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2023-2025: Two Jubilee Years of St. Thomas Aquinas

**Plenary Indulgence**

From 28 January 2023 to 28 January 2025, the double jubilee of the canonisation and death of St. Thomas Aquinas is celebrated.

On this occasion, the Apostolic Penitentiary granted the concession of a Plenary Indulgence "to the well-disposed faithful who will participate in the Eucharistic celebrations organized by the Dominican Family in our churches and schools on the occasion of the jubilee of the canonization and death of St. Thomas Aquinas (from January 28, 2023 to January 28, 2025), as well as to the faithful who will make pilgrimages to the churches, shrines and oratories under his patronage". Each entity of the Order can already announce it publicly, providing the necessary catechesis on the meaning of the Indulgence and on the conditions prescribed by the Church for its reception.

Start Date: 2023 01 28 January

End date: 2025 01 28 January

Letter of the Master of the Order

Receipt of the Apostolic Penitentiary

**OFFICIAL NEWS**

**Province of the Philippines Re-elects its Prior Provincial**



On 16 January 2025, the Capitulars of the 13th Provincial Chapter of the Province of Philippines reelected Brother Filemon I. dela Cruz Jr., OP, as Prior Provincial for a second term.

With the chapter taking place in the satellite campus of the University of Santo Tomas in Santa Rosa, Laguna, Brother Filemon received confirmation of the election from the Master of the Order, Br. Gerard Timoner III, OP, and subsequently accepted the office on the same day.

Born on 19 January 1964 in Manila, Brother Filemon is the fourth child of Filemon and Cezarina dela Cruz. He made his first profession in the Order on 11 May 1984, and was ordained to the priesthood on 30 April 1992.

He was Master of Students from 1992 to 1996, Master of Novices from 1996 to 2000, administrator at the University of Santo Tomas Manila from 2001 to 2017, and Superior of the Dominican community of the Rumah Santo Tomas in Surabaya, Indonesia, from 2017 to 2020.

He also served as Provincial Promoter of the Dominican Priestly Fraternities from 2012 to 2014, Provincial Councilor

from 2012 to 2016, and Socius of the Prior Provincial from 2014 to 2016.

His first term as Prior Provincial from 2021 to 2025 was marked by the challenging work of guiding and journeying with the brothers during the COVID-19 Pandemic. As Br. Filemon begins his ministry in this Jubilee Year of Hope, we pray for him as he accompanies the Province for the next four years.

## ARTICLES

### The Counsels of the Wise Friend: Aquinas on Religious Life



Aquinas' spiritual theology, deeply rooted in Scripture, Tradition, and practical human wisdom, and centered on the virtues and the pursuit of happiness, provides an invaluable foundation for reflecting on religious life. This is why his theology addresses a vital question concerning the nature of religious life: How does religious life help me, as a human person, draw closer to God? How does our humanity relate to grace and to the life of religious commitment? Are the evangelical counsels merely an additional layer upon our humanity?

If we cannot provide a valid, reasonable answer to the question of why it is good for a Christian, a human person, to live according to the evangelical counsels, our theology will lack something essential. We religious need the conviction that our lifestyle is worthwhile: Aquinas' theology offers answers to the why-s and provides reasons.

When considering religious life, this anthropological perspective is, of course, not the only possible one. It is always essential to link the counsels to the person of Christ, whose life is the model for religious life. In Christ, we see humanity in its fullest form. While affirming that the Christological focus is always indispensable for any theological reflection, here I would like to emphasize this anthropological aspect.

Why is Aquinas' vision refreshing? Primarily because, for centuries, the theology of the counsels and of religious life was largely shaped by an understanding of the spiritual life

that saw the vows mainly as super-obligations to be fulfilled. This perspective prevailed from the Protestant Reformation onward, up to Vatican II, and still influences our catechesis, religious education, and formation as religious. Christian life was often viewed as a two-story house: the first story was reserved for the ordinary Christian, whose life was defined by the Ten Commandments, God's precepts, with the motto, "If you wish to be saved, then keep the commandments, and this is enough for your eternal salvation." The second story was reserved for the state of perfection—the chosen few who desired a more heroic moral and spiritual life: "If you want more, and want to be perfect, be a religious and keep the religious vows!"

If the vows are principally *obligations*, then you can define very clearly what you are allowed and prohibited to do as a religious, and this clarity is certainly useful. But at the same time, the vows or counsels become completely dispensable for the whole of Christian life as such: an optional extra, without which Christian life goes the same. Like air-conditioning in a car or whipped cream on the top of a cake. After all, you can drive a car without air-condition and some prefer the cake without whipped cream. If religious vows and religious life as such lose their significance for what it means to be human, the essential question—how the counsels help me to be free and to love better—remains unanswered. A purely functional response, such as, "I live this life to be free for the mission or for the service of others," may be true but is theologically insufficient.

And the counsels lack an organic relationship to our humanity, it becomes easier to reduce their purpose to a sacrificial one. In this view, the counsels primarily exist to counter sinful human nature and help overcome it. Consequently, chastity may come to be seen merely as repression of sexuality, while passions and emotions are regarded as obstacles to be eradicated entirely. This leads to a kind of Christian stoicism, where obedience takes center stage as the submission of one will to another.

This modern account of religious life and morality is grounded in an anthropology fundamentally different from that of Aquinas. This vision of the human person and morality—which the late Servais Pinckaers OP admirably analyzed in terms of its roots and genesis—relies on a concept of human nature no longer seen as a source of wisdom and orientation. In this framework, natural inclinations are disconnected from human happiness, a

sharp departure from Aquinas' perspective. In contrast, this modern view reduces morality to precepts and obligations to obey. It employs a concept of freedom defined as the ability to choose between indifferent contraries, emanating solely from the will—a notion known as the freedom of indifference. This concept of freedom is detached from our natural inclinations and conceived as an independence from any external or internal influences, including passions, emotions, laws, or obligations.

For Aquinas, morality is fundamentally about how to attain beatitude. Virtues guide us in living a happy life here on earth and lead us to God through our free and good actions. God desires to draw the human person to Himself and provides assistance through the law, grace, and the natural inclinations of our human nature. For Aquinas, there is an original harmony between the law and human nature, a harmony that sin could damage but not utterly destroy.

Freedom, for Aquinas, is a freedom for excellence: "I am free if I am able to choose what is best to fulfill my human vocation, if I am able to perform acts of true quality."

This theology allowed Aquinas to present a vision of morality and the evangelical counsels that remains deeply connected to our humanity. His reflection on the religious state permeated his entire life. Aquinas' polemical works on the religious state emerged during the Mendicant debate in Paris, where his aim was to defend the validity of the new charism of the Mendicant orders. Additionally, he systematically explored religious life in his two *Summae*.

In my view, the most important starting point for understanding Aquinas' theology of religious life is his identification of the true source of the evangelical counsels: nothing less than the friendship of Christ. The evangelical counsels are a gift arising from the wisdom and the love of Christ, the wise and faithful friend.

"The counsels of a wise friend are of great use, according to Proverbs (27:9): 'Ointment and perfumes rejoice the heart: and the good counsels of a friend rejoice the soul.' But Christ is our wisest and greatest friend. Therefore, His counsels are supremely useful and fitting" (STh I-II, q. 108, a. 4, s.c.).

So, the best context in which to understand the evangelical counsels, and consequently religious vows, is the friendship with Christ. It is within this relationship of

reciprocal love that the counsels gain their true meaning: friendship embodies freedom, spontaneity, and generosity. Even the very act of listening to a counsel presupposes a certain freedom and generosity on the part of the listener. Christ addresses both our intellect and will; He speaks to the free and open person who is capable of hearing and responding to His call. Friendship with Christ presupposes the life of grace and an openness in the individual towards “the more,” towards spiritual growth. If my primary concern is merely to ask, “How far can I go without breaking the law, without sinning?”—this is a clear indication of the absence of true freedom.

To follow Christ and answer His call is not simply a matter of keeping the law. Christ does not call us to fulfill another obligation. His friendship means that He addresses a person who desires to love the Lord more, and the goal of the vows is to help cultivate and deepen this generosity. Morality and the religious call cannot be rightly understood as mere obedience to a precept that is disconnected from the person. Unfortunately, this proper context of the evangelical counsels—the context of Christ’s friendship—is often neglected in later accounts of religious life, which give way to a voluntaristic morality focused on obligations and precepts.

As Aquinas explains, even the very existence of the counsels points to this new relationship between God and the human person. In the Old Testament, God gave commands to His people, but in the New Law, which is not merely a new set of regulations but the grace of the Holy Spirit within us, it is fitting that God offers counsels. Giving counsels is the proper mode of communication between friends.

The evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience, as parts of the New Law, are in principle addressed to every Christian, just as the Sermon on the Mount is. Christ’s purpose in the Sermon on the Mount is not so much to add new precepts, but rather to reveal the horizon of graced human action. Therefore, the counsels are not an optional extra, but rather the privileged ways of evangelical generosity that are addressed in some way to every Christian, at least as *praeparatione animi*, a preparatory spiritual attitude (see *De perfectione vitae spiritualis*, cap. 18). Anyone who desires to grow in love and freedom will, in some way and for some time, practice the counsels. The distinction between religious life and

Christian life in general lies in the fact that religious commit themselves to intensively nurture this generosity within themselves.

Thus, when someone professes the evangelical counsels, they do not simply vow to do certain things and avoid others. Rather, they profess a commitment to continually cultivate this constant striving toward greater generosity and love. When God commands love, He does not expect everyone to possess the same level of charity; what He expects is the effort to grow in charity. As Aquinas comments, this is why it is not scandalous if a religious is not perfect; the scandal would be if they renounced the intention of seeking spiritual progress (*contemptus agendi meliora*) (*STh* II-II, q. 186, a. 2 ad 2). Listening to Christ’s counsels is a sign of generosity and love, qualities that characterize a new relationship with God. At the same time, practicing the counsels serves as a continual inspiration for such generosity. Poverty, chastity, and obedience are powerful aids in expanding the heart, which means an ever-growing capacity to love God and be loved by Him. This *dilatatio cordis*, as Aquinas calls it (*STH* II-II, q. 24, a. 7 ad 2), is a growing freedom for God that simultaneously involves free renunciation: when people experience the Lord’s friendship spontaneously want to abandon anything that could hinder them, and so cling more fully to God (as illustrated in the Gospel parable of the pearl and the treasure, Mt 13:43-45). Poverty, chastity, and obedience, which address the main areas of human life, continually help to “sell everything” in order to discover greater freedom and love—greater generosity.



Sr Hedvig Deák, OP

## Sowers of Hope: Experiences of the Jubilee of Communication



*Communicating with hope: a jubilee of encounter, truth and fraternity*

In my heart there is more hope after participating in various events of the Jubilee of the World of Communication. It has been a discovery of many communicators in the moments of prayer, the pilgrimage, the passing through the Holy Door, the Eucharists, the workshops and the audiences with Pope Francis. I believe that we are better when we are listened to, understood and well presented. Silence and listening have a range of nuances for effective communication and in the daily story of our lives.

### Communication and evangelisation

Evangelisers shared their experiences and communication strategies to meet their audiences. Theological reflections, communication experts, *influencers* and great experiences strengthened confidence, inspired projects and encouraged further improvement in communicating the Gospel.

Personally, I have participated in three seminars and I consider them to be of great value for those interested in reflecting on the challenges and opportunities of faith communication in contemporary times. From 22 to 24 January 2025, the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross hosted the XIV Professional Seminar of Church Communication Offices, on the theme “Communication and evangelisation: context, attitudes, experiences”.

**To be communicators of hope. Memorial of St. Francis de Sales (24 January)**

The Pope’s Message for the 59th World Communications Day has been published for all the custodians of communication. For several years, the Pontiff has been calling for the promotion of a more humane communication: it is necessary to “**disarm**” communication, eliminating aggressiveness and manipulation, in order to promote dialogue and mutual understanding.

Enlightened by St. Peter, he advises: “Share with meekness the hope that is in your hearts” (cf. 1 Pet 3:15-16). The challenges go to the communicative vein in order to live the Jubilee better. This world needs testimonies that raise questions and open paths of encounter, that sow hope. We are communicators of a culture of care, empathy and trust. Hope is a community project that calls us to tell stories of good, to be witnesses of a communication that heals wounds and builds bridges. In other words, in the face of misinformation and polarisation, journalists and communicators have an essential role to play in building responsible communication committed to truth and the common good.

### Opening of the Jubilee of the World of Communication in the Basilica of St. John Lateran (24 January)

Communication experts made a pilgrimage to this Basilica in search of the communicative matrix. Some were broadcasting live, others were looking for details such as the relic of St. Francis de Sales, patron saint of communicators and writers. The confessionals were full during the penitential celebration. Cardinal Baldo Reina, the Pope’s vicar general for the diocese of Rome, approached the Jubilee as time to revalue mercy, communication that collaborates with truth: “Jesus does not take the side of the woman to justify her, nor does he take the side of those who had set her before him to annul the law, but he enters into the heart of that woman, he tries to capture the beauty, the preciousness of that heart which is much greater than the mistakes she has made.

### Pilgrimage to the Holy Door of St. Peter’s (25 January)

On Saturday morning we gathered in *Via della Conciliazione*, 4. We are often attentive to capture the moments and expressions of others, but this time it was important to fast from the use of cameras, to put ourselves in “mode” of contemplation, prayer, pilgrimage. We walked singing in different languages, thanking the Virgin Mary. I

consider that we communication pilgrims were a testimony of fraternity as we crossed the Holy Door in the Basilica San Pietro, listened to the Eucharist and then attended the cultural event where the speakers were the Nobel Prize winner Ressa and the writer McCann.

### Meeting with Pope Francis – “Telling the truth” (25 January)

Applause and expressions of joy resounded as Pope Francis arrived in the Paul VI Hall. “Thank you for what you do! In my hands I have a nine-page speech. At this hour, with my stomach starting to churn, reading nine pages would be torture,” he said, smiling. The Prefect of the Dicastery for Communication, surprised, thought the Holy Father was asking him to read. The Pope continued amid applause: “To communicate is to go out of oneself a little in order to share what is mine with the other. And to communicate is not only to go out, but also to meet the other. Knowing how to communicate is a great wisdom, a great wisdom! I rejoice at this Jubilee of Communicators. Your work is a work that builds: it builds society, it builds the Church, it moves everyone forward, as long as it is true,” said the Pope, staging a dialogue with a believer, characteristic of his preaching: “Father, I always say true things...” “But you, are you true? – But you, are you true? Not only by the things you say, but you, inside you, in your life, are you true? This is a great test. Communicating is what God does with the Son, and God’s communication with the Son is the Holy Spirit,” he added, still improvising. The Pope’s entrance came before the scheduled time. His written speech was published. Of the 10,000 communicators present in the hall, 6,545 were journalists from different parts of the world.

### Audience with Pope Francis (27 January)

Very early on Monday, we went to the Vatican Apostolic Palace to participate in a meeting with Pope Francis. This audience was a good start for the **Conference of Presidents of Episcopal Communication Commissions and Directors of Social Communication Offices (27-29 January)**.

The Pope showed his joy and said that it is beautiful to communicate the life of the Church with a Christian outlook, stressing that this is the way to overcome hopelessness. The Church should not close in on itself, but communicate with love, truth and openness, he said, urging us to go forward with courage and hope.

At the end, we went to greet him and I could only say to him: “Holy Father, thank you for encouraging us communicators”. He smiled and we said goodbye: “Don’t forget to pray for me. The Pope gave us a rosary as a souvenir. It was a solemn and joyful atmosphere.

### Conference of Presidents of Episcopal Communication Commissions and Directors of Social Communication Offices (27-29 January).

I can define this meeting as a testimony of hope. Most of the participants work in the field of institutional communication in their dioceses or religious congregations. Meeting each other meant discovering the potential for networking, for weaving strong relationships of communion.

Taking the image of the Samaritan Church, we are convinced not to be afraid, to dare to be “wounded and dirty” (going out) communicators and not “sick” (closed in). Wounded in the construction of a more human communication, in the recording of true stories, in casting the nets through different channels if they get stuck between the rocks, in building bridges of dialogue. Wounded by the algorithm that dominates, by looking for the brother in the new continent, by narratives, by Artificial Intelligence.

### The pastures of communication. 28 January, memorial of St. Thomas Aquinas

We communicators are also tempted to set ourselves up as leaders, to expose ourselves in a narcissistic way and to consider ourselves as teachers as the Pharisees did. Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican Secretary of State, from the altar of the cathedra in St Peter’s Basilica, urged us to recognise the voice of the Shepherd in the pastures of communication. No one “has to assert himself as rabbi, as father and as guide: let the Holy Spirit guide the ministry and the responsibility you are called to live in the world of communication”.

Finally, I would just like to give thanks for the great signs of hope that have emerged from this Jubilee of the World of Communication. For a preacher, communication takes into account contemplation, silence, communion, the search for truth. I have only tried to tell the experience. Let us go forward with courage, sowing hope and building bridges of dialogue and love!

Among the materials provided by the Dicastery for

Communication was a simple pencil, the basic tool for a communicator to take notes. What we do with a pencil is always a sketch, it needs to be improved. But it also has a seed, a sign of the fertile soil of communication.

#### Links:

[LIX World Communications Day, 2025](#) – Share with gentleness the hope that is in your hearts (cf. 1 Pet 3:15-16) | Francis (2025.01.24)

[Pope Francis meets the participants of the Jubilee of Communication](#) (2025.01.24)

[To journalists and communicators participating in the Jubilee of Communication](#) (25 January 2025)

[Basilica of St John Lateran. Opening of the Jubilee. Homily by Cardinal Baldo Reina](#) (2025.01.24)

[Audience with the Presidents of the Episcopal Communication Commissions and the Directors of the Communication Offices of the Episcopal Conferences.](#) (27.01.2025)

Against the “spiritual illnesses” of the media, communicating without shouting ([Italian](#))

[Antiqua e Nuova. Note on the Relationship Between Artificial Intelligence and Human Intelligence](#) (2025.01.28)

## LIFE OF THE ORDER

### The book was published: “Happy as God! Happiness according to Saint Thomas Aquinas”



**Isolde Cambournac has published a book on the occasion of the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of the Angelic Doctor**

*Happy as God! Happiness according to St. Thomas Aquinas*, is the title of Isolde Cambournac’s book, in French, published on the occasion of the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of the Angelic Doctor (1225–2025).

The author, who holds a doctorate in theology from the University of Fribourg, is enthused about the thought of Saint Thomas Aquinas and seeks to transmit his wisdom to as many people as possible in a language accessible to all. To this end, she gives lectures on the Internet, in particular on her YouTube channel.

To respond to the search for happiness, Isolde Cambournac “has chosen to take us to the school of St. Thomas Aquinas, whose reflections and intuitions, steeped in wisdom, on the eternal aspirations of human beings and their quest for supreme happiness, are still surprisingly relevant,” reads the book’s introduction.

Following closely the reflections of St. Thomas Aquinas, while drawing on her personal experience, the author offers keys to discern between false and true happiness, recalling that God is the source and the ultimate goal of happiness.

The feast of St. Thomas Aquinas is celebrated on

January 28<sup>th</sup>, and let us remember that we are celebrating jubilee years: 700 years since his canonization (18 July 2023), 750 years since his death (7 March 2024), and 800 years since his birth, in 1225, in the castle of Rocaseca, near Aquino (Italy).

The book is published by Desclée de Brouwer and was put online on 8 January 2025, at the following links:

[Acheter en ligne : Desclée de Brouwer](#)

Amazon : <https://amzn.to/4gP1Xuh>

## Videos on “Adoro Te Devote” were published for the jubilee celebrations of St. Thomas Aquinas



Adore Te Devote, to humbly express faith in the Body and Blood of Christ in a theological, poetic and musical sense.

<i>Adoro te devote, latens Deitas,</i>	Hidden God, I devoutly worship you,
<i>Quae sub his figuris vere latitas:</i>	You who are truly present under these forms:
<i>Tibi se cor meum totum subicit,</i>	before You my heart submits itself completely,
<i>Quia te contemplans totum deficit.</i>	for when contemplating You all is lost in You.

On the occasion of the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth

of St. Thomas Aquinas, we present 4 videos on Adoro Te Devote: Paul Murray, OP, explains [the literary and theological implications](#) of Adoro Te Devote; in the second video, Isolde Cambournac and Olivier Michel tell us how St Thomas' Eucharistic Hymn came to be interpreted; in the third video, the interpretation of Adoro Te Devote by the Lefèvre family is shown; and in the fourth video, the same family comments on their experience and devotion to St. Thomas.

In the video, Isolde Cambournac recalls that she was in charge of the iAquinas project, which presented videos about St. Thomas Aquinas on the Internet, and to conclude this project she set out to find an artistic expression. “In the parish of Brittany, I met Olivier Michel, who is also a composer, and I entrusted him with the project of composing something based on St. Thomas Aquinas' words, especially in French. I also wanted to transmit, through this musical channel, something of St Thomas' thought,” says Isolde.

For his part, [Olivier Michel](#) recalls that he had just finished a composition on another text by St Thomas Aquinas—“O salutaris Hostia”—for a composition competition on the occasion of the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Cathedral of Metz.

Then, the project took on a new dimension and passed into the hands of the Lefèvre Family. “I had in mind the warmth of the voices of the Lefèvre Family, their heart with this unique sound. And I intuitively felt that they were the most suitable, at least among those I know, to honor this song,” Olivier stresses.

In the fourth video, Anne and Gabriel Lefèvre talk about their enthusiasm for having lent their voices to St Thomas Aquinas' poem Adoro Te Devote, set to music by Olivier Michel. They talk about their closeness to the Dominicans, their meeting with Isolde Cambournac (iAquinas project) and the composer Olivier Michel, and their joy at contributing to the international celebration of the Jubilee of St. Thomas Aquinas.

The videos were published on the Official Social Networks of the Order of Preachers. To raise the spirit with Adoro Te Devote can be listened to directly on the YouTube channel of the [Lefèvre Family](#). The other videos are also available on YouTube: the official French-language version on the channel the Ordre Dominicain, and Paul Murray, OP, can be heard on the official [English-language channel of the Order of Preachers](#).



We give thanks to God for the talent and Thomistic love of all those who made this musical production—a true jewel of Catholic spirituality—possible. May their witness inspire others to continue expressing themselves artistically for the good of the whole world.

“Adoro te devote” is a Eucharistic hymn composed by St. Thomas Aquinas on the occasion of the introduction of the Solemnity of Corpus Christi in 1264, at the request of Pope Urban IV. The hymn was included in the Roman Missal of 1570, at the request of Pope Pius V. The first two stanzas are quoted in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* to explain the Eucharistic mystery theologically and poetically.

The feast of St Thomas Aquinas is celebrated every year on January 28<sup>th</sup>. We recall that we have celebrated 3 jubilee years: 700 years since his canonization (July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023), 750 years since his death (March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024) and 800 years since his birth, in 1225, in the castle of Rocaseca, near Aquino (Italy).

#### Links:

Fr. Paul Murray, OP ([YouTube English](#))

Olivier Michel et Isolde Cambournac) ([French YouTube](#))

Adoro te Devote, performed by the “Famille Lefèvre”. ([French YouTube](#))

The “Famille Lefèvre”. Experience ([French YouTube](#))

Partitura – Adoro Te Devote – [Polyphonie](#)

## The Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati Fraternity of Poland gathered to pray for peace



On Saturday, 14 December 2024, the Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati Fraternity of the Province of Poland gathered at Fort VII to pray for peace in union with the entire Dominican Order. December is a month of Dominican prayer for peace. In this year we remember first and foremost Haiti, a republic whose inhabitants have been experiencing multiple forms of violence for many years: they are victims of murder, kidnapping, sexual violence, human trafficking, and slave labour. We also do not forget about other tragedy-struck places, among them Ukraine—our neighbour. The motto of our prayer was the verse taken from the Book of Genesis: “Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground.” We joined this cry – a cry for peace and for that reason, that no man will water the soil with the blood of another man.

The place where we gathered is Fort VII. This is part

of the defensive fortifications that surrounded Poznań in the 19th century. In October 1939, just after the invasion of Poland, the invading Nazis established here the first concentration camp in our country. Fort VII then became the place of execution and death of thousands of people whose only guilt was that they were Polish. Among the prisoners and victims of this camp are also saints of the Catholic Church. Looking at the cells created by the Nazis in the former gunpowder warehouses, at the death wall and the gas chamber, we realized the enormity of human suffering that this place witnessed. We realized how important peace is, and what its absence can result in.

The patron of our fraternity, Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, will be declared a saint this year. Joining in the celebrations of next year's canonization, we are going to organize a series of events. The December prayer was the first of them. A hundred years ago, Pier Giorgio, seeing the rise of fascism, prayed and worked for peace. Today, seeing the war destroying the neighbouring country and the injustice and violence in the Republic of Haiti and in many other places, we cry out to God for the same intention. We prayed in the newly opened ecumenical chapel in Fort VII. It is located right next to the former cells for camp prisoners. We sang the Lamentations of Jeremiah, Psalms, and the Litany for Peace, composed by one of our sisters from verses of the Holy Scriptures. We then took part in the Eucharist. The daughter of a former prisoner of the Fort VII Concentration Camp prayed with us. She told the story of her father, who was saved by the wife of one of the SS men supervising the camp. Her story was a ray of hope for us.

## Lay representative took part in the Rosary Pilgrimage to Lourdes



Flowers were offered next to the relics of St Thomas Aquinas, on behalf of all the Dominican fraternities and lay people around the world.

From 2 to 5 October 2024, I had the honour of being invited to the Rosary Pilgrimage in Lourdes to give a lecture on Saint Thomas Aquinas entitled 'The greatest of miracles: when God crosses history, Christ inhabits our stories. History and human existence as natural sites of divine Revelation in Saint Thomas Aquinas'. This pilgrimage, which brought together 16,000 pilgrims, was an opportunity for the Dominican family to meet: religious brothers, apostolic sisters, nuns and, of course, the lay fraternities, in particular those of the Province of France, presided over by Mr Jean-René Bethelémy, and those of the Province of Toulouse, presided over by Mr Jean-Louis Dulot, who organised several events to promote the fraternities. This pilgrimage had a special resonance because of the jubilee of Saint Thomas Aquinas. During the procession at the closing mass of the pilgrimage, we were able to lay a wreath of flowers next to the relics of Saint Thomas Aquinas, on behalf of all the Dominican fraternities and lay people in the world, particularly in countries at war.

*Sébastien Milazzo,  
International Coordinator of the Laity*



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