Fr Philippe Joseph LeBlanc, OP (1934-2017)

It is with sadness the the Dominican Friars of Toronto inform you that our brother Philippe Joseph LeBlanc, OP.

He died peacefully in the company of his community, family and friends on Saturday December 30, 2017.

Fr Philippe was 83 years old, in his 62nd year of religious life and 56th year of presbysterate.

He is survived by his sister Diane (Bill) Quagliozi, brother John (Ruthie) LeBlanc, and sisters-in-law Helena and Dorothy. He is fondly remembered by many nieces, nephews and friends.

Vitiation will take place on Wednesday, January 3 from 2-8PM with Vigil Prayers at 6:30 PM at Sacré-Coeur Parish, 381 Sherbourne Ave, Toronto. Mass of the Resurrection will be celebrated on Thursday, January 4 at 10AM at Sacré-Coeur Parish.

Interment will take place at a later date at the Cimetière Notre-Dame-du-Rosaire, St-Hyacinthe, QC.

For further information visit http://bernardofuneralhomes.com/index.php
Interfaith Christmas Celebration at Peace Center in Pakistan

Dominican Peace Center in Lahore and URI Pakistan organized Interfaith Christmas Celebration on 21st of December, 2017 in which over 100 religious leaders, promoters of interfaith dialogue and peace activists, men, women and children from different religions participated. His Grace, Archbishop Sebastian Shaw of Lahore presided over, whereas, Maulana Abdul Khabir Azad, Grand Imam, Badshahi Mosque, Lahore was the Chief Guest. Many honorable guests were also invited including, Fr. Pascal Paulus OP, Prior Vice-Provincial, Dominican Vice Province, Allama Muhammad Zubair Abid. Chairman Peace and Harmony Network Pakistan, Sohail Ahmad Raza, Director, Minhaj-ul Quran International, Ms. Asifa, President Aman Pukar and Hafiz Muhammad Nauman Hamid, Executive Director, World Council of Religions.

Fr. Shakeel Michael OP read a passage on the nativity of Jesus Christ from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, Bro. Irfan Christ OP offered prayers. A Muslim religious leader Hafiz Muhammad Nauman Hamid recited a passage from the Holy Quran. All the honorable guests were welcomed by school children who performed a welcome Christmas song.

Fr. James Channan OP formally welcomed and thanked all the honorable guests for their cherishing presence in the interfaith Christmas celebration. Ms. Sabina Rifat, Coordinator Women Wing URI Pakistan invited His Excellency Archbishop Sebastian Shaw to give his precious remarks on splendid celebration of Interfaith Christmas. His Grace said “I congratulate Fr. James Channan OP and his team for organizing this grand interfaith Christmas celebration. I also wish you all a very blessed, happy and joyful Christmas. Mother Mary was the chosen one who became a beautiful reason to let Jesus come into the world because Christ is the Prince of Peace. He brought message of peace for the whole world. He came for all the people and preached peace, love, forgiveness and reconciliation. He gives them bliss and eternal life. In Pakistan, right now, we are living in a state of fear and insecure atmosphere since the Quetta terrorist attack on a church. That has really pressed my heart and I feel great sorrow for the martyrs and the injured ones. But we have hope of peace as Jesus is the Prince of Peace. This is why I would like to say all that do not panic rather stay in peace and celebrate Christmas with religious enthusiasm because we are the preacher of light and darkness will never prevail on light as per our believe.”

Maulana Abdul Khabir Azad, Grand Imam, Badshahi Mosque Lahore, shared his precious words and wished all Christians a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year 2018. He highly appreciated the great efforts of Fr. James Channan for building peace among all religions throughout the world. He said, “We are celebrating the birthday of Jesus Christ. He is the Prince of Peace who preached peace all over the world. It gives me great joy to celebrate Christmas along with my Christian brothers and sisters. I strongly condemn the blast in Quetta and we always stand together to condemn the anti-peace and anti-minority elements. Yes, we are fighting and giving message to the enemies of unity. Pakistan army is doing the fabulous job for saving us. I am very thankful for the deep and profound friendship with Fr. James Channan. He always mentioned me to his friends and at national and international forums that we are jointly working for peace and dialogue among religions. Recently he was in Finland, France and the Vatican and he shared our joint efforts for building peace and interfaith dialogues. I also highly admire and salute His Holiness Pope Francis for expressing solidarity with Muslims on the situation of Palestine and for always supporting our cause and comforting us in our crises. Long live Pope Francis! It gives me great to celebrate Christmas with my Christians brothers and sisters and to cut the Christmas Cake as well.”

This followed the cutting of a Christmas Cake and all the respected guests came down from the state to cut the Christmas cake. Everybody enjoyed and celebrated the auspicious event. There were beautiful lights, stars, Christmas tree, colors and Santa Clause to share the greetings of Christmas and distribute gifts and candies all around in the hall. Dominican brothers sung beautiful Christmas carols which enhanced the spirit of Christmas.
Fr. Pascal Paulus OP, Vice Provincial of the Vice Province of Pakistan, delivered a short sermon on Christmas. Hafiz Nauman Hamid, Executive Director, World Council of Religions wished all the Christians and Muslims a very blessed and peaceful Christmas. He also congratulated Fr. James Channan and his team for the wonderful arrangements on this auspicious and grace-filled event. He said, “I know that Churches, missionary schools and Christian Colonies are under threat but we are with you with whole mind and heat. We are most willing to volunteer our services for the security of the Christian brothers and sisters on the birthday of Jesus Christ – the Prince of Peace. If needed, I offer and I am ready to bring 300 to 400 Muslims with me to protect your churches so that you can offer Christmas prayers in peace. Holy Quran gives us teaching of humanity not terrorism and anti-peace activities. I openly say that terrorists are not Muslims. I would like to request you all to be united against the agenda of the terrorists to fight back peacefully and in a non-violent way for the sake of humanity.”

Sohail Ahmad Raza Coordinator, Interfaith Relations, Minhaj-ul-Quran International, Mr. Patras Dewan, Director Global Healing, Pakistan, and Allama Zubair Abid, Chairman Peace and Harmony Network Pakistan all expressed their joy and appreciation to Fr. James Channan for the celebration. They also condemned the recent terrorist attack on Christians.

Mr. Faisal Ilyas Executive Secretary Peace Center Lahore called few children to play balloons’ game. Honorable guests came and distributed prizes and Christmas gifts to all the children. Santa Claus distributed candies and gifts to the attendees as well. There were joys and smiles everywhere. Children and their parents enjoyed and celebrated Christmas with great excitement and fun. All the audience and honorable guests appreciated the gifting segment.

Fr. James Channan thanked all the honorable guests from different religions, women and children for the beautiful participation and spiritually uplifting and very impressive celebration of Christmas. He said that we must act upon the teachings of Jesus Christ who said pray for your enemies and do not take revenge. Be the peace makers, light of the world and salt of the earth. Christmas reminds us of the great love of God for us in the form of Jesus Christ. He has given us the message of love, harmony, forgiveness and reconciliation. Let us share this joy with others, especially the poor and deserving people. Terrorists are trying to destroy the people who are working for peaceful atmosphere but we are the light of the world to lighten the darker sides so we will fight with people who are spreading the hate and terror in the world.

He also expressed his deep appreciation for the entire staff of Peace Center and URI Pakistan who had made the grand celebration a success. He extended Christmas and New Year 2018 greetings to all. And prayed for richest blessing upon the whole world, especially Pakistan.

Fr. James Channan OP, Director Peace Center, Pakistan

Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum, Nova series 2 (2017)

Just before Christmas 2017, the Historical Institute published the latest volume of the journal Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum, Nova Series 2 (2017) as a Christmas present to the Order and to all who are interested in its rich history. It contains ten interesting articles, written by researchers – historians and theologians – from seven countries, which take a minute examination of the various topics of the Order’s history from the 13th to the 20th century:

Simon Tugwell OP (Oxford): Soundings in Exeter College Ms 15 and the Evolution of Vincent of Beauvais’s Speculum natural

Elias Füllenbach OP (Düsseldorf): Hunting Dogs? Dominican Mission to the Jews in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries

Jörg Oberste (Regensburg): Omnibus fuit ipse dilectus. Das Bild des Heiligen Dominikus und das Ketzerproblem in der Frühen Geschichte des Dominikanerordens

Giuseppe Gardoni (Volta Mantovana): Per l’epistolario di Osanna Andreasi: un’inedita lettera di fine Quattrocento

Rafael Ramis-Barceló – Pedro Ramis-Serra (Palma de Mallorca): Los rectores del Colegio de Santo Domingo y San Jorge de Tortosa (1534-1803)

Albert Cassaynes-Roig – Rafael Ramis-Barceló (Palma de Mallorca): Los grados en teología tomista en la Universidad Luliana y Literaria de Mallorca (1692-1820)

Augustin Laffay OP (Toulouse): Des dominicains français en Amérique de Sud (1850-1914) : Missions en Amérique hispanique et fondation brésilienne

Darren Dias OP (Toronto): Sanctifying Liberalism: The Canadian Dominican Province 1873-1960


Since 2017, the journal has been registered in the research database EBSCO.

The volume can be ordered at editorial@pust.it (Angelicum University Press). It costs EUR 45 in Italy, and EUR 55 outside Italy. The Dominican provinces, priories and institutions can avail for a 20% discount. The volume AFP NS 3 (2018) will have monographic character on the topic Dominicans and Civil Authority.

fr. Viliam Stefan Dóci OP, Historical Institute of the Order

A Christmas Letter from Iraq

“Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.”
Mark 1: 3
As we come this year to celebrate Christmas, we recall the nativity scene of 2014 in the Christian camp in Ankawa- Iraq, which was a tent among the tents of the displaced people who fled ISIS. Now, three years later, many of the displaced people returned home in the Plain of Nineveh, and celebrating Christmas. It has been months since people returned, and from the very beginning, they started removing the remains of war, rebuilding their houses, cleaning churches, and washing streets. They have been doing that with such enthusiasm to “Prepare the way for the Lord, and make straight paths for him.”

Although the situation is still unsettled, and the towns in the Plain of Nineveh are still disputed lands, people are still hoping that the condition of the country might improve. There is an obvious lack of leadership; a number of churches are still burned and destroyed; many houses are still waiting to be restored. However, there are so many people of good will who are able to look through destruction and see the signs of God’s presence. So, they encourage, they give hand, they inspire, they dare to hope, and by that they “Prepare the way for the Lord, and make straight paths for him.”

Events of the past three years of displacement, migration, loss, humiliation and poverty, had tremendous effect on us: mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. It was time when we felt that we were abruptly cut from the past, and had a very vague vision for the future. But now, after liberation, it is time to extend a bridge between what was experienced and what is hoped. That is why we need to “Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.”
As a community, realizing that exile could mean more than geographical displacement, we are trying to help people restore their confidence in God, in the Church and in themselves. Many of our sisters are back in the Plain of Nineveh. We have four communities in Telusquf and in Qaraqosh, where sisters are involved in pastoral and educational ministry. Two kindergarten and one school have been open in the Plain of Nineveh. We trust that our presence among our people is meaningful for us and for them, as well. Our unity at this time of our history is needed more than any other time. With this we all may

"Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him."

We are grateful to each one of you who have been helping us and our people to prepare the way for the Lord. Have a very blessed and joyous Christmas.
Dominican Sister of Catherine of Siena – Iraq.
Christmas Eve 2017

**Father Charles Dahm: Dominican, Pastor, Organizer, Change Agent**

Father Charles Dahm is a dyed-in-the-wool activist, following in the footsteps of old-school, firebrand Catholic priests. He has never shied away from an opportunity to challenge authority or hesitated to speak his mind. But he says it is always in service of a single goal: bringing about a more just and peaceful world for all, in other words, putting his faith into action.

“I take a principle from Thomas Aquinas that every act is a political act. Even if you don’t do anything, that’s a political act,” he said from his office on South Ashland Avenue in Chicago’s Pilsen neighborhood, surrounded by images of Cesar Chavez, Oscar Romero, and Rudy Lozano. Since 1986, he has served as pastor or associate pastor of St. Pius V Church, across the street.

“You can stand by and watch things happen, or you can try to make things better,” he said. He says he’s been arrested during political demonstrations more times than he can count for acts of civil disobedience, such as occupying a senator’s office, blocking doorways in the Federal Building in downtown Chicago, and dyeing the Chicago River red to draw attention to the bloodshed in El Salvador in the ’80s. Back then, he was a key Midwest organizer for the sanctuary movement and helped shuttle hundreds of Central American refugees through a national underground railroad of sorts to safe havens in the U.S.

And then there was that book…

When Dahm arrived in Chicago as a young priest in the summer of 1973, he found an archdiocese that he says was marred by deep divisions and run by a man who had centralized power.

His began his career as an instigator at a young age in suburban Elmhurst, where he grew up. But he was always devout. Even as a young boy, his parents never had to wake him up to attend mass. In fact, more often than not, it was his idea to go – even during the week.

Father Chuck entered the Dominican Order (in the Central Province of St Albert the Great) at the age of twenty. He had to break off a relationship with his high school sweetheart to pursue the priesthood.

“I had to say goodbye,” he said. “It was rough, very rough.”

He spent his early years as a Dominican working with university students in the Bolivian city of Cochabamba and later in La Paz, the capital city. He chose the assignment. It was an electrifying time to be working with young idealists in Latin America, he says. In Cuba, Fidel Castro had just taken power and was implementing broad social reforms. Meanwhile, in Bolivia, activists were fighting to restore the gains of that country’s short-lived, 1952 leftist revolution.

 “[The Dominicans] were doing social ministry stuff, social justice stuff. And not just…baptizing people and so forth,” he said. “So that really interested me.”
He worked with students. “We had small groups that met, studied, prayed, and we had talks and a lot of political organizing,” explains Dahm. “And we had parties, lots of parties.”

In 1970, a small cadre of Bolivian students began to suspect that the Dominicans were agents of the U.S. government and that Dahm himself was a CIA agent, so the Dominicans called him back to the U.S.

Wanting to develop the tools to better analyze and influence systems of oppression and power, he enrolled in the political science program at the University of Wisconsin in Madison and began work towards his doctorate. He moved to Chicago in 1973, where he found the subject for his dissertation, which eventually became his book on the power dynamics in the Chicago Archdiocese.

That same year, he was elected to be the promoter of justice and peace for his Dominican province. Rather than work alone, he rallied clergy and women religious from throughout the Chicago area and co-founded the 8th Day Center for Justice. Named after St. Augustine’s belief that humanity is in the “everlasting eighth day” of creation, in which the role of believers is to help usher the world into its intended peaceful and just state, the center worked internationally as well as at home in the United States. They challenged apartheid in South Africa, fought to reduce the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the U.S., and held corporations accountable for union busting, strip mining, discriminatory labor practices, and other human rights violations around the globe.

Father Dahm also became a regional point person for the national sanctuary movement, which at that time was helping thousands of Central American refugees flee violence in Guatemala and El Salvador. He co-founded the Chicago Religious Task Force on Central America, which became the national headquarters for the movement and eventually organized 423 different sanctuary hubs across the United States. His radical politics, combined with his criticism of church hierarchy, earned him a reputation in the Chicago Archdiocese.

“Oh, no, I was not popular,” he said. “I’m still not popular with bishops.” But he spoke Spanish. So after twelve years of full-time, political activism, his Provincial moved to assign him a parish. And so, Father Dahm moved to Pilsen and became pastor at St. Pius V.

The Pilsen that Dahm entered in 1986 was very different than the one that exists today. Neighborhood gangs were splintering and battling for territory. Homes were dilapidated and overcrowded, the rental market dominated by slumlords. City services like garbage pick-up and street sweeping were sparse and inconsistent. “The place was filthy,” Dahm recalls.

Meanwhile, Dahm says he found a prevailing attitude of resignation at St. Pius V. Parishioners tended to hold traditional Catholic beliefs, such as believing that suffering in life is a virtue.

“You have to understand that the Mexican Catholic Church was way behind the Catholic Church in the United States in terms of understanding some progressive concepts,” Dahm explains. “It was a way of getting people, especially the poor, to be resigned and passive, to tell them ‘Don’t worry about sufferings. In fact, it’s going to get you a higher place in Heaven.’”

As pastor of St. Pius V, he got to work challenging these ideas and promoting an incarnational theology, one which sees Jesus’s time on Earth as an affirmation of human dignity and which calls upon believers to cooperate with the Holy Spirit to usher in the kingdom of God on Earth.

That, he says, requires active engagement.

“God wants us to live in peace and in love,” Dahm explains. “He wants us to grow and use our talents, not only for ourselves, but for others…to build the society which itself is permeated by the kingdom of God, [which is] present to the extent that there is justice, peace, and love. How do you do that? We have to get our children to not be killing each other on the streets, for one. And not being individualists but rather be servants of others.”
A New Human Rights Campaign

This December the UN is preparing for the 70th Anniversary of the inception of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by means of a yearlong campaign. The Universal Declaration is an internationally recognized document that states the fundamental freedoms that all human beings are entitled to regardless of their race, class, sex, religion, language, nationality, or political affiliation. The campaign, entitled #STANDUP4HUMANRIGHTS, seeks to remind people of these fundamental freedoms and to remind the international community of their commitments towards the protection of these rights. The campaign has three main objectives; promote, engage, and reflect. The goal is to promote the understanding of the Universal Declaration, engage a broad global audience, and reflect on the ways we can all stand up against social injustices (1). Individuals can participate in this campaign by sharing videos of themselves reciting an article of the Declaration in their own native language or they can share stories on how they stood up for someone’s rights. These videos or stories must be shared on social media in which they must end their post with hashtag (#) “STANDUP4HUMANRIGHTS” so that it can be tracked and shared across a wide variety of networks in order to reach as many people as possible.

This campaign was mentioned at both the DPI (Department of Public Information) NGO Briefing and the Human Rights Day Special Event held at the UN headquarters on December 11th. At the event, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres stated that this was not just a celebratory occasion; rather it was a reminder of our international commitment to protect and honor the rights of others. For all of the good the UN does there are significant shortcomings and failures. Most notably the failure to hold countries accountable for war crimes committed against their peoples. Navi Pillay, the former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, also spoke at the event about what she believed were the main issues surrounding the protection of human rights. Pillay called out the hypocrisy of member states, specifically the Security Council, that place their own self-interest above the needs of the international community. She spoke about the need for more collaboration between civil society groups and the UN to work towards human rights based initiatives. Both parties have a lot to learn from one another as well as produce meaningful and impactful work that can benefit many marginalized groups. Lastly, Pillay spoke about the dangers of anti-human rights rhetoric by political leaders, which is something we see here in the U.S. by our own president and his administration.

The #StandUp4HumanRights campaign seeks to address these issues mentioned in a way that it more accessible to people. Social media campaigns not only provide a platform for people affected by injustices in a way that makes audiences acknowledge and validate their struggles but also give rise to a need to demand change in our society. For example, most recently, how the #MeToo campaign spread from a social movement online into institutional change across all sectors in the real world.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is just as relevant now as it was 70 years ago. #StandUp4HumanRights is a perfect way to reach a new generation. More and more young people depend on social media to inform them on global issues. The UN recognizes the benefits of embracing these new means of communication and hopes to generate more discussions about human rights violations happening on a daily bases. I believe the power lies in the people to demand change and I believe it is up to the younger generations, including my own, to take back our narrative and create an environment that is a product of our honest beliefs. Read more about the UN’s #StandUp4HumanRights campaign below and sign the pledge to stand up for the rights of all peoples.

By Viviana Garcia-Blanco, Dominican Volunteer
Timothy Radcliffe: “Believing even in the time of fundamentalism”

A translation of the interview with Fr Timothy Radcliffe OP by the Italian TV2000

Conversation between Monica Mondo, Italian journalist, and the former Master of the Order, now consultor of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace

Theologian, Dominican, biblical scholar, lecturer at Oxford, consultor of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, Father Timothy Radcliffe has the smile of Friar Tuck, Robin Hood’s friend, and sadly is not the uncle of Daniel Radcliffe, the actor who plays Harry Potter – although, as he explains, he greatly enjoys the Harry Potter books and films: it would be a neat trick and a good way to attract young people. And since Christianity is spread by contagion, perhaps he could conceal his true identity and say that yes, he is Harry Potter’s uncle. (Well, I’d certainly sell a lot more books that way!”

“Believing in a time of uncertainty” is the subtitle of the French edition of your book.

Yes, I think that always in a time of uncertainty you have to have faith because being a Christian, being a believer doesn’t mean tat you have all the answers, but that you’re always seeking, you’re always at the start of your investigation. And in that sense being a Christian means being on an adventure where you always need the help of your friends, of all the people who’re with you.

You say that we’re living “in the time of fundamentalism, which is a feature of modernity”. In what sense?

It existed earlier, and indeed the Dominicans were regarded as masters of rigour. “Domini canes”, people said.

There’s a distinction to be made between rigour and fundamentalism. Fundamentalism means that you can have all the answers in a single language. 19th-century fundamentalism was scientific, they thought that science could give you all the answers. Today what we have is economic fundamentalism and many people think that the market is the solution to every need. And then there’s religious fundamentalism. Fundamentalism arises when things are described too simplistically, and I think the way out is always to get to grips with whoever thinks differently, whereas fundamentalists are unable to talk to those who think differently from them. Rigour is quite different. Rigour means doing all you can to understand the great questions: deep analysis is very different from fundamentalism.

“Loving people”, you write, means finding the right combination of offering space and self-giving”. You mean too much or too little freedom is harmful?

If you’re talking to someone you always have to try to give them space, so that they can show themselves to the other, listen to how they talk, who they really are. Every time you talk to someone you’re always surprised, and you have to give them space to surprise you: that’s the heart of every good, correct conversation. In any friendship you give the person in front of you the chance to be different from what you thought at first and not to conform to your initial idea of that person.

How can one have hope?

On the basis of my own experience, I think if you want to hope you have to turn to people who seem not to have hope, and together you will learn to hope. Remember, there was a terrible hurricane this September in Houston: I went there to visit all the devastated areas. People told me that at first they were very angry, but what struck me was their courage, and also their joy at being alive. And this helped me to hope too. I’m going to Baghdad to spend some time with brethren and sisters, and I can say that if you want to have hope you really have to go to Baghdad, because you meet people whose life is truly very hard, beyond our imagination. And you see, you come across a hope you didn’t think could even exist.

Is there no hope without forgiveness of sins?

The opposite of happiness is not sadness but having a hard heart that no longer feels. When you are in contact with people who suffer it opens your heart, and if your heart is wide open you can be happy again. What’s
most important if you’re to be happy is escaping from your own small worries. When you experience other people’s grief, you stop thinking about yourself and start sharing what they are going through, and so you’ll have great happiness, you’ll have a soul. In the book of Ezekiel it’s written: “I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh”, so a heart capable of feeling, of having feelings again.

Quoting from your book again: “Hope is not the conviction that something will go right, but the certainty that something makes sense”.

When we suffer we sometimes think our lives have no meaning any longer, and we wonder why this suffering, what’s the point of it. But that’s a waste of time! Our hope is that in the end we’ll see that our lives have been a pathway, a journey towards the fullness of love, of understanding. And so we travel in order to try to understand who we are, to see small indications that show us where we’re going. We have to be truthful, and when we arrive at the fullness of love and life, despite the trials we’ve gone through, then we’ll discover the meaning of it all. Now we only get a glimpse here and there, which shows us that we are made to love, to love completely. We will reach the fullness of love at the end of our journey and everything we have experienced, everything we’ve borne, will take on meaning.

You write that “Christianity makes demands that are frankly impossible”, that we can’t meet alone. So do we need the Church?

We need one another. Because you may be able to love in a way I’m not capable of, and vice versa. Unconditional love is impossible, it’s a gift that is given to each of us little by little, in time. The best thing about being human is that we’re called always to be something more, more than we can imagine, more than we can think of being. Tomorrow you’ll meet your brother, your sister, your son, your daughter, who’ll teach you far more and bring you into this fullness of love. I think that every time we love someone with real love, we realise the transcendent mystery of love that goes beyond anything we can imagine being able to receive.

“Moderernity accepts faith as long as it stays shut into the private sphere or has a decorative role, without invading the public space”. If it’s unimportant, then, limited to the sacristy.

And it can’t be like that! For instance, I think of Pope Francis, who at the moment is working on immediate human problems, and I think that Catholicism is always attracted by the dramas people are living through, here and now. Having faith doesn’t mean living in a small isolated world, staying in a corner, in safety, but coming to grips with reality. And that’s what the Pope does when he goes to visit the most difficult places in the world.

We often think that obedience means abandoning reason and liberty.

I love the origin of the term “obedience”, which comes from audiens, which means listen intently. For me being obedient towards my brother, as a Dominican, doesn’t mean stopping thinking, “I do as other people tell me”: no, I listen with my whole intelligence, with all my imagination. So true obedience is based on intelligence.

You stress that “Christianity exalts bodiliness, corporality”. We may say it’s more materialist than spiritual.

I think the essence of Christianity is that God became one of us, he became a person like us, he became body. And the gift of Christianity is when Jesus says “This is my body, I give it to you” – he doesn’t say my mind, my spirit and my soul. We must be happy to be bodily too, and that’s the case even when many people hate their bodies, they think they’re too thin or too fat or too short or too ugly. At that time we have to recognise that we can live in a body because we are spirit that lives in a body, and we must love this body. The heart of Christianity is the holiness of our bodies.

Prayer, too, for us Europeans, since the Reformation, has become a purely mental act. “Instead, we must pray with physical exuberance”.

Most Christians at one time prayed with their bodies, for instance St Dominic, the founder of my Order, had nine ways of praying with the body. Francis of Assisi too said that everything can be expressed with the body, but today we sit alone in our pews, like a bag of potatoes, we’re no longer capable of expressing the spontaneity of our faith! To pray well, we have to ask our African brothers and sisters to come and teach us how to pray with the body too.

Translated by Ruth Anne Henderson
A Pioneering Fraternity of Priests at the Angelicum

Ordinarily, diocesan priests who form part of the Dominican Family are received into the Priestly Fraternities of St. Dominic through a particular Province of the friars. This has always been the practice in the Order, until an exception recently came into existence with the admission of six diocesan priests in Rome, that is, not under a particular Province, but through a community that is directly under the jurisdiction of the Master of the Order.

On 8 December 2017, solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, at 6:30 in the evening, six priests, all currently doing their studies in different universities in Rome, began their novitiate formation with the rite of admission into the Dominican Fraternities: Fr. "Álvaro María" Álvaro Fernández Fidalgo (Diocese of Orense in Spain); Fr. "Raymund Maria" Maximilian J. Nightingale (Diocese of Kalamazoo in Michigan, USA); Fr. "Dominic Mary" Sean R. DeWitt (Diocese of Austin in Texas, USA); Fr. "John the Baptist Marie" Dominic James Buckley (Diocese of Orlando in Florida, USA); Fr. "Thomas Aquinas Maria" Jason William Borkenhagen (Diocese of Wichita in Kansas, USA); and Fr. "Pier Giorgio Maria" David Michael Fons (Diocese of Lansing in Michigan, USA).

The rite was held at the choir chapel of the Convent of Saints Dominic and Sixtus in Rome, to which the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (Angelicum) is attached. Fr. Dominic Holtz, OP, sub-prior of the convent, presided over the rite, with Fr. Miroslav Konštanc Adam, OP, the designated Religious Assistant of the fraternity, as celebrant. After the ritual, the priests joined the friars at the same venue for the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours, and later on at the convent refectory for dinner.

It was in 2016 when, upon the approval of the Master of the Order, fr. Bruno Cadoré, OP, initial talks took place between fr. Florentino Bolo Jr., OP, General Promoter of the priestly fraternities, and fr. Glenn Morris, OP, prior of the convent. Accordingly, secular priests were to be received into the fraternity under the convent's care on a provisional basis, that is, with the intention of eventually transferring to a local fraternity under a Province of the friars once they return to their respective dioceses after their studies in Rome. The transfer would then proceed according to which Province exercises responsibility over the territory of the priest's particular church.

The first attempt to organize such group took place in November 2016 at the Angelicum, but a number of unforeseen circumstances came in the way of its fruition. Another initiative came in the following year. Through the intervention of Sr. Catherine Droste, OP, some American priests came into contact with the Order, thus leading to an orientation meeting on 4 November 2017 at the Casa Santa Maria in Rome. This was followed by a formal inaugural assembly at the Angelicum on 16 November 2017, during which a total of seven diocesan priests gathered at the Sala dei Professori together with fr. Bolo, fr. Adam, and fr. Ezra Sullivan, OP, who stood as assistant to fr. Adam. With the newest addition to the priestly fraternities, the Order continues with joyful hope not only for strengthening this branch of the Order, but also for the fulfilment of its mission by helping build the local church.

fr. Florentino Bolo Jr., OP

History of The Dominican Brothers Now Available

Recent general chapters asked the Master of the Order to arrange for the history of the cooperator brothers to be researched and written up. Brother Bruno asked brother Augustine Thompson to undertake this task. A brother of the province of the Most Holy Name in the USA, brother Augustine is a professional historian. The fruit of his research has just been published as a book by New Priory Press, the publishing house of the province of Saint Albert the Great in the USA.
It is the first full history of the cooperator brothers and makes for very interesting and inspiring reading. Entitled Dominican Brothers: Conversi, Lay, and Cooperator Friars, copies can be purchased directly from New Priory Press and from Amazon.

For now the book is only available in English but it is hoped that translations into other languages of the Order will be published in the coming months.

The Order is greatly indebted to brother Augustine for carrying out this task so efficiently and so professionally. It is a task he undertook with admiration for the specific contribution of so many brothers to the holiness and preaching of the Order. Dominican Brothers: Conversi, Lay, and Cooperator Friars will be much appreciated across the Order. It will be of great help not only to vocations promoters and masters of formation but will surely become a standard reference work for anybody interested in Dominican life, mission and spirituality.

Vivian Boland OP, Socius for fraternal life and formation

Dominicana Records proudly presents The Hillbilly Thomists! After four albums of sacred choral music, the Dominican brothers have tuned their banjos and turned their attention to Americana folk and bluegrass. Their hope: to spread the joy of the gospel through the joy of music. The album largely revives old songs from the American folk tradition, with a few original arrangements and compositions from the friars as well. Familiar tracks include “Leaning on the Everlasting Arms,” “What Wondrous Love Is This,” and a new take on “Amazing Grace.”

Visit here to purchase a physical CD or to digitally download the album (also available on iTunes). Proceeds support the Dominican brothers studying in Washington, D.C.

Preview the album
What is a hillbilly Thomist? In 1955, the southern author Flannery O’Connor said of herself, “Everybody who has read Wise Blood thinks I’m a hillbilly nihilist, whereas... I’m a hillbilly Thomist.” She said that her fiction was concerned with the ways grace is at work among people who do not have access to the sacraments. The Thomist (one who follows the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas) believes that the invisible grace of God can be at work in visible things, just as the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, in the person of Christ.

Traditional bluegrass music is playful and energetic; along with American folk music, it often contains explicitly theological themes: belief in Christ, the goodness of life, the pain of unrequited love, the finiteness of death, and hope in eternal life. It is a traditional southern form of testimony to the presence of grace in the human heart. So when it is played by Dominicans who study Thomas Aquinas, there is no doubt that what comes about as a result is Hillbilly Thomism.

In this album, we will present some old bluegrass classics, some great folk standards, and a dash of Scotch-Irish instrumental music. We hope you like it, and find it a source of simple joy.

By Dominicana Records on December 12, 2017

A Presentation on the Servant of God, f. Marie-Joseph Lagrange, op

On Monday, the 27th of November 2017, the General Postulation of the Order of Preachers (fr. Gianni Festa, General Postulator; fr. Llewellyn Muscat, Secretary of the Postulation) invited the Dominican family, religious from other orders and the general public to the international round table organised at the Pontificia Università San Tommaso d’Aquino (PUST), on the occasion of the new edition of fr. Lagrange’s work The Gospel of Jesus Christ, Artège Lethielleux, Perpignan, 2017 (foreword by p. Jean-Michel Poffet, director of...
emertitus of the École Biblique et archéologique française de Jérusalem (EBAF); presentation by p. Manuel Rivero, president of the Association des amis du père Lagrange).

From 3.30 pm to 18.00 pm, the Aula minor of the University welcomed the organizers’ and four scholars’ interventions, which examined multiple aspects of the Servant of God’s life and work as a fine scholar and the founder, in 1890, of the École Biblique de Jérusalem.

The contributors were greeted by two representants of the Order of Preachers in Rome - the Master of the Order, fr. Bruno Cadoré; the General Postulator, fr. Gianni Festa- and by the Rector of the PUST, fr. Michel Paluch op.

The secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Mons. Giacomo Morandi, opened the session with an overview on “The figure of fr. Marie-Joseph Lagrange and his calling between biblical-theological studies and sanctity”. Mons. Morandi underlined fr. Lagrange’s qualities as “a scholar and as a profoundly ecclesial man, inside the Church’s connective tissue”, giving life to “a harmonious and accomplished synthesis of different parts”. The characteristic features of the believer, the authentically religious man, and the researcher were thus reunited in f. Lagrange “which belonged to Christ as a true son of Saint Dominic”, marked by an “overabundant heart” and an obedience which was “strong, lively”, unfailing.

Subsequently, prof. Maurice Gilbert sj (Pontificio Istituto Biblico, Rome) looked into “The exegete Lagrange’s evangelical virtues”. Prof. Gilbert emphasized, in particular, fr. Lagrange’s “double commitment”: for “the Church’s honour” and for “the greater good of souls”, never losing sight of the unity of Christians. Such a commitment was constantly renewed by love (for Truth; towards the Church, and the Pope; for the biblical texts, studied and meditated), in a spirit of obedience, and through prayer.

The director of the EBAF, F. Jean-Jacques Pérennès proposed a reflexion on “Fr. Marie-Joseph Lagrange’s legacy to the Ecole Biblique de Jerusalem today”. Lagrange’s love for Jerusalem left an everlasting mark on his life and work. In order to understand the sacred texts, fr. Lagrange applied himself to “understand the country and its complex history”. In this way, the Servant of God became acquainted with that country, so extensively explored that his profound knowledge of the land was unequalled. For fr. Lagrange, the “structuring process” of the École Biblique was a mission to accomplish for the sake of the Church; even so, his approach complied with the most rigorous scientific criteria. In his search after Truth, fr. Lagrange adopted, then, “a theological perspective”, whilst gathering a team of specialists of the first rank; he privileged the dialogue between different domains and methods, so as to encourage the “progressive autonomy of knowledge”. The quality of fr. Lagrange’s works was so outstanding that they soon attracted the attention of students and scholars alike, even non-christian ones, from abroad. Fr. Lagrange’s work is still relevant and helps today’s students and scholars to reflect on the actual state of research concerning, in particular, the comprehension of the Sacred Scripture’s literality.

F. Augustin Laffay (Institut Historique Dominicain, Toulouse) closed the session with an intervention on “Fr. Marie-Joseph Lagrange: a spiritual itinerary”. As a historian, f. Laffay proposed an intimate history of the Servant of God, made of “founding figures”, encounter and places that forged his spiritual identity. In primis, since his youngest age, Marie-Joseph “was close to the Holy Virgin and many Saints”, and his fervour is properly fuelled in the bosom of his own family, whose faith is great. Jean-Marie Vianney, the curé of Ars, is another significant figure in fr. Lagrange’s intimate history, inviting him to undertake a pilgrimage, studded with prayers of thanksgiving, in situ. Later on, once in the seminary of Saint-Sulpice, the young Lagrange “discovered a passionate love for the Word of God”. Fr. Lagrange development was filled with several other figures (for ex., Saint Mary Madeleine, Saint Therese of Avila), and places (the Royal monastery of Saint-Maximin-la-Sainte-Baume), also decisive. Thanks to the influence of f. Cormier, another figure of crucial importance, the young Lagrange learnt the “Charity of God”, and to love Saint Dominic.

This last contribution announced the inauguration of a historical and documentary exhibit on the same subject, organized by the Institut Historique Dominicain in addition to the round table: “Fr. Marie-Joseph Lagrange. His spiritual itinerary through documents and photographs”, a precious and touching collection including, among other things, several handwritten documents, some relics and fr. Lagrange’s pocket watch.
A series of panels with photos and texts in English on “Father Marie-Joseph Lagrange (1855-1938)” is also on display until Christmas at the Pontificia Università, in the corridor next to the Aula minor. Six panels corresponding to six significant stages of the Servant of God’s life: “Inheriting the Faith”, “Following Christ”, “Service of the Word”, “The Holy Land”, “The Biblical School”, “Monstra te esse Matrem”.

Elisabetta Deriu, External collaborator of the General Postulation of the Order of Preachers

**Allez allez petites!: Dominican Sisters open a new mission in Shendam, Northern Nigeria**

As the Congregation of the Dominican Sisters of St Catherine of Siena, Rome joyfully celebrates the 130 years anniversary of the death of Our dear Mother Gerine, the Delegation of Nigeria celebrates with series of memorable events which includes the opening of a New Mission in Shendam, Plateau State, Northern Nigeria.

The first three sisters for this mission are: Srs. M. Bernadette Urioma Duru, Margaret Hussain and Paulina Chioma Ogbonnay. They heard the voice of our humble and audacious mother telling them tenderly and confidently “Allez Allez Petites” and they accepted this invitation with so much joy and trust.

The Community was officially placed under the protection of Our Holy Fathers St. Dominic and St. Francis. The three sisters and the Delegate, Sr. MaryPia Adesanya touched their feet on the “Mission Land” on the 20th of November, 2017.

For the official take off of the community, the delegate read the various letters: Erection of the community, Figlia Diletta of each sister and finally that of the Vicar Prioress of the new community, Sr. M. Bernadette Urioma Duru. Praise the Lord, Alleluia!!! What marvels the Lord has done for us, indeed we are glad!

We are very grateful to all those who supported us with their prayers, good will messages, phone calls and so on. We truly felt your love, support and encouragement. Please let us intensify our prayers for this new born baby. May the spirit of our dear Mother Gerine continue to guide us in our mission.

Our Lady Seat of Wisdom, Pray for us.
Holy Fathers St. Dominic and St. Francis, Pray for us.
St. Catherine of Siena and Mother Gerine, Pray for us
Nigerian Delegation of the Dominican Sisters of St Catherine of Siena, Rome

**Frei Henri, champion of justice for Brazil’s rural poor**

Obituary of French Dominican priest Fr Henri Burin des Roziers, defender of landless workers in Pará

A chapter in international solidarity with Brazil’s embattled rural poor closed on Sunday 26 November with the death of Dominican priest and lawyer, Henri des Roziers. Henri had worked in Brazil since 1978, using his skills as a lawyer to defend rural workers’ unions and to bring to justice the landowners who ordered the killing of so many of their leaders.

The tributes paid to Henri at his funeral in Paris on 1 December put his commitment into a broader context. Born into what the French call a family of the haute-bourgeoisie, Henri showed very early that he wanted to
follow a different path by visiting poor families in Paris slums, an example of what was later called the ‘option for the poor’.

He studied philosophy and law at the Sorbonne and later in Cambridge. In Cambridge, he met a French Dominican theologian, Yves Congar, who had been banned from speaking by the Vatican and was in a kind of exile in Britain. Congar’s influence made Henri decide that the Dominican order would enable him to develop his Christian commitment to justice; he became a Dominican and was ordained priest in 1963. His first post was as a chaplain to students at the Centre Saint-Yves in Paris, the only student centre that did not close during the student revolts of the 1960s.

He later became a priest worker, a lorry-driver and a worker in a chemical factory in Besançon. Later, in Annecy, he had a job inspecting and closing the squalid accommodation to which North African migrants were condemned, using his legal skills to defend them.

Defending rural workers in Pará

His contact with Brazil came through Dominicans opposed to the military regime, among them fellow Frei Tito de Alencar, who was given refuge in France after being tortured in Brazilian prisons. Henri began work with the Pastoral Land Commission, defending the land rights of rural workers. Frei Henri, as he was always known in Brazil, got his French legal qualifications recognised in Brazil and became a member of the Brazilian Bar Association, the OAB. In 1991, after the murder of union leader Expedito Ribeiro de Souza, he moved to Rio Maria, in the south of the state of Pará, the epicentre of landowner violence against rural workers. It was in this region that he was to spend the rest of his time in Brazil, later moving to Xinguara.

Henri’s success in prosecuting the so-called mandantes intensified the loathing in which he was held by the landowners, and a reward of R$100,000 (£27,000) was offered for his murder. Perhaps the only thing that saved him from the fate of Sister Dorothy Strang was being forced to accept body-guards from the federal police, ‘or be expelled from Brazil’, he said later.

Denouncing slavery

The other cause in which Henri was successful was the exposure of slave labour, the system by which unemployed workers, often from the North-East of Brazil, end up in ranches in the Amazon, being charged for their food and clothing and prevented by force from leaving. Thanks to the pressure of human rights groups including the Pastoral Land Commission, in 1995 a federal task force was created to seek out situations of slave labour, and since then 50,000 people have been freed from slavery. At Henri’s funeral the president of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, Roberto Caldas, declared that part of Henri’s legacy was the Court’s declaration in December 2016 that slave labour is a crime against humanity.

Henri was forced to return to France for health reasons in 2013. He continued to follow events in Brazil, reportedly commenting on the situation under President Michel Temer: ‘Everything has to be started again’. As if in confirmation of this, the Pastoral Land Commission reports that 61 people linked to the land rights movement were murdered in 2016. Nevertheless the patient work for justice continues: on 30 November a retired police officer was convicted of ordering the killing of missionary Vicente Cañas in 1987. Cañas had worked with the Enawenê Nawê indigenous people.

The coordinator of the Pastoral Land Commission, Jeane Bellini, described Frei Henri’s legacy in these terms: ‘His attitude, at once pedagogical and prophetic, but also discreet, encouraged and motivated women and men to dedicate themselves to giving legal support to families and communities, and to pursue carefully and competently cases involving land rights and slave labour.’ Those of us who met him will also remember his simplicity, his passion, the French accent in his Portuguese that he never lost, and his marvellous smile.
The Dominican Mission in the Philippines

“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” (Matthew 28:19)

The Mission of the Roman Catholic Church is founded upon Jesus’ command to his followers to spread the faith across the world. The Confirmation of the Order of Preachers on December 22, 1216 reinforced such mission “...to propagate the Catholic faith, preaching the name of our Lord Jesus Christ throughout the world” (MOPH XXV, p.144) for the Order founded by St. Dominic “is known from the beginning to have been instituted especially for preaching and the salvation of souls” (Prologue to the Primitive Constitution). The idea of Mission – being sent to share the fruit of God’s love – resonates in the heart of the Dominican vocation. Dominic sent out the early Friars from quiet centers of study, prayer, and community life to the frontiers, where light ended and darkness began. They went as lights shining in that darkness and as voices shouting in that wilderness. And where that light found welcome and those words found hearing, behold! There was life: the life of Him who proclaimed Himself the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Prelude to the Mission in the East

The evangelization of the Philippines and the birth of Christianity in the Orient must be understood within the general historical context of the evangelization of the Americas during the sixteenth century. A Dominican named Domingo de Salazar heeded the call to be a herald of the Good News in the New World and labored 23 years of mission in Mexico and Florida. In 1579, he was appointed as the first bishop of the ecclesiastical see of the Philippines, the remotest Spanish Colony in the East. The proximity of the Philippines to China became his motivation in fulfilling his dream of opening the portal to China, the Grand Cathay of Marco Polo.

In 1580, Bishop Salazar had left Spain with eighteen Dominicans to sow the seeds of faith and establish the Dominican Order in the Orient. However, the perilous voyage to Mexico across the Atlantic and soon after, resulted in human casualties and most of them perished. From Mexico City, already on his way to Acapulco and Manila, Bishop Salazar sent Juan Crisostomo as his representative to Spain and Rome to ask King Philip II (1556-1598), the Master-General Pablo Constable de Ferrara (1580-1582), and Pope Gregory XIII (1572-1585) to send a large Dominican mission to the East. Bishop Salazar left Acapulco in March 1581 with Cristobal de Salvaterra who served as his personal secretary, and joined the pioneer Jesuit missionary group to the Philippines.

Inspite of great difficulties, Crisostomo gathered a mission of forty Dominicans which left Cadiz, Spain on July 17, 1586. Some died during the crossing to Mexico, others soon after, but the majority changed their plans and stayed in Mexico City when they learned from the Jesuit Alonso Sanchez, who sailed from the Philippines in June 1586, that China was impervious to external influence and it was useless to go there peacefully. It has been their dream to evangelize China and the news dissuaded most of them to go further.

Those who decided to continue became members of the new missionary Province of the Holy Rosary. They sailed from Acapulco in two separate groups. Three of them in a small boat sailed to Macau while fifteen Dominicans left Acapulco for Manila on April 18, 1587.

The Advent of the Dominican Mission in the Philippines

The fifteen Dominicans composed of thirteen priests and two lay brothers arrived in Cavite on July 21, 1587, the eve of the feast of St. Mary Magdalene, the apostola apostolorum and patroness of the Order. They reached Manila on foot on July 25, feast of St. James the Apostle, patron of Spain. Bishop Domingo de Salazar (1512-1594), Governor-General Santiago de Vera (1584-1590) and the rest of the people joyfully welcomed them. They were the heralds of the Gospel in the East.
For a few months, the Dominicans were lodged as guests in a Franciscan convent until they can already transfer to their own convent. In 1588, they completed building a wooden church and convent in a marshy and mosquito-infested place and was named Santo Domingo in honor of their holy father St. Dominic of Guzman. As a general rule, the members of the Province of the Holy Rosary dedicated the first house to their founder whenever they start a new mission.

After the founding of their motherhouse, the Dominicans went directly to their mission posts. At that time, the only religious in the islands were the Augustinians, the Franciscans and the Jesuits. Four went to Bataan; six left for Pangasinan; and the rest remained in Manila of which two were engaged in the ministry to the Chinese.

Bataan was sparsely populated and the groups of natives were scattered in the mountains. Sometimes, the missionaries rode small rowboats from one village to another, often 30 kms apart; but often times they were forced to travel on foot on flooded or muddy terrain. They depended on the natives’ generosity for their subsistence. Slowly, they convinced them to live together and thus the towns of Santo Domingo in Abucay, Orani, Samal, Balanga, Orion and Hermosa were created. In the course of time, the process of Christianization was accelerated.

In Pangasinan, the towns of Santo Domingo of Binalatongan (now San Carlos City), Calasiao, Mangaldan and Manaoag became focal points from which the missionary activities of the Dominicans spread to the rest of Province including Northern Tarlac. The natives except those in the coastal town of Lingayen, opposed any attempt of evangelization. This hostility could be due to the harsh collection of tribute by the Spanish government since 1574 and the natives’ faithfulness to their supreme deity and reverence to their priests and priestesses.

Furthermore, there were some revolts that hindered the process of Christian growth like the uprising of Andres Malong in 1662 and the revolt of Juan de la Cruz Palaris in 1762 during the British occupation of Manila.

The Dominicans labored strenuously to persuade the people to lay down their arms. Bishop Salazar begged the Dominicans to abandon their Pangasinan mission, but they decided to stay at all costs. It was only when they converted some influential natives that their missionary activity took a more positive turn. By 1750, they had a total of eighteen mission stations.

In Manila, Santo Domingo convent, the motherhouse, served as the center of their evangelizing activities. They also built the San Gabriel Hospital for the Chinese and took care of their pastoral needs in Binondo and in Parian. In the field of education, they had established the University of Santo Tomas in 1611 and founded the Colegio de San Juan de Letran in 1620. Both still exists at present, witnessing to the educational apostolate which the Dominicans have carried out for centuries.

In 1596, they were given the whole Cagayan Valley which was inhabited by savage tribes. Evangelization was hard and costly both in labors and lives. The main center was Santo Domingo in Lallo. The provinces of Isabela and Nueva Vizcaya were much more difficult to evangelize than Cagayan. However, by the middle of the eighteenth century, these provinces became Christian.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, they made great effort to evangelize the Mountain Province as well with their mission among the Mandayas or Apayaos. They created small towns and built some churches. All faded away in the course of time. However, they opened a new mission in the Mountain Province towards the middle of the nineteenth century.

In addition to their missions in Luzon, they also took charge of the mission in the Batanes and Babuyanes in the northernmost part of the Philippines. Fr. Mateo Gonzales, OP first landed in Innajbu in 1682 to survey the prospects of the evangelization of Batanes. There, he celebrated the first holy mass on Ivatan soil and the first baptism administered. Their missionary zeal crossed the Balintang Channel in the Babuyanes group of islands which today falls under the jurisdiction of the province of Cagayan.

Birth of the Dominican Province of the Philippines
The mission of the Spanish Dominicans became stable and systematic through the centuries as the Holy Rosary Province provided regular waves of missionaries. However, it was disrupted during the Philippine Revolution of 1896 when the Church in the Philippines became unstable. The Acts of the Provincial Chapter of the Holy Rosary Province in 1906 celebrated in Spain lamented the brutal murder of Fr. David Varas, a parish priest in Bataan. There were also several Dominicans who were held as prisoners and most of them survived their torment. The Dominicans also lost their mission territories, parishes and estates. Eventually, the Dominican mission continues amidst hostility.

The failed attempt to the Filipinization of Religious Orders from 1957 to 1958 by a group of Filipino religious preluded the establishment of the Dominican Province of the Philippines. They did not succeed mainly because of the lack of support from fellow Filipino religious and the unyielding position of their religious superiors.

Even before the establishment of the Philippine Province, the Batanes-Babuyanes region had been partially manned by Filipinos since 1960. Those who were assigned to these missions were Fr. Pedro Traquena in Batanes and Calayan missions (1960) and Fr. Amador Ambat in Batanes (1961). Fr. Benito Vargas has been the director of St. Batholomew Academy in Calayan from 1962 to 1966; Fr. Domingo Nacion took over in 1967, and Fr. Wilfredo de Leon, in 1968.

The Filipino Dominicans’ attempt at Filipinization was revived in 1969 but the spirit that animated them was not solely that of nationalism. As they always insisted, it was not separation that they wanted, nor the expulsion of all non-Filipino Dominicans, but a framework of cooperation and sharing of responsibilities, where missiological principles would find their concrete expression and fulfillment. The birth of an indigenous province could help the Spanish Dominicans undergo the transition from an implanter to an enabler.

After a series of preparatory steps, the Dominican Province of the Philippine was inaugurated on December 8, 1971. At the time of its establishment, there were 46 Filipino priests, 7 Spanish priests by reason of assignment, 32 professed clerical brothers and 15 professed cooperator brothers. The following convents and mission territory were given to the new province: Sto. Domingo Convent, Convent of San Juan de Letran and Letran College, Holy Rosary Convent in Manaog, Holy Rosary Convent in Jaro, Iloilo, Convent of St. Raymond of Peñafort and Aquinas University in Legazpi and Babuyanes islands of the Prelature Nullius of Batanes-Babuyanes. The University of Santo Tomas became subject of a special statute approved by the Master of the Order.

After the inauguration the following convents and houses were established: Convent of St. Albert the Great in Laguna (1977); Bahay Dominiko (1996); St. Dominic’s House in Sri Lanka (2001); Convent of San Lorenzo Ruiz and Companion Martyrs (2005); and Rumah Biara Santo Dominikus in Indonesia (2006). At present, the Province regularly sends friars to the missions in Calayan Island, Camiguin Island, General Santos City, Isabela and to the international frontiers of Sri Lanka and Indonesia. However, mission is not about geography; it is about the spirit. It is not about territory; it is about attitude. It is not about where a friar is sent; it is about his consciousness of himself as one being sent to some frontier, where the light of the Lord is absent or shines dimly.

By Rev Fr Louis R. Coronel, OP

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Collantes, Domingo, OP, Historia de la Provincia del Santisimo Rosario de Filipinas, Tunkin, y Formosa, Cuarta Parte, 1700-1765, Manila: Impr. De Universidad de Sto. Tomas, 1783.
Ferrando, Juan and Fonseca, Joaquín, Historia de los Padres Dominicos en Filipinas y en sus misiones de Japón,, China, Tung-king y Formosa, 6 vols., Madrid, 1870.
Why do we need Dominican Commissions and Promoters of Justice and Peace?

For a long time, Justice and Peace has been a priority of the Dominican Order. Yet, despite this, mention of justice and peace so often evokes ambiguous reactions and even resistance! Such reactions arise from a variety of negative attributes regarded as alien to Christian faith that people have come to associate with the discourse about Justice and Peace. For example: people in many places, and especially in Asia and Africa, often immediately associate it with political activism and even violence; or especially in Western Europe and Latin America, it is often associated with the 1960s liberal generation that many in the younger generation today reject; or especially in Eastern Europe, it is associated with the discourse of Communism; or in some places in North America, it is associated with a liberal pro-abortion agenda!

These negative associations have led many to call for a new name for the Church structures advocating for justice and peace. However, while we cannot refute the experience of people which has led to these negative associations, we have to guard ourselves against “throwing out the baby with the bath water”? For those of us who pray using the breviary every day, there is hardly a day that passes without the prayers of intercession including a prayer for justice and peace. If we change the name, what is to become of such prayers? So the challenge is to recover the evangelical discourse about justice and peace and to uncover the fullness of its meaning!

Our starting point therefore is to understand where the discourse about Justice and Peace fits into our Christian and Dominican vocation.

The Origins of Justice and Peace Discourse and Structures

The roots of this discourse lie in the reflections and documents of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). One of the most important documents emerging, the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Gaudium et Spes, emphasised that “The Church is in the World for the transformation of the world.” (Gaudium et Spes, 1965: §40). This was a radical statement after millennia of the Church being identified with political power (enabled by the Roman Emperor Constantine in the fourth century). This, in turn, was followed by the Church turning in on itself in opposition to the world (after its persecution during the French Revolution at the end of the eighteenth century).

Soon after the Council, in 1967, Pope Paul VI established the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace to remind the Church that work for justice and peace is fundamental to evangelisation.

All Bishops’ Conferences were instructed to establish a Justice and Peace Commission at Conference level, and all bishops were asked to establish Justice and Peace Commissions in their dioceses and in each parish. Many religious congregations too decided to establish Justice and Peace Commissions for themselves.

Then, in 1971, the Synod of Bishops on “Justice in the World” asserted that “Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world …(are) a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel”. The centrality of work for justice for evangelisation continued to be stressed in the encyclicals or exhortations of all the recent popes. For example:

Pope John Paul II: Laborem Exercens; Sollicitudo Rei Socialis; Centesimus Annus.
Pope Benedict XVI: Deus Caritas Est; Caritas in Veritate.
Pope Francis: Evangelii Gaudium; Laudato Si.

This insistence on the centrality of justice and peace for evangelisation is rooted in Luke’s account of Jesus’ primary mission, which he proclaimed in the synagogue in Nazareth: “He has sent me
- To bring good news to the poor,
- To proclaim freedom to captives
- And to the blind new sight,
- To set the oppressed free,
- To proclaim the Lord’s year of favour” (Luke 4:18).

Thus Jesus came to “bring Good News”, which is the direct translation of “Evangelisation”. This good news, when unpacked, consists of:
- Economic Justice for the poor: The poor are deprived people who will only find full satisfaction (good news) when they sense that there is a fair distribution of wealth.
- Forgiveness and mercy for offenders (captives, prisoners, sinners,…).
- Healing for those afflicted (the blind, the disabled, the sick,…).
- Political Justice for the oppressed: Oppressed people are those whose power has been taken away. Since “politics” is “the way we organise power” (in relationships, in families, in Church, in communities, in countries, globally,…), oppressed people will only find freedom when they feel that they have a voice – a meaningful participation in the exercise of power.

Thus, when economic and political justice, healing, forgiveness and mercy are present, peace in our world, in our communities, in our relationships and in our hearts becomes possible and the Lord’s Year of Favour (the Kingdom of God) is among us!

Any discussion, then, about evangelisation (bringing Good News) without a focus on justice and peace, will be hollow as it will lack this constitutive element!

Download the full article here:
Mike Deeb OP (27 August, 2017)

**Official News**

**Christmas Prayer for Peace**

Let us pray that strength and courage abundant be given to each of us as we work together to heal and renew our world where human dignity, freedom, and human flourishing prevail.

*
That the good that is in our hearts may day by day be magnified and generously shared with others especially the unwanted and unloved in our midst and those who have no place to call home;

* That each of us will come to see more clearly not that which divides us, but that which unites us;

* That each hour and day may bring us closer to a greater understanding and mutual respect for one another, not of one against another;

* That the true spirit of this Christmas Season, the Commemoration of the Birth of Jesus, its joy, its beauty, its hope, and above all His abiding love of every person who has ever been born, may live within each of us and to those entrusted to our care;

* That the blessings of peace be ours, the peace to build and grow, to care and to comfort one another with compassion, to live in harmony and humility with those with ideas and dreams different than our own, of age, color, ethnicity, gender, religious beliefs, and lifestyle, so that we might pray, live and work together and to plan our future with confidence. Amen.

“Let us make our way to Bethlehem and look earnestly upon this Word, which has been made flesh, the immense God who has been made a little Child” (Gueric of Igny, Christmas Sermons)

Office of Health Services, Dominican Friars Province of St. Joseph - 2017

Fr. Leobardo Almazán is the Assistant to the Permanent Delegate of the Order to the United Nations

The Master of the Order, fr. Bruno Cadoré, has appointed fr. Leobardo Almazán as the Assistant to the Permanent Delegate of the Order of Preachers to the United Nations and Permanent Representative at the UN Office in Geneva. His appointed will take effect from the 1st of January 2018. He will work under the direction of fr. Michael Deeb, Permanent Delegate of the Order to the UN. fr. Leo is from the Province of St. Martin de Porres, USA.

fr. Leo was born in Mexico City in 1971. He made his first profession in the Order in 2000. He studied Philosophy and Scriptures in Mexico, Moral Theology in the USA, and obtained a STL/STD in Social Ethics at the Alphonsian Academy in Rome. fr. Leo was ordained to the priesthood in 2005 and has served as parish priest, professor, and prior of a formation community.

fr. Leo has been involved in justice and peace efforts even before he became a Dominican, while working for a Senator in Mexico City. His moral theology training has allowed him to work, teach and do advocacy in the areas of social justice and human rights. He has been collaborating with the Order’s NGO at the UN in Geneva since 2012.

Like a number of religious organizations, the Order of Preachers has an NGO at the UN in Geneva. “Dominicans for Justice and Peace” enjoys consultative status at the UN, which entitles it to have a Permanent Delegate who can rightly participate in debates and advocate for justice and peace, especially regarding those places/countries where our Dominican brothers and sisters live and work. Since most of this advocacy work is done in Geneva, there is a need to have a friar who is permanently based there. Since fr. Mike lives in Rome and travels frequently to the other UN offices and all around the world to fulfill his dual duties as Promoter of Justice and Peace and Permanent Delegate at the UN, fr. Leo will be the Order’s permanent present in Geneva.
New Edition of the booklet, “An Introduction to the Constitutions of the Order of Preachers”

Bro. Mark De Caluwe has updated the text of the booklet, “An Introduction to the Constitutions of the Order of Preachers”. Since it was first edited (1999), the General Chapters of the Order have added new texts and deleted others. So all these changes had to be taken into consideration. There were also some mistakes, to be corrected.

The revised text is now available in the three languages, which are normally used in the Order: English, French and Spanish.

The brothers who want to receive a copy of the text can contact Bro. Mark at this address: mark.decaluwe@telenet.be

or by writing to:
Mark De Caluwe,
Dominicanen,
Ravenstraat 98,
B-3000 Leuven
(Belgium).

Bro. Mark thanks the brothers who would have suggestions for the publication or for correcting eventual mistakes.

Calendar of the Master of the Order for January 2018

Dec 26-Jan 6: Christmas Break
7-12: Meeting in Hong Kong on the Mission of the Order in China
17-21: Visitation to Peru
22-24: OPTIC Meetings at Paris
Jan 27 – Feb 9: Canonical Visitation to the Province of West Africa.

All articles are available on www.op.org