



OPFAM

Dominican Family Matters: 26.04.2018

*Contemplate the Gospel of Humanity
then preach the Humanity of the Gospel*

A Newsletter for the Dominican Family in Australia, New Zealand, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea

Catherine of Siena – Doctor of the Church

The Life of Catherine of Siena is an icon of the God of Surprises, a thunderclap that vibrates through the life of each of us. Catherine calls across the centuries with frightening clarity. Catherine of Siena becomes a woman to be reckoned with again. As long as there are poor among us; as long as there is war anywhere; as long as the church is more an institution than a vehicle of the Gospel; as long as any woman anywhere is demeaned or diminished or dismissed out of hand as foolish or incompetent or less in the sight of God and little in the church, then Catherine Siena is a woman to be reckoned with again.

Catherine of Siena was a woman whose life God flung across our sky to out-meteor, out-comet, out-star and out-brighten every sick and squalid age to come, to touch and sear even yet, even now, even us, even here. We too must learn to go against the natural inclinations to buy peace at any price, and we must try even harder to derail the war mentality that makes the world poor. We too must learn to trust the insights of the Gospel when education fails to persuade the rich to care for the poor and calls that obscene insensitivity 'the business cycle'. We too must learn to claim Christian feminism when the designs of God for women are obstructed by the state in the name of the law and by the church in the name of the will of God. We, too, must learn to be patient when the walls of poverty do not fall, when the wars for resources do not end, and the women of the world are wanted more for their domestic services than for their spiritual powers. Why? Because it is the measure of the things to which we give our allegiance that is the measure of ourselves. Personal sacrifice, Gospel insight, Christian feminism, and patient prophetism is the legacy of Catherine of Siena to the twenty-first century.

Adapted from Joan Chittister, A Passion for Life, Orbis Books, 1996, pp120-124.

**Creator God, you challenge our complacency
through the life of your servant Catherine,
a woman of courage and deep faith.
Give us the spirit of Jesus
to truly love and reverence one another
that we may be one family united in Christ.
Amen.**





Dominican Sisters in Committed Collaboration – ‘Gun Control Reform Postcards’ *Didi Madden OP 24 April, 2018*

The postcard campaign calling our elected officials to pass reforms that make sale and possession of high-capacity semi-automatic weapons and ammunition magazines illegal and to institute comprehensive background checks and mandatory waiting periods realized over 4,000 postcards delivered to Congress and the White House.

Violation of Human Rights in the Amazon

Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations
New York: office@holyseemission.org; www.holyseemission.org

Sr Margaret Mayce OP is the chairperson of the Mining Working Group.

On April 19, the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations held a side event entitled “Violation of Human Rights in the Amazon: Networks to Respond to and Redress Them” together with the Panamazonian Ecclesial Network (REPAM) and the Mining Working Group of UN-based Non Governmental Organizations to discuss the situation of indigenous peoples in the Amazon and the threats being caused by the proliferation of foreign mining interests. The event took place during the 17th Session of the United Nations’ Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues. In his opening remarks, Archbishop Bernardito Auza, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the UN, said that indigenous people have the right to be agents of their own development and destiny and should be given the political, economic and social space to do so. “In practice, this means upholding the collective right of indigenous peoples to their lands and resources,” Archbishop Bernardito Auza said, noting the important role indigenous people play in protecting the world’s most valuable resources, especially in regions like the Amazon.

Protecting the promoting the rights of indigenous peoples is a significant interest for Pope Francis, who has convoked a Synod on the Amazon to take place in the Vatican in October 2019. “He has sought to be a voice crying out throughout the world about the way indigenous lands, culture, rights and dignity are being overlooked or even trampled upon for the narrow economic interests of others,” Archbishop Auza said.

While Pope Francis cares for all regions in which indigenous peoples reside, the Amazon is of particular importance as the world’s largest tropical forest, covering 2.1 million square miles and nine countries, embracing 2.8 million indigenous people, 390 indigenous tribes, 240 spoken languages and as yet 137 uncontacted peoples.

The Amazon and other resource-rich geographical areas that are home to the indigenous face grave threats and exploitation. Sr Margaret Mayce, OP noted that the Amazon’s indigenous people have never been so threatened in their territories as they are now and called for an end to the exploitation, many times supported by governments, of the region’s natural resources like timber, oil, gas and gold. Indigenous people are at risk not only of losing their resource-rich land, but in some cases even their lives, for defending their right to their own land.

Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous People, suggested that those who care for improving the environment ought to support indigenous communities who work to sustain the ecosystems in their territories and leave future generations with a healthy planet. She said that extraction companies are key perpetrators in exploiting indigenous

communities and their land. She applauded Pope Francis for convoking the upcoming Synod and called for faith-based organizations and socially responsible corporations and investors to find real solutions to bring profit and development to the region without exploitation.

Her mission is to also engage in dialogue with governments to help them see indigenous communities as key players in achieving sustainable development.

“Indigenous peoples are not your enemies but are your best allies. They are the ones who live what we call sustainable consumption,” Tauli-Corpuz said, referring to the indigenous peoples’ gentle and responsible stewardship of the environment. “But they are the ones being penalized and put in jail mainly because they want to keep the earth in better shape. It is the worst expression of injustice.”

Elvia de Jesús Arévalo Ordóñez, from the Comunidad Amazonica de Accion Social Cordillera del Condor Mirador, a group of indigenous activists from the Condor region of Ecuador dedicated to social justice for their people and land, has experienced the damage caused by extraction companies first hand. They have manipulated the prices of land, taken advantage of the economic needs of the people, and violently evicted landowners.

Thirty-two families have been “violently evicted” from their homes, Arévalo said, and their rights to decent housing have been violated, although international rules deem they should have received adequate housing. “The company has evicted an entire neighborhood and demolished community assets such as church and school,” Arévalo said.

Not only have human rights been violated, she said, but also the wellbeing of the environment, which has led to devastating impact caused by the overflow of the Kin River.

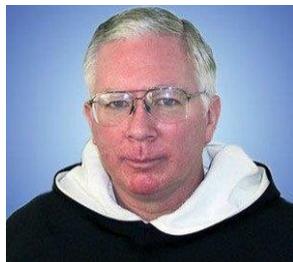
“The rivers are totally contaminated and we cannot swim, drink their water, and fish. The food sustenance of its inhabitants is over, life in these rivers is over,” she said.

Augustina Mayán Apikai is a leader of the Awajún people of Peru, whose ancestral lands encompass the country’s most bio-diverse park, but is also the most vulnerable to exploitation by extractive industries.

While some indigenous peoples have resorted to violence to safeguard their land, her community has been sought to utilize the legal system to protect their lands, specifically their forests, from exploitative extracting companies. They halted one such enterprise through the courts. “The company has been stopped and we have done so without losing any lives,” she said. “We have been to legally protect ourselves. “That’s the best way we can advocate,” Mayán Apikai said. “We are the best representation of advocacy in our communities.”

Father Robert F.Christian OP is the New Auxiliary Bishop of San Francisco

Father Christian was born December 2, 1948, in San Francisco. He entered the Order of Preachers at



St. Albert Priory in Oakland in 1970 and made his Solemn Profession as a Dominican in 1974.

He was ordained a priest in Oakland on June 4, 1976.

Assignments after ordination included: Professor (Sacraments and Ecclesiology) at the Angelicum, Rome and Prior of the 75-member resident community of friars there; member of Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission; Consultor to the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (2013-)

The Archdiocese of San Francisco comprises 1,016 square miles. It has a total population of 1,776,095 people of which 441,736 or 25 percent, are Catholic. Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone is the current Archbishop of San Francisco.

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