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## ORDER OF PREACHERS

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### Dominican Jubilee in Toulouse

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Why is the Province of Toulouse celebrating already in 2015?

Although the Jubilee of the Order of Preachers is not yet officially launched, in the South West of France in the Province of Toulouse celebrations are already well underway and the month of May has a particularly heavy schedule of events. It is not just that the friars here are impatient to start the festivities before everybody else, there are indeed sound historical reasons.

This year the feast of the translation of St Dominic's relics coincides with Pentecost weekend, in the very month that marks the 800th anniversary of the beginnings of the first community of Preachers in Toulouse. It is important to remember that before the Order of Preachers was instituted for the universal Church by Pope Honorius III, there was a diocesan institute of preachers set up at the initiative of Foulque, Bishop of Toulouse with Dominic at its head. The official mission of these new preachers was "to eradicate heresy, eliminate vice, teach the rule of faith and inculcate sound morals." This happened in May 1215, thus the current celebrations are most timely.

In fact, Dominic was becoming progressively more integrated into the diocesan Church of Toulouse, since his presumed return from Spain in 1211. Although his immediate priority at this point was to help the still sprouting monastic community at Prouilhe, for it was not until 1211-1212 that proper buildings were erected for the sisters, allowing all the nuns to be housed together in one place.

In 1214 Dominic held charge of the Christian community in Fanjeaux, and so in that sense he was the parish priest. At the end of this same year, there is evidence of Dominic in Toulouse as praedicationis minister. Around this same period, he was elected Bishop of Couserans, but declined to take up the post.

In January 1215 however, events took a different turn. Dominic received the gift of some properties in Toulouse, which made the setting up of a community of preachers a distinct possibility. The donor was Pierre Seilhan, well known to us through the still surviving "Maison Pierre Seilhan" in the Place du Parlement at Toulouse.



The transfer of the property was finalised on April 25th 1215, when the Seilhan inheritance was settled and property shared between the two brothers. In May Bishop Foulque formalised the arrangement, making Dominic's community a permanent diocesan institution.

For the celebration of their Jubilee, the Province of Toulouse had series of events; exhibitions, concerts etc., and the grand celebration was held on Pentecost Sunday (May 24) at the Convent Church of St. Thomas Aquinas in Toulouse. These activities were well publicized on the web and on social media. They also launched a website on the history of the Order.

News from Fanjeaux (Sister Historians of the Order of Preachers)

### • **Blessed Oscar Romero: “¡Viva!”**

I've been back from El Salvador for 24 hours and still cannot believe that we have just celebrated the beatification of Archbishop Romero as a martyr. Many, many people have longed for years for this great day. As a young theology student, working with Central American refugees, I heard hundreds of testimonies of the violence that forced them to flee their beloved homelands. Always, in the midst of their stories, they would eventually mention “Monseñor Romero.” The poor of Central America spoke of Romero as if he were their best friend, their faithful and trusted shepherd and teacher, the one who understood their sufferings and wiped away their tears, encouraging them to keep walking.

During those years of studies I had the great privilege of visiting El Salvador several times. Those visits helped me see the face of an incarnate Jesus, a Jesus who walks side-by-side with the people of God, sharing in their sufferings and joys, their struggles and hopes. Archbishop Romero became for me an icon of Jesus – the one who is willing to go all the way, to stand in solidarity with the most vulnerable, the poorest, those struggling for change and dreaming for new life. Romero's words gave flesh to the gospel, opening a way for my theological studies to take root deep within my heart. A distant God who watched people suffer, who stood idly by as innocent people were tortured and killed was not the kind of God I could believe in. Monseñor Romero spoke of a different God, a God who suffers with us, a God of compassion, a God who, like a mother who embraces the tortured body of her son, never leaves our side.

This past Saturday hundreds of thousands of people from around the world marched through the streets of San Salvador, singing songs and carrying pictures of the Good Shepherd who gives his life for his flock. To be swept up in such a sea of disciples and pilgrims of peace is an experience that I will never forget. I think I felt something like what the disciples experienced when their crucified and beloved teacher appeared to them as the risen Christ. Love triumphs in the end! Yes, sometimes we have to wait for the seed that was sown in the cold, hard ground to sprout and show signs of new life. The waiting makes us strong; it teaches us to link our arms, unite our hearts and walk together, sharing our fears and our faith, rekindling our belief that nothing is impossible for God.

Those who thought they could extinguish the fire that burned in Monseñor Romero's heart now know that they built their houses on sand. “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites. You are like whitewashed tombs, which appear beautiful on the outside, but inside are full of dead men's bones and every kind of filth” (Mt. 23:27). I know that Blessed Oscar Romero prays for them today, too, though many still resist the truth, choosing instead to follow the gods of money and power. May they, too, join this great pilgrimage of justice, love and peace, and know that they are welcomed and embraced at the table of the just, the table of the Reign of God.

Brian J. Pierce, OP - 26 May 2015

### • **Socius for Apostolic Life: Past and Present**

As a mendicant Order, Dominicans has both a regular life of prayer, study and living in common and an apostolic life of preaching the Word in various forms. The Dominican life is designed such that the regular life (regular observances) should nourish the apostolic life. For generations, the Order has therefore placed great importance on its apostolic life.



Since 1993, the Order has been blessed with five brothers who have assisted various Masters of the Order to organize and manage the apostolic life of the Order. They have helped to keep our apostolic life vibrant and effective, evolving and responsive to the changing times and places.

At a recent conference in Toronto, these brothers came together; four physically and one in spirit.

**Jean-Jacques Pérennès** (first from the right)

Fr Jean-Jacques was the Socius for Apostolic Life from 1992 to 1998. He is from the Province of France and is currently the Director of the Dominican Institute for Oriental Studies (IDEO) Cairo, Egypt. Even in his current assignment, he is actively involved in the apostolic mission of the Order in the Middle East through research and the study of Islam, thereby promoting dialogue and better understanding among Christians and Muslims.

**Yvon P. Pomerleau** (second from the right)

Fr Yvon was the Socius from 1998 to 2001. He is from the Province of Canada and he is currently the Promoter of the Dominican Laity in his province. He is also the Director General of the Canadian Religious Conference (CRC) which is an organization at the service of leaders of religious institutes and societies of apostolic life in Canada. In this organization, fr Yvon works to support the members of the organization in their vocation and missions especially in the area of Justice and Peace.

**Chrysostom Thomas McVey**

Fr Chrys is the one that was not there physically, he passed on to eternal glory in 2009. But before then, he was the Socius from 2002 to 2008. Although he was originally from the Province of St Joseph, New York, he worked in Pakistan for over forty years and became a son of that vice province. After many years of missionary work in Pakistan, he was once asked how many people he has been able to convert and he answered, “one, myself”.

**Prakash Anthony Lohale** (second from the left)

Fr Prakash is the immediate past Socius who served from 2008 to 2014. He is from the Province of India. He worked very hard to popularize and accomplish the “mission mandates” of the Order as defined by the General Chapter of Rome (2010) and the Master of the Order, fr Bruno Cadoré. In honour of his predecessor, fr Chrys, he coedited a book titled, “*The Dominican Family in Dialogue as Mission: Remembering Chrys McVey, OP*”, a memorial collection of some of the insightful and challenging thoughts of fr Chrys McVey. He is already working on the second edition of the book. Having just finished his tenure, he is still gearing up for his next mission.

**Orlando Rueda Acevedo** (first from the left)

Fr Orlando is the current Socius, appointed in November 2014. He is from the Province of Colombia and has just concluded his tenure as provincial when he was elected. He is off to a good start from all indications. Already he speaks Spanish and French and he has started picking up on his English and Italian. These will be effective tools for him to reach out to the brothers everywhere.

We wish him a successful tenure and we wish all the other brothers success in their current missions.

### • **Dominicans. “Guardian Angels of the Word”**

*The celebration of the Feast of the Translation of St Dominic at Santa Sabina, Rome – 25 May 2015*

The feast of the Translation of St Dominic falls on May 24 but this year, that was Pentecost Sunday. The General Curia and the Convent of Santa Sabina have always celebrated the Translation of St Dominic as its principal feast of St Dominic. Therefore, the Dominican Family in Rome gathered once again at the Basilica of Santa Sabina, this time on May 25.

Friars from different convents and institutions in Rome were represented. However, the sisters were more, they came from different congregations. There were also a good number of the lay faithful at the celebration.

The Holy Eucharist was presided over by Fr Michéal MacCraith, OFM, Irish Franciscan and guardian of St Isidore’s, an international Franciscan community in Rome. He was assisted by fr Bruno Cadoré, the Master of the Order and other priest friars around.



In his homily, he recalled the influences of the teachings of the great Dominican, Yves Congar on the Church, both in the past and in the present, especially on the reformation agenda of Pope Francis. However, these influences are hardly mentioned. He also recalled the influence the teaching of fr Timothy Radcliffe on study on his personal life and vocation. He reminded us of our mission as the “Guardian Angels” of the Word, a mission which stems from our study and contemplation. And as we celebrate the Jubilee of the Order together with the Church’s extraordinary year of Mercy, we are reminded of the connection between the Truth and Mercy.

After the Eucharist, the celebration shifted to the courtyard of the Convent of Santa Sabina where a banquet of good food and fine wine were already laid out. From that moment on, everything became informal; felicitations, chatting, eating, drinking etc.

“Behold, how good and pleasant it is for brothers and sisters to dwell together in joy and unity!”

For more pictures of the celebration, click here

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/orderofpreachers/sets/72157651144931504>

### • [An Adventure in Baghdad](#)

The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. This beautiful sentence has a profound meaning for me. This is not a simple prayer or a verse of a psalm that crosses my mind from time to time, but it is an experienced truth lived for me.

On Tuesday the 12th of May 2015, the father provincial, brother Michel Lachnaud o.p. during his canonical visit to Baghdad, went to visit our Dominican sisters of the Presentation in Tour accompanied by brothers Philippe Khoshaba, Rami Simon and myself. There was the Shiite pilgrimage, at the time in Baghdad. As every year, the faithful Shiites walk to pay tribute to their imam Mosa AL-Kadem.

On this occasion, the municipality of Baghdad and the police were blocking the roads to Baghdad to give way to the pedestrian pilgrims. But despite the difficult road, we arrived at our sisters and then we spent a joyous time and extraordinary sharing with them. It was really a beautiful fraternal meeting. Our provincial had also visited their school, the beautiful conventual chapel and the Saint Raphael Hospital. He really appreciated the apostolate of our sisters.

#### The Calvary of our return

After having spent this pleasant time with our sisters, we left this place and headed for the convent of the Epiphany, home of the Dominicans in Baghdad. We must not forget that, here, in Baghdad, surprises come every moment of our existence. The return route was complicated because of the barriers and blockages provided for the pilgrims, a car bomb exploded very close to the place where we were. This time, the police immediately began firing bullets in the air and everywhere (like in a Hollywood film). It was a (life) unique show. This time, the roads and bridges in Baghdad were completely blocked by the Iraqi army. That is a Baghdadi surprise that happens at any time without warning. As a driver, I had to find a quick and effective solution.

Here, I could not get rid of my concern, the provincial was with us and I had to protect him and take him home safe and sound. Therefore, I used the GPS in my brain and tried to take several roads and changed direction several times, but it was pointless. However, despite the bad traffic jam, we tried to cross the three successive bridges, the republic and Al-Rashid and the liberal bridge, unfortunately, everything was blocked by the police. As a last chance, I also tried the bridge of Al-Jadrya, it was the same blockage.

At one point, brother Michel said to us: (I think that Majid is no longer speaking and that is a bad sign) we started to laugh. For around three hours, we were at a dead end, the time spent and the challenge was to find a solution! This journey had allowed us to see Baghdad (by night). We saw the pilgrims, the tents set up in the streets to welcome the pilgrims, we went passed the Museum of Baghdad. Finally, we were able to return back to the house, we had a unique Baghdadi experience. Inside me there was prayer and the great reason to operate the GPS in my brain.



I find that despite the roadblocks, the car bombs, the unexpected Baghdadi surprises, we came to achieve our goal. The Lord is my shepherd I lack nothing.  
Fr. Majid, o.p.

### • **“Create bonds of communion”, fr Bruno to the Dominican Family in Brazil**

*Canonical of visitation of fr Bruno Cadoré to the Province of Brazil, 15-30 April, 2015*

The Master of the Order, fr Bruno Cadoré and fr Javier Pose, the Socius for Latin America and the Caribbean visited the Province of Friar Bartolomeo de las Casas, Brazil. This was an opportunity for the successor of St Dominic to meet with and encourage members of the Dominican family in Brazil in their religious life and mission of evangelization and the preaching of the gospel.

For sure, fr Bruno is well acquainted with the challenges of preaching “the Way, the Truth and the Life” in different places under different socio-political conditions. In relation to his duties as the Master of the Order of Preachers, fr Bruno reflected that, “the Master of the Order is the servant of unity among all the brothers, communities, provinces and cultures”, in the Dominican family and in its various forms of expression.

In Brazil, the brothers work in 10 different communities, especially in the south-central part of the country. There are approximately 70 friars in the province who are engaged in various apostolates; teaching, university chaplaincy and pastoral care, care of parishes etc.

The Dominican Sisters of Apostolic Life are represented by more than 15 different congregations. There is also a Dominican contemplative monastery within the territory of the province. In addition, the province has a good number of Lay Fraternities and young people who belong to the Dominican Youth Movement.

The canonical visitation was an opportunity for fr Bruno to discover the different Dominican entities in Brazil, from the north of Tocantins to Curitiba in Paraná, southern Brazil.

On this visitation, the sons and daughters of Saint Dominic (nuns, brothers, sisters, the laity and young people) had the opportunity to interact with fr Bruno. They met with him, introduced themselves, shared with him and celebrated with him. Indeed, he was delighted with what he saw.

As he mentioned in one of his homilies, the canonical visitation to the “brothers and sisters of the Dominican family is a pilgrimage around the immensity of the Eucharistic table”, around which “we do not talk about people from North or South America, people speaking Portuguese, Spanish or French, or people who are young or old, but people who are converted into brothers and sisters in Christ and who have accepted the invitation to come to his table and share his bread”.

For pictures of the visitation to Brazil, click here

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/orderofpreachers/sets/72157652675530109>

### • **An Impression of the Meeting of the European Council of Lay Dominican Fraternities**

*At the Monastery of Dominican nuns of Beaufort - 3 April – 3 May 2015*

At the beautiful monastery of the nuns of Beaufort (France-Bretagne) ECLDF came together for the second time to continue the work to be done and to make plans for the coming time and the ECLDF Assembly in 2017.

The hospitality of the nuns was great. They have, a little separate from the monastery, a former farm, where we could stay and work. We could share all the times of prayer together with the nuns and they even invited us for a meeting with the whole community. This community is special because they are very alive with many talented young nuns and again a new young novice. Their singing is like angelic. Singing and praying with them was really touching and heart warming. And all this for free!

The 5 members of ECLDF are made complete with the coming of the European member of ICLDF Klaus Bornwasser and also with Bro. Rui Carlos Lopes o.p. and Bro. Manolo Puppini op. Alas Arnaud Kientz,



the communication officer of ECLDF, had to leave already the first morning after our arrival, while his mum died that night. All our prayers are with him and his family.

The first thing we discussed was the communication among each other. While we are living far away from each other modern media are very important. Email boxes are normally already crowded at home for work and family, but as ECLDF member it becomes often overcrowded. That's why we agreed having at least once in two months a so-called skype-meeting.

ECLDF is nowadays very ambitious. We want to improve the communication with IDYM, but especially with all the European Provinces/Vicariates of Lay Dominicans for instance by visiting Provincial meetings, writing more newsletters, etc.

In the former ECLDF (2011-2014) formation was an extra activity. For that a framework of formation issues was composed on the four pillars of Dominican life. But also suggestions were given how these issues can become attractive and alive. Provincial formation of the local formaters was proposed. Now we will try to have 'mission' as a more central theme. Eva Zudorova became not only the new formation officer, but also the officer of our European Lay Dominican mission. For that we have to think together about how we can reach people. The ECLDF has to be renewed for that, facebook or other modern media can be used. We want to stimulate European Lay Dominicans to tell how they live their vocation and mission. For that we will have detective reporters from the different regions of Europe to gather information and stories to be published on the ECLDF website. We also want to show our commitment with the many problems in Europe: the war in Ukrain, the thousands of fugitives, but also modern society wherein we live and see poverty and desolation, young people without future, broken families, etc. Activities for justice and peace will be an increasing challenge for Lay Dominicans.

Language remains a difficulty. Europe has 26 Provinces/Vicariates with at least 20 different languages. The three official languages of the Order are for Europe only partly efficient, because only one country speaks and understands Spanish and only a few countries speak and understand French. For the greater part from East to West and North to South, the English language is the main second language. That's why ECLDF decided to use only that language for communication, asking every Province/Vicariate already at the Bologna Assembly (2014) to find somebody being able to translate the most important information for their provincial/local Lay Dominicans.

Also the financial situation of ECLDF asks attention. Being able doing our job, we need the yearly contributions of all Provinces/Vicariates. Our treasurer Aksel Misje will write a special letter again about this issue. We received a generous gift from the Province of Switzerland. That will help us to afford the costs of the site renewal!

After discussing this all we heard reports of Klaus Bornewasser about ICLDF, Bro. Rui about his international experiences and of course about the Jubilee year of the Order. We feel privileged being invited at Rome 7 November this year to witness and share the opening celebration of this Jubilee year and we will surely be there!

An important issue for ECLDF is the organization of the next ECLDF Assembly. We decided already to have this Assembly not in 2018 but in 2017 (because of the planning of ICLDF with an Assembly in 2018). Now we even decided, in connection with plans of ICLDF, to have the next ECLDF Assembly 3-7 October 2017. The place is not yet sure. In Bologna were France (La Tourette) and The Netherlands (Huissen) suggested as possibilities, now Bro. Rui suggested Portugal (Fatima). That could also be a very good place. Our Dominican lay brother Gabriel Silva and sister Cristina Busto from Portugal are already gathering information.

Last, but not least we discussed about a theme for the next Assembly and for the time on our way to that Assembly together with all our European Lay Dominicans. Because 'mission' will be a central issue now we chose for: **PREACHERS OF HOPE.**



In this theme we can show our involvement with all the terrible situations in the world of war, terror, fugitives, despair... And we can make alive how the Light is shining through all the crashes of our lives. We want to communicate this theme with as many as possible Lay Dominicans of Europe.

So we are really ambitious, but at the same time, we have to be modest. Our possibilities as ECLDF are limited. But nevertheless.....

With the intercession of our father St. Dominic and of all the Dominican saints and blessed sisters and brothers, we trust especially these days around Pentecost on the help of the Holy Spirit, who will be given to us in abundance.

Leny Beemer- de Vos, president ECLDF

### • News from our Dominican friars in Bujumbura, Burundi

*Dear friends,*

*I guess you are worried about us considering the current situation in Burundi. In fact the whole situation is reported by the media everywhere and at every hour.*

*For our community, it all started yesterday {Wednesday 13 May } around 1:10 pm (13:10) after lunch. While demonstrations against the third term of the current president were in their third week, an army general said he had dismissed the president and his government. After this statement, protesters shouted with joy, sang songs of victory and thanked the military for having freed them.*

*But that did not last long and then, fearing the return of the president, the military announced they had decided to close the borders and Bujumbura airport. The city was quiet until about 2:00 am. We heard the sound of gunfire which continued until about 8:00 am. In this situation, I was able to go and celebrate the Eucharist with the Sisters of Calcutta.*

*But until 1 pm (13.00h) the city was calm and deserted {today, Thursday 14 May}. From 1.00pm to 3:40 pm, there were fighting around the National Radio and TV Stations. We have just celebrated the Mass of the Ascension without any faithful from outside. Shops and banks remained closed throughout the day and even the market.*

*All the brothers are okay in the community, fr Emmanuel Ntakarutimana is in Tanzania while frs Nepo and Benjamin are in Kigali. Each day ends with uncertainties since local private radio stations are not broadcasting any more. So I ask you to continue to pray for Burundi.*

*Fraternally*

*Sixbert Hategekimana, OP*

### • The Dominican Laity in Surabaya Visits the Bishop of Surabaya

Members of the Dominican Laity in Surabaya, Indonesia paid a courtesy visit to the Bishop of Surabaya, Msgr. Vincentius Sutikno Wisaksono as a gesture of warmth, good wishes and solidarity.

The Bishop welcomed them warmly and gave them words of encouragement in a short heart-warming talk. At that meeting, the Bishop also officially recognized the Dominican Laity in his diocese. He commended them for their works and encouraged them to continue like manner.

Among the group were aspirants, postulants, novices and newly professed members. There were also aspirants to the clerical Order. The group was led by their coordinator and formator, fr Nilo A. Landizabal, OP.

### • Sr Diana, OP Speaks to the US House of Representatives on the Situation in Iraq

On May 13, 2015, Sr Diana Momeka of the Dominican Sisters of St Catherine of Siena in Iraq gave a presentation to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the United States House of Representatives on the situation in Iraq. She was one of the witnesses at a hearing on “Ancient Communities Under Attack: ISIS’s War on Religious Minorities”



Here is the full text of her testimony:

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**Sister Diana Momeka**  
**Dominican Sisters of St. Catherine of Siena, Mosul, Iraq**  
**House Foreign Affairs Committee**  
**May 13, 2015**  
**Ancient Communities Under Attack: ISIS's War on Religious Minorities**

*Thank you Chairman Royce and distinguished Members of the Committee, for inviting me today to share my views on Ancient Communities Under Attack: ISIS's War on Religious Minorities. I am Sister Diana Momeka of the Dominican Sisters of St. Catherine of Siena, Mosul, Iraq. I'd like to request that my complete testimony be entered in to the Record.*

*In November 2009, a bomb was detonated at our convent in Mosul. Five sisters were in the building at the time and they were lucky to have escaped unharmed. Our Prioress, Sister Maria Hanna, asked for protection from local civilian authorities but the pleas went unanswered. As such, she had no choice but to move us to Qaraqosh.*

*Then on June 10, 2014, the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and Syria or ISIS, invaded the Nineveh Plain, which is where Qaraqosh is located. Starting with the city of Mosul, ISIS overran one city and town after another, giving the Christians of the region three choices: 1.) convert to Islam, 2.) pay a tribute (Al-Jizya) to ISIS or 3.) leave their cities (like Mosul) with nothing more than the clothes on their back.*

*As this horror spread throughout the Nineveh Plain, by August 6, 2014, Nineveh was emptied of Christians, and sadly, for the first time since the seventh century AD, no church bells rang for Mass in the Plain of Nineveh.*

*From June 2014 forward, more than a hundred and twenty thousand (120,000+) people found themselves displaced and homeless in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, leaving behind their heritage and all they had worked for over the centuries. This uprooting, this theft of everything that the Christians owned, displaced them body and soul, stripping away their humanity and dignity.*

*To add insult to injury, the initiatives and actions of both the Iraqi and Kurdish governments were at best modest and slow. Apart from allowing Christians to enter their region, the Kurdish government did not offer any aid either financial or material. I understand the great strain that these events have placed on Baghdad and Erbil however, it has been almost a year and Christian Iraqi citizens are still in dire need of help. Many people spent days and weeks in the streets before they found shelter in tents, schools and halls. Thankfully, the Church in the Kurdistan region stepped forward and cared for the displaced Christians, doing her very best to handle the disaster. Church buildings were opened to accommodate the people; food and non-food items were provided to meet the immediate needs of the people; and medical health services were also provided. Moreover, the Church put out a call and many humanitarian organizations answered with aid for the thousands of people in need.*

*Presently, we are grateful for what has been done, with most people now sheltered in small prefabricated containers or some homes. Though better than living on the street or in an abandoned building, these small units are few in number and are crowded with three families, each with multiple people, often accommodated in one unit. This of course increases tensions and conflict, even within the same family.*

*There are many who say "Why don't the Christians just leave Iraq and move to another country and be done with it?" To this question we would respond, "Why should we leave our country – what have we done?"*

*The Christians of Iraq are the first people of the land. You read about us in the Old Testament of the Bible. Christianity came to Iraq from the very earliest days through the preaching and witness of St Thomas and others of the Apostles and Church Elders.*



*While our ancestors experienced all kinds of persecution, they stayed in their land, building a culture that has served humanity for the ages. We, as Christians, do not want, or deserve to leave or be forced out of our country any more than you would want to leave or be forced out of yours.*

*But the current persecution that our community is facing is the most brutal in our history. Not only have we been robbed of our homes, property and land, but our heritage is being destroyed as well. ISIS has and continues to demolish and bomb our churches, cultural artifacts and sacred places like Mar Behnam and his Sister Sara, a fourth century monastery and St. Georges Monastery in Mosul.*

*Uprooted and forcefully displaced, we have realized that ISIS' plan is to evacuate the land of Christians and wipe the earth clean of any evidence that we ever existed. This is cultural and human genocide. The only Christians that remain in the Plain of Nineveh are those who are held as hostages.*

*The loss of the Christian Community from the Plain of Nineveh has placed the whole region on the edge of a terrible catastrophe. Christians have for centuries been the bridge that connects Eastern and Western cultures. Destroying this bridge will leave an isolated, inculturated conflict zone emptied of cultural and religious diversity. Through our presence as Christians, we're called to be a force for good, for peace, for connection between cultures.*

*To restore, repair and rebuild the Christian community in Iraq, the following needs are urgent:*

- 1. Liberating our homes from ISIS and helping us return.*
- 2. A coordinated effort to rebuild what was destroyed – roads, water and electrical supplies, and buildings, including our churches and monasteries.*
- 3. Encouraging enterprises that contribute to the rebuilding of Iraq and inter-religious dialogue. This could be through schools, academics and pedagogical projects.*

*I am but one, small person – a victim myself of ISIS and all of its brutality. Coming here has been difficult for me – as a religious sister I am not comfortable with the media and so much attention. But I am here and I am here to ask you, to implore you for the sake of our common humanity to help us. Stand with us as we, as Christians, have stood with all the people of the world and help us. We want nothing more than to go back to our lives; we want nothing more than to go home.*

*Thank you and God bless you*

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### ● **Remembering the Poor: An Interview with Gustavo Gutiérrez, OP**

Each year the prestigious American Academy of Arts and Sciences announces the incorporation of new members. This year's list of honorary fellows includes the world-renowned Peruvian theologian Gustavo Gutiérrez, O.P., who is best known for his book *A Theology of Liberation* (Span. 1971, Eng. 1973).

Father Gutiérrez has written over a dozen books and hundreds of articles concerning the church's role in creating social structures of solidarity. Perhaps more than anyone else, he has been instrumental in helping the Christian community to read and live the Gospel from the perspective of the poor.

The following interview took place at the University of Notre Dame, where Father Gutiérrez has held the John Cardinal O'Hara chair in theology since 2001. The interviewer is Daniel Hartnett, S.J., a professor of philosophy at Loyola University Chicago.

*You have received numerous awards and dozens of honorary doctorates in the course of your fruitful ministry as theologian and priest. What is the significance to you of this particular award from the American Academy of Arts and Sciences?*

To tell you the truth, the news of this award took me totally by surprise. I was not even aware that my name was being considered. It is certainly an honor for me to be included in such a group of distinguished scholars, scientists and public leaders. I am very grateful for being named to this academy and for the opportunity to



bring the Gospel into a fuller and more fruitful dialogue with a broader range of disciplines and with civil society.

*Speaking of incorporations, you have been a member of the Dominican Order for only about five years. Tell us about your decision to enter.*

My relationship with the Order of Preachers goes back to my studies in France, where I had personal contact with the scholarly work of Fathers Congar, Chenu and Schillebeeckx, all Dominican theologians. I was attracted to their profound understanding of the intimate relationship that should exist between theology, spirituality and the actual preaching of the Gospel. Liberation theology shares that same conviction. My subsequent research into the life of Bartolomé de Las Casas o.p. and his ardent defense of the poor of his time (the indigenous people and black slaves) also played an important role in my decision. My long friendship with many Dominicans, as well as other circumstances, finally brought me to this step. I am grateful for the warm welcome that the Dominican family gave me.

*You have always placed the concerns of the poor in the forefront of your theological reflection. Must every theologian come to grips with the reality of social suffering in the world, or is this only incumbent, say, on those who work directly within a context of poverty?*

I am firmly convinced that poverty—this sub-human condition in which the majority of humanity lives today—is more than a social issue. Poverty poses a major challenge to every Christian conscience and therefore to theology as well.

People today often talk about contextual theologies but, in point of fact, theology has always been contextual. Some theologies, it is true, may be more conscious of and explicit about their contextuality, but all theological investigation is necessarily carried out within a specific historical context. When Augustine wrote *The City of God*, he was reflecting on what it meant for him and for his contemporaries to live the Gospel within a specific context of serious historical transformations.

Our context today is characterized by a glaring disparity between the rich and the poor. No serious Christian can quietly ignore this situation. It is no longer possible for someone to say, “Well, I didn’t know” about the suffering of the poor. (some people declare they do not care, nor they are concerned, what is MORE IMPORTANT to them are THEIR OWN SELF INTERESTS (utilitarianism, they strongly believe that every human being is an ISLAND. In a world today they fail to realize that we are all and everyone are connected and communicate immediately and instantly, we are all children off one God and ONE BODY (Jesus has only ONE BODY and he wants each one of us, no human or created thing {Francis has prepared a document on environmental issues which will be published in June} to be excluded, to live (ABIDE), share and participate in HIS OWN BODY) Poverty has a (clear) visibility today that it did not have in the past. The faces of the poor must now be confronted. And we also understand the causes of poverty and the conditions that perpetuate it. There was a time when poverty was considered to be an unavoidable fate, (some firmly believe it is a curse or punishment of GOD, I have not found it in the Scriptures) but such a view is no longer possible or responsible (note this word, I would like to add that WE are also ACCOUNTABLE TO GOD {read Mathew 25:31-46}). Now we know that poverty is not simply a misfortune; it is an injustice.

Of course, there always remains the practical question: what must we do in order to abolish poverty? Theology does not pretend to have all the technical solutions to poverty, but it reminds us never to forget the poor and also that God is at stake in our response to poverty. An active (I would say PROACTIVE, which means involvement and commitment) concern for the poor is not only an obligation for those who feel a political vocation; all Christians must take the Gospel message of justice and equality seriously (no half measures). Christians cannot forgo their responsibility to say a prophetic word about unjust economic conditions. Pope John Paul II’s approach to the phenomenon of globalization is a good example. He constantly asks: “How is this going to affect the poor? Does it promote justice?”

*Do you think the “preferential option for the poor” has become an integral part of the Catholic Church’s social teaching? And where did that term come from?*

Yes, I do believe that the option for the poor has become part of the Catholic social teaching. The phrase comes from the experience of the Latin American church. The precise term was born sometime between the Latin American bishops’ conferences in Medellín (1968) and in Puebla (1979). In Medellín, the three words



(option, preference, poor) are all present, but it was only in the years immediately following Medellín that we brought these words into a complete phrase. It would be accurate to say that the term “preferential option for the poor” comes from the Latin American church, but the content, the underlying intuition, is entirely biblical. Liberation theology tries to deepen our understanding of this core biblical conviction.

The preferential option for the poor has gradually become a central tenet of the church’s teaching. Perhaps we can briefly explain the meaning of each term:

- The term poverty refers to the real poor. This is not a preferential option for the spiritually poor. After all, such an option would be very easy, if for no other reason that there are so few of them! The spiritually poor are the saints! The poverty to which the option refers is material poverty. Material poverty means premature and unjust death. The poor person is someone who is treated as a non-person (no divine dignity and human rights as a person), someone who is considered insignificant from an economic, political and cultural point of view. The poor count as statistics; they are the nameless. But even though the poor remain insignificant within society, they are never insignificant before God.
- Some people feel, wrongly I believe, that the word preferential waters down or softens the option for the poor, but this is not true. God’s love has two dimensions, the universal and the particular; and while there is a tension between the two, there is no contradiction. God’s love excludes no one. Nevertheless, God demonstrates a special predilection toward those who have been excluded from the banquet of life. The word preference recalls the other dimension of the gratuitous (and generous) love of God—the universality. ( NOT WATERED DOWN)
- In some ways, option is perhaps the weakest word in the sentence. In English, the word merely connotes a choice between two things. In Spanish, however, it evokes the sense of commitment. The option for the poor is not optional, but is incumbent upon every Christian (those who want to be like Christ) . It is not something that a Christian can either take or leave. As understood by Medellín, the option for the poor is twofold: it involves standing in solidarity with the poor, but it also entails a stance against inhumane poverty.

The preferential option for the poor is ultimately a question of (love and) friendship. Without (love and) friendship, an option for the poor can easily become commitment to an abstraction (to a social class, a race, a culture, an idea). Aristotle emphasized the important place of friendship for the moral life, but we also find this clearly stated in John’s Gospel. Christ says, “I do not call you servants, but friends.” As Christians, we are called to reproduce (bear fruit) this quality of friendship in our relationships with others. When we become friends with the poor, their presence leaves an indelible imprint on our lives, and we are much more likely to remain committed.

*Some people say that liberation theology made an important contribution, but that it is now in decline. Do you agree? What is your prognosis for the future of liberation theology?*

Any new insight within a particular field of knowledge initially receives a lot of attention, but then it slowly gets incorporated or assimilated into the normal ways of doing things. This principle applies to many of the key insights found in liberation theology.

Like any other way of doing theology, liberation theology is linked to a particular historical moment (the O.P.s are very strong in history). Now we can ask ourselves: have the historical circumstances changed? Certainly, it is true that many important events have taken place over the past decades and that the political climate is very different from that of the 60’s and 70’s. But the situation of the poor has not changed fundamentally. As long as there is a group of Christians trying to be faithful in these circumstances, a group trying to follow Christ among the poor, we will find something like liberation theology.

Even though it is common to refer to liberation theology in the singular, we are witnessing several new expressions of this theology in different contexts and continents—North America, Central and South America, Africa and Asia. Each of these theologies has a particular point of view, but they also have much in common, particularly a concern for the poor and excluded (marginalized). Liberation theology revolves around this attention to the plight of the poor.



*What would a liberation theology in the United States look like? What do we most need to be liberated from? Consumerism, ethnocentrism? And if you were to work in this country, how would you do theology?*

We have known for a long time the many ways that poverty can destroy or debilitate persons and nations, but perhaps we need to think more about the ways that riches or abundance can weaken our commitment to Christ. Each country or context has its temptations and its opportunities (and challenges) for spreading the good news. In poor nations, one is continuously reminded of the problem of poverty; in a rich and powerful nation, the challenge is to remember the poor and not succumb to ethnocentrism. Witnessing to a culture will sometimes involve prophetic critique; at other times it will mean drawing out from that culture its noblest qualities. (should be in the forefront)

The Catholic Church has had a long history in the United States of being close to the struggling poor. Catholics have built up networks of primary and high schools, hospitals and colleges for first-generation immigrants. As Catholics moved up the social ladder, however, they began to adapt more and more to the prevailing culture of consumerism. But Pope John Paul II constantly reminds us to remember the poor. I should mention that there are significant groups of theologians in this country trying to develop a contextual theology, one that is attuned to the social and cultural challenges of living the faith in this milieu. A good contextual theology, though, will also deal with global issues, because Christian responsibility does not stop at the border. The ministry of solidarity has international dimensions.

*How do you sustain the virtues of joy and hope during difficult times or in the midst of criticism?*

Christian joy is not tied to a particular object, but to the experience of God's unconditional (and generous) love for us. Christian joy comes from knowing God and from trying to follow God's will. Joy means rejoicing in God. But we can see from the Magnificat that, when Mary rejoices in God, she is also celebrating the liberating action of God in history. Mary rejoices in a God who is faithful to the poor. Our service of others must be wrapped in this joy. Only work embraced with joy truly transforms.

And we must also engage in our work hopefully. Hope is not the same thing as optimism. Optimism merely reflects the desire that external circumstances may one day improve. There is nothing wrong with optimism, but we may not always have reasons for it. The theological virtue of hope is much more than optimism. Hope is based on the conviction that God is at work in our lives and in the world. Hope is ultimately a gift from God given to sustain us during difficult times. Charles Péguy described hope as the "little sister" that walks between the "taller sisters" of faith and charity; when the taller sisters grow tired, the little one instills new life and energy into the other two. Hope never allows our faith to grow weak or our love to falter.

I learned a lot about hope and joy when I was young. From the age of 12 to 18 I had osteomyelitis and was confined to bed. There certainly were reasons for discouragement, but also very present was the gift of hope that came to me through prayer, reading, family and friends. Later my parishioners in Lima would also teach me volumes about hope in the midst of suffering, and this is when I decided to write a book about Job. Hope is precisely for the difficult moments.

Daniel Hartnett, S.J., is a professor of philosophy at Loyola University Chicago

### • [The pilgrim Rosary of the Jubilee](#)

Together!

Many are preparing the celebration of the 800th anniversary of the foundation of the Order of Preachers.

At various meetings at the General Curia in Rome, bro. Bruno Cadoré stressed the importance of launching concrete initiatives that can mobilize all the members of the Dominican family.

Here is the project of the "Pilgrim Rosary" for the Jubilee. Throughout the 8th centenary of the Order, it will travel through all the monasteries of Dominican nuns.

Why did we choose our nuns? To do as Our Father Saint Dominic did as he began with them! The whole Dominican family is going to rely on their prayer and will take part in it, of course!

Concretely... how will this happen?



A program will be developed for the entire duration of the Jubilee. Two days will be "given" to each monastery that will become in a certain way the center of the world of the Rosary.

During these two days, the sisters, if they wish and if they can, have the freedom to organize a meeting, a time of prayer around the Rosary. And it is possible for them to invite the brothers and the apostolic sisters or the lay people who live around them.

What deadlines?

Of course, all these elements will be posted online on the website Rosarium!

- June 30th 2015: the calendar of the Jubilee will be established for the Rosary. There we will find the two days for each monastery and, for each month, a day dedicated to a prayer intention that will link liturgy and apostolate.

- September 1st 2015: deadline for sending the rosaries. Each monastery, if possible, is invited to make 1 or 2 Rosary(/ies) with 15 mysteries.

Please send this rosary to Santa Sabina, to the Promoter of the Nuns. Please do not forget to put a label on it with the community name; that will allow the monastery that will receive it to know where the rosary comes from.

- September 8th: A Celebration of the Rosary will be online. We will find there the 20 mysteries with Dominican meditations.

It will be easy to use either by taking a series of five mysteries -from the same series or not- or by taking 15 or 20 mysteries. Everyone will be able to adapt it according to the needs or to the circumstances.

- September 15th: a letter will be sent to all the monasteries of nuns.

- From September 16th to 20th: a letter will be sent to the apostolic sisters, to the provincials, to the provincial Promoters of the Rosary and to the shrines under the responsibility of brothers.

- November 7th: Opening of the Jubilee.

At the end of the celebration, the rosaries will be blessed by the Master of the Order before being sent to each monastery.

- During the Jubilee: the monasteries that wish to send us an article on the activities proposed in the context of this pilgrim Rosary are welcome!

Nothing could be simpler: just write a short article with one or two photographs. We will gladly put them online ... and that will give visibility to your monastery!

If it is possible to give this article in the language of the country of the monastery and in one (or all three!) official language of the Order, it will be highly appreciated by the visitors of the site!

And there will be other... surprises!

But we are not going to tell everything today!

The Jubilee year will be a year of the Rosary... together!

Fr. Louis-Marie Ariño-Durand, OP  
General Promoter of the Rosa

#### **[• An appeal from the International Coalition for Papua \(ICP\) Concerning the latest development in West Papua](#)**

Dominicans for Justice and Peace has been a member of the International Coalition for Papua (ICP) since its inception in 2002. We therefore participated in this consultation. Fr Mike Deeb, OP.

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#### ***An appeal from the International Coalition for Papua (ICP) Concerning the latest development in West Papua***

*We, Church leaders, human rights defenders, academics and international observers, gathered in Brussels for the International Consultation on Papua 2015 to discuss the situation of human rights in Papua. We also met in the European Parliament on 5 May 2015 upon the invitation of Ms Ana Gomes, Member of European*



*Parliament, to discuss the current situation in Papua, with the presence of Chargé D'affaires of the Indonesia to the European Union and Indonesian diplomats from Brussels and Jakarta.*

*During his visit to Papua in December 2014, President Joko Widodo publicly stated that he was committed to listening to the voices of Papuans, the latest development in Papua suggests a different reality.*

*We are concerned with the most recent developments in Papua that have been marked with increased violence committed by the Indonesian security forces against the indigenous Papuans. The Chairperson of the Evangelical Christian Church in Tanah Papua (GKI TP) Rev. Albert Yoku emphasised, "The situation in Papua deteriorated during the first six months since Joko Widodo assumed presidency."*

*On 1 May 2015, 264 Papuans were arrested for commemorating the 52nd anniversary of the administrative transfer of Papua to Indonesia. There were reports of torture of demonstrators, with at least two remaining in detention. Two years ago, on 1 May 2013, at least 30 people were arrested for similar commemorative activities. The particularly repressive response this year represents a deterioration in the situation of freedom of expression and assembly in West Papua.*

*Papuans have experienced a demographic shift in which they have become a minority in their own land. This concern has been confirmed by the study of the West Papua Project at the University of Sydney. In the 1970s, the indigenous Papuans made up 70% of the population. But today, the indigenous Papuans only constitute 42% of the population. As a consequence of the demographic shift, the relationships between the indigenous and non-indigenous Papuans are more characterized by tensions, prejudice, discrimination and violence between the communities.*

*Papuans also continue experiencing isolation from any engagement with the international community, including international human rights observers, journalists, researchers and humanitarian workers.*

*Having considered these concerns, we recommend the following.*

*To the Government of Indonesia:*

- 1. To end the excessive use of force by the Indonesian security forces and to review the security policy in Papua by involving broad participation of civil society at the local and national levels;*
- 2. To release all political prisoners without any condition;*
- 3. To ensure that impunity for human rights violation including torture does not persist;*
- 4. In the context of the demographic shift, to take concrete measures to protect the rights of the indigenous Papuans, including their customary rights over land and natural resources; and to prevent any attempt to promote conflict on the basis of ethnic differences;*
- 5. To implement the President's commitment to neutrality mediated dialogue with Papuans by taking concrete actions, such as holding negotiations with the Papua Peace Negotiators;*

*To the European Union:*

- 1. To highlight the on-going and increasing human rights violations in Papua in the Human Rights Dialogue between EU and Indonesia by supporting the involvement and participation of civil society including Papuan groups;*
- 2. To send a human rights fact-finding mission to visit Papua in the near future;*
- 3. To urge the Government of Indonesia to end the restriction on practical access to Papua.*

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### **• XVIIIth Study Week and Conference – Trogir 2015**

*XVIIIth Study Week and Conference – Trogir 2015, 23rd – 30th August 2015.*

*In August 2015, the Dominican friars of the Province of Croatia will host the XVIIIth Study Week on the theme, 'Human Curiosity and Knowledge and Christ's Acquired Knowledge' and a Conference on 'Belief, Curiosity, Knowledge and Cognition'. The official languages of the Week and the Conference are English, French and Croatian.*



During the sessions, participants will look at questions connected with the limits for human knowledge represented by death, the ineffable, and otherness, and their implications for human life. Topics will include: What kind of limit is a categorical limit? Can death be bad for us even though we are no longer there to experience its effects? What is lost in death, and what may survive? Can there be knowledge of what cannot be represented? What can we know nonconceptually? Can we have knowledge of other minds? And in what way are others a part of our world?

Arrival at Trogir will be on Sunday, 23 August 2015 and the first session of the Study Week will begin the next day after an introduction of the subject matter and some practical guidelines. There will be a total of 3 sessions on each day which will be capped with group discussions.

The Conference proper will begin on Friday, 28 August 2015 and there will be 5 presentations on each day followed by discussions. At the end of all the presentations, there will be a general evaluation of the Conference.

Speakers for the Study Week and Conference including; Simon Francis Gaine, OP, Paweł Klimczak, OP, Edmond Eh, Carsten Barwasser, Stjepan Radić, Mikołaj Sławkowski-Rode, Ralph Weir, Bruno Petrušić, Marinko Vidović and Gašpar Garmaz.

For more information concerning the Study Week (registration, participation etc.), please contact: Srećko Koralija (regens@dominikanci.hr)

#### • **ST. THOMAS AQUINAS PRIORY, IBADAN CELEBRATES THE JUBILEE OF THE ORDER**

In union with the series of events that began in 2013 to mark the 800th anniversary of the confirmation of the Dominican Order, the Dominican Priory of St. Thomas Aquinas, the House of Studies of the Province of St. Joseph the Worker, Nigeria and Ghana, had a three-day celebration as a way of participating in this all important celebration of the Order.

The celebration in Ibadan began on the 1st of May 2015, the feast of St. Joseph the Worker, patron saint of the Province. There were two talks delivered by Fr. Jude Mbukamma O.P. on “Preaching” and Fr. Anthony Akinwale O.P. on “The History of the Order from Spain to Nigeria”. Later that day, there were series of games including sack race, relay race and football between the brothers and men who worship with us in the community.

On the second day, there was a film show on the life of St. Dominic and a forum where the different arms of the Order (Friars, Sisters and Lay Dominicans) shared their experience of living the Dominican ideal of preaching.

The Grand finale was on Sunday, 3rd of May. The celebration started with the Holy Eucharist presided by Fr. Justus Pokrzewinski O.P, which had in attendance numerous friends and associates of the Dominicans. The brothers were in their full Dominican habit. There was an art exhibition after the mass, and great feasting to round off the celebration which included cutting of the Jubilee cake made by our Brother Uchechukwu Odikpo, O.P.

We are happy to celebrate our life, our charism, our heritage, our history, with the rest of the Order.

For pictures of the Jubilee Celebrations at Ibadan, click here – <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.631826910287085.1073741916.402376819898763&type=1>

#### • **The General Promoter for the Nuns Visits Nuns in North America**

On April 25, 2015, Sr. Mary Martin, Sr. Mary Catharine and Sr. Joseph Maria made the short trip over the George Washington Bridge to Corpus Christi Monastery in Hunt's Point, South Bronx to join over 30 other nuns to meet our new promoter, Fr. Caesar Bajo, OP and to join them in introducing the region to Father as he begins his 6 year of service to the nuns.



The office of Promoter was established at the 1989 General Chapter of Oakland, CA in order to assist the Master of the Order and to help the nuns who, like the friars, have the Master of the Order as their major superior. Because the Master can't always be available to the nuns in the way he would like to be (and the way we would like him to be) the promoter of the nuns fulfills a real need. Like the Master he is constantly on the road, visiting each monastery and getting to know each community and their particular way of living Dominican monastic life and their needs. Not only that, the promoter in many ways acts as a liaison for the monasteries among themselves as he can share the experiences of the monasteries with each other.

Last year, Fr. Bruno Cadore appointed Fr. Caesar Valero Bajo, OP as our new promoter replacing Fr. Brian Pierce who served the nuns so faithfully during his 6 years and now has a well-deserved rest from his Sisters!

Fr. Caesar is from the Province of the Holy Rosary, the missionary province, and is a native of Spain. Father's missionary vocation will serve him well as he travels throughout the world from monastery to monastery!

We enjoyed our time with Fr. Caesar very much. He is a humble and warm person, with a dry sense of humor and a great love of our Lord and the mission of the Order of Preachers to preach the Gospel. Father speaks some English and felt it was important that he engage in conversation with us directly with his "poor" English rather than through an interpreter and we were touched by the efforts Father made. In fact, his English is quite good!

Each prioress gave a presentation on her monastery and the last 2 days were days of retreat and reflection. Father gave conferences on the theme of Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* and after each conference we were invited to share our own thoughts, questions, reflections, etc.

Our 5 days together were a very special time of Dominican communion and we are all so grateful to the nuns of Corpus Christi Monastery for hosting us and to Sr. Anna Marie, OP for coordinating the meeting and remembering all the little details that goes into making a gathering run smoothly!

## Official News

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### • [Pope Francis Names Fr. Timothy Radcliffe Consultor for Council for Justice and Peace](#)

Pope Francis has named Fr. Timothy Radcliffe, OP a consultor of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. He is of the Dominican Province of England and a former Master of the Order of Preachers (1992-2001).

Ordained in 1971, he is a well-known preacher and speaker, and author of several books. He is now resident at the Dominican Priory at Blackfriars, Oxford (U.K.). He has been a member of the Las Casas Advisory Board and Director of the Institute. He has received a number of honorary degrees from various universities.

## Calendar of the Master of the Order for June 2015

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2-19: Canonical Visitation to Peru

22-26: Visitation to Algeria

June 29-July 1: Visitation to Cairo, Egypt

**All articles are available on [www.op.org](http://www.op.org)**