The Biblioteca Santa Sabina, the library in the Convent of Santa Sabina, the General Curia of the Order is now accessible on the web. The library is accessible through the KOHA open source library system under the domain of the Unione Romana Biblioteche Ecclesiastiche (U.R.B.E) which has links to the libraries of the Pontifical University of St Thomas Aquinas (Angelicum) in Rome and the Pontifical University of Santa Croce, Rome.

The library boast of thousands of volumes in various languages and on various subject matters. It has always been the dream of the Master of the Order, fr Bruno Cadoré to make the Biblioteca Santa Sabina a depository of all books ever published by Dominican friars from all over the world. This library is therefore a special library with a unique collection of published materials mostly by the friars of the Order. It has an area for the “Rare Book Collections” of acclaimed Dominican authors. This is the uniqueness of this library.

The Biblioteca Santa Sabina is located in the Convent of Santa Sabina, Rome and it is open daily - Monday to Friday. But most importantly, you can now access it online from anywhere.

Discover the rich collection of the library by simply browsing - http://biblioteca.op.org
If you have some concerns or questions, please contact: bibliotecario@curia.op.org
Meet Dominican friar who takes care of St. Jude relic

For Dominican Father Michael Ford, the history of salvation is contained in a chunk of bone. Ford directs the Dominican Shrine of St. Jude Thaddeus at St. Pius V Church, 1910 S. Ashland Ave., and as such, he takes care of the shrine’s relic of the apostle, perhaps best known as the patron saint of lost causes, and brings it to parishes and schools around the country where he offers parish missions, retreats and other events.

Relics, he said, are “a way for people to grow in their faith. Catholicism isn’t crazy for doing this.”

Many people, religious and otherwise, venerate relics in their own way, whether it’s building a shrine to one’s ancestors or displaying an autographed baseball card, “anything we keep from a previous encounter,” Ford said.

When he visits schools, Ford said, he explains that relics of the saints are physical reminders that the saints we venerate were real people. They wore clothes, they ate and drank, they embraced their loved ones. Now that they are with God in heaven, we can ask them to pray for us.

“It’s a human thing to honor the dead, and we add another layer to it with the Communion of the Saints,” Ford said. Keeping mementos of the saints, he said, “it’s not as odd as people think.”

But, Ford said, people do think it’s odd. He understands, because he used to think so, too. Ford converted to Catholicism 24 years ago, but it wasn’t until he’d been in seminary three or four years that relics started to make sense to him.

Physical remains remind Catholics of the resurrection of the dead. “Our bodies are important,” Ford said. “We die and are going to be separated from them, but we’re going to get them back.”

When Ford travels, he brings a case of mostly small relics from various saints — a drop of blood on a cloth, or something the saint once used. Physical remains, from bones to hair to blood, are considered first-class relics; items the saint used such as articles of clothing are second-class relics. He distributes holy cards that people can touch to the relic of St. Jude, thereby creating their own third-class relics.

The St. Jude relic — a 1¼-slice of the right radius bone, taken from where the wrist bumps out — is encased in a 225-year-old reliquary shaped like a forearm and hand. It travels in a specially built case, and when Ford flies somewhere, it always goes carry-on, never checked.

A few years ago, when the airline changed the size of carry-ons allowed, Ford was able to get the gate agent to give him special permission to take the case aboard with him. The agent told her husband about it, and he got his Knights of Columbus council to donate a new case, made to fit to the smaller specifications.

Ford said he also has had his share of interesting conversations with TSA agents, although questions have diminished since he got approved for pre-check.

“You see them back it up in the machine and look again,” he said. Then they want to open the case and take a look.

“I tell them that’s fine as long as I’m the only one to handle the relic,” he said. “Once they understand what it is, they’re fine. A lot of them say it’s the coolest thing to ever come through their line.”

When Ford is not traveling with it, the relic is locked in its niche behind glass in the shrine, house in St. Pius V Church, 1910 S. Ashland Ave. Since the Dominicans learned that St. Pius V will remain open following the reorganization of parishes in Pilsen, Ford is looking for money to refurbish the shrine.
He hopes, he said, that the shrine and its relic can help spread the virtue of hope — hope and trust in the promise of the Resurrection.
To visit the shrine or request a lecture by Ford, visit the-shrine.org.
By Michelle Martin

**Regents of Studies of the US & Canada Meet in Oakland**

A meeting of the Regents of Studies of Canada & the USA took place June 19-21, 2017, at St. Albert’s Priory in Oakland, CA. The regional meeting, mandated by the Dominican friars’ 2016 General Chapter (no. 171), was attended by (in photo, left to right) frs. Michel Gourgues (Regent of Studies, St. Dominic, Canada), John Langlois (Regent, St. Joseph, Eastern USA), Bryan Kromholtz (Regent, Most Holy Name of Jesus, Western USA, and Coordinator), Michael Mascari, the Master of the Order’s Socius for the Intellectual Life, and Mark Wedig (Regent, St. Martin de Porres, Southern USA). Unable to attend were frs. Jay Harrington (Regent, St. Albert the Great, Central USA) and Thich Ngo, Promoter of Study of the Vietnamese Vicariate in Canada.

The Regents gave one another another overview of the state of our provincial Centers of Study and of studies in our Provinces, and shared “best” practices.

Fr. Michael Mascari was able to provide insight into two new editions of Dominican legislation: the Ratio Studiorum Generalis (RSG) and the Ratio Formationis Generalis (RFG), the guidelines that govern studies and formation, respectively, for the Order. Both have been promulgated within the past year. Fr. Michael also pointed out certain acts of the General Chapter of Bologna, 2016, that concern study and the intellectual life. The discussion will help the Regents as their provinces proceed to update their respective particular plans for studies and formation, i.e., the Ratio Studiorum Particularis (RSP) and the Ratio Formationis Particularis (RFP).

At their annual meeting in April of this year, the Provincials of the US and Canada decided to invite the Regents of Study and the Presidents of the Centers of Institutional Studies (Dominican University College, Ottawa; Dominican House of Studies, DC; Dominican School of Philosophy & Theology, Berkeley; Aquinas Institute, St. Louis) to their next annual meeting (April 2-5, 2018). This will allow for a greater ability to undertake new initiatives of collaboration for studies among the Provinces and institutions involved. Given the need to prepare for this upcoming meeting, the Regents spent some time considering possible future collaborative ventures regarding study among the US and Canadian provinces, while reviewing ways in which collaboration is already occurring, including the Dominican Mini-Courses (fr. John Vidmar will lecture on Dominican history in St. Louis in late August 2017, while fr. Thomas McDermott will lecture on St. Catherine of Siena in Oakland/Berkeley in mid-January 2018). The Regents set January 17, 2018, as the date for their next discussion, to be carried out as a “virtual” meeting (i.e., via audio-conference or audio/video-conference). Before then, the Regents will be in communication with the Presidents involved, to consider possible opportunities or needs for cooperation.
Fr. Bryan Kromholtz, OP

**The Dominican Way of Life in Timor-Leste**

“Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls...” 1 Peter 1:8-9

Last April 19, 2017, the International Dominican Youth Movement (IDYM) Coordinator, Elijor Benjamin “Benz” Rodil together with Belen Tangco, OP (Philippines) and Theo Atmadi, OP (Indonesia) who represented the Dominican Laity visited the
Dominican Family in Timor-Leste. They were welcomed by Fr. Ruben Martinez, OP (Representative of the Major Superiors of Timor Leste) and the Dominican sisters.

This 4-day visit started with a gathering at the school of the sisters where the Dominican youth welcomed their guests with a traditional dance performance. The gathering focused on discussing and contemplating on how the youth can live and embody the Dominican way of life - Prayer, Study, Community and Preaching. Benz Rodil was able to share about the life of the Dominican Youth and the Youth Movement, while Belen and Theo shared about the life of a Dominican Lay person.

The Dominican Youth of Timor-Leste with the friars and sisters had also a mission in the community as they have learned about the Dominican Way of life especially the Mission of the Order, to preach the Gospel. Every day was a celebration of Christ as the whole Dominican family shares their faith in forms of song, prayer, dance and speeches. Each night was capped with the celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

This mission in Timor-Leste was an experience of joyfulness in the rawness of life. It is with such gratefulness that we witnessed the strong faith of our dear friars, sisters, lay Dominican and youth as they celebrate God, share his love and preach his words to one another. This visit is truly an experience of overflowing happiness that roots from our growing faith in the Christ we love.

Benjamin “Benz” Rodil, International Coordinator IDYM

Blackfriars in Gotham: 150 Years of Dominicans in New York

Tomorrow will mark 150 years since the New York archbishop John McCluskey penned a letter to the Provincial of our province, Fr. William O’Carroll. The letter states in full:

“The Dominican Fathers having with my permission purchased lots in this city on which they are to erect a church and convent of their order, they are further authorized to appeal to the charity of the faithful in furtherance of their important work. I beg at the same time to commend them to the benevolence of all, wishing them blessing and success.”

Archbishop McCluskey must have been excited at the prospect of the Order of Preachers having a stable ministry presence in the Archdiocese, and eager to make it public knowledge. On the same day his letter is dated, the editors of New York’s Catholic weekly, the New York Freeman’s Journal and Catholic Register, published an article entitled “The Dominicans in New York,” in which they announced:

“We have very good news for the Catholics of New York City. Since our last paper went to press a magnificent property has been secured in this city, for a church and college (priory) of the Dominican Order of Preachers. The entire block on the east side of Lexington Avenue, extending from 65th to 66th streets, two hundred feet front, extending eastward two hundred and twenty-five feet, has been purchased, on favorable terms, as a Dominican house in this city. So, we have reason to congratulate the Catholic community on the accession of another Religious Order to supply the wants of this almost God-forsaken city. The Dominicans have made a grand purchase.”

Two days later, Fr. O’Carroll wrote his own letter to the Master General of the Dominican Order, Fr. Vincent Jandel. Whereas the Archbishop’s correspondence is declaratory, Fr. O’Carroll’s is an attempt to explain his own actions and, interestingly enough, the desire of New Yorkers for Dominican friars. He remarks:

“Our work is fairly started in New York and by the time the present convent is built there will be I trust in God plenty of fathers of the right spirit to send there. The opportunity was so propitious, priests and laity calling out for more churches, that I thought that I should not be faithful to my charge it I neglected it. The people and the priests would have accepted anyone that came to attend to the spiritual wants of the people. But since
they came to know us through the missions they are better pleased to have us than any others. The title of the new convent will be St. Vincent Ferrer.”

Fr. O’Carroll’s letter hints at the reason why Archbishop McCluskey had so enthusiastically supported the building of a Dominican church and priory in Manhattan. The Dominicans had become widely known in the city the winter previous through several large parish missions its itinerant preachers had given. While the spiritual fruit of these missions is known only to God, one, given at the Church of the Transfiguration in South Manhattan (modern-day Chinatown), yielded astounding statistical results: a rotation of nine Dominican friars preaching and instructing four times daily, an average of ten hours of confessions heard each day leading to an estimated total of 16,000 absolvements during the three-week mission. Fittingly enough, this Dominican foundation uptown from the developed part of 1867 Manhattan—indeed, sitting in an expanse of empty lots and fields complete with rock formations and dirt roads—was put under the patronage of St. Vincent Ferrer, one of the greatest preachers ever given by God to the Order of Preachers.

Today, a century and a half later, God continues to bless our preaching and presence in Manhattan. On the Upper East Side, Dominican Fathers hear confessions daily in our two magnificent churches—St. Vincent Ferrer’s and St. Catherine of Siena’s. The Dominican Friars Health Care Ministry of New York provides 24/7 spiritual care and ethical guidance to patients, families, and health care workers in three hospitals. Dominican sisters run two all-girls college preparatory schools. Down in Greenwich Village, the friars of St. Joseph’s, under the patron of the universal Church, have been tremendously successful in their R.C.I.A. program. Throughout the Archdiocese, Dominicans have helped to implement and preach a new wave of three-day parish missions, focusing on quality preaching by consecrated religious and on offering the sacraments of the Church. It also is worth mentioning that student brothers from the House of Studies in Washington, DC, go up to New York each summer for 10 weeks. In addition to serving at some of the ministries mentioned above, the brothers have assisted in recent years at First Things, the World Youth Alliance, and the Missionaries of Charity.

As Dominicans, we have much to be grateful for in our 150-year history of formal apostolates in the City. Let us pray that God continue to watch over us and bless our friars, sisters, and those we serve during this anniversary year.
Br. Barnabas McHenry, O.P.

Manuscripts saved from the Islamic State by a Dominican friar to be exhibited in Rome

What motivated the Dominicans in the 18th century to establish a community at the heart of the Nineveh Plains?

An exposition at the Dominican friary of Santa Maria Sopra Minerva in Rome, which runs until June 17, offers a collection of Iraqi manuscripts never shown to the public before—dating from between the 13th and 19th centuries—as well as exceptional photographs from the old photo archive of the Dominican friary in Mosul (Iraq).

These are the treasures that, along with the desire to live the Gospel in a land of ancient Christianity, inspired the Order of Preachers to establish a residence in Mosul in 1750. Throughout the centuries, and right down to our day, generation after generation of Dominicans—sometimes facing great risks—has worked to preserve and analyze these manuscripts. At the risk of his own life, Fr. Najeeb Michael managed to save many of these invaluable manuscripts in 2014, before their probable destruction by the Islamic State’s soldiers.

For a few days, it will also be possible to admire works such as a liturgical book from 1723, called a “cycle,” containing the Gospel readings from Sundays and feast days according to the Chaldean calendar followed in Mosul. The book was copied in Syrian for the church of Saint George of Shiez, annotated, and stored in a church in the nearby town of Mar-Ya Qub (or Yaqo), where the Dominicans had settled.

This Syro-Oriental manuscript has the peculiarity of being dated according to the era known as that “of the Ascension of Our Lord” (which begins around the year 30 or 31). The copyist-painter signed his name, Elias,
and mentions that he is “the son of Fr. Daniel.” It contains paintings with crosses and scenes from the Gospels, such as the entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem, riding a donkey.

Among the photos that accompany the other documents, there is one dated 1956 showing some Dominicans seated before the colossal statue of one of the two winged androcephalous bulls of Nimrud, which dated from the 7th century before Christ. The statue was destroyed in 2015 by Daesh [also known as ISIS].

Instrumental in organizing this unprecedented event is the French embassy to the Holy See. The embassy helped bring to Rome a great part of an exposition Mesopotamia: intersection of cultures, which was organized at the National Archives of France in Paris in June, 2016.

Attending the exhibition’s opening, in the company of many prelates, was the French ambassador to the Holy See, Philippe Zeller, who expressed his desire for the exposition to “simply allow these Christians to become better known, and more present in our concerns.” Also in attendance was Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, who explained that the exposition includes “documents of the faith that have made it possible for our brothers and sisters of previous generations to celebrate the liturgy, study the Bible, and explore other subjects in depth.”

Arthur Herlin/France

**Refugees: An opportunity to grow together**

*Joint ecumenical statement for World Refugee Day 2017*

The Christian Bible tells the story of two men, Peter and Cornelius, utterly divided by religious belief and culture, who in encountering each other discovered a truth about God’s common will for them that neither had previously grasped. They learnt that the Holy Spirit brings down walls and unites those who might think that they have nothing in common.

All around the world, women, men, and children are forced by violence, persecution, natural and human-caused disasters, famine, and other factors, to leave their homelands. Their desire to escape suffering is stronger than the barriers erected to block their way. The opposition by some countries to the migration of forcibly displaced people will not keep those who undergo unbearable suffering from leaving their homes.

Wealthy countries cannot evade their responsibility for the wounds inflicted on our planet – environmental disasters, the arms trade, developmental inequality – that drive forced migration and human trafficking. While it is true that the arrival of migrants in more developed countries can present real and significant challenges, it can also be an opportunity for openness and change. Pope Francis poses this question to us: “How can we experience these changes not as obstacles to genuine development, but rather as opportunities for genuine human, social and spiritual growth?” Societies that find the courage and the vision to go beyond the fear of foreigners and migrants soon discover the riches that migrants bring with them, and always have.

If we, as a human family, insist on only ever seeing refugees as a burden, we deprive ourselves of the opportunities for solidarity that are also always opportunities for mutual learning, mutual enrichment, and mutual growth.

It is not enough for Christians to profess to love Christ: belief is authentic only if it is expressed in loving action. We are one Body of Christ, undivided. In the words of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, “It is only through Jesus Christ that we are brothers and sisters of one another…. Through Christ our mutual belonging is real, integral, and for all time.” If we are one body, we are knitted into a solidarity that defines us and makes demands of us.

Signs of solidarity can be multiplied beyond the borders of religion and culture. Meeting believers of other persuasions encourages us to deepen our knowledge of our own faith, and in our encounter with our refugee brothers and sisters, God speaks to us and blesses us as He did Cornelius and Peter.
In every genuine encounter, an exchange of gifts takes place. Sharing with others what we have and own, we discover that all is given freely by God. At the same time, in welcoming those whom we encounter, we meet the God who is always already present with the vulnerable, at the peripheries, and in the other.

Increasingly around the world we witness the building of walls to keep out the displaced: not just physical walls, but also walls of fear, prejudice, hatred, and ideology. Let us all, as one human family, strive to build bridges of solidarity rather than walls of division. Our refugee sisters and brothers present us with opportunities for mutual enrichment and flourishing: it is God who brings us together.

With the development of new international frameworks – Global Compacts on Migrants and on Refugees – in 2018, States should not only ensure a more effective responsibility-sharing in response to large movements, but they should also accept the opportunity to recognize and highlight the significant contributions that refugees and migrants make in their host communities.


World Refugee Day, 20th June 2017

Annual Meeting of Young Dominican Biblicalists

The symposium of Dominican Friars known as Bible in Jerusalem has become an annual fixture in the calendar of the École Biblique et Archéologique Française. Held in the first week of every year, young Dominican exegetes from around the world gather with those resident and working in Jerusalem for a few days to celebrate the Epiphany in the Holy City and for fraternal study of the Bible. The goal of these meetings is to fulfil the Dominican way of life—prayer, study, community, preaching—in the service of the Word of God at an advanced level of academic discussion.

The meeting has three aspects. First, a conference theme upon which brothers give presentations. Space is also given for new participants to present their current exegetical projects to the symposium, so we can discover and share what our brothers are researching around the world. Secondly, an exegetical workshop upon an agreed text applying the tools of the Ecole’s BEST Project. Finally, recognising the opportunities presented by meeting in the Holy Land, we hold an excursion to a site of biblical interest. These aspects take up the vision of Père Lagrange that studying the Bible in the Land is of incomparable value. We humbly feel we are continuing to follow his vision.

BiJ 2017 built upon previous success with trips to Masada and Tel Arad, and presentations on the book of the Apocalypse, the Temple in Ephesians and on tradition and innovation in St Paul. However, the focus this year was a three-day workshop on 2 Kings 2. Using and contributing to the Ecole’s BEST Project, we examined the story of the succession of Elisha from many different perspectives as each brother added his own expertise to a rich discussion. The workshop concluded with an entertaining look at how this story had been depicted in sacred art. Again, we were happy to welcome a number of first time participants as the group continues to grow.

We are currently planning the next meeting, to take place in the first week of 2018. Next year will focus upon conference papers given around a theme with a shorter exegetical workshop on Rev 4:1-11. Once more we will make an excursion. We hope to continue to extend the meeting to include more participants and their scholarly fields, particularly for those brothers who study the bible but have fewer opportunities to come to Israel and experience the Lagrange vision of the Bible in the Land.
BiJ was begun in response to the lack of connection that was felt between the Dominican provinces and the work of the Order’s Ecole Biblique. Many brothers who study the bible to an advanced level had not experienced the life and work of EBAF, nor had the brothers working in Jerusalem had much encounter with their younger confreres from around the world. Such an annual meeting allows connections to be made and collaboration to begin. We learn about each other’s work and through fraternal discussion improve and shape our ideas in the study of God’s Word. This has to be the fruit of our common life of prayer and study and this strength we can offer to the world. I think that the next steps for this meeting is to use these academic connections to continue this scholarly and fraternal conversation throughout the year for the good of the Church and the world.

Fr. Bruno Clifton, o.p. Lecturer at Black Friars Hall, Oxford

Solemnity of the Trinity Brings Three Secular Priests into the Fraternity of Switzerland

On the second vespers of the Solemnity of the Holy Trinity, 11 June 2017, three diocesan priests were received into the Priestly Fraternities of St. Dominic at the Convent of Saint-Hyacinthe in Fribourg, Switzerland: Fr Lionel Girard (Diocese of Sion in Switzerland); Fr. Jacques Papaux (Diocese of Geneva, Lausanne and Fribourg in Switzerland); and Fr Nicolas Tousch (Archdiocese of Strasbourg in France).

Fr. Lionel was ordained priest on 29 May 2016, and currently serves as Vicar of the Cathedral of Sion and Chaplain of the hospital of Sion. Fr. Jacques was ordained on 6 July 2014, and currently serves as Vicar of St-Pierre, Sts-Pierre-et-Paul, Ste-Thérèse and St-Laurent parishes (St. Joseph's Pastoral Unit), in the canton of Fribourg, Switzerland. Fr. Nicolas was ordained on 9 June 2013, and currently serves as Chaplain of the Episcopal College Saint-Etienne in Strasbourg.

The journey of discernment for the three priests began through the collaborative guidance of fr. John Emery, OP, of the Province of St. Augustine in Argentina, and Ms. Isolde Cambournac, a lay collaborator of the Dominican Family. All three priests earned their theological degrees at the University of Fribourg, where both fr. Emery and Ms. Cambournac were also pursuing academic degrees.

During the past year of discernment, the priests were likewise assisted by fr. Guido Vergauwen, OP, Prior Provincial of the Province of Switzerland, and fr. Adrian Schenker, OP. After a number of meetings, where they experienced greater acquaintance with the spirituality of the Order, the three diocesan priests finally decided to formally join the Dominican Family and, thus, become the first novices of the Priestly Fraternity of St. Catherine of Siena under the Swiss Province.

Fr. Vergauwen presided over the rite of admission, during which the habit of the Order was given to Frs. Lionel, Jacques and Nicolas. The ceremony was also witnessed by fr. Jean-Michel Poffet, OP, prior of the convent of Saint-Hyacinthe, as well as by other friars not only from the convent of Saint-Hyacinthe, but also from the nearby convent of Saint-Albert (The Albertinum).

How Sr. Cecilia Espenilla, OP single handedly conquered the hearts and minds of the UN in Vienna

Friday the 26th of May was a very good day for the Dominican presence at the U.N. in Vienna. At the commission on crime prevention and criminal justice, NGOs have the possibility to organize a side event (50 minutes long). They invite speakers and present a topic in front of the countries delegations and other NGOs. I met Sr. Cecilia Espenilla at the conference of the Order on human rights last year in Salamanca. Although we only talked for a few minutes I could not forget the passion she had for her work against human trafficking. When we decided on a topic for our first side event Sr. Cecilia and
her work were the obvious choice. Our second speaker was Rory Field, the vice president of the International Association of Prosecutors, a long serving public prosecutor. The Government of Finland also supported our event.

During her 25-minute speech Sr. Cecilia raised awareness about human trafficking, the exploitation of women and children and the problematic coherence of demand and supply in the fight against trafficking in persons. Her authentic style of presentation, gained through the work with the victims of such heinous crimes, she immediately won the audience’s attention. In a different style but not less interesting was Rory Field’s presentation on how prosecutors experience the fight against human trafficking and traffickers. With the video of Sweetie, a 10-year-old Philippine girl completely computer animated we ended our side event. She is used to hunt pedophiles in online chat rooms. After the side event, we had the chance to talk to members of the audience, exchange business cards and talk about different projects and possibilities of working together with other NGOs and countries.

On a side note, after the word got around that there is a Philippine sister around, employees of the U.N. (mostly from the Philippines) kept showing up at our lunch table asking for pictures and to exchange a few words with our own people's magnet.

Dominican Nun goes to prison: “The power of prayer unites me with them”

Sr. Maria Grazia of the Dominican Monastery of “S. Maria della Neve e S. Domenico” at Pratovecchio, Arezzo in Italy visited her friends in prison as a gift for her 25th profession anniversary. Here is her testimony.

Six, seven, eight, nine, ten… Don’t worry, I haven’t lost my marbles! These are just the dates on which the verse from the Gospel, “I was in prison and you visited me”, came true for me. It’s true, I was able to visit the prisoners with whom I’ve been exchanging letters for several years. The Letter to the Hebrews says: Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them; and those who are ill-treated, since you also are in the body (Hebrews 13:3). This year I celebrate the 25th anniversary of my religious profession and I decided to ask my Prioress for a present—one that would make not only me, but my prisoner friends happy. She said yes provisionally, and the Master of the Order confirmed the permission.

When you go into a prison and walk down those long corridors, hearing the sound of your every footstep and the sound of keys turning in barred doors, you can’t help thinking that there are two worlds: one “inside” and one “outside”. Yet despite this spontaneous distinction, every time I go into a prison I feel at home. It’s one of a number of feelings that make up a mystery. Maybe I feel at home because I’m a prisoner too, in a way: there is a visible prison, where the guilty are punished (and sometimes, reminding us that human justice is not infallible, victims and the innocent too), and an inner, invisible prison where we all live because of our sins. These years of monastic life have taught me to open my heart beyond the walls in order to embrace all humanity: this is the simple consequence of my struggling to live with God, to know his Love. It is a love that incites love for every brother and sister. I don’t feel superior to others: when I think of my prisoners it’s not their faults that come into my mind but the man who, recognising his mistake, opens up to Christian hope and is supported by it. The power of prayer unites me with them. Among those I write to some are progressing in faith and others, who do not believe in God, are nonetheless happy to have a nun for a friend.

St Dominic is a teacher for me. In love with prayer and with the Word of God, he loved all souls, longed for their salvation and so was open to everyone. One day I read this sentence: “Praying for people means giving the blood of your heart”. It’s true: when you are in touch with the unhappiness of these brothers, it is not simply a question of praying, but of shouting to God. One prisoner told me that once he was about to fall into the abyss and told me: “Sr Grazia, that day I didn’t pray, I shouted at God!”

Prayer is the means by which I am united to God and my brothers and sisters, to my neighbours of all races and religions. Prayer is a great source of strength. My talks with them have opened my heart. Their confidences,
their discomfort, their difficulties help me to see my own difficulties as trifles, and to understand once again how poor are my offerings to God in the name of love. I have felt joy in the days of my conversations with my prisoner friends, listening to them, not saying much but clasping their hands in a simple gesture of profound solidarity and friendship.

I must admit that this visit to prisons has swept away any possible prejudice. On 8 March, Women’s Day, the chaplain of a prison and a woman who volunteers there decided to organize a meeting with the whole prison population, and to invite me and two other speakers, one a Muslim woman, who told their own moving tales. After we had spoken, a Muslim prisoner took the microphone to thank me for coming among them, expressing the hope that this meeting might build a bridge between me and them. At that moment I somehow felt the universality of humanity: we are all brothers and sisters, all children of God. That might sound as though it’s obvious for a nun, but as the years have passed there has always been something more that God has made us understand and discover as a novelty to rejoice over. I left the prison happy and, smiling to myself, I thought: “Fancy that, it took prison and a meeting with Muslim friends to understand universal brotherhood!”

I want to take this opportunity of thanking the Managers of the prisons I have visited for making my visits to the prisoners possible. I want to thank the police officers with whom I was able to talk. Thanks to my two very helpful guardian angels, Anna and Danila. And to the prisoners Domenico, Giacomo, Giancarlo, Filippo, Andrea, my friend Giulio who has now left prison and is living in Fr Mazzi’s Community — all of you welcomed me very courteously and joyfully: thank you! I was not able to take my gifts to them, but they gave me so many. I must also thank Fr Beppe who introduced me to the world of prison and gave me the joy of a personal meeting and of hearing his rich testimony. In these days I always kept in my heart the three words that have accompanied my 25 years of religious life: trust, abandonment and desire. Thank you.

Sr Maria Grazia OP
Monastery “S. Maria della Neve e S. Domenico” – Pratovecchio (Arezzo) Italy

1Fr Mazzi is a priest who works extensively with drug addicts and others in need of help

Read the original text on “Piccole Luci”

This holy trio of Dominican nuns shows that God can call any type to the convent

Blesseds Diana, Amata, and Cecilia were friends of St. Dominic.

If you ask most people to tell you which of their acquaintances is most likely to become a nun, nine times out of 10 you’ll be directed to the shy, quiet, awkward girl. But anyone who’s spent 10 minutes with a group of nuns will tell you that not every nun is meek and homely—quite the contrary. Convents are filled with beauty queens, actresses, and investment bankers, filled with the shy retiring type, the loud and sassy type, and plenty of “problems like Maria.”

On June 8, the Church celebrates a group of these nuns: Blesseds Diana, Amata, and Cecilia, friends of St. Dominic and among the very first Dominican nuns.

Blessed Cecilia Caesarini was a Benedictine noblewoman. Unfortunately, while her community was ancient and esteemed, it was also lax and caught up in scandal. When Cecilia was 17, Dominic arrived to reform the community at the request of the pope. Hearing him speak of the beauty of a life entirely handed over to God, Cecilia was enthralled and threw herself at the feet of the great preacher, asking to be received into his order and becoming the first Dominican nun.

The identity of Blessed Amata is less certain. We know that she was dear to the heart of St. Dominic, that she received her name from him, and that she was a nun with Diana and Cecilia.

The most spirited of the bunch was Diana d’Andalo, a young noblewoman who was described as being “of outstanding beauty,” as well as being eloquent, charming, intelligent, and rather spoiled. Diana was fond of beautiful and expensive things until she heard the preaching of Blessed Reginald of Orleans, an early
Dominican preacher. Convicted by his words on luxury and vanity, Diana gave away the beautiful things she loved and even persuaded her father to donate some of his land to the friars.

Not satisfied with this, Diana soon made a vow of virginity witnessed by Dominic himself. This sort of occasion usually involves proud fathers and teary-eyed mothers, but Diana’s profession had neither, for the simple reason that she hadn’t told her parents of her plans. She was (understandably) concerned that her wealthy family would insist that she marry, so she made the ill-advised decision to ask forgiveness rather than permission.

Her secret consecration was further complicated by the fact that there was still no Dominican convent for her to enter. Diana set about living as a nun in her family home but her family made it difficult for her to pray and fast as she wanted, so Diana hatched a plan: she and her girlfriends would go have a picnic at an Augustinian convent. At the end of the day, all the girls would go home—all but Diana, who would be hidden away behind the convent walls.

Diana hadn’t counted on the fury of her family. When her friends arrived back in Bologna with the news that Diana had decided to stay, her father, brothers, and uncles rode out after her. They galloped up to the convent and demanded that she return with them. Diana refused, clinging to the very building until they dragged her away—breaking at least one of her ribs in the process.

Diana appeared to be near death when she arrived back at her family home and was confined to bed. During that time, she received letters from Dominic who, though he was on his deathbed, encouraged her to persevere in her vocation. Persevere she did, and before terribly long she had exhausted the resistance of her family. The second time she sneaked out to become a nun, they didn’t follow her.

Not long after the death of St. Dominic, Diana left her temporary home with the Augustinians for the convent of St. Agnes where she began to live according to the rule of St. Dominic. For a few months Diana served as prioress, but soon Blessed Jordan of Saxony (the master general of the Dominicans after the death of Dominic) sent for some more experienced nuns from Rome. Of these, Blessed Cecilia was appointed prioress.

From there, life continued rather as expected for cloistered nuns, excepting only Diana’s deep friendship with Blessed Jordan. The many letters from Jordan to Diana give us a model of transformative spiritual direction and of chaste friendship. These letters, along with the description of St. Dominic given to us by Blessed Cecilia, form the literary legacy of this trio of holy women, but their witness of holiness as God made them (not as they were expected to be) might be even more valuable.

On their feast day, let’s ask them to pray for all women discerning religious life and for women who don’t quite seem to fit the mold. Blesseds Diana, Amata, and Cecilia, pray for us!

Meg Hunter-Kilmer

“I have collected my roses and I am leaving this conscious world”

“...”

Farewell to Fr. Augustine Reargues OP (1950 – 2017)

These were the final words of Fr. Augustine while he was still conscious and was ready to bid goodbye to his temporal earthly home. He said this to fr. Pascal Paulus (Vice Provincial of the Vice Province of Pakistan) as he visited him in the Holy Family Hospital, Karachi three days before the end of the earthly journey. These words indicated clearly that he was prepared to depart from this world to enter his eternal home in the company of the saints. Fr. Pascal in his homily at the funeral, on May 29th, 2017 expressed his sincere gratitude and condolences to his elder sister Sr. Margret and all the other family members.

These are the words of Fr Pascal at the funeral Mass:
We are gathered here for the farewell rites of Fr. Augustine Rodrigues. We pay tribute to him for his untiring and devoted services to the local Church and the Dominican Vice Province of Ibn-e-Mariam in Pakistan his entire life. May his soul rest in peace in the company of the saints!

Fr Augustine Rodrigues, a Dominican friar and priest was born on 2nd March 1950. He made his first profession on 27th September 1970 and was ordained to the priesthood on 25th April 1976. He was born to a very strong Catholic Goan Family who belonged to Fatima Parish Karachi. Fatima parish was administered by the American Dominican Friars at that time.

He was among the first group of locals to join the Dominican Order in the early seventies and served the local Church faithfully for 47 years. He was a very committed and joyful friar. He was always obedient to his superiors and bishops.

Augustine in his youth was a happy, handsome and talented young man who had a great zeal to become a Dominican. He had a good voice and was fond of singing hymns and songs with his guitar to make any celebration joyful and to cheer up everyone around him, young and not so young.

One of his uncles had served as a Monsignor in the Archdiocese of Karachi and his elder sister, Sr. Margret is also a religious belonging to the Congregation of the Daughters of the Cross.

He was sent to Rome for his novitiate and made his first profession there. He did his Licentiate in Philosophy in Italy and taught Philosophy in Karachi and then Lahore at Saint Francis Xavier Seminary for over 20 years. He was an expert in Latin, Italian and English languages besides Urdu and Punjabi. He had been a classmate of Fr. Siddique Mark Sunder, Fr. Rehmat Raja, the eldest of our Dominican community. He was a simple pastor and friends of the poor and he will be surely missed for a long time. Fr. Bashir Francis and Fr. Emmanuel Yousaf are also present at his funeral.

He was a great intellectual and philosophical thinker who had learnt Dominican traditions and history, in particular the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas very well, and this he taught in the seminary with great commitment and interest.

He was a committed priest, a dedicated Dominican. He always kept clear accounts of everything, being so transparent in all things and obedient to his superiors and the ordinaries with whom he served the people of God and the diocese. He suffered ill health for a long time but was always sympathetic towards the sick, the poor, widows and the needy whom he knew personally.

He served as a dedicated parish priest, assistant pastor, provincial chapter secretary, an archivist and historian of the Ibn-e-Mariam Vice Province.

In his last days when he was hospitalized, he had great concern for the money that was being spent on his treatment. He expressed gratitude to the Vice Province for the care and treatment.

We must not forget the services and presence of the Charity Sisters of Mother Teresa in Faisalabad who spent a lot of time with him in Faisal Hospital and at the Holy Rosary Priory, Warispura. He served as their spiritual director and confessor.

He spent all his life in a spirit of simplicity. Whatever he received as gift from his family, friends and benefactors, he would not rest until they are distributed to the poor and needy.

When he was in good health, he was fond of travel on his bike to far away villages of the Holy Rosary Parish. He would ride from Warispura to Okara and Okara to Lahore to teach at St. Francis Xavier Seminary. During most of his priestly life, he served the people of the Holy Rosary Parish and knew many of the parishioners by name.
He suffered greatly from lungs and kidney problems in his last six months. In his last days with the consultation of Sister Margret, he was brought to Karachi for a better treatment and so was hospitalized at Holy Family Hospital in Karachi.

I must acknowledge the services of Brother Emmanuel who took care of our elder brother during his last six months; he graciously accompanied Fr Augustine and took care of him until his last breath. The community of Holy Rosary Priory, Warispura, the Dominican House of Studies, Karachi and the Missionary of Charity Sisters of Faisalabad also offered great services to Fr. Augustine. May the Lord grant a good reward to all those who were kind to and accompanied our brother Augustine in his last days. God bless all of them.

**Inauguration of restored paintings of St Dominic at Valletta Basilica, Malta**

The Basilica of Our Lady of Safe Haven and St Dominic was en fête on Wednesday, May 31, 2017, titular Feast of the Visitation of Our Lady as the restored paintings of the vault of the St Dominic Transept were inaugurated.

The paintings depicting the prophetic dream of Blessed Jane de Aza before she gave birth to our Holy Father St Dominic in the centre of the vault and the Glory of St Dominic in the apse are the work of the renowned Maltese painter Giuseppe Calì, a son of the parish, who executed the commission in 1899. These oil on stone frescoes were in a very bad state of conservation and needed to be completely restored.

The funds for this major project were provided by the Good Causes Fund of the Ministry of Finance of Malta.

The celebration began with the unveiling of the cleaned altar piece of the altar of The Holy Name of God which depicts St Rose of Lima exalting the Christ Child and surrounded by various saints who spread the devotion of the Holy Name.

There followed a Pontifical Mass presided by His Grace Archbishop Emeritus of Malta, Monsignor Paul Cremona OP, assisted by Fr Francis Micallef, Prior Provincial of Malta, Fr Michael Camilleri, the Prior and Parish Priest of the Valletta Community and various other priests from the same community. Also present were other churches in Valletta as well as the Mons. Carmelo Refalo, Archpriest of the Collegiate Basilica of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin in the village of Xaghra on sister island of Gozo.

The Pontifical Mass was attended by Prof Alexiei Dingli, Mayor of Valletta, and Mr Mario Cutajar, Principal Permanent Secretary within the Office of the Prime Minister of Malta as well as delegations from the St Dominic Feast Association and the King’s Own Band led by their presidents Mr Joseph Zammit and Architect Ivan Piccinino respectively.

The restoration was carried out by the Conservator Agatha Grima with the help of the her team of her bottega. Alfred Grixti, Lay Dominican, Parish Basilica of Of Lady of Safe Haven and St Dominic, Valletta, Malta
Fr Damian Juraj Macura is the New Provincial of Slovakia

The Slovak Dominicans friars, gathered at their Provincial Chapter, have elected fr Damián Juraj Mačura as their new Prior Provincial for the next four years. The election has been confirmed by the Master of the Order, fr Bruno Cadoré and fr Damian has accepted the election. He succeeds fr Reginald Adrian Slavkovsky who has just completed his second term.

Fr Damian was born in Brezne in 1978. He had his novitiate in the Order in 1998 and made his first profession the following year. He studied Theology at Košice and was ordained to the priesthood in 2005. He completed his Licentiate study in Theology at Fribourg, Switzerland in 2011.

As at the time of his election, he was assigned to the convent in Zvolen where he has been the Syndic and Liturgist of the convent and also the Master of Student and Cooperator Brothers. At the provincial level, he was the Regent of Studies and member of the Formation Council, the Commission for Intellectual Life and the Liturgical Commission.

The Dominican Province of Slovakia was established in 2001 and it currently has 58 brothers present in five cities - in Košice, Bratislava, Žilina, Zvolen and Dunajska Lužná.

2017 Summer Session of the Liturgical Commission of the Order

Members of the Dominican International Commission on the Liturgy met at Santa Sabina, June 20-23, 2017, for their summer session.

In addition to meeting separately with the Socius for Apostolic Life, the Socius for Fraternal Life and Formation, the Procurator General, the Secretary General, the Promoter General for the Nuns, the General Promoter for Social Communications, and the International Coordinator for Dominican Sisters International (DSI), Commission members received an updated on the status of the English translation of the Dominican Proprium which continues to be worked on in the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments at the Vatican.

The responses from the questionnaire about the OP Jubilee Rituals, from various branches of the Dominican Family from around the world, were shared and analyzed.

The latest issue of Info/CLIOP on the topic of music, “Liturgy between Tradition and Actuality,” was discussed and is presently being electronically disseminated. Future issues of Info/CLIOP were planned and a draft of a new liturgical resource, Laudare, aimed to assist in the liturgical formation of members of the OP family in initial formation was presented. The Commission agreed to pilot and evaluate this resource over the next few years.

The Commission had two presentations on the use of the Dominican social media resource, “Atrium” for communication purposes and to assist in liturgical formation throughout the Order.

The Master of the Order has tasked the Commission with the creation of a Service of Reconciliation for suggested use in the priories and houses of the friars but to be made available to other members of the Dominican family as well. Each day afternoon sessions were spent creating and designing this Service of Reconciliation, creating and organizing an effective and systemic control system for the CLIOP archives, and
working on the Dominican Book of Blessings in addition to the calendar of the Order. Members will continue to work on these projects remotely in preparation for the November meeting of CLIOP.

A highlight of the summer session was when Commission members presented the Master of the Order, Bruno Cadoré, with a signed copy of the book of Gregorian songs, “Cantus Selecti, O.P.”, created for the 800th Jubilee of the Order.
David G. Caron, OP, D. Min.

Fr Francolino José Gonçalves, OP (1943 – 2017)

Francolino José Gonçalves, op, a professor of the Old Testament at Ecole Biblique in Jerusalem passed on to eternal glory on 15 June 2017 at the age of 74 years.

His funeral will take place at the Saint-Etienne convent, Jerusalem on Saturday, June 17 at 11:30 am

He is a son of the Province of Portugal. Born on 28 March 1943 in Corujas, Macedo de Cavaleiros (Portugal). He made his first profession in the Order in 1960 and was ordained to the priesthood in 1968. He is a specialist in Biblical prophecy and prophetic literature and the Old Testament yahvisms.

Academic degrees
1965-67 and 1968-69 – Faculty of Theology, Dominican College of Philosophy and Theology, Ottawa (Canada): Reader in Sacred Theology (1967) and Maîtreise in Theology (1969).

Features
Since 2013 – Professor Emeritus of the Biblical and Archaeological School.
Member of the Scientific Council of Cadmo (Universidade de Lisboa, Lisbon).
Member of the Scientific Council of Revista Lusófona de Ciência das Religiões (Universidade Lusófona de Humanidades e Tecnologias, Lisbon).
Member of the “Consejo de Asesoramiento Internacional” of Revista Bíblica, Buenos Aires (Argentina).
Member of the Editorial Board of Revista Dominicana de Teologia, São Paulo (Brazil).
“Investigador integrado”, Centro de Estudos de Religiões e Culturas Cardeal Höffner, Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Lisbon.
Member of the Advisory Board of Res Antiquitatis. Journal of Ancient History “, Universidade Nova de Lisboa / Universidade dos Açores (Portugal).

Awards
Member of the Scientific Council of Cadmo (Universidade de Lisboa, Lisbon),
Member of the Scientific Council of Revista Lusófona de Ciência das Religiões (Universidade Lusófona de Humanidades e Tecnologias, Lisbon).
Doctor Honoris Causa, Universidad San Martín de Porres, Lima, Peru (09/09/2000).
Member of Academia Portuguesa da História, elected “Académico de Mérito” the 16/07/2010.
Price “Pedro Hispano” 2011 (Portugal).
Fr Frans Michallef has been reelected as the Provincial of Malta

The 48th Provincial Chapter of the friars of Malta has reelected Fr Frans Micallef as the Prior Provincial of the Province of Malta for the second term. The Master of the Order, fr Bruno Cadoré has confirmed the election and fr Frans has accepted with the profession of faith.

Fr Frans was born in Rabat in 1948 and completed his education at the Seminary and the College of Philosophy and Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas in Rabat. In 1965 he made his first profession in the Order and was ordained a priest in 1971. He studied music after his ordination.

He has served in various capacities in his province: Socius of the Provincial, Master of Students, Financial Administrator of the Province, Prior of the Convent in Rabat, Rector of St Albert the Great College and Parish Priest of Porto Salvo Parish in Valletta where he set up a community radio station called “Radio Xeb-er-Ras”.

Calendar of the Master of the Order for July 2017

1-8: Haitian Retreat in France
11-25: Canonical Visitation to the Province of Australia
27-31: At the Asia Pacific Common Study at South Korea

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