International Meeting of Representatives of Priestly Fraternities of St Dominic

ABOUT THE ASSEMBLY
In order to respond to the provisions of the 2010 General Chapter (ACG 2010 Rome, n° 233), there will be an international assembly of representatives of the PRIESTLY FRATERNITIES OF ST. DOMINIC, which also aims to provide an opportunity to promote their life and mission, especially in the context of the Jubilee of the Order. This gathering, which will be held on 22-26 February 2016, at the Casa del Pellegrino, San Sisto, Rome, Italy, also aims to come up with relevant recommendations for the General Chapter of the friars later in the same year in Bologna, Italy.

PARTICIPANTS
The assembly aims to gather sufficient representation, namely, 1 friar (preferably the promoter) and 1 secular priest (member), from each Province/Fraternity. In the interest of promoting greater awareness in the Order about the Dominican Priestly Fraternities, the assembly is also encouraging Provinces, where there is yet no presence of the fraternity, to send a friar as a representative.

Program. The actual conference begins on February 22 and ends on February 26, but we recommend that you arrive in Rome on the 20th, Saturday, in order to take advantage of the Pope’s Angelus on the following day, February 21, at the St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican. The accommodation that we have arranged covers only 20-27 February 2016.

Financial concern. We implore the generosity of your Province to offer financial assistance to the secular priest representing the Province, if there need be. To the best of its ability, the General Curia shall shoulder the expenses for accommodation and other logistic requirements in Rome.

Language recommendation. It would help us to better facilitate the discussions if your Province could send a representative who speaks English. This would help us economize by saving on the cost of translation.
However, if this is not possible, we will arrange for translators according to your need. Please indicate your language of preference based on the official languages used by the Order: English, Spanish, French. 

Things to prepare. We likewise would like to request you to prepare the following for the assembly: (You may also send them in advance to sacerdotes@curia.op.org)

1. WRITTEN STATUS REPORT OF THE FRATERNITY IN THE PROVINCE (If any). A brief description about the fraternity’s beginnings, its current members, activities, and other relevant information; this is to facilitate a more accurate update of the status of the priestly fraternities in the Order.

2. WRITTEN EVALUATION OF THE RULE. A reflective assessment of the Rule of the Priestly Fraternities of St. Dominic (Latin, English, Spanish, French, Italian), as well as comments and suggestions, if any.

3. OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS. We suggest that there be a forum for the members of the fraternity (if any), together with the promoter, to come up with recommendations on the following:
   a. specific mission of the Dominican Priestly Fraternities
   b. manner of organising the Fraternities in the midst of the Order
   c. needs and expectations in order to strengthen the mission of the Order in the Fraternities

**Rite of Profession.** If the secular priest representing your Province has not yet made his profession, we are glad to inform you that we can arrange for him to have it during the assembly, possibly in the presence of the Master of the Order.

COORDINATION:
fr. Florentino Bolo, Coordinator for the Priestly Fraternities of the Order: sacerdotes@curia.op.org
fr. Orlando Rueda Acevedo, Socius for the Apostolic Life: apostolatus@curia.op.org

● **Dominicans engaging with Land Grabbing in Africa**

Last November, 6 Dominicans from 4 entities in Africa participated in a conference on “Land Grabbing in Africa” in Nairobi, Kenya. It was hosted by SECAM (Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar), the lead organiser being the African Faith and Justice Network (AFJN), led by our Brother Aniedi Okure from Nigeria. The hope is that, with the awareness gained from this conference, Dominicans can begin to play a greater role in preventing the devastation and suffering resulting from land grabbing in the world, 60% of which takes place in Africa. See the final statement of commitment attached.

---

**SECAM Conference on Land Grabbing and Just Governance in Africa**
**Jumuia Conference and Country Home, Limuru (Kenya), November 22-26, 2015.**

**COMMITMENT TO ACT AGAINST LAND GRABBING AND TO SUPPORT LOCAL COMMUNITIES**

**OUR LAND IS SACRED, OUR LAND IS OUR LIFE, OUR LAND IS NOT FOR SALE**

Land grabbing has become a cancer to the way of true development of Africa. It is packaged in various counterfeit development programs that are practically targeted towards the looting of our resources. We acknowledge this problem to be part of the unjust global economic system which has impoverished us gravely thus creating: forced evictions and migrations such that our brothers and sisters are dying in the Mediterranean Sea in an effort to seek new life; community conflicts that weren’t there in the past, extreme inequality and power differentials and other social problems in our beloved continent. We also acknowledge that our political elites and some of our local leaders are accomplices and beneficiaries of this evil thus giving Europe, North America, Asia and even South America the opportunity to colonize us the second time.

However, we recognize that it is not helpful to sit back, fold our arms and blame the past and colonialism for our problems. Motivated by our Christian values, Catholic social teachings, African religious and social value of ubuntu we resolutely commit to take our
future in our hands. Our ancestors gave us this land in trust for our own use and for the use of future generation and they resting there as well. OUR LAND IS SACRED, OUR LAND IS OUR LIFE, OUR LAND IS NOT FOR SALE. God forbid that we betray this trust and turn African land into commodity for sale. In this vein, we the participants at the SECAM Land Grab Conference held at Limuru, Kenya from November 22-26, 2015 commit to concrete personal and group strategies to reverse this situation.

We are committed to presenting and telling a different narrative of Africa and her development needs; showcasing the opportunities and potentials that are available in our land instead of the story of misery, deprivation and hopelessness put in our consciousness by colonialism and tell others to do the same. What Africa needs are justice and respect for our shared humanity and not development aid.

We are committed to working in coalition because as the African proverbs says; when spiders unite their webs, they can tie a lion. We particularly charge SECAM to provide the necessary leadership. We need not only to network and form a coalition of activities of advocacy, we also commit to a network of prayers and prayers to counteract the actions of the corporations.

Advocacy is not synonymous with being in opposition; rather we engage in it to provide sounding boards for the various national and international policies and frameworks geared towards the enhancement of greater justice, peace and integrity of creation in our world. We therefore commit ourselves to a more proactive advocacy of the national public policies and policy making process especially those aimed at facilitating land grabs before they are signed into laws. This might entail getting experts at the national and international levels to become part of our coalition.

Land grabbing has unique faces in different countries of Africa and are in most cases counter productive strategies accepted or adopted by the respective African national governments to address some economic needs. We recognize in this vein that there is no one size fits all solution to the problem of land grabbing. Therefore, we commit to work with national/regional JPIC commissions of Episcopal and Major Superiors’ conferences, Faith based Organizations, locally and internationally based NGOs, and Experts to proffer more productive alternative strategies for a particular country.

We commit to a campaign for a Moratorium on further land deals in Africa until the National Governments have incorporated national binding laws that will protect the vulnerable and our ecosystem in the face of international voluntary regulations and frameworks that facilitate land grabbing.

We commit to denounce the criminalization of land activists in all its forms and commit to support those already criminalized and their families until they are freed.

We are committed to:

- an action plan for the education of Local and Christian communities about land grabbing, creating awareness of the lies behind land grabbing and market economy;
- empowering local communities to stand up for themselves non-violently and without giving in to despair;
- an action plan to educate local communities on the sustainable use of land and preservation of the integrity of our ecosystem;
• promote and sustain mass movements of creative non-violence to protect our African cultural value of communal land ownership; support for women and youth to have access to land and support for restoration of Lands already grabbed;
• identify actors that hide behind the corporations, dialogue with them for change/conversion and take creative non-violent actions where necessary;
• expose the endemic corruption in our economic system which keep us in poverty and make our people easy prey to land grabbers.

We commit to a **five-year** action plan as outlined below. The co-organizers of this conference will forma monitoring team to evaluate the yearly progress of the action plan.

**GENERAL PLAN OF ACTION**

To conclude the Nairobi Conference with concrete guidelines to work together in the next five years, it was possible through the Open Forum Methodology, to adopt a General Plan of Action with three main dimensions: Education and Empowerment, Networking, and Policy advocacy and Engagement

1. **Education and Empowerment**

   **Whom?**

   • Self education, individuals and groups
   • Faith based communities
   • Local communities
   • Religious communities, Major Superiors and Bishops Conferences
   • Women groups

   **What?**

   Strategic focus: Human Rights, socio-economic and environmental impacts of land grabbing.

   **How?**

   • video/ films/ documentaries
   • Drama
   • Workshops in schools, communities
   • Road shows and speak outs
   • IC resources Town criers
   • Radio, TV, Gingo spots
   • Media

2. **Networking**

   **What?**

   Strategic Focus: sharing information, building coalition for action and dialogue, bring other actors on board.

   **How?**
• Creating platforms & working groups (Would CIDSE provide leadership for Europe and America; and SECAM provides for Africa?)
• Systematization of case studies and alternatives for advocacy, sharing of best practices
• Approach and dialogue with other actors, investors, policy makers and parliamentarians
• Support local communities in their non-violent resistance actions

3. **Policy advocacy and Engagement**

**What?**

Strategic Focus: National policy makers & parliamentarians, EU commission and Parliamentarians, US congress and policy makers, African Union (AU), African Regional Community and Economic blocks

**How?**

• Campaign of Moratorium on further land deals in Africa
• Research/documentation and publications of potential impact and impact assessment of policies on land grabs.
• Active participation in public consultations regarding international frameworks and national land policy making process.
• Working with experts to provide better alternatives policies.
• Approaching UN rapporteurs with evidences of Human Right violations through land grabbing asking for policy change.
• Monitor policy implementation processes
• Inform/educate communities about land policies and work with them to internalize their socio-economic impact on them.
• Engage in the advocacy to state Land as a Human Rights Promote policies that will protect land activists

4. **Monitoring System**

SECAM to see to it that one of the co-organizers of the Conference takes the responsibility to put in place a Network or Platform to facilitate communication among all Conference participants.

The monitoring team will regularly communicate with individual participants/networks to receive feedbacks on practical actions and strategies taken to implement the above Plan of Actions and share any type of results with others.

Each country delegation is requested to select one Conference Participant to play the role of reminder.

**Brs Aniedi Okure (Nigeria - Main organiser), Emmanuel Mulu (Kenya), Neil Mitchell (South Africa), Mike Deeb (South Africa - General Promoter of Justice and Peace), Julio Candeeiro (Angola), Gabriel Feyisetan (Nigeria)**

1. **SECAM: Governance, Common Good and Democratic Transition in Africa No. 29.**
• **Brother Bruno Cadoré, first Master of the Order to visit the Island of Reunion**

“First canonical visitation of a Master of the Order to the Island of Reunion”. It is in these terms that the brothers, nuns and lay Dominicans expressed their joy of welcoming brother Bruno Cadoré in Saint-Denis, the Reunion Island in the Indian Ocean. The 87th Master of the Order arrived in Saint-Denis on Sunday December 20, 2015, his Socius for Africa, brother Gabriel Samba, the following day. They left Saint-Denis on Wednesday 23.

This visit had a particular historical aspect. Because in this year of the Jubilee of 800 years of the confirmation of the Order by Pope Honorius III, the 86th successor of St. Dominic, brother Bruno Cadoré celebrated the anniversary of the approval of the Order, on Tuesday 22 December 2015 at the monastery of the Dominican nuns in Saint-Denis. During the Mass we prayed in a special way for brother Carlos Azpiroz Costa, former Master of the Order, whose Episcopal ordination as Coadjutor Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Bahia Blanca in Argentina took place the same day. After Mass, the Master of the Order visited the monastery and had breakfast with the sisters. He then met with the nuns. The joy was overflowing. Pictures and the guestbook will keep the memory of that memorable visit.

With the brothers, the Master of the Order had community meetings and individual interviews. He visited the places of apostolate of the brothers and made a courtesy visit to His Lordship Gilbert Aubry, Bishop of Saint-Denis. On the evening of December 22, three events marked the Golden Jubilee celebration of the eighth centenary of the confirmation of the Order. First, the meeting of the lay Dominicans with the Master of the Order at 5pm, in the Don Bosco parish hall of the Cathedral of Saint-Denis entrusted to the pastoral care of the brothers. The laity wanted clarification on critical issues discussed at the Synod on the family to which brother Bruno had taken part. Second, the solemn Vespers in the Cathedral at 6pm, in the presence of Bishop Gilbert. Third, the talk of the Master of the Order at 7pm, with more than a hundred guests in Don Bosco’s hall. Brother Bruno spoke of the Order and its mission today which consists in being "at the service of the conversation between God and his people." He then stressed the importance of preaching, which is rooted in contemplation lived through prayer, study and fellowship. For the Master of the Order, the challenge and priority of the Order today is “the door (la porte) and the reverse (l'envers).” The evening ended with a fraternal meal served to all the guests, in the garden of the presbytery of the Cathedral where is the priory of the brothers.

It should be noted that before arriving in the Reunion Island, the Master of the Order who was coming from the canonical visitation to Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, stopped in Madagascar. This short 24-hour visit (the first of a Master of the Order) was of great importance in view of the desire of the Order affirmed by the General Chapters, to see the province of Toulouse already present on the Reunion Island, to found in Madagascar where the brothers provide specific missions. The Master of the Order and his Socius for Africa were warmly welcomed in Antananarivo by brother Christophe Randriambolona (from Madagascar) who came from Saint-Denis, the Dominican Missionary Sisters of Delivrande who came from Antsirabe in central Madagascar, and the Lay Dominicans. During this brief stay, brother Bruno spoke with the sisters and the lay Dominicans. He also met with the rector of the Catholic University of Madagascar and his team, the secretary of the Archbishop of Antananarivo (himself being indisposed for health reasons). He also visited some places including Akamasoa village of father Pedro.

fr. Gabriel Samba, op.

• **Invitation to IDYM Meeting and WYD**

In 2016 we are calling all to a new International Meeting of IDYM. For this occasion, and because of the Jubilee, we will meet in the Dominican places where the Order of Preachers was founded: Fanjeaux, Prouilhe, Toulouse, Montreal, Carcassonne. These are the places Saint Dominic trod, where he evangelized, and where he felt the need to organize the Holy Preaching, to which he devoted his life.

Following in his footsteps, we will come to know the places and the history of our origins, especially the motivations behind and the essence of the Dominican charism. This will allow us to grow in this charism and make it known to others.
We will share what unites us as young Dominicans, enjoy getting to know other cultures and experience different ways of being Church together. It will also be a unique opportunity to meet other young people and become friends create fellowship with people from the 5 continents.

Meeting dates and Assembly
Meeting dates are from July 16-21, 2016:
- 16: Arrival
- 21: Departure

During the meeting we will visit Fanjeaux, Prouilhe, Toulouse, Carcassonne and discover the most important Dominican places in France and their cultural and artistic heritage, not to mention the nature and beautiful landscapes. We’re sure they will amaze you.

The dates of the Assembly are from July 21-24, 2016:
- 21: Start Date
- 24: Departure

Cost and including
The total cost is €180 per person. The cost includes accommodations, meals, travel between sites, admission tickets and translators during the meeting. It also includes the costs for participation of the representatives the Assembly, so the representatives do not need to pay an additional cost to participate in the Assembly itself. The pre- and post-Assembly meeting and days are not covered in this cost for those representatives.

Participants wishing to stay in Toulouse during the Assembly can at an additional cost is €17/day including accommodations and meals.

Who is the International Meeting for?
Participation is open to all members of the Dominican Youth Movement 18 years or older. Also invited are any nearby Dominican youth groups or movements, even if they don’t belong to DYM. We also welcome those groups and their leaders, who want to learn more about the IDYM. Religious and laity advisors are also invited to participate.

Assembly participants
The Assembly officially calls for 2 representatives per country, province or movement (depending on each case) that is part of IDYM.

Representatives from Dominican youth movements which are still not officially part of IDYM and are interested in being an active part may also apply to participate as observers in the Assembly. They will be able to have their voice heard, but not have voting power.

Preregistration
This form is the responsibility of each country, province or movement (depending on each case) to indicate the number of people who will attend from their organization. They must ensure that they have together the necessary funds for each participant or are in the process of doing so prior to registration. Pre-registration will be open until February 29 or until all places are full. During April and May, the final registration will open.

Go to registration form - https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1oCVbCpuYHJKsjMe94jeSSRDDMRs_wl-qESELpJTP4(pk/viewform

● Fr Bruno Cadoré Visits Karachi Monastery
During his visitation of the Vice Province of Pakistan (1-9 December 2015 ) fr Bruno Cadoré took several hours off to visit the Monastery of the Angels of the Dominican Nuns in Karachi, Pakistan. He was accompanied by Fr. Orlando Rueda, Socius for Apostolic life, Fr. Vincent Lu Ha, Socius for Asia Pacific, Fr. Pascal Paulus, Vice Provincial of Pakistan, Fr. Thomas Bhatti, Superior of the Karachi House at the National Seminary of Christ the King and Fr. Maris Javed, Master of Students.
The group arrived for Sext at the Monastery. Due to his tight schedule, Fr. Bruno could not celebrate the Eucharist with the nuns. Together with his companions, he entered the enclosure and visited with the nuns in the community room for about an hour, after which the whole group had lunch prepared by the nuns. The time passing so quickly, the Master had to leave for the Airport for his flight to Punjab in continuation of his visitation.

The Monastery of the Angels was found in 1959 from the Monastery of the Angels in Los Angeles, California. At present, there are ten professed nuns and two second year novices in the community. The Monastery has witnessed the growth of the Dominican presence in Pakistan to the glory of God.

Dominican Nuns - Karachi.

- **Five Holy Marvels of the Dominican Order**

Nearly 800 years has passed since The Order of Preachers (e.g., Dominican Order) was officially approved by Pope Honorius III. Dominicans today include friars, nuns, sisters, and lay or secular Associates. The particular charisms of this spirituality include charity, combatting heresy through preaching and theological study, and mystical union with God. St. Catherine of Siena and St. Rose of Lima are among the most notable Dominicans who lived a deeply mystical spirituality within the Dominican framework.

There are several lesser known Dominicans who deserve to be acknowledged, if for no other reason than their unflagging fidelity to God through their religious commitment. Some are saints, others blessed, but all lived in such a way that pointed others toward God. In the Middle Ages there was evidence of precursors to the Age of Enlightenment, though its full influence would not occur until several hundred years later. But in the 13th century, the understanding of and attitude towards religion were shifting, which is why the Dominicans (among other religious orders) were so critical in their pursuit of theological truth and zeal in catechizing those who were skeptics. These five men and women helped shape not only the order itself, but also their communities and societal perspectives that might otherwise have shifted to humanism much sooner than what actually happened.

**St. Hyacinth Odrowatz (1187-1257)**

Also known as St. Hyacinth of Poland, he was educated in Krakow, Prague, Paris, and Bologna as a lawyer and Doctor of Sacred Studies. He was ordained a priest in the Dominican Order after witnessing a miracle performed by St. Dominic de Guzman himself. As one of the original Preachers, Hyacinth was known most for his charism of evangelization, as he brought the faith to thousands of people throughout his native Poland, as well as Lithuania, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Scotland, Russia, Turkey, and Greece! One of his most memorable deeds included salvaging a crucifix and a heavy statue of Mary during a raid on a monastery, which was nearly impossible for a man his size, considering his stature and the weight of the statue. Because of this, most images of St. Hyacinth include both a crucifix and statue of Our Lady in his hands. Today he is known as the patron saint against drowning and of the archdiocese of Poland.

**St. Zedíslava Berkiana (1221-1252)**

Born in modern day Czech Republic, Zedislava (also known as Zdislava Berka) was born of Bohemian nobility and exhibited unusual piety from a young age. She had dreams of becoming a hermit, but her parents forced her to marry. Sadly, she lived in an unhappy marriage. She had four children and was a lay Dominican, devoting herself largely to the poor. This apostolate increased the tension and conflict in her marriage, but she persevered in this call. Oddly for the time, she received Communion on a daily basis and founded the Dominican priory of St. Lawrence close to the castle where she dwelled. She is reported to have appeared in a vision to her husband following her death, and other apparitions were validated by the time of her canonization in 1995. She is invoked as the patroness for people in difficult marriages or who are ridiculed for their piety.[2]

**St. Margaret of Hungary (1242-1270)**

The niece of well-known St. Elizabeth of Hungary, St. Margaret was born into nobility, specifically the Kingdom of Croatia as the ninth of ten children (and the last of the girls). After a promise to God, Margaret was dedicated to the Lord and placed at a nearby Dominican monastery at age four. She was transferred to
the Monastery of the Blessed Virgin (which was founded by her parents) at the age of ten and remained there for the rest of her life. She became a Consecrated Virgin and successfully fought her father’s attempt for her to marry a king. After several unsuccessful attempts at her canonization, she was finally canonized by Pope Pius XII in 1943 and is depicted wearing a religious habit while holding a lily and a book.[3]

**Blessed Alvarez of Cordova (1350 – 1430)**

Alvarez was born in either Hungary or Spain and was well-known throughout his life for his widespread and effective preaching. In addition to this, he lived a very austere life committed to the Way of the Cross and contemplation of the Lord’s Passion, which gained him notoriety (unsought, of course) among mainly the Spaniards – royalty and paupers alike. One of his most notable and successful acts was to lead opposition to the antipope, Benedict XII (Peter de Luna). A true Dominican as preacher, ascetic, and anti-heresy warrior, Alvarez developed a cult following around the year 1741.

**Blessed Pier-Giorgio Frassati (1901-1925)**

Pier was born into a family of journalists who owned a well-renowned newspaper, La Stampa, in Turin, Italy. Many noticed his devotion and piety, despite the fact that he was only an average student. As an adult, Pier became a Third Order Dominican and was heavily involved in Catholic social reform, especially Catholic Action and Apostleship of Prayer. He devoted much of his time to prayer and acts of charity for the poor. Part of his burgeoning apostolate included the founding of his own newspaper, Momento, which was based on Pope Leo XIII’s encyclical, Rerum Novarum. A vehement anti-fascist, Pier made no bones about his political views and was zealous in the tireless work he did to promote the Catholic social teaching, preferential option for the poor. He died in 1925 of polio, and nearly immediately following his death, people petitioned for the cause of his canonization to be investigated. St. John Paul II beatified Pier in 1990, appropriately calling him “The Man of Eight Beatitudes.”

The heart of Dominican spirituality has manifested through individual charisms for hundreds of years, especially through the exemplary lives of these saints and others unnamed who have devoted their lives to specific works of charity and catechesis. Without the Dominicans, our Church would be missing an essential and vital order of religious and lay people who have evangelized countless people covering numerable geographical areas. Even more importantly, we would be lacking the beautiful tapestry of the individual gifts that the Dominican Order has generously dispensed for God’s glory and the conversion of sinners.

By Jeannie Ewing

**Dutch Dominican Family Launches Jubilee Campaign in the Pub**

The Order of Preachers started in a pub, not in a church. The Dutch Dominican Family therefore has launched a Dominican jubilee-beer, called Zondag (Sunday). It marks the start of a campaign in 2016 to create opportunities for meaningful encounter with secular people in universities, on social media, in café’s and elsewhere.

The brothers, sisters and lay Dominicans of the Dominican Family in the Netherlands want to celebrate the 800-jubilee of The Order not only among themselves, but with people outside of their priory’s, convents and churches as well. The famous story of Saint Dominic talking all night with the innkeeper shows that preaching starts with the willingness to spend time together and share visions on life and love. The question therefore is: who is today’s innkeeper we would like to meet?

So the Dutch Dominican Family has decided to work together with young secular communication professionals, who are interested in what they themselves could learn from our tradition, and vice versa. The result of all this is a communication campaign with the slogan Dwell – Share – Celebrate, as a modern translation of Dominican inspiration. The logo of the campaign is - of course – the dog with a torch.

The campaign consists of several elements. First there is the beer called Sunday, a special brew of a small brewery called De Hemel (Heaven) – what’s in a name? It is a blond and tasteful beer and it goes with special beer mats. On these mats are quotes from famous Dominicans as Meister Eckhart, Catharine of Siena, Thomas Aquinas and Edward Schillebeeckx. With the quotes come questions to deepen the encounter, such
as ‘What is not God?’ of ‘What do you hope for?’ or ‘What are you grateful for? And how do you know that?’

Sunday is also the name of a series of seven radio-programmes and podcasts, produced with a national radio-station. The series is due for the summer of 2016. Sunday refers to what seems to be lost in the secular culture of the Netherlands: a space to contemplate and share and celebrate life. It also refers, of to the name of Dominic, to the word Sunday in Latin.

The radio-programs focus on life changing moments and dealing with the questions on what people find valuable and important about life. As Leonard Cohen sings in his song Anthem: ‘There is a crack in everything, that’s where the light gets in’. The seven sacraments are structuring elements in these programs.

Thirdly we are organising three debates at the universities of Amsterdam, Tilburg and Nijmegen. In these public meetings scientists and Dominicans will talk about urgent issues. The intention is to start talks in which arguments are a part of mutual learning and understanding, referring to the long tradition of democracy and dialogue in the Order.

Fourthly: one of the Dutch priories will host Writers in Residence. A group of writers is invited for a retreat, with contemplation, study and meetings. They will share their experiences and insights in new stories or poems, which will be published.

The fifth element of this campaign is to get in touch with secular people. This element will become clearer later in the year.

The situation of the Dominican Family in The Netherlands is delicate. There are about sixty brothers, 150 sisters of different congregations and 60 lay Dominicans (the most vivid branch of the Order in the Netherlands nowadays). Most of the brothers and sisters are old, although far from inactive. In fact, the sisters and brothers tend to keep on working until old age forces them to slow down.

Nevertheless, the long tradition of the Order in the Netherlands seemed – until recently - to come to an end, except for the lay Dominicans and the Dominican centers for study and spirituality in Zwolle, Huissen, Rotterdam and Amsterdam, in which predominantly lay professionals are employed.

Yet on March 13, 2013, the same day Pope Francis was elected, the Dutch brothers chose their youngest to be their provincial superior. Ever since René Dinklo was elected, there have been breaths of fresh air. The Dutch Dominicans now have five younger brothers in formation, and at least two on their way.

The Dutch brothers, sisters and lay Dominicans compare their current situation to that of Saint Dominic in 1216, sending out his sixteen brothers to the world. There is much uncertainty, but there is also hope and a mission.
The campaign-website: www.800jaardominicanen.nl
The normal website: www.dominicanen.nl

● The Symbols of the Logo of the Jubilee Year of Mercy

The logo and the motto of the Year of Mercy together provide a fitting summary of what the Jubilee Year is all about. The logo – the work of Fr Marko I. Rupnik, SJ – presents a mini summa theologiae of the theme of mercy. In fact, it represents an image quite important to the early Church: that of the Son having taken upon his shoulders the lost soul, demonstrating that it is the love of Christ that brings to completion the mystery of his incarnation culminating in redemption. The logo has been designed in such a way so as to express the profound way in which the Good Shepherd touches the flesh of humanity and does so with the love and with the power that changes humanity.

These are the symbols and their significance:

1. The Almond Shape: This is the oval shape of a madorla or almond nut. This is an important figure in ancient iconography. In ancient Greek culture, the almond tree is the first to blossom in the new year, it is
therefore considered a sign of new life. The circles overlap as they come in contact with one another. The union of the circles represent the union of the Divine nature and Human nature of Christ.

2. The Concentric Oval Shape: The oval shape of the mandorla or almond nut shows three concentric overlapping shadings which gets darker towards the center. This reminds us that we must pass from darkness to encounter the light of Christ. The colours progressively become lighter as we move outwards and this suggests the movement of Christ who carries humanity out of the darkness of sin and death into the light of his love and forgiveness.

3. The Colours: The colours used and their significance are:
   - Red – blood, life and the divinity of God
   - White – the eternal light of Christ
   - Blue – humanity
   - Golden – Adam and all redeemed humanity in a process of becoming like God through Jesus Christ

4. The Image of Jesus Carrying Adam: The image in the oval shape is that of Christ (the Good Shepherd) carrying Adam (humanity) that has been wounded by sin on his shoulders. The inspiration for this comes from the Parable of the Lost Sheep (Luke 15:1-7). The Parable of the Good Samaritan is also applicable here (Luke 10:25-37). Christ is carrying humanity from sinfulness to righteousness, from the night of sin and death to the dawn of the resurrection and light.

5. The Unique Gaze with One Eye: If you look closely, you will see that Jesus and Adam (humanity) shares one eye. Christ sees with the eyes of Adam and Adam sees with the eyes of Christ. This means that God communicates himself in such a way that humanity is able to see as He sees. In this, humanity is able to understand God and understand his/her own identity as sons and daughters of God.

6. The Motto: The motto of the Jubilee Year of Mercy is “Merciful Like the Father” (Luke, 6:36). This has two purposes; a reminder and an invitation (a challenge). It is a reminder of the bountiful amount of unmerited love and mercy we have all received from God the Father. It also serves as an invitation (a challenge) to follow the merciful example of the Father who asks us not to judge or condemn but to forgive just as we have been forgiven and to give love without measure. (cfr. Lk 6:37-38)

- A Grand Imam and a Dominican Unite Against Christian Persecution in Pakistan

With persecution against Christians rife as the result of radicals and militants, the Grand Imam of Pakistan’s second largest mosque, Badshahi Mosque in Lahore, Imam Syed Muhammad Abdul Khabir Azad, and a Dominican priest, Father James Channan OP, are working together to protect the country’s embattled Christian minority. Father Channan is the Director of Peace Center, Lahore, whereas, Imam Abdul Khabir Azad serves as a board member and close collaborator of Peace Center.

In an exclusive joint interview with Aid to the Church in Need, Imam Abdul Khabir Azad and Father Channan described the conditions in Pakistan and their work together.

Imam Abdul Khabir Azad and Father Channan act swiftly when outbreaks of persecution occur, seeking to bring healing to those affected and minimize retaliatory attacks.

For example, on 15th of March 2015, two suicide bombers approached churches; St Joseph’s Church of Catholics and Christ Church of the Protestants/ Church of Pakistan, in Youhanabad, Lahore, which is one of Asia’s largest Christian colonies. At the cost of their own lives, security guards intercepted the bombers at the church gates. Still, the detonations killed 22, Christians and Muslims, and wounded another 70.

The great majority opposed to terrorists

In close consultation with Father Channan, Imam Abdul Khabir Azad went to the Youhanabad community the next day as a public witness of Muslim solidarity with Christians.
The next week Imam Abdul Khabir Azad organized a march in front of his Badshai Mosque—a vast facility that can accommodate as many as 100,000 worshippers—to demonstrate mainstream Muslim opposition to terrorism and call for peace and harmony.

Father Channan’s Peace Center also conducts ongoing efforts of reconciliation through publishing a journal, Umang, and holding Christian-Muslim and ecumenical conference and workshops throughout the year. Imam Abdul Khabir Azad’s focuses on rural Islamic clerics, who are often the instigators of religious violence. He is very much committed to bring a positive change among these clerics so they do not make announcements in the mosques against the Christians. In 2004, Imam Abdul Khabir Azad organized an interfaith conference inside the Badshahi mosque, the first time Christians had been invited to speak in the mosque in its 350 year history. Fr James Channan was invited to give first ever speech in this mosque on the significance of Christian-Muslim relations and dialogue.

Since the atrocities of 9/11 in the United States more than 60,000 Pakistanis—most of them Muslims—have been killed by the terrorists. While slow to recognize the internal threat, the Pakistani government now pursues a vigorous policy against terrorism under the able command of Chief of Army Staff, General Raheel Sharif. Imam Abdul Khabir Azad estimated that the armed forces have successfully eliminated 80% of Pakistan’s terrorists.

**Laws that are misused**

Many problems remain however, especially in regard to the abuse of Pakistan’s Blasphemy laws, according to both Father Channan and Imam Abdul Khabir Azad. There is a grave to work on these issues both by the Christians and Muslim so that blasphemy laws are not misused and those who misuse these laws are brought to justice and given exemplary punished so that no one dares to use these laws to settle personal scores.

For example, on March 2, 2011 Mr. Shahbaz Bhatti, a Catholic and the first as Federal Minister for Minorities Affairs, was assassinated by members of the Taliban for his opposition to this law and its provisions. The former Governor of Punjab, Salman Taseer, was assassinated, by his own bodyguard, Mumtaz Qadri, after criticizing the blasphemy provisions as “black law.” Mumtaz Qadri was given death sentence by the Sessions Court and this verdict is upheld by the High Court and Supreme Court of Pakistan. It was shocking for some that for the militants Qadri is seen as a hero who has done right thing by killing Salman Taseer. However, such a claim is rejected by all law enforcing agencies

Father Channan cited a case that illustrates just how bad anti-Christian feelings and persecution can be. On November 4, 2014, a Christian couple, Mrs. Shama Masih wife of Shahzad Masih was accused of desecrating the Quran in the village of Kot Rodha Kishan. Shama Masih was a 24 year-old mother of four and pregnant at the time. Shama along with her husband were seized by an angry mob, tortured, and then burned alive in a brick kiln. It was a crime against humanity, says Fr James Channan. The Imam also condemned this barbaric act in the strongest words.

It is dangerous to speak out against such abuses, but Imam Khabir Azad does so regularly. “I have received threats for the work that I am doing, but I am not going to give up. It is the need of the hour, and it is my mission.” The Imam takes inspiration from Jesus as the Prince of Peace, his favorite image of Christ.

**Constructing a better society**

Father Channan calls evangelization and inter-religious dialogue the “two tracks on which the train of Catholicism runs.” Through evangelization Christ’s followers, in obedience to his command, offer all people the opportunity to be reconciled to God through his death and resurrection and thus be baptized. Whereas, the aim of inter-religious dialogue is not to convert the other, rather seek those things which are common if different religions and thus work jointly for the better of humanity and promoter peaceful co-existence and respect for the religion of the others.

At the same time, inter-religious dialogue has a role to play as well—one with a civic as much as an eternal character. We must find as much common ground as we can, Fr. Channan says, in order to build a better society for everyone. This can bring about a “conversion of heart” in terms of having Muslims and people from other faiths recognize Christians as worthy fellow citizens.
The importance of inter-religious dialogue in countries like Pakistan can hardly be overstated. For this reason Father Channan was appointed as Consultor of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (1985 - 1995), and also served as a Consultor to the Vatican Commission for Religious Relations with Muslims (1999-2004). Father Channan has been regularly consulted on religious issues by Pakistan’s government and travels internationally lecturing on the importance of peace building through dialogue.

Fr. Channan has seen many Islamic leaders in Pakistan move from a position in which they would not even share a meal with Christians to one of real friendship—the kind of friendship that is so well exemplified by Imam Abdul Khabir Azad and Father Channan.

By Amanda in ACN Canada, ACN PROJECTS, Pakistan, ACN PRESS, ACN Intl, Adapted by Amanda Bridget Griffin, Interreligious Dialogue

**LA SACRA PREDICAZIONE (THE HOLY PREACHING)**

LA SACRA PREDICAZIONE (THE HOLY PREACHING) is the initiative promoted by the Province of St Thomas Aquinas in Italy to celebrate our Jubilee 1216-2016 in the territories of the South of Italy.

LA SACRA PREDICAZIONE proposes an itinerant exhibition focused on the charisma of the Order, whose aim is remembering the past by witnessing the present to send it into the future.

The exhibition stages a virtual *domus praedicationis* – a house of preaching – in which three spaces tells us about where we come from, who we are and where we live.

It is a kind of imaginary cloister, whose wings are provided with panels with texts and pictures; moreover, a 15 minutes video-documentary and an application will give the visitors the opportunity of listening to the friars and nuns of our Province talking about their experience of life and faith.

The exhibition is completed by a series of specifics designed objects – books of prayers, rosaries, cardboards with icons of saints, notebooks, bookmarkers etc. – that will be proposed to our visitors as an opportunity to know the Order of preachers and appreciate it.

This initiative has also been an occasion to reveal the talents of our friars and nuns – scholars, artists, writers – who have been directly involved in the implementation of this project.

The itinerant exhibition will be staged in the three convents of our Province, for a period of four months each throughout the Jubilee Year.
- Palermo – December 2015/March 2016
- Bari – April/July 2016
- Madonna dell’Arco-Napoli – August/December 2016
  Fr. Sergio Catalano, OP

**2015 Highlights from the Dominican Sister in Iraq**

*Dear Sisters Brethren and Friends,*

*With the New Year greetings, I extend my gratitude for your continuous support and prayers. Also, I would like to share with you our highlights from 2015.*

*Thanks to the blessed efforts of people who are accompanying us, we have had an eventful year. In addition to accompanying the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) at the camps, sisters were able to prepare 400 children for First Communion in ten groups in different cities and towns in the region of Kurdistan.*

*We are grateful to the Lord that our efforts to open a primary school were fruitful. Eventually, we managed to get all the licenses needed from the Iraqi and Kurdish governments. Bishop Wada (the Chaldean Bishop of Erbil) offered us a building that Catholic organizations built on property belonging to the Archdiocese of Erbil, and the Pontifical Mission furnished it thankfully. There are about 460 pupils — girls and boys — and*
all are IDPs. Seven of our Dominican Sisters are working at the school, with other teachers and administrators, also IDPs. Studying at our school is free. The salaries of teachers and staff (about $18,000 a month) have been granted by the Pontifical Mission for this year. People are thankful and happy for this project, as the condition of other schools is really miserable. Because of the large number of IDPs, some schools have three shifts a day, each shift for different groups, and the number of pupils in a class could number more than 80.

Also, we managed to open another kindergarten for the IDPs as there is more demand this year. The families prefer to send their children to be educated by the Dominican Sisters. Now there are 440 children attending our kindergartens in Ankawa. Additionally, in a town called Aqra with 250 IDP families, we opened a kindergarten for 50 children. The kindergarten in Kaznazan also has 130 children in attendance. These kindergartens are free of charge for the IDPs.

In both projects, school and kindergarten, sisters have been noticing much improvement in children’s behavior. They are more willing to listen to their teachers and it is easier for teachers to discipline the children. The schools are equipped with [a] playground and a sport field, which gave the children a suitable environment to play and direct their energy.

However, people are still facing many challenges. As for the present conditions in Iraq, it is still traumatic. We were shocked last month when seven individuals (parents with their 7-year-old son and 3-year-old daughter, and a lady with her 7-year-old son and 13-year-old daughter) drowned in the sea as they were trying to flee to Greece.

Everybody is physically and psychologically exhausted. It does not seem that there is any solution. People risk their lives. Immigration is increasing in all directions. Just before the end of the year, families of 167 persons were placed in Slovakia (at once) as part of immigration program [sic], and there are more to go in the coming month. That, of course, shook the confidence of people about the future of Christianity in Iraq. Add to that, there are other families who are leaving the country to the neighboring [countries] like Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey. In a matter of three months the number of children in our school lowered down from 520 to 460; also about 15 children from the kindergarten left with their families and more are planning to leave.

Although we are sad to see people leave, people who are living in prefabricated houses are facing [a] tremendously hard time, [e]specially now in winter as these houses (caravans) are not healthy at all — they are not made to comprise large families, neither are they equipped to such harsh weather. They are extremely cold in winter, extremely hot in summer.

The recent news about the policy in the Middle East is not encouraging at all, [neither] is there anything promising. Everything is unknown and uncertain. Therefore, it is not surprising to see people leave. We pray that the doors of divine mercy may open for our brothers and sister that they may find people who could welcome them. As for us, we remain with the remnant here, to support the people intellectually and spiritually through educational projects and liturgical meetings.

Within the community, we are thankful for all those [who] helped us purchase a house, which provided a better environment for our young sisters in [the] formation program. We have started preparing for our general chapter that is planned to be held in July 2016.

We ask your prayers that God may enlighten us and grant us His wisdom to discern in our reality despite all the difficulties and pressure we are living.
Dominican Sisters of St Catherine of Siena, Iraq.

● Letter to the Dominican Family from COP 21
Dear Sisters and Brothers,
We are writing this letter to share with you our experience of having just spent between 4 and 16 days together in Paris, attending the historic UN Climate Change Conference (COP 21) – from 30 November to
12 December. 19 Dominicans (11 sisters, 3 brothers and 5 lay Dominicans and collaborators) originating from 11 countries (Austria, Brazil, Central African Republic, France, India, Paraguay, Philippines, South Africa, Spain, USA, Zimbabwe) attended our meetings, while several others from countries such as the UK and Germany arrived for the final days of action.

We had the privilege of getting to know each other and sharing our common concerns about the future of our planet, Mother Earth, especially the huge threat to it posed by rampant human-induced climate change.

We then sent an open letter to the delegates of COP 21, briefly expressing our convictions about the decision that we expected the summit to reach. You can find this letter attached1.

We attended some of the many events organised to highlight the challenges to the environment and the activities that violate the rights of nature, which includes the earth, its people, its animals, its biodiversity, etc.

We also joined the many thousands of people from all regions of the world in actions of solidarity to advocate for urgent action from our governments to address climate change. These included:
--- a demonstration, on the day before the start of the summit, where thousands of people placed their shoes in Place de la Republique to symbolise the march that had been prohibited under the national State of Emergency regulations;
--- the demonstration on the last day of the summit that gathered over 15,000 people all wearing red to draw a red line in solidarity with the millions of victims of climate change.
--- Ad hoc demonstrations of particular groups, such as indigenous people.

Despite much skepticism about the possibility of the 195 states present to reach an agreement after 20 years of failure to do so, the final agreement surpassed the expectations of most of us! No-one could any longer ignore the urgency that is facing our world, and most countries have committed themselves to reducing carbon emissions to ensure a maximum increase in global temperatures of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.

While this agreement moved the international community to a new stage of response, we should not celebrate for too long, as there is still a huge task ahead of all of us to ensure that the agreements made are implemented at national and local levels. If this is not done (and many scientists feel it is already too late!), weather conditions will certainly worsen and sea levels will rise, devastating our lives – and especially the lives of the poor, the small island states and low-lying cities!

Climate change is not only a socio-economic and scientific issue. It is a moral and ethical issue as it can only be avoided if there is a change of lifestyle. Too many (if not all) of us have been seduced by consumerism – always wanting to get more and newer things! In the name of development, economic and environmental exploitation continues to be justified. Our planet therefore will not be saved by this one conference! It can only be saved if we all consistently work together to change our own lifestyles and ensure that the Paris Agreement2 is implemented at every level.

We therefore call on all Dominicans and all Dominican communities to play their part in the salvation of our planet by:
1. Continuing to educate ourselves within various Dominican fora about climate change, its science and mitigation and adaptation strategies, and by investing in sending members to ecological and environmental education that shows the connection between these issues and all other issues.
2. Organising community meetings to become more informed of lifestyles that contribute to climate change, and to discuss how each community and each individual can adjust their lifestyles to model the changes that need to occur if we are to avoid catastrophic climate change. This would include ways to implement sources of renewable energy in convents and motherhouses, reduce meat consumption and carbon-emitting transport.
3. Raising a permanent consciousness of the need for a personal response. We learnt of a worldwide movement where some people take turns to fast everyday to maintain such a consciousness. In line with our own religious tradition, a creative suggestion could be for each community to embark on such a
fast with willing participants taking turns on a roster to fast daily and/or for communities to consider reverting back to fasting from meat on Fridays and joining the “Meatless Mondays” movement.

4. Continually advocating strongly with our own governments:
   a. to reduce fossil-fuel energy generation - using coal, gas (fracking), oil,… - in favour of investing massively in renewable energy (solar, wind, water, wave,…).
   b. to support, financially and otherwise, all other countries – especially poor, developing countries – to gain the necessary technology to effect such an energy generation conversion.
   c. to invest massively in support systems for areas affected permanently by climate change (through typhoons, floods, droughts,…) so that people living there can still gain a livelihood and not be forced to become climate refugees.

5. Directing our ministry responses and investments in line with SDGs3 that pertain to ecosystems’ conservation and restoration and with all other environmental

6. Reviewing our Dominican rules/constitutions/statutes to take into account the integrity of creation, integral ecology and ecological conversion.

To assist us on this journey, we hope to establish an ongoing virtual group that will continue this reflection and the promotion of climate justice. Anyone who wishes to join this group is welcome to contact Fr Aristide Basse at abassearistide@yahoo.fr.

We hope and pray that, together, we can grow in a spirituality that accords full respect to all of creation – through environmental justice, climate justice, socio-economic justice, and political justice.

We look forward to receiving your response!

Your brothers and sisters in St Dominic,
Fr Aristide Basse - Central African Republic
Ms Belen Tangco - Philippines
Ms Chloe Schwabe - USA
Fr Claude Saldanha - India
Sr Christina McGarry - Ireland
Sr Elise Garcia - USA
Sr Elizabeth (Claris) Zwareva MM - Zimbabwe
Dr Imelda Martinez-Nunez - Paraguay
Sr Karen Marguerite d’Artois - England
Sr Maite Zabalza - Spain
Sr Margaret Mayce - USA
Sr María Juliana Ruano Gómez - Spain
Ms María Zabalza Casla - Spain
Sr Marie-Laure Denes - France
Sr Marvie Misolas MM - Philippines
Fr Mike Deeb - South Africa
Sr Pat Daly - USA
Sr Pat Siemen - USA
Sr Rebecca Macugay MM - Philippines
Sr Tina Veloso Freitas - Brazil
Sr Marie-Laure Denes - France
Sr Marvie Misolas MM - Philippines
Fr Mike Deeb - South Africa
Sr Pat Daly - USA
Sr Pat Siemen - USA
Sr Rebecca Macugay MM - Philippines
Sr Tina Veloso Freitas - Brazil
Mr Tobias Krachler - Austria

14 January 2016

Footnotes:
1  http://www.op.org/en/content/open-letter-dominican-family-delegates-cop-21
2  http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/cop21/eng/l09r01.pdf
3  The UN General Assembly adopted its post-2015 development agenda in September 2015, on the same day that Pope Francis addressed the world’s leaders. Unlike other General Assembly meetings, the issue of climate change was placed front and center, along with its inextricable connection to the plight of those who are most marginalized and vulnerable. The new agenda – Agenda 2030 – includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): See
These 17 goals pick up where the Millennium Development Goals left off, with some very significant additions: the SDGs apply to all countries, not just the developing world; sustainability is to be at the core of future development; and climate change must be addressed if the needs of people and planet are to be met. In light of the agreement reached in Paris at the meeting of COP 21, these elements of the SDGs take on added significance: Goal 2 – promotion of sustainable agriculture; Goal 6 – availability and sustainable management of water; Goal 7 – access to affordable, reliable and sustainable modern energy for all; Goal 12 – ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns; Goal 13 – take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts; Goal 14 – conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development. Regarding the SDGs, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said, “We want to change our world, and we can.” However, the only true test of commitment is implementation. Now that Agenda 2030 has been adopted, and there is a relatively positive outcome to the Paris Climate Summit, implementation becomes the responsibility of national capitals. This being the case, our role as members of civil society is more important than ever, in helping to ensure that the SDGs touch the lives of those who are most vulnerable, and that they are implemented in such a way that the integrity of Earth is respected.

- **Nashville Dominican Sisters rescue Dominican church in Limerick, Ireland**

Dominican Sisters based in Nashville, Tennessee have come to the rescue of the Dominican Church in Limerick, which they are to keep open, despite the fact that the Order announced it was withdrawing from the city.

The religious tide has been turned and St Saviour’s Church, Glentworth Street, will remain open and keep an 800-year association with Limerick intact, thanks to the Dominican Sisters of St Cecilia, who will take over the priory in the city and breathe new life into the church.

Four sisters will arrive in Limerick from Tennessee in August 2016 and begin their work of prayer and community outreach. It has been confirmed that priests will continue to say Mass in the church. The Dominican Friars in Ireland announced it had embarked on a process of reorganising its commitments in Ireland in view of falling numbers and would be withdrawing from Limerick.

Then in stepped Bishop Brendan Leahy. He made a speculative invite to the sisters asking if the would set up in Limerick.

I knew I would be in a long line of bishops making such requests but I decided at least I’d put my name down on the list,” he explained. “To my surprise,” he continued, “I got an immediate reply as the sisters came back to say they were interested in exploring the possibility. Two sisters came last summer and were very taken with Limerick where they received and hosted by the Mercy Sisters in Westbourne.”

The Dominican Sisters of St Cecilia itself is a community founded in Nashville in 1860 and flourishing in the United States.

Mother Ann Marie, Prioress General of the Order, said: “Our entire community is very excited about being part of the life of the Church in the Diocese of Limerick. This is a gift and privilege for us. In our community’s early history, we had several sisters who were from Ireland, and a good number of our sisters are of Irish descent.”

“The four sisters who will begin serving in Limerick are eager to come to know personally, a people who have given so much to the Church.”

The timing of the sisters arrival comes almost 800 years since the ‘Order of Preachers’, as they are known, came to Limerick, in 1227 and established in a number of locations, including Kilmallock and Limerick city. They are in Glenworth Street since 1815.

“I think this is a wonderful development. It’ll be a sign of hope for us all in this year when we are having a Synod,” said Bishop Leahy.
“I look forward to welcoming the sisters and I know they’ll get a warm reception from the good-natured Limerick people who appreciate the contribution that religious sisters have made in Limerick as we saw earlier this year when a civic reception was held to mark that contribution.

“In this year dedicated to Consecrated Life, it is like a gift from God to us that we can now look forward to the arrival of new young Dominican Sisters who will surely also be an inspiration to young people,” said Bishop Leahy.

By Eugene Phelan

• **Diaconate Ordination of the First Zambian Dominican**

The Vicariate General of Southern Africa celebrated with great joy, the diaconate ordination of the first Dominican brother from Zambia, Bro. Clement Mweni. The ordination took place on the 28th of November 2015, at St Raphael’s Parish, KwaMzimba KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Bro. Isaac Mutelo from Emaphethelweni Dominican Priory gives us the details of this historical event.

Brother Clement was ordained deacon by the Most Reverend Bishop Barry Wood, auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Durban, together with six Missionaries of Africa and two Sacred Heart of Jesus brothers, from seven different African countries. The Bishop was accompanied by Brother Sikhosiphi Mgoza, Vicar General of the Dominican Vicariate of Southern Africa, the Provincials from both the Missionaries of Africa and Sacred Heart of Jesus and lecturers from St Joseph’s Theological Institute, Cedara.

Saint Raphael’s Church was packed with religious brothers and sisters, family members, friends and many faithful from both outstations and nearby parishes. The colourful and invigorating liturgy was led by a combined choir comprising St Raphael Parish choir and brothers from the Missionaries of Africa, Dominicans and Sacred Heart of Jesus communities.

In his homily, Bishop Barry Wood highlighted the need for the diaconate candidates to be servants once they are ordained. He also encouraged them to be responsible, prayerful and focused in their new ministry.

Most of the newly ordained deacons including brother Clement will be doing their fourth year of theology at St Joseph’s Theological Institute this year.

Brother Clement Mweni did his novitiate in Cotonou, Benin Republic from 8th September 2008 to 8th September 2009. His diaconate ordination is an important historical event as he is the first Dominican from Zambia to be ordained deacon. This partly instils hope for young Zambian men intending to join the Dominican Order.

Br Isaac Mutelo, O.P. - Emaphethelweni Dominican Priory

• **Be A Preacher of Mercy**

“We are called to show mercy because mercy has first been shown to us,” Pope Francis proclaims in Misericordiae Vultus. As we continue our celebration of this Extraordinary Year of Mercy, and the 800th Jubilee of the Order of Preachers, we offer seven, simple suggestions anyone can follow to be a preacher of mercy, many of which would make great resolutions for the new year.

1) **Feed the hungry and give drink to the thirsty**

A number of our communities sponsor a Sunday dinner for the hungry once or twice a month, following in the footsteps of Saint Dominic, who sold his books/scrolls in order to feed the hungry. If this suggestion speaks to your heart, then consider volunteering at a soup kitchen, or cleaning out your pantry/cupboards and giving to a local food bank. You might even try buying nonperishable food items to donate every time you go grocery shopping.

2) **Shelter the homeless**

Not all of us have room to take in the homeless, but there are organizations we can support who do. Our community at St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Newman Center in Salt Lake works with Family Promise and periodically offers housing to families who would otherwise spend the night in their cars or on the streets.
Organizations like these are often in need of financial support, or items on the wish lists of their families, such as diapers and toiletries. Think about how you can help.

3) Clothe the naked
As the seasons change, so do the needs of those on the streets. Warmer clothes, jackets, thermals and gloves are all in greater demand during the winter months. So clean out your closet, or sponsor a clothing drive. When socks, t-shirts and the like are on sale, consider buying an extra package to donate to your local St. Vincent de Paul Society.

4) Comfort the afflicted and visit the sick and imprisoned
Everyone could use a little cheering up now and then. Consider volunteering at a hospital or a convalescent home. You can visit weekly, or organize activities around the holidays. Having a party to create decorations a week before Valentine’s Day, St. Patrick’s Day, Easter and so on can be lots of fun. And while visiting inmates in jail can be difficult because of security, don’t forget those who suffer from other kinds of imprisonment. Those who struggle with addiction, loneliness and depression often feel as if they are weighed down. Make their burden a little lighter by offering your support and prayers.

5) Pray for the living and the dead and bury the dead
Praying for our friends and family members is a great privilege. Through this act we grow in charity and compassion. Think about offering a Mass for those on your prayer list, or reciting a rosary in their honor. And when it comes to praying for the deceased, don’t forget the souls in purgatory. Remember that burying the dead is about more than digging a grave. Providing support while a family grieves is a great act of mercy. Closing an estate, boxing up the deceased’s possessions, even making meals can be a big help.

6) Counsel the doubtful and instruct the ignorant
Many people today do not understand what the Church teaches because they are misinformed. They doubt the authenticity of the Christian faith because they have been led astray by a culture which values power, wealth and fame over obedience, simplicity and humility. Saint Dominic faced a similar state of affairs 800 years ago. Follow his example. Take time to study and learn what the Church really does teach and believe, so that you may help the questioning and uninformed discover the many graces available to the faithful.

7) Admonish sinners, forgive offenses and bear wrongs patiently
Dominicans in formation for the priesthood are often told that when they are ordained, they should be “lions in the pulpit and lambs in the confessional.” In other words, while their preaching should convict the sinner to seek repentance, their manner in the Sacrament of Reconciliation should be gentle and merciful. All of us should follow this example when warning others about the consequences of sin. Although the laity cannot absolve from sin, we can remind people that the Lord is merciful and ready to forgive us if we acknowledge our wrongdoing and turn back to Him.

**Official News**

- **Fr Stanislaus MUYEBE is the new Vicar General of the General Vicariate of Southern Africa**
  On Tuesday the 26th of January 2016, the Brothers of the Vicariate General of Southern Africa, gathered for their elective chapter have elected Brother Stanislaus Muyebe as their new Vicar General. He succeeds Brother Sikhosiphi Mgoza.

  Brother Stan was born in 1969. He made his first profession of vows in the Order in 1997 and was ordained to the priesthood in 2001. He studied Canon Law at Ottawa and has as PhD in Theology and Law from Stellenbosch University, SA.
He has been the Parish Priest of Our Lady of Mercy Parish at Springs, SA and has also been in charge of Justice and Peace and the Bursar of the Vicariate. Before his election, he was the Socius of the Vicar General.

**IMPELLED BY THE EUCHARIST: PREACHING, COMPASSION AND THE CARING MOMENT**

*Witnesses of Compassion: A Series on the Vocation of Cooperator Brothers in the Order*

The vocation of the Cooperator brothers in the Order remains a vital part of our preaching mission. In a bid to promote this Vocation, we will be featuring the works of different Cooperator brothers from different parts of the world. We invite you to follow this series on the website of the Order (www.op.org) and on IDI.

This month, we are featuring:

**Brother Ignatius Perkins, O.P.,** currently serves as Director of Health Services for the Dominican Friars (Province of St. Joseph, USA) and as Executive Director of the Dominican Friars Health Care Ministry of New York.

**How do I carry out the Order’s Mission and charism?**

As Dominican Cooperator Brother, I share with our Priest Brothers, the privilege and the responsibility to announce the Kingdom of God to all those yearning for and needing His message of salvation in their lives. As a Dominican, with every breath, every action, every suffering, every joy, I preach God’s message of salvation, a message of hope, a message of enduring love for all of us. It is through Baptism and the consecration of my life and the profession of Solemn Vows, I have been given the freedom, the joy and indeed the responsibility to help others come to understand, believe and to cooperate with God’s Word through healing and transformation of their heart and minds. This is the healing that Jesus desires for all persons.

**How is the art and science of nursing been integrated with my vowed commitment as a Dominican Cooperator Brother?**

Like other Dominican Cooperator Brothers, I fulfill my preaching from a different pulpit than that of my priest brothers. My pulpsits are varied but are centered in the healing ministry of Jesus Christ, first as a Dominican Friar then as a clinician, nurse, ethicist and educator, where I engage people where ever they are in their journey in search of truth, healing and hope. Whether it be with other friars, women and men religious, clinicians, patients or families, students and colleagues, being compassionately present to them in their dire moments of vulnerability and abandonment, reassuring them that they always possess intrinsic dignity and worth regardless of the circumstances of their lives, and helping them discern their life experiences, are ways in which I bring God’s salvific message of healing and hope to those who are suffering and in distress. It is a privileged opportunity to be present in their lives, to protect and defend their dignity and freedom, and help re-establish the integrity of the suffering person once fractured and made vulnerable by illness or despair through caring with compassion of the whole person, and when the cure of illness it not possible, to bring healing and hope even to those nearing the end of their lives.

As an educator in higher education in nursing I have had the enormous responsibility and privileged opportunity in today’s society and culture to help students and colleagues embrace the understanding among faith, truth and science and to apply this understanding through unlimited charity for the human person and in societies in our global world. In this role, especially in health care ethics, I am able to help create the space for dialogue to occur, to help students, colleagues and administrators come to an understanding of the richness of the Catholic moral tradition, to help form their moral compass, to apply the Church’s moral principles in caring for others as healers of the whole person, and to facilitate the development of moral communities among clinicians so they can together become authentic moral forces in reversing the prevailing culture of individualism and moral relativism.

**Describe the source that impels you as a Dominican Cooperator Brother to live out the idea of care in the Dominican Tradition?**

An excellent example that drives my energy and enthusiasm for the life and ministry of my vocation is found in the many examples of the lives of Sts. Martin dePorres and Juan Macias. As I have written elsewhere[1]:

---

In the experience of Martin and Juan, we come to more fully understand what St. Thomas Aquinas means when he speaks about the Eucharist as the Sacrament of Charity. The late Fr. Thomas Gilby, a noted Thomistic scholar, in interpreting the words of Aquinas about the effects of the Eucharist, wrote that through the sacrament of the Eucharist, whether it is received or desired, grace is increased and the life of the Spirit is perfected. The Eucharist spiritually strengthens not only the habits of grace and especially the virtue of charity but these virtues are aroused to activity in those who remain close to the Eucharistic Christ.[2] There exists the theological warrant to ascribe the effects of the Eucharist as something specific in the lives and ministries of Martin dePorres and Juan Macias. The Eucharist as the Sacrament of Charity enabled their works of mercy and compassion much as we read about in the life of St. Dominic and his own ministries to the sick and dying, the unwanted and the disenfranchised.

Dominican Cooperator Brothers, as consolers of the sick and those in distress, we have been singularly called to respond to the radical call that evangelization evokes; to open our doors to those who seek healing and hope; to heal the sick and the abandoned in their darkest hour wherever they may be and wherever they call home; to believe and then to proclaim that every person born into the world is worthy of our respect and of our unlimited love regardless of the reasons for their distress or their station in life.

As a Dominican Friar, I preach God’s message of salvation, a message of hope, a message of enduring love and charity for one another and all those committed to my care with every breath, every action, every suffering and every joy. Impelled with the power and grace of the Eucharist, the Sacrament of Charity, I “go forth into the whole world and proclaim the good news to all creation” (Mk 16:15). I work to freely bring to others the gift of my presence and my vowed life to our mission of evangelization through preaching. But the greatest gift I am privileged to bring to the encounter with others is the person of Jesus in the Eucharist made flesh in us. This is the Dominican Moment.


**Fr Omar Orlando Sánchez Suárez has the elected as the Vicar Provincial of the Puerto Rico**

On the 19th of January 2016, the friars of the Provincial Vicariate of Santa Cruz de Puerto Rico of the Province of San Luis Bertrán de Colombia elected fr Omar Orlando Sánchez Suárez as their first Vicar Provincial. The Vicariate of Puerto Rico recently became a part of the Province of Colombia and the Provincial of Colombia, fr Said León Amaya has confirmed the election.

Fr Omar, a native of Saboya, Boyacá in Colombia was born in 1963. In 1986, he made is first religious profession of vows in the Order and was ordained to the priesthood in 1994. He has a Doctorate in Canon Law and he is currently a judge in the Superior Ecclesiastical Court of Appeal of Colombia.

At a celebration with the whole Dominican family in Puerto Rico, in the presence of the Master of the Order, fr Bruno Cadoré and the Provincial of Colombia, fr Said León Amaya, fr Omar made his profession of faith as the new Vicar Provincial.

**Elections in the New Province of Hispania**

On the 8th of January, after the Mass of the Holy Spirit, the Capitular friars of the Province of Hispania elected their definitors, councilors and delegates to the General Chapter.

Seeking assistance from above before elections is always important. It ensures that the election is done in peace and in good faith. It is more important because in the Dominican life, elections are not just about popularity or having the highest votes, they are more about finding the brothers that would help us live more fraternally and also help animate our mission.
The Eucharist was presided over by fr Emilio Gracia Alvarez, the Prior of Caleruega. In his homily, he dwelt on the scene of the election of Matthias in the book of Acts of the Apostles and the text of the Gospel of John where Jesus told his disciples, “You did not choose me, rather I chose you”.

Following the guidelines of the Constitutions of the Order, the following brothers were elected:

**As definitors:**
- Fernando Vela López
- Martín Gelabert Ballester
- Francisco J. Rodríguez Fassio
- Juan Carlos Cordero de la Hera
- Vicente Botella Cubells
- Francisco Javier Carballo Fernández
- Léster R. Zayas Díaz
- Moisés Pérez Marcos

**As Councillors:**
- Ricardo López López
- Emilio Barcelón Maicas
- Oscar Jesús Fernández Navarro
- Javier Garzón Garzón

**As Supplementary Councillors:**
- Manuel Santos Sánchez
- Ricardo de Luis Carballada

As Delegates to the Elective General Chapter of 2019
- Definitor: Javier Carballo Fernández
- Socius to the Definitor: Martín Gelabert Ballester

Socius of the Prior Provincial to the Elective General Chapter of 2019: Miguel de Burgos Núñez
- Definitor to the first General Chapter: Ricardo de Luis Carballada
- Socius of the Definitor: Juan Luís Mediavilla García

### Calendar of the Master of the Order for February 2016

- Jan 22-Feb 3: Visitation to Colombia and Puerto Rico.
- 6-7: Jubilee Mass at Paris
- 8-19: Plenary Council Meetings at Santa Sabina
- 22-26: At the International Meeting of Representatives of the Priestly Fraternities, Rome.
- 25-27: Dei Verbum Congress at the Angelicum, Rome
- Feb 28-March 6: Visitation to the Province of Bohemia

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