An interview with Fr Antonio Visentin; a son of the Province of St Dominic in Italy and a missionary in Turkey

Two hundred meters below the Galata Tower, hides an enduring Dominican presence, that has survived wars and earthquakes, emperors, Sultans and presidents. Today, as never before, it has been reduced to a flicker: four friars between Istanbul and Izmir. The Osservatore Domenicano (the official website of the students of the Province of St Dominic in Italy) has asked fr Antonio Visentin, Superior of the Community, to relate to us the atmosphere on the Bosporus.

Antonio, how did your vocation start?
I was born on the 23rd of March 1953, in Campo San Piero where Saint Anthony of Padua died. We were poor and the parish was far away and we went to the Franciscan church.

When a Dominican, fra. Pierbon, came to speak to us at the catechism class, he asked who wanted to spend a week in the convent. I was shy and I did not answer. My cousin answered on my behalf and in this was how I entered the “network of the black and white”.

… all Dominicans know your love for Brazil.
I have always had the desire for the missions. The 1st of December 1989 I left by ship from Genoa. I spent 21 days at sea. I left in the winter and arrived in the summer. I felt immediately at home. I stayed in Brazil for 6 years. We were supposed to go to the Amazon (and now there is a community there) … I would have loved to serve the most abandoned people. Instead, the provincial called me back to Italy.

And Turkey?
From 2012; precisely on the 2nd of February, the Day of the Consecrated Life. For me it is like a new consecration. I am very motivated: the mission, the road, adventure, the cultures of the world. Since my childhood, I have found within me this gift for the missions.
At 60 years, to get back to the game again and learn a language in such a different culture is not easy. Maybe, as I tell my brothers, I arrived in the wrong hemisphere. It is a form of poverty. I feel a part of the life of the millions of people who live as foreigners, in different cultures and their struggles are bigger than mine. I already have a house but they must find a job. It is poverty, because you do not have immediate contact with each other, to speak, to know each other, to understand. On the other hand, I try to live my life more deeply. But Turkey is a world so close and completely new. This fascinates me.

**What do the Dominicans do in Turkey?**
We provide the diakonia of contemplation, as those Christian monks who filled Mohammed with wonder, praying even at night. We are given the gift to live our spirituality: contemplata aliis tradere. These are the times of prayer to dictate your life and that of the community. And here we are called five times a day to prayer by the muezzin. Sometimes I say this to those around me: listen, they are calling us to prayer. We live in a communion with the Turkish people in this aspect.

And then humanity: we must be cordial people. This is a city full of bridges and cordiality is a bridge with the Turkish people who are very hospitable. This our home must be a sign of hospitality.

Finally the study: a dedicated time to deepen the knowledge of the mystery of God and of the Church in a path of communion with our sister Christian Churches and the great challenge with our Muslim brothers who have a totally different view of life and of God. Making contact with people is simple, when you are on the street, go shopping, on the boat. But indeed, this is not enough. It is also necessary to have more important contacts, at the university with those who form the mentality of a country, a culture.

**When did the Dominicans arrive in Turkey?**
We have been here since 1230, to bring our Orthodox brothers back into communion with Rome and take care of the Levantine community. There was no real concern for dialogue with Islam at that time. By reading the chronicles of our brothers, we understand that there was not much regard for the Turkish Muslim world then. Now things have changed. In this city, in this place, I bless God even more for the gift given to the Church and to humanity by the opening of the Vatican Council II. When John XXIII was a nuncio here, he already invited us to move out. He said that we are no longer in the time of the catacombs.

Now the parish community is gone, we must understand where to focus our attention, our passion, our pastoral care. But rather than ask ourselves: “What are we doing here?” we should ask ourselves: ”What is God doing for us?” We will develop projects, but things do not change. Planning is important, but here it is sometimes as if the ground is being ripped right out from under your feet. It’s like our life is useless, as the Gospel says: unworthy servants.

I believe instead that we must let ourselves be moulded by the Spirit of God and by the concrete history of this country, like the tree carved by nature.
fr. Luca Refatti

**Dominican Iraqi sister tells of experience with refugees**
Dominican-Iraqi sister Habiba Bihnam Toma spoke about the time she spent helping refugees after bombings in northern Iraq in 2014.

Toma said she and her fellow sisters did not want to leave Qaraqosh, Iraq until everyone in the village had fled, but upon hearing news that ISIS was on its way, they were forced to retreat.

“"A friend called me and tearfully pleaded that the sisters leave quickly,” Toma, who began learning English in the fall, said. “ISIS had already entered…and we were in grave danger.”

ISIS demanded the remaining survivors convert to Islam, pay monthly fees or be killed.
Between this and the explosions, 25,000 Iraqis were forced to leave their homes, many with little more than the clothes on their backs.

“(The) only (things) we brought with us (were) our prayer books,” Toma said. “It was a shock to leave the walls of our convent and see the streets full of cars and people, all doing as we were doing, leaving our (homes) out of fear for our lives.”

Alongside their neighbors, the Dominican sisters traveled 48 miles east to Ankawa, Iraq.

“The main road was (so) filled with cars and people walking that we could not continue,” Toma said. “We abandoned the road for (an) unused path.”

A soldier guarding the border of Ankawa’s providence, Kurdistan, kept the Dominican sisters from entering by car.

“I told him all of (the) sisters can’t walk,” Toma said. “They are elderly.”

They had barely reached Ankawa when ISIS invaded.

“We heard the sound of gunshots,” Toma said. “We were afraid. (We) cried, prayed and moved slowly among the thousands of people crouching to the ground to avoid the bullets and yelling, ‘Where are you, O God? Why have you abandoned us?’”

Toma said survivors lived on the streets and in churches. Many sought shelter in incomplete buildings that did not have windows or roofs. The only heat they had to prepare food with was from the sun. Many were crying. They were sleep-deprived, hungry and thirsty.

Like the Dominican sisters, the priests and bishops who had also fled and suffered the same fate refused to leave the refugees’ sides.

“Finally, all of the sisters arrived at the convent,” Toma said. “(We) numbered 75 living in a building meant to hold 20.”

The sisters and priests split into 15 teams of two to travel across Ankawa and assist at various camps, with some living in a school abandoned for the summer.

“All day we visited (the refugees), listened to their suffering, encouraged them to be patient, wait in hope and strength of their faith,” Toma said.

The sisters gathered adults to pray and kept the children busy at play.

They accepted donations of food, clothing, water and money.

“Each family had limited living space, several sharing one classroom, others crowding under the stairs or living in tents,” Toma said. “The men and young people slept outside under the stars.”

Eventually, school was back in session, and the refugees were forced out to the tents. Toma recalled that the rain brought snakes and scorpions, but eventually the church managed to rent houses for the displaced families.

“Some of the young adults (had) given up their college in order to work and provide for their families,” Toma said. “Because all of our (younger) students were without school, we noticed an increase in violent behavior among them.”

As a result, the sisters opened four makeshift kindergartens and two elementary schools.

“Everyone was suffering because ISIS destroyed not only our homes and schools but our churches and monasteries and all the landmarks of our 2,000-year-old Christian culture,” Toma said. “We feel that we can
only return to our village when there is peace and when the international community can (ensure) our safety and protection.”
Mallory Kutnick (mbkutnick@eiu.edu)

The 20th Study Week and Conference: Science and Religion

The Croatian Dominican Province in conjunction with other educational institutions is organizing the 20th Study Week (BA and MA level: 28 - 31 August 2017) and Conference (research level: 1-2 September 2017) which will take place in Trogir (Hotel sv. Križ, Arbanija), Croatia.

Theme: Science and Religion

Keynote speakers:
Stephen Priest (Faculty of Philosophy, University of Oxford)
Keith Fox (Professor of Biochemistry, Principal Investigator (Nucleic Acids), Associate Director of the Faraday Institute for Science and Religion, University of Cambridge)

Call for Papers:
Applications are invited to attend and/or deliver papers at the Study Week and Conference.
Suitable paper topics for the 2017 conference include:
- Evolution and human genetics
- Are science and religion complementary or in conflict?
- Could theology have the status of a science?
- Can a scientific culture provide a satisfactory substitute for religion?
- What does science tell us about religious postulates such as God, free will, and the soul?
- Could God intervene in the natural world?
- Does science provide an exhaustive view of human persons?

Official Language: English
Participants are invited to attend the Summer School, Conference, or both.

Those who wish to deliver papers at the conference should submit a proposal that includes: title of presentation, a paper abstract approximately 250-300 words in length, which includes the problem with which your scholarship engages, and the contribution you plan to make.

All applicants are requested to send as a separate document: name and surname, status/title, institution, contact address, e-mail and phone number, CV.

All applications and proposals should be submitted as e-mail attachments (entitled: ‘Application for the Trogir 2016’ (a) ‘Study Week’ (b) ‘Conference' (c) ‘Study Week and Conference’) by 1st of June 2017 to: sk885@cam.ac.uk.

Fees:
The registration fee will be 350 euros (for the Study Week); 150 euros (for the Conference) and will cover the costs of the Study Week/Conference and accommodation (some scholarships available).

This event is organised by The Croatian Dominican Province, the Centre of Excellence for Integrative Bioethics (Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb), the Ian Ramsey Centre for Science and Religion (University of Oxford), the Faraday Institute for Science and Religion (University of Cambridge), the Emmy Noether Group (Ruhr University Bochum), the Institute of Philosophy (University of Warsaw) and the Humane Philosophy Project.
Srečko Koraliča, OP - organizer
Marija Selak
Mikołaj Sławkowski-RodeWeir
Laying of the Foundation Stone of Saint Albert the Great Chapel, Nyagatare

The Master of the Order, fr. Bruno Cadoré layed the foundation stone for the building of Saint Albert the Great Chapel of the Dominican brothers in Nyagatare, in North-Eastern Rwanda. The ceremony took place on Sunday 12th March 2017, at the end of Mass in which about fifty people participated.

In addition to the Vicar provincial of Rwanda and Burundi, fr. Sixbert Hategekimana and the prior of St. Dominic’s priory, Kigali, fr. Benjamin Ngororabanga, the following were also present: the Dominican (Sisters) Missionaries of Africa (DMA) from the communities of Matimba and Nyabwishonwezi, the representative of the Mayor of Nyagatare District, the president of the parish council of Nyagatare, the architect and the contractor, and also the associates of the brothers in the apostolate.

Located at 152 km from Kigali, the capital of Rwanda, near the borders with Uganda and Tanzania, the new community of Nyagatare is a filial house of Saint Dominic’s priory in Kigali. The chapel of Saint Albert the Great, which will be completed in nine months, will have a capacity of 350 seats. It will serve as a conducive place for liturgical celebrations for the brothers but also the local and regional Christians who will come for retreat sessions at the Spiritual Center which the brothers plan to build in the third phase of the Nyagatare project.

In the Provincial Vicariate of Rwanda and Burundi, these conventual churches are important places of preaching for the brothers and presence of the Order in the local Churches of these countries. These conventual churches are often frequented by many faithful who come from many places and from different social categories, attracted by the substantial and well prepared preaching of the brothers. With time these conventual churches become very small and require expansion. The challenge for the brothers is not so much the requirement to properly prepare their preaching as the needs of the faithful demand, but to train these faithful, in a spirit of a domestic church. To make them evangelizers of their different environments of life, with a strong sense of belonging to the local Church. Far from creating small identity churches of the Dominicans of Kigali, Bujumbura or Nyagatare, cut off from the realities of the dioceses, the challenge of preaching for the brothers is in fact to serve the local Churches by highlighting the specific dimension of the family which is characterized by the Order and stress its communal dimension.

Such will be the mission of St. Albert the Great Chapel of the Dominican community in Nyagatare. This new Dominican community in Nyagatare was opened on the 7th November 2015, on the feast of All Saints of the Order and the first day of the Jubilee Year of the 800th anniversary of the confirmation of the Order. The new community of Nyagatare is currently made up of four brothers of whom three are priests and one is a student brother. The Ordinary, Bishop Servilien Nzakamwita, Bishop of Byumba, has entrusted three main apostolates to the Dominicans: the pastoral care of university chaplaincy and intellectuals, pastoral care in secondary schools, and the pastoral care of families. The brothers also assist the priests of the only parish of the city of Nyagatare by serving six out of the 24 outstations of the parish.

Considering the history, religious and socio-political context of Nyagatare, the brothers have shown a lot of apostolic creativity. After the first phase of Nyagatare project, which was the opening of a new community, and the second phase, which is the construction of the chapel, the third phase will be building a social and cultural center with facilities for sporting activities for the integration of young people into a healthy social environment, and a retreat center to welcome retreatants from the region.

The laying of the foundation stone of the St. Albert the Great Chapel of Nyagatare was held during the canonical visit of the Provincial Vicariate of Rwanda and Burundi which took place from 6 to 14 March 2017. fr Gabriel Samba,op
On Saturday, March 25, 2017, on the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord, fr. Richard Appora, OP, was ordained Coadjutor Bishop of the Diocese of Bambari in the Central African Republic (CAR). The ordination took place in the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception in Bangui, during a Mass presided over by Cardinal Dieudonné Nzapalainga, Metropolitan Archbishop of Bangui, and principal consecrator. His Lordship Pierre Raffin, OP, Bishop Emeritus of Metz from France was the first consecrator, and His Lordship Cyr-Nestor Yapaupa, Bishop of Alindao, a neighbour of the diocese of Bambari was the second consecrator. Eight bishops of the nine dioceses in the CAR were present at the celebration. Also present was the President of the Central African Republic, His Excellency Faustin-Archange Touadera and his wife, the Vice-President of the National Assembly, members of the government, as well as representatives from other religions.

At least two hundred priests from all over the country, many religious, male and female, hundreds of faithful, including those from the Diocese of Bambari and from Cameroon, relatives, friends and acquaintances of Bishop Richard, also took part in the ordination.

The Dominican presence was remarkable: brothers, apostolic sisters, laity and Dominican youth came to support their brother. The Master of the Order, fr. Bruno Cadoré was represented by his Socius for Africa, fr. Gabriel Samba. The Prior Provincial of the Dominican Province of France, fr. Michel Lachenaud, was there in person, as well as two former Vicars of the Provincial Vicariate of Equatorial Africa: frs. François Dominique Charles and Maurice Billet, not to mention the current Vicar Provincial, fr. Jean-Paul Kamaheu and all the vicarial council. The Vice-Province of St. Augustine in West Africa was represented by fr. Paul Dago, who came from Abidjan, while the Vice-Province of St. Pius V of the D.R. Congo was represented by fr. Louis-Marie Bambou who came from Kinshasa. The list is far from being exhaustive!

At the opening of the celebration, after the presentation of the ordinand by the Provincial of France, the “chargé d'affaires” of the Nunciature of Bangui read out the letter of apostolic mandate. In his homily, Cardinal Nzapalainga relied on the three readings of the Annunciation to emphasize the three functions of the bishop, namely, to teach, to sanctify and to govern. Given that the Diocese of Bambari is in the area still being occupied by armed groups, the cardinal invited Bishop Richard to be courageous and to support the faith of this people very much affected.

The episcopal ordination properly speaking consisted of three principal rites. First the preparatory rites with the invocation of the Holy Spirit, the interrogation of the ordinand and the litany of the Saints. Then the essential rites marked by the imposition of the hands of the three consecrators and all the Bishops present, the imposition of the book of the Gospels on the head of the ordinand, and the consecratory prayer. The rites of ordination ended with the complementary rites: anointing of the head of the new Bishop with the oil of the Holy Chrism, remissions of the Gospel, the ring, the mitre and the crook, and finally the Kiss of peace. Accompanied by the second consecrator, the new Bishop blessed the faithful by going around the whole cathedral.

After communion, there were three speeches. First was the message of the Master of the Order read by his Socius for Africa. Brother Bruno invites Bishop Richard to realize his vocation as a preacher now through his episcopal ministry, being attentive to the thirst for God of our contemporary world. The Provincial of France, asked Bishop Richard to be simple and close to the people. Finally, Bishop Richard gave thanks to God for all his blessings.

On Sunday, 26 March, His Lordship Richard presided over a Mass of thanksgiving in the church of the community of our brothers in Bangui where he still resides. He will be joining his diocese of Bambari after a Mass of thanksgiving that he will celebrate in his parish of Bangui, on Sunday 2nd April. The massive participation in the ordination of Bishop Richard testifies that the brothers are well integrated into the local Church.
Good and fruitful episcopal ministry, dear brother, Bishop Richard Appora, op. fr. Gabriel Samba, op.

**Dominican Nuns share lectures over the cyberspace**

From the nuns of the Monastery of Our Lady of the Rosary, Summit, NJ: On March 26-28 we hosted Fr. Augustine Thompson, OP from the Western Province for lectures on Dominican Conversus/Lay/Cooperator Brothers (and a little on the sisters!). Fr. Thompson has been studying this topic in depth in preparation for a book he is writing.

This series of lectures was a little extra-ordinary in that it was something of an international event. We had Dominican monasteries from three countries participating: America, Canada, and Trinidad. This involved a little scrambling as we tried to find times that suited three different time zones!

They joined us via GoToMeeting to take part in the lectures as a sort of 'trial run' to see if/how this would work as part of the on-going formation programs the Association runs for the monasteries. We had a wonderful, patient lecturer and the format seemed to work well. We’ll have to wait and hear the experiences of the other participating monasteries to see what needs tweaking.

The four monasteries participating were us, Queen of Peace Monastery in British Columbia, Canada, Rosary Monastery in Trinidad, and the Monastery of the Infant Jesus in Lufkin, Texas. You can read about Lufkin’s experience of the lectures in their blog post Monastic Cyberspace.

Fr. Thompson spent each session lecturing and then had time for questions and comments at the end. It wasn't just the Summit nuns who could ask questions, the sisters in the other monasteries raised their hands and Sr. Mary Magdalene (or the rest of us!) would alert Father and they’d be able to interact. It was really neat to attend the lectures with three other monasteries: an incredible way to share lectures without leaving the monastery, as well as a great opportunity to foster relationships between the monasteries.

**REINSPIRA’17: First International Conference on Religious Marketing**

On April 21-22 2017 the province of Hispania (Spain) is organizing the First International Conference on Religious Marketing. This conference fills a gap that was felt in the Church and mixes 3 passions: Creativity + Marketing + Church to create the first Congress of Religious Marketing.

To preach the gospel is the mission for which the Order was founded and it is important to think about how to communicate and connect with the world. In order to conduct the mission, Saint Dominic had friars, nuns and laypeople at his disposal from the very beginning. Studying the Gospel and finding suitable ways to share it with the World is an essential part of our vocation. Throughout our history, we have looked for the best way of using words, images, art etc. in preaching. How can marketing help us to carry out this mission?

Using marketing techniques for preaching the Gospel can be questioned. Clearly, the corresponding marketing and communication strategies should be in line with the content of the message to be shared: Jesus preached using parables and provocative gestures – sometimes in order to improve the way he shared God’s message – such as sitting down at the table with those who had been rejected by society. This conference will allow us to see the aspects that religious marketing has in common with other types of marketing and the aspects that may be specific to it.

Carlos Luna, Lay Dominican of the fraternity of Atocha (Madrid) and marketing professional and university professor in this discipline, is responsible for the organization of the conference. Visit the website of the conference: http://marketingreligioso.com/
**Asia-Pacific Dominican Formator’s Course 2017**

Now on its 9th year, the Asia-Pacific Dominican Formators’ Course gathers together Dominican men and women in the region from March 6 to 31, in collaborative study and fellowship concerning the special ministry of formation. Held once every three years, this year’s program has 43 registered participants from 19 congregations and ten countries, namely, Australia, El Salvador, Myanmar, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam.

The course is organized by the Asia-Pacific Dominican Formation Center (APDFC), based in the Caleruega Retreat Center in Nasugbu, Batangas, Philippines. It seeks to provide a holistic approach to formation, taking into account the unique realities of the region. The program is geared towards offering courses on spirituality for Dominicans of different age groups, providing a venue for exchanges of ideas regarding initial and ongoing formation, and implementing the thrusts and priorities of the Order of Preachers in formation. This year, the course is guided by the theme “Dominican Formation for Preaching”.

Fr. Gerard Francisco Timoner III, OP, Socius of the Master for the Asia-Pacific, celebrated the Opening Mass and welcomed the delegates to the course. The total registered participants were composed of 12 friars, 28 apostolic sisters and 3 nuns. Since the commencement of the gathering, it has been providing the participants with various insights and workshops that deal with diverse stories and issues among religious communities in formation. The encounter has been enriched by the sharing of experiences by the participants who are currently engaged in, or are being prepared for, formation ministry in the Dominican Family. Among the resource speakers invited from overseas are fr. Vivian Boland, OP (Socius of the Master of the Order for Northern Europe and Canada), fr. Michael Deeb, OP (General Promoter of the Order for Justice and Peace, and Permanent Representative of the Dominican Order to the UN), and Sr. Bernadette Kiley, OP (Coordinator of the Dominican Sisters International for the Asia-Pacific Region). Fr. Vivian speaks on Preaching in Formation, while fr. Michael lectures on the Dominican Order for Justice and Peace, and Sr. Bernadette shares on Human and Sexual Development.

Other resource speakers include the following: Fr. Edgardo Javier, SVD (Mission in the Asia-Pacific); fr. Enrico Gonzales, OP (Intellectual Formation, and St. Thomas Aquinas on Formation); fr. Quirico Pedregosa Jr., OP (A Life of Preaching, A Preaching Life); Ms. Cynthia Concepcion-Baga (Psycho-Spiritual Integration); Fr. Noel Deslate (Spiritual Accompaniment in Formation); and frs. Quirico Pedregosa Jr., OP and Florentino Bolo Jr., OP (Dominican Family and Collaboration).

**A very special Dominican**

This is a shortened version of an article by Timothy Radcliffe, whose permission we have to publish it. Sr Pauline, who also said “yes” to our request, asks us to pray for her. We are sure you will all remember her in your personal prayers. You can read Sr Pauline Quinn’s full story in the book “Secrets Shared: The Life and Work of Sister Pauline Quinn op” – published on 14 Oct 2016, available on Amazon websites (or ask your local bookshop to stock it!).

Sister Pauline Quinn’s arms are criss-crossed with scars. They shed a harsh light on the devastating suffering of the abused. But by God’s grace, she climbed back up to the light.

Kathy, as she was then called, grew up in the glamorous world of Hollywood. When her father disappeared, the family disintegrated. Then began a long history of sexual abuse, first of all by a neighbor and the milkman.

As a teenager, Kathy constantly ran away, only to be recaptured and sent to juvenile detention. She ended up in the notorious Camarillo State Hospital in California, “a warehouse for discarded human beings.” She was chained to the bed, and raped by two doctors, to whom she had to repeat: “You did not do anything to me”. She began to die inside.
Hurting herself was the only way to express her pain and despair. She became a vagrant, living on the streets, cutting herself, raped by strangers, including the police. Then she met a Catholic Sister, Josepha, who gained her trust. Then she was given a German Shepherd dog, Joni. For the first time, she felt safe and loved. In 1981, she started the Prison Pet Partnership Program in Washington State Corrections Center for Women. She has since started such programmes all over the US and as far away as Argentina.

Then, helped by a priest who was in hospital with malaria, she was gradually converted to Catholicism. She became a Dominican tertiary in 1987, taking the name Sister Pauline of the Cross. Unusually for a tertiary, she wore a habit, and from that moment she never cut herself again.

It verges on the miraculous that a single woman, profoundly wounded by years of abuse, unsupported by any organisation, has done so much. She believes that people have a vast capacity for kindness and so she asks of them an astonishing generosity. She teaches us that we must dare to ask, and ask again, because she refuses to believe that human beings are essentially self-centred.

Many communities of sisters were alarmed by her history and the wounds she carries, which can still cause her to explode in angry recrimination if she feels threatened. I have received piles of letters from indignant cardinals, bishops and nuncios demanding to know what right she has to call herself a Dominican Sister and how she fits into the institutions of the Church. Who has authority over her?

I can only reply that we were proud that she was part of our Dominican family and that she had my authority to call herself Sister Pauline Quinn OP. She took her final private vows to the Mexican Dominican Bishop Raul Vera Lopez in 1995.

We need difficult people who challenge our complacency and insist on believing in our capacity to be kind and generous. Sister Pauline is now having chemotherapy for cancer. In between bouts, she is back in California seeing how one of her prison programmes is doing. Pray for this great woman.

Ruth Anne Henderson

_Sr Maureen Gallagher, OP on the “Centro Santa Catalina” for Women in Mexico_  
_Q & A with Sr. Maureen Gallagher, setting up financial independence paths for women in Mexico_

In Juárez, Mexico, where cartels have left families mourning loved ones and women fending for their families, the Centro Santa Catalina provides opportunity for about 20 women to utilize various creative and management skills to help them generate a survival income.

When farms throughout Mexico started closing after the North American Free Trade Agreement came into effect in the late 1990s, men migrated into the cities to find work.

"The men couldn't get jobs because they had a sixth-grade education and weren't used to living in the city," Dominican Sr. Maureen Gallagher said. "The women stayed at home with the children, and sometimes there wasn't enough money for food."

The “colonia” where the women live, Colonia Pánfilo Natera, is built on what was once the city's garbage dump, with homes constructed out of scrap materials; many lack electricity, water and basic city services. For most of these women, Centro Santa Catalina is their only source of income.

As the marketing director for the sewing cooperative across the border from El Paso, Texas, Gallagher helps the women sell their projects, including aprons, table runners, purses, shawls, laptop holders and "Mexican prayer flags." In addition to the sewing co-op, the center also provides tutoring, spirituality classes and a garden for the women to grow and share vegetables.

GSR: How did Centro Santa Catalina begin?
Gallagher: It was started by Sr. Donna Kustusch, an Adrian Dominican sister, and she started it in '96 or '97. She was a professor in the religion department at Sienna Heights College, and she had decided she had to walk the talk. She brought students down for immersion in Ciudad Juárez and later decided that’s where she’d start her ministry — helping economically poor women. That eventually led to a prayer group with some of the women, and from the prayer group, the center developed for women who were mostly migrants from the rural areas.

Sister Donna said, 'Aside from praying, what can we do to help you?' They said they really needed money, so they decided to start a co-op.

The idea was that they would have a business and be able to stay in Mexico — which is what they wanted to do — and support their families and have a decent life. At this time, the co-op has its own president, vice president, secretary, and they make their own decisions. The only problem is with selling the products, because we have to sell them in the U.S., and the women don't speak English. And only five of them have visas, but they can only go 40 miles within the U.S.

I'm the marketing director, and [along with two other sisters] we help them find places where they can sell. If we have a place in El Paso, then women come and sell things themselves so they can learn the process. Right now, we're trying to make the co-op independent, so that they run the co-op, take care of all the money they get, and continue it on their own once we leave [ideally by 2020].

Tell me about other programs offered at the center.

In Juarez, there aren't enough schools for the children in elementary grades — they go either in the morning or afternoon — so we’ve trained 10 women to be tutors. The nice thing about that is most of them got their GEDs through the center; we paid for them to get it.

This past year, we hired a director — the plan was for a Mexican woman to take over the center so that it would be owned and run by Mexicans. We hired a director, and through her intercession, we've been able to send the tutors to a class where they are now certified teacher aides, so if something should happen to us or to the center, they have a skill they can market.

We also have a youth program for teenagers, and we're starting a garden program, and the idea is that that eventually becomes a co-op for them to share vegetables.

We don't charge the families anything to send their children to tutors; it's a two-way thing. They're getting help with their homework, but they're also being kept off the streets while their parents are working.

All the money goes into a bank, and at the end of the month, they have to decide how much money they need for repairs, new products and materials. Then they share equally what's left over with the 18 women that make up the co-op. Average is $160 [U.S. dollars, per person] when you don't have a big sale, and that's really just for survival. As marketing director, I try to find more places for them to sell.

Tell me about the women you work with.

Juarez was a place where two cartels were fighting, and during that time, it was around 2010, every one of our women in the co-op had either a relative or a family member killed. It was total anarchy.

Many of them are battered women. One of our women in the co-op has four or five children and just left her husband. She had left him before, but she financially couldn't continue, so she invited him back. When the co-op started picking up and we were getting more money, she felt she could get rid of him again, so she kicked him out of the house. She had to get another job in a factory, so she works two jobs. He put her in the hospital five years ago because he beat her so badly.

Of the 18 women, I know three of them definitely can't read or write. One is now the vice president of the co-op and the mother of five children.
Another one who came to the co-op, Victoria, was there for a three-month trial period to see if she can sew. She couldn't do anything, but the women didn't want to let her go because she had no income. She was a widow, and her children had all moved back with their children and were really taking advantage of her. So the co-op hired her as the ironer, and she's the world's best ironer. She can't read or write, but the women try to help her. They have that community spirit of helping one another.

I've seen the women grow unbelievably. We went through a bad time at the center, when a woman got angry at our director, Rosa, because Rosa had bought heaters for the classrooms. This woman thought they should've gotten the money in their salary instead of the heaters, and a group of women had locked us out of the center.

But while we worked with the [El Paso and Juárez] dioceses and lawyers, the tutors and co-op members who didn't turn against us took it upon themselves to continue the center [for kindergarten classes]. They were able to find a house that they rented and got donations of chairs and tables from neighbors. When we came back to tell them what we had figured out, they said, 'Well, we have a house, and we're going to continue' [holding classes there until the end of the school year]. They could not have done that five years ago. We looked at them as they grew in confidence and authority and ability to take hold of their own lives, which is absolutely amazing and confirming that what the center had done was help these women grow.

How has this work changed you as a person?
It's helped me understand other people and other cultures. I had a hard time learning Spanish because I ministered for 40 years in Chicago, so my background had no different cultures — it was just Chicago, Chicago, Chicago. But then I came down here, and I learned the Mexican culture is a beautiful culture, and I picked up many things, like hugging people — that was not part of my background in Chicago.

I'm definitely a different person. I'm not quite as confident that I have all the answers. My background is teaching, and as teachers, we have a set way of doing things and think our way is the best way. I'm an Irish Catholic, Southside Chicagoan, and we have all the answers. But I've learned we don't.

by Soli Salgado [Soli Salgado is a staff writer for Global Sisters Report. Her email address is ssalgado@ncronline.org. Follow her on Twitter: @soli_salgado.]

Dominicans for Justice and Peace Statement on Sri Lanka
Mr. President,
Dominicans for Justice and Peace and Franciscans International welcome the recent report of the Office of the High Commissioner as well as the increasing engagement of the Government of Sri Lanka with the United Nations system since 2015. However, based on our own observations on the ground, we concur with many of the concerns of the report, especially about the slowness and inadequacy in implementing commitments made in resolution 30/1 as well as continuing surveillance, intimidation and threats to human rights defenders.

Many victims feel that the grievances giving rise to the conflict and the immediate problems they face have not been addressed since the unity government came into power in 2015. Hopes they had are fading and confidence is eroding. This is evident in long and widespread protests by families of the disappeared, by the landless, workers, unemployed, etc. The Government can no longer delay to release political prisoners and land occupied by the military, to operationalise the Office of Missing Persons (OMP) and to enact legislation for other transitional justice mechanisms.

We believe that this process must be victim-centered, prioritising their rights, needs and interests. We therefore call on the Government to ensure that victims can actively participate in each stage of the process, from the design to the implementation of the transitional justice mechanisms.

Mr. President,
The creation of a coalition government by two major parties supported by key smaller parties and the international community offers a unique opportunity for peace in Sri Lanka. However, we are concerned that this may be lost, unless the Government acts promptly to address urgent concerns on the ground and ensures independent transitional justice mechanisms and a new constitution that will address the grievances and aspirations of survivors, victims’ families and all communities in Sri Lanka.

Thank you Mr. President.

**Joseph Kenny - “Breaking the Mould: Priest unlike others”**

*Rev. Fr. [Prof.] Joseph Peter Kenny, OP. [1936-2013] of the Province of St Albert the Great, USA and a missionary in Nigeria.*

“Sweet, they say, is the memory of the righteous, and their memory is blessed.”

[Cf. Proverbs 10:7]

The renowned Dominican and my namesake, Fr Joseph Kenny lived a meaningful and fruitful 77 years, part of which he spent at St. Thomas Aquinas Priory, Ibadan in Oyo State, Nigeria. These years were lived in the fullness of love and service to God, the Church, and humanity, particularly in Nigeria and in African at large.

On 28 February 2017, a public lecture was organized in his honour by the Nigerian Field Society, with the theme, “Breaking the Mould: Priest unlike others”. The lecture was delivered by Dr. Patricia Oyebola [I was told she is Irish]. During that lecture, a lot was exposed on the life and person of Fr. Joe, both by the lecturer herself and by others who had been in contact with him. Several remarks and testimonies were given to buttress the fact that my namesake Fr Joe [whom I so much cherish, even though I never met him in person] was a good man. Fr Joseph, indeed, was a special creature of God.

Prior to this day, however, I have always felt the presence of Fr Joseph Kenny. In fact, the first time I saw his picture behind the Hall of Martyrs, along the corridor in the Priory, his continence was serene, I sensed that he was a great soul and I felt connected to him. Often times, I hear people say positive things about him, and how he influenced their lives for good. Hence, I sought to know who he really was. One of the Dominican friars once related to me how ‘the great Joe’ made the study of Greek simple and enjoyable for him to understand. I also discovered that he was the type of person that sacrifices his time, amidst his tight schedule, to attend to people who sought his audience, attention or help. Invariably, Fr Joe was a man of the people! Sometimes I do feel that I should have been at the Dominican Institute much earlier so that I could have seen him, meet him in person and have some discussions with him, but providence did otherwise. In any case, I consider those who were able to meet him in person as privileged.

In regards to his nationality, the great Joe who was a native of Chicago, USA is a man of dual citizenship - an American by birth and a Nigerian by naturalization. He came to Nigeria at the request of the Holy See for a resource person knowledgeable in Arabic and Islam. Having studied Arabic and Islam in Rome, Tunisia, and Cairo, he obtained his Ph.D at the University of Edinburgh. He was an eloquent preacher, and academically, he was an erudite scholar and a Catholic priest who sought religious harmony by becoming a scholar in the academic discipline mentioned above. A true follower and son of St. Dominic whom we can call the St. Thomas Aquinas of our time, as I consider him one of the intellectual colossi of the Order of Preachers in the twenty-first century.

Finally, just as the rainbow among other heavenly bodies is bless with beautiful colours, and the peacock among the birds, the humble Joe is blessed with many talents which he offered in his humble service to humanity. Among them is his ability to communicate in about thirteen different languages. According to Dr. Patricia Oyebola, Fr Joseph Kenny translated the psalms into Hausa language and preached in Arabic regularly at the Lebanese Church in Lagos; a typical example of the wise servant whose master rewarded greatly for putting into effective use what has been given to him [Cf. Mt. 25: 14-30].

Fr. Prof. Joseph lived a worthy life and through his example of love, humility, frugality and sacrificial service has taught us the way to holiness and salvation. Many are the things which could be positively said about him, but I have just poured out few of them here with the hope that it edifies us all. Hoping and praying that one day, the cause for his canonization will be initiated.
By Bro Philomeno Maria Joseph Ishola, a member of the Philomenites of the Immaculate (PI) and a student at the Dominican Institute in Ibadan.

**Fr James Channan receives the URI-Africa Interfaith Harmony Award for 2017**

In commemoration of the World Interfaith Harmony Week, the URI-Africa is honouring Fr James Channan with the Africa Interfaith Harmony Award for 2017. Fr James is a Dominican friar of the Vice Province of Pakistan. He is the Director of the Peace Center in Lahore, Pakistan and the Regional Coordinator of the United Religions Initiative (URI) in Pakistan.

The award is in recognition of Fr James’ ongoing outstanding contributions in promoting interfaith harmony and peaceful co-existence among followers of different religions in Pakistan and other parts of the world, and especially in breaking down walls of hatred between Christians and Muslims and building bridges of trust and mutual respect.

Fr James will be jointly honoured with Maulana Abdul Khabir Azad, the Grand Imam of the Badshahi Mosque in Lahore, Pakistan. Both of them have been working closely together for the past 20 years in Lahore and they have also travelled to several countries including; Italy, Germany, South Korea, Japan, Brazil, Jordan, Qatar and USA to promote Christian-Muslim dialogue. They are being jointly honoured for setting a good example as religious leaders from different faith traditions working together in addressing counter violent extremism and enhancing inter-religious constructive dialogue and cooperation for the common good of all.

The award presentation will take place in September 2017 in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina.

**Blessing of the New St Dominic Chapel and St Thomas Hall at Multan, Pakistan**

On 20 February 2017, the opening and blessing ceremony of the new chapel, “St. Dominic Chapel” and hall, “St. Thomas Hall” took place at the Louis Hall, Dominican House of Formation, Multan, Pakistan by fr. Pascal Paulus, Vice Provincial of the Vice Province of Pakistan. On this auspicious occasion Dominican friars, Dominican Sisters, Louis Hall Students, OMI priests, and lay faithful were all present. fr. Pascal presided at the thanksgiving Mass. He blessed the new chapel and new hall in the presence of the clergy and lay faithful.

In his homily, fr Pascal said that as Dominicans, one of our priorities is to provide sound and profound formation to the young postulants. It is also our concern to give them healthy and suitable atmosphere for prayer, study and other healthy and creative activities. The new St. Dominic Chapel and St. Thomas Hall are precious gifts to Louis Hall, Dominican House of Formation, Multan.

Fr Pascal expressed his words of congratulations to fr. Naveed Imran, Director of Louis Hall, Dominican House of Formation and to all the postulants for the new chapel and hall. Further he expressed his gratitude to God for giving us grace to construct the new chapel. He also thanked fr. Bruno Cadoré, the Master of the Order and SPEM MIRAM for their financial support towards the successful completion of this project.

At the end fr. Naveed Imran Joshua expressed his words of gratitude to fr. Pascal Paulus, who with great interest has turned this dream into reality. God bless us all in the Dominican Chrism and spirit. The ceremony concluded with a thanksgiving meal and fraternal sharing.

Reported by:
Adeel Martin (Postulant 4th Year)
Zohaib Michael (Postulant 4th Year)
Louis Hall, Dominican House of Formation, Multan.
Sanctuaries of Compassion: The Idea of Care in the Dominican Tradition

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” (Mt 11:28)

In Matthew’s Gospel, we read “you are the light of the world . . . your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father” (Mt: 5:13-16). In his book, St. Martin De Porres: In the Service of Compassion, Jacques Ambec, O.P. notes that St. Dominic envisioned his sons and daughters being formed in such a way so as to become those lights to the world. Through patience, gentleness, delicacy in prayer, in love, they were to be present to the sick as sanctuaries of compassion.[1] Today, we find ourselves surrounded by a culture of individualism and indifference, a culture that diminishes human life, depriving it of dignity, freedom, and its ability to flourish, as God intended. As healers of the sick and those in distress, we need to ask ourselves, how do we in turn, become those sanctuaries of compassion for our brothers and sisters, who are lost, dismissed as the least, or who find themselves unwanted or even unloved?

St. Dominic took the words he heard in St. Matthew’s gospel about becoming a light to the world, as words addressed directly to himself. As a result, in 1215, along with six companions, he formed his Order. As he did, he was aware that the society around them was changing. As cities continued to grow denser because of their ability to fascinate and draw more and more people, St. Dominic realized their spiritual needs would need to be met in a way that was a radical departure from the practice of the day.

If we look into the very early days when St. Dominic formed his Order, we encounter a man who possessed the ability to see beyond immediate challenges, in order to perceive the beauty and dignity of the whole person. His response to persons in distress was similarly appropriate. As a consoler of the sick and those suffering, St. Dominic applied the same disciplined formula that he purposed for the formation of his earliest disciples, namely, to first listen, then to pray, to study, and then to preach the message of mercy, hope, and healing. In doing so, they would become authentic sanctuaries of compassion, for those seeking mercy, healing and hope. The Dominican Order, more than eight centuries later faithfully, embraces this same vision today.

This example characterizes St. Dominic’s ability to synthesize the data of his pastoral experiences and Church teaching to formulate a healing intervention, whether it be caring for his brothers, the Nuns of the Order, the poor of the cities, non-believers, those who were far from the faith; especially the lost, the least, those who were unloved and unwanted. His charism captured the fire of evangelization and spread the Word of God across the world and through the great preachers of his Order: Albert the Great; Thomas Aquinas; Catherine of Siena; Rose of Lima; Margaret of Castello; James Salomoni; Martin De Porres; Juan Macias; Rose Hawthorne Lathrop; Pierre Claverie, and hundreds of martyrs who lost their lives, defending human dignity and freedom.

Click here to download the full article.

Bro. Ignatius Perkins, OP, PhD, RN, Executive Director
The Dominican Friars Health Care Ministry of New York
3 March 2017

Promulgation of the New Ratio Studiorum Generalis

Dear brothers,

Study, preach and found convents! Just after the celebration of the Jubilee of the confirmation of the Order, it is in the dynamism of this renewed joy to be sent to preach the Gospel that I promulgate this new Ratio Studiorum Generalis.

We are sent, as disciples and seekers of God, to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of God which is near. Disciples, founding their lives on listening to the Word, finding their joy in the wonder of the mystery of a God who hears his people, and going to him to reveal in fullness the promise of the covenant and to fulfil it. Disciples who, day after day, based on a contemplative study of the Word and the tradition of the Church, seek tirelessly to discern the signs of the times beginning from the friendship that is offered to them by the One who is the way, the truth and the life. Seekers of God who, placing themselves in the school of their Lord, go to meet all those who seek the truth, entering into dialogue with them and studying with them, like the first brothers Dominic sent to the universities. « Thus our spirit ought to be open both to the Spirit of God and to the hearts of those to whom the word of God is being preached, so that it may obtain a communication of the light, the love and the strength of the Paraclete. Consequently, the brothers should learn to recognize the Spirit working in the midst of God’s people, and to discern the treasures hidden in the various forms of human culture, by which human nature is more fully manifested and new paths to truth are opened» (LCO 99, §II). Yes, it is true, an Order may have been instituted for the purpose of study, because it wants to support the Preachers in their vocation of learning how to become servants of the mystery of Truth in this world, it places, at the heart of study, the Word of God. Guided by the long and fine tradition of study in the Order, from the great masters Albert and Thomas down to our contemporaries, it proposes a method which indicates both the demands of contemplative study and the way in which this study is essential to the full realization of the vocation of the preacher. Proposing fundamental principles common to all, it underlines both the importance that each particular province should translate these into its own cultural context and adapt them to the specific vocations of the clerical brothers and of the co-operator brothers, both united in the same dynamic at the service of evangelization. In this way the dialogue initiated in the development of this Ratio will continue, taking into account the intercultural reality of the Order today, as well as the complementarity of vocations within the Order, seeking always to establish a stronger « culture of study » which carries the preaching project. A culture that is both rooted in fidelity to the tradition of the Church, and gives courage for encounter and for dialogue with contemporary forms of knowledge, while learning how to deploy, in contemporary contexts, the proclamation of the Gospel in the friendship of fraternity.

Study, preach and found communities. In promulgating this Ratio Studiorum, I express once again the hope that it will help each of us, and each of our communities, to deepen and to express their joy in being preachers in the contemplative study of Truth.

fr. Bruno Cadoré, O.P.
Master of the Order
7 March 2017
Fr René L. Dinklo has been reelected as the Prior Provincial of the Netherlands

Fr René Lebuïnus Dinklo has been reelected as the Prior Provincial of the Province of the Netherlands for the second term. The election has been confirmed by the Master of the Order, fr Bruno Cadoré and fr René has accepted.

Fr René was born in 1965. He worked briefly with the government before joining the Order. He made his first profession of religious vows in 1994 and was ordained to the priesthood in 2005. He studied theology at the University of Nijmegen.

Since his ordination, he has been working at Zwolle as the pastor of the parish and the superior of the community. He has also been a member of the Provincial Council and the Financial and Economic Advisory Board.

At the time of his first election, fr René was the youngest brother in his Province. However, there has been a renewal of hope in the Province with the gradual resurgence of vocations. There are about six friars in formation at the moment and the process of discernment is ongoing for several other prospective candidates.

Vice Province of Saint Pius V in D. R. Congo has a New Vice Provincial

Gathered since 15th March 2017 at the Benedictine Monastery of Mambré in Kinshasa for their very first Vice Provincial Chapter, the eleven Capitulars of the Vice Province of St Pius V, D. R. Congo elected fr Bienvenu Nsekoko Bongo, as their new Vice Provincial for the next four years. The election was confirmed by the Master of the Order, fr Bruno Cadoré, and fr Bienvenu accepted his election.

Fr Bienvenu Nsekoko was born in 1974. He made his profession in the Order in 1997. He was ordained to the priesthood in 2006. He is presently the parish priest of St Dominic’s parish, Limete, Kinshasa. Fr Bienvenu was also the Socius of fr Justin Adriko when he was the Vicar General, and then the first Vice Provincial when the Vicariate General of St Pius V became a Vice Province on 31st May 2016.

After the serious road accident of fr Justin on 5th June 2016, which left him with two broken legs, fr Bruno appointed fr Bienvenu Nsekoko as the Vicar of the Vice Province for three months. This was renewed in September. To give him more time to receive the necessary medical treatment, on 2nd December 2016, fr Justin presented his resignation as the Vice Provincial to the Master of the Order in accordance with LCO 348, § IV. Fr Bruno accepted the resignation and fr Bienvenu became the Vicar of the Vice Province. In that capacity, he convoked the Vice Provincial Chapter.

In response to the request of the Council of the Vice Province and in accordance with the recommendation of the General Chapter of Bologna, fr Bruno delegated frs Gabriel Samba and Cletus Nwabuzo (former Socius for Africa) to assist the brothers in the celebration of their first Vice Provincial Chapter.

fr. Gabriel Samba, op

Fr Viliam Doci is the New Vicar of the Master for the Convent of Santa Sabina

The Master of the Order, fr Bruno Cadore has appointed fr Viliam Stefan Doci as his Vicar for the Convent of Santa Sabina in Rome. He succeeds fr Dominic Izzo. He is a son of the Province of Slovakia.

Fr Viliam was born in 1978 at Trebišov Veľaty in Slovakia. He made his first religious profession in the Order in 1997 and was ordained to the priesthood in 2003 at Košice, Slovakia.

After working for four years in his Province, he was assigned to the Convent in Vienna, in the Province of St Albert the Great, Southern Germany and Austria. He studied Church History and obtained his Doctorate at the Faculty of Theology of the University of Vienna in 2014. He was the Assistant Student Master in the Province of Austria and later Student Master. In 2011, he was elected the Prior of the Convent.
In 2015, he was assigned to the Convent of Santa Sabina and appointed as the President of the Historical Institute of the Order. Before his election, he was a member of the Conventual Council of the Convent of Santa Sabina.

**Calendar of the Master of the Order for April 2017**

*March 27–April 8: Canonical Visitation to the Holy Rosary Province*

*13–16: Holy Week and Easter celebration at Santa Sabina*

*20–23: IEOP Meeting in Krakow, Poland*

*April 24–May 2: Canonical Visitation to the Province of Canada*

*All articles are available on www.op.org*