



BLAUVELT

Connections

THE SISTERS OF SAINT DOMINIC OF BLAUVELT, NY

Summer 2024

IN THIS ISSUE

- 2 Message from Sr. Mary Flood, OP
- 3 Congregational Happenings
- 4 Service & Leadership Scholarship
- 5 Celtic Tea
- 6 SOAR!
- 8 2024 Hearts Afire Gala
- 11 Memory Lane – 1974 News Article
- 12 Synodal Symposium
- 14 Lenten Series Recap
- 15 Upcoming Events

Sr. Mary Flood, O.P.



Dear Friends,

Having come to the end of the Easter Season, the fifty days from Easter Sunday to Pentecost, we are called to embrace a continued time of renewal and rejoicing. As we moved from the beautiful days of spring with rebirth all around us to the official start of summer, we are reminded that this time of year symbolizes new beginnings - the triumph of light over darkness, hope over despair, and life over death. Let

us allow the grace of our Risen God to transform our hearts and lives and enable us to bring the light and hope of Christ's love to a world in desperate need of redemption and reconciliation.

On April 28th, we celebrated our Hearts Afire Gala where we honored three outstanding individuals with the Mother Mary Ann Sammon Award for Compassion and Service. Mark Jacobs is a man whose financial leadership, networking abilities, and strategic thinking has made an incredible impact on many nonprofit and community organizations who strive to make our world a better place to live. We are especially grateful for his contributions to Saint Dominic's Family Services, our founding ministry, where his financial expertise and guidance have brought the agency to a new level of fiscal sustainability. Sister Mary Eileen O'Brien and Sister Kathleen Sullivan were recognized for their outstanding contribution to the field of higher education and especially for their life-long dedication to Dominican University New York. Under their astute leadership, they brought Dominican College to university status, the first university in Rockland County. We are most grateful for the wonderful support of all our donors as the Gala has become our major fundraising event of the year.

Recently we received word that our congregation was awarded a SOAR! Grant to plan for the future care of our sisters and repurposing the motherhouse. As our sisters age and decline in number, it is necessary for us to consider how best to care for the sisters and, at the same time, be responsible stewards of our resources.

In this edition of Blauvelt Connections you will have an opportunity to learn about the significant happenings at Dominican University New York. As of June 30th, 2024, Sister Kathleen Sullivan will retire from the University after fifty-six years of very dedicated service in many administrative positions. We are pleased that Sister Jennifer Schaaf will join the Dominican staff as Vice-President for Mission and Ministry as of September 1st. Finally, the Dominican University students who were recipients of the convent-sponsored scholarship for service and leadership will share their experience of working with the sisters during the past year.

Since our last edition of Blauvelt Connections, Sister Michaela Connolly, our former prioress, died unexpectedly. Her funeral was a beautiful tribute to Sister's many years in ministry and leadership.

Sincerely,

Sister Mary T. Flood, O.P.

Sister Mary T. Flood, O.P.
Prioress

EDITOR
Kerrin Kissel
Director of Development
845-359-5767
kkissel@opblauvelt.org

Congregational



The Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt were recently awarded a 2024 SOAR! grant of \$50,000.

This generous grant will fund a professional services building and property assessment study, aiding in congregational planning to ensure the quality of life for our sisters in their retirement years. The study will consider factors such as accessibility, safety, comfort, and long-term sustainability.

SOAR! (Support Our Aging Religious) raises and provides funding for congregations to meet the immediate needs of aging sisters, priests and brothers. We are deeply grateful to SOAR! for their continued and generous commitment to the our aging sisters.



Catholic Sisters Week Recap

By Kristin DeGuzman

To kick off Catholic Sisters Week, the Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt collaborated with the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill for a morning of Coffee & Conversation. Communications Coordinator Kristin DeGuzman moderated as Sisters Didi Madden & Theresa Rickard (Blauvelt) were joined by Sisters Christine Ferrar & Mary Jo Heman (Sparkill) to share their stories, memories, and advice. Together, they delved into their unique journeys, sharing heartfelt stories, cherished memories, and invaluable advice.



t i o n a l H a p p e n i n g s

Throughout the week, the focus remained on highlighting the spirituality, mission, and community building of women religious, with this year's theme being Celebrating Traditions, Changing the World.

Rockland County Executive Edwin J. Day honored the sisters with an award of appreciation which acknowledged their significant contributions to education, social services, senior housing, pastoral



ministry, and social justice in Rockland County since 1878. Supervisor Teresa M. Kenny also recognized the sisters at the March 5th town meeting by proclaiming the week of March 4th as National Sisters Week in the Town of Orangetown.

To conclude the Catholic Sisters Week, we highlighted our 2024 Jubilarians. This year's Jubilarians were honored and celebrated for their dedication and service, marking 80, 75, 70, and 60 years of unwavering commitment to their faith and community.

I N M E M O R I A M



Sr. Michaela Connolly, OP

Sister Michaela Connolly, OP, formerly Elizabeth Ann Connolly, a member of the Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt, NY for 61 years, died unexpectedly on February 24, 2024. Sister Michaela recently served for eighteen years on the Leadership Team of the Sisters of Saint Dominic as Prioress and Councilor. Sister Michaela was 78 years of age.

Celebrating our Jubilarians

On Sunday, June 2nd, the Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt celebrated ten Jubilarians with a Jubilee Mass and celebratory reception at St. Dominic's Convent. **Congratulations Jubilarians!**

JUBILARIANS 2024

80 Years



Sr. Theresa Lynch

60 Years



Sr. Danielle Doran

75 Years



Sr. Miriam Lent



Sr. Mary Theresa Flood



Sr. Loretta Lynch



Sr. Ceil Lavan



Sr. Mary John O'Brien



Sr. Theresa Maillet

70 Years



Sr. Barbara Anne Duffy



Sr. Maggie McDermott

Congregational Happenings continued on page 10



Students' Final Presentation

On Friday, May 3rd, we bid farewell to our 2023-2024

Service & Leadership Scholarship students: Stacy Eliezer '24

Maria Hernandez-Morales '25
Daniel Ramirez '26 and Steven Smith '24.

During their final presentation to the sisters, convent staff, and Dominican University New York staff, the students shared highlights from their service and leadership experiences at the convent over the past academic year.

We wish them all well as graduates Stacy and Steven embark on their new journeys, and Maria and Daniel as they continue their education at DUNY.



SERVICE & LEADERSHIP SCHOLARSHIP

Student Interviews with Sisters

Interview with Sr. Mary John O'Brien, OP

By Stacy Eliezer, '24

The Service and Leadership Scholarship has allowed me to connect with and interview sisters residing at the Motherhouse. Exploring their individual life stories before and after joining the Dominican Order deepened my understanding of their dedication.



A native of the Sheep's Head Bay neighborhood in Brooklyn, New York, Sr. Mary John O'Brien was born in 1928 into a Catholic household, surrounded by her older sister and two brothers.

As the youngest sibling, she happily reminisces about her close and loving family. Her parents, always joyful and smiling, created a home filled with gratitude and love.

Sr. Mary John's education began at St. Mark's School, followed by St. Brendan's High School, before earning her teaching degree from St. John's University in 1949. Not long after graduating, she committed to the Dominican Sisters of Blauvelt, NY. Sr. Mary John "recognized it as her true calling and a divine gift." Looking back on her decision, she expressed "unwavering gratitude for the privilege of being part of such a profound and enriching community."

For more than thirty years, Sr. Mary John dedicated herself to shaping young minds, teaching students from kindergarten to sixth grade in Brooklyn, the Bronx,

and Providence, Rhode Island. One of her former students, Sister Mary Flood, now serves as the current Prioress of the Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt. The influence of Blauvelt Dominican Sisters as teachers and mentors is clear in the number of sisters who followed in their footsteps. This is a true testament to the impact of their guidance and compassion through their teaching.

Sr. Mary John's legacy goes beyond her many years in ministry. She has strong bonds with her extended family, including nieces, great-nieces, and great-great-nieces and nephews, who frequently visit and share family memories.

Sr. Mary John O'Brien's journey is an example of the power of family, faith, and education, leaving a mark on the many lives she has touched through the years.

Interview with Sr. Ursula McGovern, OP

By Steven Smith, '24

Engaging with someone whose wisdom surpasses your own can broaden your perspective and illuminate aspects of life previously unseen. On a Thursday afternoon, I had the privilege of meeting a



remarkable Sister overflowing with pure joy. Greeting me in a pink dress with elegant shoes, she seemed to have carefully planned our time together. Little did I know, she hadn't ventured out of her room for days due to

a recent Covid outbreak in the building. Introducing myself as Steven, I met Sr. Ursula McGovern, whose joyful presence I couldn't help but admire. I escorted Sr. Ursula around the convent grounds, our conversation light and easy. Learning she was born and raised in the Bronx, her pronunciation of certain words and phrases surprised me. As we walked, Sr. Ursula shared tales of the past at Dominican College, pointing out where an old house, part of the early Dominican College, once stood, now replaced with new buildings and structures. She reminisced about Forkel Hall, the college's main campus of her younger days.

Intrigued, I inquired about her most cherished experiences as a nun. Her face lit up as she spoke of impacting lives worldwide. Jamaica held a special place in her heart, where she dedicated herself to ministering in schools and hospitals, enjoying the vibrant culture and amazing food she experienced there.

As we continued talking, I learned of her long educational journey, which included eight years in Catholic school and a fulfilling career as a teacher and principal. Sr. Ursula emphasized the importance of personal connection in teaching, believing that education is a gift that no one can take away from a child.

Reflecting on her calling to enter the convent, Sr. Ursula spoke about being inspired by the nurturing sisters who once guided her. Their impact fueled her desire to mentor and guide young people, a mission she has dedicated over seventy years to fulfilling.

In Sr. Ursula, I witnessed the power of knowledge and compassion, which left me inspired by her remarkable life and journey.



Celtic Tea

On Sunday, March 10th, the Huston Room at the Motherhouse buzzed with St. Patrick's Day excitement during the annual Celtic Tea. The sisters joyously welcomed family, friends and the community to this cherished annual event.

The afternoon was filled with delights, including a lively sing-along led by Irish folk singer Kevin Cronin, an array of teas, delectable finger sandwiches, freshly baked Irish soda bread, irresistible sweets, and an enlightening presentation by Sparkill Dominican Sister, Sr. Mary Dunning, OP. Attendees also enjoyed taking chances to win raffled beautiful Irish-themed gift baskets.

Heartfelt thanks to everyone who attended and contributed to the event's success this year!



Sr. Loretta Lynch, OP, and Sr. Joan Smith, OP, were recently highlighted by SOAR! in their blog posts and on social media. We are thrilled to share their inspiring stories with our readers.

soar-usa.org/connect/blog/ | facebook.com/soar-usa.org



Sr. Loretta Lynch, OP

What attracted you to become a Sister?

I was taught by the Dominican Sisters of Blauvelt in elementary school in the Bronx. From the time I was a child I always admired them for their kindness and the work they did. My older sister entered St. Dominic's Convent in Blauvelt, and I wanted to follow in her footsteps.

And how long have you been a Sister? 75 years

What year did you enter? 1949

As you look at your years of faithful service, what has been your greatest joy?

My greatest joy was teaching and also serving as the principal at St. Raymond's School and Saints Philip and James School in the Bronx, and St. Mary's School in Yonkers.

Your greatest challenge?

It was always very challenging as a teacher and a principal to keep everyone happy. It was important to me to be a good teacher and to make a difference in the children's lives. As a teacher, that was a challenge. As a principal, keeping the parents happy was often a challenge.

Each part of our life journey is touched by the holy, and we, in turn, are asked to bring Christ to others. Can you share such a moment from your life?

Preparing children for their First Holy Communion, watching them grow in their faith at such a young age, and witnessing them receive the Eucharist for the first time was such a blessing and so special.

Do you have a word of wisdom you'd like to share with people today?

Always follow your heart and follow your dreams. Becoming a sister was an easy decision for me. I knew from a young age that it was what I wanted, and I never had a single regret. I have loved all my years as a Blauvelt Dominican Sister.

Source: SOAR! Support Our Aging Religious

Sr. Joan Smith, OP

Featured by SOAR! (Support Our Aging Religious)

Sr. Joan Smith, OP



We recently caught up with Dominican Sister Joan Smith pictured as a postulant above (far left), about her vocation. Read the interview below.

What attracted you to become a Sister?

I was taught by Blauvelt Dominican Sisters from first grade on, and I loved them. They were so down-to-earth and relatable. The Sisters would invite us to visit the convent and we loved to go.

And how long have you been a Sister? 63 years

What year did you enter? 1960

As you look at your years of faithful service, what has been your greatest joy?

One of my greatest joys was receiving the habit on a beautiful spring day. It was really such a joyful time. In ministry, my greatest joy was moving from regular second-grade classroom teaching to teaching art to students of all grade levels from nursery school through high school. Teaching students to express themselves through art was such a joy. I also greatly enjoyed serving as the communications director for my community and for the Sparkill Dominican community. Technology was beginning to boom, and it was so exciting to serve in that capacity and to share this knowledge with the community. It was a whole new world for us.

Your greatest challenge?

My greatest challenge was leaving my family in the Bronx when I entered the convent in Blauvelt. It was also very difficult to follow the very strict rules that were in place during that time.

Can you share a story or some insight about a favorite time in ministry?

While teaching art, it was a joy to work with students who were open to learning and excited about exploring their talents. My years as director of communications were also very special. I loved documenting events, special occasions, and our sisters in ministry through photography and film. I often traveled to our sisters' ministry sites to photograph them and the people they served.

Each part of our life journey is touched by the holy, and we in turn are asked to bring Christ to others. Can you share such a moment from your life?

While I was in ministry at Christ the King Parish and School in the Bronx, during the rise of the Charismatic Movement in the 1970s, a few teachers would come together each morning to pray before the start of each school day. We supported, embraced, and encouraged each other by openly praying for one another. It was a beautifully spiritual experience to be able to lift one another up through prayer in this way.

Do you have a word of wisdom you'd like to share with people today?

In this world we live in today, we must hang in there and have hope.

Source: SOAR! Support Our Aging Religious

The 2024 He

Honoring The 2024 Mother Mary



Our Annual Hearts Afire Gala was held on a glorious spring day, Sunday, April 28th, at The View on the Hudson in Piermont, NY. A wonderful gathering of friends and family joined the Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt to celebrate honorees Mark Jacobs, Board Chair, Montefiore Nyack Hospital Trustees, Sr. Mary Eileen O'Brien, OP, past President, Dominican University New York, and Sr. Kathleen Sullivan, OP, retiring Chancellor, Dominican University New York. Gala attendees enjoyed a cocktail hour overlooking the Hudson River, a delightful luncheon, a silent auction, raffles, a wine pull, and time spent in fellowship with family, friends, and colleagues.

The Hearts Afire Gala honors individuals with the Mother Mary Ann Sammon Award for Compassion and Service. The recipients' lives and the work they do demonstrate a spirit of service and deep caring for others.

Mark Jacobs, Founder & President of K&M Newspaper Services, Inc., established the company in 1984. Specializing in engineering, designing, and manufacturing newspaper

and insert collation equipment. K&M's technology is utilized globally by leading publishers, facilitating the delivery of millions of publications daily. Mark is also active in community service, serving on various nonprofit boards since 1990, including Community Foundation of Orange County, Dennis P. McHugh Piermont Public Library, Orange Regional Medical Center Foundation, Rockland County Pride Center, and Wartburg Foundation. Mark's commitment to community service is evident in his current board affiliations, which include Chair, Montefiore Nyack Hospital Board of Trustees, Chair Emeritus of Montefiore Nyack Foundation, and roles in organizations such as the Rockland Country Club Foundation, St. Dominic's Family Services, and YMCA of Middletown.

Sister Mary Eileen O'Brien, OP a member of the Dominican Sisters of Blauvelt for over 50 years, has dedicated herself to education and leadership. She began her career in the Bronx, teaching mathematics before serving as principal at St. Luke's School. She later became Acting President and then President of Dominican College (now Dominican University New York) for several terms. She holds a doctorate in Educational Administration, among other degrees, and has received numerous awards for her contributions to education and community service.

Beyond her roles at Dominican University, Sister Mary Eileen is involved in various local, regional, and national organizations, including boards and councils related to higher education. As the longest-serving president in Dominican University's history, she has overseen its growth to serving approximately 1,500 students with a range of undergraduate and graduate programs.

arts Afire Gala

Ann Sammon Award Recipients



Sister Kathleen Sullivan, OP eldest of three born to Irish immigrants Kathleen and Patrick Sullivan in the Bronx, has dedicated more than 65 years to the Dominican Sisters of Blauvelt, after attending St. Nicholas of Tolentine elementary and high school and graduating "summa cum laude" from Good Counsel College. She earned a Masters in French from St. John's University. She taught at St. Dominic's School and later at St. Anthony's Shrine in Oceanside, Long Island. Returning to Blauvelt, she held various administrative roles at Dominican University New York, including President from 1987 to 1997. She received an honorary Doctorate and became Chancellor of External Affairs. She served on various boards and associations, including The United Way of Rockland and The American Association of Higher Education, making significant contributions to education and the community.

Proceeds from the Gala support the Sisters in active ministry and provide our aging Sisters with dignified, safe, and nurturing care in their retirement years.

We are very thankful to all who attended and supported the Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt through sponsorships, journal ads, and donations. Through your goodness and commitment, the sisters are able to continue serving God's people, bringing compassion and mercy to those who need them most.

2024 HEARTS AFIRE GALA SPONSORS

Gala Sponsor

Teresa Radzinski/Bank of America Private Bank

Journal Sponsor

St. Dominic's Family Services

Silent Auction Sponsors

Laura & Dan Grable
The Jacobs Family

Floral Sponsors

JAG Physical Therapy
Peggy Kalter
Orange Bank & Trust Company/Hudson Valley
Investment Advisors
Pavarini North East Construction

Wine Pull Sponsors

Manhattan Beer Distributors
Schulman & Kissel, P.C.

General Sponsors

Berard & Associates, CPA's, P.C.
Joe & Cathy Corless
Hiep Sanitation
The Hilb Group of New Jersey, LLC
d/b/a William H. Connolly & Co.
Janet & Lane Jorgensen
Rockland Community Cuisine

To view the online Hearts Afire Gala journal, please visit
opblauvelt.org/heartsafiregala/thank-you

Sr. Kathleen Sullivan, OP To Retire



Sr. Kathleen Sullivan is set to conclude her 56-year tenure at Dominican University New York by retiring at the end of June. Throughout her distinguished career, she has held numerous roles, such as Foreign Language Instructor specializing in French, Director of Admissions, Academic Dean, President, and most recently, Chancellor of External Affairs. As she embarks on this new

chapter, we extend our heartfelt blessings and good wishes to Sr. Kathleen.

Health & Wellness Program

During a recent community event, the sisters were presented with fresh health and wellness goals focusing on comprehending different wellness levels and discovering methods to enhance wellness through dietary selections, age-appropriate nutrition, and physical activity.



Beth Whittam, a family nurse practitioner and seasoned health and wellness coach with over three decades of experience, spearheaded the engaging conversation, which was warmly received by the congregation. We look forward to learning more health and wellness habits from Beth in the coming months!



Faith & Healing Through Bereavement Counseling

by Sr. Monica Paul Fraser, OP

Having worked in bereavement ministry for fourteen years, I was missing the contact with those

people who needed help at such a difficult time in their faith Journey. I needn't have worried. Shortly after I came home to the Motherhouse in July 2023, Sr. Mary Eileen O'Brien referred a woman to me who had just lost her husband. She in turn asked me if I would meet with one of her friends. Now I see both of them weekly.

At the same time, Sr. Terry Rickard put me in touch with the Archdiocesan Family Life Office. After meeting with the one in charge of their bereavement program, we have done two zoom meetings with those who work in parish programs with another coming up. Three more are scheduled for next year.

I left behind some eighteen persons who had significant loss in their lives: parents, spouses, siblings, friends, and too many who had lost young children. Monthly telephone calls enable me to continue the journey which we began years ago.

To say that God is good is a gross understatement. One of the 957 (lol) things I love about God is how God always takes care of us; how God uses the gifts God gave us so that we can continue to be of service to God's people, even as our hair gets grayer and our steps get slower. I thank God and I thank our Community for providing us with the education and formation we need so that we can continue to Praise, Bless and Preach.

National College Preaching In Action Conference

Sisters Venentia Mthembu and Mary Ann Collins presented at the 22nd Annual National College Preaching In Action Conference held at Molloy University, May 21-26.



Students and mentors, including our 2023-24 Service and Leadership Scholarship recipients, Daniel Ramirez, Maria Morales-Hernandez, Steven Smith, and Stacy Eliezer, along with Dominican University New York Director of Community Engagement & Leadership Development, Dana McStowe, attended. Students from nine Dominican universities and colleges, along with one Jesuit institution, participated in this annual event.

The 50 participants engaged in a variety of activities over the course of the week, culminating in a presentation on Leadership in the Dominican Tradition led by Sr. Venentia and Sr. Mary Ann. The students were engaged and enthusiastic listeners, sharing on their various leadership styles and characteristics, as well as describing the skills and qualities they are using on their campuses.

Reflecting on the evening's conversation, Sr. Mary Ann shared, "our Dominican Family, church and world are in good hands with this group of college students. Our Dominican tradition of preaching continues to speak to youth while helping them fulfill their own search for God."

Sisters Tilled the Soil Till Farms Disappeared

By Sr. Michaela Connolly, OP†

Dominican College Director of Development from 1973-1987. Public Relations Director between 1972-1973.

Sisters at St. Dominic's in Blauvelt no longer till the soil from sunup to sundown. Instead of working as truck farmers, raising vegetables to feed the boys and girls who live at St. Dominic's home, the sisters now spend their time teaching at Dominican College, and providing the type of specialized child care the institution is known for.

However, it was not long ago that the Dominican Sisters were better known for their farming ability. In the archives of the order are clippings from such prestigious newspapers as *The New York Sun*, which pay tribute to their agricultural accomplishments.

Up until 1955, the sisters continued to farm their land, although chunks of the 200 acres they once owned and cultivated vanished over the years. Some 22 acres were sold to State of New York in 1938, for use in building Rockland State Hospital. In 1943 an additional 68 acres vanished into the Camp Shanks complex. Forkel Hall part of Dominican College, swallowed up the rest of the farm land in 1955.

HISTORY ABOUND

History abounds at St. Dominics, which was founded as a religious institution in 1878. On the original tract of land acquired by the sisters is the 222 year-old Smit's farmhouse. The home, located on Western Highway and Mountain View Avenue, was built in 1752 as a present to Theri Smit and his bride Elisa Peck. Their names and the date "1752, April 26" are inscribed on each side of the front door.

In 1892, the house and the 14.7 acres of farmland that went with it were deeded to the sisters, who had built their convent and home for orphans on 16 acres of land in 1878. Also in 1892, 100 acres of the former Smit farm, on the west side of Western Highway, was sold to the sisters.

HARD-WORKING

The New York Sun article, written in 1937, describes the sisters as "the best farmers in Rockland". Without masculine aid, *The Sun* raved, the nuns are managing a 200-acre truck, dairy and poultry farm "in a manner which has aroused the envy of every farmer in the community."

"Looking down from the knoll on which is situated (their) house and grounds, one sees acre upon acre under cultivation, each plot green and fertile and as spic-and-span as any of the old Dutch settlers of Rockland would have asked for themselves. There is a



~ The Old Smit House ~

dairy and the poultry yards, and to the right the orchards. Apples, peaches and various small fruits are canned right in the convent for winter use."

The un-named *Sun* reporter describes the sisters as "shrewd, practical farmers, in the verdict of the community." The article points out that none of the 525 children at the institution at the time are used to work the fields during the school year. However, in the summer, each was given his own plot for vegetables and flowers, and certain animals to look after.

The sisters, regarded as good neighbors and good farmers, left their mark on the community in other ways. They purchased their supplies and equipment locally, and were careful to pay their bills on time - an important factor when local merchants extended their own credit.

When the sisters needed something, they would walk up dusty Western Highway to George Lediger's general store, and buy what they needed - seed, grain, animal feed or hardware. The Esposito brothers, who now own the store, uncovered dusty ledgers dating back to the turn of the century that record their purchases.

Some of the newer members of the order - most with college degrees - have never turned a plow or have never seen a chicken or cow up close. Some of the older sisters remember the days when St. Dominic's was just one farm among many in Orangetown.



“The Pastoral Charge for Lay Catholic Eucharistic Preaching”

A Homiletic and Theological Symposium

By Sr. Theresa Rickard, OP

Twenty-seven preachers and theologians from North America, Europe, and Asia met at Aquinas Institute of Theology in St. Louis on March 11-14 for a synodal symposium on “The Pastoral Charge for Lay Catholic Eucharistic Preaching.” The group formally submitted its recommendations about lay Preaching at Mass to the US Bishops and to the Synod on Synodality in Rome and its recently formed study group on “theological and canonical questions concerning specific forms of ministries.”

The symposium participants propose a change in canon law to allow qualified lay preachers to preach the homily at Mass. The group also recommends that the Church expand the instituted ministries of Lector and Catechist or institute a new ministry of Lay Preacher to allow for lay preaching at Mass.

Two scholars presented major papers: Dr. Edward P. Hahnenberg from John Carroll University on the Theology of Ministry for Lay Eucharistic Preaching and Dr. Layla Karst from Loyola Marymount University on Eucharistic Preaching in a Synodal Church. The group prayed together and engaged in listening sessions and panel discussions to contribute a synthesis of its insights to the work of the Synod on Synodality.

I attended the conference and facilitated a panel discussion of five women from diverse age cohorts, backgrounds, and ethnicities. We are Dominicans, theologians, professors, pastoral workers, and a doctoral student, and most importantly, Catholic women preachers. Preachers, called from our Baptism, theologically trained, pastorally experienced, and committed disciples of Jesus, the Christ. We passionately believe that preaching the Word is a constitutive part of being a baptized Christian. We responded to the papers presented and the subsequent dialogue from our social location and experience as hearers, doers, and preachers of the Word of God.



Despite the myriad of barriers that lay Catholic women preachers encounter—theological, canonical, cultural, historical, sociological, and institutional- we continue to preach. At times, this has been a deeply painful journey, but despite personal wounds endured and the obstacles mentioned, we are committed to the revitalization of the Catholic Church, and we continue to heed the Spirit's prompting to keep on Preaching. We preach in churches at varied liturgical services, on college campuses, in convent chapels, at the bedside of the dying, at gravesites, on the web, and, sometimes, at the Eucharist. In addition to supporting and promoting the countless ways lay Preaching is currently permitted in the Catholic Church, each of us fully supports the commissioning of well-formed lay Eucharistic preachers.

Aquinas Institute of Theology in St. Louis hosted the event, sponsored by the three schools of preaching in

the Dominican Preaching Network: Aquinas Institute of Theology in the United States, the Institute for Pastoral Homiletics in Germany, and the Institute of Preaching in the Philippines. Fr. Gregory Heille, OP, Professor of Preaching and Evangelization and Director of the Doctor of Ministry in Preaching at Aquinas Institute of Theology, convened the event with the support of a grant from the Lilly Endowment Initiative to Strengthen Preaching.

This synodal moment in the Church is an opportunity to expand its instituted ministries to meet the current needs of the people of God. This is a new moment to particularly recognize the voice of women and expand the ministry of the lay preacher—a preacher who is recognized by the community, committed to the apostolic life, theologically and spiritually formed, and commissioned by the Church to preach in all situations including the homily at Eucharist.



WHAT IS THE SYNOD ON SYNODALITY?

Our Holy Father Pope Francis has invited the Catholic Church to engage in a Synod on Synodality - simply meaning journeying together. Through listening and discernment rooted in the Holy Spirit, the entire people of God are being called to contribute to a process by which the Church deepens an understanding of its mission and looks toward the future.

The Synod on Synodality is a two-year process of praying, listening, dialoguing, and discerning, culminating in the celebration in Rome of the General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in October 2024. Every diocese in the world will participate. It is the first time that lay people, particularly women, will vote on the proposals being developed throughout the universal Church. For information, please visit <https://www.synod.va/en.html>.

Lenten Series Recap: Witnesses to the Cross

By Sr. Kathleen McManus, OP

From its earliest days, our church has birthed luminous witnesses to the cross. Sometimes, they are saints who are declared martyrs because they were executed for their public testimony of faith in Jesus Christ. Always, they are faithful disciples who devoted their lives to the proclamation of Gospel Truth. The witnesses I chose to highlight in our Lenten Series are contemporary, twentieth century figures who spent their lives in courageous dedication to the cause of the poor, the marginalized, the voiceless, and the invisible in the name of Jesus Christ. They are Dorothy Day, Sr. Thea Bowman, and Archbishop Oscar Romero.



**Dorothy Day, Servant of God
[1897 – 1980]**

Dorothy Day's personal life included many dramatic twists and turns, but the causes of justice for the poor, women's suffrage, farm workers' rights, civil rights and non-violence always engaged her passion as a journalist. When she embraced Catholicism, her writing and speaking became infused with the Gospel to which she had always been implicitly attuned. Many times, she suffered imprisonment for her acts of non-violent protest. Always, she drew strength from the Eucharist.

Dorothy is best known for the Catholic Worker Movement, which she co-founded with Peter Maurin, a philosopher and mystic. It began in 1932 with a newspaper devoted to the spread of Catholic Social Teaching and the peaceful transformation of society. It led to the establishment of Catholic Worker Houses (houses of hospitality for the homeless), beginning in New York City and spreading to cities throughout the country. These urban missions were and are still complemented by Catholic Worker farms in the countryside, providing formation in the care of creation to workers and their guests. Dorothy's cause for canonization has been underway since 1997.

**Sr. Thea Bowman, FSPA, Ph.D.
Servant of God [1937 – 1990]**



Growing up in Canton, Mississippi during the Jim Crow era, Thea exuded a love of learning, musical talent, and radiant faith. She entered the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration in La Crosse, WI, at the age of fifteen. As the first African American Sister in her all-white Congregation, she experienced many cultural challenges, yet always maintained her joyful spirit. As an educator, she made it her life's mission to bridge the divide between Blacks and Whites in the Church. Sr. Thea became a sought-after speaker who passionately advocated for the inclusion of Black Catholics and their cultural expressions of faith and spirituality in the American Catholic Church. In 1989, just months before her death from cancer, she addressed the American Bishops as a loving sister challenging her brothers to shed their paternalism and enter into solidarity with the Black Catholic Community. Sr. Thea's cause for canonization began in 2018.

**Saint Oscar Romero
[1917 – 1980]**



Oscar Romero was a priest during the turbulent Civil War in El Salvador. Originally timid, conservative, and shielded from the suffering reality of the people by bureaucratic assignments, his eyes were opened when the violence of the military reached into his own village in the massacre of local peasants. He began to see that pious charity was not the answer. The rich had to be evangelized and converted. When he became Archbishop of El Salvador in 1977, he spoke out fearlessly against government repression and military Death Squads. When he preached that the church rejected violence on all sides, the elite flew banners stating, "Be a patriot. Kill a priest." Romero viewed the poor as the church's chief instructors in the faith: "A church that doesn't provoke any crises, a gospel that doesn't unsettle, a word of God that doesn't get under anyone's skin, a word of God that doesn't touch the real sin of the society in which it is being proclaimed—what gospel is that?" he asked.

Archbishop Oscar Romero was gunned down by the military while celebrating Mass on March 24, 1980. He has been declared a martyr for the faith and was canonized in 2018.

Sr. Jenn Schaaf, OP to Join Dominican University New York

Sister Jenn Schaaf will join Dominican University New York as Vice-President for Mission and Ministry as of September 1st. Since 2013 Sr. Jenn has served at Yale University as Assistant Roman Catholic Chaplain, St. Thomas More Chapel & Center.



Sr. Jenn shares, *“as universities founded by religious communities see more lay leadership, a new professional field of mission integration has become an integral part of keeping the founding charism and mission of the educational institutions central. The V.P. for Mission and Ministry will help Dominican University to transition from the long-standing leadership of Sr. Mary Eileen O’Brien and Sr. Kathleen Sullivan into a new era through working with students, faculty, staff, and administration to continue the four pillars of Dominican life (prayer, study, community, and service) and the specific charism of the Blauvelt Dominicans’ care and compassion for marginalized communities and individuals. Drawing on the rich heritage of Dominican saints, scholars, and wisdom figures will also be key in continuing the mission of the university.”*

Sr. Jenn also shares, *“after many years in campus ministry at Yale, and previously at Ohio Dominican, I am excited to take on this role, which brings together my past experience of ministry, my research focus on charism formation in higher education, and my passion for the future of Dominican life. I know I am following in the footsteps of many beloved sisters who have served at Dominican University throughout the years and shaped it into the institution it is now - one that truly cares about the students and their success.”*

We wish Sr. Jenn many blessings as she enters into her new ministry and welcomed into the Dominican University New York family.

Sisters of Saint Dominic of Blauvelt

Designer Handbag BINGO

Thurs., Sept. 26, 2024

Doors open at 6pm - Bingo starts at 7pm

**ROSARY HALL
DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY**
500 Western Highway - Orangeburg, NY

Ticket Prices

\$50 in advance **\$55** at door *(space permitting)*

Your ticket price includes:
Bingo boards for all 10 games, bingo dauber,
door prize ticket, coffee and dessert

TORY BURCH LONGCHAMP kate spade NEW YORK MICHAEL MICHAEL KORS COACH

Grand Prize Raffle*

Louis Vuitton Neverfull MM (Retail Value: \$2030)

\$25/1 ticket **\$100**/6 ticket

*Grand Prize Raffle winner need not be present to win.

 Bring your own food & drinks.

Door Prizes - Raffles - 50/50

 **BUY TICKETS ONLINE AT**
www.opblauvelt.org/bingo
or scan the QR code.



PASSION FOR THE POSSIBLE
Sisters of Saint Dominic
 OF BLAUVELT NY

496 Western Highway Blauvelt, NY 10913-2097

NON-PROFIT ORG
 U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
 MONSEY, NY
 PERMIT NO. 412



About Us...

The Sisters of Saint Dominic of Blauvelt, New York, are a community of vowed women religious and Associates committed to bringing hope and mercy to all in need through programs and advocacy.

Today, professed Sisters and Associates are involved in education in colleges, elementary schools, and special education programs.

Other ministries include:

- Healthcare
- Social service programs
- Adoption services for older children
- Programs for migrant children
- A shelter for homeless women and their children
- Housing services for persons with HIV/AIDS
- Programs for the mentally ill and chemically addicted

We are active in social justice activities, retreat work, pastoral care for the homebound, and hospice, prison, and prayer ministry.

Learn more by visiting

www.opblauvelt.org

Connect with our Sisters and Associates on Social Media



Search for @opblauvelt or Sisters of Saint Dominic of Blauvelt, NY

ATTENTION ALL FOOTBALL FANS!

SUPPORT THE SISTERS OF ST. DOMINIC OF BLAUVELT

Take a chance to win

NEW YORK GIANTS

Season Tickets

\$10 for 1 ticket

\$25 for a book of 3 tickets

ny

INCLUDES ALL HOME GAMES IN THE
2024-2025 REGULAR SEASON

Winner will be announced
Friday, August 16, 2024

TICKETS CAN BE PURCHASED IN THE
DEVELOPMENT OFFICE OR ONLINE AT
www.tinyurl.com/2024giantsraffle

All proceeds to benefit Sisters of Saint Dominic of Blauvelt.

PLEASE NOTE: Paper ticketing for all New York Giants games has been replaced by electronic ticketing. The season ticket raffle winner will receive instructions on how to access the tickets through the official New York Giants app.

Learn more by visiting www.opblauvelt.org