



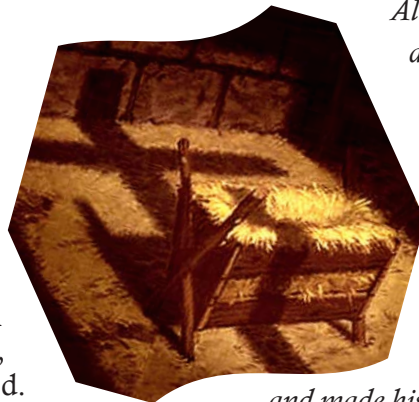
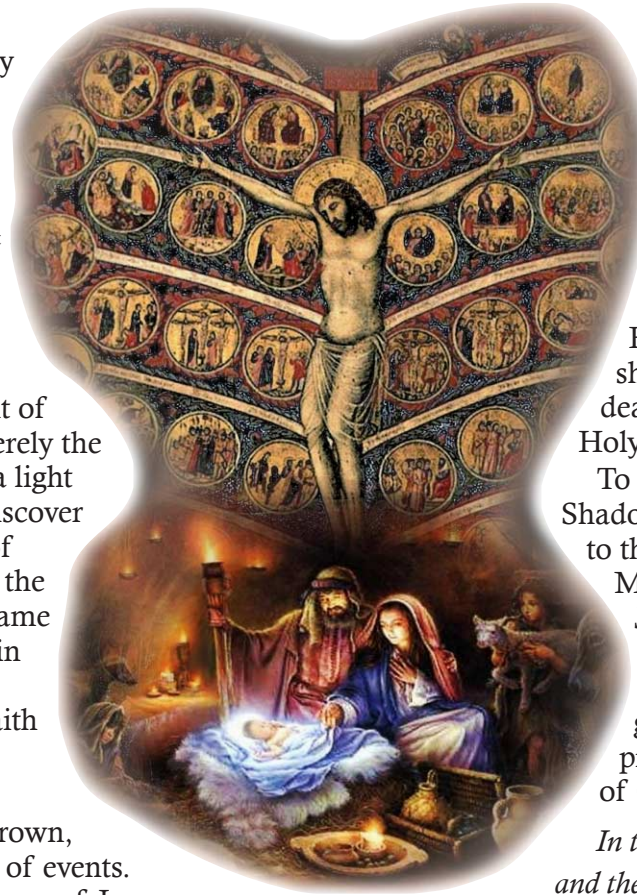
THE LIGHT BEHIND THE SHADOW OF THE CROSS ON THE MANGER

The Cross of Christ is already present in the infancy narratives of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, casting its shadow even on the Manger of the Lord. cf.

Raymond E. Brown, SJ; An Adult Christ at Christmas. Although Christmas is the season of light, we often find shadows in our own hearts. Very personal crosses can obscure the Light of Christ. Since a shadow is merely the form of an object blocking a light source; perhaps, if we can discover the Light behind the Cross of Christ casting its shadow on the Manger, we can allow that same Light to dispel the shadows in our hearts and celebrate the Birth of Jesus with deeper faith and greater joy.

In every gospel found in Scripture, according to Fr. Brown, there is a common sequence of events. The revelation of the good news of Jesus as Son of God, Messiah and Savior was followed either by acceptance or the rejection.

The rejection, opposition and even indifference present in the infancy narratives of Matthew and Luke bring to mind Christ's suffering and death and thus cast the shadow of the Cross on the Manger of our new born Savior. In the Gospel of Saint Luke, the shadow first appears when there is no room in the Inn and he must be born in a cold, dark stable with a feed trough for a bed. At his Presentation in the Temple the shadow deepened, as Simeon blessed the child's parents and said to Mary, his mother: This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign of contradiction, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too."Lk. 2:34-35



In the Gospel of Saint Matthew, the Magi were the harbingers of the Cross by their gifts. Gold proclaimed his Kingship, Frankincense his divinity and priesthood, while Myrrh, as a preparation for burial, foreshadowed his death.

However, the deepest, darkest shadow of his crucifixion and death was the slaughter of the Holy Innocents.

To find the light behind the Shadow of the Cross, we must turn to the Gospel of John. Luke and Matthew find the identity of Jesus revealed at his conception, however, the author of the fourth gospel gives to us a deeper and more profound revelation of the truth of Christ:

*In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God, and the
Word was God. He was in the beginning with
God.*

*All things came to be through him,
and without him nothing came to be.*

*What came to be through him was life,
and this life was the light of the human
race; the light shines in the darkness, and
the darkness has not overcome it.*

Of Christ's Incarnation John continues to give us a higher vision,

And the Word became flesh

*and made his dwelling among us,
and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only
Son, full of grace and truth. Jn. 1:1-5, 14*

For John, Christ, even before he was the incarnate Word, was the Light of life. Saint Maximus the Confessor reflecting on the Incarnate Light, proposed that:

“The lamp set upon the lampstand is Jesus Christ, the true light from the Father. In taking our own flesh he has become, and is rightly called, a lamp, for he is the connatural wisdom and word of the Father.” The saint continues: “God the Word, says: No one lights a lamp and puts it under a bushel, but on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house (the world). Clearly, Christ is calling himself the lamp, he who was by nature God, and became flesh according to God’s saving purpose.”

Saint Maximus the Confessor, abbot (Quaest. 63: PG 90, 667-670)

Our faith tells us that the Cross clearly was the instrument of ‘God’s saving purpose.’ And Jesus said of the Cross, “If I be lifted up I will draw men to myself.” Hence, the Cross can be considered the Lampstand for the Light of the World, who is its Savior and its Lord. As he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” Jn. 8:12

What happens if we do what the Lord invites us to do and follow the light? What if we follow it to the Cross where for three hours the Lamp was obscured by the darkness of his suffering and death? What if we keep following beyond the Cross into the hiddenness of the tomb, where the darkness of death seemed to conquer? Here we are left to “sit in darkness and the shadow of death” for less than 72 hours. Cf. Lk. 1:79 Then, on the third day, Jesus, the Sun of Justice, like a supernova, blazed forth from the tomb. In fact, to create the image of Christ on the Shroud of Turin, the 2011 Italian ENEA report states that “34 thousand billion watts” of Vacuum Ultraviolet light would have been needed. 2011 National Agency for New Technologies, Report

But we must follow even further.

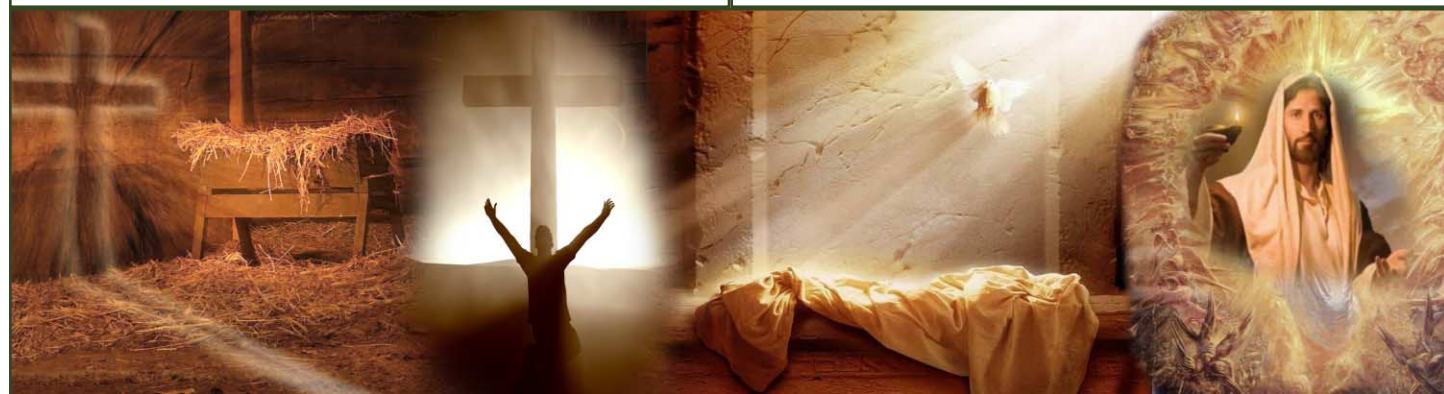
Beyond the glory of his Resurrection, the Apostle’s Creed declares that Jesus rose from the dead and ascended into Heaven where he is seated at the right hand of his Father in Glory. Are you still following?

Now, according to Scripture, “Christ is seated at the Father’s right hand in the heavenly places.” cf. Eph. 1:20 Of the ‘heavenly places’ it is said, “The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it, and its lamp was the Lamb.” Rev. 21:23 This is the same Lamp whom we have been following. The same Light, who was with the Father from the beginning and has been manifest to us, is himself the Light behind the Cross.

In the end we have come full circle. The Light behind the Cross is, in fact, the same Light of Life that was wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in the Manger. The fleeting Shadow of the Cross on the Manger reminds us of the true reason for our joy at Christmas.

*God so loved the world
that he gave his only Son
that whoever believes in him
might not perish
but have eternal life.* Jn. 3:16

No shadow can dampen this Good News:
in Christ we go from
light to *Light* – from life to *Life*.



*I am the light of the world.
Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness,
but will have the light of life.”* Jn. 8:12



The chief goal of our life is to live in harmony; being of one mind and one heart seeking God. The Rule of St. Augustine



Fr. James-Peter Trares, OP

Annual Preached Retreat

During the first week of August the Nuns annual eight-day retreat was preached by Father James-Peter Trares, OP of the Central Province of St. Albert the Great. Father informed, challenged, encouraged and inspired all to live our cloistered life with increased fervor and joy.

Recreation in the palour on the last day allowed us to get to know each other as brother and sisters.



We hope that Sr. Mary Catherine’s warm-from-the-oven baked goods will bring Father back to us soon.

A Time for Quies



Annually, the Nuns enjoy a week of Qui’es | \ kwi’ es from the Latin quiescere: to be quiet or calm. Calm, work-limiting and joy-filled but not totally ‘quiet’ as you can see here. Our life of prayer remains unchanged. But Quies has become a time to regroup individually and as a Community.

Nothing replenishes the spirit or builds community like laughter.



Winning at Pickleball is its own reward. But you can see, on the table, the variety of coveted prizes to be chosen by the indoor game winners.

Sister Mary Peter could be a professional Bingo caller!



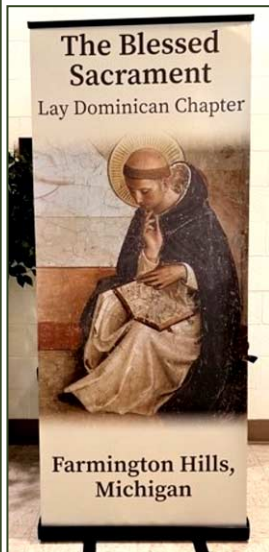
Canine Quies



Kona and Lizzy had their own game of tug-of-war. Thought to be their prize was a chipmunk inside the tube. But, alas, Sr. Mary Rani rescued it.

THE LAY DOMINICAN FRATERNITY OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT MONASTERY

Fully “Lay” and Fully “Dominican” by Ed Shea, - Dominican Laity



“We must sow the seed, not hoard it.” With these simple words, St. Dominic, founder of the Order of Friars Preachers (i.e., the Dominicans), summarizes the shared purpose of the four branches of the Dominican Family – the friars, the cloistered nuns, the apostolic sisters, and the Lay Dominicans. While each branch carries on the mission of the Order in a different manner, all are fully Dominican.

Lay Dominicans are Catholic men and women, married and single, who have committed themselves to “living Dominican” through study, prayer, community and mission – the four pillars of the Dominican Order. The Lay Dominicans take the fruits of their prayer and study into the secular world, preaching in words and actions through their everyday family, community, and work lives. Some of the greatest Dominican saints and blessed were Lay Dominicans, including Catherine of Siena, Martin de Porres and, one of the most recent saints canonized by Pope Francis, Margaret of Castello.



Earlier this year, members from three other Michigan fraternities joined our Fraternity for a visit from Br. John Steilberg, O.P., Central Province Promoter for the Lay Dominicans.

Lay Dominicans exist worldwide. They are formed into “fraternities” within the Order’s 39 provinces, all under the jurisdiction of the Master of the Order in Rome. The Blessed Sacrament Fraternity is 1 of 29 fraternities within the Province of St. Albert the Great (the Central Province), which is one of four provinces in the United States. For more than 25 years, our Fraternity has shared in the preaching mission of the Order. We currently have seventeen active members.

Lay Dominicans are not ordained and do not take religious vows. However, after a period of discernment and formation, they make professions, first “temporary” and then “perpetual,” to live according to the spirituality of the Order. While not canonically binding under the pain of sin, such professions are taken seriously as signs of being truly Dominican. In fact, the professed Dominicans use the O.P. suffix after their names, indicating their status as members of the Dominican Order – the Order of Preachers.



In March, Ellen Licavoli, O.P. (center) made her temporary profession in the presence of (right to left) Fr. David Santoro, O.P., Monastery Chaplain, Patricia Shea, O.P., Fraternity President, Gwen Weinberger, O.P., Provincial President, and Br. John Steilberg, O.P., Provincial Promoter.

Any active Catholic who is in full communion with the Church and who feels a desire to strengthen his/her Faith through association with other such Catholics is eligible to become a Lay Dominican. The process generally takes up to five years of “formation” and “discernment.” It begins with a simple inquiry to enable the candidate to determine his/her interest in becoming a Lay Dominican. This is followed by six months of initial formation and discernment, as well as participation in Fraternity activities, after which the candidate can request reception into the Order. After reception, the candidate deepens his/her formation for one year, while demonstrating commitment to the

Fraternity. At this point, the candidate can request to make “temporary profession” into the order, which is a three-year commitment to formation and full participation in the life of the Fraternity. Upon completion of this period, the candidate can request approval to make “perpetual profession” – a life-long commitment to live as a Dominican, to continue ongoing formation, and to actively participate in the community life of the Fraternity.

Life in our Fraternity is built on the four pillars of the Dominican Order – study, prayer, community and mission. Our Fraternity meets monthly (generally the second Sunday of the month at 1:00 p.m.) in the Guild Room at the Monastery. We begin our meetings in prayer by praying the Liturgy of the Hours (Office of Readings) in the Chapel. Afterwards, we engage in ongoing formation and study. Currently, we are studying the book “Knowing the Love of God” by Fr. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P. We also provide an opportunity each month for one of the members to “preach,” typically reflecting on the Gospel for the day. We then finish with community fellowship centered, in true Church fashion, around food. After our meeting,



In 2017, members of the Fraternity enjoyed a pilgrimage to what is now the Basilica of St. Anne de Detroit.

members are invited to join the nuns, sisters, and Father David in the Chapel for Rosary, Evening Prayer, and Benediction. We also schedule a yearly pilgrimage to a holy site (e.g., the Solanus Casey Center), an annual picnic (in July), an annual retreat (usually at an off-site retreat center), and a Day of Remembrance (in November) at the Monastery.

In addition to the monthly meeting, the Fraternity engages in mission activities, putting the fruits of our prayer and contemplation into action. Several years ago, the Fraternity assisted a Dominican sister who was leading the Archdiocese’s Iraqi Resettlement Program.



Fr. David Preuss, OFM Cap, joined Fraternity members during our pilgrimage to the Solanus Casey Center earlier this year.



Our 2018 pilgrimage was to the Our Lady of Consolation Shrine in Carey, Ohio, where members of the Fraternity were invited to carry the statue during the daily procession.

Currently, the Fraternity is supporting “God’s Favor,” a ministry that provides lunches to those in need in the Cass Corridor in Detroit. In addition, each of our members are engaged in ministries, often through their parishes.

Welcome is any Catholic who is at least eighteen and looking to advance their Faith through participation in the Dominican charism.

Contact for more information through the Monastery website (opnuns-fh.org). Just click on the Dominican

Laity tab at the top of the home page.

You can also call the Monastery at (248) 626-8253 and leave a message for our President and Formation Director, Patricia Shea.

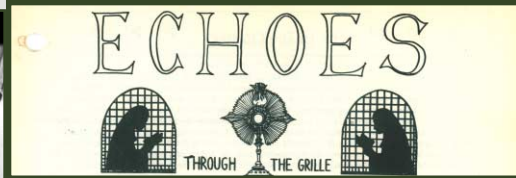


Members of the Fraternity prepare lunch bags for the God’s Favor Ministry.

Laudare, Benedicere, Praedicare – To Praise, To Bless, To Preach

Jesus Christ is Lord!

Nor did their arm bring them victory, Lord; it was your right hand, your arm, and the light of your face, for you loved them. Ps 44:3



"All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is of the world." 1 John 2:15-17

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"Nuns Are Out To Destroy The World"

Yes, Nuns, the Warriors of God, the Soldiers of Jesus Christ, part of Mary's vast Legion, are out to destroy the world - - - in the hearts of men.

"But what can a Nun do?" A Nun may be only a "little woman," but in God and with Him, she can do great things.

The "A Bomb" is only a little bomb and the human eye can't even see the atom, but it can destroy whole cities. A community of Nuns is a powerful shield against the justice of God. Just as God promised Abraham that he would not destroy Sodom and Gomorha if there were ten just men to be found, So today at their prayer he bestows mercy on men.

Since I have entered the Cloister I've heard about "H Bombs" and I suppose, scientists have nearly exhausted the alphabet with later varieties. But, I wonder if they know the power of God's peace plan, the "L Bomb," the atom of love, of God-love and neighbor-love. "For love is stronger than death," (Canticle of Canticles), stronger even than the prodigious devastation of the "A Bomb." And even a very little bit of pure love possessed by a soul makes the least actions of that soul more pleasing in God's sight than a year's efforts by another imperfect soul.

Yes, a Nun is only a "little woman," but "hid with Christ in God," she is a majority. She spends her life praying for the extension of God's Kingdom in the hearts of men by doing His "will on earth as it is in heaven," that is, all the time, twenty-four hours a day, seven days, a week, until death, and then throughout eternity.

"How is this praying?" To those who do His Will, God is a perpetual communion. "All that love does, is love."

You, too, can help her destroy the spirit of the world in the hearts of men, so that God can move in and reign in them. Perhaps you think, "What can I do? I am only one person and I haven't any influence." Maybe you haven't any influence on earth, but you do in heaven. Maybe you can't do great exterior things, but that is no excuse for omitting what you can do, and YOU CAN do something. A daily Rosary, the Family Rosary, even one Hail Mary, is a greater power than the forces of evil combined. You can say many "Hail Marys" throughout the day, waiting for a bus, walking home, etc. St. Thomas, the Prince of Theologians, says that one degree of grace is a greater thing than the whole material universe. With one degree of grace, he continues, anyone can overcome even the greatest temptations of the devil and prayer obtains these graces for men. A Nun prays her whole life out for you and for all men. She is a failure before the blind eyes of the world, but gloriously victorious before the court of heaven.

In 2022, the battle for hearts and minds is still being fought and the Nuns continue to lob Prayer-bombs over the cloister wall to comfort, strength and bring souls to the joy of Jesus. Be sure to view and share the documentary on our life. See details on page 8.



The Habit of Prayer

CHRISTMAS NOVENA OF MASSES ~ DECEMBER 16 ~24

From December 16 through December 24 our Dominican Monastic Community will offer a Christmas Novena of Masses *for and with* our friends and benefactors.

For these nine days all are welcome to our regular daily 7:15 AM Holy Mass.

The Chapel will remain opened from Mass time until 2:30 PM

On Christmas Eve: Holy Mass at Midnight

Our doors will reopen at 11:30 PM for Midnight Mass.

Please unite with us by praying the Novena Prayer during these days, as we prepare our hearts to celebrate the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ



Intentions: _____

Please check here if no acknowledgment needed

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Liturgical Celebrations



Christmas Midnight Mass

Chapel will open at 11:30 PM

Christmas Morning Mass - 9:30 AM

Our doors will open at 9:00 AM

New Year's Day Mass - 9:30 AM

Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God

Our doors will open at 9:00 AM

On Christmas and New Year's Day our doors will close at 12:00 Noon, so that all the sisters can be together for dinner.

If you are unable to be with us for Holy Mass during this Novena, please join us in spirit by reciting the Christmas novena prayer at home.

In observance of National Holidays on Mondays: **December 26th and January 2nd** our doors will close at 12:00 Noon

Novena Prayer

Wipe away, Infant Jesus, the tears of children! Embrace the sick and the elderly! Move men to lay down their arms and to draw close in a universal embrace of peace! Invite the peoples, O merciful Jesus, to tear down the walls created by poverty and unemployment, by ignorance and indifference, by discrimination and intolerance. It is you, O Divine Child of Bethlehem, who save us, freeing us from sin. It is you who are the true and only Savior, whom humanity often searches for with uncertainty. God of peace, gift of peace for all humanity, come to live in the heart of every individual and of every family. Be our peace and our joy! Amen.

Pope Saint John Paul II (Urbi et Orbi 12/25/1994)

Sweet Jesus, please, hear the petitions we now speak in the silence of our hearts.

**WEB ADDRESS: www.opnuns-fh.org
Donate on-line via PayPal or "Givng"
Prayer Line: 248-626-8253**

*The Lord is my light and my salvation.
The Lord is the stronghold of my life.* Psalm 27:1-2

May Christ our Light shine in your hearts and your homes.

Merry Christmas!

"Come and see" our Giftshop.
Open Monday through Saturday from 8:15 AM until 2:30 PM
Remember to pay a visit to the Lord in our Chapel and to offer a gift of prayer for all those on your shopping list!

Please, share Echoes with your friends.



You may donate on-line via PayPal at www.opnuns-fh.org - And please consider remembering us in your will.

THE DOCUMENTARY ON OUR LIFE, *THE HABIT OF PRAYER*, IS WINNING AWARDS!



Great news has come from our friends at OpenLight Media.

They entered their documentary on our life, "The Habit of Prayer," in several film festivals. So far, it has won two awards.

The Best Shorts 2022 Festival (national) gave them an Award of Merit - Special Mention in the documentary category. The *I See You Awards* (regional) awarded them Best Documentary Short. This latter festival was hosted in Royal Oak, MI, and played the film in theaters.



Dominican Sisters of Mary
Mother of the Eucharist

Bringing the Light of Christ into the World

The Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist are passionate about sharing the truth, beauty, and goodness of God—leading others into an encounter with Christ. Openlight Media is an accessible and trustworthy portal providing relevant informational resources helping educators, young families, and individuals.

Congratulations,
to the Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist, Open Light Media and all those involved in this project.

For the glory of God, may you and all of your future service to the Lord be richly blessed!



Link on opnuns-fh.org

Have you watched it? Enjoy & share it with your friends.