Eucharist. And in both of these—the mysteries of the Rosary and the Eucharist—we find Christ’s self-offering there. The way to the blessed is through the one who gives all for us, the seed that dies that we might have life. And our vows seek to follow his life—a life of poverty, holding all things in common; chastity, a purified love for God; and obedience, reflecting the obedience of Christ who is obedient unto death.” ✠



Br. Raphael Arteaga, O.P., and Br. Pius Henry, O.P., with student master, Fr. Sebastian White, O.P.



UPCOMING

APR
26
DHS Spring Social
Dominican House of Studies
Washington, DC

JUN
5
Priesthood Ordination
Basilica of the Immaculate Conception
Washington, DC

JUN
27-29
Veritas: A Thomistic Institute Conference
Dominican House of Studies
Washington, DC

AUG
15
Profession of First Vows
St. Gertrude Parish
Cincinnati, OH

SEPT
27
Dominican Rosary Pilgrimage
Basilica of the Immaculate Conception
Washington, DC

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teacher swung open the portal, and the local pastor helped Fr. Raymond bear the precious cargo up to the second-floor chapel, the stairway lined with cheering students.

It's especially appropriate that my travels with St. Thomas' major relic began and ended with the "Common Doctor" being visited and venerated by children (and their teachers) at Catholic schools. After all, St. Thomas is the patron of Catholic schools and of students in general. As the patron of the Angelic Warfare Confraternity, he also leads the charge for purity, desperately sought in this world where lust, pornography, and sexual objectification are common-place among citizens of this digital age, no matter what their age or background.

My journey with St. Thomas paralleled the history of our province—from its original start in Springfield, Kentucky to its current headquarters in New York City. The major relics of St. Thomas afforded me many opportunities to preach—in church as well as over coffee—as well as to watch, listen, learn, and contemplate. His presence here not only edified me with my own personal opportunity to venerate his relics, but walked me through an exitus-reditus leading me there and back again, but changed, deeply impressed with the effect of Dominican holiness on the world and my fellow pilgrims in it. From the bluegrass to the Big Apple and back, I witnessed men and women of all ages looking with wonder, with hope, and in faith to a giant of scholarship, a champion of piety, and a brother in the order of St. Dominic. His life, and the relics left behind, teach us how to follow Jesus who is "all in all." ❀



Photo courtesy of The Catholic Herald



Performing for God

BY BR. JEROME MASTERS, O.P.
Photography by The Catholic Herald

From the midwest to Florida to Washington, DC to Rome and now Arlington, VA. Fr. Vincent Ferrer Bagan, O.P., has been taking his musical talents around the world to promote and teach sacred music and is currently serving as the Director of Music at the Cathedral of Saint Thomas More in Arlington, VA.

Interested in music from a very young age, Fr. Vincent Ferrer would play piano for Mass in high school. He also took organ lessons and was involved in his high school marching band and he knew he wanted to pursue a music career. He would go on to study at St. Olaf's College in Minnesota and received a degree in vocal music education. "It was during college that I started to think about the priesthood and religious life," Fr. Vincent Ferrer said, which led him to Ave Maria University in Florida. During his time there, he earned a master's

degree in philosophy while working as a music teacher and church music director. During his time at the Dominican House of Studies, he served as both the assistant schola director and schola director. Upon his ordination in 2015, he went to the Catholic University of America to earn a master's degree in Sacred Choral Music. After receiving the degree, he moved to Providence, Rhode Island to work at Providence College as a Visiting Instructor of Music and Theology—which led him to Rome to work at the Pontifical North

American College as the Director of Liturgical Music.

When describing his duties as Director of Music, Fr. Vincent Ferrer said, "On a musical level, if you compare it to being a school music teacher, one major performance difference is that you're doing a fair amount of rehearsal toward a few concerts per year. Whereas in a church music setting, the pro and con is that you're performing every week." He uses the term perform intentionally, because church choirs are performing at a high level, "principally for God." They are not performing to put on a concert but to put on a formal performance for God to help supply the Mass with beautiful music. "For our cathedral choir, we're doing about two choral pieces per week," Fr. Vincent Ferrer said. It takes time to be familiar with certain pieces and to teach them effectively to his choir. Fr. Vincent Ferrer also composes some music for liturgies, such as a hymn that he composed for the golden jubilee for the Diocese of Arlington that will be sung across the diocese. "On the other hand, there can be a lot more administration that goes into it." In his cathedral choir, Fr. Vincent Ferrer has 8 professional singers and 25 volunteers. He does get to work with the bishop to have approval for some diocesan liturgies such as ordinations and he sometimes will need to obtain permission for some pieces to be played at liturgies.

When asked about the benefits of being a priest and religious while also being Director of Music, Fr. Vincent Ferrer noted that it is an opportunity to provide formation to people on the beauty and meaning of the liturgy. Dominicans are liturgical and musical by nature since the friars chant the psalms of the Liturgy of the Hours every day as part of the rhythm of Dominican life. As people who live immersed in the liturgy, the friars are well equipped to help others appreciate and enter into the magnificent treasures of the liturgy and sacred music more deeply. ✠



Thousands Flock to Venerate the Skull of St. Thomas

BY PRAEDICARE STAFF | PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFFREY BRUNO AND JOHN OSTERHOUDT

As Fr. Pier Giorgio's story hinted at, the Dominican Order is in the midst of celebrating a three-year jubilee of St. Thomas Aquinas. In 2023, the Order celebrated the 700th anniversary of the canonization of St. Thomas; in 2024, the 750th anniversary of St. Thomas' death; and in 2025, the 800th anniversary of his birth. So when the Dominican Friars of the eastern province heard that a tour of the major relics of St. Thomas for this jubilee was happening in Europe, they inquired about getting the relics to our shores. And in November 2024, the major relics of

St. Thomas Aquinas, namely his skull, traveled from Toulouse, France, to 14 parishes and ministry sites of the Province of St. Joseph.

The task of getting the major relics from France to America fell to Fr. Michael Dosch, O.P., and Fr. Cassian Derbes, O.P. And it was a complex task—discussions in French, navigating permissions of the Archbishop of Toulouse with American bishops, transporting the relic to the US and around the province, and keeping it safe. Noting first the generosity of the Dominicans of the Province of Toulouse, France,

and the Archbishop of Toulouse in offering the Province of St. Joseph the opportunity to host the major relics of St. Thomas Aquinas, Fr. Cassian said “we were obviously concerned about the safe movement of the relics and the reliquary, such that we would avoid any damage to something (and someone) so precious.” In addition to safety concerns, there were security concerns, as well. “We moved St. Thomas Aquinas the same way the Metropolitan Museum of Art moves the Mona Lisa when the painting is on loan,” Fr. Cassian said. “We used the same transport company that the Met uses. It was not cheap, but



“...ask for wisdom. Ask for insight. Ask for healing. Ask for growth. Ask for desire. Ask for love. If you lack the words, fear not, St. Thomas will lend you his. Better still, he'll lend you God's.”

FR. GREGORY PINE, O.P.

it was well worth the opportunity to have St. Thomas visit our country and our province.” There was also security protocol transporting the relic within the province—two Dominicans were necessary to transport the relic from parish to parish around the province, sometimes at great distances.

Relics have been a tradition going back to the very early days of the Church when you couldn't go to the shrine where someone was buried because of persecution, so there became the practice of bringing the buried to you, explained Fr. Michael. “A lot of our parishes have relics, so, as Dominicans, we're very accustomed to it. But in this case, it was a major relic—the skull of St. Thomas Aquinas—so that's hard to top! Unless of course you had St. Dominic.” But people know St. Thomas better, he

said. “He shapes our theology. At the Dominican House of Studies, we all go through a deep formation in his thought so this is our older brother who we know so well.”

Tens of thousands took the opportunity to venerate the relics of St. Thomas as it made its way through the province. Fr. Michael said most parishes estimated between 2,000-3,000 people came to pray before St. Thomas' skull, so by his estimation that's 30,000-40,000 people. Many parishes made special prayer cards for the visit. Fr. Andrew Hofer, O.P., composed a special hymn. Special liturgies and preaching were on tap. Even all-night vigils took place.

In his homily at St. Patrick's in Columbus, Ohio, pastor Fr. Paul Marich, O.P., provided some insight about this practice of venerating relics and why we do it. He said that

“the saints in heaven have not risen yet; they have died in the body, and are still awaiting resurrection. This allows us to pray before their earthly remains—be it at the tomb of a saint in a beautiful church, or today, in our own parish church, as we are given the rare opportunity to venerate the skull of St. Thomas Aquinas...and when we venerate the relics of a saint, we are expressing our belief in the resurrection of the dead, for one day, this relic, along with the rest of St. Thomas's remains, will rise to become a new and glorious body. Then the beautiful reliquary that is in our church tonight will just be an empty box, much like how the tomb of Christ is empty! For in the end, life is victorious over the grave! Christ is risen, and soon, all the saints—and all of us—will share in his resurrection, rising to a new and glorious life with him!” ✠



Q&A

FR. JOSEPH-ANTHONY KRESS, O.P.

Associate Director, Dominican Friars Foundation



Welcome to New York City, Father! Can you tell us a little bit about yourself?

I grew up in a small town in southeast Ohio (St. Clairsville) with my two older sisters. I attended Franciscan University at Steubenville and spent the first two years there as a seminarian for the Diocese of Steubenville and then stayed to finish my undergraduate degree. I met the Dominicans at Franciscan — one of my professors was a Dominican friar. I joined the Dominican novitiate the summer after graduating, was ordained to the priesthood in 2016, and then was assigned to be the chaplain at the University of Virginia. I have been in Charlottesville up to this point, almost eight years.

What will you be doing here in NYC?

Great question! I have a new assignment in many respects, not just for me personally, but also for the province. I will be devoting around half of my time to serving as the Promoter of the Holy Rosary for the Province of St. Joseph, which is a significant investment into itinerant preaching that the province hasn't done in decades. I will also be assisting the Dominican Friars Foundation as the Associate Director, raising support for our brothers in formation and for several of our exciting ministries, including the Dominican Rosary Pilgrimage and the Confraternity of the Most Holy Rosary.

What is the Dominican Friars Foundation?

The Foundation supports the life and mission of the friars of the Province of St. Joseph. That includes formation costs for young men at the early stages, which ensures that we continue to have friars ready to serve in our parishes, campus ministries, and other apostolates, as well as support for our retired friars who have spent their lives serving Christ and following the life of St. Dominic, and direct financial support for several ministries of the province.

Why is the work of the Dominican Friars Foundation and of the Province so important?

I believe that truth has become suspect for many people, not just as a concept, but as a lived experience. As Dominican friars, we live our lives to preach the Truth who is Jesus Christ himself.

You see the Latin word *Veritas* plastered over everything we do.

That's an ancient reminder to us as friars of how the Lord created each and every one of us in his image and likeness. We need to be unafraid of that. More than ever we need our friars to be in those places where truth is being questioned, to be in our campus ministries, to be in our parishes, and to be heavily involved in theological and academic ministries—to be a guiding light for that truth.

We're often asking people to explain why they support the Dominicans and how God has blessed them through their relationship with the Dominicans. You have supported the Dominicans by the gift of your whole life! Do you have any stories about how the Dominicans have blessed your life or the life of someone you know?

As a chaplain, you see a little bit of everything. You see it in the students' lives, you see the ripple effect into their parents and their families' lives. You see it by hospital bedsides too. The reality is, our hearts are made for God. We are made from him and we are returning back to him.

I've seen people encounter the Lord. I've seen them change their own patterns of life and behavior. I've seen them receive his mercy and love at a crisis of their life when no one else would enter into it, but then there's a friar—there's the Lord—entering into those moments.

There are countless encounters. I could talk to you for hours about those moments.

What are you looking forward to over the course of this assignment?

I'm a people person. I love hearing peoples' stories and I love being a part of their journey. I think this new assignment will be a different style of life for me, but humanity is always the same no matter where you are.

Finally, do you have any final words for the people?

It's simple. It's not easy, but it's simple—you love Jesus above all. He gives you strength, and this doesn't mean it takes away the suffering, but he gives you his presence and accompaniment, and he typically does that through good people in your life. ✠



DHS GETS A BELL!

One hundred and twenty years after the Dominican House of Studies was built...they got a bell! Fr. Gregory Schnakenberg, Prior of the Dominican House of Studies, blessed the bell and spoke about its importance saying "even more than 120 years ago the world needs to hear the sound of Church bells. We need our lives to be interrupted by things that are beautiful. We need our attention drawn above the horizon. And we need to be distracted from our distractions so that we might contemplate higher things and turn our mind to God."



PRAYING FOR THE DEAD

Every November, the Dominican Friars head to Mt. Olivet Cemetery in Washington, DC, to pray for their deceased Dominican brothers.



FRIARS AT SEEK25

Every January, the Dominican Friars join thousands of young people at SEEK, a 4-day conference for college students sponsored by FOCUS. Fr. Gregory Pine, O.P., and Fr. James Brent, O.P., gave keynote talks and many of our friars, who serve as campus chaplains, brought their students to the conference.



FRIARS FOR Life

You can help us form
new Friars for Life.

Support our campaign today at:

FriarsforLife.org





Dominican Friars

PROVINCE OF SAINT JOSEPH

DOMINICAN FRIARS FOUNDATION

141 East 65th Street · New York, New York 10065-6618



A TOUCH OF FAITH

A parishioner at St. Vincent Ferrer in Manhattan presses his Rosary to the skull of St. Thomas Aquinas during this past Fall's tour through the province.