

Special Edition

Letter from the Provincial Council President



November 15, 2011
Feast of St. Albert the Great



My dear Brothers and Sisters,

May the love and peace of Christ be with you always! The Universal Church, and especially the Order of Preachers, today honors her Doctor *Universalis* — St. Albert the Great. Students of philosophy, theology, and the sciences know *Albertus Magnus* for his advanced thoughts and observations chronicled in an encyclopedia of treatises on almost every subject. Most of us however, know St. Albert as the teacher of St. Thomas Aquinas. The great mind of St. Albert recognized in St. Thomas the greatness that was to be. Their relationship was strong, their work historic, their influence far reaching into our times and beyond.

St. Albert's recognition and vision of greatness in St. Thomas Aquinas is the reason why I have chosen the feast of this "great" Dominican saint to announce the "great" news. The Lay Fraternities of St. Dominic, Province of St. Joseph, is embarking on a capital campaign to help erect our Province's first priory in this millennium: St. Thomas Aquinas Priory in Charlottesville, Virginia.

The Charlottesville Priory is projected to house 8 friars (expandable to 12) to serve the growing needs of the area's Catholic and University communities. We (the Laity) have been asked to specifically provide the finances required for the Priory's refectory (i.e. dining room and kitchen). This is the place where the friars gather together in community for their meals, socialization, and hospitality. The refectory is also the place where in every Dominican house and priory, the friars pray the *De Profundis* before their evening meal, remembering in a special way all the deceased members of the Order and their benefactors. By collectively collaborating with the Province in this venture, we, the Laity of the Province, are assured of their prayers forever.

A more tangible outcome of our collaboration will be the "naming" of the refectory. While Lay Provinces throughout the world have built schools, dispensaries, soup kitchens, etc., we have not. Yes, we have been financially supportive of many apostolic works throughout the Province and beyond; but there is no real property that memorializes the collective presence and work of Lay Dominicans in our Province. The success of our campaign will afford the LFSD the opportunity to be remembered as a vibrant and supportive branch of the Order for perpetuity. It will be a permanent reflection of our commitment to our vocation and to our friars.

This is such an historic venture for the Laity. For over 100 years, the friars of our Province have provided spiritual and financial support to advance the growth and apostolic efforts of the Laity. They continue to tirelessly give of themselves — spiritually, physically, and financially — for the sake of our souls. As the

friars have demonstrated their commitment to the Laity for over a century, this campaign is our opportunity to demonstrate to them our support and gratitude.

I have included a brief overview of the St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic community following my letter. The bulleted points do not give justice to the mission, vision, and evangelical efforts of the Charlottesville friars and their parishioners. There are great joys and great tribulations. The joys are found in the spirituality and commitment of the friars to preach and teach God's Word and Truth to all people at all times, as well as the commitment of the parishioners themselves to fully embrace and live their Faith daily. The obvious tribulation is the current lack of friars; but that is not unique in the Church these days. What is unique is that the Order of Preachers in the Province of St. Joseph has been blessed with a growing number of vocations that has not been seen in over 50 years. While we may currently be experiencing a drought of friars, we have approximately 63 men in various stages of their priestly formation. Praise God!

The priory's groundbreaking ceremony was held in the Spring following the capital campaigning efforts of the parishioners that raised over \$3.4 million (one-half of expected costs). The ceremony was officiated by Archbishop J. Augustine DiNoia, O.P., and pastor, Fr. Luke Clark, O.P. Construction is well underway with an anticipated completion date in 2013.

When St. Albert the Great was informed of the death of Aquinas, he is recorded as stating, *"The Light of the Church has been extinguished."* I would like to think that St. Albert, once observing the great blessings of vocations and apostolic works in our Province, would be consoled by the "light of the Church" fanning anew the flame of Faith in Charlottesville's St. Thomas Aquinas University Parish and Priory.

My dear brothers and sisters, we need to be a part of this historic collaboration in our Province! *"Do not be concerned with the amount of money you give, but what you have left behind."* (Archbishop

Fulton J. Sheen). We need to leave behind a permanent legacy for the Laity! We need to raise \$250,000.00! If parishioners can raise \$3.4 million as a sign of their commitment to their friars and parish, how can the Laity not show the same commitment in raising just 1/12th of the parish's investment? It's do-able even in these tough financial times, so catch your breath and continue to read.

Lay members are asked to pledge \$250.00 per member. Donations can be made in full or in monthly increments (\$25.00/month over 2 years-OR \$8.00/month over 3 years).

Here is how the Lay Dominicans can "fan the flame" in Charlottesville:

- Pray that the Holy Spirit enlightens you and guides you in your participation;
- Pray for the Province, the friars, and the success of the Priory's capital campaign;
- Complete the pledge card you will soon receive from the *Dominican Foundation* (by Thanksgiving) and return it promptly¹;
- Complete the pledge card, enclose your full donation, and return it promptly² to receive a gift;
- Complete the pledge card, enclose a \$350.00 (or more) donation, and return it promptly² to receive a special gift;
- Make your donation online, please click on the following link:

<https://www.op-stjoseph.org/donate/> SELECT **"Please Designate My Gift For"**; then SELECT **"Charlottesville Priory Campaign: Refectory"** on the drop-down menu;
- Demonstrate charity and consider a chapter treasury pledge for a member experiencing hardship;
- Check your emails and snail-mails for updates on the "LFSD C'ville Refectory"³
- Consider visiting the Charlottesville area and see for yourself the great work being done for

God's Honor and Glory, and the salvation of souls!

May God continue to bless you through the intercessions of Our Lady, Queen of Preachers, our holy father, St. Dominic, our Doctor *Universalis*, St. Albert the Great, and our "*Light of the Church*", St. Thomas Aquinas!

Sincerely,

Marianne

Ms. Marianne Jablonski, O.P.
Provincial President
Lay Fraternities of Saint Dominic
Province of St. Joseph, USA

NOTE: 1 All pledges must be returned no later than Jan. 28, 2012 (Feast of St. Thomas Aquinas).

2 The first 250 donations paid in full and received no later than Jan. 28, 2012 (Feast of St. Thomas Aquinas) are eligible for the gift offer.

3 Links to donate on line will be available shortly. You will be notified when this option is available.

*Thank you for your support
for this important initiative!*

*About St. Thomas Aquinas University Parish
("STAUVA"):*

- The parish of St. Thomas Aquinas is in the Diocese of Richmond and located on the campus of the University of Virginia (UVA).
- Dominican friars have successfully served the Catholic community, University staff, and students for the past 50 years.
- The STAUVA parish community is one of the largest parishes in the Richmond Diocese, encompassing an approximate 50 mile radius.
- The STAUVA community actively participates in 65 different parish groups that offer spiritual, educational, and social justice activities for all age groups.
- STAUVA is the current "home" for the Laity's *Dominican Bookstore* and *Tertia Pars Religious Goods Store* which is operated by members of the parish's Lay Dominican chapter. This is the only Catholic religious goods store in over a 60 mile radius.
- Parishioners have raised approximately half of the total funds required for the priory's construction on their own accord.

About the University of Virginia (UVA) and St. Thomas Aquinas Parish:

- The University was founded by Thomas Jefferson.
- The first female, first Catholic University President requested her induction to be an ecumenical service at STAUVA Church in 2011. The guest speaker was Archbishop J. Augustine DiNoia, O.P.
- UVA students actively participate in *Theology on Tap* lectures provided by the friars.
- Theology and philosophy books provided in the Bookstore have been purchased by faculty and students.
- UVA Music majors and choristers actively participate in the Music Ministry at STAUVA.

About the Friars at STAUVA:

- Currently, there are three (3) friars serving the needs of the parish and university communities: the pastor and two (2) parochial vicars.
- The friars provide Campus Ministry services at UVA.
- The friars provide coverage at the local hospitals and nursing homes.
- The friars are the spiritual presence and support for the students at Charlottesville Catholic School (elementary grades).
- Due to the number of parishioners, the weekend Mass schedule provides the community with 1 Saturday Vigil Mass and 6 Masses on Sunday (from 7:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.). There are 3 daily Masses. It is not uncommon for the Church to have "standing room only" attendance.
- The friars celebrate Mass at "neighboring" parishes (a 1 hour drive minimally) as needed.
- One friar from the Dominican House of Studies (an approximate 2-1/2 hour drive) arrives on the weekends to help celebrate Mass.
- St. Thomas Aquinas rectory is an old, modestly furnished 4-bedroom house up the street from the Church. Visiting or assisting friars sleep in a finished section of the house's basement.