

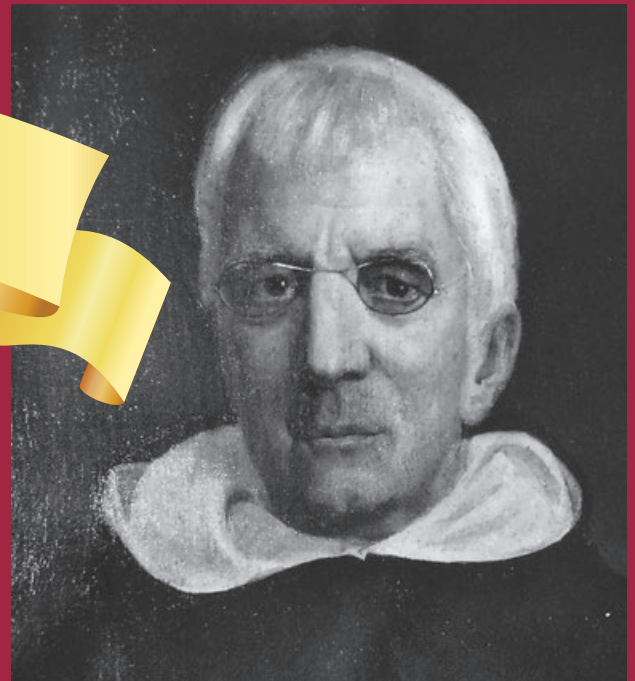
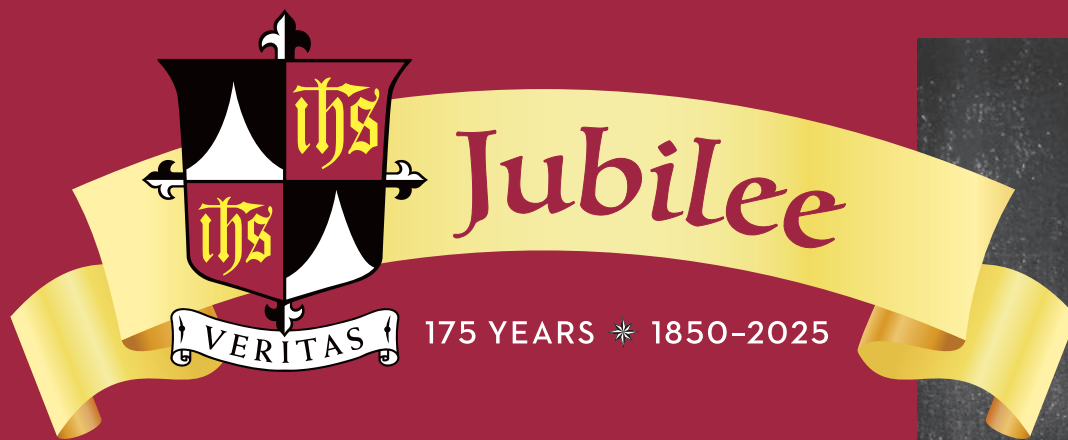
# MISSION WEST

A newsletter for friends of the Dominican Friars, Province of the Most Holy Name of Jesus

## CELEBRATING 175 YEARS

1850 – 2025

- ✱ The Story of our Province
- ✱ Meet the Newest Dominican Priests
- ✱ Dominicans Profess Vows Until Death



## THE QUOTABLE DOMINICAN Fr. Francis Sadoc Vilarrasa, O.P. 1814-1888

**“It may be hoped, however, that with God’s help and the foundations now having been laid, we may make more rapid progress, so that California may be soon erected into a Province, for the spread of the Catholic Faith and the added luster of the Order. Fiat. Fiat.”**

Fr. Francis Sadoc Vilarrasa, O.P., was born in Spain, where he received his initial formation in the Order. After continuing his formation in Italy, he was ordained in 1837. He volunteered for the missions and was assigned to the United States, arriving in Ohio in 1845. In 1850, he accompanied Bishop Alemany to California, leading to the foundation of the Western Dominican Province.

## DID YOU KNOW?



At the beginning of the Order of Preachers, St. Dominic established a convent of nuns before organizing his friars. So too, at the beginning of the Western Dominican Province, it was the women who were first instituted.

On March 6, 1851, Mr. William Hartnell deeded the use of his home, *La Casa Arnel*, to the Dominican Sisters, under the leadership of Mother Mary Goemaere, O.P., for a period of 12 months. The convent was formally opened on April 1 that same year under the patronage of Saint Catherine. It was, as Fr. Francis Sadoc Vilarrasa, O.P., claimed, the first convent established in California.

---

Cover Photo: Friars standing around the original pond of the Perry estate, the current site of St. Albert’s Priory, c. 1933. Learn more about the history of our province on pages 12-15.

---

*Our sincere gratitude is extended to all those who helped make this edition of the newsletter possible.*

---



# From the Prior Provincial

## Memory and Mission



Dear Friends,

I'm pleased to say that the issue of *Mission West* which you hold in your hands is a special one, because it expresses the very heartbeat of the People of God.

In Scripture, we read again and again how God instructs the Israelites to remember what He had done for them. Our Lord instructed the Apostles to remember how He laid down His life. Indeed, at every Mass we remember salvation history. The people of God are a remembering people.

The people of God are also a missionary people: we are called to go out in the present moment. Israel's calling wasn't meant just for itself; rather, it was meant to be a beacon of God's goodness to the nations. Christ calls his disciples to be this, and more: by our share in the Holy Spirit, "we are God's fellow workers" in the salvation of the world.

In this issue of *Mission West*, I see that same heartbeat of remembrance and mission: taking in the memory of God's life-giving work, and then going out to share that divine life.

We read about younger friars' studies at Oxford and Rome, both places of deep Christian memory. We remember older friars who, after long lives rich with the workings of God, have gone to His house. In particular, we remember our 175-year journey as a Province, and especially our three pioneering founders. As members or friends of the people of God, the Catholic Church, the Order of Preachers, and the Western Dominican Province, you and I are inheritors of an unfathomable treasury of memory. Let us draw life from it!

We also read about the mission of our friars today. Four brothers recently professed solemn vows, thus giving their lives permanently to the service of God and His People. We also see the new assignments of friars around the Province, as we strive to best fulfill our preaching mission. Lastly, we hear from four friars recently ordained to the priesthood by a son of this Province, Bishop Steven Maekawa, O.P. In all, we see the friars working fervently to bring God's life to the present world.

As I will never tire of saying, none of these things would be possible without friends like you. It was generous friends who welcomed our founders to California in 1850. That same generosity equipped and encouraged our predecessors to preach across the American West for 175 years. And it is your generosity today that makes it possible for friars to provide Word, Sacrament, sound doctrine, and compassionate preaching to a world in need of true life.

In Christ and St. Dominic,

Fr. Christopher Fadok, O.P.  
Prior Provincial

# Dominicans Until Death

Meet the brothers following in the footsteps of St. Dominic

## Br. Michael Thomas Cain, O.P.

Praise God! I belong completely to God now. It is freeing to give everything to God, not just for a particular moment or period of time, but for one's entire life. Everything is His now. I want to thank all of the people who have helped me make this gift of myself to God by supporting my vocation through love, prayer, and financial help. I ask that you pray for me still. Now is the true beginning, so please pray that I live out the vows that I have made to the fullest!

## Br. John Paul Puschautz, O.P.

As I was preparing to profess solemn vows, I was moved by the fact that Jesus calls the disciples his brothers after the resurrection: "Go to my brothers and tell them that I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God" (Jn 20:17). On a long journey of discipleship where I have been blessed to walk with Jesus as my Lord and my God, I was invited to contemplate Jesus as my brother as I said "until death" with my brothers.

I am so grateful for all the outpouring of support throughout these years that make possible this beautiful life of preaching as brothers with Jesus, our brother. What a joy to know that we are not alone in this holy endeavor!







### Br. Kevin Peter Cantu, O.P.

I spent years seeking worldly success, but God never abandoned me. By His grace, He brought me to the day where I offered myself completely to Him in solemn profession. Two things stand out to me: first, the ordinary yet wonderful nature of the vows. I spoke a few words, and my life changed little; yet I know I am bound to Christ as closely as possible in this life. Second, the life of the baptized is really “hidden with Christ in God.” Christ Jesus has given me the privilege to live His life as completely as possible this side of heaven. Please pray for my fidelity to this gift.

There is One Body with many members who depend on one another. I depend on the prayers and gifts of our generous benefactors. Without this support, living the way I do is simply not possible. Thank you!

### Br. Xavier Marie Wu, O.P.

It is impossible to put into words what happened when I placed my hand on our Constitutions and professed my vow.

How surreal it felt when I heard the words “until death!” Christ has truly accepted me, with all that I am and all that I will become. He has appointed me to be His preacher until death, and not for myself only, but also for all whom He has entrusted to me.

To you, who have been there for me, either in person or from afar, I owe my utmost gratitude. Thank you for your kindness and generosity!

To make a gift in honor  
of the newly professed  
brothers, visit  
[opwest.org/solemnvowsgift](https://opwest.org/solemnvowsgift)





## A Priest Forever

Meet the men ordained to serve Christ and serve you!



### Fr. John Peter Anderson, O.P.

I have no claim to be a priest. It is a grace. God gives me this grace so that He might give me in service to the People of God. Through my union with Christ in the ministerial priesthood, I am to become a sign to the world to show that the whole of life, all its blessings, are first of all grace. Once we understand this, our lives can become a worship of thanksgiving to God. Generosity enters in, and joy. For Christ lives in us, and we are hidden with Christ. I am thankful for all my material and spiritual benefactors for helping me to live this life.

### Fr. Antony Augustine Cherian, O.P.

Vatican II reminds us that the Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life. To receive the gift of celebrating Mass, and to become one through whom Jesus makes His Body and Blood available to His Church, are, in a way, the summit of my formation. The last eight years have been a continuous process of growth towards becoming the kind of man through whom Jesus can work more fully. I am excited to exercise the unique priestly ministry: saying Mass, hearing confessions, anointing the sick, and all the other paternal and ministerial roles of a priest!

### Fr. Nathaniel Maria Mayne, O.P.

I have grown during these eight years of formation in so many ways that have prepared me to be an instrument of Christ's sanctification of the world as a priest. There is nothing I look forward to more than allowing Christ to touch the lives of others through my priestly ministry. Very little of who I am today is due to my own efforts. Instead, it is a result of God's grace and the community He has given me, both in the Order of Preachers and all of you who have supported me and my classmates throughout these years. I am forever grateful, and I thank God that He has allowed all of us to participate, in our own ways, in the salvation of the world.

To make a gift in honor of the newly ordained priests, visit [opwest.org/ordinationgift](https://opwest.org/ordinationgift)





### Fr. Elias Guadalupe Ford, O.P.

During this time, I am profoundly aware of God's mercy in bringing me to the Dominicans and into the Order of Priests. I look forward with great joy to being His instrument of mercy in the Sacrament of Confession, and to feeding His people with His life-giving Bread in the Holy Mass. This would not have been possible without you. Thank you for your generosity over the years in supporting our formation. The world is starving for the truth and mercy of the Gospel, and we need holy priests to proclaim it with courage and love. Please pray for me and my classmates, that we may persevere in the struggle against sin and fulfill this sacred task!

## FRIARS ON THE MOVE

Your place to stay up-to-date on the friars you know and love.

Friar	New Assignment
Fr. Matthew Wanner, O.P.	Parochial Vicar at Holy Family in Anchorage
Fr. Gregory Liu, O.P.	STL Studies at the Angelicum in Rome
Fr. Dominic DeLay, O.P.	Parochial Vicar at St. Dominic's in Benicia
Fr. Anthony Rosevear, O.P.	Retired at St. Dominic's in Benicia
Fr. Mark Padrez, O.P.	Chaplain at Marist Catholic High School in Eugene
Fr. Isaiah Mary Molano, O.P.	Pastor at St. Dominic's in Eagle Rock
Fr. Augustine Hilander, O.P.	Director of St. Benedict Lodge in Oregon
Fr. Ambrose Sigman, O.P.	Chaplain of Corpus Christi Monastery in Menlo Park
Fr. Chrysostom Mijinke, O.P.	Parochial Vicar at Catholic Community at Stanford
Fr. Antony Augustine Cherian, O.P.	Parochial Vicar at St. Raymond's in Menlo Park
Rev. Br. John Paul Puschautz, O.P.	Diaconate Ministry at St. Raymond's in Menlo Park
Fr. Thomas Aquinas Pickett, O.P.	Professor at DSPT in Berkeley
Fr. Albert Duggan, O.P. (Eastern Province)	President of DSPT in Berkeley
Fr. Peter Rogers, O.P.	Retired at Holy Rosary in Portland
Fr. Elias Guadalupe Ford, O.P.	Director of St. Jude Shrine in San Francisco
Fr. Nathaniel Maria Mayne, O.P.	Parochial Vicar at Prince of Peace in Seattle
Fr. John Peter Anderson, O.P.	Parochial Vicar at Blessed Sacrament in Seattle
Fr. Corwin Low, O.P.	Director of Development at the Angelicum in Rome
Student Brothers	Residency Assignment
Br. Thomas Maria Johns, O.P.	St. Dominic's in Benicia
Br. Anthony Michael Martin, O.P.	Holy Family in Anchorage



# An Enriching Year in Oxford and Rome

Four brothers share stories of their year abroad



(L to R) Br. Luke Maria Lee, O.P.; Br. Benedict Mary Bartsch, O.P.; Br. Philip Neri Gerlomes, O.P.; Br. Francis Dominic Nguyen, O.P.

## Br. Benedict Mary Bartsch, O.P. (Rome, Italy)

Studying in Italy afforded me the opportunity to make my annual retreat at the Abbey of St. Benedict in Norcia. It was a joy to spend the week at the birthplace of my patron saint. They follow a very traditional Benedictine way of life, living a rhythm of prayer and work closely following the Rule, celebrating the traditional Monastic Office and the Traditional Latin Mass. The manner in which the monks offer the liturgy gently invited me to prayer and gratitude for Christ's sacrifice, and thus to participate actively in the heavenly worship which is ceaselessly offered by the saints and angels before God. It was an experience I will not forget, and one that will shape my own understanding and offering of the liturgy as I approach ordination.

## Br. Luke Maria Lee, O.P. (Rome, Italy)

During this year in Rome, I have been praying with the universal Church more vividly and concretely than I ever imagined: not only by living and studying with Dominicans and other students from around the world in courses on moral theology, grace, spirituality, canon law, and liturgy but also by accompanying saints throughout Rome and by praying for the dead, especially with the indulgences offered during the jubilee year.

Last November, Dominicans from around the world came together at the Basilica of St. Lawrence Outside the Walls for a Mass in commemoration of deceased Dominican brothers and sisters. Afterwards we processed to the Dominican mausoleum in the adjacent cemetery. Praying before the tombs of centuries of Dominicans reminds me of the immeasurable support that others contribute to my Dominican vocation, which even includes prayers after death. For this beautiful memory and many others, I will be eternally grateful.







**Br. Francis Dominic Nguyen, O.P.**  
(Oxford, England)

The dedication to the pursuit of truth by some of the greatest minds throughout history almost seems to permeate the walls and carve itself into the beautiful architecture in Oxford. This thirst for knowledge, one of the most supreme human goods possible, is channeled by the tutorial method: a method of education that St. John Henry Newman pioneered. Engaging my interests under the experienced guidance of another scholar in a personal teaching relationship was not for the faint of heart, but it was invaluable. This year, I immersed myself in the culture and hundreds of years of history of English Catholicism, I was edified by the witness of many martyrs for the Faith, and I was constantly supported by a deeply fraternal community life.

**Br. Philip Neri Gerlomes, O.P. (Rome, Italy)**

While living in Rome this year, I've been able to deepen my knowledge of both the Italian language and our Church's rich artistic and liturgical heritage, while also studying among friars from around the Order as well as priests, seminarians, religious, and laity who come to the Angelicum from around the world. I'll especially treasure the insights from my seminar on the Virgin Mary's special role in God's work of redemption. You'll also never reach the end of remarkable experiences to be had outside of the classroom in Rome, whether walking and praying amid the echoes of Christian history, or witnessing that history get made all over again as I saw the white smoke rise from the Sistine Chapel and heard the announcement of our new pope! Thanks be to God for this invaluable component of our formation.







Br. Philip Neri  
Gerlomes, O.P.

## Our American Pope, Leo XIV

During his studies abroad in Rome, Br. Philip Neri was able to attend the new pope's first appearance

First, we heard the crowd erupt, and then we turned and saw the smoke starting to rise, looking unmistakably white as it gathered and billowed. Thousands rushed toward the center for a better view of the loggia. The bells of St. Peter's rang, various groups waved their flags, drones and boom cameras swept overhead.

We alternated between humor and apprehension, recognizing the monumental significance of the announcement we'd soon hear. We sang a very loud Regina Caeli. Bands and honor guards assembled. Then, after a surreal hour, the curtains parted and the doors opened. It became still and quiet as we bowed our heads, laid hands on each other's shoulders, and waited to hear the name.

*"Ementissimum ac Reverendissimum Dominus Dominus Robertum Franciscum Sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae Cardinalem Prevost, Qui sibi nomen imposuit Leonem XIV."*

As we waited for the new pope's first appearance, we feverishly discussed what little we really knew about the man. An Augustinian friar! An Angelicum-trained canonist! Originally from Chicago—Chicago!

When the procession finally led Pope Leo onto the loggia to greet the world, we really began to celebrate.

Ten years ago, an art historian explained to me how the statues along the top of the Vatican Basilica's facade depict Christ, John the Baptist, and 11 Apostles—but not Peter. Only when Peter's living successor stands on that balcony is the set of 12 complete. The big screens showed us what you likely saw: a close-up of a man filled with appropriate emotion as he considered the magnitude of what was happening.

What could only really be appreciated in person was the view of that whole facade. There, once again, was Peter's successor. It was a scene of power and majesty, even and especially because the pope himself looked so small. You couldn't distinguish facial features, you just saw a figure in a white cap and a red mozzetta and knew, "that's *the* pope."

How deeply we knew and felt in that moment that we aren't just some self-organizing assembly of people. We're members of His one Mystical Body, alive across time and space with all the saints depicted atop that colonnade and with our true High Priest in the Heavenly Sanctuary.

Our God makes a Universe out of nothing. He makes a man from the dust of the Earth. He makes His own Body and Blood out of bread and wine. He makes sinners into saints. And that evening, He made a timeless pope out of the ordinary dude from Chicago. More powerful than any of the words Pope Leo spoke were the minutes that he stood there, silently waiting, until he greeted us all with the words of the Risen Christ, "Peace be with you all."

Far more than who the new pope is or where he's from, the power of this experience lay in what he is: the Servant of the Servants of God—those people who filled St. Peter's Square under the watchful eye of the icon of Mary, Mother of the Church. There we celebrated the arrival of a new Vicar of Christ—in the very spot where St. Peter once conquered the world when the world thought that they had conquered him.

God only knows what we're *beginning* with this pontificate. We all rejoice just to know that we're continuing the greatest story ever told. God bless America. God save Pope Leo. Praised be Jesus Christ.





Save the Date!

# THE DOMINICAN BLACK & WHITE

CELEBRATING 175 YEARS IN THE WEST

December 6, 2025  
The Palace Hotel, San Francisco

*"Where others are drawn by gold, carry the cross."*

For more information,  
visit [opwest.org/gala](https://opwest.org/gala)



## REQUIESCAT IN PACE

Please pray for the repose of the souls of the following friars who have recently passed away.



Fr. David Geib, O.P.,  
died on March 10, 2025.



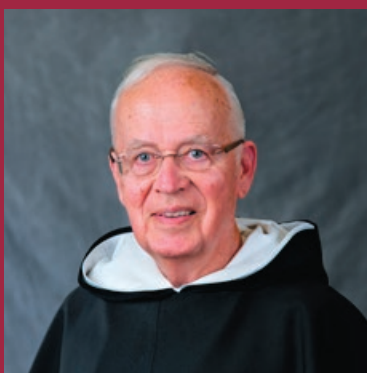
Fr. David Farrugia, O.P., died on  
April 1, 2025.



Fr. Brian Thomas Becket  
Mullady, O.P., died on April 22, 2025.



Fr. Reginald Martin, O.P., died on  
May 4, 2025.

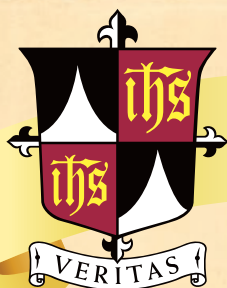


Fr. Eugene Sousa, O.P., died on  
May 18, 2025.



To learn more about or make a gift  
in memory of one of these friars,  
visit [opwest.org/requiem](https://opwest.org/requiem)





# Jubilee

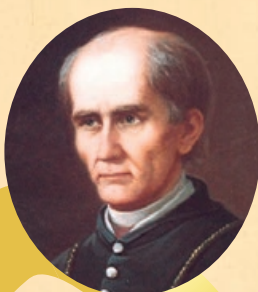
175 YEARS ✱ 1850-2025

## Celebrating 175 Years of History

The Western Dominican Province celebrates the anniversary of its beginnings

### 1773 The Early Missions

Dominican friars arrive from Mexico City to Baja California as part of a cooperative missionary effort in conjunction with the Jesuits and Franciscans. The Friars Preachers are assigned to the Northern part of Baja. In 1837, the Mexican government would seize the Dominican Missions, and they almost completely disappear by 1846.



Fr. Joseph Sadoc Alemany, O.P.



Fr. Francis Sadoc Vilarrasa, O.P.



Mother Mary Goemaere, O.P.

### 1850 "You Must Go to California"

Pope Pius IX appoints Alemany as the much-needed Bishop of California. Though Alemany tries to decline, the pope insists, telling him:

**"You must go to California; there is no alternative; where others are drawn by gold, you must carry the Cross. God will assist you."**

The newly appointed bishop, along with Fr. Vilarrasa, receive permission to found a Dominican community in California, under the patronage of the Most Holy Name of Jesus.

With donations from both Europe and the Eastern United States, the two friars set sail for California with the province's third founder—a Belgian Dominican sister, Mother Mary Goemaere, O.P. They arrive in the port of San Francisco on the night of December 6.

### 1845 Two Founders Cross the Sea

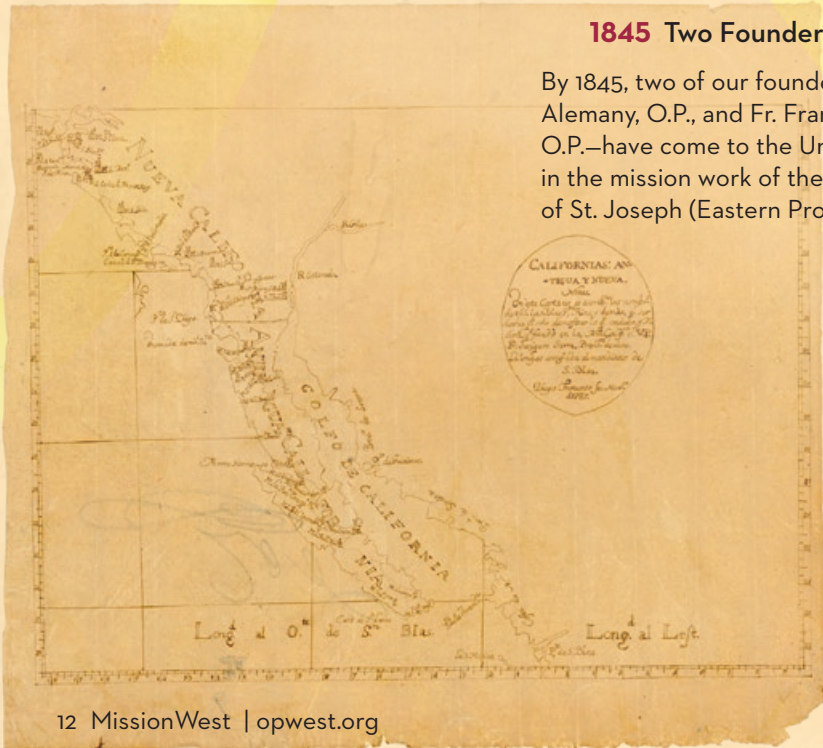
By 1845, two of our founders—Fr. Joseph Sadoc Alemany, O.P., and Fr. Francis Sadoc Vilarrasa, O.P.—have come to the United States to assist in the mission work of the Dominican Province of St. Joseph (Eastern Province).



San Francisco Harbor in 1851

### 1849 The Seed Is Planted

Fr. Peter Augustine Anderson, O.P., from the Province of St. Joseph, travels to California to revive the Dominican Missions and serve the "Forty-Niners" seeking gold. Fr. Anderson preaches in San Francisco and Sacramento before succumbing to illness while bravely serving the sick during a cholera outbreak.





(Continued on next page.)

### 1851 Dominicans in Monterey

Bishop Alemany, Fr. Vilarrasa, and Mo. Goemaere settle at the minimal headquarters in Monterey, California. Though they must work in sparse frontier conditions, the three founders get right to work. Mo. Mary opens St. Catalina's School, the first Dominican-run school in the new diocese. Bishop Alemany visits the remote communities of his expansive diocese, and Fr. Vilarrasa receives six novices from Spain, training them for the Dominican way of life—of the six novices that arrive, only two will remain with the province.



### 1908 Dominicans in the Puget Sound

Bishop Edward O'Dea of the Diocese of Seattle invites the Dominicans to serve the growing city and university populations. Fr. Francis P. Driscoll, O.P., is the first Pastor of Blessed Sacrament Church and founds what is today's Prince of Peace Newman Center, serving the students at the University of Washington.



### 1893 Expansion Beyond California

After eight years of earnest invitation by the Archbishop of Portland, Bishop William Gross, the friars establish a community in Portland, Oregon—dedicated as Queen of the Most Holy Rosary.



### 1854 Moving to Benicia

Struggling to sustain themselves in Monterey, the small Dominican community relocates northward to Benicia, where the friars establish St. Dominic's Church and the sisters open St. Catherine's Convent and School. At this point there are only a handful of friars to assist Alemany (now the Archbishop of San Francisco) in providing preaching and sacraments in Vallejo, Martinez, Antioch, Concord, Pittsburg, and across Sonoma and Contra Costa Counties.



### 1875 Dominicans in the Heart of the City

Though they had ministered in parishes throughout San Francisco since 1864, the friars are finally able to build their own church in the city—the first structure of today's St. Dominic's, San Francisco.



### 1864 The Preachers Expand to the City

To help meet Archbishop Alemany's desperate need for priests in the growing city of San Francisco, the Dominicans send what few friars they can spare from Benicia to serve the newly founded parish of St. Brigid. A year later, despite a continuing shortage of friars, they are also called on to administer St. Francis parish.





### 1912 A Province at Last!

After decades of striving to meet so many pastoral duties with a small number of friars, the Western Dominican Community finally grows large enough to be designated a province.



### 1955 Building an Oasis at McKenzie Bridge

When businessman Dom Bede Reynolds leaves his career behind to become a Benedictine monk, he donates his property in remote McKenzie Bridge, Oregon, to the Western Dominican Friars. His one request: they must offer daily mass at the remote chapel. The Dominicans accept and turn McKenzie Bridge into a retreat center.



### 1921 The Friars Go to Los Angeles

The friars establish St. Dominic's Church in the suburb of Eagle Rock to help Bishop John J. Cantrell meet the needs of the booming population of Los Angeles.



### 1945 Founding the Rosary Center

Fr. Paul Duffner, O.P., expands on a Dominican tradition by founding the Rosary Center at St. Dominic's in San Francisco. In 1970 the Rosary Center relocates to Portland, Oregon.



### 1931 The Brothers Move to Oakland

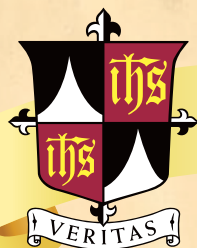
With difficult circumstances in Benicia, the friars begin searching for a new home for the novices and student brothers. In answer to many prayers, they purchase the historic Perry Family Estate in Oakland, California, and relocate the priory and house of studies. This marks the beginning of St. Albert's Priory and College.



### 1935 A Shrine for St. Jude

Fr. William Thomas Lewis, O.P., founds the St. Jude Shrine at St. Dominic's in San Francisco, at the request of the fourth Provincial of the Province, Fr. Leonard Callahan, O.P.





# Jubilee

175 YEARS ✱ 1850-2025

## 1967 Campus Ministry Expands

Continuing the Dominican tradition of establishing communities near universities, the friars begin ministering at St. Thomas More Newman Center in Eugene, Oregon.



## 2024 The Province Continues to Expand

The friars continue to devote themselves to campus ministry and begin serving at Newman Hall-Holy Spirit Parish—staffed for many decades by the Paulist Fathers—in Berkeley, California, just a few miles from St. Albert's Priory.

## 2013 The New Gold Rush: Tech

Like the early friars who came to serve those seeking gold, the friars serve in Silicon Valley—the heart of the global tech revolution—at St. Raymond Church in Menlo Park, California. Fr. Christopher Fadok, O.P., is the first Dominican pastor.



## 1995 Down to the South Bay

The friars continue to expand in campus ministry, with Fr. Patrick Labelle, O.P. leading the friars to serve the Catholic Community at Stanford University.

## 1974 North to the Last Frontier

At the invitation of Archbishop Joseph T. Ryan of Anchorage, the friars come to Holy Family Cathedral in Anchorage, Alaska, providing an example of stable religious and liturgical life in a frontier diocese.



## 1980 The Friars Venture Inland

The Western Dominican friars minister at St. Thomas More Newman Center in Tucson, Arizona. The following year, the friars begin serving at St. Catherine of Siena Newman Center in Salt Lake City, Utah.



## Joseph Alemany, O.P.: A Life of Service

“Small of stature and pale of face but great of mind and deep in the aspirations of the soul was Joseph Sadoc Alemany,” writes historian Peter T. Conmy.

Born in Vich, Spain, in 1814, Joseph Alemany was the son of pious Catholic parents. At only 15, he discerned his vocation to the Order of Preachers and professed vows two years later in September, 1831. After years of diligent study in Italy, Alemany was ordained a priest on March 11, 1837.

A few years later, when the opportunity to serve in the United States arose, Fr. Alemany volunteered and was sent to work in Ohio, Tennessee, and Kentucky in 1841. He was eventually named the Prior Provincial and superior of the Province of St. Joseph (Eastern Province).

His years of service and leadership in the United States would prepare him well—both mentally and spiritually—for an even greater mission to come, this time in the fractured mission territory of California.

### New Bishop of a Vast Diocese

By 1835, the diocese of Monterey—spanning present-day California, Nevada, and Utah—was without a bishop and had only a handful of priests to serve that immense region. Those priests served a population of people that was growing rapidly with the Gold Rush. It was in this frontier that the Western Dominican Province would take form.

At the recommendation of his peers, Alemany was appointed the new bishop of Monterey by Pope Pius IX. Though Alemany initially tried to refuse, the pope insisted, saying, “You must go to California; there is no alternative; where others are drawn by gold, you must carry the Cross. God will assist you.”

Bishop Alemany had two tasks: lead the Diocese of Monterey and establish a Dominican Province on the West Coast. Knowing the challenges that awaited him, Alemany immediately began fundraising

and recruiting others to join him in the American West. An ardent believer in education—and having particular concern for the growing number of children in his new diocese—he recruited orders of teaching nuns to establish schools.

He arrived in San Francisco, along with Fr. Francis Sadoc Vilarrasa, O.P., and Mother Mary Goemaere, O.P., on the evening of December 6, 1850. Armed with the Gospel, the three founders set to work uniting a divided diocese and preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ to those seeking worldly riches.

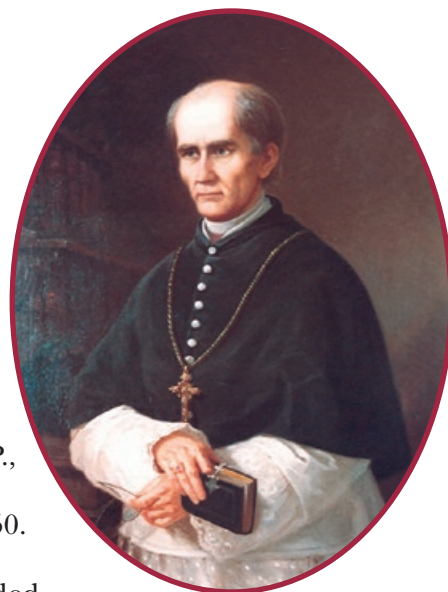
Though he held great responsibilities as bishop, Alemany had a heart for his flock. His love for the people of his diocese enabled him to work tirelessly until his retirement in 1884.

Before he returned to his native Spain for a life of prayer and contemplation, the press stated:

*“Our venerable Archbishop has not, in his long life, labored a single hour for himself. He has spent his years in God’s service, spent his strength in laboring zealously for the salvation of souls.”*

Alemany’s response to this praise might be found in his final address to his clergy: “The work of the priesthood is the grandest upon earth. We instruct the minds of men unto salvation. We train up the hearts of the dear young children to know God and serve Him. We teach them truths that are to endure for all time to come, and to make their souls, if faithful to that teaching, shine as the stars of heaven. Our mission is besides, by gentleness and kindness and holiness of life, not only to keep up that faith in the children of the church but to edify and attract those outside of it.”

Alemany died in Valencia, Spain in 1888, at the age of 73.



Bishop Joseph Sadoc Alemany, O.P.