



- **The Dominican Family**

Under Palazzo Valentini, in Rome, archaeologists have discovered the ravishing remains of the homes of wealthy Romans of imperial times; among much else, these include mosaic floors, in which each tiny individual tile contributes to the overall effect. If even one is missing, or out of place, the pattern is flawed.

Our Dominican Family is rather like that: every individual member is a crucial part of the whole, yet paradoxically no individual is important except in relation to all the others. We have friars (ordained priests and co-operator brothers), contemplative nuns, laity, Sisters in apostolic life, the Youth Movement, the international volunteers: each of us has a place in the Family, and each of us has a contribution to make. Like the tiles in a mosaic, we fit into our individual places and so form a harmonious picture.

It's natural for a lay Dominican woman to wonder, at times, what exactly her role can be. With rare exceptions, we don't live in community, we don't wear distinguishing costume, there may be little or nothing to tell those we meet that we are members of the Order. And yet there are many lay Dominican women who show clearly that it's possible to combine an active Dominican life with a job, a family, all kinds of activities. Think of Patricia Robinson, who was the first ever European representative on the International Council of Lay Dominican Fraternities (ICLDF) – mother of seven, grandmother of many more, now very elderly but still a force to be reckoned with: she not only sets a wonderful example of Christian family life, but preaches regularly on word.op.org and is an active member of the European Council's new formation commission; or of Eva Kameniarová from Slovakia, who until very recently fulfilled the same role on the ICLDF – Eva is a nurse, totally dedicated to her work with the sick. They, and many others, are living their Dominican vocation to the full.

Women have fought for recognition at all levels in Western society, and in large part the battle has been won. What's disturbing is to see how many young women take as their role model someone like Madonna or Lady Gaga, hugely famous and successful, not least on the basis of their ineffable vulgarity, instead of Aung San Suu Kyi, the Burmese politician and Nobel Peace laureate, who combines the highest moral integrity with an exquisitely feminine appearance. Lay Dominican women, who can testify to their faith in their homes, at work and in all the day-to-day contacts of their lives, are unlikely to achieve international fame, but they can follow our Patron, St Mary Magdalene, in announcing to others that Christ has risen. For that is exactly what preaching, etymologically, means: it comes from the Latin *prae* "before" + *dicare* "to proclaim, to say". Every time we witness to our faith, in our daily lives, in active participation in the work of the Order and of the Church as a whole, we are fulfilling our role as members of the Order of Preachers.

In the 1990s a book by a "relationship counsellor", John Gray, became a best seller; it was entitled *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus*. Gray contended that the relationship between the sexes was necessarily complex because they are, in effect, from different planets: men are aggressive, confrontational; women are gentle and collaborative. Like many generalisations, this one can be disproved again and again from our daily experience; but like all generalisations, it has a smidgen of truth in it. What is far more important, though, is that the sexes can be complementary,

and at best can enrich each other through friendship and respect. Among the many Lay Dominicans whose lives testify to this are Catherine of Siena and Rose of Lima, both of whom had close friends among the friars. And if we are tempted to say “They were saints, I’m just an ordinary person” – what is a saint but an ordinary person who has made an extraordinary effort to be what s/he was called to be? Our brothers in the Lay Dominican Chapter “Our Lady of Mercy” in Norfolk Prison, Massachusetts have a saying that I love: “Every saint has a past; every sinner has a future”.

We have 800 years of history behind us. Our job now is to build for the next 800years! Praedicator gratiae, nos iunge beatis.

Ms. Ruth Anne Henderson op

• EUROMON OP 2012

The third regional assembly of prioresses and delegates from the Dominican monasteries of the Region ‘Europa Utriusque’ took place in 5-10 September in Krzeszowice near Krakow in Poland. Nuns from thirteen monasteries took part, coming from Austria, the Czech Republic, Ireland, Lithuania, Germany, Norway, Poland, Portugal and Switzerland. Among the invited guests were fr Brian Pierce, Promotor General of the Nuns, fr Viktor Hofstetter, ex-Promoter in the 1990’s, fr Józef Zborzil, Promotor of the Nuns in Poland, fr Krzysztof Popławski, the Polish Provincial, and for the last two days, fr Bruno Cadoré, the Master of the Order.

The assembly took place in a formation centre of the Missionaries of St Vincent de Paul. The official languages were the three main languages of this region: English, German and Polish. Listening to talks, sharing and discussions were possible thanks to five generous Dominican friars and sisters who served as interpreters, and provided us with simultaneous translation. Yet, the language barrier was not a problem. It was good to be together as brothers and sisters, talking about serious matters as well as conversing freely at the table, during walks in a beautiful park. We prayed together the liturgy each day in a different language. Sr Dominika rightly said that we communicated in four languages: English, Polish, German, and the language of heart.

First day Sr Josefa Strettiova from Prague, our representative on the International Commission of Nuns, introduced her report on the state of the monasteries of the Region during the last twenty years. Her report could be summed up in two words: a decrease in numbers, an increase in collaboration. Within the last two decades six monasteries were closed and two discontinued; the number of nuns also has reduced significantly. But there is much more unity and collaboration, mutual knowledge and willingness to help. Sr Josefa presented a beautiful example of a community of nuns in Nijmegen who, welcomed by a Congregation of Dominican Sisters, continue to live fully their contemplative life, which would not have been possible any longer in their former monastery. The Order seems to be fully alive in our region, with growing awareness of the mission of the nuns in collaboration with other branches of the Dominican family.

Fr Brian Pierce then presented his main concerns as Promoter of the Nuns. They pertain to: the quality of spiritual life in monasteries; providing good care for our elderly and ill sisters; and the need of a common initial formation programme. Under the present circumstances the Holy Spirit seems to be inviting us to communion, to collaboration in the area of care for our elderly and infirm sisters, and to cooperation in providing times and places of common study for our sisters in formation, to give them a chance to form relationships with their peers.

In his Biblical conference fr Brian introduced us into the theme of the Assembly: ‘Freedom and Obedience’. He presented Dominican obedience as the expectant waiting of poor people who,

knowing and accepting their own inner emptiness, receive with open hearts the Word of God only to give it to others, not to keep the gift for themselves. A good example of free, generous and joyful obedience is the anonymous boy with the five loaves and two fish who attentively listens to, and hears Jesus. Similarly, what we receive from God can transform our lives. The Johanne boy is an image of a true disciple who receives the Word of God with all his poor heart, giving everything he has to Jesus and to people.

Fr Viktor Hofstetter in his three conferences pointed out the unique relationship between obedience and common life in the Rule of St Augustine and in our Constitutions. Dominican obedience is only possible in friendship that liberates us. 'Obedience, by which we "conquer the deepest part of ourselves", aids greatly in attaining that interior liberty which belongs to the children of God and disposes us to the free gift of ourselves in love.' (LCM 19.III.)

Fr Viktor also showed the contemplative dimension of obedience, illustrated by the examples of St Nicholas of Flüe and the Jewish mystic Etty Hilesum. He also drew from the rich source of Meister Eckhart's homilies. We were especially impressed by his meditation on Mary and Martha, in which Eckhart reverses the stereotyped interpretation of this gospel story.

In group work we shared our reflections and lived experience. A summary was then presented to the whole assembly, enriching all of us.

From 8th September we were pleased to welcome among us the Master, fr Bruno Cadoré. He reminded us of our place and mission in the Order. The obedience of nuns of the Order of Preachers comes from listening to the word of God. "The word of God, *lectio divina*, is the centre of the LCM. It is not an option," said fr Bruno. "The goal of our life in the Order is to give always first place to the word of God." (cf. LCM 96.II.). In this sense the whole Order is contemplative. Fr Bruno also said: "In the liturgy we want to celebrate the word of God, just as we celebrate the coming of a friend, our meeting with him, when we introduce him joyfully to everybody. This is part of our mission: not just praying the breviary, but celebrating the word of God together." The word of God is the principle of unity of the Order, in which we are called to preach the good news of God's coming down to be with us in Jesus Christ.

Each day of our assembly was concluded with common Vespers and an hour of Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. But on Saturday night we had a lovely, joyful recreation at beautifully laid out tables in the dining room. There were skits, songs, jokes, and we admired the Irish dance of Sr Mairéad. During this evening fr Brian received the title of a 'nun honoris causa'.

On Sunday afternoon we went for a trip to Krakow. We visited the Sanctuary of the Divine Mercy in Łagiewniki. Then we went to the ancient monastery of Dominican friars, where we prayed at the tomb of St Hyacinth and listened to a very interesting exposition of fr Tomasz Gałuszka on St Hyacinth and the beginnings of the monastery of the Holy Trinity founded by him. Together with the friars we sang the Sunday Vespers, after which we had supper in the refectory that has been used by the friars invariably for nearly eight hundred years.

The next day we said good-bye with grateful and joyful hearts. Special thanks go to the sisters from various Polish and Czech monasteries who prepared the meeting. There was a general agreement that the next Euromon would take place in 1215. The venue and organizing committee are yet to be decided upon. At the moment we are just grateful to God and to all our brothers and sisters for this wonderful meeting.

By Srs. Zdislava Szymczynska OP and Josefa Strettiova OP

- **Sr. Maria of the Cross (1937-2012)**

Sister Maria of the Cross Gennaro, O.P., of the Dominican Nuns, Summit, N.J., entered eternal rest at St. Catherine's Infirmary, Caldwell, N.J. on Thursday, Sept. 20, 2012, at the age of 75. Sr. Maria was born in Brooklyn, N.Y., on Jan. 3, 1937, to Dr. Joseph and Alice Gennaro. She felt called to religious life at a very early age. She graduated from St. Angela Hall Academy, Brooklyn, and attended Marywood College, Scranton, Pa., for a year before entering the monastery on Sept. 8, 1956. Sister made first profession on March 25, 1958, and became a solemnly professed nun of the Order on March 25, 1961. During her more than 56 years at the Rosary Shrine, she has blessed the community with splendid artistic and musical talents; painting two murals, sketching the designs for five bas reliefs, directing the liturgical music and compiling a highly respected Catholic hymnal, the Summit choir book. She was also a very accomplished organist. For many years, Sr. Maria had generously and tirelessly cared for the sick and the dying as community infirmarian but she will perhaps best be remembered for her compassionate manner, listening ear and fun-loving spirit, regaling the Sisters with folk dances, square dances and festive songs of myriad varieties and languages. (From the official Obituary)

From the Dominican Nuns of Summit blog:

"While Sr. Maria was talented in many different areas, she will always be most known for The Summit Choirbook, a 15 year labor of love. Sr. Maria also wrote numerous Mass ordinaries. She adapted the entire Dominican rite gradual for chanting in English as well as an adaptation of the antiphonarium. She composed music specifically for singing in English for the Sacred Triduum, Easter Sunday and the Easter Octave, drawing on the chants used for the Latin texts in the Dominican rite. This is what is used at our monastery but has never been published. She translated and wrote her own arrangements for a collection of Polish hymns for the liturgical year—The John Paul II Songbook. This book is also used by the monastery but was never published because Sr. Maria always said it wasn't complete. Sr. Maria wrote three different sets of psalms tones for use at the Office. Her first set, written around 1967 is used by several Dominican monasteries along with the antiphons of Sr. Mary of the Pure Heart, OP, (RIP) West Springfield, MA. Sr. Maria of the Cross had a great love for the chant and for the chants of the Ukrainian rite and taught our community to sing these as well.

Her ability to write music as she heard it was something we tended to take for granted! If the community was watching a Papal Mass and she was struck by the responsorial psalm, or alleluia or a hymn she would grab some manuscript paper and begin scribbling a first draft and nothing could get her more exasperated than when the commentator would start talking and she couldn't hear!

Sr. Maria was also a gifted translator. She could speak French but also translate from Polish, Italian, French, and Spanish. She began learning Hebrew in the last 15 years of her life.

Sr. Maria had a great love for the simple things of life: books, cats, flowers, Sabina our dog. She was always grateful for things the sisters did and would show gratitude and enthusiasm and if she didn't like whatever it is, she would still be encouraging and wouldn't let on that it wasn't something she was particularly fond of, say for example, something you were cooking.

Sister had a great love of the Rosary, particularly the 54 day novena. If you were going through some difficulty she would say, "I'll pray a 54 day novena for you!" She was a sympathetic listener and people who called or came to the parlor while she was on turn duty found comfort in her ability to listen and her promise of prayers.

Please remember our Sr. Maria of the Cross in your prayers."

- **fr Timothy Radcliffe preaches on the Servant Leadership of Bishops**

fr Timothy Radcliffe OP recently preached at a Mass in Birmingham's St Chad's Cathedral marking the Silver Jubilee of the Episcopal ordination of Bishop William Kenney CP. Bishop Kenney is an auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Birmingham, and has particular oversight of Oxford, where fr Timothy is resident in the Priory of the Holy Spirit (Blackfriars).

Bishop William, I feel enormously honoured to be asked to preach at your twenty fifth anniversary of ordination as a bishop. You asked me to preach on what it means to be a good bishop. I confessed to one of my brethren that I was a little nervous about this since I had never been a bishop. He replied: 'Don't worry Timothy. Ignorance has never stopped you before.'

But I would like to thank you on behalf of the community of Blackfriars for being a good bishop for us. We are all deeply appreciative of your pastoral and loving care. In the gospel, Jesus prays: 'that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and thou in me, that they may become perfectly one.' The bishop is someone who should gather us into unity, practising what Paul calls the 'ministry of reconciliation'. This is a healing ministry, overcoming division in society and in the Church, in the parishes and the diocese, and within the Universal Church. But it is not any sort of unity. It is living the unity of the Triune God, 'that they may be one even as we are one'.

It took the Church centuries to grasp that this is a love of complete equality, of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We are baptised into an equal love. Though I think of an Irish Dominican, Cardinal Michael Browne, who returned home after years in Rome. He went to see the nun who had baptised him as a baby in emergency, to thank her. She was now very ancient and said, 'Your Eminence, it was honour to baptise you ... in the name of Jesus, Mary and Joseph.' For a moment of panic he wondered if he had been baptised at all, and then reflected that perhaps her mind had wandered a little.

The Father shares with the Son and the Spirit, everything, even complete divinity. And so the bishop is charged with building a unity that undoes inequality, which strengthens the weak, which purifies the community of domination and subjugation. Of course the Church has been from the beginning a hierarchy, otherwise she would just be a motley collection of disconnected individuals and not the Body of Christ. But it is a paradoxical sort of hierarchy, because if it is of God, then it must always be, as it were, undoing itself, subverting inequality. It does not always look like that. A former bishop of Limerick is supposed to have said: 'Everyone in this diocese is equal, from me downwards!' Bishops are ordained to govern. Obviously this involves a lot of administration, letter writing, meetings, taking of difficult decisions. But Christian government is always at the service of the rule of God, not the rule of the bishop. Charles Taylor, the Canadian historian of ideas, has plotted the rise of the culture of control.

After the sixteenth century, there was a loss of confidence in the rule of God's gentle providence, and so increasingly there was an impulse for us to manage everything. We see the emergence of absolute monarchs, centralised state control. Everything must be administered, monitored, controlled, culminating in all the absurdity of endless health and safety regulations. In this culture of control, the Church should be an oasis of freedom, for we believe in God's rule. But Cardinal George of Chicago complained recently that the Church 'is not a Christ-centred church, as it is supposed to be; it is a bishop-centred church' (National Catholic Reporter October 7 2009, Quoted Michael Crosby p.83)

But the bishop's rule, I believe, is about always opening the space for God's rule. This includes making sure that no one else rules: the bullies must not rule, the fearful must not be allowed to control things. The latest fashion cannot manipulate us; nor the media, nor people who threaten to

report you to Rome. God's rule works through the Holy Spirit which is poured into every member of the Body of Christ. So the bishop's government, I would think, is about helping the timid to speak up, the minority to have their word, the despised to be heard with respect and especially those who disagree with you. So the bishop's government is not about control, but opening the space for God's surprising grace. Jesus says in today's gospel: 'Sanctify them in truth.' Cardinal Suhard of Paris famously said that the first task of a priest is to speak the truth. There is no healthy unity except in the truth. The trouble is that when one starts to speak the truth, one is likely to stir up controversy, provoke division, and your desk will be deep in angry letters.

The greatest challenge for Church leadership today is to how to speak truthfully and preserve unity. If you take a strong stand on a moral issue, then the media will fall upon you, and if you question what the Church has so far taught, and explore some new development, then you will stir up a storm. How can you both speak the truth and keep unity? How can we be one without being fuzzy? This requires of us a deep confidence in the great teachings of our faith. But also a vast humility in the face of the mystery of God's love, which is always beyond our grasp. We are a teaching Church, entrusted with the great doctrines of the Creed, the Trinity, the divinity of Christ, the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. We must dare to teach these with confidence, otherwise our religion will just become tedious moralisation. But we must also be humble in the face of God's mystery, beggars after the truth, eager for what anyone can teach us, regardless of whether they are Christian or not. We should be attuned to the creative thinkers, the novelists and filmmakers, the poets and song writers, the wise men and women, for what they can teach us. St Dominic wanted us preachers to be beggars, not just for bread but beggars for the truth, which is why he sent the first friars off to the best universities to learn. Anyone who has insight into the heights and depths of love, regardless of whether they are Christians or not, has something to teach us. If we give them authority, then we shall have authority. Bishop Butler, who ordained me, said at the Vatican Council in his perfect Ciceronian Latin: 'Ne timeamus quod veritas veritati noceat'; 'Let us not fear that truth can endanger truth'.

All truth is of the Holy Spirit. So faced with the strange mixture of wisdom and stupidity of our contemporary society, let us not be defensive and afraid. If we are, we shall just become an embattled little sect. Let us gather in the wisdom of even the most unlikely people. Then we shall gather people into the unity of God's love, which has a place for everyone. And then, Jesus assures us, 'the world will know that thou has sent me, and has loved them, even as thou has loved me'.

- **Dominican Brothers Receive Papal Medals**

Saturday, September 15, will forever remain a memorable day in the Archdiocese of Ibadan (Nigeria) and the Dominican Province of Nigeria and Ghana. It was a three-in-one celebration for the archdiocese.

Firstly, it was the grand finale of the week-long Archdiocesan Eucharistic Congress. Secondly, it was the priestly ordination of three young men of the Archdiocese. Thirdly, it was equally a celebration of the investiture of new monsignors as well as the recognition of the Papal Honours (pro ecclesia et pontifice) conferred on sixteen consecrated persons, among whom were three of our Dominican brothers, namely Frs Peter Martin Otilio, Justus Pokrzewinski, and Edward Riley.

Addressing the consecrated persons honoured by the Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, the Archbishop, Rev Dr. Felix Alaba Job, admonished them never to lose steam in doing the work of the Lord. He thanked them for the several years of service to the local church in Ibadan to the glory of God and the salvation of God's holy people. In the same vein, he encouraged them to remain

good examples to God's people so that at the end each of them would be able to say like St. Paul: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."

Bros. Peter Otilio (81), Justus Pokrzewinski (80) and Edward Riley (79) are originally from the Province of St Albert the Great, USA but they have been missionaries in Nigeria for over 50 years. They are among the pioneer brothers from the Chicago province to open up the Dominican mission in Nigeria. They took active part in the establishment of the Province of St Joseph the Worker, Nigeria and Ghana, the growth of vocations in the province and the formation of the abundant vocations. There is hardly a brother from the province who did not pass through them during his formation.

Also, for over 50 years they have been involved in various pastoral works and in the opening of mission grounds within Nigeria especially in the Northern part which is predominantly Muslim. The formation house of the Province of Nigeria is located within the Archdiocese of Ibadan and our brothers have been very active in the archdiocese. Fr Justus Pokrzewinski has been the Diocesan Vicar for Religious for several years.

We felicitate with and congratulate our brothers for all they have done for the Province of Nigeria and Ghana and for the Nigerian Church as a whole. As an African proverb says, "you can tell a ripe corn from its look", our brothers deserve to be commended for their immense contributions. May the good Lord at the end, crown their good works here on earth with a crown of glory in his heavenly kingdom. Amen.

Bro. Samuel Onyiba, OP

- **Dominican Women at the heart of the Holy Preaching**

“The nuns are to seek, ponder and call upon him in solitude so that the word proceeding from the mouth of God may not return to him empty, but may accomplish those things for which it was sent.” LCM 1 II

The primary preaching of the nuns does not consist in what we ‘do’ but in who we ‘are’: contemplative women who have entered into the heart of God through union with Jesus Christ, the Word of God—women who have become the place of God’s salvation for all God’s people and all created reality.

It is so easy to define our preaching first of all by what we do—the ways in which we reach out to people through our interaction with others. To define the nuns’ preaching in this way is to define our participation in the preaching of the Order very superficially.

Our preaching should emanate from a deep inner core of contemplation—from union with God and with the prayer of Jesus. This is a primary element of the preaching of the whole Order given to us by St. Dominic. To be true to our vocation of preaching means to live our life of preaching from the very heart of God. Frequently our Brother Carlos, as Master of the Order, challenged the nuns to live our essential vocation as nuns of the Order as a witness and a challenge to the whole Order—to regain this essential relationship between contemplation and preaching which was at the very heart of Dominic’s charism.

Dominic’s preaching proceeded from the very core, the center of his heart. It was from Dominic’s inner core – where God indwelt – that his loving service to his brothers and sisters emanated.

The nuns are called to witness to the Order that our preaching, like Dominic's, is first of all grounded in a deep love relationship with Jesus Christ. The preaching of the Order is meant to flow from a deep inner union with God and then proceed outward as Good News to our brothers and sisters.

Like Dominic, the nuns are called to a life of essential intercession.

“In the cloister the nuns devote themselves totally to God and perpetuate that singular gift which the blessed Father had of bearing sinners, the down-trodden and the afflicted in the inmost sanctuary of his compassion.” LCM 35.1

Dominic followed the example of Jesus “Who offered prayer and supplication to God”. The nun's whole life is a living out of Dominic's life of intercession. We are called by our way of life to enter into the heart of God, and from that deep contemplative space intercede for the needs of the whole world. United with the prayer of Jesus:

“The nuns should keep before their eyes by day and by night Christ the Lord who, during his life on earth, offered up prayers and supplications to God with loud cries and tears, and now sits at the right hand of the divine majesty, always living to make intercession for us (Heb. 5:7, 1:3, 7:25)” LCM 74.I.

The whole purpose of our life according to LCM is that God's Word should dwell abundantly in the monastery. In this we are not excluded from the ministry of the word:

“For they listen to the word, celebrate it and keep it in their hearts (cf. Lk. 2:18), and in this way proclaim the Gospel of God by the example of their life.” LCM 96.I

Sr Jean Marie Dwyer is the author of the book, “The Sacred Place of Prayer” The book considers the human person as the sacred place of prayer. The first three chapters lay philosophical, biblical and theological groundwork for the understanding of the human person as the sacred place of prayer. Subsequent chapters develop this truth more fully. The chapters on desert spirituality, illusions and finding our center give insight into how we find our true self and our place of home and belonging. A major premise is that everything flows from our creation in God's image. Each of us is the privileged and sacred place of prayer.

Sr. Jean Marie Dwyer, OP
Monastery of Mary, Queen of Peace
Squamish, Vancouver, Canada

- **Book Launch for Irish Rosary Priest**

Irish Dominican, Fr Gabriel Harty, had his latest book “Heaven Sent. My Life through the Rosary” launched in Cork city, Ireland, recently by the bishop of Cork & Ross, Dr John Buckley.

For those who don't know Fr Gabriel, he has had a long and successful involvement in the promotion of the rosary in Ireland and elsewhere, being the provincial promoter for very many years.

Fr Gabriel aims to set in his new book how the Rosary is not only a contemplative prayer but a means of proclaiming scripture - 'the Gospel on its knees' as the famous French Dominican Lacordaire once said of the Rosary.

Being autobiographical, the book gives a real sense of the story of Fr Gabriel's life in relation to the rosary, his cultivation and devotion to it and a deep exposition of the healing and grace for all who pray this great prayer.

A brief paragraph from a chapter entitled The Dominican Tradition of the Rosary can give us an insight into how Fr Gabriel considers the Rosary as an important means of preaching for Dominicans:

'When a Dominican is clothed with the habit, he is invested with a large rosary beads to hang from his belt. He is like an army officer commissioned with a sword of office, as was David when given the very sword with which he had slain Goliath: "There is no other sword like that; give it to me." Any good preacher of the rosary is meant to use it not only for his own private prayer, but as an instrument of his missionary work and as a weapon for salvation. There is none like it.'

"Heaven sent. My life through the rosary" is published by Veritas and can be browsed and ordered through their website: <http://www.veritas.ie>

- **The Exaltation of the Cross**

Fr. Marcel Sigrist, O.P., shared the following reflection on The Exaltation of the Cross. Fr. Sigrist is a friar of the Province of France and is the Director of the École biblique et archéologique française de Jérusalem at the Ecole Biblique in Jerusalem.

A few years ago I had the opportunity to travel with presidents and administrators of Dominican Colleges and Universities in the U.S. I was excited for in my many years as a Dominican, it was the first time I would actually be able to see Caleruega, where St. Dominic grew up. High atop one of the hills stood this impressive cross pictured here. On September 14th Christians celebrate the Feast of the Triumph of the Cross. Many people may not be familiar with this feast but legend tells us that Saint Helen, the mother of Emperor Constantine, discovered the True Cross in 326 while she was on pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre was built and remains a place of pilgrimage in Jerusalem. This feast reminds us of the sacrifice by which our salvation was won. For many religious it marks a season of penitential practices that anticipate the Season of Lent, a time to deepen our life in Christ. In the Mass for the feast we pray, we beseech you, Lord Jesus Christ, to bring those you have redeemed by the wood of your life-giving Cross to the glory of the resurrection.

Even in the midst of suffering salvation finds its way to bring hope. The devastation of hurricane Isaac, the struggles of the Middle East, and the challenges of secularization remind us of Christ's Cross even today. Let us join in prayer this month of September and remember those most in need of the hope found in the life-giving Cross of Christ.

Fr Kevin Gabriel Gillen, OP

Clarity and the Cross

Instagram has taken off like a rocket. In just under two years this unique social network has gained over 80 million registered users. Instagram thrives on turning photos of everyday life into trendy,

artsy images. Photos are squared to resemble old Polaroid images, and filters are applied to give the photo an artistic look, with the saturation adjusted to emphasize different parts of the picture. As more and more people choose to transform their snapshots with Instagram, I ask, “Why are Instagram images preferred over a normal photo?” I think the answer is that the Instagram filters do something our eyes cannot: They adjust the color and the saturation of light in order to distract us from seeing the reality of the entire picture. We focus on one thing while the rest is blurred or skewed.

It is tempting to apply something like an Instagram filter to today’s feast, The Exaltation of the Cross, because this is a feast that puts our faith to the test. Today we celebrate the supreme paradox: an instrument of death became the sign of everlasting life. This is a startling reality that is hard to blur or soften. One of the cruelest and most barbaric forms of execution ever devised is now a revered image and a commonplace sight. The cross adorns the walls of our homes and is even worn as jewelry around our necks. Christ has transformed the cross into a thing of beauty and has claimed it as a symbol of his victory. As St. Thomas the Apostle can attest, the very wounds of the crucifixion now reveal the glory of the Resurrection (cf. Jn 20:27–28).

Christ came to conquer death and destroy sin by shedding his blood on the Cross. By the redemption won upon it, the Cross has become the source of all grace. We now share in the victory of the Cross by uniting ourselves to Christ in a life of supernatural virtue, for “the goal of the virtuous life is to become like God” (CCC 1803). The infused virtues are freely given to the soul and “adapt man’s faculties for participation in the divine nature” (CCC 1812). Through the Cross we are granted access to the divine, not just to view God as a spectator, but to be united with Him. In virtue of this union we look upon the world from his perspective, seeing the reality of his creation. He draws us to Himself, healing our vision, which has been blurred and darkened by sin.

Through the use of a camera phone, Instagram blurs an image, modifying what was a true depiction of reality. Through the Cross, Christ discards anything that blurs reality, conforming us to himself through the life of supernatural virtue. As we find in St. Catherine of Siena’s Dialogue, Christ has become for us a bridge between heaven and earth. Speaking to Catherine, God the Father says,

“The bridge has walls of stone so that travelers will not be hindered when it rains. Do you know what stones these are? They are the stones of true solid virtue. These stones were not, however, built into walls before my Son’s passion. So no one could get to the final destination even though they walked along the pathway of virtue. For heaven had not yet been unlocked with the key of my Son’s blood, and the rain of justice kept anyone from crossing over.”

Today we exalt the Cross. For by the Cross the fullness of the virtues has been unlocked for us, and now we have a sure path to God.

Bro. Joseph-Anthony Kress, OP

<http://www.dominicanablog.com/2012/09/14/clarity-and-the-cross/>

- **Collaborative Dominican Novitiate**

The Collaborative Dominican Novitiate (CDN) is a joint effort by the women in the Dominican Order in the USA to provide its members in initial formation with an experience of the larger Dominican Family. To date, there are 17 Dominican congregations participating in the venture.

The CDN is situated at St Louis, Missouri and its experience lasts for a span of 10 months, beginning in August until the end of June. Each year a new group of novices comes together to

create its own unique experience of community with fresh spirit, abundant gifts, and eagerness to grow in the Dominican tradition.

The purpose of the canonical year in the CDN is to provide a quality experience of Dominican community life, prayer, study, ministry, exposure to and practice of preaching skills, and personal growth for the novices of the member groups. The process of this collaborative experience is intended to:

- Offer a rich novitiate experience
- Encourage a supportive peer group
- Share the giftedness and resources of the congregations involved
- Promote the charism of the Order.

This August, four novices began their canonical year at CDN: Adela-Iuliana Langa, Alexa Chipman, Jennifer (Jenn) Schaaf, and Renéé Jacqueline Hala Asmar. Sisters Joye Gros, OP (Dominican Sisters of Peace) and Megan McElroy, OP (Dominican Sisters of Grand Rapids) both function as directors at CDN. The CDN is also celebrating its 25th anniversary.

• **My Away from Jerusalem**

Fr Marcel Sigrist, OP is a French Dominican and the current Director of École Biblique of Jerusalem. Here, he shares with us his current research works.

"For a number of years now I have spent my summers with the great collections of cuneiform tablets, like those found in the British Museum or at Yale. The time allows me to decompress after an academic year in Jerusalem, as well as to gather new epigraphic material that I would like to work on during the year. In this way I have been able to produce many editions of texts.

This year, due to particular circumstances of life at the École, I left Jerusalem June 16th to spend 8 days in Alsace for a family celebration. From there I went directly to Oklahoma to catalogue the Green Collection that interests me above all biblical texts, old as well as new. My interest in the collection is that it includes even cuneiform tablets that date well before the time of Christ. I was able to date the younger ones to the Akkadian Empire and almost completely got through Richard Caplice's grammar.

From Oklahoma, I left for the Babylonian Collection at Yale University in New Haven. During those 8 weeks, I worked on the royal seals of tablets 4,000 years old; seals which were sealed prior to other tablets. The work consisted of noting those that still have a legible seal, not because of the age of the tablet, but because of the more or less good application on the clay. The best parallel would be postmarks on postage stamps that are now only partially legible. It is a thankless job that requires twisting and turning the tablet in all directions so as to be sure you have not missed any symbol on the seal.

In short, it is a daunting task, but one that is necessary. From September 19-20, there will be conference on 150 years of French archaeology in the Holy Land organized by the IFPO (Jean-Sylvain Caillou) and the École Biblique, and on September 21, I will arrive in Jerusalem to retake the task of directing the École".

- **A Catholic Center at NYU**

Two Cardinals, a Rabbi, and an Imam found common ground for praise this past Saturday with the opening of the New York University Catholic Center. In audience for the much-anticipated occasion were close to two hundred people that included parishioners of Saint Joseph's in Greenwich Village, FOCUS missionaries, NYU students and alumni, a half dozen Sisters of Life, a small army of Dominican Friars as well as several priests from the Archdiocese.

His Excellency Cardinal Dolan delivered a heartfelt homily for the Saturday Vigil Mass at the newly christened Cardinal John Newman Chapel. He praised the location of the NYU Catholic Center in "the heart of things" as being the right place for Catholics to shine their light on the world, as well as to live out Christ's command: "Be Not Afraid!"

Following the mass there was a dedication ceremony with the President of NYU Grad/Law Michelle Fitzgerald holding court as master of ceremonies. Functioning as an inter-religious tag-team, NYU's Rabbi Yehuda Sarna and the NYU Muslim Chaplain Imam Khalid both sang high praise for the Pastor of Saint Joseph's Fr. John McGuire, O.P., who has worked hard to make the Catholic Center and his parish of Saint Joseph's in Greenwich Village a welcoming spiritual home for NYU students in search of community in New York City. The rabbi and imam gave moving examples of how he provided them with support, both spiritual and practical when they needed it.

It was Cardinal Egan who went on to explain with humor and reverence how Fr. John is a tireless worker, and expects the same zeal from his co-workers in Christ, without exception. Cardinal Dolan concluded by blessing the people and the center with holy water.

However, this was not the last act as a photograph of Cardinal Egan was unveiled as part of the dedication of the "Edward Cardinal Egan Catholic Center." Earlier, Cardinal Dolan said that he was not offended by the choice of names since he expected that the dining room table would bear his namesake.

There are 18,000 Catholic students at NYU, so please pray for the new administrators of the Catholic Center: Fr. Alan White, O.P. and Fr. Austin Litke, O.P., and the FOCUS missionaries who support them.

For more pictures, <http://www.flickr.com/photos/dominicanfriars/sets/72157631514104237/>

Fr. Kevin Gabriel Gillen, O.P.

- **A New Monastery on The Hill**

After settling in Western Canada 13 years ago, the Dominican Contemplative Nuns welcomed hundreds of guests, both lay and religious, to their new home for the dedication Mass of Queen of Peace Monastery.

"This monastery and its chapel bridge the gap between beauty in the world of nature and the unfathomable beauty of eternal life, between the beauty of things and God Who is beauty itself," Archbishop J. Michael Miller, CSB, said during his homily Aug. 8 on the Feast of St. Dominic. Archbishop Miller celebrated the Mass with Friar Andre Descoteaux, OP, the Dominican Order provincial; Dominican priests from across Canada; and many priests of the archdiocese.

“We are praying that this monastery will be for the Dominican nuns, and for all of us, a place where God reveals Himself,” Archbishop Miller continued. He said the monastery reveals God’s “tremendous majesty” in the natural beauty of Canada, which he called a reflection of Mount Zion.

The monastery sits in the Coast Mountains in Squamish, out of range of cell phones. The building sits on a hilltop and behind the altar of the chapel are floor-to-ceiling windows, giving a view of the property and the surrounding glaciers. “With stone, and wood, and glass, this building points to the One Who is our Rock of Refuge,” Archbishop Miller said. “Truly, the beauty here is a pathway to God, and the choral prayer, the Church’s praise of the Creator which the nuns faithfully carry out in this chapel.”

In November 1999, with the sponsoring support of Farmington Hills Monastery, a group of five nuns coming from monasteries in the United States, responded to a call from the Master of the Order, Brother Timothy Radcliffe, who asked that all the branches of the Order establish a Dominican presence on the West Coast of Canada which is a place of mission and the door to Asia.

Sr Claire Rolf, OP

- **A Dominican’s Appeal to the UN**

"The news, continually increasing, regarding violence against Christian children are really annoying, disturbing. For Christians, it seems that living in Pakistan is more and more difficult. There are many Christian girls kidnapped, raped and converted to Islam by force and even killed as in the case of Amariah Masih, the 'Maria Goretti of Pakistan'. There are children kidnapped and killed for shady dealings, as the recent case of Sunil Masih or Shazia Bashir. Now the children are also accused of blasphemy, as Rimsha Masih. If children are attacked, it means that a limit of intolerable abuse and inhumanity have been reached": This is what the Dominican Fr. James Channan, OP, Director of "Peace Center" in Lahore, strongly committed to interreligious dialogue says to Fides.

After the case of Rimsha, the Director, for years at the head of the Commission for Dialogue of the Episcopal Conference of Pakistan, puts the spotlight on the law of blasphemy: "This controversial law, for which so much blood has been spilled in Pakistan, continues to be a tool to persecute Christians, Hindus, but also Muslims. It is an unjust and ambiguous law. As Christians, we have been asking to repeal or modify it for such a long time in order to reduce the abuses. And in this battle there are many organizations for human rights established by Muslim citizens beside us."

Christians in Pakistan have launched an appeal: "We call on the government to forcefully take responsibility, to ensure respect for human dignity and basic rights of all citizens, whatever creed they profess. I think international awareness is also necessary: we ask, therefore, a special mission on behalf of the UN Special Raporter for religious freedom."

- **The Dominican Clerical Fraternity**

Pursuant to the charge from the Master of the Order to organize an international gathering of representatives from the priestly fraternities all over the world, the first General Assembly was held on August 6-9, 2012, at Caleruega Retreat Center in Batangas, Philippines.

A number of Provinces in the Order expressed interest in the outcome of the assembly, though no representatives were able to come except for Fr. Jesper Fich, who earlier worked with Fr. Prakash Lohale (Socius for Apostolic Life) in conducting a survey in 2009. Apparently, the same conditions affirm the findings of the survey, that is, only relatively few provinces currently have an active

fraternity, while others are interested in learning more about the movement. Nevertheless, participants from the Philippines give a good representation of different ecclesiastical territories all over the country.

The participants include a mixture of diocesan priests and seminarians, either working in their dioceses or undertaking further studies and formation. It is also interesting to note that 11 of these are in the field of Canon Law. Some bishops who are members of the Fraternity also expressed their best wishes even though they are not able to attend.

With the scriptural passage from Mark 3:14 as guide, the organizers adapted the theme, “We gather to be sent” for the assembly. As the Apostles were called by the Lord Jesus in order to be with him and to be sent forth, the participants were likewise gathered to affirm their Dominican identity and spirituality, and to be sent forth to mission as members of the Dominican family in the priestly fraternity of St. Dominic.

As stated in the letter of the Master, it is in the interest of further consolidating this dimension of the Order, and as a way to respond to the request of the Chapter (ACG Rome n° 233) concerning the revision of the Rule of Priestly Fraternities that the assembly shall undertake a fruitful reflection on the following:

1. the specific mission of the Dominican Priestly Fraternities;
2. recommendations concerning modifications to bring to the Rule;
3. the manner of organizing these Fraternities in the midst of the Order; and
4. the needs and expectations in order to strengthen the mission in them.

As part of the preparatory steps for the 2012 Assembly, members of the Fraternity based in the University of Santo Tomas Central Seminary undertook preliminary discussions on the Rule. Results of these discussions were included in the kits that were distributed to the participants during the assembly, along with copies of the letter from the Master, and the Rule to be evaluated. These preliminary observations served as starting points in the group sessions during the assembly, which also followed the same classification done in the UST seminary earlier. Copies of the Rule were also sent earlier to the participants in order to provide them opportunities for initial familiarization with the tasks.

- **Fr Anthony Akinwale, OP Has Been Appointed as An Expert For The Synod of Bishops**

The XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, will take place in the Vatican from the 7 to 28 October 2012 on the theme of the new evangelization for the transmission of the Christian faith.

In accordance with the provisions in the 'Ordo Synodi Episcoporum, the Secretary General of Synod of Bishops, with the approval of the Supreme Pontiff has appointed Fr Anthony Alaba Akinwale, OP as *Adiutores Specialis secretaries* (or experts) for the Synod.

Fr Anthony Akinwale was born in 1962 at Lagos in Nigeria. He entered the Order and made profession in 1981. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1987. He has a doctorate in Systematic Theology and he is

currently a Professor of Systematic Theology and the President of the Dominican Institute at Ibadan, Nigeria.

- **Cardinal Schönborn, OP is appointed Synod Father**

The Holy Father has appointed some prelates as Synod Fathers for the forthcoming Thirteenth Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, due to take place from 7 to 28 October on the theme: "The New Evangelisation for the Transmission of the Christian Faith".

One of those appointed as a Synod Father is Cardinal Christoph Schönborn, OP of the Archdiocese of Vienna, Austria. There are altogether; 12 Cardinals, 1 Patriarch, 11 Archbishops, 8 Bishops and 4 Major Superiors.

- **The Coordinator of the Preparations for the Jubilee of the Order**

The Master of the Order has appointed fr. José Gabriel Mesa of the Province of Colombia, as the Coordinator of the preparations for the Jubilee of the Order in 2016. Working directly with the Master of the Order and the General Council, fr. José Gabriel will prepare the program for the Jubilee of the Order which will be presented to the General Chapter of Trogir in 2013.

- **Fr Máté Barna, OP is Reelected**

The brothers of the General Vicariate of Hungary have reelected Fr Máté Ferenc Barna as their Vicar General for another term of four years. This was done at the Chapter of the Vicariate at Sopron on the 4th of September 2012. The Master of the Order has since confirmed his reelection.

Born in the Hungarian city of Szeged in 1966, he entered the Order in 1991 and made his first profession the following year. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1998. He was first elected Vicar General in September 2008.

We wish him the best in his second term.

Calendar of the Master: October 2012

Sept 25-Oct 3: Visitation to Porto Rico and Venezuela

7-28: Synod of Bishop in Rome

30-4 Nov: Meeting of Cooperator Brothers in Lima, Peru