



newsletter

Dominican Sisters International

**Dominicans Preach
through Technology**



**Jubilee 2012: Dominican
Women and Preaching**



Life Behind Walls



***Dominican Women
and Preaching***

DECEMBER 2011

www.dsio.org

Is a DSI Newsletter necessary?

This is a question we have been asking ourselves. The newsletter represents a cost, both financial and in human resources; but we'll gladly incur it if we can confirm that it is actually useful to Dominican sisters to get to know each other and reinforce collaboration.

We raised these questions as we met with Fr. Eric Salobir, OP, Social Media Promoter for the Order. He encouraged us to reflect on the objectives of the different communication instruments that DSI is currently using: are they really useful as they are set up? Do we need to change anything? Facebook, Website, Newsletter, News, Brochure...

The DSI Coordinating Council raised the same questions during their recent meeting. As we continue to reflect, we decided to address this question to you, the readers of our newsletter: do you think that a printed newsletter is really necessary or is the website sufficient?

Our concern is to be able to reach all sisters and not just the ones who may easily access the Internet and stay connected as long as they wish.

Our newsletter and other media are intended to be at the service of the Dominican sisters throughout the world so they may feel accompanied by other sisters in what they do, so they may learn about the variety and richness of the feminine preaching, as they read. This awareness grants us the serenity and flexibility to change and adjust to your needs and wants.

This is an invitation to reflect and think together... before we celebrate our Jubilee in 2012: Dominican Women in Preaching.

If you so desire, you may send your opinions and comments to dsi@curia.op.org, possibly by the end of December. Thank you...

Patrizia Morgante
DSI Secretariat

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DECEMBER 2011



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Predicarte, 2011

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"May it be done to me according to your word"...
(Lk 1,26-38)



**María Fabiola Velásquez
Maya, OP**

Like Mary, let us Be Bearers of the Word of Life



Christmas 2011

At the historic moment of the Annunciation, the promise of the Old Testament becomes history: the Word becomes flesh. What happens in Mary's heart and flesh is the beginning in time of the mission of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Mary, at the time of the Incarnation, is the first one to hear about the Trinitarian mystery. Yahweh is the Father of the One she accepts to carry in her womb and the power of the Most High that fecundates her is the Holy Spirit. The confident and free response of Mary opens us to know the intimacy of God, the Trinitarian communion.

The meeting with Mary reveals this mystery about the love of God: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life." (Jn 3,16)

Before the supreme revelation of love, Mary also responds with love and total availability. She actually does not simply say YES; she adds: "May it be done to me according to your word". Not because she knows it, rather because she feels great love. She gives such answer because at the call of the Father, she does not look at herself, nor does she measure her strengths. Mary trusts Him. A harmony of desires develops through this loving dialogue leading to a surrender and confidence in the Other that will be incarnated in everyday life. It is the acceptance of an unmarked itinerary where mutual surrender is renewed at every moment and blended with a discernment that is not free of doubts and difficulties.

In Mary, we understand that our entire missionary journey is also a love story, accepting that we are not the ones who must set the ways nor the pace. We rather must accept to "be led", even along paths that are not always anticipated nor understood, because love always requires dying to self in order to give life.

On the road to prepare for the Jubilee of the Order, as we travel together, the theme for 2012 is: "The Dominican woman and Preaching". I am convinced that Mary represents the best model to live the mission that identifies us: contemplating and imitating her, unknown and concealed, but always faithful in her mission to make God known to men, is a more hopeful and effective task.

As Dominican women, we share the spiritual maternity of Mary. She was the first missionary, the first announcer of the Gospel of Life, the first disciple who carried the Good News of Jesus to the others. She made him visible; she uncovered him to the Shepherds, the Magi, and many more, in other places.

Today, in this world of ours, we are responsible for displaying the presence of the "Emmanuel," the "God among us," concretely, in our own unique way. □



USA, October 2011



U.S. Dominicans Preach through Technology

Barbara Kelley, OP

Our holy Father, Saint Dominic, was in many ways a man of his times. He preached the Word of God through the media available to him: walking from town to town, praying, and spending a pivotal evening in a tavern, preaching the Gospel face to face to an innkeeper who believed the heresies of his day. Saint Dominic's sons and daughters in the 21st Century United States preach in the "taverns" of our own time and culture: not only face to face, in parishes, classrooms, hospitals and prisons, but through websites, Facebook, Twitter, Ustream and You-Tube videos.

"The Dominican Sisters of San Rafael [California] have found technology an important medium for preaching," said Sister Pat Farrell, OP. "We preach on our website by sharing reflections and publishing events that highlight our involvement in critical social issues and needs of our day." The San Rafael Dominicans receive even more traffic through their Facebook page. "We have also found that preaching through the creation of videos is a powerful tool that touches the heart," Sister Pat added.

Sister Mary Ann Nelson, OP, Vocation Director for the Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa, Wisconsin, writes a vocations blog called Catherine's Café. The Sinsinawa Dominicans also reach out through Ustream, archiving events such as funerals, professions and receptions.

The Dominican Sisters of Adrian also use Ustream to broadcast and archive events such as their weekly Evensong for Peace and various rituals of their women in formation. In addition, the congregation has used technology to draw their Sisters and Associates together. Months before delegates gathered in Adrian for General Chapter 2010, the Chapter was formally convened in the Motherhouse chapel, and the one-hour ceremony was streamed to Sisters gathered at other sites scattered throughout the country.

The U.S. Western Province, the Province of the Most Holy Name, focuses their website on promoting vocations to the province and sharing news about the province, said Father Vincent Benoit, OP, webmaster. Other postings include homilies by the Friars, a calendar of Dominican feast days, information about local talks and lectures by Dominicans, and special ministries of the province.

Most are quick to point out that, while they might post actual homilies, reflections and events on their social media, the most important way that they preach is through the lives of their Sisters and Friars. "I feel... that the best way to convey the Sisters' commitment to preaching is to give examples of it in their lives," said Johanna Warren, Electronic Communications Coordinator for the



Barbara Kelley, OP, an Adrian Dominican Sister, Ministers in the Communications and Technology Department at the Motherhouse in Adrian, Michigan. Before entering in 1996, she worked for nine years as editor, reporter and photographer for The Catholic Weekly, the organ of the Diocese of Lansing, Michigan. As an Adrian Dominican, she has served as communications coordinator for Regina Dominican High School, north of Chicago, and in parish work for the Diocese of Juneau, Alaska.



Sister Paulina coordinates powerpoint at the 2011 DSA Assembly in Nairobi, Kenya

Dominican Sisters of Racine, Wisconsin. "The home page of the website has a news-feed that is constantly updated with Sisters' missions and activities."

Johanna Warren also takes seriously the need to educate the Racine Dominican Sisters about the use of communications technology. "As my job revolves around the Sis-

ters' online presence, I have created and conducted social media classes for the Sisters and Associates," she said. "To date, approximately 40 sisters have come through my three-part Facebook class, and I am happy to see quite a few of them are using the outlet."

While reaching out to a wider audience, the U.S. Dominicans don't leave their Sisters behind in the use of modern communications technology. At any one time, 14 Sinsinawa Dominican Sisters write postings for a special blog, "The Daily Grind." Sister Mary Ann changes the group every six months, and so far has involved about 100 Sisters – some in their 90s – in writing about their daily lives. "They tell about their lives as Sisters, and some are really preaching, writing what they think about," Sister Mary Ann said. She added that Tricia Buxton, their Communications Director, has been teaching the Sisters how to make use of Facebook.

While modern social media can easily be misused, U.S. Dominicans have, for the most part, put them to good use: to preach God's Word to the world, unite their Sisters and Associates, and reach out to potential members. We can only guess that, were Saint Dominic alive again today, we could "friend" him on Facebook and keep up with an ongoing blog of his inspirational homilies. □

Preaching and Mission



Where Art and Spirituality meet!

Barbara Schwarz OP continues to work in the Dominican tradition that goes back to Fra Angelico. She believes that what one sees with the eyes touches the heart. Her art is a search for truth and expression of life, justice and hope.

She writes: "I have done some interesting travels of my own this spring. Holy week I gave a retreat in Mission San Jose--my Facebook page has some video from it; in May the College Preaching Conference in River Forest and next week the High School preaching conference.

I just finished a redesign of our NE Vocation Website: www.catholicdominicansisters.org. If you could add that link to your website, it would help us on Google. Also I have some video links on www.youtube.com/artafire of my own; our Amityville OP heritage is on www.youtube.com/heritageamityvilleop."

Visit her website Where Art and Spirituality meet! www.artafire.homestead.com: Artafire is the website of the Ministry of Preaching through the Arts of the Sisters of St. Dominic (Amityville).

WORKSHOP: Living on a Digital Continent: Challenges and Opportunities for Evangelization,
animated by Sister PINA RICCIERI, FSP

I Love Internet, and you?

“Living on a Digital Continent: Challenges and Opportunities for Evangelization,” was the title of the workshop organized by SEDOS (Service for Documentation and Studies regarding Mission, www.sedosmission.org) in Rome, which the DSI Secretariat attended. It was led by Sr. Pina Ricchieri, Daughter of Saint Paul,



author of the book “Formation a Click Away, Digital Communication and Sanctification of the Mind.” The topic is extremely current and many religious organizations such as DSI are trying to reflect on how to use information technologies to their greatest potential in order to promote communication and the formation of sisters. The digital world is a space we can inhabit and visit that relies on a variety of instruments available to us today. The difficulty may lie in getting to know them and use them, without being enslaved or rejecting them in advance as if they had nothing to do with Preaching. Today, we speak of digital natives (the young), digital immigrants (the ones born prior to the 90's) and digital apostles. We need a new language to express concepts and phenomena which never existed before.

“We must rethink formation, at any level, in relation to digital technologies, for a possible synergy along the lifelong dynamic journey toward human and religious maturity. What is required today in order to form the new generations coming from the digital society? How can we integrate the use of the new electronic devices into formation for consecrated life?

There is a growing conviction that suggests that formation to use communication media is necessary and pressing in consecrated life, but also that we need to offer formation through the media in this environment. In fact, it is increasingly evident that our challenge today is forming for communication through communication.” (Pina Ricchieri)

The challenge of the digital world lies in adjusting the formation for Consecrated Life to the new languages and instruments used by the young. In reinforcing the skills of the religious in information technologies, they can discover benefits for announcing the Good News. The presence of so many religious on Facebook, for instance, can make the difference as far as contents and languages used for our testimony: learning to write a message, rather a so-called “post,” can make sure it is a message of hope --and of Christian hope.

We are no longer just passive users in the digital environment (as it was with Web 1.0). Today we are producers and consumers both of news and information (a peculiarity of Web 2.0). Others will read and gather information based on what we publish on our websites about the nations and places where Dominicans are present.

Information technologies are fascinating and we must not fear them nor feed prejudices about them. They cannot replace the human touch and human relationships, however, in the physical sphere. We must learn to integrate these spaces, digital and physical, in accordance with our traditions and cultures.

I Love Internet, and you?

Patrizia Morgante
DSI Secretariat





The Joy of our Jubilee

Institut Saint Dominique de Rome

<http://www.institutsaintdominique.it/>

Marie Joannes OP, teacher and dean of the Institute from 1968 to 2009

On June 23, 24 and 25, 2011, the Institut Saint Dominique in Rome celebrated its 50 year anniversary. This jubilee celebration was marked by a totally Dominican simplicity and joy. Over 350 former students from all over the world brought to our present students the testimony of what they received in the past, for some more remote than others. They shared with warmth and spontaneity their experiences, joys and struggles along their different walks of life, and they pointed out how the sound values acquired during their school education helped them to keep sight of the right direction. Not without humour, they offered some brief stories about their lives as students, which goes to show how our young people remain “young” regardless of their generation!

These three days also offered an occasion to form officially the “Alumni Association” which will allow us to strengthen the network of former students from around the world and to provide welcoming communities for younger generations in the Dominican spirit, should they be called to expatriate because of their studies or other reasons-- a very concrete way to gather within the great family of Saint Dominic.

Our jubilee came to a close with a gala evening which brought together parents, friends, present and past students. A solemn Eucharistic celebration was held in the “St Do” Chapel with its long and rich tradition, where so many sacraments were received by our young people. This Eucharist was presided over by His Eminence Cardinal Poupard, the first Chaplain of the Institute way back when he used to work in the Secretariat of State of the Vatican, who always supported us in our mission and remained a faithful friend. A festive meal was the appropriate occasion to exchange many memories in a more informal manner and to find each other again, sometimes after so many years.

The joy of this jubilee could only console

The joy of this jubilee could only console us about the value of this mission of education so dear to us and so necessary today more than ever. Saint Dominic still has a lot to contribute to our young people today

us about the value of this mission of education so dear to us and so necessary today more than ever. Saint Dominique still has a lot to contribute to our young people today: the search for truth in liberty and joy, as well as the sense of our responsibilities in a world that needs much love for its values but also needs to be deeply evangelized. More than ever, we must face a major challenge: to teach all these young people, so different in race, culture and religion – every year Saint Dominique welcomes students from approximately fifty different nationalities – to live in good comradeship, to accept differences and to place their complementarities at the service of each other. To achieve this, an entire educational team, sisters and lay people, accompany them according to an educational program we have designed together to help them appropriate the great Dominican values and grow into wholeness according to their particular vocation. The most urgent and passionate mission ever! □

“Ad multos annos!”

Shaping our Dominican Future in Africa

Faustina Eytayo Jimoh, OP, Dominican Sisters of St. Catherine of Siena, Nigeria

Africa is seen as giving hope to the Church in terms of the number of vocations to the priesthood and religious life. We also must acknowledge, however, that the bug of decline in vocations is beginning to bite in some if not all parts of Africa, and the Dominican Order is not untouched by this reality. Barely one year after the General Assembly of Dominican Sisters International (DSI) in Rome at which the future of our Dominican life in the world was placed at the centre of our deliberations, we gathered again in Nairobi, Kenya from May 16 – 23, 2011 to reflect on how we might prepare for the future of Dominican life on the continent of Africa.

Prioresses General or delegates of Dominican Sisters Congregations which have their Generalates in Africa, continental and zonal coordinators of DSA, JPIC co-promoters, and representatives of the young sisters attended this Assembly. We were blessed with the presence of our highly esteemed DSI coordinator, Sr. Fabiola, and other special invitees including the Dominican Sisters representative at the UN, Sr. Margaret Mayce, OP, the Dominican Volunteer Coordinator, Sr. Lucia Fernandez Riega, OP, secretaries and translators.

Sr. Petronilla Kayiba OP gave the keynote address rewording the theme of the DSI Assembly, "Shaping our Dominican future in Africa with realism, daring and



hope." She compared shaping the future to preparing the ground to receive the seed which will be harvested in the future. Being familiar with this process I

Sr. Faustina Eytayo Jimoh, OP from Kabba, Kogi State of Nigeria. Joined the Dominican Sisters of St. Catherine of Siena, Nigeria in 1990; made first vows on December 1, 1992; made final vows on November 25, 2000.

Leadership role: Prioress General (first tenure: 2005-2009; second tenure: 2009); Vice President Nigeria Conference of Women Religious.

could already see in Sr. Petronille's imagery the daunting task we have on our hands which will necessarily evoke feelings of fear, apprehension, and uncertainty. How might we work in anticipation of a good harvest? Sr. Petronille suggests that we need not work in isolation but carry with us the experiences of the men and women whom we serve, to that we discern the needs of our continent and discover what possibilities there are. In other words, we need the ability to see, judge and act and this requires courage to break with the past, a daring which can happen only by an inner conviction borne out of faith. She reminded us of our call to be preachers in Africa and that our Dominican life requires a new credibility in order to be relevant today. Each member, she said, has the capability to preach and we must recognise the authority of each member to preach. As Dominican women, our way of evangelising, which is mostly through charitable works, must at the same time be a proclamation, and our work, especially among youth, must prepare them to face the future with daring.

Encouraged by Sr. Petronille's input we reflected on the following questions: what are the main problems affecting the African continent? What are the main challenges to the mission of the Church in Africa? What does preaching mean for us Dominican women in the African context? What are the priorities of our preaching? How could we achieve these? Following this reflection, we felt very strongly that collaboration among us at the level of

Our Dominican life in Africa will be more pragmatic if we will share the little resources, human and material, that we each possess as Congregations; if we will strengthen communication by every means possible in spite of the challenges of distance, language and funds.

country and continent is our way forward into the future. Our Dominican life in Africa will be more pragmatic if we share the little resources, human and material that we each possess as Congregations; if we will strengthen communication by every means possible in spite of the challenges of distance, language and funds; if we dream of and execute projects together as much as possible within countries, zones and continent.

What stood out for me at this Assembly was what I judged as the determination of everyone to carry the vision of St. Dominic into the future. No one wanted it to die even if the challenge of keeping it alive was enormous. I felt certain that Dominican life in Africa will stand the test of time. I am hopeful of this because I could feel the verve at the Assembly. However, we must not forget that our actions as Dominicans in Africa today can help to shape the Africa we wish to see tomorrow and more so if we witness together. God bless Dominican life in Africa! □



Assisting the Syndic of the Order at Santa Sabina, Rome

Ma. Teresa A. Cruz, OP

I invite you to introduce yourself, your Congregation, studies, past mission, country of origin.

Our Congregation, the Dominican Sisters of St. Catherine of Siena, is the first local Religious Congregation in the Philippines. Our Foundress, Mother Francisca del Espiritu Santo, whose tricentennial anniversary of death we celebrated on August 24, 2011, was a Dominican Tertiary whose mission was to serve the poor, the sick and the young, in the charism of St. Dominic. We are mostly in schools, hospitals, spirituality centers, pastoral care and other related ministries. I had been assigned as a treasurer for most of my religious life except for two years when I was a school administrator; first, before coming to Rome in 2000 and second, before returning to Rome this May 2011. The first few years of my mission as a religious treasurer was a period of discovering the path of preaching through administration of material goods and human resources. Aside from handling a course or two every school year, my new found interest in teaching was served through informal Catechetical instruction to the non-academic personnel of the school where I am assigned or in our service partner communities.

You are back to Sta. Sabina after 6 years: what were your feelings when you received the news? What and where was your mission at that time?

The school where I was last assigned underwent an accreditation process, and I was looking forward to a less-stressful and more fruitful year ahead. Though I am ready to go where I am sent, it dawned on me that I would again be working with papers and numbers. I felt that there were others who could do the job better but at the same time I reflected: Who am I to question the will of God? When I



The first few years of my mission as a religious treasurer was a period of discovering the path of preaching through the administration of material goods and human resources.

said yes to this mission, I was happy, excited and looking forward to being back in this beautiful city of Rome with my good friends and the larger Dominican family. This year, we are also starting a new religious community here in Sta. Sabina; it's not like the last time when I worked alone here in Sta. Sabina and my religious community was in Via Aurelia and we met only during the weekends. Together with me here now is Sr. Josie Fe Presbitero, OP who assists Fr. Wilmer in the Archives and Sr. Myra Delos Santos, OP and perhaps there will be another sister later.

What is your mission/job right now? Can you explain more about your work here?

My task is to assist the Syndic of the Order, Fr. Hilario Provecho Alvarez, OP in his mission of service to the needs of the curia, its entities and branches so that the Word of God may be preached. Specifically, I maintain the books of accounts, receive and release requisitions for supplies, bank transactions, and other financial related matters. That is just in terms of work in the office yet I would like to believe that God has better plans and purposes in bringing me here. The important element in this mission of service is joy – to be happy, to give and receive joy in our everyday tasks is very Dominican. Dominic was a joyful friar and I believe that to be true Dominicans we are called to proclaim the God of love and peace through our joyful disposition in the midst of difficulties and different situations.

There are many Filipino migrant workers here in Rome and each Sister in our community does some apostolate in different centers or Churches where there is a group of Filipinos. Together with Fr. Roberto Luanzon, OP, we meet a group of Filipino Dominican Laity regularly here in Sta. Sabina to pray, study, serve and play together in the spirit of St. Dominic. Being with them has helped me better understand our people and how they serve our country even when they are far from home. At first, our main objective was to bring God closer to them knowing how difficult it is to be separated from family and country but along the way, it is they who showed me the face of God in a different perspective. We minister to one another and grow together in our

When I said yes to this mission, I was happy, excited and looking forward to be back in this beautiful city of Rome with my good friends and the larger Dominican family. This year, we are also starting a new religious community here in Sta. Sabina, so it is not like the last time when I worked alone. here in Sta. Sabina

respective vocation, in mission and in friendship.

You have the opportunity to work with all the other branches of the OP Family: how do you find this collaboration? What are the joys and satisfaction of your work here?

To work in the curia is to share in the mission of all the other branches of the OP Family. First of all, the brothers and sisters in Sta. Sabina are all so welcoming. Even though they hold key positions in the Order, they treat me as a true member of the family. I am always in awe and wonder at the simplicity, humility and goodness of the members of the community. Everyone, literally, all, including the secretaries and staff, willingly and gladly offer a helping hand. The question, 'is there anything I can do for you?' is like a musical line that can be heard every now and then, anywhere I go. This for me is collaboration – sharing in the one vision and mission of the Order in friendship. To be a part of the preaching mission in every part of the world where there is a Dominican Community or Family, even if I am not physically present there, is truly a great blessing.

Some weeks ago, I had the opportunity

of communicating with Sr. Paulina, a Dominican Sister in Nigeria, in relation to some financial matters for a Justice and Peace Program in Zambia. In the course of our email conversations, she shared with me about her work and life situation in her present mission. I haven't seen her personally, but I truly felt that we are family – she is my sister and her mission is my mission too. Her joys have become my joys and her troubles are mine as well and because we belong to the same Dominican family, we support and love each other. My commitment to this service and collaboration made perfect sense when she wrote and I quote, "The Master General will soon be in Nigeria and we will feel the presence of all of you in him."

Recently, the IAOP Syndic in Africa requested money for their 2011 Formation Fund and IAOP assembly budget in August. In his email was written all the necessary information for the bank transfers. His instructions and explanation were so detailed that it was like viewing the situation in pictures. When the financial transactions were completed Fr Emil replied, 'Thank you. In bed with flu. Keep well.' This is how I am part of their life and mission, a collaboration and family experience shared only by a chosen few. Because of this kind of experience, I prefer a religious person to be in this mission. The exchange of insights help us nurture one another's vocation in the religious life as well as expand our spiritual and theological insights and reflections.

What are the major difficulties you encounter?

The major difficulty in this assignment now is language. When I was last assigned here, the Syndic of the Order was a Filipino, Fr. Edmund Nantes, OP and most of the assistants, promoters and commission coordinators were English-speaking. Language was not a great difficulty, especially dealing with numbers. But this time, I am having a grand time learning Italian, Spanish and sometimes French and Polish too! Fr. Hilario once translated a phrase about work in the office in 12 different languages. I keep it as a reminder that God is multi-lingual and He is present everywhere in the world. We pray and speak in different tongues yet believe and proclaim the same and one God to people of various origins and culture. It calls for greater faith, hope and trust in the Lord. □

The Dominican Sisters of Bruges

Marie-Josine and all the sisters in Brugge

Engelendale translated « Valley of Angels », was the name of the congregation of Sisters founded in Bruges in 1284.

During the general chapter in Lille in 1293, the Congregation was incorporated to the Order. It was a flourishing monastery. During the restless times of the 15th century and by exhortation of the Council of Trent in the 16th, the Sisters were enclosed. Engelendale remained a convent of Dominican nuns until the dissolution of the monasteries by Jozef II. On March 17, 1783, the sisters were expelled from their monastery. Their building became State property and in November of 1796 it was publicly sold and demolished. Their property was confiscated. Inevitably, the sisters were scattered, but it was not the end after all.

The seed was planted.

On October 6, 1846, negotiations with the sisters of Courtrai were completed and two sisters came to Bruges to be engaged at the Institute Saint-Dominique. The Institute provided care to mentally ill women. The director had fond memories of his Dominican aunt and he asked the Dominicans for help. The Sisters were formed as Dominicans with the help of a congregation from England and France. On March 17, 1847, the two Sisters were accepted into the Dominican Family. And in 1854 there were already 19 professed sisters.

The seed springs and brings forth much fruit.

Among these were a new monastery and the establishment of social works, such as homes for disabled children; care for the ill, schools, pastoral projects and works in foreign places. The latest one was in the diocese of Niangara, known as Isiro today, in the Northeast of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

As everywhere, the scarcity of voca-

We are a small community with little means and sometimes we wonder about our significance in the worldwide organization of Dominican Sisters International?

tions forced us to reflect on our future. Does the evening become a time to rest? During the 1989 chapter, the congregation reached the decision to reorganize social projects and establish a new non-profit (ASBL) under the management of lay people in order to maintain existing projects for the sake of suffering people.

The convent built in 1867 was demolished to make room for a new construction which included accommodation for elderly people according to the laws in force at the time.

Then in 2007 with the number of sisters was diminishing, there were 16 vacant rooms in the convent. After a mature reflection in the Council and with the agreement of all sisters we decided to seek help to find a solution to our problem: empty rooms, aging sisters, but also a strong desire to stay together to live our Dominican life, our life in community. Our prayers were more intense than they ever were at the times we were concerned about work, while we gave a testimony of our religious life.

We finally found a partner in the Mutuelles Chrétiennes in Brugge. Since June 1 of that year, they have taken care of



the management and organization of our house. We remain in our convent and live our Dominican life. Although we share facilities with the inhabitants of the nursing home which, after construction, will be able to house over 90 people, one part of the house is reserved for our community with chapel and recreation room. The Sisters are happy with this arrangement since we can stay together in our home. Its management is in able hands and collaboration is good.

We are a small community with little means and sometimes we wonder about our significance in the worldwide organization of Dominican Sisters International? That is why the second visit by the International Coordinator of DSI, Sister Maria Fabiola, really comforted us. She was able to see with her own eyes how we live our new life, and she encouraged us to deepen our Dominican life and to testify to the Good News. □



Back to the West Indies

The Congregation of the Dominicans of St Catherine of Siena (Étrépagny France) is experiencing a unique moment right now.

The 2008 general chapter made a bold decision for the future of the Congregation of Étrépagny. Faced with the significant reduction in the number of Sisters in France as well as their advanced age, it faced two alternatives: ask the sisters in Trinidad to take over the governance of the Congregation in France, or, after having taken the necessary actions to ensure adequate living conditions for the sisters from France, transfer the administration, the government of the Congregation to Trinidad and Tobago. The latter was the solution preferred by the chapter.

Following this decision, a number of questions were raised: how would we ensure a peaceful transition despite the detachment demanded, particularly for the sisters from France? How would we help the sisters in Trinidad to adjust to this new reality and to accept it? How would we give a deeply spiritual sense to this change and live it with hope? How would we accomplish all this, without forgetting the more concrete issues such as choosing a location for the generalate in Trinidad and the material changes required?

Once all these questions were answered satisfactorily, the generalate was officially transferred on August 28, 2011.

I now turn to Sr. Renée Hall who speaks of this celebration in an article published in the Catholic newspaper of the Diocese.

Jeannette Léger, OP, General Prioress

From France to Trinidad

Renée Hall, OP

Trinidad and Tobago is now the new headquarters the Dominican Sisters of St Catherine of Siena. St Dominic's Convent in Barataria has been transformed into the Mother House of the Congregation and the historic event was celebrated last Sunday with a transfer ceremony.

"From the very beginning of the Congregation, the Prioress General and her Council lived in France. All eyes were turned to France; the trends, the projects, often came from there. And now, with the transfer of the central government, they will come from Trinidad, to which all eyes will turn," said Prioress General Sr Jeannette Léger.

The ceremony of transfer began with a solemn procession of the flags of Bar-



bados, Canada, France and T&T. The Sisters of the Congregation carried a relic of the foundress, Mother St Dominic of the

“With the transfer, each of the sisters in Trinidad will be called upon to support the Prioress General and her Council in their task of keeping alive the charism and the mission, which is to serve the needy and to reveal the Good News that the world might believe.”

prayers and songs in both French and English. Chief celebrant Archbishop Edward Gilbert told the sisters “the future depends on how you live your life now”. He said, “New beginnings are not easy” and added that it was important to find “a balance between reasonable comfort and struggle.”

The Archbishop’s homily was followed by intercessory prayers for the Church, the Dominican Sisters, the deceased sisters of the Congregation, the country, and all the benefactors, artists, architects and tradespeople who contributed to the project. After Mass Archbishop Gilbert and Bishop-Elect Msgr Gordon blessed the new Mother House.

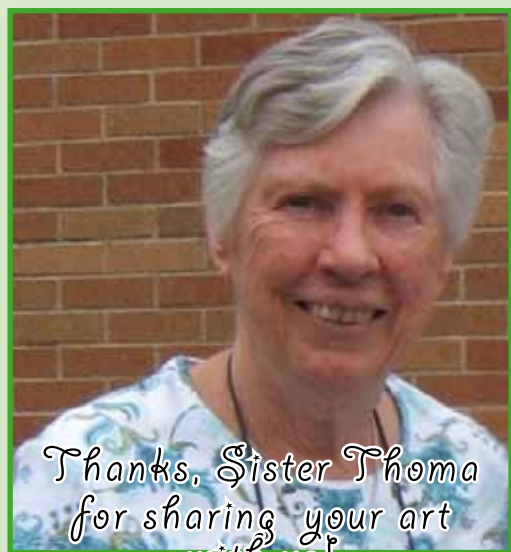
In her vote of thanks, Sr Arlene Greenidge expressed gratitude to the Archbishop and concelebrating priests including Fr Daniel, representative the Apostolic Nuncio, and Bishop-Elect Monsignor Jason Gordon; French Consul Joel Ferrand; the religious brothers and sisters who attended; and all benefactors – of which special mention was made of the architects EMSAB and Jades Interior, along with Conrad and Jasmin Sabga and George Haloute and his wife for their invaluable support. She also thanked Sr Aeleen Besson, who spearheaded the project with the assistance of Ruth Rique, plus the relatives, friends and well-wishers of the Dominican Sisters who made up the small gathering. □

Cross, and held lit candles.

It was after welcome remarks by Regional Prioress Sr Thérèse Antoine that Sr Jeannette highlighted the significance of the transfer. Sr Jeannette explained: “With the transfer, each of the sisters in Trinidad will be called upon to support the Prioress General and her Council in their task of keeping alive the charism and the mission, which is to serve the needy and to reveal the Good News that the world might believe.”

She pointed out objects in the chapel that had been brought over from Etrépagne, France, such as the tabernacle, three statues – The Virgin and Child, St Dominic and St Catherine of Siena, a painting of Mother St Dominic of the Cross, and the Stations of the Cross.

The ceremony was followed by Mass and the liturgy incorporated readings,



Thanks, Sister Thoma
for sharing your art
with us!

Dominican Women and Preaching



“Magdalene is torn between her desire to stay with Jesus whom she loves and her loving compulsion to do whatever he asks of her. The apostles are in a dark place so she answers both calls to love by carrying Jesus to them.”

(Sr. Thoma Swanson, OP, author of the logo)

JUBILEE KIT on www.dsiop.org

Dominican Jubilee 2012



“Collaboratively We Announce the Good News in an Inter-Cultural Context.”

Promoters of Preaching from The Western Region of the United States

Patricia Bruno, O.P., Congregation of the Most Holy Name, San Rafael, California (Congregational Promoter of Preaching and chair of the Western Region's Promoters of Preaching)

Patricia Beattie, O.P., Sisters of St. Dominic of Tacoma, Washington State (Congregational Promoter of Preaching)

Marian Castelluccio, O.P., Dominican Sisters of Adrian, Michigan (Western Region Promoter of Preaching)

Mary Ellen Green, O.P., Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa, Wisconsin (Western Region Promoter of Preaching)

Elizabeth O'Donnell, O.P., Dominican Sisters of Mission San Jose, Fremont, California (Congregational Promoter)

Denis Reilly, O.P., a member of the Western Province of Friars in the U.S. (Promoter of Preaching for the Friars of the Western Province)

The Dominican Promoters of Preaching of the Western Region of the United States are responding collaboratively to the question, “How do we announce the Good News in a communal way and in an Inter-Cultural Context.” The Promoters in the Western Region include the Province of the Holy Name of Jesus (Friars) and five congregations of Dominican sisters who have motherhouses in the region and/or have a significant number of sisters ministering in the region. The sisters' congregations represented are Adrian, Michigan; Mission San Jose, California; San Rafael, California; Sinsinawa, Wisconsin and Ta-

coma, Washington State.

Together, we hold a vision which reverences and affirms the dignity of each person as we seek to bring the Gospel to bear with depth and compassion on the critical issues of our times. We claim our teaching and preaching charism through a variety of ministries: parish, hospital, all levels of education, high school/university campus ministry, retreat, spiritual-direction, pulpit-preaching and justice issues with particular attention to those issues that are reflected in the following corporate stances.

These corporate stances evidence our commitment to work toward a more just society and world. They are intended to lift the burdens of the underprivileged and marginalized and to give voice to those without representation, many of whom are from diverse cultures.

The following corporate stances represent a collation of the corporate stances and public statements of the above congregations and province.

We support:

- Political refugees from El Salvador and Guatemala by means of Public Sanctuary

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

- The Earth Charter

- Compassionate Immigration Reform

We work to end:

- The death penalty

- Proliferation of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction

- The war in Iraq

- Trafficking of persons, especially women and children

These corporate stances evidence our commitment to work toward a more just society and world. They are intended to lift the burdens of the underprivileged and marginalized and to give voice to those without representation, many of whom are from diverse cultures.

- Landmines
We will continue to support these corporate stances by the following actions.
- Prayer - both individually and congregationally, praying for courage, wisdom and perseverance to bring about a more just society,
- Ministry - in non-violent ways to attain our goals,
- Education - of ourselves and others regarding the magnitude, causes and consequences of these issues,
- Collaboration- with advocacy and justice groups (i.e. our Non Governmental Organization affiliations, justice organizations and other inter-faith justice organizations.),
- Advocacy - for policies and programs that address the prevention and elimination of these evils and/or provide alternative solutions,
- Influence - others through our economic, social and religious power to create a more just and environmentally sustainable society. □



Info:
www.domlife.org

Dominican Family

Nuns write...

"Dear Sisters in Our Father Dominic.

Thank you for your news. It is interesting to learn about your ministries. We are a small group of nuns in contemplative life; our average age is around 80. It is admirable, however, how we start each one of our days of prayer and surrender for the sake of the Order and humanity as a whole with a spirit of joy and confidence, as if it were the first day we gave ourselves to this mission. We live filled with hope. He has never failed us.

We send you our warmest greetings. Do not lose your strength and if possible, always keep us informed."

Mtrio Dominicans of S. José in Calatayud, Spain. Federation of the Immaculate."

Hope is not Deceiving

Hoping against all Odds

Maria-Joseph du Passage, OP

“I give you my peace,”
says the Lord.

Hope is not only experienced, luckily, in borderline situations of scarcity and dereliction.

There is the confidence of good people, like you and me, filled with good will and understanding, but far from perfect.

The hope of our “being sinners”: we are familiar with resolutions that are not maintained, efforts with no results, recurring defects. Each one knows well that he or she is not in charge in his or her home, that we don’t do as much good as we’d like. So?

Do we throw in the towel? “That is just the way I am”. Period. Do we blame ourselves, get locked up in our wounded pride? Do we find bad excuses in bad faith?

Or do we believe right then and there that still and always, actually more than ever, we have reason to hope? Are we so certain that we cannot find our sanctification alone? Can we turn it into an issue of theological hope?

The ordinary faith of people who apparently have no problems can in fact be related to an authentic spirituality of hope.

It seems to me it is then like a gift. It does not proceed from reasoning; it is not a result of emotions. It is there, calmly settled in the heart. Simply, gratuitously: “It is so simple to trust in you, my God!”

“I give you my peace,” says the Lord, some of the “already there” in the “not yet” of the Kingdom. □

I have good hopes of passing my exam. Human hopefulness lies on guarantees, personal efforts, calculations, luck, and the like.

Is it in this processing of our desires that the theological hope finds its source? No.

Abraham had only one son and a plot of land to bury his wife. He would never have more!

God promised him many descendants, however, and a land of his own.

God promises; man expects. Hope remains there, in the parsimony of the present. It holds on, with no personal resources, onto the Word of the Other.

And what about Jesus? Despite the disturbance caused by the anguish of the moment, his human hope resists. “My God, why have you abandoned me?” That is when hope entirely takes over: “I surrender my spirit into your hands.”

What about us Christians? “Who will be saved?” “Nobody.” Nobody! Field of our hope: what is impossible for men is not for God.

A spirituality of hope, as trivial it may be to say it, does not lie in our will, the calculation of our merits, the multitude of our prayers.

We often act as if it does! I recall an incident from a free country school years ago. On the eve of the Certificate of Studies, the students were asked to place on the altar, before Mass, the notebooks and pencils they would use for the exams, in order to pass. God will be forced to help them! Yes, but the results were not always up to expectation! And students started to raise questions.

Our hope then does not work like hope-

Groupment Fraternel, France



fulness.
“God, I am entrusting my sick brother to you; please, heal him!” But he is not healed. So we have to go from hopefulness to hope: the disease may take on a different meaning for him; it may become a path. But I am not necessarily expected to know it.

Theological hope has its dark hours. It may push you toward arid lands, to doubt,

drought or even moments of desperation. Stubborn, rebellious, closed in ourselves, we expect nothing more, we wish for nothing. Where could hope then hide?

Perhaps we need to go deeper, to the bottom of our hearts and find there the little hope nestled in silence, like a child against his mother. □

Dominican Family



First meeting between the Coordinating Council and the International Commission of Nuns

“It was a very important and enriching meeting”, remarked Sr. Fabiola at its end. “It was the first time in DSI history that we met with the commission of Dominican nuns. It was a valuable way to shorten the distance between these branches of the Order.” It was strongly encouraged by Fr. Brian Pierce, OP, general promoter for the nuns, and by Sr. Fabiola Velasquez Maya, OP, DSI international coordinator. Since both groups were at Santa Sabina, in Rome, for their annual meeting over the same days, it just seemed natural to come together to introduce ourselves and exchange ideas. They began with common prayer and continued with a description of the structure of both realities: DSI and the Federation of Nuns, past, present and future. This meeting marked the beginning of a greater collaboration among the Order’s Preaching Women. As Sr. Fabiola noted : “Sometimes we forget that the nuns were the first disciples of Dominic; they are easily placed on a second level with respect to the other branches of the Order.”

This meeting may serve as an encouragement for sisters and nuns to meet at the local level and pray together more frequently.

Volunteers: a Sign for Times of our Age

Lucía Fernández Riega, OP

Sr. Lucia Fernandez, director of DVI, was interviewed by CIDALC for the Día (medios@cidalc.op.org). We include here an excerpt of her answers (the full text may be found at www.dviop.org).

I have been with DVI for nearly one year and it has been an intense and enriching experience, mainly because of the relationships I have maintained with candidates, volunteers, former volunteers and their families, particularly at the times of their departure for the mission.

This is true of receiving communities as well, especially at the beginning when we connect communities and candidates so they may know each other before departure, that is, before the volunteer becomes a part of that family. There are some extraordinary receiving communities, while others may not show it as much. But volunteers have always been very well received, and that is what matters most to me.

I would like to send a message to all the communities in the great Dominican Family, Brothers, Sisters, Nuns and laity: I believe that we still don't quite understand the significance of DVI as a Project of the Order. We may still be somewhat locked within ourselves and fear losing that intimacy which hosting a volunteer may affect. I believe this is a major mistake since our volunteers are familiar and prepared for all aspects of the mission; they know the meaning of the Dominican mission and of the charism of the Order.

Very few in our Dominican Family open their doors to volunteers, despite the great need for help in achieving our mission. This concerns me since there are many very capable volunteers today who look forward to sharing the mission with our brothers and sisters, and doors are not opened very easily. I believe that this is often due to a lack of knowledge of



the meaning of Dominican Volunteers International rather than to an unwillingness to welcome them into our communities. We are somewhat to blame because we have not always promoted DVI and its significance now when there is a scarcity of vocations. I believe that volunteer service is a sign of the times and that our missions need lay volunteers with a serious commitment to the Order in order to carry out the preaching of the Gospel. They are called by God for this mission and this is paramount. We must share our mission, we must help each other, and we must work together. Master Bruno Cadoré very often says this. It is a fact that the brothers and sisters who have welcomed volunteers continue requesting them. I think this is a good sign.

I would like for all of us within the Dominican Family to be aware of what the laity represents for the Church and the help

I would like for all of us within the Dominican Family to be aware of what the laity represents for the Church and the help they offer in a secularized world with its seeming distance from God. Having lay people committed to the Preaching of the Gospel is a gift from God and as such, we must cultivate it and treat it with the utmost care.

they offer in a secularized world with its seeming distance from God. Having lay people committed to the Preaching of the Gospel is a gift from God and as such, we must cultivate it and treat it with the utmost care. This is a major challenge for me as the person in charge of DVI. That is why I believe that my task includes making this project and all that it entails known to all, and to increase the number of volunteers year after year. This represents a greater opportunity to proclaim the Gospel around the world even if ours is just a small parcel in the "Lord's great vineyard". I thank CIDALC for this opportunity to speak of DVI and I would like to add that many volunteers come from Latin America, which was once a land of mission and today is a land of missionaries. This is a great truth and we must be deeply grateful for that.

My objective is to turn this project into a preaching field in the way of Dominic, with his charism and his humanity. I wish that the entire Dominican Family would embrace this project, not only in words, but through the works. We are brothers and sisters, and the project is ours.

I dream about having many more receiving communities; I wish the entire Dominican Family were a place of wel-

come and that volunteers had only to wait for the appropriate preparation time before leaving for the mission. □



Philippines: Receiving Community of Luke Samy (right)

NEWS

Formation:

invitation from the Coordinators for Latin America and the Caribbean

The next workshop (CODALC – CIDALC) for brothers and sisters, formators or future formators will be held from August 12 to the 23rd, 2012. The theme of this workshop is: "The Vows in Dominican Life in Latin America Today," as suggested by those attending the previous meeting. In order to prepare adequately for the meeting, participants should send in their names by February 15, 2012, so we may contact them and provide them with the material that will be used during the course. The addresses to register the names of participants are: Sr. Irene Diaz Castro, op iredi-ca@mmddperu.com and Fr. Jorge Rafael Diaz Nuñez, op jorgerafaelop@gmail.com.

Whoever Laid Hands on the Plough should not look back

Stefania Baldini, OP



The recurring longing of humanity to live in a fraternal atmosphere, where justice is true for all and where all human rights are respectfully protected is an old story. It is also the story of God's journey to-

ward His creation so it may turn to Him again.

Today, this longing is even sharper since beyond the official statements and diffused periodic indignation, many of us wish that this justice, this safeguard of human rights and the rights of creation would become a reality.

I was struck by the pastoral letter recently sent by the Archbishop of Tunis Mons. Maroun Elias Lahham, to his faithful. It is a clear and brave document which asks Christians to listen with humility to the "new developments" occurring in the country after 01/14/2011, a date that marks an epochal change in the history of Tunisia.

The Archbishop believes that the task of the Catholic Church, a minority Church in the country, is to be at the service of the relationship that God wishes to establish with the world, so its mission is to "accompany God on the journey toward the peoples of the world".

One reason for joy and hope lies in the fact that "our brothers in humanity, the Tunisians, are acquiring rights they have been deprived of for decades" Mons. Lahham believes that the claims for the right to freedom, dignity, justice, personal choices and transparency are echoing Jesus' speech in the synagogue (Lk 4).

The trust that the Archbishop of Tunis places on the awakening of his peo-

ple reminds us of the many battles for rights fought against all wars and discrimination. I think that as believers, we have not always given our specific contribution which is and remains, as Prof. Giorgio La Pira never ceased to repeat, "spes contra spem".

The thirst for justice merges with the need to multiply signs of hope inside us and in all the people we meet and want to meet. And while it is urgent not to fall asleep and give up the sacred fight or the indignation that leads to concrete actions, we must rethink our internal behaviours. Our weakness also depends on the reliance on the success, however small but visible, of our battles, and the disappointment in the "prophets" and masters we had elected.

There is however an inexhaustible source of hope that remains hidden. The invitation of God to Isaiah must echo inside of us: "See, I'm doing something



Stefania (Leda) Baldini, born in Florence, (14.01.1932) joined the Tuscan Dominican Congregation in 1956. Between 1974 and 2011, she has been part of a small community while she continued her teaching at the public school. She has participated with local organizations to lobby for the protection of civil rights and against wars and discrimination. She was also part of the Justice, Peace and Safeguard of Creation Commission of the Dominican Family. As of this year, after the closing of her community, she has been assigned to the convent of S. Niccolo in Prato.

***“See, I’m doing something new!
Now it springs forth, do you
not perceive it?”***

**No, we do not notice it
because we are expecting
nothing from most of the
people who live or walk by
us. We want to listen to
experts, but as far as the man
in the street is concerned--
can anything good come
from him?**

new! Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?” Is 43,19

No, we do not notice it because we are expecting nothing from most of the people who live or walk by us. We want to listen to experts, but as far as the man in the street is concerned-- can anything good come from him?

Instead, we should be relying on a God who chooses fragility and weakness, who tells Gideon (Gd 7) to send back most of his men so the Israelites may not boast of their strength. We rely on a God who always captures the longing hidden among the strangers he encounters and who says in astonishment – he who is God – “I never found so much faith in Israel.” We rely on Him who said to Peter: “not flesh and blood, but the Father” suggested what he confessed.

Jesus is very attentive to unexpressed expectations and he provokes the humble to come out of their situations of invisibility. He gives the word back to the dumb: “effathà” – open yourself-- and they finally sing, as “children and infants” God’s glory.

As Abraham, we should ask the God hiding in each creature: “Do tell me your name, please” (Gen 32,30), the name belonging to that creature whose absence would remove from humanity one piece of the mystery that permeates it, because



www.giustiziaepace.org

in each being there is a shade of the face of God.

I also think of the speech by Samuel (1 Sam 9) “The people will not eat” until the last one of the brothers is here, the youngest one.

Has the future of peace and justice, the advent, the here and now of the Kingdom been entrusted to the ones long forgotten by history? □

NEWS

Thank you for your updates to our Catalogue!

Many Congregations responded to our request for updated information for our catalogue. We have decided to prepare a new edition of the Catalogue which will present the data of each congregation in a clearer and more orderly fashion.

It was sent to the General Prioresses and to the sisters in our distribution list by e-mail. We also published it in the reserved section of our website: each Congregation has a user name and a password to access the same. Although these were sent to the General Prioresses, they are available to all the sisters from that Congregation.

The DSI catalogue is a tool available to the entire Dominican Family; you may request it from DSI.



United Nations and Dominican Family New York...

Earth Summit



RIO+20
United Nations
Conference on
Sustainable
Development

Margaret Mayce, OP



The theme of sustainable development has been part of the United Nations' agenda since 1972, when the UN Conference on the Human Environment brought the industrialized and the developing nations of the world together to

delineate the "rights" of the human family to a healthy and productive environment. A series of meetings followed, addressing topics such as the rights of people to adequate food, to sound housing and safe water. This effort to pay greater attention to humanity's connection with Nature led to the creation of global institutions within the UN system. Our Common Future, also known as the Brundtland Report, from the UN World Commission on Environment and Development, was published in 1987, and placed environmental issues firmly on the political agenda. It aimed to discuss the environment and development as one single issue. In addition, the report recognized that the many crises facing the planet are interlocking crises that are elements of a single crisis of the whole.

In 1989, the General Assembly called for a global meeting to create integrated strategies that would halt and reverse the

negative impact of human behavior on the physical environment and promote environmentally sustainable development in all countries. This was accomplished at the UN Conference on Environment and Development, known as the Earth Summit, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June, 1992. Underlying the Earth Summit's conclusions is the realization that humanity has reached a turning point, and that we can better manage and protect the ecosystem and bring about a more prosperous future for all through a global partnership for sustainable development. Maurice F. Strong, the Secretary General of the 1992 Earth Summit, said at the time, "The movement to turn the world from its self-consumptive course to one of renewal and sustenance has unmistakably spread... Though in the aftermath of Rio there is a heightened awareness of, and debate over the compelling need for action, there is not yet a concerted and decisive response to the magnitude and urgency of the task... There is much to be done."

June of 2012 will mark the 20th anniversary of the Earth Summit. Known as RIO + 20, the UN Conference on Sustainable

For more information on RIO + 20 and the Earth Charter, please see:

www.uncsd2012.org
www.roadtorioriplus20.org
www.earthsummit2012.org
www.earthcharterinaction.org

RIO + 20 will be an important place in which people like ourselves, ordinary citizens of the world, can make our voices heard and make a concerted effort to hold governments accountable for the diminishing quality of our environment.

Development will take place in Rio de Janeiro, from June 4 – 6, and will focus on two major themes: green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication; and the institutional framework for sustainable development. While there is no universally accepted definition of green economy, we here at the UN concur with the definition set forth by the UN Environment Programme: a green economy is “one that results in improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities...it can be thought of as an economy which is low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive...” Some essential elements of a green economy include the following : a recognition of the limits of the traditional market economy, and a return to a more locally-based agricultural/manufacturing economy; structural change (i.e., an institutional framework) that would be mandated to call governments to accountability; the need to curtail economic growth at all costs, in favor of a more balanced approach based on the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development – society, environment and economy. The prevailing economic theory, based as it is on the use and allocation of natural resources, fails to take into account the finite nature of these resources. Earth can simply no longer sustain the “business as usual” approach to development. Also, the competition that is a hallmark of current economic growth has led to ever-increasing inequity between the rich and those



who are living in poverty, at both global and national levels. This growing gap is widely recognized as one of the root causes of conflict and violence worldwide.

Finally, with the growing awareness of Earth as a living system of interconnected components, there is a growing recognition of the concept of the rights of nature. This highlights the importance of human beings living in a more balanced and harmonious relationship with nature, as opposed to the prevailing relationship of domination. The Earth Charter, a document created by civil society and promulgated in 2000, is a declaration of fundamental ethical principles for building a just, sustainable and peaceful society in the 21st century. The Preamble reads in part:

“We stand at a critical moment in Earth’s history; a time when humanity must choose its future. As the world becomes increasingly interdependent and fragile, the future at once holds great peril and great promise. We must join together to bring forth a sustainable global society founded on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic

justice and a culture of peace. Towards this end, it is imperative that we, the peoples of the Earth, declare our responsibility to one another, to the greater community of life and to future generations.”

RIO + 20 will be an important place in which people like ourselves, ordinary citizens of the world, can make our voices heard and make a concerted effort to hold governments accountable for the diminishing quality of our environment. I will provide additional information in the next edition of the newsletter.

In the meantime..... if any of you would be interested in attending this conference, please be in touch with your DSI Continental Coordinator. It will be very important to have our Dominican Family well represented in Rio. □

“We Refuse to be Silent!”

Carol Gilbert and Ardeth Platte, OP



Dominican Sisters
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Dear Sister Fabiola,

Thank you for your condolences for our Sr. Jackie Hudson who passed to new life on August 3rd. We three entered trial for an action at Y12 in Oak Ridge, TN May 9 to 11. We were found guilty of trespass and were incarcerated. Sr. Jackie was with us in two jails (Blount County and Irwin County). She became ill and was neglected, growing too weak to continue, so gained release on June 15th to return for care at her mission in Washington state where she was eventually hospitalized and diagnosed with multiple myeloma. Sister Carol and I continued in jail with sentencing scheduled for September 16th. We appeared before Judge Guyton in Knoxville, TN in the federal district court, delivering our testimonies. The judge gave us time served, which was four and one half-months. We deeply appreciated prayers from so many Sisters as we continued ministry to the prisoners inside the walls and now continue the struggle for a nuclear-free world and a banning of war outside of the walls.

We deeply appreciate when you share our writings. Jackie gave her life to the very end for abolition of nuclear weapons and an end to all war. We pray that we may do likewise.

Srs Ardeth and Carol

Sentencing Statement by Sister Carol Gilbert, O.P., September 16, 2011

One of the charisms of my Dominican religious order is “to give to others the fruits of your contemplation.”

These past 131 days I have contemplated what if anything I would say to this court.

Some clarifications need to be made:

We do not choose jail. Anyone who has ever been in jail, prison, or even a lock-up would never choose it. We do choose non-violent direct action. We do choose civil resistance enough to risk arrest and incarceration. We do choose to try and uphold Article 6 of the United States Constitution (the supremacy clause) which was not allowed in this courtroom. We do choose life over death. But, we do not choose jail.

I chose not to testify at trial because of your order which would silence my truth. Your order spoke of lack of “imminence”. I believe that every human being and all species are my brothers and sisters. These last 131 days have only strengthened for me how imminent our action was.

We met women both in Blount County Detention Center, Maryville, TN and Irwin County Detention Center, Ocilla, GA who had friends, relatives, spouses or themselves that worked or lived near Y-12 Oak Ridge (National Security Complex). We heard stories of cancers, deaths, class action suits, loss of jobs due to contamination, money awards, environmental contamination and radiated deer. We heard from peacemakers where on 279 out of 365 days last year, the water leaving the Y-12 facility was contaminated beyond safe drinking water levels. This speaks to me of imminence!

This court has no understanding of the difference between civil disobedience and civil resistance. Civil disobedience means breaking a specific law. One example from our history is the African-American population who broke the racist Jim Crow municipal ordinances by sitting at lunch counters legally prohibited from serving them. Civil resistance is upholding the

laws. The necessity defense and Nuremberg principals say that citizens have a responsibility and a duty to resist illegal government crimes.

In many countries around the world and sometimes in this country people are acquitted for these non-violent actions. Our Y-12 action on July 5, 2010 was an act of civil resistance.

These 131 days most of which were spent in a “for profit, private jail” (and that is a whole other story) taught me again how we treat the poorest in this country—the throw aways:

pain clinics, addictions, trauma, conspiracy laws, no trials, plea

bargains, mandatory minimums, overcrowded federal and state

prisons and lack of medical care – you know what happened to

our Sister Jackie, may she rest in peace, and hers is one of many stories I could share.

I want to close with a story about our Sister Jackie Hudson. When Jackie was giving a presentation she always ended by asking people “to take one step outside of their comfort zone.

Each of the warheads prepared or refurbished at Y-12 is known and intended to threaten or inflict vast, indiscriminate and uncontrollable heat, blast and radiation. Life as we know it would cease.

After ten months of strict supervised release and 131 days in jails we come before this court as drops of water...drops of water that over time can wear away the stone.



We do not choose jail.

Anyone who has ever been in jail, prison, or even a lock-up would never choose it. We do choose non-violent direct action. We do choose civil resistance enough to risk arrest and incarceration.

Sentencing Statement by Sister Ardeth Platte, O.P., September 16, 2011

“I REFUSE TO BE SILENT”

Magistrate G., we have been taught, have learned and believe that:

In these courts, justice should be rendered.

In these courts, prosecution for broken laws and policies regarding cancer-causing radioactivity that poisons soil, water, animal and human life should be enforced.

In these courts, killing and threats to kill should be on trial.

In these courts “Deterrence” – intentional threats to kill massively (i.e. triggers cocked at targeted nations) should be listed on trial dockets as criminal.

The probation officers chose to list for you some of my nonviolent, symbolic, direct actions of civil resistance that were designated points because of arbitrary arrests and incarcerations. However, they too have eliminated the moral and legal ways and means of my teaching and preaching truth about war and weapons, nor have they recorded the reasons why I refuse to be silent.

So before sentencing I want to tell you more of my story. Note that it is violence, injustice and killing that move me to actions. I believe that nuclear weapons are the taproot of all violence and must be abolished. Poverty and deprivation kill too. Domestic and foreign violence, injury to air, soil and water kills, massive killing in war with conventional

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Is it legal to occupy countries and establish 1000 military bases on $\frac{3}{4}$ of the world's countries?

Is it legal for the U.S. to divide the world into Command Centers, controlling independent Continents?

bombs and threats of actual use of nuclear weapons – all are immoral, illegal and criminal.

So I refuse to be silent.

My stance is the same as my religious community of Dominican Sisters, my intentional community of Jonah House and my Roman Catholic Church. It is the same position taken by international law professors and lawyers (like Charles Moxley who testified before you), the World Court, Global Zero, Nobel Peace Laureates, many Admirals and Generals, political leaders, scientists, organizations and millions of

people throughout the world.

We each in our own way refuse to be silent!

Affected by and study of a nonviolent/loving God, a nonviolent Jesus, giving his life rather than taking another's life, all people made to the image of God, one family of sisters and brothers in the world, to become a Beatitude people, love God and neighbor as self, do good to those who persecute you, forgive seventy times seven, hammer swords into plowshares –all of these words/concepts took root in me. I would never be the same because sacred life and creation became most meaningful.

I found my voice, must speak out, must speak truth!

In the 60's and 70's, during the years of my educational ministries, the "isms" became evident, focused and clearer to me. Racism was prevalent so it was right and good to be part of the nonviolent civil rights movement. Farmworkers were oppressed, so many of us joined boycotts and marches with Cesar Chavez and workers. Sexism and classism reflected the subjugation of women and the poorest and my heart and eyes were opened to the need for education, empowerment and organized efforts. For in each of these movements for justice, I saw democracy in action and had to join it; it was the way to bring about systemic change through legal, political and direct action.

I refused to be silent then and now!

Assigned to an Upward Bound program at our college as an administrative assistant and to an inner city high school as principal brought me face to face with killing. It was the time of turmoil, riots and sniping in the streets of the cities. At the same time war was escalating and raging in Vietnam. Militarism had a devastating effect on domestic budgetary needs: education, food, shelter, health care. African Americans, Hispanics, and people made poor challenged me to walk by faith's talk about preferential option with the poorest. Some of our grads were coming back in body bags and some of our students and family members were killed on the city's war-zoned streets.

We opened an Educational Center to drop outs, expellees and adults to offer some hope and self-determination sessions during a dark time. I participated in

moratorium marches within the city and also in Washington DC. My own conversion kept deepening.

My voice was not silent!

War is not peace. Basic human necessities are intended as a right for all of God's people. Hundreds of thousands of us were part of the demonstrations...and the Vietnam War ended. But nuclear weapons continued to be built. Each President, except Ford, threatened to use them, from Truman to the present as weapons of mass destruction have become more and more powerful.

{As an interesting sideline, all of my arrests at these bases were for trespass. In the city I served for years, the police were facing a hostage situation – a veteran had collected a stash of guns and was holding his wife hostage. The police requested me to come to defuse the situation, so the man could be seized and given the mental health care that he needed. There was no question about my trespassing to stop a possible killing. I did so and it was successful. It is exactly what we attempt to do each time we enter a nuclear site – to save lives and stop the hostage-taking of other nations.}

During the 1980's and 1990's under the tutelage of lawyers, we learned the laws of the United States applicable to nuclear weapons, war and our own nonviolent actions.

Lawyers who are experts in Law continue to teach us the pertinence of the Constitution, Geneva, Hague, UN Charter, Nuremberg Principles, Poison Earth Treaty, World Court Decision, the Non Proliferation Treaty – “with its obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects, under strict and effective international control.”

Nuclear weapons inflict indiscriminate and uncontrollable mass destruction, violate fundamental rules and principles of humanitarian law and threaten the existence of life itself.

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Is it legal to allow or cause people to starve and be malnourished here and abroad?

Is it legal to sign treaties to total nuclear disarmament and not fulfill them? If it is legal, it is certainly not moral. My commitment has been and is to put my mind, body, spirit and voice on lines to stop war, weapons, and killing. I oppose all killing – by the pen, by guns, by conventional and nuclear weapons. I refuse to be silent about personal, societal, state and national murder. I refuse to be silent regarding the lies told, the resources stolen, the crimes against peace, crimes against humanity and war crimes. The universe, Earth, creation and creatures are sacred, too magnificent to be destroyed.

You may wonder why I'm taking time to add the above material to the record and my rap sheet. No doubt you have probably decided my sentence before I spoke. I wanted you to know my convictions and passion and what has led me to do what I do...not only civil resistance and the promise to give my life for justice and peace. I want to invite you to be agents of change.

My question is – where are the courts and judges. Will any of you be agents for change as were the courts in abolishing slavery, child labor, gaining civil rights, women's voting, unionization, and other laws galore that had to be upheld and interpreted. It is an urgent time, a kairos moment, a key time in history – wherein abolition of nuclear weapons is law. Let all of us go home to feed the poor and serve God's people! Never again bring to court nonviolent civil resisters at Y12. Cases dismissed. Join the movement to stop weapons, war and killing! Prosecutors – bring forth the cases of contamination and radiation. Stop nuclear weapons and prosecute those breaking the law. As Jackie would say, “Let's all take another step outside our comfort zone.” I trust and hope you will be the persons that will someday do it. □

Life behind Walls

Maria Julia Ardito, OP



Since our community arrived in Lima, we have been invited to share our life and mis-

sion with the people. Two places in particular represent a source of life, contemplation, formation and preaching of justice: the male juvenile rehabilitation centre of and the maximum security criminal center for women in Chorrillos.

For the past three years we have been visiting the women's criminal center on Mondays, Thursdays and some Saturdays. It is called maximum security because it holds "political" prisoners, those who have participated in the internal war in Peru from 1980 to 2000, and those detained for drug trafficking.

The criminal center is located right in the city of Lima; it occupies more than a block and is enclosed by a massive wall and towers where guards are constantly on the watch. The first time we entered we shivered; each process we underwent seemed to last forever--showing of documents, stamping of arms, checking of bags and frisking of bodies. When we finally got through all the checks, we reached another one prior to crossing the gates. As we recall our first impressions, we smile because this routine has now become regular and familiar. On any given day we visit, however, we must sometimes be willing to wait many minutes until the trucks transporting some of these handcuffed or chained women exit the premises to take them to some other location for processing or to the hospital.

Each morning, that entrance to the criminal centre completely mobilizes us. We enter "another world," the one "inside,"

the one hidden from the city, from society, from the church, from all public interest. In society, they are "silenced", locked up, concealed even though sometimes they have not been sentenced or judged.



We are open to and in expectation of each day's novelty. While we walk, we wonder what will happen today; how will they be doing. We have heard rumours about requisitions (when hundreds of policemen enter the cells at night to check everything the women have and remove those things that are not allowed, such as cellular phones, USB drives, TV's, etc.). We have heard that some of them are sick, have been punished, that someone has been released and that a baby has been born. And among us, as we go forward, we tell each other out loud that it will be an intense day, that we will certainly not just do therapy or accompaniment but that we certainly will have to face something regarding the management of the criminal center, human rights and/or the Office of the Ombudsman.

Our days there are marked by what happens to each of the women we accompany as they live together in the compound. We

Maria Julia Ardito, Dominican of the Holy Name of Jesus, has been living in Peru for 15 years. She is a psychologist and specializes in biblical spirituality. She is the Director of the "Emmaus" Spirituality Centre., but also works at the clinic and teaches classes and courses.



also address the relations between the women and the authorities, since these are affected by present political

decisions in the country, by the manipulation of the media and all that relates to the protection of their rights.

Each day also brings out the beauty of the creativity of these women; they do beautiful work in ceramics, painting, music, poetry and dance. And every time we visit we share exhibitions, competitions, parties; any occasion-- births, birthdays or confirmations--is a reason to celebrate..

Most of these women have been in jail for over 15 or 20 years and they entered at the age of 25 or 30. Many are teachers, professors or university students, women who were engaged in their neighbourhoods and communities during the 80's and 90's. Over the years they have grieved many losses (children, family, their professional life, their health and their future). That is why each moment that we spend listening, witnessing to what they have experienced and what they now feel, suffer,

These are some photos showing one part of the work done by these women, the political prisoners of Pavilion B, the "memory keepers". They have attended a one-year course about women in history. And they have decided to make three triptychs, each part measuring three meters by two, about the woman in the history of Peru since prehistoric times.

There are 20 women who draw and paint and others do ceramic work. The sculptures are 40 cm tall.

The first exhibition outside of the prison was held on Thursday, October 7 of 2010, in the Square of the district of Chorrillos. The second exhibition was held in May of this year in en Ayacucho with an attendance of over five hundred people.

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search for and question as women in the ordinariness of life, becomes a space for confrontation of

our own history, of women from the same generation. This is why every day is so intense. When we leave, the first thing we do upon reaching home is to look at the sea, thank God for what we have lived and ask Him to continue supporting us on this path to the humanization and justice both we and they wish for. □



To our dear Sisters/Friends at DSI,
Blessings and love to you all as we enjoy and our challenged by the latest DSI Newsletter.

It is such a good way to 'keep us connected' and we are grateful for all the interesting reflections from so many different countries.

We have colour copied a Newsletter for all our Communities throughout New Zealand. **WONDERFUL!!!**

Your Sisters in the spirit of Dominic and Catherine.

Dominican Sisters International (DSI) is an international movement of Dominican Sisters which seeks to create links between all Dominican Sisters of Apostolic Life throughout the world for the sake of the mission of the Order.

G O A L S

To support one another in living out the Dominican Charism and to claim and promote our identity as women preachers.

To facilitate communication and networking among Dominicans at national, regional and international levels.

To foster a more compassionate world order through the promotion of peace and justice, the integrity of creation and human rights, especially those of women.

To explore and foster collaborative initiatives within the Dominican Family.



152 Dominican Congregations

25,000 Dominican Sisters



110 Countries of Mission