Driving into Baghdad from its fortress airport a few weeks ago, I was greeted by innumerable Santa Clauses and, ironically in this desert land, forests of plastic Christmas trees. Sometimes my Dominican brethren gather with Shi’a Muslim friends around the trees and together remember the birth of Christ, but for most people in Iraq the image of Santa with his snowy white beard and red coat does not evoke the charitable bishop saint from the Middle East, St Nicholas; it is simply a tantalising symbol of the Western consumerism from which most people in this oil-rich but poor country are excluded.

I had come with Brian Pierce, a Texan Dominican, at the invitation of the Iraqi Dominican Sisters of St Catherine. There are 140 of them, Syriac Catholic and Chaldean Catholic. This reflects the Dominican love of the cultural and religious pluralism of Mesopotamia. In the last century the brethren translated the gospels into Kurdish and established a seminary in which Syriac and Chaldean Catholics studied together.

The last time Brian and I had visited Iraq was shortly after Da’esh (IS) had captured Mosul and hundreds of thousands of Iraqi Christians had fled the plains of Nineveh for the relative safety of Kurdistan. Many had had to leave their cars four miles from the Kurdish frontier and complete the journey on foot in the hot sun, since Erbil was so clogged full of the refugees’ vehicles that no more were being allowed in. One of the Dominican Sisters, Hanna, told me she had just made it to the safety of the Kurdish capital when she heard that her father had been left behind. She got a cart and went back to carry him to safety. Then she was told that there was an old Muslim man who could walk no further, and so she again went back: another eight tough miles to collect him and bring him back with her in 50C, but a small sign of an interreligious friendship that even Da’esh could not extinguish.
After this, the priority for the sisters, and the brethren too, was care for the refugees. Now the Dominican sisters were inviting us to accompany them as they faced a new challenge, their return from the Kurdish-controlled area of Iraq to their home on the Nineveh Plains. It was extraordinarily magnanimous that they would ask citizens of two countries, the USA and the UK, who had wrought such devastation on their own land, to join them in this next, nerve-wracking, adventure.

Mosul and the villages of the plain of Nineveh are liberated from Da’esh. But while the foreign fighters have fled, most of their Iraqi collaborators have shaved off their beards and melted back into the local population. The atmosphere in the whole country is thick with fear and insecurity. We felt this in Baghdad, walking every day the half mile from the home of the brethren to the sisters and back. For the sisters, making this daily journey was a small sign that fear would not rule the lives of the community.

In the ancient city of Kirkuk, 148 miles north of Baghdad, the walls of the sisters’ convent are still pockmarked by bullet holes and a grenade blast from an attempt by Da’esh to break in to kill them. On the other side of the road is a small hospice for women university students of all faiths. The terrorists broke in; eight girls hid under the beds for seven hours, listening in petrified silence to the jihadists describing what they would do with the girls when they came back. Eventually the terrorists left and the girls were saved. Some of the sisters have resumed teaching in the University of Mosul, but they face daily harassment and aggression. Many students, especially from the south of Iraq, assume that any woman not wearing the hijab is either immoral or encouraging male attention.

We made our way back to Qaraqosh, just east of Mosul, and close to the ruins of the ancient Assyrian city of Nineveh. Here lives the largest concentration of Syriac Christians, the source of many of our vocations. On our way into the city we passed through innumerable checkpoints, manned by different groups. Within half a mile we were searched by Iranian, by Iraqi Shi’a, and by Iraqi Christian soldiers. Travelling in the other direction was an endless queue of lorries carrying away the blackened scrap of Mosul.

The convent and schools of the sisters in Qaraqosh had been destroyed by car bombs. The immediate priority is to rebuild the kindergarten and school. The sisters are scattered, living in threes and fours in the houses of relatives. So far, about a third of the population has returned. A teacher told me: “Because the sisters have come back, we can.” The pupils plastered the walls of the school with pictures of the return from exile, showing people holding the keys of the town. A teacher told us, “Even if the tree looks dry, there is a green branch.” She meant the sisters.

They know that the rebirth of Iraq depends on education. Teaching the children of all faiths to think is a first response to the easy slogans of fundamentalism, whether it is the religious fundamentalism of Da’esh and their friends, or the simplistic tweets which fuel so much modern politics. I was bowled over by the commitment of the sisters to give the very best formation to their new vocations, in theology, science, art, music, everything, so that they can help to form a new generation of Iraqis whose faith, whatever it is, is thoughtful and intelligent. The logo of the college of the brethren in the capital – the Baghdad Academy of Human Sciences - is the traditional Dominican shield, with a question mark pointedly added. Here, no questions are forbidden. Its founder, now the Archbishop of Kirkuk, Yousif Mirkis OP, explains, “we need the oxygen of open debate”.

All over the plains of Nineveh the sisters are reopening their schools. Muslim parents are eager for their children to attend them, since the Iraq’s education system is in freefall. But the sisters are mocked by some parents, who tell them that soon the sisters will be gone and the schools will be theirs. It is hard to give your lives to the education of children, when many of their parents are watching you with impatient and jealous eyes. The faces of the children are marked by fear and exhaustion. Some applaud us when we arrive; others cower under the desk with hands over their ears, afraid of the noise. Sometimes the Christian pupils are taunted by their Muslim companions as “heathens” who will soon be gone. But we also saw Muslim and Christian children playing together. In Baghdad, a class of teenage girls assured us that their friendships, crossing the barriers of religion, would last. In the town of Alqosh, 31 miles north of Mosul, a group of Yazidi students asked if they could come to visit the convent, because “This is the home of God.”

Perhaps it is here in these classrooms that the seeds of a new Iraq are being sown. Like the sower in the parable, the sisters and the lay teachers scatter the seed; some fall on rocky ground or among thorns, but from the small
amount that falls on fertile land, the Lord will surely give an abundant harvest beyond our imagination. Forming the young to think is a refusal to succumb to the meaninglessness of violence.

We encountered similar ambiguities in the sisters’ hospital in Baghdad. The maternity ward is presided over by Sister Bushra OP, who delivers on average 30 babies a day. She is known as “the mother of Iraq”. Brian bent down to pick up a newborn child. He looked at me and said, “Timothy, I am holding the future of Iraq in my arms.” A nurse reminded us in a quiet, sad voice: “No one holds Iraq in their arms.” So it may seem, but Bushra and her staff do. Her maternity ward has the best equipment, supported by organisations such as Aid to the Church in Need. Here also, friendships are formed around cradles which may give birth to a new Iraq. Muslim, Christian and Yazidi parents share the drama of new life. But here too, there is the fear that some staff are simply waiting for the sisters to go, so that they can take possession.

But the sisters hang on, even when their families have fled to the West or are waiting in Jordan and the Lebanon for visas to allow them to travel. The sisters’ faithful abiding is a sign of our loyal Lord, whose last words were: “I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28.20). They do not criticise those who have gone. Maybe they had no option. But staying is a quiet witness to their hope that the light of our Christian faith will continue to shine here, where Christians have lived since the beginning. A few Christians are coming back. In Kirkuk, we met a married man who had found refuge in Sweden but had come back home, wanting his children to grow up in the land of their ancestors. He is about to be ordained a permanent deacon.

The sisters are not just hanging on with gritted teeth. Everywhere we were feasted with masguf [UNITAL], the grilled carp that is the national dish. Yes, we saw a country exhausted by the violence which has never let up ever since the Iran/Iraq war broke out in 1980, which was nearly broken by the hardship of sanctions, then the two gulf wars, and finally the rise and, at least temporary, fall of Da’esh. Yes, the country hardly seems to hold together, divided as it is by so many religious and ethnic tensions. Yes, it is certainly a moment of crisis for the diminishing Christian population. But everywhere we met the infectious joy of our sisters. These Dominican sisters have lived through worse crises, such as the jihad against Christians in 1915 which led to the brutal martyrdom of seven sisters; still they remained. Their endurance, their commitment to education and to care of the sick, and above all their joy, is a sign of hope in our Lord who never deserts us.

By Timothy Radcliffe, OP

Bishop Pierre Claverie, OP: a beatification rich in meaning

On Friday, 26 January 2018, the Holy Father Francis received in audience His Eminence Cardinal Angelo Amato, S.D.B., Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. During the audience, the Supreme Pontiff authorized the same Congregation to promulgate the Decrees for the beatification of Bishop Pierre Claverie, OP, Bishop of Oran and the 18 companions, men and women religious, killed in hatred of the Faith in Algeria from 1994 to 1996. Pope Francis has decided to beatify “Bishop Pierre Claverie and his eighteen companions”, victims of the violence in Algeria in the late 1990s. Pierre Claverie, murdered on the 1st of August 1996, was the last of the nineteen victims of the Church of Algeria, who died during the Black decade that claimed the lives of more than 150,000 Algerians. This Beatification has a powerful meaning.

- A life to encounter others

Pierre Claverie is someone who has spent his life as a man trying to encounter the other whom he had ignored all his youth. “We were not racist, only indifferent, ignoring the majority of the inhabitants of this country… I was able to live twenty years in what I now call a ‘colonial bubble’, without even seeing others”, he wrote with lucidity evoking his youth in colonial Algeria where he was born. His whole life was devoted to making up for this first missed encounter, his whole life was inhabited by a real “passion for the other”. In the cosmopolitan and globalized world which is now ours, this challenge of the encounter is more pertinent than ever. While the globalization of the economy and social networks have bought men together, murderous identities are resurfacing, barriers are emerging between people, seeming to slow down the progress of the
post-war (UN, Europe, etc.). Pierre Claverie reiterates the happiness that there may be in the encounter of the other, the different. It is a powerful message for countries tempted to shut their doors as migrants are knocking at their doors.

- **The Muslim is also a brother in humanity**

Today the other who is scary is often the Muslim. There are objective reasons for this: the rise of a political Islam, the horrors of al-Qaeda and Daech, the suffering of the Christians of the East, the weight of the clichés in the media. But the fear of the Muslim is often irrational, visceral and prevents a real encounter. The Church of Algeria had to make a real conversion after the political independence of the country in 1962. While its presence was hardly justified by the small number of faithful, it wanted to put itself at the service of the Algerian people and become a Church of encounter. Bishop Henri Teissier, former Archbishop of Algiers, close friend and confidant of Pierre Claverie, even called it “a church for Muslim people”. “The keyword of my faith today is dialogue; not by tactics nor by opportunism, but because dialogue is constitutive of the relationship of God to men and men to each other”, written by Pierre Claverie who disliked the superficial dialogue of convenience. True dialogue, in his eyes, is demanding, it supposes to recognize the uniqueness of the other and to want to enrich our differences. The passion of his life was to discover what the next Muslim Algerian could teach him, including the search for God. Without syncretism, without easy unanimity.

- **The taste of friendship and a plural, non-exclusive humanity**

Coming from a Mediterranean background, Pierre Claverie had a warm temperament which allowed him to make beautiful friendships. Learning the Arabic language, he had particularly sought to “learn Algeria”, to be part of it and feel like his Algerian friends. He did it with passion during the decades after independence where everything was to be built in this country. There he put all his talents and his whole heart, engaging in projects of solidarity and development. But he did it also in the dark hours, when violence fell on the country, killing all those who had the taste of what he calls “a plural, non-exclusive humanity”, an Algeria where difference is perceived as a richness and not as a threat. Refusing the caution that his friends advised him, Pierre Claverie had publicly declared his solidarity with the Algerians, writers, artists, intellectuals, who fought for an open and plural Algeria. The destiny of the Algerian women was particularly close to his heart. He paid for it with his life. This beatification is not, therefore, a way of setting the Christian victims apart from a tragedy that has left tens of thousands dead. This should be on the contrary, as Bishop Jean-Paul Vesco, successor of Pierre Claverie in Oran, said, an opportunity to celebrate the loyalty of a Church which has wanted to remain in solidarity at the time of the ordeal and therefore to celebrate the friendship with the Algerians.

- **A life given for love**

The meaning of this testimony must therefore be clear: the 19 “martyrs” of the Church of Algeria are not beatified because they were murdered, but first because they chose, in times of danger, to remain in complete freedom, despite the risks, “beside the sick friend, holding his hand, placing a wet cloth on his forehead”, as Pierre Claverie wrote after the death of the monks. It is the testimony of love for Christ, for the Church and for the Algerian people that they have given, that the Church wants to recognize, to celebrate by using them as examples for the universal Church where all those who are on the path need role models who can show them the way.

- **Role models for our time**

To beatify together these nineteen witnesses of faith and love is rich in meaning. Pierre Claverie, Christian of Chergé, brother Christophe have written a lot of the meaning of their life. Most of the others, especially the nuns, have lived their testimony in discretion and humility, but it is absolutely the same testimony that is given. The Church therefore offers us as examples of the men and women whom we can feel close to. These are role models of holiness for our time. It is a grace for the entire Church. We hope that Algeria is thus encouraged in its work of healing and reconciliation.

**Summary Biography**

Pierre Claverie was born in Bab el-Oued the 8th of May 1938, in colonial Algeria. His family resided in this country for five generations.
When he left for France in 1958, in the middle of the “battle of Algiers”, to begin his university studies, he becomes aware of having lived until then in a colonial bubble, ignoring the other, the Algerian Muslim, seen only through clichés. An intense deep search leads him to religious life in the Dominican Order.

At the end of his studies in philosophy and theology, he returns to Algeria in July 1967 and finally discovers “his” country. He learns Arabic and is passionate about discovering a newly independent country, learning the Arabic language and making many Algerian friends.

For 15 years, he is with Bishop Henri Teissier, one of the closest collaborators of Cardinal Duval, who understood that the new mission of the Church in Algeria was not to be a Church of Embassy, a survival of the past, but a church for Algeria, an Algerian Church. Its mission is not to convert Muslims, but to accompany a country that is being rebuilt and to live with the Algerians the adventure of friendship and encounter.

His clarity of analysis of situations and his spiritual depth earned him to be chosen on the 5th of June 1981 as the Bishop of Oran, a small diocese according to the size of its faithful Christians, but very rich in nationalities who live in a special way in profound harmony with the Algerian society. When the violence descends on the country, Pierre Claverie chooses to put the structures of his diocese even more at the service of the needs of the Algerian population.

At the time of the violence of the 1990s, he made the choice to speak, in solidarity with his Algerian friends - intellectuals, artists, women - who campaign for an open, non-exclusive Algeria. His own experience allows him to speak eloquently about the meaning of encounter and friendship. In the spring of 1996, he publishes Lettres et messages d’Algérie. His courageous words went beyond the borders and this led to his assassination on the 1st of August 1996, a few weeks after the assassination of the Trappist monks of Tibhirine who are today beatified with him. At his funeral, the massive population of Oran came to weep for “their” Bishop.

The wish of the Church of Algeria is that this beatification enhances the friendship that these witnesses of faith wanted to live with their Algerian friends.

fr Jean-Jacques PERENNES, OP

**fr Richard Steenvoorde OP: An Ordination in the Dutch Province after a couple of decades**

Fr Richard Steenvoorde was ordained to the diaconate at Blackfriars, Oxford, on 21st January 2018, the Dutch Province's first ordination in a couple of decades. Br Stefan, a novice of the Dutch Province currently living in Cambridge, reports on the occasion.

After two hours of driving the novices (including two Dutch novices) from Cambridge, we arrived at Blackfriars, Oxford to attend the ordination of Br Richard. Upon arrival, we met with the students who had been novices in Cambridge the previous year. One of the novices helped out in the kitchen and prepared a delicious Beef Wellington for dinner.

At 6:15pm, the ordination Mass started. The choir of the church was filled with brothers from the Dutch and English Province and the provincial of the Dutch Province was also present. Auxiliary Bishop William Kenney (Birmingham) emphasised in his sermon that a deacon is first and foremost called to serve the people of God; to imitate Christ who came not to be served but to serve.

After the Holy Mass there was a short reception which allowed the novices to catch up with the students and the other brothers. This also gave the novices the opportunity to congratulate Richard on his ordination to the diaconate.

*Deo gratias: a new deacon for the Church!*

Br Richard is one of a number of recent vocations to the Dominicans in the Netherlands. A fruitful collaboration between our Provinces in recent years has allowed Dutch brothers to undertake the novitiate year in Cambridge alongside the brothers of the Province of England. Br Richard also joined our brothers for his pre-ordination studies at Blackfriars, Oxford.
No authentic portrait of saint Dominic has survived and no representation of his face was realised while he was alive. From the 13th century until today, his body has been pictured in numerous representations for Dominican priories and monasteries as well as for chapels hosting fraternities of the Holy Rosary. The development of printing enabled the faithful to enhance their devotional practices through images or objects. On the occasion of the eighth centenary of the foundation of the Order of Preachers, ten art historians from the francophone world join their expertise in this volume devoted to the representation of saint Dominic. From Fra Angelico to Georges Braque, through to the mysterious Verotius or Anglo-Saxon artists, these studies describe the variations of the images of saint Dominic in Western Europe.

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Canonical Establishment of Lay Dominican Chapters in Indonesia

Three Lay Dominican Fraternities (Chapters) in Indonesia were canonically established by separate decrees issued by Fr. Napoleon B. Sipalay, Jr., Prior Provincial of the Dominican Province of the Philippines (DPP). The DPP has two juridically erected Houses in Indonesia: Rumah Santo Dominikus in Pontianak (2006) and Rumah Santo Tomas Aquino in Surabaya (2013).

The respective Bishops and Parish Priests gladly endorsed to the canonical establishment of the Lay Dominican Chapters in Pontianak, Surabaya and Yogyakarta. Bishop


Dr. Belen L. Tangco, President, Dominican Laity Provincial Council, DPP, and Asia-Pacific Coordinator on the International Council of Lay Dominican Fraternities, read the Decrees before the Assemblies of Lay Dominicans in each place of establishment.

The official decrees were handed by Fr. Giuseppe Arsciwals, to the President of each Lay Dominican Chapter: Mr. Fransiskus Edy of the St. Dominican de Guzman Lay Dominican Chapter of Pontianak; Mr. Wellem Hemfry Elim Kusuma of the St. Thomas Aquinas Lay Dominican Chapter of Surabaya; and Mr. Robertus Belarminus Adi Imsawan of the St. Martin de Porres Lay Dominican Chapter of Yogyakarta.


In Surabaya, Fr. Joseto Bernadas, Jr., Ecclesiastical Assistant (Spiritual Director) and Promoter of Lay Dominicans in Surabaya, presided over the Eucharistic celebration. Concelebrants were Fr. Filemon de la Cruz, Superior of the Dominican Community and Fr. Giuseppe Arsciwals. Fr. Adrian Adirejo, Parish Priest of Redentor Mundi Parish, delivered the homily.


Mr. Theophilus Atmadi, National Coordinator of Lay Dominicans in Indonesia and Mr. Stephanus Suriaputra, President, St. Catherine of Siena Lay Dominican Chapter (can. est. 2017) provided warm support in guiding Fr. Arsciwals and Dr. Tangco through the places of canonical establishment, including their visits to Lay Dominicans of Cirebon and Jakarta. The Dominican Sisters of Indonesia shared accommodation and assistance in the celebration: Mother General Anna Marie Dwiyanti, Sr. M. Elisabeth Sukamdo, Sr. M. Krisanti in Yogyakarta; Sr. M. Hermine in Surabaya; Sr. M. Gabriela and Sr. Albertine in Cirebon.

The Lay Dominicans in Cirebon look forward to the canonical establishment of their Lay Dominican group even as they have started the preparations of documentary requirements.

Dr Belen L. Tangco, OP

**Archbishop becomes first novice of newly erected Chapter of Priests in the Philippines**

On 23 January 2018, His Excellency Most Rev. Jose Palma, DD, of the Archdiocese of Cebu, joined the Dominican Family. This was through a rite of admission in the Priestly Fraternities of St. Dominic, with the Prior Provincial of the Dominican Province of the Philippines, Fr. Napoleon Sipalay Jr., OP, as presider. The rite was held within the celebration of vespers at the chapel of the Archbishop's Palace in Cebu City.

Members of the Dominican Family welcomed the Archbishop, foremost of whom was his fellow bishop in the Archdiocese,
Most. Rev. Antonio Rañola, DD, himself a member of the Dominican Priestly Fraternities. The Prior Provincial was joined by other friars: fr. Quirico Pedregosa Jr., OP, Socius of the Provincial; fr. Florentino Bolo Jr., OP, General Promoter of the Priestly Fraternities; fr. Louie Coronel, OP; and fr. Dominik Jurczak, OP, a visiting friar from Poland. Also present were priests from other fraternities in the Province, secular priest-formators of the University of Santo Tomas Central Seminary, Dominican sisters working in the region, as well as friends and some students of Dominican institutions.

The Chapter of St. Vincent Ferrer is one of the nine newly established local fraternities of priests in the Province of the Philippines, all of which were erected on 23 September 2017, at the Convent of Santo Domingo in Quezon City, on the occasion of the visit of the Master of the Order, fr. Bruno Cadoré, OP. The chapter's current prior is Fr. Simplicio Pugasan Jr. of the Archdiocese of Cebu, and it has currently around 20 members.

In his thanksgiving speech, Abp. Palma affirmed his affinity with the Dominicans under whose institutions he obtained his higher education. He completed his Licentiate degree in Theology at the University of Santo Tomas, Manila, and his Doctorate degree in Theology at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (Angelicum) in Rome. He served as president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines from 2011 to 2013.

A gathering of Formators in Central and Eastern Europe

An exploratory meeting was held in Vienna on 20 January to consider the possibility of starting a regular meeting of formators in Central and Eastern Europe, the only region of the Order that does not have such a regular meeting.

There are many novices and students in formation in this region and there is increasing collaboration among its provinces. A regular meeting would support the brothers asked to take up this ministry, would help to form them as formators, and would strengthen relationships between the provinces.

The brothers agreed that such a meeting would be established, that it would meet each year over a 'long weekend', and that it would include not just the novice masters and student masters of the region but also their assistants, the promoters of vocations, and the directors of pre-novitiate programmes. Many thanks to the community of Vienna for their fraternal welcome and generous hospitality.

The brothers who attended this exploratory meeting were fr Vivian Boland, socius for fraternal life and formation, fr Piotr (Krakow, translating), fr Jakub Kruczek, student master in Krakow (Poland), fr Krzysztof Poplawski, regional socius, fr Reginald Slavkovsky, novice master in Zvolen (Slovakia), fr Laurentius Hoehn, novice master in Worms (Teotonia), fr Domagoj Polanscak, student master in Zagreb (Croatia) and fr Gunther Rietzi, student master in Vienna (South Germany and Austria).

Pope Francis prays before relics of Sts Martin de Porres, Rose of Lima etc.

On the last day of his apostolic journey to Peru, Pope Francis prayed before the relics the nation's most beloved saints.

Pope Francis on Sunday (21 January) joined some two and a half thousand priests, religious, seminarians, consecrated lay people and members of ecclesial movements to pray before the relics of the Peruvian Saints in Lima’s Cathedral of Saint John the Apostle.

The relics of Saint Martin de Porres, Saint Rose of Lima, Saint Turibius of Mogrovejo, and Saint John Macias were
brought from Santo Domingo Convent. Those of Saint Francis Solanus - enshrined at the Archbishop's Museum – were also put on display and placed besides the presbytery.

The Cathedral Basilica of St. John the Apostle and Evangelist, located in the historic center of Lima was built in 1535 after Francisco Pizarro laid the first stone.

The building has suffered the devastating consequences of the earthquakes which have rocked Lima.

Above one of its oldest altars is the image of Our Lady of Evangelization, a gift from Emperor Carlos V. In Her hand, She holds a golden rose placed by Saint Pope John Paul II in 1988 during his second trip to the country.

This is the prayer offered by Pope Francis before the Relics:

God our Father,
through Jesus Christ
you founded your Church
on the rock of the Apostles,
that, guided by the Holy Spirit,
she may be a sign and instrument
of your love and mercy in the world:
we thank you for the gifts you have
bestowed upon our Church in Lima.
We thank you in a special way
for the holiness that has flourished in our land.
Our Archdiocesan Church has been made fruitful
by the apostolic labours of Saint Turibius of Mogrovejo,
enlarged by the prayer, penance and charity
of Saint Rose of Lima and Saint Martin de Porres,
adorned by the missionary zeal of Saint Francisco Solano
and the humble service of Saint Juan Macías.

It has been blessed by the witness of Christian life and fidelity to the Gospel
of many others of our brothers and sisters.
We give you thanks for all that you have accomplished in our history
and we ask you to keep us faithful to the heritage we have received.
Help us to be a Church that goes forth,
drawing near to all, especially the less fortunate.
Teach us to be missionary disciples
of Jesus Christ, the Lord of Miracles,
living in love, seeking unity
and practising mercy,
so that, protected by the intercession
of Our Lady of Evangelization,
we may live the joy of the Gospel
and proclaim it before the world.

Attack on the Dominican Church in Kinshasa, DR Congo

The Dominican brothers working at St Dominic Church, Limete, Kinshasa, DR Congo were attacked together with their parishioners on Sunday, December 31, 2017. They were attacked by security forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo made up of soldiers and the police.

The Catholic bishops of the Democratic Republic of Congo, supported by a coalition of civil society groups, called for peaceful demonstrations after Sunday Mass on December 31, 2017, to denounce a new electoral reform law that came into effect on
December 25, and to mark the first-year anniversary of the 31 December 2016 political agreement, facilitated by the bishops.

President Kabila, whose mandate ended in December 2016, had agreed to set an election date by the end of 2017 to ease tensions in the mineral-rich country. However, the country’s election commission has now said that the vote cannot be held until December 2018. Critics accuse Kabila of postponing elections to maintain his grip on power, causing tensions to increase and provoking violence and deadly street demonstrations across the country since the end of 2016.

The government refused permits for the December 31 demonstrations for what it called security reasons, yet more than 160 churches in many parts of the country participated in the call. Police responded with tear gas, rubber bullets and even live ammunition. At least seven people were killed and many others seriously injured. Many were also arrested.

Several police came to St Dominic’s Parish in Kinshasa, run by our Dominican friars, and fired on parishioners in the church grounds and even inside the church. One woman was shot in the forehead by a live bullet, others in their legs, and a friar, Jean Nkongolo, was shot in the face at close range by a rubber bullet.

Another demonstration was planned for Sunday, January 21.
Let us show solidarity with our brothers and sisters in praying for justice and peace in the DRC.

**Praying as a Family: Nashville Dominican Sisters’ Mission to the Family**

If parents love God, children see and learn faith. Parents who pray together teach by the way they live that God is real; that He is present, listening, and eager to be a part of our lives. A life of prayer makes us fully human because it makes us real; it brings us out of ourselves, again and again, into conversation with the Author of life Himself — the God who made and loves us, and created everything we know. (Archbishop Charles Chaput)

Prayer nurtures the life of the family. It opens hearts, melts away resentments, fosters gratitude, and becomes a fount of grace, peace, and joy for the entire family.

**The Book**

A Short Guide to Praying as a Family, written by our sisters as an aid for families who desire to grow in their lives of prayer, is illustrated with photographs of stained-glass windows from many different areas in the world. In simple and engaging language, the book directs families step-by-step in beginning to pray together and in deepening their prayer. Families who have used this book say that they have found especially helpful the sections on how to begin family bedtime prayers, the monthly family meeting, and praying with one’s spouse. They have commented that this guide is simple, practical, and profound. “Helping children learn the habit of prayer,” writes Archbishop Charles Chaput in the Forward, “becomes one of the most important lessons a family can share.”

**The TV Series**

The Dominican Sisters and EWTN have worked together to create a television series, Praying as a Family, based on this book. Currently the series is in its second season.

**The DVD Series**

Ever wonder if other families are going through the same things yours is? Join the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia as they step into the homes of Catholic families around the country for a closer look at the domestic church at work. As they share their personal joys, struggles, and sorrows, they reveal how "Praying as a Family" has helped put Christ at the center of their lives, and strengthened them and their Catholic faith! Produced by the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia and EWTN.
Fr Prakash Lohale continues his mission in Interfaith Dialogue in the Archdiocese of Toronto

The Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto, Canada has appointed fr Prakash Lohale, OP as the Director of its Office of Ecumenical and Interfaith Affairs.

Fr Parkash Lohale is not a stranger to ecumenical and interreligious dialogue. He has dedicated his life to this mission both in his home country and Province of India and at the General Curia of the Order in Santa Sabina.

Fr Prakash served at the General Promoter for Justice and Peace in the Order (2005-2008) and the Socius of the Master of the Order for Apostolic Life (2008-2014) during which he was a member of the General Council of the Order. In those roles, he organized gatherings of Dominican women and men living in Muslim countries or working with Muslims elsewhere for interreligious dialogue. He participated in numerous conferences and regularly given lectures on interreligious dialogue, mission, justice and peace.

He has also worked with the National Council of Churches in India from 1999 to 2001.

Fr Prakash is currently assigned in the Province of Canada and he is the Prior of the Priory of St Thomas Aquinas, Toronto.

DSE Düsseldorf Meeting in Oslo 2018

Just as the wise men from the East (Magi) left their own country and went to Jerusalem in search of the new born king whose star they have observed at its rising and have come to do him homage (Mt. 2:1-2), some Dominican sisters from Europe left their home convents and gathered in Oslo, Norway for the yearly “Düsseldorf meeting”. They have come together to pray, study, reflect and share on the theme “Incarnation and Human Dignity – A Dominican Spirituality for Catholic Social Thought”. It was also a time for exchanging stories and updates, recreation and by simply enjoying each other’s presence and appreciating the beauty of belonging to the Dominican family.

This annual gathering for young sisters has been held at the convent of the Dominican Sisters of Catherine of Siena in Düsseldorf Angermund for the past eight years.

In 2018, this meeting for young sisters took place for the first time at Katarinahjemmet (convent of the Dominican Sisters of Notre Dame de Grâce) in Oslo from the 5th to the 7th of January. Sr. Marie Laure Larcher OP set the tone for the theme by giving a concise and interesting presentation on Jacques Maritain and Human Dignity. Sr. Marie Laure belongs to the Dominicaines du Saint Nom de Jésus in Toulouse, France.

The main speaker, Sr. Helen Alford OP who is the former dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences and currently vice rector of the Angelicum, gave an enriching lecture on Dominican Spirituality and Catholic Social Thought enfleshed in the lives of Dominican men and women. Knowing the stories of these dedicated Dominicans in their passion for Preaching Justice in light of the Joyful, Luminous, Sorrowful and Glorious mysteries of the Rosary was truly inspiring!

Participating sisters were from Germany, France, Latvia, Portugal, England, Ireland, Austria, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Switzerland, Spain and Norway.

This event was made possible through the leadership of Sr. Else-Britt Nilsen OP, continental coordinator for Dominican Sisters Europe and her councilors Sr. Franziska Madl OP, Sr. Edel Murphy OP, Sr. Mary Laure Archer OP, Sr. Barbara Bonfante OP and Sr. Lúcia Petres OP.
Special thanks to the following: Carla Bertana for her simultaneous translation in both English and French, Sr. Anne-Bente Hadland, prioress and the sisters of Katarinahjemmet for their hospitality in hosting the meeting, the Dominican brothers in the Oslo Priory for the use of their conference hall and Fr. Rory Mulligan, SM for celebrating the Sunday Mass.
Sr. Agnes Lalu OP, Dominicaines de Notre-Dame de Grâce

**Dominican sisters help educate Iraqi children returning home**

When Iraqi residents fled their homes during the Islamic State invasion, they left behind their houses, neighbors, and day-to-day lives.

For the children who fled, leaving their home behind also meant an interruption in their education – in some cases for months or years. While some refugee camps offer classes for children, challenges abound and students often fall behind.

Now, a group of Dominican sisters in one Iraqi town is working to help educate displaced children as their families return to their homes and work to rebuild their lives.

With the support of Catholic charity Aid to the Church in Need in Spain, the Dominican Sisters of Saint Catherine of Siena were able to restore their convent, which had been destroyed by the Islamic State in Iraq. Today, they offer classes to hundreds of children who had been displaced by the war.

“We try to help the children, giving them peace: in our convent we offer them a safe place,” Sister Ilham told ACN in late December. Despite the expulsion of ISIS, security in the area remains unstable.

In May 2017, ACN funded the restoration of Our Lady of the Rosary Convent with a grant of $54,000. Located in Teleskuf, north of the plain of Nineveh, the convent is just over 20 miles outside of Mosul.

The sisters worked 12-hour days to prepare the convent to welcome the children, Sister Ilham said. They provide daycare for children between three and five years old. In the mornings, they teach about 150 children between the ages of six and 12. In the evenings, they teach students 12 years of age and older.

Sister Ilham, 57, was working for a church in Mosul when the rapid advance of the Islamic State forced her and her community to flee. However, after the fall of the terrorist group, she returned to the area and today is helping those displaced from Teleskuf.

“None of us wanted to leave where we come from, but as the attacks continued, we had to flee to save our lives,” she said.

“In 2016 some 6,000 people had to leave Telskuf. When I returned to this area, all the houses were abandoned and many of them destroyed,” she continued. “In Teleskuf all that is left of many of buildings are the ruins. The school and the children's home are destroyed, the doors of the convent were forced open and the sisters' home was sacked.”

In addition to teaching at the convent, the sisters visit the members of the Christian community in their homes, teach catechism to the children, and prepare them for their First Communion.

Once the local school is rebuilt, the children will no longer need to attend the convent classes. In the meantime, the sisters hope they can help the children from falling too far behind in their studies.

“Before the Islamic State invasion, there were five sisters in the convent, while now there are only two of us. Fortunately, we are will soon receive reinforcements,” Sister Ilham said.

In addition to helping fund the convent reconstruction, Aid to the Church in Need is currently helping rebuild 13,000 houses and more than 300 church properties destroyed by the Islamic State in Iraq.
Fr Hyacinthe Destivelle, op speaks about the progress in Catholic relations with Russian Orthodox world

Fr Hyacinthe Destivelle, from the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity, talks about prospects for the new phase of relationships between Moscow and the Holy See

While Churches in the West prepare to celebrate the Epiphany this Sunday, Christians in much of the Eastern Orthodox world, which follows the ancient Julian calendar, are gearing up for their Christmas celebrations.

In Russia, home to almost 40 percent of the world’s Orthodox Christians, Patriarch Kirill will lead celebrations at Moscow’s Cathedral of Christ the Saviour. Last May, the cathedral hosted the relics of St Nicholas, one of the Orthodox world’s most revered saints, in an unprecedented ecumenical gesture from the Catholic Church in the Italian city of Bari.

The loan of the relics to the Russian Church was the result of a historic first meeting between Pope Francis and Patriarch Kirill in Cuba in February 2016, an encounter that also led to a visit to Moscow by Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, last August.

Dominican Fr Hyacinthe Destivelle heads the Eastern relations desk at the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity. He talks about recent progress in relations between Moscow and the Holy See and about his hopes for the coming year….

Fr Destivelle notes that the Cuba meeting between the Pope and Patriarch Kirill “opened a new phase of our relationship”, leading to the loan of the relics, seen by over two million people in Moscow and St Petersburg, as well as the first visit of a Vatican Secretary of State to Russia since 1999.

Vienna meeting to mark Havana encounter

He says the next step will be the 2nd anniversary of that Havana meeting which will take place in Vienna on February 12th, through the invitation of Cardinal Christoph Schonborn to Metropolitan Hilarion and Cardinal Kurt Koch.

Fr Destivelle also notes that a joint working group, founded after the Havana meeting, is working on other cultural and spiritual projects. “Spiritual ecumenism and especially ecumenism of saints is very important”, he says, to remind us that “unity will not be fruit of our efforts” but rather the work of the Holy Spirit and the prayers of the saints.

Cultural, spiritual events to prepare for papal visit

Cultural events, such as exchange study visits for young priests, or concerts, are also important to recognise that “although our cultures are different, we share the same faith”, he adds. While he says he is not aware of any plans for a papal visit to Moscow at the moment, Fr Destivelle insists that such spiritual and cultural initiatives are essential “to prepare the mentalities” for such a visit.

From high level contacts to grassroots ecumenism

While Catholics have been sensitive to ecumenical issues since Vatican II, he says, the Orthodox Church was persecuted at that time, and although there have been high level exchanges, the “people of God was not really involved in all these contacts” That’s why visit of relics was so important to make people sensitive to the necessity of Christian unity, he says.

Finally, Fr Destivelle speaks about the theological dialogue with the 14 Orthodox Churches, noting that the adoption of last year’s ‘Chieti document’ is “probably a fruit also of the good relationships existing now between the Holy See and the Moscow Patriarchate.

By Philippa Hitchen
Do you know what the Synod on Young People is all about?

The voice of Youth in the Church

Pope Francis, in his line of opening the doors of the Church and announce the Gospel of Joy to everyone, he has called the Synod of the Bishops with the theme: “Youth, Faith and vocational discernment”. On January 13, 2017, a preparatory document was published by the XV General Ordinary Assembly of the Synod of the Bishops with this same title.

And the obvious questions are: “What is a Synod, how does it work and what is it for?” The term Synod comes from two greek terms: syn (together) and yhodos (way), and expresses the idea of “walking together”. In the Vatican there are several organisms that form the Roman Curia and they are in charge of the government of the Church, looking after different sectors and areas. But there was an existing concern for having a structure where the universal church was represented in the way of an assembly of bishops from all over the world who could help the Pope in the government of the church through their advice. And that’s how Pope Paul VI created, on September 15, 1965, the Synod of the Bishops, as a permanent institution, depending directly of the Pope. The Synod of the Bishops gathers every time the Pope calls the meeting and with the subject that is recommended for study, analysis, debate and consultation. It’s presided by the Pope and has a long preparatory process so that the work document, that’s called “Instrumentum laboris”, and is the basis for the discussion of the Synod, is a true result of the enquiry to all the Church.

A Synod about, for and with youth: Pope Francis has already made two Synods: The Synod of the New Evangelization and the Synod of the Family. His proposal is that God’s project for men and women of all times reaches everyone and all scopes of life, without exceptions. And that’s why this third Synod that’s been called, invited us to ask ourselves how to accompany youth in the path of faith, in their vital decisions, and asks also the youth to help identify the best ways to announce the Good News.

Roadmap: with the publication of the preparatory Document, on January 13, 2017, the enquiry phase was opened. Its pretends to involve all those who represent the youth sector of the Church, the responsible of Youth and Vocational Pastoral, the Parishes, Religious Institutes, Youth and Ecclesial Movements, Diocese, national and continental assemblies… Meetings and congresses are organized, in which the proposals for the Synod should be brought up. Also a website was created where we can follow the process (http://www.synod2018.va/content/synod2018.html) , participate in the debates and elaborate a survey for all youth, ages 16-29, who want to participate. The idea is to reach all youth, believers or not, all cultures, regardless their religion or origin.

When all information, proposals and surveys are gathered, they will proceed to elaborate, before May 2018, the Instrumentum laboris (Working document), which will be discussed during the Synod from 3-18 October 2018. All that will be worked and discussed during the Synod will be collected in a document of Minutes of the Synod, which will be handed to the Pope and with which he will elaborate a document that will be published under the name of Apostolic Exhortation (is the publication that will collect all discussed during the Synod).

INITIAL TEXT OF THE INTRODUCTION OF THE PREPARATORY DOCUMENT FOR THE YOUTH SYND

“These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full” (Jn 15:11). This is God’s plan for all men and women in every age, including all the young men and women of the Third Millennium, without exception.

Proclaiming the joy of the Gospel is the mission entrusted by the Lord to his Church. The Synod on the New Evangelization and the Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium treated how to accomplish this mission in today’s world. The two synods on the family and the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Amoris laetitia were, instead, dedicated to helping families find this joy.
In keeping with this mission and introducing a new approach through a Synod with the topic, “Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment”, the Church has decided to examine herself on how she can lead young people to recognize and accept the call to the fullness of life and love, and to ask young people to help her in identifying the most effective ways to announce the Good News today. By listening to young people, the Church will once again hear the Lord speaking in today’s world. As in the days of Samuel (cf. 1 Sam 3:1-21) and Jeremiah (cf. Jer 1:4-10), young people know how to discern the signs of our times, indicated by the Spirit. Listening to their aspirations, the Church can glimpse the world which lies ahead and the paths the Church is called to follow.”
Águeda Mariño Rico, csd, December 2017

Fr Philippe LeBlanc pioneered the Dominican presence at the UN in Geneva

Dominicans have a long history of being rather dissatisfied with this world. But they have never merely complained.

Canadian Dominican Father Philippe LeBlanc has complained, but never aimlessly. He pioneered a Dominican presence at the United Nations in Geneva. Beginning in 1996, in partnership with Franciscans International, LeBlanc and a band of Dominicans have been standing up at the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights to point out where the world has failed, where power and blind arrogance has injured the poor, where dignity has been forgotten.

“This was a religious order going to the UN, which freaked people out,” LeBlanc told The Catholic Register. LeBlanc did more than freak out the diplomatic corps. He and his brothers saved lives.

Beginning in 1997 the Dominicans began pointing out the deteriorating human rights situation in the southern Mexican state of Chiapas — where the federal government had mounted an outsized, blundering military response to the Zapatista protest movement. By the end of 1997 the army stood by in Acteal while a paramilitary group called the Red Mask murdered 45 indigenous people. Many accused the Mexican Army and the then ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party of complicity in the massacre that killed people inside the village church.

Dominican agitation at the United Nations put the situation on the UN human rights agenda. In 1999, after Leblanc had made another speech to the Geneva Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, a resolution was on the floor calling Mexico to account.

At the same time, the Mexican military was preparing an operation in Oaxaca, just north of Chiapas — a town with strong Zapatista sympathies. LeBlanc walked out of the assembly and gave an interview to a journalist.

“When (the story) came out in Mexico, all hell broke loose,” recalls LeBlanc. “Never, never had Mexico been charged with human rights violations.”

In the end, the attack on Oaxaca never happened. The key to Dominican success at the United Nations was authenticity, said LeBlanc.

“They knew that what we were saying came from the field, and not from some newspaper article, because we had people in more than 100 countries,” said LeBlanc.

The most valuable thing LeBlanc brought to his 12 years at the United Nations was not so much his ability to complain as his ability to encourage, said Jesuit Father Jack Costello of the Jesuit Centre for Social Faith and Justice. In LeBlanc’s world idealism trumps cynicism and despair.
“It could be that the people in the UN get out of bed with more conviction, more freedom, more desire to serve beyond self-interest because of knowing Philippe Leblanc,” Costello said. “He contributes to formation of a community at the UN, and it would be a community of light, of wanting to do the right thing, believing it.”

As a religious working on development issues in the United Nations in New York, Augustinian Father Christian Emeka Obiezu is very aware of how LeBlanc and the Dominicans blazed a trail.

“It was a success not so much quantified by what has been achieved and what has not been achieved, but a success in the sense that it has taken seriously the Vatican II call that religious communities be open to the signs of the times and respond appropriately through their various vocations,” Obiezu said.

The Dominicans in Geneva and Franciscans in New York work at the United Nations as an officially accredited NGO. They have a freedom that the Holy See’s ambassadorial contingent does not.

“(The Holy See) couldn’t make any criticism of a country. How could they?” said LeBlanc. “But they would say to us, ‘Go for it.’ ”

Since the assassination of Pakistan’s Christian minorities minister Shahbaz Bhatti in 2011 there has been some world attention paid to the oppression of Christian minorities in Pakistan. But LeBlanc and the Dominicans were campaigning on the issue as early as 2003. Before the Iraq War the Dominicans put the fate of poor Iraqi children under U.S.-enforced UN sanctions on the agenda. The Dominicans took on the U.S. government and military over the tiny island of Vieques, which for generations was used for target practice. In the aftermath of the genocide in Rwanda, the Dominicans documented human rights abuses throughout the African Great Lakes region. The Dominicans continue to campaign for the abolition of the death penalty around the world.

In all these campaigns LeBlanc could point to Dominican heritage. The very concept of human rights first appeared in an Advent sermon by Dominican Father Antonio de Montesinos in the Dominican Republic in 1511. Montesinos asked by what right were the Spanish enslaving and killing aboriginal Taino people on the island. Another Dominican, Fr. Bartolomé de las Casas, heard that sermon and dedicated the rest of his life to stopping the endless slavery of native people in the Americas.

Those efforts brought about the Laws of Burgos in 1512, the Leyes Nuevos of 1542 and the Laws of the Indies codified in 1680 — the world’s first human rights legislation. The ceiling of the chamber where the UN Human Rights Commission meets is painted with a huge mural of Bartolomé de las Casas preaching to the Indians.

The 16th-century Dominicans didn’t win. The Taíno people, their language and culture were eventually wiped out. Enslaved aboriginal people in the Caribbean and South America were replaced with African slaves. But the idea that we have rights by virtue of being human has outlived the Spanish empire.

As LeBlanc now assembles a history of the first decade and a half of Dominicans at the United Nations, he knows human rights have not triumphed universally.

“It didn’t change the world,” said a modest LeBlanc.

Perhaps. But LeBlanc and the Dominicans know whose side they’re on.

By Michael Swan, The Catholic Register
**Fr José Fernandes Alves is the New Provincial of Brazil**

The Master of the Order, fr Bruno Cadoré has confirmed the election of fr José Fernandes Alves as the New Prior Provincial of the Province of Frei Bartolomeo de Las Casas in Brazil. Fr José has accepted the election. He succeeds fr Edivaldo Antonio dos Santos as the 6th Prior Provincial of Province of Brazil.

Fr José was born in 1955 at Espirito Santo do Turvo, São Paulo. He made his first profession in the Order in 1978 and was ordained to the priesthood in 1981. He has degrees in Philosophy and Theology and a postgraduate degree in Education and Human Rights.

Fr José is an expert on the issues of human rights, justice and peace and has worked in various capacities in that field. He is the Coordinator of the Dominican Commission for Justice and Peace of the Dominican Family in Brazil. He is also a member of the National Justice and Peace Team of the Conference of Religious of Brazil and of the Justice and Peace Commission of the National Conference of Bishops of Brazil.

In 1998 he was elected as the first Prior Provincial of the Province of Brazil, so this will be his second non-consecutive term as Provincial.

**Fr Christopher Eggleton is the New Promoter of the Rosary**

The Master of the Order, fr Bruno Cadoré has appointed fr Christopher T. Eggleton as the Promoter General of the Rosary. He is a son of the Southern Province of St Martin the Porres, USA and he succeeds fr Louis-Marie ariño-durand. Fr Chris who is currently the Socius of the Master for the Provinces in the United States of America will double as Promoter of the Rosary.

Born in 1950, fr Chris grew up in Louisville, Kentucky, USA. He took his first vows in the Order in 1983 and studied Philosophy and Theology at the Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology in Berkeley, California. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1988.

Since after his ordination, fr Chris has taken up the following assignments;
- At St Dominic Parish in Miami, Florida (a predominantly Cuban-American Spanish-speaking community) as parochial vicar for 3 years.
- At the Community at Atlanta George and served both at Emory University and Holy Cross Parish.
- At St Anthony of Padua Priory and served at St Anthony of Padua Parish as parochial vicar for 5 years.
- At Albert the Great Priory in Irving, Texas where he served as Associate Spiritual Director at Holy Trinity Seminary of the Diocese of Dallas for 3 years.
- At the community at Hammond, Louisiana and ministered at Holy Ghost Parish.
- Elected Prior of St Martin de Porres Priory in Raleigh, North Carolina and served as parochial vicar at St Michael’s, a non-Dominican parish.
- On Mission to Ecuador for three and half years.
- Appointed Novice Director and was a member of the Provincial Council.
- In 2010, he was elected the Prior Provincial of the Province of St Martin the Porres.
- After his tenure as Provincial, he was Chaplain to the Sisters of Peace in Kentucky ministering to their sick and elderly sisters for 6 months.
- At Holy Rosary Priory in Houston as Pastor of the Holy Rosary Parish for 2 years.

In August 2017, he was appointed Socius of the Master for the United States.
Fr Lukáš Fošum is the New Provincial of the Province of Bohemia, Czech Republic

On 23 January 2018, at the Provincial Chapter of the Province of Bohemia holding at the Convent of St Giles in Prague, the capitular friars elected Fr Lukáš Jan Fošuma as the New Prior Provincial of the Province for the next 4 years. The Master of the Order, Fr Bruno Cadoré has approved the election and Fr Lukáš has accepted the election. He succeeds Fr Benedikt Mohelník who has just completed his tenure.

Fr Lukáš was born on 1 May 1977 at České Budějovice, Czech Republic. After graduating from high school, he studied general medicine at the Faculty of Medicine in Pilsen where he also met the Dominicans for the first time. Between 2001 and 2003, he worked as an anaesthesiologist at the České Budějovice Hospital. In August 2013, he joined the Order. After his novitiate at Zvolen, Slovakia, he studied at the Dominican Centers of Studies in Bordeaux and Toulouse.

After his priestly ordination in 2010, he worked for a year at the Convent of St Giles in Prague before proceeding for postgraduate studies at Fribourg, Switzerland. He obtained his Licentiate in 2012 and has completed his doctoral studies in Moral Theology. Since 2014, he has been the Master of Student in his Province. He has also been a lecturer at the Palacký University, Olomouc, Czech Republic.

Appointment of Fr Pablo Carlos Sicouly as Socius for Intellectual Life

The Master of the Order, Fr Bruno Cadoré has appointed Fr Pablo Carlos Sicouly as his Socius for Intellectual Life. He is a son of the Province of St Augustine in Argentina and he succeeds Fr Michael Mascari who has just concluded his tenure.

Fr Pablo was born in the city of Buenos Aires in 1954. After studying Law at the Catholic University of Santa Maria de Buenos Aires, he entered the novitiate of his Province in Mar del Plata in 1979. He made his first profession in 1980, his solemn profession in 1983 and he received the ordination to the ministerial priesthood in 1986.

He studied Philosophy and Theology at the Center for Studies of the Province of Argentina in Buenos Aires, in affiliation with the University of St Thomas Aquinas of the North. He is a Professor of Philosophy at the University and a Doctor of Theology from the Faculty of Sankt Georgen, Frankfurt/Main, Germany.

He was Regent of Studies of his Province between 1992-1996 and 2000-2007 and Prior Provincial from 2007 to 2015. During this period, he served as President of the Governing Board and Grand Chancellor of the University of St Thomas Aquinas of the North. He was professor of Fundamental and Dogmatic Theology at the Center of Studies of the Province of Argentina and at the Faculty of Theology of the Catholic University of Argentina (Buenos Aires).

Since 2015, he has served as Promoter of Studies for CIDALC (Interprovincial Conference of Dominicans in Latin America and the Caribbean), in which he participated in recent years in the program of complementary studies for friars in the region, in collaboration with the Faculty of Theology of San Esteban in Salamanca, of the Province of Hispania.
Calendar of the Master of the Order for February 2018

Jan 27 – Feb 9: Canonical Visitation to the Province of St Augustine, West Africa
12-23: Plenary General Council Meetings at Santa Sabina
14: Ash Wednesday Mass with Pope Francis at Santa Sabina
Feb 26-Mar 5: Canonical Visitation to the Province of England

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