



Dominican Sisters of Mary
Mother of the Eucharist

FEB 2025
VOL 29 | ISSUE 1

sistersofmary.org

MATER Eucharistiae

A PUBLICATION OF THE DOMINICAN SISTERS OF MARY, MOTHER OF THE EUCHARIST



PILGRIMAGE IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

PAGE 4

Walking the
Camino: A St. James
Pilgrimage

PAGE 10

Visiting the
Eucharistic King
Down the Hall

PAGE 14

Marian Shrines:
Visits with Our
Mother

PAGE 16

Meditation:
St. Dominic's Ninth
Way



Dominican Sisters of Mary Mother of the Eucharist

MOTHERHOUSE

4597 Warren Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan
www.sistersofmary.org

Mother Amata Veritas, OP

Prioress General

General Council:

Sr. Mary Michael, OP
 Sr. John Dominic, OP
 Sr. Louis Marie, OP
 Sr. Elizabeth Ann, OP

Vocations Director:

Sr. Mercedes, OP
vocations@sistersofmary.org

Director of Communications:

Sr. Maria Canisius, OP
dsmmecomunications@sistersofmary.org

Prayer Requests:

www.sistersofmary.org/contact-us/

MISSION ADVANCEMENT OFFICE

24 Frank Lloyd Wright Drive
 PO Box 365, Ann Arbor, MI 48106
 (734) 930-4222

OPENLIGHT MEDIA

4101 East Joy Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48105
 (734) 996-4245

ON THE COVER

Photograph of a marker for the Camino de Compostela outside of St. Jakobskirche in Bamberg, Germany.

DEAR FAMILY AND FRIENDS,

“From the rising of the sun to its setting, may the name of the Lord be praised” (Psalm 113:3). Walking the Camino de Santiago for 7 days this September was an extraordinary privilege. Each day as I took care of my blisters, stretched, and laced my shoes up for another day on the Way, I was struck by how I never knew what the day was going to bring. With each step I met a new person, encountered new beauty, or was peaceful in prayer, relying on the “strength of the Lord” to be with me to the end. A pilgrimage in Spain showed me yet another way to embrace the present moment in life. Whether I am in my office, at school, attending Mass, or at community recreation, Our Lord is present at each step, providing and delighting in my awareness of His presence in me as I encounter Him at each moment.

Our February 2025 *Mater Eucharistiae* is full of explorations of the idea of pilgrimage, since life is a pilgrimage and we are pilgrims together on our way to eternal life. As the Church celebrates this Jubilee Year with the theme “Pilgrims of Hope,” we wanted to emphasize all of the ways Our Lord is with us on our journeys. Whether it is a walk across Spain or a walk across the school to the Eucharistic Lord in the chapel, we are on a journey, and we are on it together.

Whatever path you find yourself on in your own life, in this present moment, please be assured that you are accompanied by our prayers. “From the rising of the sun to its setting,” Our Lord’s presence is constant and sure in your life. Filled with His love, may you walk with confidence.

Faithfully in Christ,



Mother Amata Veritas Ellenbecker, OP
 Mother Amata Veritas Ellenbecker, OP
 Prioress General

A JOURNEY WITH A DESTINATION

Abraham. Moses. Elijah. Paul. God called many of His people to go on epic journeys. Some were called to the Promised Land. Others were called to far-off places for the sake of carrying on God's mission. Regardless, each biblical figure embarked on a sojourn at God's direction, under His guidance and providence. Afterwards, none of these people were the same. Even Jesus spent His entire mission constantly on the road for three years. Similarly, all of God's people are somehow "on the way" to heaven.

Countless books, movies, and even inspirational posters latch onto the word "journey." "Journey" evokes a sense of adventure, hazard, growth, and discovery. In the words of one of J. R. R. Tolkien's many songs in both *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, "The road goes ever on and on..." Tolkien wrote a few iterations of this song, and the words shifted depending on the character singing it and the circumstances at hand. Bilbo's version in *The Hobbit* contains these lines:

*The road goes ever on and on
Under cloud and under star,
Yet feet that wandering have gone
Turn at last to home afar.*

Every road has a destination, as much as popular culture tends to emphasize the adventures on the road. The Christian destination is heaven, the true home of every human being, and the journey prepares the pilgrim to enter God's dwelling. It matters where we are going, and it matters how we get there. Our entire lives are a pilgrimage.

The smaller journeys we make are reflections of our journey to heaven. The destination may be a great basilica or a little wayside shrine, but getting there and being there are unified parts of a whole experience. A pilgrimage is not a vacation. Every part of the journey can be an offering to God, even—and sometimes especially—the hardships of travel. One of our Sisters taught her eighth grade class this call-and-response: "This is a..." "Pilgrimage!" "Not a..." "Vacation!"

"And on a..." "Pilgrimage!" "We do not..." "Complain!" A delayed flight could foster a meaningful encounter with a fellow passenger. Bad weather could be offered as a sacrifice. Changes in plans provide an opportunity to grow in patience. Then the arrival at the pilgrimage site is a kind of miniature revelation, a place to meet God in a deeper way.

But for now, the road, indeed, "goes on and on." Jesus Himself spent the last hours of His earthly life on the Way of the Cross, a journey of salvific love for us. The graces we need for our own salvation in Jesus are present along our Christian journey. We find rest, strength, and healing in the sacraments, companions in our fellow Christians, and a roadmap in the Scriptures. With the Holy Spirit as our compass, we will not fail to have both a formative adventure and a joyous arrival at our heavenly destination. +



"Jesus Traveling," by James Tissot, Brooklyn Museum

PEACE, PRESENCE, PRAYER

**SR. JOHN DOMINIC
REFLECTS ON HER
EXPERIENCE OF
WALKING THE CAMINO,
A CENTURIES-OLD
PILGRIMAGE ROUTE
CULMINATING IN
COMPOSTELA, SPAIN.**

By Sr. John Dominic, OP



In 2022, the Dominican Sisters of Mary celebrated 25 years since our founding in 1997. It was a year of celebration and sadness for me, as my mother passed away on March 25, 2022. Her untimely passing was the result of several unfortunate circumstances that moved the hearts of her loved ones and friends to gather for a memorable celebration of life. Such moments provide opportunities for family and friends to share memories and life-changing personal events.

My mom's brother shared his experience of walking the Camino with his daughter, with such emotion and enthusiasm that it spurred within me a desire to one day walk the Camino.

A few months later, Mother Amata Veritas and her Council offered the four foundresses the opportunity to go on a retreat or pilgrimage of our choice in honor of our 25th anniversary. My heart swelled with gratitude, and this desire that started at my mom's celebration of life was suddenly a reality. Not knowing who would one day accompany me, I simply entrusted it all to God's providence and knew He would place the desire in the hearts of other pilgrims.

Two years later, the moment of our departure dawned, and after months of praying for our fellow companions, we finally met at the airport. The words *peace, presence* and *prayer* adequately describe the ten-day experience.

Walking the Camino is unlike any other pilgrimage. A noticeable difference for me was the pace, the complete change of pace of life. Each day our only responsibility was to walk to the next town. It was freeing to be in the open air and to have time to notice nature, medieval

architecture, animals, clouds, and bees (I got stung 6 times!). The pace of walking provided a calming rhythm and united us as a group of pilgrims.

The change of pace provided the freedom to be fully present to everyone on the walk. As we walked, there was a shared bond among us as well as with our fellow pilgrims from around the world. It was not uncommon to see a parent walking with a son or daughter. In fact, our group had a mother and daughter who had the time to be present without the normal daily interruptions. Their joy together was tangible. Siblings and friends had time to be present to each other as well.

Naturally, this experience and sense of joy lifted one's heart in praise and thanksgiving to God.

In God's providence, we had a tour guide from France who tended to us like a good shepherd. Our group consisted of people of different faith backgrounds and individual reasons for walking the Camino. Each day,

he gathered us in a circle of prayer and offered a reflection to guide our footsteps. These hours of silence and prayer were refreshing and nurtured the conversations we would share with each other further down the road.

While we have each returned to our daily life, there is a unity among our Camino group that is expressed by our last shared experience in Santiago. At the conclusion of Mass, we experienced the *Botafumerio*, the enormous thurible swung from the ceiling of the cathedral. As the incense filled the church and the cantor sang, one felt as if the intentions and prayers of the previous days were rising to heaven.

Just as the smoke lingered in the church, the grace of the pilgrimage will linger for years to come.

The simple reality that God's love is so real was evident during the Camino.

The pace enabled us to see the beauty of His creation. His presence was tangible in each other and the fellow pilgrims whenever we said

“*Buen Camino*,” and it provided an opportunity to pray always.

The gift of the Camino will continue to be manifested in the lives of each pilgrim for years to come. Despite the different faith backgrounds, we all knew tangibly that where two or three are gathered in His name, He is in their midst. He was with us and continues to unite us in a love found only in Him. †



(Left): Along the way, the pilgrims stop for a picture by the sign for St. James of Compostela.

(Right): The pilgrims reach the Cathedral of St. James in Compostela. The *Botafumerio* hangs in the background.



DEAR “PILGRIMS OF HOPE...”

By Sr. Maximilian Marie, OP

You are not the same person today as the one who boarded the bus in the early hours of January 7, 2025! As our t-shirts declared, “Hope does not disappoint,” and we experienced the joys and challenges of pilgrimage that transformed us into “Pilgrims of Hope.”

Our first stop was Mass in the chapel of the Eucharistic miracle of Orvieto, celebrated against the backdrop of Eucharistic hymns. We heard about their author, St. Thomas Aquinas, who never had doubts but had many questions, leaving no question unanswered on his “journey of hope through this world to the heavenly city.” In Siena we walked in the footsteps of St. Catherine, venerating her relics at the Basilica of San Domenico, visiting her home. When you explored Siena’s neighborhoods marked by the colorful *Palio Contrade* flags and lamps, you made pacts to return to Siena someday soon. Mass at the Basilica of St. Francis and adoration before the exposed Eucharistic miracle was profound and sweet. Friendships, new and old, deepened over these shared experiences.

In Assisi, we prayed at the tomb of St. Francis, and at the bodies of St. Clare and Blessed Carlo Acutis. You prayed before the very crucifix from which Christ spoke to Francis, “Rebuild my Church,” and in the church he built, the “Portiuncula.” You were moved at the sight of a young man your age wearing clothes like yours who in three months will be declared a saint. It made holiness seem attainable.

Then we experienced the climax of salvation history all in a day. First, at the Holy House of Mary in Loreto, you felt the stone walls and read the plaque, “The Word was Made Flesh... Here.” You lit a candle and set out on your knees around the house where God was made man, feeling the grooves made smooth over hundreds of years by so many pilgrims. Next, to Lanciano, site of the first recorded Eucharistic miracle, then to the Holy Veil of Manoppello. In the words of a student, “we prayed where the Word was

SR. MAXIMILIAN MARIE, SR. TERESA CHRISTI, AND SR. MARIA BENEDICTA ACCOMPANIED STUDENTS FROM BISHOP LOUIS REICHER CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL TO ITALY.

made flesh, then we prayed in His presence before that ‘Flesh,’” and finally, we saw the image of His face.

In Rome, we had the profound experiences of the early Christians in the catacombs, St. Thomas Aquinas’ relics in Santa Maria Sopra Minerva, St. Cecilia’s tomb in Trastevere and St. Dominic’s rooms at Santa Sabina—just to name a few! We venerated the relics of our Lord’s Passion at the Basilica of Santa Croce. We prayed at the Holy Crib at the Basilica of St. Mary Major. We walked as “Pilgrims of Hope” through the Holy Doors of the four major basilicas. Your profound reverence and sincerity were palpable. Praying at the tombs of St. Paul and St. Peter with you was a moment of grace!

It was profound that Mass at St. Peter’s was followed by our audience and meeting with Pope Francis, the successor of Peter. It was your patience, the purity of your desire, and your assertiveness that caught his eye! For the Holy Father to “back up” to greet someone is very rare—and this he did for you! The joy and peace of your interactions with our Holy Father was something to be proud of.

Through the Holy Doors, at the tombs of the saints, and to all the holy sites, we carried the intentions of our loved ones, friends, and so many others. And now, the pilgrimage is over, but in truth it has just begun. You are “Pilgrims of Hope,” and this is when the work of pilgrimage begins. Pope Francis invited us to remember: “Life is a journey. It is a path, a journey to meet Jesus.” With Jesus as the object of our hope, we will never be disappointed. Always remember, Pilgrims, hope in God does not disappoint! †



STATIONS OF THE CROSS



WITH NARRATION



INSTRUMENTAL



FOR CHILDREN



A PILGRIMAGE FROM HOME

Pilgrimages were a popular practice in the Middle Ages. The destination *par excellence* was the Holy Land. Yet periodic violence in the Holy Places, not to mention financial burdens or physical ailments, often prevented people from going on pilgrimage. This gave rise to devotions such as the Stations of the Cross. Anyone can walk with Jesus on the *Via Dolorosa*, the Way of Sorrows, using images in a church, a garden, or a book. This is a devotion that encourages one to offer one's own sufferings and unite them with the suffering of Jesus. As Lent approaches, consider taking up this practice on Fridays, either in a parish or at home. Jesus always walks with us in our earthly pilgrimage; let us walk with Him in the path that redeemed us from our sins. †

HEARTS on FIRE THE VOCATION STORY OF SR. MARIA REGINALD, OP

Sometimes God works through drastic and surprising events, but His fingerprint is also evident in the gradual ways He led me to be His own. My first examples of dedication were my parents, who daily demonstrated what knowing, loving, and serving the Lord looked like. They sent me to Catholic school, where my love for learning led me to encounter the One who is Truth Himself.

In high school, I walked past the chapel to get to my locker. One day I simply had to go in. "But Lord, what if someone sees me?" I perceived Jesus telling me: "Trust Me." So, I would go to my locker, grab my lunch, then sit in the chapel for as long as I dared before I knew my friends would miss me. This time stolen in audience with God became the center of my day, and I started to bring my big questions: what am I made for, and how can I be happy? The answer, both revealing and obscure, was the same: "Trust Me."

I had heard the vocabulary about vocations, and I was intrigued, without having much practical knowledge. So, while seeming to be fully engaged in chemistry class, I was constantly watching Sister teach, wondering "Could I leave everything like she did?" Again: "Trust Me."

On my first retreat at our motherhouse, I realized I did not need four years of college to "discern" what I already knew as a rising senior. "What will my friends think?" "Trust Me." This constant refrain expanded my heart which, I was learning, could only be contented with the One who is Love. When I could no longer avoid the discussion that I knew would shock my family: "Trust Me." Even when I entered at the age of 18 and knew my discernment was not over: "Trust Me." Through the beautiful and sometimes challenging years of formation: "Trust Me." And on the morning of my final vows, when I could in one act lay down the whole of my life before Him who had already done the same for me: "Trust Me." And I do. †





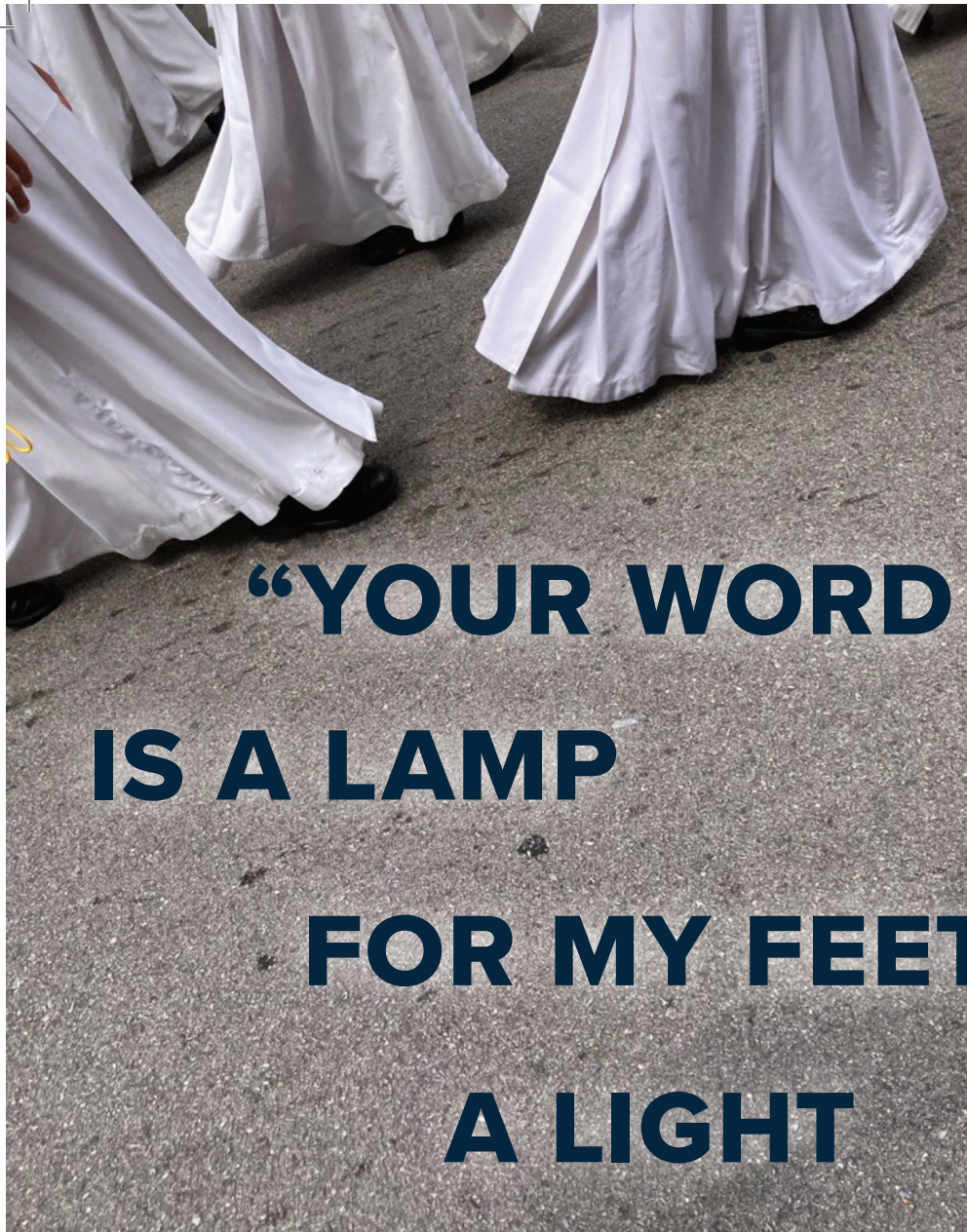
**BLESSED STANLEY ROTHER
SHRINE, OKLAHOMA CITY**



**SAN
MARCO,
FLORENCE**



**OXFORD,
UNITED KINGDOM**



**“YOUR WORD
IS A LAMP
FOR MY FEET,
A LIGHT**



**COMPOSTELA,
SPAIN**



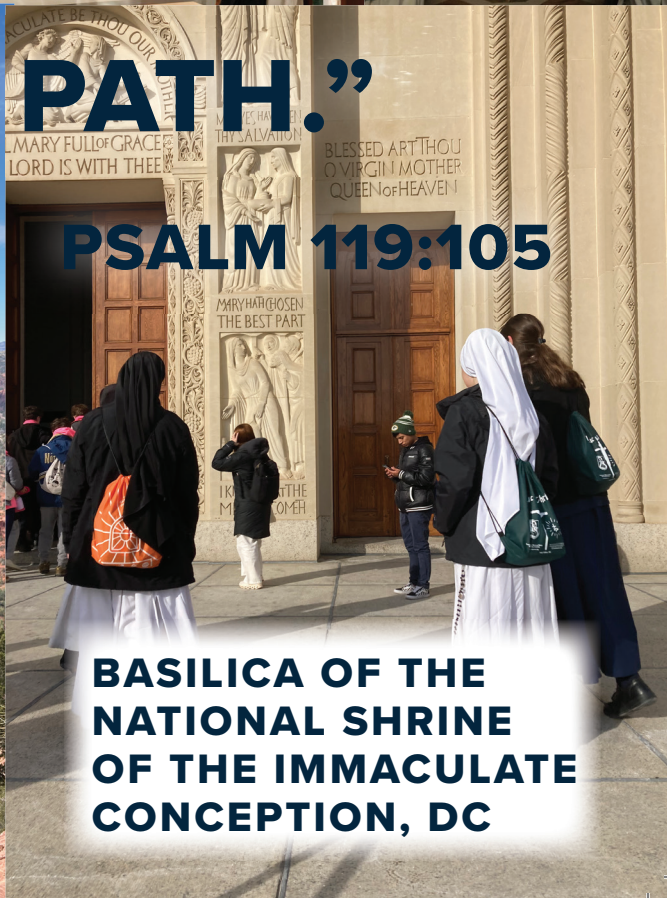
**OUR LADY OF
GUADALUPE SHRINE,
WISCONSIN**



**ST. DOMINIC'S
CELL, SANTA
SABINA, ROME**



**CATHEDRAL
ROCK, ARIZONA**



PSALM 119:105

**BASILICA OF THE
NATIONAL SHRINE
OF THE IMMACULATE
CONCEPTION, DC**



THE KING DOWN THE HALL

NOT EVERY PILGRIMAGE NEEDS TO BE A LONG ONE. MANY OF THE SISTERS ARE BLESSED TO TAKE THEIR CLASSES TO VISIT THE KING OF THE UNIVERSE, PRESENT IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT. HE IS ONLY A SHORT WALK AWAY.

Sr. Mary Margaret, OP

Several summers ago, I was teaching Vacation Bible School in a small town in Montana. I found that very few of the children had ever heard of the Eucharist, let alone knew what It was, but they were intensely excited that first morning as I explained to them the mystery of the Real Presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. At the end of the morning, as we were heading toward the church, the parish secretary walked by. She said to one of my four-year-olds, “Tyler, where are you going?” He answered, in tones of deepest awe, “We’re going to see God!”

In my years of teaching elementary school, I have always taken my students regularly to visit Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. For many of my current fourth graders, our visit to the parish Adoration chapel is the best part of the day. The same children who neglect their homework and would rather skip grammar class never forget that it is time to go to

the chapel. They offer prayers aloud, sing joyfully with the class, and sit in silence adoring Jesus. Many of them have told me that their favorite thing is just spending time in silence with Him. They are a great example to me in their ability to drop everything as they enter the door and focus on loving Jesus and being loved by Him. I pray that they can always keep this desire to see God and to be seen by Him.

Sr. Mary Esther, OP

“Sister, is it Chapel Day?”

I hear it before the bell rings to begin class. It comes out of deep-voiced athletes, bouncy freshmen boys, and stressed young women who speak it with a wistful sigh.

Sometimes the question is accompanied by a sheepish smile that says, “Yeah, I know it’s not Chapel Day, but please, Sister?” The question is always a hopeful one.

“Chapel Day” is a little pilgrimage. It is a visit to the Blessed Sacrament,

and the forms it has taken for my high school theology classes are many. At schools where the chapel is just down the hall, it might mean 15 minutes every Friday. Where the visit involves a 7-minute hike to the church next door, it could be a biweekly half-hour. The longer the commute, the more they want Chapel Day. The longer walk means less class time, of course, but also a chance to disconnect from the ordinary.

Chapel Day involves “story time” about a saint portrayed in the church or a symbol emblazoned on the altar. Sometimes I teach a form of prayer—*lectio divina*, a chaplet, spiritual reading. Most often, though, I give them silence with the King.

What happens within my students while in His presence is a mystery to me, but sometimes I get glimpses: the girl encouraged by the line she found in Scripture, the existential question raised by another during the walk back to the classroom, the general desire to return again. My hope is that these class pilgrimages spur my students’ own personal pilgrimages into His presence and

develop in them a spiritual muscle memory: “I found peace there in front of the tabernacle. That’s where I’ll find it now.”

Jesus is waiting there for you, too.

Sr. Catherine Thomas

Halfway through a 90-minute class period, I read the signs of the times in the post-lunch sleepy eyes and ask, “Are you ready for a brain break?” Twenty-six freshmen voices answer, “Yes!” “Should we go to Adoration?” This time, an even louder “YES!!!”

Teaching in a high school with regular Eucharistic Adoration, I have the blessing and joy of going on pilgrimage with my students each week to heaven on earth. We get to step out of the normal, everyday busy-ness and respond to Jesus’ invitation to “Come away with me... rest a while” (Mark 6:31). Students have shared that in Adoration, they have experienced peace, have given Jesus their struggles and difficulties, have been able to talk to God and have learned how to hear Him speak to them, and so have grown in their relationship with Him. One student expressed joy that “Adoration has been like nothing else in my life before. It is almost like a second home for me and knowing I can go and get

anything off my chest is a fantastic feeling.” Adoration brings transformation: another student shared that once, during Adoration “I felt Jesus’ presence so much I couldn’t help but start thinking about Him in everything I do. I wanted to have more encounters with Him. Since then, I like to dedicate things to God, like when I play tennis, for example; I try to find Him in all things.”

It is a joy beyond telling to experience that Jesus does much more for my students in this weekly pilgrimage from the ordinary and everyday into His Real Presence than anything I could do in my classroom. He gives His life, His grace, His very self.

Sr. Mary Bethany, OP

“We are Jesus’s treasure and Jesus is our treasure!!” I was doing a scavenger hunt with my kindergarten class and little expected the Holy Spirit to place these words on the lips of one of my most energetic boys! But as he joyfully kept repeating his discovery, we dropped everything and trekked to the chapel

to find our true Treasure, besides Whom the “treasure” I had planned for the scavenger hunt paled in comparison.

On many days, getting to the church or the Adoration chapel can feel like a pilgrimage of epic proportions. If you are bringing children with you, the visit brings with it the probability of wiggles and whispers. Yet seeing the children’s eager desire to “find the Treasure” spurs me on to take the risk of pilgrimage to the tabernacle, where our hidden Jesus yearns to speak to our hearts as He did to my little kindergarteners.

Blessed Carlo Acutis said: “There are so many tabernacles where I can visit Jesus at any time, I don’t feel the need to go to Jerusalem. We have Jerusalem right out our front door.” The fruit of any pilgrimage—whether to a European cathedral, your parish church, or even this lifelong journey home to heaven—is the realization: We are Jesus’s treasure and Jesus is our treasure. Let us make this pilgrimage daily to the tabernacle where our Eucharistic Treasure awaits us! +



THE DOMINICAN ROSARY PILGRIMAGE

By Sr. Agnes Maria, OP

If you see St. Dominic depicted in stained glass windows, you will find that he is often on his knees receiving the rosary from one hand of Our Lady, while she holds Christ with her opposite hand. If you were at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception at 3:00pm on Saturday, September 28th, you would have found many of St. Dominic's sons with rosaries in their hands as they prayed Our Lady's Rosary, joined by hundreds of men, women, and children who were present for the second annual Dominican Rosary Pilgrimage.

Every pilgrimage involves penance and sacrifice, and the Sisters of our Long Island Mission offered our part by rising before the sun for the four-hour drive to Washington, D.C. to arrive in time for the opening procession. The day was filled with opportunities for grace through conferences, Adoration, prayerful recitation and singing of the 15 decades of the Rosary, and the culmination of the day in the Sunday Vigil Mass, followed by an evening of fun and fellowship fostered by the now-familiar bluegrass sounds of the Hillbilly Thomists in concert.

What I have continued to ponder from that day is the love of our Blessed Mother for her children and what we can rely on her to do for us.

Fr. James Sullivan, OP shared two conferences centered on our Lady and her role in our lives. Mary, immaculately conceived, shows us that God originally created human beings lacking nothing. She reminds us that only God can make us perfectly human and perfectly happy, because she is the living reality of this gift. Letting Mary be our mother makes us receptive to living her virtues, particularly her



"The Madonna of the Rosary," by Luca Giordano, 1657

faith, hope, and love, and makes us confident in going to God our Father. When we take the Rosary from her hand and meditate on each mystery, pausing at each moment in the Lord's life, she teaches us how to stop along the way in our lives, so that we gain perspective and clarity along the journey.

Perhaps my favorite image from Fr. Sullivan's conference, and one I can relate to as a teacher, was of parents teaching their children basic but important phrases to say in day-to-day life and the correspondence of these phrases to the mysteries of the Rosary. The Joyful Mysteries focus on God becoming man and giving Himself to us in beautiful baby Jesus. The Incarnation is proof of God saying to us, "I love you." Why else would God have come to us, except that He loves us and wants us to tell Him that we love Him? The Luminous Mysteries show us the dependence we have on God, a dependence that requires us to ask for what we need by saying "please." We need God's grace, His strength, His teaching.

God responds to us with the greatest gift, Himself, in the Eucharist, through which He feeds us and abides with us.

The Sorrowful Mysteries show us Christ's suffering for our sins and teach us to turn to God for His mercy and say, "I'm sorry." The Glorious Mysteries prompt us to say "thank you" for all that God has done, for all the graces God has given us, and finally for letting us be with Him in heaven. +



“

**THIS IS THE
BEAUTY OF
CONSECRATION:
IT IS JOY.**

- POPE FRANCIS



Dominican Sisters of Mary
Mother of the Eucharist

**JOIN US FOR A
VOCATIONS RETREAT!**

APRIL 5-6, 2025

For more information email our Vocations Director,
Sr. Mercedes: vocations@sistersofmary.org



VISITS WITH OUR MOTHER

MARIAN PILGRIMAGE SITES ARE BOTH NUMEROUS AND BELOVED. MARY NEVER STAYS FAR AWAY FROM HER CHILDREN, BUT SHE ALSO SOMETIMES CALLS THEM TO MAKE A PILGRIMAGE TO SEE HER. THESE SISTERS HAVE HAD THE GIFT OF VISITING OUR MOTHER IN SOME OF HER FAVORITE PLACES.

LOURDES

Sr. Maria Rose, OP

We have a saying that Dominican life is so incarnational. Because God took on flesh and had a body, the body becomes important in our worship, too. We can, as St. Paul said, “offer our bodies as living sacrifices” (Rom 12:1). The aspect of the Lourdes pilgrimage that is most moving for me is the total integration of our bodies and spirits that together appeal to God the Father and our Mother Mary with the intentions of our hearts, especially when we hold very big prayer requests that, humanly speaking, seem impossible. We don’t just pray with our minds and hearts in Lourdes, but we physically walk through the grotto with our hands touching the cold, wet rock walls, we have Lourdes water wash us in the baths, and we walk in the evening candlelight procession, singing and speaking. Then there’s the beauty and solidarity in the sanctuary of the grotto. We’re praying and hoping intensely alongside all the other pilgrims who are also praying with us that day and throughout the years. It is that tangible experience of the mystical body of Christ that buoys us up, especially when we hear of answers to prayers and even miracles. There is a saying among the pilgrims, “Everyone who goes to Lourdes receives healing. It may not be the one you were looking for, but everyone goes home changed somehow.” I can attest that that is true!

What is interesting about the apparition at Lourdes is that Mary never says to have all the sick come here for healing. Instead, she simply tells Bernadette, “Go tell the priest, and tell the people to come here in procession and to build a chapel here.” The reason we associate miracles and healings with Lourdes is because of what happens when pilgrims follow these simple Marian instructions. Subsequently, Lourdes has become a beautiful center of spirituality of hospitality for the sick, whom they refer to as *malades*. The *malades* receive first-class treatment, as if the volunteers are serving the Lord Himself! It is this Lourdes message, coupled with the witness of St. Bernadette, who is a humble, hidden servant, that impacts

me most about this apparition. Bernadette was asked once, long after the apparitions, when she was living as a Sister in Nevers and knew she would never return to her beloved grotto: “Are you sad that you cannot go back?” She replied, “No,” because she knew her role was to be the broom in the corner of the room that is picked up and used for a time and then placed back into the shadows of the room again. She was happy to be our Lady and our Lord’s broom for a short time. I marvel at her humility and detachment!

I have had the gift of going on pilgrimage to Lourdes three times. In my last pilgrimage to Lourdes, I was especially carrying an intention for my father’s health. That spring he had had a massive stroke and heart complications, which was a scary wake-up call for my family. My father had otherwise been a healthy 70-year-old man. While in Lourdes, I received the update that my dad was in the ER and having tests run to find out what was wrong. Since I was in another country and helping to lead a youth pilgrimage, I couldn’t just pick up the phone and call my family right then and there. I was reliant on the messages coming from home to keep me updated. All I could do was to entrust my dad’s health to God the Father and to our Lady. That day, our pilgrimage group was in charge of crowd control at the candlelight procession. Attending the Lourdes procession is one of my favorite parts of Lourdes. I was guarding the roped-off places, when all of a sudden, a man who had moments ago been speaking French (and who was wearing the official uniform of Lourdes Domain workers) walked over and singled me out. He asked in English, much to my surprise, if I would present one of the golden bowls which carry all the intentions left in the grotto from that day and are presented formally at the end of the procession. Of course I would! As I was standing there beside the intention bowl, with tears starting to fill my eyes, I quickly added the last intention for the day: my dad. I felt as if our Lady had arranged this gift for me, that of all the nights I was there, it would be that night I

would be asked to do this. What a consolation and honor to view the whole candlelight procession from the platform stage in front of the Rosary Basilica's entrance. The grace of nearness to our Lady is such a tangible experience in Lourdes!

MEDJUGORJE

Sr. Joseph Andrew, OP

The messages of our Mother at Medjugorje for 43 years still have a way of piercing through the hearts of us all. She is our Mother, and we need her to lead us and to remind us how to be children of the Father and brothers and sisters of Christ! Medjugorje is a place of tremendous peace, where one's very heart feels so loved! This love is not of an earthly origin; it is a lightness and joy in the Holy Spirit through a profound union with Mother Mary and her Son. If I had to state the aspect of Medjugorje that most moves me, I would answer in one word: "Everything!" I love just breathing the very air that our Mother chooses to come into each day! Then I am moved by all the Eucharistic Adoration and Masses, the singing and quiet prayer, the walks around Apparition Hill and Mount Križevac with rosary beads dangling from praying hands representing the whole world. Divine peace seeps into every pore, and heaven becomes so close!

OUR LADY OF CHAMPION

Sr. Veronica Marie, OP

I have had the great privilege of visiting three Marian apparition sites: Lourdes, Fatima, and Medjugorje. At each site, I truly experienced Mary's presence and the sacredness of these places. My visit to each site showed me a different aspect of our Lady. At Lourdes I really came to know Mary as my mother. In Fatima I came to see that our Lady is with me in all my sufferings, and at Medjugorje I came to know the peace our Lady can bring. When we decided to take our novitiate Sisters on a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Champion in Wisconsin, I was a bit skeptical of whether I would really experience Mary in the same profound way. Was the sacredness of Lourdes and Fatima to be found in a small farm town of Wisconsin?

When we arrived at the shrine of Our Lady of Champion in May of 2024, I first noticed it was a very small and simple

site compared to what I was used to at Marian shrines. My doubts of having a profound experience were increasing. However, our Lady had plans for me. I went down to the apparition oratory with all my doubts and knelt there in front of the statue of Mary. I cannot really explain it, but I know Mary was there. All the other Sisters felt the same way. It was beautiful.

The message of Our Lady of Champion is so simple, yet needed today. Mary told Adele the following: "Gather the children in this wild country and teach them what they should know for salvation... Teach them their catechism, how to sign themselves with the sign of the Cross, and how to approach the sacraments; that is what I wish you to do. Go and fear nothing; I will help you." As I prayed at the shrine, I realized this apparition of our Lady is so perfect for our community! This is exactly what we are trying to do. I have taken Our Lady of Champion as a special patroness as I live out my life as a Dominican Sister of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist. †



MEDITATION

ST. DOMINIC'S NINTH WAY

By Sr. Peter Thomas, OP

Our Holy Father Dominic was a man of pilgrimage. Where he went, he walked – and he went a lot of places! He found his vocation as a preacher of Christian truth while on his first major journey, accompanying his bishop. He made recurring trips on foot between Spain, France, and Italy during the last years of his life. And he died in 1221 just after reaching Bologna, at the tail end of yet another of his countless treks. He walked literally thousands of miles.

Dominic was so constant a traveler that when his contemporaries described his mode of prayer, they wrote that “*in choir or along the road*, he was often seen lifted suddenly out of himself and raised up with God.” The thought of Dominic walking prayerfully from place to place came as naturally to their minds as did the image of their saintly founder praying in a church!

Moreover, Dominic was known for his very incarnate forms of prayer.

Appropriately for a preacher battling a heresy that held the material world was irredeemably evil, he demonstrated not only by his words but by his devotions how good the body and its environs can be, if used to glorify God and draw nearer to Him.

Dominic's sons recorded their founder's habits of piety in a short work called *The Nine Ways of*



From a medieval illustration of St. Dominic's “Nine Ways of Prayer”

Prayer. The ninth way specifically describes how Dominic prayed while traveling, and it can be a roadmap for us towards sanctifying our own journeys.

On the road, Dominic would always have at least one companion (the Dominican custom, from the apostles' example of going out “two by two”). When they had been walking for a while during the day's journey, he would quote the prophet Hosea to his fellow traveler: “I will lead her [the Lord's beloved] into the wilderness and speak tenderly to her” (Hos 2:14), preparing his heart for just such a communication from the Lord. Then he would speed up or draw back a bit, putting a little space between him and his companion, and giving his mind over to the things of the Lord and his heart to fervent charity. His brothers later recalled (perhaps having surreptitiously

watched him on the occasions he took the lead) that he would “fortify himself” repeatedly with the sign of the Cross—so much so that some mistook it for swatting away flies!

It was from this frequent, itinerant prayer, the friars concluded, that Dominic obtained his insights into Scripture, his power of fervent preaching, and his Spirit-inspired knowledge of the hidden things of God. No small claim!

We may no longer walk everywhere we go, and we may not so often think of ourselves as “on pilgrimage.” But whether we walk or ride, whether hiking a beautiful trail in nature or stuck in a traffic jam on our daily commute, let us ask Saint Dominic's intercession, that we may learn to turn every journey into an opportunity for deeper communion with the Lord.*

Inspired by Beauty

PILGRIMAGE: ART IN MOTION



THE MAGIC OF PILGRIMAGE

by Sr. Maria Frassati, OP

When Chaucer began his *Canterbury Tales*, he used the conventions of the love poetry he was known for writing. Springtime has come, the birds are singing, the flowers are blooming – but just when the reader would be expecting the introduction of the hero or heroine, Chaucer says of this propitious time of year: “Thanne longen folk to goon on pilgrimages.”

The “folk” in question here are the twenty-nine people who met in Southwerk at the Tabard Inn, and their destination is Canterbury, “The hooly blisful martir for to seke,” that is, to honor the martyr St. Thomas Beckett, who “hath holpen” each of them in some way.

The pilgrims are a bit of a motley crew – the Prioress full of culture but perhaps not much religion, the upright Knight, the drunken Miller, the poor Parson, the jovial Host – each is supposed to tell two stories on the way to Canterbury and two on the way back. Chaucer left this work mostly unfinished, but what he did leave us is a remarkable cross-section of medieval society. Unlike any comparable work – Boccaccio’s *Decameron* is the closest analogue – Chaucer’s work contains people from wildly different classes and corners of society. Each one values something different, finds different things funny, and subscribes to all sorts of different standards. And yet all are met here in the same tavern, going on the same journey.

A pilgrimage, then, is a kind of leveling space where everyone meets as equals. In this way, a pilgrimage is a microcosm of the whole world on a journey to heaven. Each person is on the same journey, and yet each one also on his or her own journey with his or her own story to tell. As we journey with Chaucer and his pilgrims, we are treated to humanity in all its glory and brokenness. But we also have the opportunity to hear from someone much different than ourselves, who perhaps has something to teach us about God and His work in the world.



EVERY JOURNEY HAS ITS CHALLENGES AND SOMETIMES EVEN ITS STORMS. DOES IT FEEL LIKE JESUS IS ASLEEP IN TROUBLED TIMES? MEDITATE ON JESUS’ PEACEFUL PRESENCE WITH THIS OPENLIGHT MEDIA VIDEO OF DR. ELIZABETH LEV ANALYZING “CHRIST ASLEEP IN HIS BOAT” BY FRENCH PAINTER, JULES JOSEPH MEYNIER.





PRACTICAL VIRTUE

Talking about good manners may sound old-fashioned, but etiquette never goes out of style. Everyone wants to be comfortable in any given situation, and the virtue of courtesy helps us to habitually put others at ease and know how to conduct ourselves. Modern American culture may not emphasize good manners as much as it did fifty years ago, but they remain a social expectation, and they can even foster better relationships between classmates, colleagues, friends, and family members.

“Manners Monday” was born when a Sister in her first year of teaching had an idea to make the virtues practical and concrete for the everyday life of high school students. Every Monday, Sr. Catherine Thomas highlighted an aspect of the virtue of courtesy for her theology students. The topics ranged from how to give a handshake to how to write an email to a teacher. The students’ response to these little moments of formation was overwhelmingly positive! From these on-the-ground beginnings, “Manners Monday” eventually evolved into a series of videos from Openlight Media.

Sr. Peter Thomas and Sr. Mercedes host “Manners Monday” each week during the school year. In just a couple of minutes, they pack in advice that makes life more beautiful for everyone. Who doesn’t want to know how to act at a funeral or how to give feedback to a coworker? The first season, released in 2021, was so successful that Openlight is now producing and releasing Season Two! Full of good humor and lighthearted banter, these episodes have become beloved by students and adults of all ages. Enjoy taking a look by scanning the QR codes.

SEASON ONE

EPISODE ONE: BE ON TIME



SEASON TWO

EPISODE ONE: CLEANLINESS



TRAVELING COMPANIONS

GRATITUDE PILGRIMAGE

Part of our mission is to go on pilgrimage in gratitude to our friends and benefactors who make possible the Sisters' consecrated lives of vowed poverty. We are so blessed to count Jim and Flo Donovan among our friends in New Orleans. During our visit, Sr. Isaac Marie shared stories from the National Eucharistic Congress in Indiana this summer, while the Donovans shared about the Eucharistic procession in Louisiana that made its way down the Mississippi, complete with barges for bells, incense, and a 14-foot monstrance for Jesus to be seen far and wide! The faith is indeed alive in our friends and across the country.



ROSARY CRUSADE

Rosary Sunday is a beautiful Dominican tradition held every first Sunday of October, during which the Sisters pray the Rosary continuously. All of our Texas Sisters journeyed to Our Lady of Guadalupe Priory with so many friends, students, and benefactors, who made a pilgrimage of their own to be there! It was a beautiful afternoon of fellowship and prayer, with over 200 people participating in Confession, the Rosary, a wonderful talk by Fr. Christopher Eggleton, OP, and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. What a gift to join our prayers with this wonderful community of believers who walk with us here on our earthly pilgrimage.



As fellow pilgrims on the way to heaven, we pray for all those who support us. Please feel free to share your prayer intentions with us.

www.sistersofmary.org





Dominican Sisters of Mary
Mother of the Eucharist

4597 Warren Road | Ann Arbor, MI 48105
www.sistersofmary.org

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
ANN ARBOR, MI
PERMIT NO. 109

Recipient First and Last Name

Recipient Address Line 1

Address Line 2

Additional Line

Angel of God, my guardian dear, to
whom God's love commits me here,
ever this day be at my side to light and
guard, to rule and guide.

Our Lady of the highways, pray for us.

Amen.

*The Sisters pray this prayer every time they
go on a journey.*

