



- **Mary: Contemplation and Preaching of the Word**

Yearly Jubilee Theme: 2013

“May it be done to me according to your word” (Lk 1, 38)

Mary: Contemplation and Preaching of the Word

« I have seen wonders! ». This exclamation of Blessed John-Joseph Lataste following his first experience of preaching to the inmates of the Cadillac prison, could serve as an adequate introduction to this new year of preparation for the Order’s Jubilee. In fact, the theme for this year is: « May it be done to me according to your word (Lk 1, 38) ». Mary: contemplation and preaching of the Word.

During this year of the novena, how can we be guided by the exclamation of the apostle of prisons? He had just preached in one of the worst places of dereliction; he had addressed women spoiled by life and by the serious acts of which they are guilty, worn by the conditions of their detention, crushed by the absence of a possible future. Nevertheless, having preached the Word of Light and Truth in this place of the worst dereliction, he has seen wonders. He contemplated the work of the Word he was preaching, the work of the mercy of the One who « loved us in friendship and perfect friendship ». He was dazzled in discovering the strength of women ostracized by male society as they experienced their re-creation in the image of the humanity of Christ while receiving the Word of mercy. Contemplation!

This evocation clearly illustrates that contemplation and preaching of the Word together constitute the heart of the life and of the mission of the Order of Preachers. It is not about creating opposition between the one and the other as if sisters and brothers incessantly had to attempt to establish, through their own wisdom, a fragile balance between the active ministry of preaching and a withdrawal into the silence of contemplation. We also recall the enlightened comment of Master Eckhart about the Gospel of Martha and Mary. Being thoroughly and at once both contemplation and preaching, the ministry of the Preachers places them in the school of Mary when, in welcoming the angel’s message, she agreed to give birth to Jesus, « the Lord saves » (Mt 1, 21). After relating the story of Jesus amidst the doctors in the temple, the evangelist Saint Luke tells us that « his mother kept all these things in her heart » (Lk 2, 51). In welcoming the Word of mercy and life, Mary shows us the path of a « contemplative humanity ».

I borrow this expression from the Archbishop of Canterbury who, in his address to the Synod of bishops on October 9, 2012, showed how contemplation is at the heart of evangelization: « evangelization, whether old or new, must be anchored in the deep certainty that we have a human destiny which distinguishes us and that we must show and share with the world ». He went on: « The fact of being fully human means to be re-created in the image of Christ’s humanity; and this humanity is the perfect human “translation” of the relation of the eternal Son and the eternal Father; a relation based on the gift of oneself in love and adoration, a torrent of life toward the Other. Thus, the humanity in which we grow with the Spirit, the humanity we attempt to share with the world as the fruit of the redemptive work of Christ, is a contemplative humanity ». « Study and adoration », these are the two features of the Order’s tradition that Benedict XVI puts forward to express how

the Order of Preachers is called to take part in the new evangelization. Allow me to quote Rowan Williams again: « Saint Edith Stein observed that we begin to understand theology when we see God as the “First Theologian”, the first one to speak to us about the reality of divine life since “all we say about God presupposes that it is God Himself who speaks”; similarly, we can say that we begin to understand contemplation when we see God as the first contemplative, the eternal paradigm of this uninterested attention paid to the Other, who does not bring death, rather life. All contemplation of God presupposes the absorbed and happy knowledge that God has of Himself and the contemplation of Himself in Trinitarian life ».

As we are invited to focus our attention on contemplation at this stage of the preparation for the Order’s Jubilee, we are led to the school of Mary meditating in her heart the mystery of her Son, to the heart of the consecration of our life to the Word, « The true light, which enlightens everyone, coming into the world » (Jn 1, 9). Wherever there is a question of humanity, unity and salvation. Of humanity, since beyond all efforts we make in the practice of contemplation, the latter is in fact the path on which we wish to expose our own humanity to be seized and, by the grace of God, transformed by the unfathomable mystery of the revelation of the Son of God to humanity. And how we would love for this to be translated more every day into the concrete reality of our fraternal relations, into our perception of others and of the world! Of unity, since far from being simply defined by a “reserved” space and time, contemplation invites us to commit all our being and our time to this face to face (« those who look to Him will shine ») that exposes us to the silent gaze of God who teaches love and justice, humility and repentance, the action of grace and hope. Can this unified heart keep us from the agitation and dispersion that often threaten our endeavours for evangelization? Of salvation, when, led by the elusive presence of God who comes and forgives as in the prodigal son in the Gospel, we lack the words to ask him to give us life once again. How can we not incessantly go back to that first day when, by consecrating our life to preaching, we implored the grace of mercy?

« Contemplare et contemplata aliis tradere »... This motto of the Order, as we know, does not describe two sequential steps in the ministry of evangelization. We do not behave in contemplation as we would when we go to the market to acquire what we can later distribute. Certainly, this motto well indicates that there can be no preaching without contemplation. However, in doing so, it indicates that evangelization proceeds from contemplation while, at the same time, the latter is somehow the most precious invitation (the gift) that evangelization can offer to humanity, thereby opening with it and through it a path for the desire for Truth. This desire is the echo of that same desire of the One who comes to love us with friendship, to propose to humanity an alliance of friendship; this alliance that is « played » in each of us through the commitment of His Word to ours, or, rather, the giving of our word to listen to His: « May it be done to me according to your word »! This simple expression shows how everybody’s life can be rooted in the absolute trust in God’s Word who promises and achieves the alliance of friendship, and in the tireless watch that searches, at the heart of this alliance, the mystery of friendship in God who is the ultimate Truth.

God speaks to the world and, in order to discover this unprecedented reality, contemplation allows us to be inhabited firstly by his silent presence that enables our hearts to hear the Word He addresses to the world and to each one. We can certainly describe the « means » that can place us in this contemplative attitude. However, it is even more important to pay attention to the paths along which the Order’s tradition leads us. And on these different paths, the Word of God – hearing it, celebrating it, meditating on it, and studying it – is central. The Word of God is central in the hearing of it that fraternal life makes possible. Often, we run the risk of reducing the life among brothers or sisters to its concrete and practical aspects – often very happy but sometimes burdened by the fragility of our humanity – while our brothers and sisters are, in the first place, given to us as carriers of this Word, as scholars of the Word working in them and through them. It is central in

celebration; not as a task to be performed but as the rhythm of our celebration of God's Presence in order to receive, through prayer with others, our own capacity to pray and contemplate. It is central in the meditation of Lectio Divina, which today could take on greater significance than it has among us so as to truly place the « centrality » of the Word at the heart of our life. At the school of Thomas, it is central in study, since the work of reason is one of the occasions that invites us to give the Word to the One who is the « first theologian » and, therefore, will lead us to recognize Him as the « first contemplative » and to be taught by Him.

« I have seen wonders »! The experience of such a vision one day led Thomas of Aquinas to relativise all the theological science he had formulated. Not because this intellectual work was not important, but because Thomas wished for it to be effaced before the adoration of the Christ, directing his gaze on humanity. It is also the experience of Blessed John-Joseph Lataste when he was shocked to see on the inmates' raised faces the reflection of the look of mercy God directed onto them. For the one as for the other, the look of contemplation toward God is a response to God, who first turns his gaze towards humanity and towards each of us: « He has looked on his lowly servant ». This look that expresses the unprecedented love of God for his creature, which carries the latter into existence, also carries the creature continuously in his work of creation and animates him through the mystery of Trinity. Contemplation is concerned with the gaze, with the purification of the gaze which allows itself to be inhabited by the mysterious light of the gaze of God. We are often impressed by the clarity of perception of contemplatives: by turning their gaze inwards towards God, they encounter the gaze of God towards humanity which enlightens their own gaze at others and at the world. Thus, human words are silenced so that, in the silence of a feeble whisper, the Word of life may be heard. Silence, the father of preachers...

God speaks to the world and addresses each one. During the Annunciation, Mary is immersed in this experience. Chosen among women, she is like the figure of the people as a whole, of its expectation of God as well as of its conviction that the God of the promise acts in human history. She shows no surprise at the news that God wishes to give a Saviour to humanity, since that is her hope and the hope of her people. She does not doubt that this Saviour comes taking our humanity to himself, seeming rather to welcome this announcement as written into the logic of the promise. The question she raises deals with what concerns and involves her, « a humble young girl », in this fulfilment. How will it be done? « The Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Almighty... ». Is that not the beginning of the time of contemplation? There is a time to address God and a time to enter into the silence in which He addresses us, or rather a time when he displays in us the mystery of his Presence. To the question « how do I contemplate? » a nun answers as follows: « By asking the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit to come and live in me, to love itself in me, to nourish me with its love». Contemplation is the seizing of our entire being by the mystery of this love which simultaneously acts in the world and establishes its home within us. Since that moment, preaching is not a transcription into human words of a truth seized by the intellect ; it aims rather at echoing the seizing, in one and the same movement, of intellect and heart by a Presence which in addressing us, addresses the world; that is to say, by giving itself.

Thus, the primary objective of preaching is to invite people to welcome this Presence whose grace outruns all the words of the preacher.

fr Bruno Cadoré, OP  
Master of the Order  
February 2013

- **Dominicans Prepare for Possible Election Chaos in Kenya**

An Interview with Fr. Martin Martiny, OP, the vicar provincial for the Dominican Vicariate of East Africa for the Province of St. Joseph.

As Dominicans in East Africa, we are blessed to have a mix of friars from Rwanda-Burundi, Angola, from the Equatorial Africa vicariate, from Cameroon, from Congo, from Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. We have 3 communities, 2 in Nairobi and one in Kisumu. Our student friars are studying at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Tangaza University College, and Consolata University College.

We are within days of the March 4th national elections. Most Kenyans are both hopeful and a bit nervous because the results of the last national elections were disputed. Political clashes became tribal fighting and then deteriorated into criminal looting, burning, raping and pillaging—bedlam. Over 1,300 died in the fighting and thousands ended up, and many remain today, in refugee camps.

We Dominicans, along with most Kenyans, are praying for a peaceful election and post-election period and an orderly transition to a new government. We ask that other Dominicans and those in the United States who support us to join us in these prayers. Should it become other than peaceful, we will do our best to assist those who come to us for help.

We have asked all of our communities to check out our equipment, especially our backup generators, to see if we can build in some redundancy in our communication systems. During the last post-election violence electricity, water, food, and communications proved to be real challenges. We have also looked into our ability to provide support for those who might come to us for refuge.

During the 2007-2008 elections, Kisumu had the brunt of activity with refugees (“Internally Displaced Persons”, to use the UN term). There was violence in Nairobi, Naivasha, Nakuru, but in regard to our friars we had refugee opportunities only in Kisumu. Although one of our brothers had an uncle killed during the violence in Nairobi, our friars were spared.

In Kisumu we had at various times between 100 and 250 refugees and 200-300 children for whom we were responsible. Fortunately, because we had a walled compound we were OK and were able, with the help of the police, to move the refugees back to their home areas. We took in whomever came to us who needed refuge. When we were asked by people outside which tribes were inside, we said, “Everyone here is a son or daughter of St. Dominic” and left it at that. Fortunately we did not have a problem that we were not able to deal with.

Sadly, there are still many refugees in camps and they are determined not to be there much longer. Many Kenyans fear that if a conflict arises over a disputed election, those in the camps who are mostly from one tribe will come out in large numbers to take back what they lost five years ago and 2007/8 could repeat itself on a larger scale.

We did have our novices go to Nairobi during that time because there were novices from tribes that would have been vulnerable in the Kisumu area. So we were advised by higher Church authority to take those who were of different tribes out, but they came back after things settled down. Our houses in Nairobi and Karen both seem to be in relatively safe neighborhoods, but you never know what could develop, so we are doing our best to be prepared. We don’t have a political position as a vicariate or as the Church.

The Church, Dominicans in particular, is preaching peaceful participation by all Kenyans in an important aspect of the life of the citizen. Even, however, promoting peace and justice can cause irritation amongst those who believe they have been deprived for half a decade of justice and their hearts are not at peace. Our hope is to spiritualize the Kenyans approach to the elections through prayers, Masses, and meetings bringing our faith in God to a nation that needs a peaceful election followed by a peaceful and calm transition to a new constitutional government. We hope for the best, but plan for the worst. As Dominicans and Catholics, we do not have a horse in this race. We pray the Kenyans will find a Kenyan path to a peaceful democracy.

Our Lady of Grace School is a non-profit primary and secondary school for children who would otherwise likely miss the opportunity to get a Catholic education. It came into existence during the post-election fighting of 2008. Fr. Cleophas Tesha, OP serves as chaplain and spiritual counselor at both schools and assists in school administration. The schools were recently blessed with two new and productive boreholes, which have met the needs of both schools. Should the March 2013 elections become as violent as those of 2007 and refugees return to the Dominican compound, the additional water will prove most valuable.

Conducted by Fr. Benedict Croell, O.P.

- **Mercy's Power**

“Mercy is for the weak!”

As a kid, I always found this line from Karate Kid to be hilarious. Maybe it was the delivery or the context, but it always had me roaring. Years later, the scene is still funny, but now I find the general attitude it embodies to be laughable as well. One can find many people who echo this sentiment, “Mercy is for the weak,” but I doubt they have ever thought about what mercy really is.

Who can be merciful? We ask mercy of those who have power over us. A child asks her parent for mercy when she has broken a lamp. A student asks her teacher for mercy when requesting an extension. A player asks for mercy when he asks his opponent to take it easy on him during a game. The accused asks for mercy from the judge or jury. Asking for mercy is making an appeal to one who has the power to remove our misery. The child's misery lies in the guilt of knowing she did wrong. The student's misery lies in the fact that she cannot finish the paper in the time allotted. The player's misery lies in the fact that he isn't as good as his opponent. The misery of the accused lies in his powerlessness in deciding his own fate. The weak need the mercy of the strong and powerful. Thus, mercy is the exercise of the strength to remove the misery of another. Only the strong can be merciful.

“And Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.’” (Lk 23:34)

The mercy of a crucified man should make us pause. How is this man offering mercy? He is in the weakest position imaginable: a naked and dying criminal. What mercy can he offer? Not only the mercy of an innocent and just man; but the mercy of God. The power of Christ's mercy is found in both his human and divine natures. The innocent and upright man always has a certain power. This is fitting when we consider that the meaning of “virtue” is power. The virtuous person is a powerful person, since he has the power to act in accord with the perfection of his nature. The virtuous person acts in a truly human way and is truly reckoned to be a good person. There is something about a good person that makes us act differently, whether that entails watching our language or realizing that certain actions aren't appropriate around them. The virtuous or good person always has a power that can translate into mercy. On the other hand, the power of God lies in who God is: the One

through whom all things were created and continue to exist, the First Cause. The power of God to be merciful flows from His absolute Goodness and his Lordship over all creation.

Christ's mercy on the cross is given to us through the dual fonts of his humanity and his divinity. It is a mercy that can remove every misery, not just the particular misery that we might call attention to in a moment of felt weakness. A child may feel guilty about breaking a certain lamp and her parent might offer her a particular mercy, but though it may remove her guilt, this mercy can't make the child less clumsy. The mercy of Christ can do both: remove the guilt of sin and restore the power to do good. Sin is taken away, our wounds are healed, and a new relationship through the Son of God is given to us.

This new relationship is particularly demonstrated in the martyrs. These are men, women, and children who witness to the power of God's mercy; so much so that they share in that same power. The striking thing about each martyr is that they relive and reenact the merciful forgiveness of Christ. At the moment before their death, when no one would blame them for fear or anger towards an unjust oppressor, they offer mercy. They overturn the tables of power in a radical way. The power of the oppressor over their bodily life is shown to be less than that of one who lives in conformity with Christ. In the act of offering mercy, the martyrs demonstrate that they hold the true power: Power to intercede for the misery of their executioners, power to forgive their executioners' hatred and rage, power to love those who persecute them.

Truly, God's power is made perfect in the weakness of His saints, who in turn radiate the tremendous power of His mercy.

Br. Tomás Martín Rosado, O.P.

- **Reflecting on Dominican Studies in African**

The meeting of African Regents of Studies was held in the Convent Saint Dominic in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire from 13 to 17 February 2013.

The following brothers were present at the meeting; Francis EMEKA NWOSUH (Regent of Studies of the Province of St. Joseph the Worker, Nigeria and Ghana), Brice BINI (Moderator of Study of the Vice-Province of St. Augustine, West Africa), Philippe DENIS (Regent of Studies of the General Vicariate of Southern Africa) and André ADOBA (Regent of Studies of the General Vicariate of DR Congo) who is the Coordinator,. fr Gilles SOGLO (Regent of Studies of the Vice-Province of St. Augustine West Africa) was unavoidable absent. Fr Aurel da Silva was chosen as the secretary of the meeting while fr André ADOBA presided.

Fr Sombel SARR, the Socius of the Prior Vice-Provincial of the host entity was at hand to welcome the brothers. The warm reception was seen as a manifestation of the interest and support of the Vice-Province of St Augustine to the academic life of the brothers in African. Profound gratitude also goes to fr Roger Hounbedji and the entire Vice-Province for their willingness to host the meeting and to see to its success.

Fr André Adoba reiterated the urgency and importance of the meeting which is an opportunity for the Regents to deliberate on ways of improving the study life of the brothers in African. Worthy of note is the words of encouragement from the Socius of the Master for Intellectual Life, fr Michael Mascari who could not be at the meeting. They are well appreciated.

The meeting pursued two main objectives;

Firstly, the Regents conducted the “SWOT” on the Study Centers in Africa. They examined their Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. In doing this, they tried to answer the following questions; What are you trying to do? How are you trying to do it? How do you know its working? What needs to be changed for improvement? These preliminary questions were accompanied by a critical examination of the opportunities, risks and weaknesses of each center to meet the intellectual and pastoral formation of the brothers.

This led them to reflect on the mission, goals and strategic priorities, systems and procedures put in place and their suitability for the task ahead. The procedure for strategic planning and the ability to change and face new challenges were reevaluated. The measures put in place for internal evaluation of the quality of studies, feedback from the students, staff and employees and all stakeholders were all checked.

Secondly, the Regents critically examined the Ratio Studiorum Generalis (RSG) and shared proposals from their respective entities on ways of revising it and making it more flexible and suitable for the African’s peculiar circumstances.

In conclusion, the Regents visited the Sankofa Centre of Theology and Development and the Basilica of Our Lady of Peace at Yamoussoukro.

fr André ADOBA,  
Coordinator

fr Aurel da SILVA,  
Secretary

- **“We do not pretend to be friars, sisters or nuns”**

Testimony of a Polish lay Dominican

A few years ago my husband and I made a profession to live according to the Rules of the Lay Fraternities of Saint Dominic. For some of our friends and relatives, this decision was unintelligible and incomprehensible. For our parents, they had to be reassured that our decision would not deprive them of the hope of having more grandchildren since they associated the Order mainly with celibacy. Even our friends who are familiar with the Church were surprised because of our young age - Polish fraternities usually consist of elderly people.

Zbigniew Nosowski, who is a friend and at one time a consultant to the Pontifical Council for the Laity once asked us: “Why do you need to search for your identity and spiritual fulfillment in the Order when the Second Vatican Council has elevated the lay vocation in the Church as an equal way of sanctity?”. Unlike before, today, it is clear that lay people achieve perfection exactly by immersing themselves in their world. Why then do we need the Order now?

In the past, there was no better way of living than to imitate consecrated men and women. Today however, our participation in the Order is absolutely not an attempt to pretend to be consecrated brothers, sisters or nuns. We are perfectly fulfilled in our lay vocation, which enables us to realize our desires and give our hearts completely to God.

I am writing this during the octave of Christmas, still having our family’s Christmas crib before me. There God incarnated in our everyday life. This year, I have been touched in a particular way by the humility of His revelation – in the "ordinariness" of Mary's tiredness, the cry of a Newborn waking up His Mum, maybe still suffering the effects of child birth, dirty nappies, Joseph's concern for his Newborn Child and wife – a concern known so well to me from my husband’s dear face. Jesus is

here, in this ordinary, simple gift of love, therefore in the hardship, responsibilities and discreet beauty of everyday life.

The life of Dominican brothers, sisters and nuns is different from those of lay Dominicans. Since the spirit and charism of St Dominic is universal, we are all living out different aspects of it. For me, I live out my Dominican life as a wife, mother and teacher (my profession). As lay people, we have a special mission to preach the Word today. It is time for us to abandoned the divisions into saints and sinners, believers and non-believers etc, it is time we turned from our tendency to separate to the tendency to invite and offer closeness to today's Zacchaeuses.

Salt added to a pot of soup can only influence the taste after dissolving in it. We have to fully participate in the world, we must not pretend that we are different or separated because we are not supposed to be. In living out my life as a lay Dominican, my apostolic outfit consists of a tasteful dress and make-up. If I am supposed to proclaim the truth, that concerns the truth of femininity, which I am privileged to express.

Our documents recommends that lay preaching shall draw from two sources - study and contemplation. Study enables us to satisfy the needs of contemporary society, which has the right to finally hear, from a workmate, a neighbour or a sister-in-law, in a simple and competent manner, why contraception is wrong. I give this very example on purpose, because according to the Rule, Lay Dominicans shall have the dignity of life and family particularly at heart. Contemplation makes our hearts become channels of God's tenderness for our brothers and sisters. God's love gets the opportunity to spread among people through the praying heart. It is extremely important to me that the Order does not replace our lay life, it only enriches it.

In our fraternities, we meet once a week. Each of us have our individual lives and through that we radiate our Dominican life. Very importantly, when we meet, we share our common prayers. In my family, after our second child passed away before birth, we were anxious about our ability to have another. Then, brothers and sisters in the fraternity, the friars, sisters and nuns all surrounded us with prayers – especially the prayers with “St Dominic’s belt”. St Dominic's belt is a prayer for woman who want to conceive or who are pregnant and anxious about the safety of their pregnancy; the prayer is accompanied with a belt, made of white ribbon, on which the initial words of the prayer "O spem miram..." are inscribed. It is very popular in Poland. Soon after, our daughter was born. Now we are awaiting the birth of yet another child.

Our Fraternity is dedicated to Bl. Jordan of Saxony and Diana and we have been attached to the Dominican Monastery of Szczecin since 2004. We are a unique Fraternity because we are made up of mostly young people (8 young couples, 2 mothers, 4 singles and 4 seniors). We meeting to share the Eucharist with Agape, to Adore the Blessed Sacrament, for Lectio Divina and for formation. We work in the parish and also collaboration in most Dominican initiatives. We help with the “School of Faith”, the Dominican Fête, parish magazine, VERITAS Foundation, liturgical music and pastoral care of youths and students.

While some of us undertake our apostolate by assisting with pastoral work, other do theirs by raising their children faithfully, carrying out their professional career in the Dominican Spirit and in faithful intercession. There is always the individual respect and freedom which enable each person to recognize for himself the possibilities of activities and involvements. It is obvious that our vocation is in everyday life in the world, in the family and the environment. This is where we need to lives with God.

Małgorzata Wałejko

(translated by Joanna Duda)

- **Dominican Life and Mission in the Asia-Pacific**

The major superiors of the entities in the Asia-Pacific region gathered at Rosary Hill, Hong Kong in February 2013 to discuss the life and mission of the Order in that region.

Most of the superiors were present at that meeting; fr Javier Gonzalez (Holy Rosary Province) was the host provincial, fr Kevin Saunders (Australia), fr John Kusumalayam (India), Joseph Ngo Si Dinh (Vietnam), fr Vincent Li (Taiwan), fr Hiroshige Watanabe (represented the vicar from Japan) and fr Gerard Timoner III (Philippines). Also present were; fr Vincent Lu Vien Ha (Socius of the Master for Asia-Pacific) and fr Prakash A. Lohale (Socius of the Master for Apostolic Life). Unfortunately Fr. Pazcal Nazir (Pakistan) was unable to come.

Each of the brothers gave reports of the different challenges facing the Dominican life and mission in their entities. From Australia, fr Kevin reported that the average age of brothers in the province is rising and the in flock of vocations is not encouraging. He is hoping that the vocations from the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea will be able to work in Australia and New Zealand in the future.

Fr Vincent gave a report on the Order's support to the region through the Solidarity Fund. This fund is used to support common studies and to offer scholarships to brothers from the region. The hope is that the brothers so sponsored by the fund will return to teach in one of the institutes of the region. In the spirit of collaboration, the entities in the region also offer different forms of scholarship to brothers from within and outside the region.

There were also positive reports from the last Common Study programme of the region hosted by the Province of Vietnam at Bangkok, Thailand. The participants had the opportunity to learn from the resource persons invited and from one another. The next programme will be hosted by the Province of India at Igatpuri, near Bombay between June 25 and July 27, 2013. There will also be a Leadership and Formators Course at the Philippines between February and March, 2014. This is open to all members of the Dominican family. It was noted that emphasizes should always be placed on formation for mission since the region is a vast mission territory.

On the Jubilee of the Order which comes up in 2016, the brothers were updated on the preparations from the General Curia. All the plans which are still in the developmental stage, will focus on Liturgy, the Patrimony of the Order, the Dominican Family, Studies, Communication and the History and Heritage of the Order. The entire celebration will culminate on December 22, 2016, the anniversary of the confirmation of the Order by Pope Honorius. As soon as the plans are finalized, they will be communicated to the entire Order.

Each entity also shared on their levels of preparation for the celebration of the Jubilee. From their reports, they will be focusing on retreats, conventions, pilgrimages, conferences and various liturgical celebrations. On the regional level, as part of the Jubilee celebrations, the next Dominican Family Retreat and Celebrations will take place in October 2016 at UST, Manila. The Leaders Conference and Business Meeting will following after that.

The brothers made some recommendation for the forthcoming General Chapter of Trogir, 2013.

It was indeed a fruitful gathering of brothers, thus they will gather again in Japan in March, 2014.

- **Dominican Monastery of the Mother of God: Rosary Virtuosos in West Springfield, MA**

There is something about the Dominican way of life that people notice even if they cannot articulate it right away. The very atmosphere of the place, whether church or chapel or convent or monastery seems to be instilled with the peace and joy and awe that comes from the contemplation of God. All the monasteries of Dominican nuns are wonderful in just this way. Today I would like to draw attention to one in particular: our Dominican monastery in West Springfield, MA.

The first thing you are likely to notice upon entering the chapel of the Mother of God Monastery is the Blessed Sacrament exposed in a beautiful monstrance atop a magnificent exposition throne integrated into the choir screen. The nuns of this monastery have a strong devotion to Eucharistic adoration. Strong, too, is their devotion to praying the Rosary. All Dominicans have a special love for the Rosary, but for the nuns of this monastery it is something special even among Dominicans. The roots of the Mother of God Monastery of West Springfield lie in a tradition going back to a French Dominican monastery in Calais that was founded for the perpetual recitation of the Rosary. True to their roots, the Rosary remains a key element of the spirituality of the community in West Springfield.

One of the times when I had the privilege of a visit with the Sisters in their parlor, my brothers and I were able to ask them some questions about how they pray the Rosary. Of course the nuns were too modest to boast that their prayer is really excellent. But when we asked especially for advice about how to meditate on the mysteries, it became clear to me that these sisters are virtuosos at praying the Rosary. Before my visit, I hadn't really pondered the difference between the Rosary master and the Rosary novice.

The difference, at least with regards to the human dimension—which is an important dimension even though the grace of prayer comes from God alone—lies in the meditation on the mysteries which accompany the words we pray. Most of us, I think, manage to have the initial intention to pray attentively out of love for God, but in practice we hardly manage more than a few brief spurts of attentiveness each decade. St. Thomas Aquinas says that God is pleased with the whole prayer and hears it on account of the initial intention, even if in fact our mind wandered unintentionally during the course of it. But, he teaches that for the other effect of prayer, the spiritualis refectio mentis (the spiritual “refreshment” or “nourishing” of the mind), attentiveness is required throughout your prayer.

How does one become more attentive in prayer? Is it a matter of trying harder, straining with more effort? I suggest rather that it is more like developing the skill of memory. Many people aren't aware that it is a skill that can be developed on purpose, but ask yourself: what are the things you remember best? Things for which you have a vague, hazy, weak, unclear mental impression, or things which you associate with a definite, strong, distinctive, clear mental picture? Likewise, as you pray the Rosary, what meditation will be less prone to distraction—a vague, weak, hazy meditation, or a clear, strong, vivid one?

From hearing a few of the nuns speak about the Rosary, I gathered that their Rosary meditations are strong and persistent and rich and varied beyond what many of us even aim at. How did they get this way? Not by accident, I am sure, but by lots and lots of prayer, practice, and grace.

Imagine if you had struggled to play the piano out of a sense of duty but never advanced much in skill. You might have a hard time understanding why a virtuoso musician always seems to take such delight in performing music, especially if you had never heard his music yourself. Just so, many people consider it a puzzling paradox that nuns who are faithful to the monastic life seem so happy

all the time. As noble as music may be, the sisters delight in something incomparably more excellent—the contemplation of God. And the nuns at West Springfield give every indication of being happy women. I could see it in their smiles and hear it in their voices when they talked to me about Jesus and the things they do out of love for him.

Of course, in the end, it all comes down to love of God and neighbor, to which the Rosary is only a help. But it makes sense to me why meditative prayer like the Rosary is such a good help. To this truth, the Dominican nuns of the Mother of God Monastery in West Springfield, MA give living testimony.

Br. Leo Checkai, O.P.

- **The Dominican Brothers of Eastern Africa**

From the 2nd to the 10th of January 2013, frs Prakash Lohale (Socius for Apostolic Life) and Gabriel Samba (Socius for Africa) made a canonical visitation of the Provincial Vicariate of Eastern Africa on behalf of the Master of the Order. Although the territory of the Vicariate covers Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and South Sudan, at the moment, the brothers are present only in Kenya with three communities.

The Vicar provincial, fr Martin Martiny did everything possible to ensure the success of the visitation. The Prior Provincial of the mother province, St Joseph Province, USA, fr Brian M Mulcahy took time to be with us during the visitation.

The Vicariate of Eastern African was established in 1991 by the Province of St Joseph, USA. The brothers are proud of the legacy of the early Dominicans who came to Kenya to start the mission 22 years ago. At present, there are 17 friars solemnly professed assigned to the vicariate, 8 simply professed friars with 1 novice. There are 8 assigned from other provinces (1 priest, 1 cooperator brother, 5 students and 1 novice).

The Convent of St Dominic is the Studentate which also welcomes students from other entities of IAOP. There are 3 students from the Provincial Vicariate of Rwanda and Burundi, and 3 from the Provincial Vicariate of Equatorial Africa. The brothers study philosophy at Consolata, Theology at Tangaza College and at The Catholic University of Eastern Africa. Some Dominican brothers are lecturing in these institutions. The Convent of St Martin de Porres, the only priory of the Vicariate hosts the Novitiate with 2 novices this year (one from Kenya and the other from the Provincial Vicariate of Angola) and the Postulancy with 3 postulants. At the Convent of St Catherine, the brothers are building a new parish church.

The visitation was a short one since the brothers are few (33 in all), but it was an opportune time to renew the fraternal bond with the Master and the members of his General Council. The visitation afforded us an opportunity to see the life and ministry of the brothers in the Vicariate, to confirm their commitment to the vowed life as friars-preachers, and to encourage them to carry on zealously the apostolic preaching of the Gospel.

The visitation took place in a political atmosphere as Kenya is preparing to hold its first national election in March 2013. These political events have a bearing on the brothers in view of the post-election violence experienced in 2008. They are therefore called to be “sober and alert”, and to live the fundamental aspects of our Dominican life in this particular socio-politic context marked by tensions.

Despite their number, the brothers are committed in their apostolates; pastoral care of a parish with stations, teaching in the Universities (CUEA) and Masena in Kisumu, Institute of Consolata, Tangaza College, Maseno University, Chaplaincy, Catechesis, Bernard Lonergan Centre, retreats and recollections, Fr. Thomas Heath Kids, Micro-financing programme, sponsorship for poor children's education, prison ministry etc. Having a lot of apostolate to manage, the brothers have to prioritize often. They certainly need assistance from their mother province and other IAOP entities in terms of collaboration in formation and mission. The focus of the Vicariate is unmistakably mission. Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and South Sudan are countries that are growing and progressing economically. The Church is also growing and still taking shape. The brothers are aware of the need to expand and they are taking this seriously.

The idea of the first missionaries was to establish the local Church. Today the idea of mission is to enrich the local Church. The Vicariate is challenged to discern the best way they can enrich the local Church. How can the brothers contribute to enriching the local Church and still continue to live our Dominican heritage? How must the Order continue its presence in the society and Church of Eastern Africa today? These are challenges for the brothers.

We were warmly received and treated hospitably throughout the duration of the visitation. This is a testimony to the brothers tradition of hospitality. Many brothers have fond memories of the gracious hospitality of the brothers. In addition, the Vicariate of Eastern Africa has hosted many meetings of IAOP, and it is preparing to host the 12th General Assembly of IAOP in July 2014.

At the end of the visitation, we launched a way forward to help the Vicariate to achieve its goals. In accordance with the recommendation of the General Chapter on Rome, 2010 (AGC, n° 224), the Socius of the region will be following up the implementation of the conclusions of the visitation.

fr Gabriel Samba, OP  
Socius for Africa

- **Penance with a Purpose**

Last year in this space on the first Friday of Lent, I observed that the liturgy pointed us toward thinking of penance as warfare. We saw there how penance serves a spiritual volley against the devil. But while penance can do us good, God can also use our penance to benefit another.

Penance helps to recover from the spiritual damage done by sin. "Raised up from sin, the sinner must still recover his full spiritual health by doing something more to make amends for the sin: he must 'make satisfaction for' or 'expiate' his sins. This satisfaction is also called 'penance'" (CCC 1459). "Such penances help configure us to Christ, who alone expiated our sins once for all. They allow us to become co-heirs with the risen Christ, 'provided we suffer with him'" (CCC 1460). The Council of Trent casts this notion of penance in the language of Scripture:

"The satisfaction that we make for our sins, however, is done through Jesus Christ. We who can do nothing ourselves, as if just by ourselves, can do all things with the cooperation of "him who strengthens" us. Thus man has nothing of which to boast, but all our boasting is in Christ . . . in whom we make satisfaction by bringing forth "fruits that befit repentance." These fruits have their efficacy from him, by him they are offered to the Father, and through him they are accepted by the Father"(Quoted in CCC 1460).

We need to do penance for our own sins, because by penance we turn ourselves away from sin and toward God. St. Thomas says that "the will must abandon sin by moving in a contrary direction

from those movements whereby it was inclined toward sin. Now, it was inclined toward sin by appetite [desire] and enjoyment in regard to lower things. Therefore, it must move away from sin by means of certain penances whereby it suffers some injury because of the sin that it has committed. For, just as the will was drawn toward consent to the sin by means of pleasure, so is it strengthened in the detestation of sin by means of penances” (SCG III 158).

These penances, besides making satisfaction for our own sins, can be borne for others (ST I-II Q.87 A.8). In our country today, two of our major national sins are disrespect for human life and destruction of the family, which in large part comes from institutionalizing a flawed idea of marriage. Since the Church must oppose these injustices, the official sanction of these ideas endangers our religious liberty.

Since the 1960s, Catholics in the U.S. have only been obliged to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday and to abstain from meat on the Fridays of Lent. In light of the recent developments in life, marriage, and religious liberty, however, the U.S. Bishops have issued a Call to Prayer. The bishops are encouraging us to, among other things, kick our fasting up a notch: to fast on all of the Fridays until Christ the King (November 24, 2013) or at least to extend the Friday abstinence from meat past Lent this year. You can make an online pledge to answer this call to prayer at [www.usccb.org/fast](http://www.usccb.org/fast). You can also sign up for weekly reminders and reflections.

By our fasting, we can help make satisfaction for our national sins. And through prayer and action, hopefully we can change our country’s culture for the better.

Br. Clement Dickie, O.P.

- **Dominicans on Justice and Peace in the Asia-Pacific**

The Conference which was held at Surabaya, Indonesia from the 24th to the 26th of February, 2013 brought together Dominican brothers, sisters and laity from Australia, New Zealand, Philippines, Indonesia, India, Japan and Vietnam. They shared on the fruits of their Justice and Peace activities and planned for the next Justice, Peace and Care of Creation (JPCC) Conference in 2014.

At the JPCC Conference in 2010, fr Andreas Kurniawan and Sr Hermine Nurhayani were both chosen as the joint co-promoters of JPCC in the Asia-Pacific region. They coordinated the meeting.

Australia: On the JPCC ministries, Sr Gabrielle Kelly reported that despite the advanced age of sisters in Australia, the sisters are working assiduously, independently and in collaboration with other sister groups. The lay groups are also at hand to make up for the lack. There are a number of youth groups in Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney who are actively involved in social awareness locally and in neighbouring countries like East Timor, Vietnam, India, Indonesia and even Africa.

New Zealand: The sisters are actively involved in preaching the Good News and doing the work of justice and peace through the media, focusing on issues like the environment, interfaith dialogue, human trafficking, euthanasia, youth development and care of leprosy patients. They encourage the youth through Dominican Volunteers and participation in the Dominican NGO at the UN.

Philippines: According to fr Bienvenido Trinilla, the Dominican family in the Philippines responded to the victims of the storm at Mindanao and worked to rehabilitate them. They are also helping the poor in various ways like providing scholarship for students from poor homes under the Dominican School Network.

In addition, Sr Cecilia Bayani reported that the Dominican Sisters are involved in campaigns against extrajudicial killings and human right abuses. They are involved in the pastoral care of women and children who are victims of violence. They are also instructing students on chastity and abstinence as against the use of contraceptives. To regenerate the environment, the sisters have planted over 800 trees.

Indonesia: Sr Hermine reported that after the 2010 conference, the Sisters of Central and West Java and DKI Jakarta focused on waste management, tree planting, land use, prison visitation, pastoral care of the sick and visitations to families of convent staff. The sisters are also involved with the issue of human trafficking and the provision of loans for pedicab drivers. She raised the concern about the difficulty in changing the orientation of migrant workers on education, purity and self-dignity.

Sr Theresa Tri Astuti also shared on her experiences with prisoners and parents with special needs children. In Jakarta, the Lay Dominican assist the sisters with the management of waste and their catfish farming. During Ramadan, when the convent staff are away for Eid'l Fitri, the lay Dominicans render domestic assistance to the sisters.

India: Fr Prakash Lohale, the Socius for Apostolic Life of the Order was invited to share about the situation in India. According to him, there are projects for the children living on the streets and several sisters are also working on different issues about women, education, human rights etc. Fr Prakash is also responsible for the Journées Romaines Dominicaines, an initiate in support of Dominican sisters and friars working mainly in the Moslem world.

Japan: Fr Raymond Latour highlighted the different situation in Japan which is mostly related to the aftermath of the Tsunami. To overcome the effects of the Tsunami, there are plans to run social reconstruction programmes such as providing a better place for the children of tsunami victims, helping those who have been under pressure due to lack of work and the financial crisis. The sisters in addition have been running houses for orphans.

Vietnam: Sr Maria Ha Dinh expressed the difficulty in following the theme of the 8th conference of JPCC. To establish Justice and Peace in Vietnam the sisters can only be committed to simple ministries that can help development in their country. They can only do charitable works and not work for justice and peace directly. They take care of abandoned old women, do skill training, create jobs for the youth and education for the physically challenged, poor people, street children and youngsters, as well as protection for the unborn and the welfare of mothers. In fact, they take care of creation from womb to tomb, from the unborn to the newborn babies, from the children to youth and to the elderly who are in the twilight of their lives.

Although there were no reports from East Timor and the Solomon Islands, the meeting was informed that sisters at East Timor are working very hard especially in the care of orphans. In the Solomon Islands, the sisters are also working against violence and abuses against women and children.

The meeting decided that the 9th Asia-Pacific JPCC Conference will be held at Indonesia in 2014 with the theme, "Coming Together as Bright-Makers: The Challenges of Interfaith Dialogue and Peace Building in the Asia-Pacific Region". This will be a joint meeting with JRD. A core group was formed to prepare for the event.

From the reports and other activities during the meeting, it was clear that the Dominican family is actively enhancing the life of society through their JPCC ministries.

Sr. Gabrielle Kelly OP  
13 February 2013

- **Perhaps in Ashes**

What is dust? For an astronomer, the word might conjure up thoughts of a gigantic cloud in space, whirling and condensing over vast aeons until it bursts into life as a star; for Philip Pullman, the word signifies a rarified material particle that forms the basis for rationality; for John Steinbeck it represents the world of hunger and desolation from which men vainly flee; for the author of Genesis, it betokens God's generosity, as he made man from dust (2:7), and his justice, as he condemned the serpent to eat of it as punishment (3:14); and for most of us—especially those of us who live in old houses—it means that ubiquitous floating dirt that settles on everything, requiring constant care and cleaning to drive away.

On Ash Wednesday, the Church gathers all these meanings (except perhaps Pullman's) together in the words that are said as a person's head is marked with ashes: Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return. These words are more than a simple memento mori—remember that you die. They are a reminder of the great and terrible entropy of all earthly things: "All go to one place; all are from the dust, and all turn to dust again" (Eccl 3:20). The finest chef spends hours preparing a banquet that is consumed in a few moments and passes on unwanted a few hours later; a wealthy businessman flits from success to success until a market collapse reduces him to ruin; a profligate revels in his conquests until his heart is barren, and even his memories fail to keep him warm; an intellectual spends his life drinking from the wells of the world's knowledge, only to lay his head at last in the dry dust of the grave. Decay haunts our every achievement, a daily herald of that distant enemy, death: "Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold." Dust settles; dust remains.

So why this day? Why wear the dust of our downfall like a mark of honor? Why dwell on our dour denouement, when we can distract ourselves with beguiling delights? It is because dust and death are not the final word about our lives. When we wander like the Israelites, almost blinded by the dust of our own sins, weakened by our own wickedness and wounded by others', a voice still calls out: "Perhaps he will again relent and leave behind him a blessing" (Jl 2:14). Here at last is a sound utterly unlike the dry susurrations of Death's dusty lips; here is a voice ringing with power and with life, that beckons to us with its pregnant perhaps. Perhaps dust is not our lasting abode. Perhaps death does not undo all things. Perhaps there is a way out; a greater truth; an eternal life. Perhaps we can believe, and hope—and even love.

Today's ashes are a sign of God's justice, certainly—we have sinned against the Lord who made us—but they are more than that. They are pre-eminently a sign of God's mercy, that he does not abandon us to our own sinful ways once we have rejected his grace. God has imbued even dust-bound men with the freedom to return to him, to be forgiven, to love with a new heart. Throughout Lent, we pray, fast, and give alms, not to celebrate ourselves, to look gloomily backward at the half-remembered pleasures of Egypt, or to bribe the infinite God with our finite offerings, but to offer God his own mercy back to him, in loving confidence that he will change our hearts and bring us to him.

We know that dust settles on all things, and all men die. The ashes on our heads today remind us that perhaps there is more. Perhaps now is a very acceptable time. Perhaps now is the day of salvation (2 Cor 6:1–2).

By: Br. Gabriel Torretta, O.P.

- **Ash Wednesday: The First Station Mass at St Peter's Basilica**

According to the tradition of the Church of Rome which dates back to the 4th century, the faithful journey through the streets of Rome, visiting and praying at various churches during the period of Lent. These churches are known as the Station Churches. The tradition started as a pastoral way of strengthening the sense of community within the Church of Rome since it required the Bishop of Rome to visit each part of the city and celebrate Masses with the faithful in their churches. In addition to the Masses, there are processions, the recitation of the Litany of Saints and veneration of relics.

The Station Masses begins at the Basilica of Santa Sabina, on Aventine Hill. Although, it is not exactly clear why Santa Sabina was chosen as the first station, it is however, one of Rome's "domus ecclesiae". It is a 5th century church which was rebuilt in the 9th century and restored in 1914. It has a unique architecture which highlights its long and rich history. Part of the history of the church has to do with St Dominic. In 1218, Pope Honorius III entrusted the church to him to establish a community for the new Order he had just founded. The church and the attached community still serves as the headquarters of the Dominicans.

The Dominicans have always looked forward to the celebration of the first station Mass every Ash Wednesday at the Basilica of Santa Sabina. The Mass is usually celebrated by the Holy Father himself with the traditional procession and recitation of the litany of saints starting from the Benedictian Basilica of Sant'Anselmo.

This year, however, the celebration was moved to St Peter's Basilica at the Vatican for obvious reasons. The Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI has just announced his intention to resign from his office as the Bishop of Rome and the Successor of Peter by the 28th of February. The Ash Wednesday Mass automatically becomes his last public Mass before his resignation. It was then fitting for it to be moved to the Basilica of St Peter which is bigger and more accommodating .

The first Lenten Station Mass for this year was therefore celebrated at the Basilica of St Peter. A large number of Dominican brothers led by the Master of the Order, fr Bruno Cadoré joined a large crowd of the faithful for the Mass. The Dominicans and Benedictians were accorded the usually recognition to lead the procession and recitation of the litany of saints.

This is the Homily of the Holy Father at the Mass:

*Venerable Brothers,  
Dear Brothers and Sisters!*

*Today, Ash Wednesday, we begin a new Lenten journey, a journey that extends for forty days and leads us to the joy of Easter, the victory of Life over death. Following the ancient Roman tradition of Lenten stations, we have gathered for the celebration of the Eucharist. The tradition says that the first station should take place in the Basilica of Santa Sabina on the Aventine Hill. The circumstances have suggested that we gather in St. Peter's Basilica. Tonight we are great in number around the tomb of the Apostle Peter, also to request his intercession for the Church's*

*journey at this particular time, renewing our faith in the Supreme Pastor, Christ the Lord. For me it is a good opportunity to thank everyone, especially the faithful of the Diocese of Rome, as I prepare to conclude my Petrine ministry, and ask for a special remembrance in prayer.*

*The readings that have been proclaimed provide us with ideas that, with the grace of God, we are called to make concrete attitudes and behaviors during this Lent. The Church proposes to us, first, the strong appeal that the prophet Joel addressed to the people of Israel, "Thus says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning" (2:12). Please note the phrase "with all my heart," which means from the center of our thoughts and feelings, from the roots of our decisions, choices and actions, with a gesture of total and radical freedom. But is this return to God possible? Yes, because there is a force that does not reside in our hearts, but that emanates from the heart of God. It is the power of his mercy. The prophet says, further: "Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, rich in faithful love, ready to repent of evil" (v. 13). The return to the Lord is possible as a 'grace', because it is the work of God and the fruit of that faith that we place in His mercy. But this return to God becomes a reality in our lives only when the grace of God penetrates to our inmost being and shakes it, giving us the power to "rend our hearts." The same prophet causes these words from God to resonate: "Rend your hearts and not your garments" (v. 13). In fact, even today, many are ready to "rend their garments" before scandals and injustices - of course, made by others - but few seem willing to act on their own "heart", on their own conscience and their own intentions, letting the Lord transform, renew and convert.*

*That "return to me with all your heart," then, is a reminder that involves not only the individual, but the community. We have heard, also in the first reading: "Play the horn in Zion, proclaim a solemn fast, call a sacred assembly. Gather the people, convoke a solemn assembly, call the old, gather the children and the infants at the breast; let the bridegroom leave his room and the bride her bridal chamber"(vv.15-16). The community dimension is an essential element in faith and Christian life. Christ came "to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad" (cfr. Jn 11:52). The "we" of the Church is the community in which Jesus brings us together (cf. Jn 12:32): faith is necessarily ecclesial. And this is important to remember and to live in this time of Lent: each person is aware that he or she does not face the penitential journey alone, but together with many brothers and sisters in the Church.*

*Finally, the prophet focuses on the prayers of the priests, who, with tears in their eyes, turn to God, saying: "Do not expose your heritage to the reproach and derision of the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, 'Where is their God?' "(v.17). This prayer makes us reflect on the importance of the testimony of faith and Christian life of each of us and our community to show the face of the Church and how that face is sometimes disfigured. I am thinking in particular about sins against the unity of the Church, the divisions in the ecclesial body. Living Lent in a more intense and evident ecclesial communion, overcoming individualism and rivalry, is a humble and precious sign for those who are far from the faith or indifferent.*

*"Behold, now is the acceptable time, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor 6:2). The words of the Apostle Paul to the Christians of Corinth resonate for us, too, with an urgency that does not allow omission or inaction. The word "now" repeated several times says that we cannot let this time pass us by, it is offered to us as a unique opportunity. And the Apostle's gaze focuses on the sharing that Christ chose to characterize his life, taking on everything human to the point of bearing the very burden of men's sins. The phrase St. Paul uses is very strong: "God made him sin for our sake." Jesus, the innocent one, the Holy One, "He who knew no sin" (2 Cor 5:21), bears the burden of sin, sharing with humanity its outcome of death, and death on the cross. The reconciliation offered to us has cost a high price, that of the cross raised on Golgotha, on which was hung the Son of God made*

*man. In this immersion of God in human suffering and in the abyss of evil lies the root of our justification. The "return to God with all your heart" in our Lenten journey passes through the cross, following Christ on the road to Calvary, the total gift of self. It is a way on which to learn every day to come out more and more from our selfishness and our closures, to make room for God who opens and transforms the heart. And St. Paul recalls how the announcement of the Cross resounds to us through the preaching of the Word, of which the Apostle himself is an ambassador; it is a call for us to make this Lenten journey characterized by a more careful and assiduous listening to the Word of God, the light that illuminates our steps.*

*In the Gospel of Matthew, to which belongs the so-called Sermon on the Mount, Jesus refers to three fundamental practices required by Mosaic Law: almsgiving, prayer and fasting; they are also traditional indications in the Lenten journey to respond to the invitation to "return to God with all your heart." But Jesus emphasizes that it is both the quality and the truth of the relationship with God that determines the authenticity of each religious gesture. For this reason He denounces religious hypocrisy, the behavior that wants to be seen, attitudes seeking applause and approval. The true disciple does not serve himself or the "public", but his Lord, in simplicity and generosity: "And your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you" (Mt 6:4.6.18). Our witness, then, will always be more effective the less we seek our own glory, and we will know that the reward of the righteous is God himself, being united to Him, here below, on the journey of faith, and, at the end of life, in the peace and light of coming face to face with Him forever (cf. 1 Cor 13:12).*

*Dear brothers and sisters, we begin our Lenten journey, trusting and joyful. May the invitation to conversion resonate strongly in us, to "return to God with all your heart", accepting His grace that makes us new men, with the surprising novelty that is sharing in the very life of Jesus. Let none of us, therefore, be deaf to this appeal, that is addressed to us also in the austere rite, so simple and yet so beautiful, of the imposition of ashes, which we will perform shortly. May the Virgin Mary accompany us in this time, the Mother of the Church and model of every true disciple of the Lord. Amen!*

[Original text: Italian]

- **Pope Benedict XVI's abdication**

The sudden abdication of Pope Benedict XVI yesterday, to come into effect on 28 February at 7pm GMT, was greeted with sadness by many Catholics around the world. Shock and sadness were predominant themes on the social media. Although the Pope has not died, thank God, our response to the news – and that of the media – quite naturally thinks of the Holy Father's departure in such terms. The Church is, as it were, losing a great and holy leader. The Pope's bold announcement was another great sign of his deeply humble and loving service in the vineyard of the Lord. And that is why we will miss him.

But I have to admit my principal reaction to the news was one of strangely joyful surprise. I suppose this is because it was immediately apparent that Pope Benedict had taken this decision on his own, in full freedom and after prolonged prayer; and therefore he himself considers this the best, and perhaps only, course for the Church to take in light of his increasing frailty. In other words, this was a great act of humility and love for Christ's Church – and that is a reason to rejoice. Besides, we can be happy that the Pope can find peace in his prayerful retirement, which is of course what he had longed for before his election to the See of Peter.

This unprecedented move in the modern era demonstrates yet again how Pope Benedict is radically committed to the common good and the advancement of the Gospel in our world. He knows clearly

– at least much better than us – what challenges and burdens the governance of the Church imposes on its earthly leader. Our Pope has never forgotten that his position is one of service to the Lord, and hence of service to the whole Church: he is the 'Servant of the Servants of God'. Like John the Baptist, Benedict knows when Love calls us to say, 'I must decrease.' (Jn 3:30)

Inevitably, the feverish harvesting of opinions, the inchoate assessments of 'legacy', the bewildering speculation about succession, once begun will not cease over the coming months. Even the jokes have piled in already: the Pope has set the bar very high in giving up something for Lent; and so on. Many of the jokes are in poor taste, alas, just as the media commentary is often negative. So, what should be our Catholic response to this? I think we should recognise that the papal resignation is not a simple act and cannot be interpreted in any simple fashion. Our sadness is lined with joy; our reflection on the past mixed with hopeful anticipation for the future. In praying for the Pope and the Church at this time, let us also remember the many who do not call themselves Catholic and Christian, including those who (for whatever reason) do not see the Church as a bearer of 'good news'.

Godzdogz would like to wish Pope Benedict a happy and peaceful retirement, with our prayers for him and those who must now meet to elect his successor.

Matthew Jarvis OP

#### The Empty Chair

The wound is still fresh and the shock of the blow makes the sting all the worse. The sadness that comes with death is something we are all too familiar with, but the ambiguity of the papal resignation leaves us confused. So many of us see Pope Benedict XVI as a spiritual father, whose works from both before and during his pontificate affect us profoundly. How could he leave us this way? Even as we seek to understand his reasons, we are left frustrated and uncertain.

Theologians and those who study the nature of the Church will give us some answers in time. They will discuss how Pope Benedict has placed the office before the man and reaffirmed that the Petrine ministry is not about the personality of the Pontiff. They might consider how the terms of service for others who hold office in the Church—from pastors to bishops to cardinals—often no longer last until death but a retirement age that reflects increasing lifespans. They will debate what this means for how we treat the modern papacy and the almost sacramental character it seems to have for those who hold it. The questions of protocol and rank for former popes will surely need clarification.

For now, though, the prospect of the empty chair is still before us. There is no use pretending that it doesn't sting, or that the whole idea sits easily with us. Yet for all the angst this decision will bring, we must not lose sight of the profound humility shown by Pope Benedict. Along with his blessed predecessor, Pope Benedict gives a powerful witness to our utter dependence on the grace of Christ. He gives testimony to the confidence we must have that the Holy Spirit is guiding us even through uncharted waters.

It must be a terrible thing to examine one's conscience as Supreme Pastor of the Church—the spiritual weight is undoubtedly immense. As much as we might be tempted, we can never fairly second-guess this prayerful decision of him who will stand before Christ and render account for the whole of His flock. Even as we struggle to comprehend his decision, we must respect the abiding faith that inspired it. So we must come to terms with the empty chair and endure a time of Lenten sadness that necessarily precedes Easter joy. Let us then grieve for a time, all the while taking

comfort that the Holy Spirit is still at work in the Church, and Christ is still drawing the barque of Peter towards heavenly shores.

When the prior of the Dominican House of Studies announced at the end of our conventual Mass Monday morning that the Pope had resigned, he asked us to sing the Salve Regina for the Holy Father. The Salve is how we end most every day as Dominicans, imploring the protection of the Blessed Virgin. No matter what troubles us in our religious life, all the friars preachers—from the novices to the nonagenarians—entrust their worries and cares to her intercession, and ask her to keep us under her mantle and draw us to her Son. And so, at the prior's word, we fell to our knees, and prayed that Our Lady would turn her eyes to Benedict, our shepherd and teacher, and walk with him on this, his twilight journey.

Henry Stephan, OP

- **Prayer for the Jubilee Year 2014**

O God our Father,  
we thank you most sincerely for your love and your goodness  
for blessing us with the foundation of our Order.  
We praise you for the countless lives  
that have been touched in the past 800 years of the Order's existence.  
We are grateful for the service  
and example of our forbears  
who sacrificed all that was possible within their reach  
to spread the good news of salvation and preach the gospel.

As we celebrate the 800th anniversary,  
we ask you loving Father  
to fill us with zeal,  
to keep aflame in us the spirit of service and love of our founders.  
Heal those among us who are wounded,  
give comfort to the afflicted,  
courage to the aged,  
mercy to those who are suffering,  
wisdom to the Master of the Order,  
the Provincials,  
our officers in the various Fraternities  
and all Dominican Communities.  
Help us your sons and daughters to be a prophetic voice.  
Let us, the young and the old,  
dream and see visions of your glory.

May your love continue to bind our hearts together.  
Help us to continually bear witness to the risen Lord  
in all we do, think or say.  
Let our lives and all we engage in  
bring glory to your Holy Name.  
We make our prayers through our Lord Jesus Christ  
who lives and reigns in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God for ever and ever.  
Amen.

Mary, Mother of Preachers, pray for us.  
St Dominic, pray for us.  
St Catherine of Siena, pray for us.  
All Saints and blessed of the Order, pray for us.

*Prayer composed by the members of the International Council of Lay Dominican Fraternities (ICLDF) for the Jubilee Novena year 2014: « The Dominican Laity and Preaching »*

- **The Sacramental Purpose of Religious Clothing**

When I was a boy, more than 50 years ago, ecclesiastical clothes were impressive. They were unusual and colorful, antique and sacral; they were distinctively Roman Catholic. The colored watered silk, the jeweled gloves, the red slippers (buskins) pointed to an individual caught up in a church office. This transcendent figure, a representative of the divine, appeared among the ordinary suits and dresses of working-class Catholics at rare moments. Nonetheless, even as a teenager singing in a college choir at the archbishop's liturgies, I had already noticed that sometimes rituals focused more on the clothes than on religious words and sacrament. Removing gloves and putting on glasses, keeping a skullcap in place or adjusting a pallium could appear more important than the elevation of the chalice.

Time passes, and today ecclesiastical clothes are less intelligible and pointless clearly to something beyond their colors and gilt. They raise questions of gender and class, of culture and sacramentality.

There are three kinds of clothes male Catholics wear for public ecclesiastical and liturgical events. There are vestments for the liturgy of the Eucharist and other sacraments and for devotions. Among them are chasuble and stole, alb and cincture, miter and cope. Second, there are the habits of religious orders and congregations. Third, there are special garments for those in the episcopal order and for those in levels below (monsignors) or above (cardinals). Vestments at the Eucharist and other liturgies appear at their best when they are simple, aesthetically pleasing and inspiring to the people viewing them. Members of religious orders, particularly monks and friars, tend to wear their habits at liturgy and at other times inside their religious houses.

Here is a ninth-century description of the liturgical clothes used by the bishop of Rome, clothes related in their style to garments worn by Romans two centuries earlier. Walahfrid Strabo, who died in 849, wrote: "Priestly vestments have become progressively what they are today: ornaments. In earlier times priests celebrated Mass dressed like everyone else."

Often special church garments do not come from the patristic or medieval period (which did not encourage distinctive clothes). They come from the Baroque period from 1580 to 1720, when liturgy as theater arranged rituals to channel graces. After 1620, in the world of Pope Urban VIII, ecclesiastical garments began to assume the importance they have today in spotlighting ecclesiastical officeholders. Who may wear what, in which color, and at which church services? The years from 1830 to 1960 witnessed additional, quite artificial elaborations of church attire. Today vestments that reflect the simplicity of the patristic or early medieval style also appear contemporary, while those that appear antiquarian and flamboyant are the product of the Baroque.

Critics of religious clothes

Jesus is a critic of religion. He warns against human display and the use of religious objects to disdain others. He condemns using religion to further being noticed or set apart from most people.

"The scribes and the Pharisees ... do all their deeds to be seen by people; they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long, and they love the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues ... The greatest among you must be your slave" (Matthew 23:5-6, 12).

Few dimensions of human life aroused Jesus' anger, but religious leaders seeking attention and power through clothes were called "whitewashed tombs that look handsome on the outside but inside are full of the bones of the dead" (Matthew 23:27).

In the years just before the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), Dominican Fr. Yves Congar wrote a critique of the church's display of power and privilege. He had researched the origins of church vestments and insignia in the Roman Empire and in feudalism, concluding that those clothes no longer have any clear meaning for people. He concluded that vestments can have value, although their religious presence must resonate with the people they address.

One contemporary critique of ecclesiastical clothes was Federico Fellini's 1972 movie "Roma." Ecclesiastical fashions are exhibited on a runway where models display chasubles and miters for an audience of nuns and clerics and a presiding cardinal, a pale, sexless creature with crimson robes and ill-suited sunglasses who falls asleep. The style show ends with new designs using electric lights on chasubles.

Vatican II spoke of "a noble simplicity" for ecclesiastical clothes. In the years just after Vatican II, Pope Paul VI sold papal tiaras and issued instructions to set aside unusual clothes like flamboyant cloaks, colored stockings, special buckles and sashes with tassels.

#### Clothes today

Among a few small groups in the church, religious clothes are returning. They may be returning not as religious signs but as distractions from faith and ministry. Sashes and birettas, chains and large crosses, amices and maniples, special gloves and shoes have reappeared. Restorationist and reactionary groups tend to have striking clothes just as dictatorships have uniforms.

These groups show a preference for special kinds of clerical collars, tall miters, elaborate trains, a metal cross hung around the neck. Programs on EWTN are the runway for Baroque fashions, some authentic, some from the 19th century, most imitations. Great attention is given to gold vestments and gold vessels, odd new habits and distortions of past religious objects. Monastic habits with tunic and hood were originally the ordinary clothes of laborers. As centuries passed, they became unusual when ordinary clothes changed. Still, the habits of the medieval monks and friars were simple, and no sashes and capes or medals are added. The habits of many congregations of men founded after 1830 were colorful and attention-getting, elaborating on the medieval or Baroque but without any connection to the modern world.

At graduations at Catholic universities, students, faculty and administrators wear their academic robes, while parents and families wear suits and dresses. A bishop in a silk cape with ribbons and a skullcap looks out of place. Once, at a fundraising event in a large hotel, a bishop wore what he called his "full dress uniform, which attracts lots of compliments on my wardrobe." The main speaker of the night remarked: "If I were dying and someone with a red bow and gown drew near, I would be scared stiff."

The media pays attention to the current pope's red-pink shoes, fur-lined hat of the eighth century, elaborately embroidered stole from the 18th century. Recent images on television of bishops and popes in white and red cassocks, Renaissance hats and jeweled gloves no longer seem religious and

sacramental but antiquarian and self-centered. The pope, during a visit to the White House garden in white cassock and no visible pants, looked out of place; distinctive and different, yes, but not spiritual. American Catholics are, for the first time, reacting to televised gatherings of bishops and cardinals where there is concern over wearing properly colored skirts and sashes.

### Clothes and ministry

New religious groups in the United States, along with some young members of older orders seem eager to wear a religious habit in public, not just on the grounds around a school but at airports or on the subway. What does a monastic habit or a cassock in public say to Americans at the beginning of the 21st century? It is not at all evident that the general public knows who this strangely dressed person is or even connects the clothes to religion. The symbolism is not clear and a message is not evident. The person does stand out, but as a kind of public oddity. Eccentric clothes instill separation. While some argue that odd clothes attract people, the fact is that more often than not they repel. Normal people are not attracted by the antique or bizarre costume, and ordinary Christians are not drawn to those whose special costume implies that others are inferior. Sometimes wearing clothes seems to be a substitute for real ministry.

It is not clear how men wearing dresses and capes proclaim God's transcendence or the Gospel's love. A man's identity is something complex; the search for it lasts a lifetime. A celibate cleric gives up things that form male identity, like being a husband and a father. One cannot overlook possible links between unusual clothes and celibacy. Does the celibate male have a neutral or third sexuality that can put on unusual clothes? Are special clothes a protection of celibacy? Or are they a neutralization of maleness? Why would a man want to wear a long dress or a cape in public? Are spiritual reasons the true motivation?

### Cultural meaning

Clothes are useful as they keep us warm or cool and cover our nakedness. They can make men and women attractive to others. Human beings and societies have come up with a variety of clothes to which they give particular meanings, using a few clothes as symbols -- the toga, the high hat, the veil, the robe. What do ecclesiastical clothes say today? This question touches not only the wearer's identity but the community's faith. There is no absolute answer, no answer apart from people in their time and culture. Tradition and history are not an answer, for there is always a time when this ecclesiastical garment was unknown and there will be a time when it will be seen only in a museum.

Time brings and then buries styles. A medieval person probably understood episcopal regalia fairly well because aspects of his or her life depended upon its rare appearance, and it was seen in a milieu of many insignia. The elaborate arrangement of artificial clothes in the Catholic church is from the past four centuries. Today, unusual clothes appear on television as something connected to entertainment. What thoughts are conjured up when a cardinal or archbishop appears at a baseball game in a cape and gown? What does the cape and sash say personally and socially? Does it recall the New Testament or the liturgy of the Christian community?

There are no intrinsically religious clothes. Religious clothes are meant to point to some truth of faith or suggest a sacramental presence. The public person of each minister in the church should relate to the humble Jesus and to sacramentality in this church's life. In the Christian community all clothing -- this includes liturgical clothing -- expresses the church's life animated by the Spirit. Capes and cloaks in a Baroque style are neither prophetic nor countercultural. If regal or antiquarian distinction was once a value for church leaders, if pretension to being ecclesiastically or even metaphysically better was presumed, since Vatican II more and more people ignore such displays.

Time never stands still. What seemed powerful in the past is today merely curious. Many Catholics are reaching a point where antiquated clothes are not inspiring and sacramental but exist outside human life.

Both the church's expression of the reign of God and the culture to which it speaks are historical. Change touches everything. At any time, something new is being born and something static and alien is dying. History flows through the relationships between faith and grace and people, and those are always being determined anew in the concrete. The Holy Spirit strives, against sin, unreality and selfishness, to animate the church. In the last analysis, clothes are just clothes.

Henry David Thoreau said it well: "Beware of all enterprises that require new clothes." Perhaps some lesson remains in the words of Psalm 132: "I will vest the priests in holiness, and the faithful will shout for joy."

[Dominican Fr. Thomas O'Meara is the Warren Professor of Theology Emeritus at the University of Notre Dame. His latest book is *Vast Universe: Extraterrestrials and Christian Revelation*.]

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## Official news

- **“Thank you, Pope Benedict XVI”, fr Bruno Cadoré, OP**

“Thank you, Pope Benedict XVI” fr Bruno Cadoré on behalf of the entire Dominican Family

Most Holy Father,

I ask you to accept the immense gratitude of the Order of Preachers for the great generosity and beautiful simplicity with which you have exercised your ministry, ‘a humble worker in the Lord’s vineyard’. The Brothers, Nuns, Apostolic Sisters, Lay Dominicans and the entire Dominican Family join me in assuring you of our communion in prayer and thanksgiving.

On several occasions during your ministry, in the course of your teaching, you evoked some great figures of holiness that God by His grace has given to the Order of Preachers. It was for us a strong invitation to draw anew and constantly from the source of the charism of St. Dominic.

When you did me the honor of receiving me, you insisted that the Order should deploy its rich tradition of "study and worship" and take its place in the "new evangelization" to which you have invited the Church in continuity with the Second Vatican Council. This reminder, I believe, provides us with the horizon in view of which we are preparing to celebrate, in 2016, the eighth centenary of the confirmation of the Order of Preachers.

I ask you to assist us with your prayers, that the Lord may grant us the grace always to seek always to serve the Church and its unity, "totally committed to the evangelization of the Word of God" as it was expressed by Pope Honorius III.

fr Bruno Cadoré, OP  
Master of the Order

Pope Benedict XVI Farewell Blessing at his Last General Audience (27 February, 2013)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I offer a warm and affectionate greeting to the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors who have joined me for this, my last General Audience. Like Saint Paul, whose words we heard earlier, my heart is filled with thanksgiving to God who ever watches over his Church and her growth in faith and love, and I embrace all of you with joy and gratitude.

During this Year of Faith, we have been called to renew our joyful trust in the Lord's presence in our lives and in the life of the Church. I am personally grateful for his unfailing love and guidance in the eight years since I accepted his call to serve as the Successor of Peter. I am also deeply grateful for the understanding, support and prayers of so many of you, not only here in Rome, but also throughout the world.

The decision I have made, after much prayer, is the fruit of a serene trust in God's will and a deep love of Christ's Church. I will continue to accompany the Church with my prayers, and I ask each of you to pray for me and for the new Pope. In union with Mary and all the saints, let us entrust ourselves in faith and hope to God, who continues to watch over our lives and to guide the journey of the Church and our world along the paths of history.

I commend all of you, with great affection, to his loving care, asking him to strengthen you in the hope which opens our hearts to the fullness of life that he alone can give. To you and your families, I impart my blessing. Thank you!

- **Fr Benedict M. Ashley, OP Goes Home in Peace**

Fr Benedict M. Ashley, a foremost theologian and philosopher of the Central Province of St Albert the Great, USA has passed on. He had a major influence on the 20th century Catholic Moral Theology, Moral Philosophy and Ethics in America through his writings, teachings, and consultations. He passed on peacefully on Saturday, 23rd of February, 2013.

He was born in Kansas in 1915 and raised in Blackwell, Oklahoma. He started off as a committed atheist and communist but after studying the works of St Thomas Aquinas, he was baptized in the Catholic Church. He entered the Dominican Order, made his religious profession in 1942 and was ordained to the priesthood in 1948.

He has a Doctorates from the University of Notre Dame (Political Science) and Aquinas Institute, River Forest, Illinois (Philosophy). He also has a post-doctoral Master of Sacred Theology from University of St Thomas Aquinas, Rome and a Honorary Doctor of Theology from Aquinas Institute.

He has taught various subjects in various capacities in the following institutes; Aquinas Institute (1952-69), Pontifical Institute of Philosophy, River Forest (1957-69), Institute of Religion and Human Development, Texan Medical Centre, Houston (1969-72), Aquinas Institute of Theology, Dubuque (1969-81), Aquinas Institute of Theology, St Louis (1981-88), Pontifical Pope John II Institute for Studies in Marriage and Family, Washington DC (1988-92), Kenrick Seminary, St

Louis (1996-2004), Center for Health Care Ethics, St Louis University (1997-2003), Institute for Psychological Sciences, Washington DC (2001), John Paul II Cultural Center, Washington DC (2001), Institute for Advanced Physics (2003) and the University of Chicago,

He has been a consultant to a number of groups, notable among this is the US Conference of Catholic Bishops. He received the medal Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice from John Paul II and he is also a Senior Fellow of the National Catholics Center for Bioethics, USA.

He has author some 22 books and even more articles. He was a major exponent of the "River Forest School" of Thomism. Health Care Ethics, which he co-authored in 1975 and now in its fifth edition, continues to be a fundamental text in the field of Catholic Medical Ethics.

May his soul rest in peace.

- **Pope Benedict XVI announces his resignation at end of month**

Pope Benedict XVI on Monday said he plans on resigning the papal office on February 28th. Below please find his announcement.

Full text of Pope's declaration

Dear Brothers,

I have convoked you to this Consistory, not only for the three canonizations, but also to communicate to you a decision of great importance for the life of the Church. After having repeatedly examined my conscience before God, I have come to the certainty that my strengths, due to an advanced age, are no longer suited to an adequate exercise of the Petrine ministry. I am well aware that this ministry, due to its essential spiritual nature, must be carried out not only with words and deeds, but no less with prayer and suffering. However, in today's world, subject to so many rapid changes and shaken by questions of deep relevance for the life of faith, in order to govern the bark of Saint Peter and proclaim the Gospel, both strength of mind and body are necessary, strength which in the last few months, has deteriorated in me to the extent that I have had to recognize my incapacity to adequately fulfill the ministry entrusted to me. For this reason, and well aware of the seriousness of this act, with full freedom I declare that I renounce the ministry of Bishop of Rome, Successor of Saint Peter, entrusted to me by the Cardinals on 19 April 2005, in such a way, that as from 28 February 2013, at 20:00 hours, the See of Rome, the See of Saint Peter, will be vacant and a Conclave to elect the new Supreme Pontiff will have to be convoked by those whose competence it is.

Dear Brothers, I thank you most sincerely for all the love and work with which you have supported me in my ministry and I ask pardon for all my defects. And now, let us entrust the Holy Church to the care of Our Supreme Pastor, Our Lord Jesus Christ, and implore his holy Mother Mary, so that she may assist the Cardinal Fathers with her maternal solicitude, in electing a new Supreme Pontiff. With regard to myself, I wish to also devotedly serve the Holy Church of God in the future through a life dedicated to prayer.

From the Vatican, 10 February 2013

BENEDICTUS PP XVI

- **The New Secretary General of CIDALC**

Within the framework of the XVII General Assembly of CIDALC taking place in Mexico, Fr Samalot Yamil Rivera has been elected as the Secretary General of CIDALC. He is from the General Vicariate of the Holy Cross in Puerto Rico.

Fr Yamil is from Isabela in Puerto Rico. After his novitiate in the Province of St Louis Bertrand, Colombia, he made his first profession in 2002. He was ordained to the priesthood in 2006. He has a doctorate in the Language and Literature of Luso-Brazilian from Brown University, Providence, RI (USA) and another in dogmatic theology from the Pontifical University of Javeriana, Bogota.

In his General Vicariate, he has served as the Moderator of the Center of Theological Studies, at the Central University of Bayamon and as the rector of the Shrine of St Martin de Porres in Cataño. He was the coordinator of the CIDALC Caribbean Zone (2010-2013).

### *Calendar of the Master - March 2013*

Feb 25-March 6: Visitation to Haiti and Cuba

7-10: Away to Paris and Le Creusot

12-14: Meeting with New Provincials at Santa Sabina

16-19: Visitation to the General Vicariate of Hungary

20-25: Visitation to the General Vicariate of Russia and Ukraine

26-31: Holy Week and Easter Celebrations at Santa Sabina