

Monialibus

*Nuns of the Order of Preachers
International Bulletin*



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Year 2012- Dominican Women and Preaching



"Go and tell my brothers..."

(Jn 20, 15)

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Letter of fr. Brian, op

Dear Sisters in St. Dominic,



The new year speaks of new beginnings. Our God is always a God of new beginnings: "The one who sat on the throne said: Behold, I make all things new." (Rev. 21,5).

In the Old Testament the prophets frequently proclaimed a new beginning, a new era of hope for God's people – themes common to both Advent and Lent:

"Comfort, give comfort to my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her service is at an end, her guilt is expiated ... Though the grass withers and the flower wilts, the word of our God stands forever." Go up onto a high mountain, Zion, herald of glad tidings; Cry out at the top of your voice, Jerusalem, herald of good news! Fear not to cry out and say to the cities of Judah: Here is your God!" (Is 40,1-2. 8-9).

We have begun a new year and God promises us a new beginning, renewed hope and joy. As you know, each year the Order reflects on a new theme as part of our journey toward the Jubilee Year of 2016. This year's theme takes us back to the "new beginning" *par excellence*: the resurrection of Christ.

After Jesus' crucifixion, Mary Magdalene spent the entire night immersed in the darkness of death. Her beloved teacher and Lord was dead. Hope itself seemed to die. But God was not finished with his people. Mary heard a voice in the darkness: "Woman, why are you weeping?" It was a word that resonated with the creative power of the first word that was spoken "in the beginning" (Gn 1). The darkness and chaos of the garden of death turned into a beautiful blossom of life on that *new first day*. "And God saw that it was good."

The risen Christ called Mary Magdalene by name. It is the same voice that we heard call us by name on the day of our baptism. On that day we made our first steps from darkness into the light of Christ – a new beginning. But Jesus did more than call Mary by name; he placed his Word in her mouth and on her lips. She was anointed a prophet as the sun dawned on that first day. "Go and tell my brothers ..." Mary was given a mission, to carry a healing and hopeful word to the community of disciples. It was a new beginning.

The Master of the Order, fr Bruno, frequently asks the nuns what it means for them to share in the preaching mission of the Order. My dear sisters, have you not also been given a Word to speak to the brothers (and sisters)? Does Jesus not say to each of you and to your community as a whole: "Go and tell my brothers..."? The Order's pilgrimage to the Jubilee year 2016 only makes sense if we live these years as a "new beginning," a time of renewal, a time to return to the original fire that gave birth to the Holy Preaching.

This year's theme celebrates the mission of preaching that is lived day to day by the nuns, the apostolic sisters, the lay Dominican women, and Dominican women who are members of secular institutes. What word are you called to speak? As your brother, I would ask you to:

- Speak to us of the liberating power of prayer and silence.
- Tell us of God's tender mercy.
- Help us rediscover the value of poverty and simple living.
- Remind us that we hear God's Word in communal dialogue and in study.

"Go and tell my brothers..." "Go and tell the whole Order..." "Go and tell the world..." Sisters, how do you live this prophetic anointing in your own Dominican life? The Order invites you during this year to listen *anew* to the voice of the risen Christ, so that you might speak a word of life and light to us, your brothers and sisters. Be courageous! The Order needs you! We, your brothers, need you! Like Mary Magdalene

and the disciples in the early Church, share and reflect on the Word of God in community, and then speak that Word to us and to the world. Let it flow out of the monastery through your liturgy, your silence, your creativity, and your communal witness. Help the Order prepare for a new beginning!

Happy New Year! Happy “new beginning” in the Risen Christ!
Fraternally in St. Dominic,
Brother Brian

Original: English

***In a corner of the largest city
of Cameroon, some people are
keeping watch:***

*The Monastery of Our Lady of the Rosary and
of St. Dominic*

Our monastery dates from 1959 when a foundation was made at Libreville in Gabon by the Monastery of Our Lady of the Rosary, of Paray-le-monial, France. In 1975, the monastery was transferred to Douala, in Cameroon. It has been a spiritual center of the city for 35 years.

At the time of the change, we were planning to flee from the city by choosing as our location a suburb of Douala (the great economic capital), a place which is 10 km from the center of the city.

The village of Dikahe, which was virgin forest at the time, today is one of the most populous sectors of the city. We like to tell our visitors that we wanted to flee the city, but alas! It very quickly recaptured us. However, we have the consolation that we still enjoy tranquillity. We can receive groups for days of recollection and retreats, or individuals in search of rest and calm.

The capacity of our guesthouse is 25 beds. Our multi-purpose room can accommodate 35 persons.

The Dominican Fraternity “St. Thomas Aquinas” holds its general meeting every third Sunday in our reception room. The group celebrates its commitment ceremonies in our chapel. Also the Dominican Youth from time to time make days of recollection

at our centre, accompanied by a Dominican friar. Their dynamism and dedication are exemplary.

In our community there are eight nuns. The average age is 50. It is evident that, as everywhere else, girls do come to share our life but they return to the world or enter other religious institutes.

Collaboration among our monasteries is slowly taking small steps. After we had benefited for three years from the effective help of our sisters from the monastery of Bambui-Cameroon, the Holy Spirit turned us, on the fifth of May, 2010, toward our sister of Ngoxi –Burundi. We elected Sr. Mary Constance prioress of Douala. In her determination, she is learning courageously to live in the seasons of great heat. Her presence is renewing the community because of the discretion which she exercises.

The novitiate is awaiting young girls who are now continuing their studies.

The Eucharistic celebrations of Sundays and feasts are led by a group of young people: St. Dominic’s Choir, already 17 years old. Our choir has to be multilingual. Cameroon counts more than 232 local languages in a population of about 19 million, 406 thousand. Besides the Choir, we have a Liturgy group which has been in existence for 15 years. Their preparation for feasts and Sundays is done every Saturday. The liturgy is lively, with the participation of about 250 of the faithful. From the St. Dominic Choir there have already emerged one priest and two young people still in formation. From the Liturgy group too we have a seminarian.

Our daily Eucharists are celebrated by Dominican Friars or by other priests of the city.

Our activities:

The sewing workshop, where a nun of the community works with 3 girls, functions well. Our priests and seminarians have been happy with their cassocks and liturgical vestments “made by the Dominican Nuns of P.K.10.” Even if there are as many as 13 ordinations, each ordinand is satisfied.

In the altar-bread department, a nun is in charge, assisted by two ladies who do the baking. Several nuns help to complete the work. The packets of hosts are then deposited at the Archbishop's house, where each parish of the dioceses come also.

Having made with you this little tour of our world, the small Dominican community of P.K.10, Douala-Bassa, directs toward the Lord a great thank-you for the path we have travelled. Our Sr. Mary Michael, already in the Father's House, joins us in this thanksgiving. We entrust to Providence the path which we have yet to travel. We continue our march toward the Kingdom, wanting to allow the Lord to act in our lives.

Your sisters in Douala.

Sister Marietta of Christ , o.p.

Original: French

Newest Monastery in
North America:
the Holy Preaching in Squamish,
Western Canada

We are always delighted to read news, reflections and reports from our Sister communities throughout the world and now we are pleased to share a small time-capsule that contains a few of the formative events in the growth of *Queen of Peace Monastery*, a community that is eleven years old.

Extending the Mission of the Order

In keeping with the Order's mission to preach Jesus Christ in those places where the Order is not yet fully present, and underscored by the Church's conviction that "the future of mission depends to a great extent on contemplation" (see *Redemptoris Missio*, 91), the seed for a new foundation in North America was planted by the Master, Bro. Timothy Radcliffe OP, and his Council in 1996. While Prouilhe's daughter monastery was established in francophone Berthierville, Quebec in 1925, the other side of this vast country of Canada – some 5,000 kilometres away (Madrid to Moscow is 3,500 kilometres), now called for the presence of all

branches of the Dominican Family to join several friars already in western Canada.



**The First Five Volunteers Arrive,
*Advent 1999***

Bro. Timothy's call for volunteers from USA monasteries for a foundation in western Canada saw the arrival of five nuns in Vancouver in Advent 1999, something only made possible by the visionary, courageous and generous sponsorship of the *Monastery of the Blessed Sacrament* (Farmington Hills, Michigan, USA), a monastery with a large missionary heart.

Equally essential was the very real spiritual and financial accompaniment of all the other monasteries in the USA. Few North American monasteries had nuns to mission to a new foundation, yet they consistently made sacrifices from their own meager resources to bring into being this new community.

The US nuns' support of the mission stems from their conviction about the Order's call to this new territory and the venture's collaborative nature.

The First Ten Years

By 2009 the community had grown to eight solemnly professed Sisters, a Sister in formation and a postulant, all living in a family-style house surrounded by a beautiful Canadian cedar forest in Langley, an outer suburb of Vancouver. A large barn behind the house served as a workshop for our monastic arts such as icons, pottery, painting, sculpture and woodwork, and a small bakery, and of course, equipment necessary to maintain 6.5 hectares (16 acres) of land. To satisfy government regulations on this land, we kept a small flock of sheep and lambs

under the able care of one of the nuns, a flock that was guarded vigilantly, day and night, by our llama, Honey-Rose. Llamas are excellent shepherds who keep the coyotes (wild dogs) away from the flock! By this stage five cats had settled into monastic life with us, cats belonging to neighbours who could see that their animals preferred the cloister.

Modelling a New Form of Collaboration

During these first ten years we had made a sustained effort to live our regular life according to LCM. A tangible sense of being missioned in the spirit of St Dominic enabled us to transcend many of the difficulties that accompany any new venture. Throughout these early years we attempted to insert ourselves into the local Church and the wider community of the city. The fraternal support of our brothers in Vancouver has always accompanied the community, an expression of the loving and healing presence of God to us through our collaboration. Equally important in this Dominican collaboration has been the presence of two active, vibrant chapters of Dominican laity, and the establishment of our Adrian Dominican Sisters from Michigan, USA in the neighbouring diocese of Prince George, BC, has brought about the presence of all branches of the OP Family in this region.

Canonical Establishment 2009

Our fledgling monastery was able to attain its canonical status as an autonomous monastery in October 2009, during a joyful solemn celebration of the Eucharist in the presence of our wonderful Archbishop J. Michael Miller CSB; diocesan clergy who had been serving our monastery with daily Eucharist over the years; a Benedictine monk representing Vancouver's Westminster Abbey; loyal, hardworking and generous friends and volunteers; a large number of friars with the rest of the Vancouver Dominican Family; and nuns who had come from the USA to represent their monasteries so closely involved in bringing to birth this newest foundation on this continent. The

presence of family members of several nuns completed this significant event.

During the Eucharist the Archbishop read the proclamation of the Master of the Order, Br. Carlos Aspiroz-Costa, OP, appointing Sr Clarie Marie Rolf, OP, formerly of Langeac and Prouilhe, and a Canadian by birth, as the first prioress of Queen of Peace. Accepting this appointment, Sr Claire made the *venia* before the entire assembly while the choir, organ and trumpets led us all in singing the Dominican *Magnificat* (composer Fergus Kerr, OP), a most moving moment for everyone, but especially for those nuns who had now formally transfiliated to the new monastery.

The simultaneous celebration of the golden jubilee of profession of two Nuns from Queen of Peace demonstrates once more, that all Dominicans, including nuns, must be prepared to be itinerant preachers. Our oldest Sister celebrated her 91st birthday not long after this event: age and stage are no impediment to mission.

A Permanent Home: "Living Stones"

It was clear we had outgrown our house at Langley and were unable to welcome young women inquirers. After several years of searching, in December 2009 we located property in the Canadian wilderness on which to establish a permanent English-speaking monastery of the Order in Squamish, an hour north of Vancouver city. This is a beautiful and strategic location within the Archdiocese to build a small, modest but beautiful monastery capable of welcoming up to twenty nuns, and a small guest-house.

The entire community worked diligently and reflectively to develop a community consensus and vision for the monastery and its chapel. These efforts to articulate our hopes and dreams, and attempts to try to express in stone, wood and glass, our understanding of all that is precious in Dominican monastic living has been hard work; it has also enabled us to grow together, since we are very aware that we are "the living stones."

Our architectural plans were drawn up by a gifted local firm, and during this period there have been concerted fund-raising efforts, including the recent sale of the house which was our home for the last eight years. By the end of May 2011, we were able to have a celebration to bless the land, some 34 hectares (82 acres) and to break ground for the monastery building.



In this awesome setting, on a rocky plateau above the Squamish River Valley, we listened to the gospel of the person who built his house on rock (Luke 6:47-49) and we prayed and sang with our Archbishop Miller and a small representative group of friends, Dominican Family, diocesan priests, and persons assisting us in the project.

Since moving to Squamish in August 2010, our presence in our temporary lodging has been attracting a variety of people who wish to share our prayer and the silence and beauty of God's creation. During this time of transition into a permanent monastery one of our valued experiences is Sunday celebration of the Eucharist in our local parish, 30 minutes' drive, where the pastor and parishioners have given us a warm welcome. We are fortunate that we are able to celebrate the Eucharist most days of the week in our own small chapel with our Dominican brothers and various diocesan priests.

The final item to note in our time-capsule history is that we are surrounded by various kinds of wildlife in the Squamish River Valley – bear, deer, skunks, raccoons, salmon, chipmunks, elk, bald eagles, humming birds, and even a few cougars. Like our neighbours we are learning to co-habit

responsibly with native plants and animals, and our building will be very green.

We look forward to moving into the new monastery by the end of 2012, and welcome the support of your prayer as we learn to grow in awareness of the particular mission to which we are being called by God, under the mantle of Mary, Queen of Peace, and St Dominic.

From the Community of Queen of Peace Monastery

You will find further information with photos and videos at www.dominicannunsbc.ca

Original: English

Dominican Preaching

Monastery-Notre-Dame de la Clarté -
Taulignan, FRANCE

The Monastery of Notre-Dame de la Clarté is located in the south of France, midway between Lyon and Marseille. There are 16 sisters between 30 and 90 years old. A postulant came on All Saints Day. A great amount of work, especially to the kitchen and the guest area, is currently underway and involve a lot of interest and time. A new focus of livelihood is also underway with the launch of the cultivation of aromatic plants. The color is definitely green! - Our links with Africa are close since the foundation of the monastery of Rweza in Burundi, now autonomous since 1988, but where two of our Sisters lived over 10 years.

Preaching by Scripture:

Three years ago, we were approached by the magazine "PANORAMA" to write for their readers, a little commentary on the Gospel of the day, to appear each month, in addition to the magazine itself, in the form of a booklet entitled "Biblical Meditations."

We just handed this work over to the Sisters of the Monastery of Beaufort, and at the end of our own experience, we are happy to share some thoughts for Monialibus about this silent preaching that is new to us until now. It was a real source of spiritual enrichment, with the joy of increasing our

prayer to the dimensions of the suffering world. Indeed, these meditations have brought us a great deal of correspondence. Reactions to our texts are generally benevolent and show a real communion. However, most importantly, entrusting to our prayer, a flood of intentions full of both distress and trust were very moving. We kept all the letters until the following *Maundy Thursday* where they were presented on the altar, then burnt in the fire of Easter! So many requests of all kinds could only increase our desire to respond in the Church, to our mission of prayer and compassion.

In addition to this opening of human misery, another enrichment came from the work itself. We divided the work between eight Sisters. First, we had to meditate and deeply ponder the word personally. Second, to find its meaning and the words that would speak best to the heart of the readers. Finally, to write them down as best as possible and accept any corrections from the journalist in charge of editing. From the beginning, we made it a duty to edit each other's texts and critique them before sending them to the magazine. It was a great fraternal cooperation, but also sometimes a beneficial asceticism, because all of the Gospel pericopes are not so easy to understand, especially if we are to extract the depth to share it with others!

Preaching on the Internet

Another collaboration has been sought from us this year 2011 by the Dominican Friars of *Lille* who wanted to involve the nuns in their beautiful realization of the "Retreat in the city." For countries that ignored this new way of preaching, it is a matter of spreading the Word of God through the Internet throughout Lent, as a sort of retreat in the heart of everyday life. In preparation for Easter, a meditation or a theme of reflections for everyday, prayers, tapes of the Divine Office of the Brethren, were suggestions made as some opportunities for dialogue. The number of Internet users interested in this new mode of preaching, and would not

have otherwise been reached by us, has never stopped growing. At present there are more than 50,000 users. The Friars have asked us to make it available in this way; the third week of Lent; the Sunday of the Good Samaritan and the following week. Here, it was not just writing a text, it was also reading it. Hence, a fairly close collaboration with our Dominican brothers since both the text itself and recording of the sisters "prêcheresses" should be adapted to the particular style of Preaching on the Internet. This time there were only two sisters. One took the longer texts on Sunday and the other took the whole week. These were short texts on a single theme that she called "By the current of water". The adjustments and corrections were made by telephone, and two young brothers came to our place to tape us. The whole community participated in the taping of Vespers and our liturgical prayer which were also part of the program. The whole process was much work and a significant investment of time, but the benefit was similar to that of the meditations we did for Panorama: a broadening of our horizon of prayer, the source of friendly contacts, plus the joy of working with young brothers whom we admired for their dedication, competence and apostolic zeal. They neglected nothing to make everything possible in order to fulfill the goal they pursued together: to proclaim Christ to the world!

"Making Dominique known"

Last August Fr. Brian Pierce, OP visited with us. A reflection from him during a meeting led us to an exchange about the Dominican charism, and brother Brian suggested that we share it with you. The discussion occurred in response to a question Fr. Brian shared with us and often encountered in meetings of the Dominican family. The leaders of Dominican youth movements see, in fact most of the time, their numbers disappearing in the wild when they could continue in the family, especially by engaging in the laity. The reason most often mentioned for this mass defection is the poor

image they have of the Dominican laity: in general, that of a group of elderly people reciting the rosary. Similarly, it is often difficult for brothers to escape the usual caricatures of intellectuals, or inquisitors. But at the same time it seems that there is something else, a lack upstream, of a real appeal to the Dominican spirituality.

A sister then noted that the figure of a Dominic is in fact much less attractive than that of Francis of Assisi or a Therese of Lisieux. We then went around to all the participants. It turned out that gathered for this meeting were not only the nuns and the brother but also an apostolic sister and a lay Dominican. We heard that no one in the group, knew Dominic (or so little) before entering the Order. The Dominican charism is discovered after several years, as it is being experienced. What attracts to the Order is not generally the figure of Dominic, but the meeting of brothers and sisters, or a particular desire to live the Word of God, or something else one cannot name. Others mentioned the ways of God Providence. We do not always know why we entered the Order, but we know why we stay.

The main feature of the Dominican charism is to be communitarian. It is the community that presents the face of Dominic. It is the different branches of the family that show the face of Dominic in which we find constant joy, simplicity and freedom. "When you know a dominicain, you know ... a Dominican." We cannot deduce the Order through one person. We cannot be Dominican alone.



At Prouilhe, in 1206, the Holy Preaching began with what would become all parts of the Dominican family: Nuns, Dominic's companions (they were not yet "brothers"), laity people welcomed by Dominic to be associated in this work themselves, as actors of the Holy Preaching. Today, we can mention two examples among others, of works of preaching involving the whole Dominican family: the Retreat in the city (proposed on the Internet during Lent) and the Rosary Pilgrimage. In one as in the other, all branches of the families are involved, each according to its own charism. For each of the two, it is the huge public demand that has led to the involvement of the entire family in order to be able to meet the demand. The diversity of charisms in the family can meet the demands in their diversity. But then, if the Dominican charism is discovered through many years of experience, how can we communicate it to young people attending the Dominican family for a time too short to grasp it?

We have stayed on this issue, and we invite you to share your answers also!

Sr Marie-Pascale and Sr Mary Magdalene, op, monastery of Taulignan

Original: French

En recuerdo de la últimas monjas cubanas

Sister Yolanda of the Infant Jesus
and Sister Trinidad

These two nuns saw the monastery through difficult moments but regardless of all the difficulties, they were pillars of strength. They closed the eyes of the elderly nuns. The government wanted to remove the monastery from them but Sister Yolanda fought against this situation. She had to make some changes with Cardinal Jaime Ortega Alamino. They had to give up the big monastery for a small monastery which used to belong to the Redemptorists and is now our Monastery of Saint Catherine "the Small"

(as Sister Trinidad used to say). The old monastery became a priestly house to welcome the priests from Cuba and other places. This exchange had to be done otherwise they would have lost their monastery.

Sister Trinidad died on the 14th of April 2010 at the age of 84. She used to be optimist and happy, she encouraged us to overcome the difficulties. She was very charitable. She always tried to introduce the Cuban culture to us (as most of us were foreigners). Her teachings were fruitful for some of us.

She wrote a short book with her poems "Contemplation times". When she prayed before the Holy Sacrament she liked to draw the face of Jesus as she imagined it.

At dawn when the bell rang for pray, the first thing she used to do was to kiss the tabernacle. Seven times a day at prayer time she greeted Jesus with a kiss and spoke to Him. She said that when we founded a new monastery her bones should be taken with us, like Joseph's, even before the first stone was put down. She stole food to give it to the poor and we pretended not to have seen her. She liked to please all the nuns at mealtimes. She used to say that if we had vocations after she had died we should think she was with God in heaven. She asked us to bury her under the avocado pear tree because she was scared of being alone in the graveyard. She was the joy of the monastery for her good mood and her reliance in God.

On the 25th of July 2011 Sister Yolanda of the Infant Jesus died at the age of 75, one year after Sister Trinidad's death. She was very observant, she always took care that the Constitutions were fulfilled. She was very careful with the archives. She liked working on the history of the monastery. She restored some images. She suffered because we were few nuns but at the same time she encouraged us to think that one day the monastery would be full of nuns so that we could found another monastery in other provinces.

When she was a novice she was sent to Colombia where she took her vows. After 19 years she came back to her country at the age

of 43. She always spoke with affection about the monasteries of Colombia. It was a sign from God for her to return to her country so she was able to avoid the monastery being closed down.

She asked the Federation of Mexico Our Lady of Guadalupe for help in 1989. She was Prioress for many years. She worked hard trying to retrieve a piece of land which was adjacent to our small monastery. She taught us to live with difficulties in this country.

She was admired because she was able to overcome difficult moments with calmness and serenity. She was sick but she wished to go on living and to do a lot of things especially for vocations. Like Sister Trinidad she longed for a Cuban vocation, we did not expect her to die. Five adolescents from Camaguey came to our monastery to meet us and Sister Yolanda was preparing a talk for them about the history of the monastery and on adolescent conduct. After the talk she had lunch, had a rest and worked for a while. In the afternoon we said goodbye to the adolescents and she seemed very happy because she saw the fruit of Sister Trinidad's prayers for vocations. After this we went to the chapel when suddenly she fell into one of the sister's arms, she couldn't breathe properly and she died. The Lord took her to him.

We ask our two Cuban nuns to intercede for our community and may the Lord give us Cuban vocations. Sister Yolanda used to say: "The Lord knows why things happen. We should let Him do what He has to do"

Original: Spanish

Passionately fond of the Eucharist

The year in preparation of the centenary of the death of Sr. M. Luisa Maresca, of the Dominican Monastery of Sorrento has recently started. This Nun died on the 5th May, 1912. the Nuns of her Community, the Lay Dominicans and many inhabitants of Sorrento who venerate with devotion and love the memory of this Nun, have taken the opportunity of this anniversary to meditate on the original and rich human, christian and dominican history of this religious who lived and died in odour of sanctity.

Born in Naples, on the 4th July, 1872 in a middle-class family, for a number of necessities and providential circumstances, she is accepted, while still a girl, by the Dominican Nuns of the Monastery of Santa Maria delle Grazie in Sorrento, where one of her aunties lived. She spends her childhood and her teens here becoming familiar with the Dominican Contemplative life, learning to love it so much to the point of choosing it as the way of consecrating herself to God. The death of her father and the stubborn will of her mother to prevent her stay in the monastery, obliged her to leave but only for a few days, because when she became of age she returned, determined to become a member of that Dominican cloistered community.

When she finished her novitiate, she professed her vows on the 1st December, 1894 and from that day onwards she clearly evidenced faithfulness to her duties of a contemplative religious: from prayer to penitence, from her service of charity to a serene obedience. Sr. M. Luisa distinguished herself for the quality with which she realised her *Sequela Christi*.

Her faithfulness to all the duties of a cloistered life was so evident and convinced that her Sisters and the Priests who were her spiritual directors, unanimously acknowledge it. Both the first and the latter left numerous and beautiful witnesses of her rich spiritual life: example of every virtue,

from obedience to humility, from charity to penitence. Sr. M. Luisa spread the 'good perfume' of Christ in her Community and even beyond it.

In the realistic 'symphony' of virtue that we can listen to in the life of Sr. M. Luisa, there is a note which stands out higher than the others: her love for the Holy Eucharist. She was deeply fond of the eucharistic mystery as can easily be deduced from the life and experience of our Sorrento Sisters.

Above all she loved spending long hours praying in front of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, living a personal encounter with the Lord. Her familiarity with the tabernacle made her grow in love and know deeply her Divine Master who taught her to share the passion of God for the salvation of the world. The beauty of this experience, united on one part to the conviction that from the Eucharist flows every grace for the world and on the other part to the desire of imbuing the other Sisters and possibly a great number of other persons with the love for the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of our Saviour, made her write a book entitled *Eucharistic Novena*. When one reads this work and goes beyond the literary form, evidently influenced by the period in which it was written, one finds numerous and bright rays of theology and eucharistic spirituality. Evident product and clear witness of what John Paul II called the "lived theology of saints" (Novo Millennio Ineunte n. 27).

In the considerations written by Sr. M. Luisa one can perceive, on one side a condensed expression of a deep love for the Holy Eucharist which in the theology and poems of St. Thomas of Aquinas found a sublime expression, and on the other part, in this same book of the Nun of Sorrento, it's not difficult to deduct the anticipation of what the Vatican Council II will say about the Eucharist: that it is the *culmen et fons* of ecclesiastical life and of the personal experience of every christian.

In a background and historical period in which the life of the Christian community and that of every single believer dedicate a

lot of time to devotional forms, certainly important, but secondary compared to the Eucharist, Sr. M. Luisa draws the attention of her Sisters and of the whole Church (she wrote to the Pope several times), to the necessity of cult and devotion for the Sacrament of the Supper of the Lord. These are her words: "Many novenas are said for the feasts of Saints, so why not recite one for the first of all Saints, for the feast of Chorpus Domini?". A niece of Sr. M. Luisa, Sr. Maria Margherita Maresca (who entered the Monastery of Sorrento and was afterwards sent to the Monastery of St. Dominic in Pisa), writes about her aunt: "Not only the novena of the feast of Chorpus Domini, but for her Holy Thursday too was a day of paradise. She was never tired of praying in front of the Blessed Sacrement where she remained all day and throughout the night. She also invited us to do the same, thus we all tried our best to remain as long as possible for the adoration with her, even during the night hours.

As a real daughter of St. Dominic, Sr. M. Luisa was always assiduous in all the observances of the dominican contemplative life, she also cultivated marian devotion and the Rosary. Above all, in a very short time she grew in her deep love for the Lord, so much so that she was able to accept with admirable serenity the illness which would conduct her to death, her Sisters say that a few hours before she died, her face revealed an outstanding joy, while she whispered: "Dear Mother, you are so beautiful!", and at the same time she blew a kiss to the Virgin Mary.

Sr. M. Luisa died on the 5th May, 1912, only forty years old. Humanly speaking, still young, but she was mature for the Kingdom of the Lord according to God's judgement. Her charity had reached such high peaks that allowed her to see "face to face" He whom till that day she had seen and loved while "hidden" in the sacrament of the Eucharist.

The Dominican Nuns of Sorrento –
Italy

Original: English

Diario de viaje

International Commission of Nuns

Rome 6 -14 -IX-2011

Our journey to Rome was successful despite the initial fright because some flights to Italy had been cancelled because of the strike. We arrived in Rome and after getting our luggage we went to the arrivals area where Fr. Brian, Sister Vicenza and Sister Chiara, the driver sister, were waiting for us. Fr. Brian told us what it was prepared for the following day: Eucharist with Lauds at 7:15 a.m. in Santa Sabina and after the audience with the Holy Father! Fr. Brian remained at the airport waiting for the rest of sisters.

On the 7th, Wednesday, it was a sunny day in Rome with a beautiful blue sky and a very good temperature. We took the Eucharist in Santa Sabina with the friars of the community, the Curia, the members and, of course, the Master of the Order who greeted us personally when Mass over. At the first sight his simplicity, delicacy and kindness is surprising. He asked us to pray for him and for the Order when we were with the Pope. After breakfast we went to St. Peter's Square and as we had an invitation we got an excellent place, near the altar where the Pope was going to pass.



The sight of the two towers of the Basilica and the number of people from different languages and places with the same wish was impressive: to meet the Vicar of Christ and listen to his word. I cannot describe what I felt when I saw the Pope so near. All of us enjoyed the experience a lot. The square was full of people although we

could not appreciate how many people there were from where we were. In the evening we started our work in the Commission. Fr Brian welcomed us and gave us the timetable for those days. He talked several things about the liturgy and the work we were going to carry out.

The interpreter was Fr. Leonardo Almazán, from the Province of St Martin of Porres, in Texas, (EE.UU), the same Province as Brian.

On the 8th, the birthday of the Virgin Mary, we started the day with Eucharist and Lauds in Santa Sabina. In the morning and in the afternoon we started our work by regions. After dinner we went to see the Coliseum which is beautiful and majestic at night.

On the 9th, in the afternoon, at 4:15 p.m. we went down to Saint Sixtus passing through Saint Mary Intempulo, taking the same route as St. Dominic used to. The cloister and the church of St Sixtus are beautiful, nowadays sisters of a Congregation of apostolic life live: Dominican Missionary Sisters of St Sixtus. There are more than 50 sisters as it is the Mother House of the Congregation. We visited the refectory where our Father preformed the miracle of bread to feed 100 friars and the chapter. Both are real jewels. The sisters were very kind. After Vespers we all had dinner together.

On the 10th, we started the day praying Lauds in our father's cell. After breakfast we had a talk with the Master which was very fraternal, sincere and close. The Master is a serious, deep and respectful person. It is a pleasure to listen to him talking. He has a very soft voice and speaks as if his voice comes from his heart. We were very comfortable with him, we asked, he answered... At 12:30 p.m. he celebrated the Eucharist in our Father's cell. We had lunch with the friars so we could speak to them.

On Sunday 11th we had free time. We visited the Basilica of St Peter. In the evening we prayed Vespers with the nuns from Monte Mario which is the first Italian Monastery founded by our Father on the 28th of February of 1221. We enjoyed praying

before the icon of St Mary and looking at different relics very much: our Father's breviary, a piece of his skull and a tooth and one of St Catherina of Siena's hand. The nuns prepared a spectacular dinner with a delicious pizza. It was a gift to share all this with them.

On the 12th fr Philippe Toxé, the General Procurator, talked to us about some juridical matters and how to proceed with them. In the evening after dinner we watched the film about Antonio Montesinos called "Even the rain".

On the 13th we had the Eucharist in our Father's cell. Every day we prayed for all the nuns, for all our monasteries and for vocations, especially for the Order.

It was the last day and we went over all we had done: some comments and details and the next meeting. All of us value these meetings, we enjoyed the mutual familiarity. It is an incentive and helpful for us to share and get to know other realities as we don't have too many opportunities to go out and experience other things.

At 12:00 a.m. Fr Vito T. Gomez who is a historian and the Postulator of the causes of saints in the Order showed us the Basilica of Santa Sabina. It is the oldest church in Rome (5th Century) and it was given to our Father as a gift by the Pope Honorio III who also gave his house that was built beside the church of the monastery.



The history contained inside these walls is a reason to bless and glorify God, especially thinking of all the saints who have touched these columns such as: St Thomas Aquinas, Blessed Jordan of Saxony, St Hyacinth of Poland and the Blessed Ceslaus. The Chapel where St Pius V took the habit is intact.

In the afternoon we had a meeting with the Dominican International Sisters (DSI), an international movement of Dominican Sisters who try to create links among all the sisters of apostolic life throughout the world for the sake of the mission of the Order. The international Coordinator is Sr Fabiola Velasquez, O.P. We shared their projects with them: join forces so as the preaching of all the sisters of apostolic life around the world can be more visible and efficient.

We prayed Vespers together and after we had dinner with them and the friars: a delicious pizza. We enjoyed participating in the Word and later of the table. The brothers of Santa Sabina are very fraternal and hospitable. We felt at home.

On the 14th we returned to our place of origin. All of us were very happy for the opportunity and the grace of having lived together these days. We have appreciated the magnificence of St Dominic's work and its continuity during centuries for the charisma of the mission of preaching. We bless God for the gift of Dominican fraternity and the joy of the communion.

Original: Spanish

Message of the Master to the ICN

Roma, 10th September 2011

When we talk about the nuns in the Order, we must speak about specific and personal situations.

The missions of the nuns is different, it is universal. In my opinion we should always think that nuns and friars were founded together. At the beginning our father didn't plan to found anything, he just saw great need. The Church was not at its best moment so he wanted to do something although he didn't know what. Our father, little by little,

discovered that there were others who wanted preach; they preached in a very important way, that is, telling humanity who God is. He and his brothers showed example in their way of life; they were called to be perfect.

Women were the first ones to be converted. Saint Dominic realized that when you are preaching and someone is listening, you receive the fruit of preaching. Our first sign as preachers is born from conversion. We must convert. The nuns in the Order are not just "contemplative" but a Dominican sign of contemplative preaching.

My dream, my wish is to do something together because we have a common mission. Our commitment is one: to have the same mission in the Order. We need to live a human life, in relation to all the communities because there are few and in difficult situations. But we must know how to discern because, what we didn't want for our old and sick mother, we shouldn't want for our sisters who are in a precarious position.

One of the signs which indicate that we have reached our mission is fraternity: being brothers and sisters; listening to the preached word. In the Church the Benedictines pattern is the most common. The abbess is the pattern for ever. But, how many mothers do we have in our monasteries? The prioress in our case is different because she is the first one among sisters; democratically she is called to be at the service of the community. It is better to alternate her and not postulate the prioress.

In the name of God nobody has power. In the following years I would like to see how the monasteries open their doors and we are converted. The Holy Spirit should give us joy and not fear, peace and not discord. Sometimes we prefer talking about ourselves being the centre instead of leaving God to be the centre.

We join together to talk about the enclosure or the habit which is necessary but it is not the most important thing. What has to do with everybody must be discussed by everybody. I think that our International Commission of Nuns (ICN), as the

federations, should help the prioress to be prioress. There is a problem in some regions when the nuns gather in the regular chapter the sisters cannot put forward points to be discussed only the prioress decides the themes to be dealt with.

The life that we want to live is not easy. The number of vocations is not important. We need vocations, this is true, but we shouldn't become paralysed by this matter. If we live our mission vocations will come but we cannot buy vocations in the market. It is a grace and a gift having vocations where they arise. When we are afraid of closing a monastery it is because we are afraid that life, as a gift, comes to us.

As Master I won't do anything the nuns don't want to do. We can live together or alone. I am going to visit our brothers; the partners will make long visit and later the Master will make a short visit. After talking to the brothers I will try to meet the nuns.

I hope that nuns and friars could work and prepare the future of the mission together. Sometimes the friars meddle in the nuns' affairs and this is not polite. Working together is not that. We are preparing the Jubilee so it would be good to study ourselves looking to the future. There is not one particular method to coordinate the nuns that is why we need to sit down together and work to prepare the future. I am not talking about closing this monastery or that one but to help each other.

If young people see that the nuns and the friars are working to be a credible sign they will come and be interested in our life. The nuns pray for the friars but the friars also pray for the nuns. We are a family.

Nobody should be surprised because the Master has a meeting with the Prioresses to discuss the situation or the reality in each region. Study among the nuns has to be fostered. Study is as important as cooking or making something to be sold and it is common in our family. We need to help our mind and let the Holy Spirit reach our heart to open ways in our life.

Our contemplation is also study. We must be creative although it might be

difficult because of culture, but we need to do it. We should make a plan of permanent study and initial study. Each nun has to be contemplative and to be contemplative the nun has to study. To respect human life we have to look after our mind and our heart. We must study; this is what St. Dominic left us to be free. It is good to share our own experience. We must be brave to value the situation of each monastery and if it is better that some monasteries go on surviving instead of living. The only authority is love and this is what can help us to obtain solutions.

Our Order must propose a happy way to live according to our vocation. You are not only contemplative nuns but Dominican contemplative nuns. We are part of a mission that St. Dominic started; we are not a hollow to be filled. All the people who joined St. Dominic wanted to join his mission. The nuns are a presence in the Holy Preaching. The friars and the nuns preach in different ways. We should ask ourselves: How do we preach? There are three ways of preaching: liturgy, prayer and writing a letter. We shouldn't be worried about staying in the enclosure. The point is to live the mission of preaching from the enclosure.

Echoes from the Commission

*International Commission of Nuns
Rome, September 2011*

During the meeting of the commission in Rome, after a time to share what is lived in the monasteries of the various regions of the world, we discussed on themes important to our monastic life such as prayer, study, work, etc. Every sister had prepared a brief introduction to launch the debate. These reflections were not initially meant to be published, but we share some of them with you. May they help you to have beautiful discussions in your communities as they did for us!

PRAYER

Sr Josefa – Prague, Czech Republic

In my reflections on prayer I took as a point of departure St. Dominic and his prayer-life, according to our Constitutions that say about the first nuns that “they had no other teacher to form them to the life of the Order”.

St. Dominic was formed in the monastic tradition:

- meditated on the Scriptures > his prayer for obtaining love issued from this meditation, as he discovered God’s plan of salvation;
- was inspired by the spirit of the Beatitudes (the Gospel of Matthew);
- lived the inner presence of Christ by grace (the epistles of Paul);
- read the Church Fathers, esp. Cassian > knew the tradition of the unceasing prayer of the heart as practiced by the desert monks;
- he prayed in the churches and in nature as he walked long miles through the fields;
- he taught the first nuns to pray, encouraging them to intercede for the Holy Preaching and for the salvation of souls.

Intercession

Carrying others with their worries, joys and sorrows, in the inner sanctuary of compassion, lifting them to God;

Prayer

For us Dominicans is closely linked to the Word of God. It is based on the Scripture; we contemplate God’s advent, his coming to us in Jesus; our prayer is incarnational: we pray through Christ. We look for him in the Annunciation (the frescos of fra Angelico), in his preaching, in his poverty on the Cross (again, fra Angelico’s favourite theme). We adore him in the Blessed Sacrament as the Word Incarnate. Our prayer of the Rosary is christocentric; it shows us how much God

loves us, and it teaches us how to respond to him after Mary’s example.

Contemplation

While liturgy is a sort of action (we give thanks – “*gratiorum actio*”), pure prayer is a sheer gift. We can only prepare for it, be open to it. So we need to find a way which leads us into receptive silence. It may be silent repetition of a prayer word or attentive listening to one’s breath or pondering on a Scripture verse, anything that helps us to be with God, here and now. St. Thomas says: ‘Contemplation consists in the simple enjoyment of the truth’. This, of course, is not a truth *about* something, but *the* Truth who is our Life. ‘I am enjoying the silence,’ a prayerful lay Dominican said recently.

Prayerful way of life

The monastic concept of *leisure* (LCM 36), being *free for God alone* (Fund. Const. LCM 1) – what does it mean? Could it be trying to live without stress, open to the Spirit who forms us into free people? Embracing the peace of Christ – learning to be in peace with ourselves, with God, with others, with nature? Simple – but not easy!

LITURGY

Sr Isabelle – Estavayer-le-Lac, Switzerland

The point of departure of my reflection is the last sentence of LCM 75, which I actually discovered on the occasion of this assignment. It reads: “The solemn celebration of the liturgy is the heart of our whole life and the chief source of its unity”. Let us see how liturgy is at the heart of our prayer life, at the heart of our whole life, at the heart of our common life and how it is the source of their unity.

I - Liturgy is at the heart of our prayer life and the chief source of its unity.

There is a constant back and forth between personal prayer, *lectio divina* and liturgy. We see Dominic stay in church after

office and pray at length, as if office had opened up streams of prayer. But the reverse is also true.

We all have had the experience of reading a psalm or a bit of scripture during lectio, and then it suddenly comes alive during the next office or it is another psalm that it lit up by what we have meditated. In that sense it can be said that liturgy gives life to our lectio divina.

In the same way, it can be said to give flesh to our personal prayer: by ourselves, we can just doze off, or lock ourselves in a little world of our own during our long times of oratio and sr Monica adds that someone who is neglecting liturgy, has often been neglecting personal prayer before that.. Liturgy is what brings of objectivity to our prayer life

In this way, we attain a necessary balance between objectivity and subjectivity.

- a subjectivity which comes from our intimate and personal relationship with God
- an objectivity which comes from the fact that during liturgy we don't only pray what we like, when we like it, and how we like, but we are appointed by the Church for the "work of divine praise".

II – Liturgy is at the heart of our whole life and the chief source of its unity.

"The various offices of the day are like the pillars of a bridge. Their only function is to carry the roadway. What use would those pillars be if they weren't covered by the roadway that unites the two sides of the river. The various times of prayer are just milestones for an unceasing prayer." (Adalbert de Vogüé, O.S.B.)

Several times a day, in the middle of our various occupations, we get together to pray the Lord and we bring with ourselves what is the fabric of our day: our joy, our sadness, our fervor, our tiredness... In that sense, liturgy is a moment of truth for each of us and for the community. It is the expression of our common life. That is why our liturgical life has its ups and downs, its moments of enthusiasm or strain, of joy and hurt.

Seeing a community celebrate usually gives a good perception of how this community lives, it will reflect the atmosphere of our life, our work, our common life. Our office is what people have access to, and they quickly "get the feel" of a community. A visitor can often sense if there is peace, prayer, unity in the community. That is why the best compliment is not "This celebration was splendid," "you sang well," "you have a nice voice," but it is: "I could sense the unity of your community," "here I can pray."

III - How can liturgy help us unify the community?

LCM offers wide possibilities for each community to organize its liturgy, from Latin to vernacular, from recitation to chanting (*ord.8*), and that is a good thing. There is no such thing as a perfect liturgy, but there is a liturgy that corresponds to a given community in a given place at a given time. Liturgy can be a very simple thing because the sisters are few or old, but if it is adapted to the community, it gains new beauty and prayerfulness. That is what Dominic wanted: he wanted it to be well sung, with fervor, yet, as a practical man he also asked that it not be so long as to lose devotion (I Const., dist I, chap 4, 82#2)

Liturgy is vital to our life because it is time wise our most important way of praying to God and appropriating Scripture, so it is crucial that sisters can live in a liturgical ambiance that they feel comfortable with. A lot of communities in my region are made up of sisters coming from various monastic horizons and this makes it even more crucial that every one has a voice, that no one feel totally left out.

Original: English

*God always leads us where he
is waiting for us*

In July 2011, our brother Brian Pierce, promoter of the nuns, visited us. He spoke about the Word of God in the heart of our lives and the need to share it. "This is our charism" he said. "What we receive from God is not to keep to ourselves but to give to the world who thirsts for God, even if they do not always know this!" At his request I feel like sharing my story with you. It is simple, but perhaps it can help other women who, like me, seek God.

I'm a Quebecer, 63years old, retired nurse. Like many women of my generation, to my great regret, I ignored God and the Church for over twenty years, despite a Catholic education with the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame. In 1998, alone, I took my first trip to France, which included a week in Paris. I intended to visit several museums and all those wonderful places that I dreamed of going to some day, but, however, not too many churches and cathedrals.

A friend had asked me to buy for her some medals at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Montmartre. So, on a beautiful sunny morning I went to that place. Oh! Surprise, I arrived at the time of mass. Some little sisters were there, in the nave, directing people in singing for the mass soon to begin. They moved me by their appearance so small and fragile in this huge basilica. I also noticed the presence of people sitting and very recollected in a closed section in the front. Their attitude moved me. There they are, silent, in the midst of the crowd of tourists that continue to circulate. I hesitated, then, I crossed the small enclosure to find myself among them. It was a moment of great intensity. Nothing existed except that life expressed by all these people in prayer. They were true believers!

At the time of exchange of peace, with tears in my eyes, I shook hand with France, China, Africa ... I had the impression that I was communicating with the world. It was

also a communion in time and space: how many millions of people had come to pray in this church and how many more would come? How many hearts had the organ music cheered and consoled? And all those feet that had walked on this ground, carrying their sorrows and their joys! ... How long did I stay there, after the end of Mass? I was bowled over, and that Jesus who was looking at me, as from heaven, with open arms. I felt that He was watching me, I alone, and that he was waiting for me. Me, the little Quebecer, it is in France that he came for me, because in Quebec, I had no longer attended the church, for a long time!

I remember another experience which came to confirm the first one. Entering through the side of the church at St-Sulpice, I noticed three people kneeling saying the rosary together. I sat near them and, with emotion, watched them pray. It was a great discovery for me, this prayer sincere and therefore possible for me too?

Back home, resuming my activities, I had minimized the value of these experiences and had buried them deep in my memory. However, the existence of God always questioned me, but I did not pay too much attention to it. In the beginning of 2000, I decided to settle once and for all, the question of God. So I made an appointment with the pastor of my parish and I said, "I really want to know if God exists and I cannot find an answer to this question, if I don't find an answer to that question, it will be over for the rest of my life and I will not worry about it ever again. "

His answer simply stunned me "First, do not set foot in a church any more. What you need is to develop your relationship with God, like the one you have with your best friend. "And that was it. He planted the seed in my heart and it has gradually grown at the pace of my opening up, one step at a time. God is very patient and his newly found lost sheep he does not let go any more

On 1st October 2011, I made a big leap in faith. Yes, I responded positively to the call of God after enormous resistance on my part. I made solemn profession at the

Dominicans Nuns in Berthierville, Quebec. I remember the day I knocked on their door. I was 57 years old, three children and three grandchildren, and my only sister was a nun at the Poor Clares of Valleyfield. Despite all the obstacles and challenges to consider, I insisted with them and told them: "If I am not trying to live in your community, I feel like I shall be missing a part of my life." And my dear nuns agreed! So it is with joy that I entered for an internship on 1 October 2005. I followed every step of gradual training to arrive at my solemn profession on October 1, 2011.

What kindness on the part of God for making me discover this community of Dominicans Nuns, that I did not know at all! I feel that, here, I can grow in faith. This fraternal life is my land of labor where I learn more and more to become the one God wants me to be.

And my kids will you say? Of course the first two years, they did not like my choice, neither did my friends who were opposed. Gradually they were tamed in contact with the place and as they met some sisters in the guests quarters. God did the rest, and He watched over them. Through many concrete facts, he showed me that he was taking care of them and he wanted me to take care of him. I feel so privileged today to give the rest of my life to God. This is truly the God of the impossible. Yes, I want to grow old with God and the community. My mission may be to bridge the gap between the group of sisters and one younger ahead. I arrive with all the experience of my past life. There are some elements that I believe can help the community.

Even for a mother of three children and grandmother of 7 grandchildren, 1 to 10 years old, the choice of the contemplative life is possible. My children, with time have dropped their fears and prejudices and all my little one rejoice in coming to see their "Mamanou" to the monastery. The whole family came with joy to the celebration of my solemn profession on October 1st. The day after the party, my daughter Miriam told me she had never seen such a beautiful

wedding! And Melanie seeing me so radiant added: "How can a child refuse that happiness to his mother?" God works wonders in our lives and in that of our loved ones when we give ourselves to Him! Fraternaly your sister in St-Dominique S. Diane of the Sacred Heart op.

Original: French

WORLD YOUTH DAY (JMJ) MADRID 2011 AND THE DOMINICAN NUNS



Last August the whole of Spain was celebrating. Cities and towns were invaded by song and joy. Pilgrims from all corners of the earth came to Spain to meet the Pope and take part in the JMJ Madrid

2011: a great show of faith.

This event had been prepared long in advance and with great care. Everybody in the church of Spain was included in what was about to take place in Madrid as were the Dominican Nuns. From the enclosure of our monasteries we lived the whole event with intensity. Our presence and our participation were not only through prayers but also we were involved in different ways. There were sisters that were present in some of the central acts of the WYD (JMJ) and other acts that the Dominican Family had organized.

All the sisters agree that being able to participate has been very important for them. These are some of their comments: "What I experienced those days was like a flow of optimism, joy of faith, life and hope. Christ is alive in His Church. The faith, the fervour and the happiness of so many young people is contagious". "This experience has enriched my life as a contemplative nun and the horizon of my prayer has widened to the ends of the earth and now it is full of names, experiences and intentions".

The Organization Committee of the MJM (WYD) had a marvellous initiative called "sew and sing" where they proposed to sew the garments for the liturgical celebrations. This initiative was accepted with joy in our monasteries and we immediately set to work. This was a way of participating and being present.

I think everybody knows that every World Youth Day has a remote preparation which consists in the Cross of the Young People and an Icon of the Virgin Mary being taken to visit the dioceses of the host country. The Cross and the Icon are placed for the night in the church of a monastery. Our monasteries welcomed these special guests and the entourage which followed the Cross and Icon. It soon became clear what the WYD was going to be like. From Albarracín we received this testimony: "At 6 in the morning the community was again beside the Cross, people came to worship the Cross. We spent emotional hours. For us this day has been a deep experience. We are very grateful because each day we followed the Lord with great joy. With the Lord and from the Lord who presides the course of the human history. This day we felt His presence nearer".

Some days before the WYD pilgrims from all over the world came to Spain and they visited our monasteries. They wanted to pray and hear the testimony of our consecrated life. We also welcomed them in our guest house. These meetings were times of rejoicing as young people came full of expectation for a word of hope from the Holy Pope. Some of them came from far countries which was a great sacrifice. Their eyes were bright and their faces showed great joy. The sisters of Caleruega who welcome a group from USA tell us: "It was a way of participating with the young people from here; we accompanied them with our prayers. We lived those days intensely, it was like a whirlwind of grace which pushed everybody. It was the Holy Spirit who pushed all of us. The community offered the hospitality free of charge and now we are watching the fruits".

And after the preparations for "Come everybody" off to Madrid and the nuns too.

On the morning of 17th of August the Pope arrived and the WYD Madrid 2011 commenced. Some sisters went to the Monastery of the Escorial to meet the Holy Father where a meeting of young sisters and nuns took place.

They tell us: "what a joy to meet so many young consecrated sisters. So many different habits reminded me of the great number of monasteries and houses of sisters of apostolic life that exist in Spain from different Congregations and Orders. I realized the special and deep love of the Church for the consecrated life when I heard the greeting and the words from the Holy Father, Benedict XVI, and the Cardinal of Madrid". "Having participated in the meeting with Benedict XVI in the Escorial, in the setting of the WYD of Madrid last summer, was as if I had received the call of the Lord again to serve Him in the Church and in the Order. And at the same time receiving "live" the love and gratitude of the Church for my consecration. I was there and the Pope told me: "The world needs your young devotion". And again I said: "Here I am, send me!" I didn't come back empty because that word which was sealed in my heart was FIDELITY".



I would like to mention Sr M^{re} Luisa from the monastery of Orihuela. She lived an exciting moment when she met the Pope face to face, by chance. She tells us: "I entered surprised and excited, I extended my hand and he looked into my eyes. I could not speak, I felt penetrated by the bright

transparency of his pacific stare, I kissed his hand and I took it to my forehead then he blessed me. Actually it was me who guided his fingers making a cross on my head. He let me do it. There were no words but a silent language of deep thought and faith: "He is filled with God". He left and I felt deeply moved by this gift. I felt filled with peace and radiant joy he had transmitted to me".

The Dominican Family also organized some acts in which some sisters participated and they were marked by this experience: "A great and beautiful experience was to share the forum, Lumen Ecclesiae and the Eucharist with the whole Dominican Family (lay, sisters of apostolic life, nuns, and friars). It was a time of Grace as we met so many sisters and brothers and I felt their love and care. They wish our great family to continue preaching THE TRUTH so there can be light in this world"... "All of them were in love with the Charisma the Holy Spirit inspired in St Dominic of Guzman, a gift of preaching and searching for the truth of Jesus Christ".

For us nuns, all of what we have experienced is not anecdotal or it is just the emotion of a moment but a task which has to be carried on.

"Now our mission is to intercede for all the young people of the world who came to the WYD, especially for the ones who came to our monastery to ask for prayers such as their wish to persevere in the Church, our Mother..." "My prayer has faces, thousands of faces, faces of those who walked the streets of Madrid".

To finish I want to mention the fact that in many of our monasteries in Spain there are sisters who had heard: "Come and Follow Me" in other WYDs. So during these days they relived the beginnings of their vocation and thanked the Lord. They felt hope to go on each day giving up their lives to fidelity.

Original: Spanish

(Nota de la editora: Este artículo ha sido redactado gracias a la colaboración de hermanas de los Monasterios de Albarracín, Bormujos; Córdoba ; Ocaña; Toledo; Palencia; Torredonjimeno; Orihuela; Caleruega; Albarracín y Murcia. Desde aquí mi agradecimiento)

FORMATION COURSE

On 8th, 9th and 10th of November in the House of Spirituality of the Dominican friars of the Convent of Torrent (Valencia-Spain) a formation course was held, which was organized by the Federation of the Immaculate. It was open to the other two Spanish Federations: the Federation of St Dominic and the Federation of Our Lady of the Rosary. It is the first course realized in the conjunctive formation plan of the three Federations of Spain. In the meeting with the Prioresses, the Federal mothers and their Councils, which was held in May, the Master of the Order urged us to carry out these courses.



In these meetings we learn a lot from the teachers. Moreover, the wish of exploring what is exposed grows in us and the wish of taking it into our particular life with transparency. We were 41 participants and we were enriched by each other living together. Our inter-federal walk has a long history and with these events it is strengthening.

During these three days we had the opportunity of praying together, talking to each other and spending happy, pleasant evenings. In this way fraternity and mutual knowledge are growing and the creation of bonds is stronger among the Federations.

These are the themes exposed:

- **“The chair of the three religions in the University of Valencia”.**

The teacher was, **Fr Jose Luis Ruiz Aznárez OP**. He in his usual grace, simplicity and depth, made a historic route explaining the different stages that this pioneering experience has passed through in the Spanish University world.

Later he exposed the importance of the dialogue among religions which should favour the respect for the other theological conceptions and help to build a pacific coexistence. This will contribute to educate, not only better men and women, but also better societies.

- **“The fundamental Constitution of the Nuns and the Rule of St Augustine”**

It was explained with profundity and grace by **Fr Emilio Barcelón Maicas, OP**. Firstly he presented a synthesis of the Fundamental Constitution. Then he made a theological and spiritual reading of it. He started clarifying that theology is the heart of the Dominican unanimity. The parts that he explained are the following: a) Theology and preaching: formal reason of the Dominican Charisma; b) The Dominican Theology: the seeking of God; c) Experience of the Theology: the contemplation; d) The shared theology: community life. Next, he commented on the Rule of St Augustine.

- **“We hear them preaching in our own language”**

It was in relation to the motto of the Dominican Jubilee for this year: “We hear them preaching in our own language about the marvels of God”. (Acts. 2, 11): Preaching and culture / Preaching of the Community” was the theme that **Fr Martín Gelabert Ballester, OP** developed in his usual theological depth. He explained how the Revelation is conditioned by the questions and the problems of culture of those who address it. He presented St Thomas Aquinas

as the model who makes theology in a new culture, precedent of the modern dialogue with science. Then we exposed the different environments we can find when we evangelize: a) A religiosity which is not entirely Christian; b) An environment that favours fundamentalism; c) Those who are at a distance and those who are disinterested. Finally he remarked on what our communitarian preaching should be like.

Original: Spanish

Oremos por...

The Amazon Jungle

Due to endless abuses our Amazon has been suffering for many years, I would like to present one of these abuses so as it can be included in our prayers.

The Amazon is the most extensive tropical forest in the world. Its extension, which is shared by nine South American countries, is 6.000.000 Km². Peru has 600.000 Km² more than half of its own territory. In this humid area of high temperatures and dense vegetation, where the native population and settlers live precariously and in poverty and are unable to cover their basic needs, is the Apostolic Vicariate of Puerto Maldonado which was entrusted to Dominican Missionaries from the beginning, more than one hundred years ago.

The missionaries went across one hundred and fifty six kilometres through water and land in order to spread the Gospel throughout the Vicariate. The Evangelization is incomplete if, apart from the word of life, the daily bread is not on the tables of every home. For this reason the missionaries worked to help solve the inhuman situation that the inhabitants of the forest were living.

In this way they insisted on social commitment as a consequence of the announcement of the Gospel and hearing the cry of the poor.

The forest has experienced positive changes over the last hundred years. Nowadays, the new towns which are in the middle of the green vegetation offer opportunities of life and development to the man of the forest although the problem still exists: the life of the poor is still a motive of abuse and marginalization. The rights of the insignificant social man are not as important as the interest of the looters of the environment; or the gas and mining companies or the big projects that are made without considering the impact on the people's life, their lands and towns.

The recent construction of a huge bridge which will join the inter-oceanic road from Peru to Brazil is literally dividing in two the city of Puerto Maldonado, leaving a part of the population cut off. Five hundred families will be affected with the construction and installation of walls of 150 metres high which will be the base of the huge bridge that will leave them isolated and cornered impeding the right to move freely and the possibility of cars, ambulances and the fire brigade reaching their houses in case of necessity.

Before this situation of abuse against a minority group, last June Monsignor Francisco Gonzalez, OP, (Valladolid-Spain. He arrived in Peru in 1996. He was ordained as Bishop in 2001 and named Bishop of the Apostolic Vicariate of Puerto Maldonado in 2008 by the Pope Benedict XVI) Bishop of the Apostolic Vicariate of Puerto Maldonado, declared in favour of the settlers who are affected by the urban section of the road. He criticized the attitude of the company called Cornisa which is in charge of the construction of the road. He said that it was an abuse and an imposition to build the walls that damages the families from Cusco and Lambayeque.

For this solidarity with the town, Monsignor Francisco has seen his personal integrity threatened and his image has been damaged. He had to stand trial, with the possibility of prison but finally everything went in his favour. It was a clear injustice and the Vicariate showed its solidarity. Throughout the Vicariate the communities,

parochial groups, priests, religious and laity defended "Father Paco" as we affectionately call him. There were placards written: "Father Paco is good", "Father Paco, you for everybody and we for you", they expressed the recognition of his work as a good shepherd who loves his flock and defends his sheep. He also has fine sensibility to listen to the clamour of the poor and lend his voice to defend from the abuse.

Not only the Vicariate expressed solidarity with Monsignor Francisco but also the Dominican Family in Peru, different lay organizations of Puerto Maldonado, the Episcopal Peruvian Conference. In this sense it is thought-provoking the Peruvian Bishops' pronouncement that reminds us that like Jesus, the Good Shepherd, the bishop has the mission of defending the life, the principles and the values of the Gospel and the welfare of the human being who was created in the image and likeness of God.

Although the issue of the trial against Monsignor Francisco was solved, the subject of the wall hasn't been solved yet. This project still continues and from his position as server, Monsignor Francisco will continue his role of prophet in the same line as his predecessors who were in charge of spreading the good news of the Gospel to the man of the jungle, to live his daily life, to face situations where he is excluded and in situations where his fundamental rights are taken from him.

Original: Spanish

New Dominican Bishop

Bishop Bernard Genoud, died in September 2010. He was the Bishop of Lausanne, Geneva, Fribourg and Neuchâtel. This is a very composite Diocese: Fribourg, rich in many religious communities, is called the Rome of Switzerland, Geneva, the city of Calvin, is called the Protestant Rome, even if today the number of Catholics outnumber Protestants, Lausanne and Neuchâtel are regions with a Protestant majority. In recent years, the diocese has been shaken by

numerous scandals and it's hard to find young people in our churches. This is one reason why it was very difficult to find a successor to Bishop Genoud.

After more than a year of waiting, a new bishop has been appointed: our brother Charles Morerod, of the Suisse Province, who was previously president of the Angelicum in Rome. As I write this, brother Charles is making his ordination retreat in our monastery. He asks us to pray for the diocese, of course, and also for him. He told us, with great emotion, that accepting this charge was for him as a leap into the void. "Now there is only grace, all other supports seem to have disappeared. I realize the truth of the word of the Gospel: *the good shepherd risks his life for his sheep*. I am not yet bishop, but I can already see how the bishop is like a point of focus for all hurts and frustrations that people have towards the church. "

Brother Charles will be ordained on December 11, 2011 at the Cathedral of Fribourg and we agreed that he would send messages to us asking for prayers at time of greater importance ... and we asked him to come celebrate with us on August 8 as a Dominican Family!

Pray for him and all our brother bishops throughout the world.

Your sisters from Estavayer-le-Lac

Original : French

At the last meeting of the *International Commission of Nuns*, and in dialogue with the Master of the Order, the Council of Dominican Sisters International and the General Promoters of the Order, it has been decided to celebrate the *Feast of the Visitation* as an opportunity for Dominican sisters and Dominican nuns to come together for a time of prayer, sharing and celebration. In the spirit of the Jubilee theme for this year, we would encourage each monastery, in dialogue with local Dominican sisters, to plan a festive, prayerful time together on or near the feast of the Visitation next May. Our hope is that this "visitation" become an annual event.