



# OPFAM

**Dominican Family Matters: 3.12.2018**

*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

We greet each other in a spirit of **Advent hope**:  
The **hope** foretold by the prophets and born in Bethlehem.  
The **hope** that pervades the world,  
in all of God's creatures and in every human person.  
The **hope** that lives on in our church, despite its sins and imperfection.  
The **hope** entrusted to us to proclaim,  
in our communities, churches, parishes, schools, institutions and families.  
The **hope** that promises that God is continually doing something new in us:  
in our hearts, our homes, our church, our world, and in our association.  
Let us join together in praying and living this **hope**.

## **Congratulations to Our Sisters of Holy Cross Congregation, Adelaide who are celebrating 150 years of service among the people of South Australia.**

On 4 December 1868, Sister Kathleen wrote from Kapunda to another Sister of St Joseph. Within the letter she asked: "Have you seen the real nuns yet?" She was referring to the Dominican Sisters due to arrive from Cabra, Ireland, the first Sisters to come to South Australia from overseas. Seven young Sisters were chosen to go to Adelaide. They left Ireland on 9 September 1868, arrived in Plymouth and departed for Adelaide on the *Orient* on 14 September. Almost three months later they arrived in their new country. Their first home was St Mary's Franklin Street, once a convent of Mary Mackillop and her Sisters. They had come at the invitation of the Bishop, Laurence Sheil, to establish a 'superior' school for girls, to complement the educational work of the recently formed Sisters of St Joseph. The newly arrived women opened their first school on 2 February 1869. And thus began another chapter in our awesome global Dominican Story, a chapter richly embossed with the golden threads woven by decades of women committed to being and doing the Gospel.

*Congratulations Sisters, and may you continue to be blessed with the courage and the confidence necessary to undertake the challenging journey into an again unknown future, for the sake of the Gospel.*

## **Bishop Pierre Claverie OP of Algeria: Patron for the Dialogue of Cultures; to be BEATIFIED on 8 December 2018**

On December 8 the ceremony of beatification will take place in the cathedral of the Diocese of Oran, of which the martyred Pierre Claverie was bishop.

Pope Francis has decided to beatify *Bishop Pierre Claverie and his eighteen companions*, victims of the violence in Algeria in the late 1990s. Pierre Claverie, murdered on the 1 August 1996, was the

last of the nineteen victims of the Church of Algeria, who died during the Black decade that claimed the lives of more than 150,000 Algerians. This Beatification has a powerful meaning.

In their press release of October 2018, the bishops of Algeria make it clear that the purpose of the beatification is not to make of these men and women heroes. Rather it is to show that through these ordinary men and women we see how even in the darkest of times there are glimpses of hope. And their unconditional love of God, their country and their people shows us how “only love can end the alienating spiral of evil”.

### **A life to encounter others**

Pierre Claverie is someone who has spent his life as a man trying to encounter the other whom he had ignored all his youth. *“We were not racist, only indifferent, ignoring the majority of the inhabitants of this country... I was able to live twenty years in what I now call a 'colonial bubble', without even seeing others”*, he wrote with lucidity evoking his youth in colonial Algeria where he was born. His whole life was devoted to making up for this first missed encounter, his whole life was inhabited by a real *“passion for the other”*. In the cosmopolitan and globalized world which is now ours, this challenge of the encounter is more pertinent than ever. While the globalization of the economy and social networks have brought people together, murderous identities are resurfacing, barriers are emerging between people, seeming to slow down the progress of the post-war (UN, Europe, etc.). Pierre Claverie reiterates the happiness that there may be in the encounter of the other, the different. It is a powerful message for countries tempted to shut their doors as migrants are knocking at their doors.

### **The Muslim is also a brother in humanity**

Today the other who is scary is often the Muslim. There are objective reasons for this: the rise of a political Islam, the horrors of al-Qaeda and Daech, the suffering of the Christians of the East, the weight of the clichés in the media. But the fear of the Muslim is often irrational, visceral and prevents a real encounter. The Church of Algeria had to make a real conversion after the political independence of the country in 1962. While its presence was hardly justified by the small number of faithful, it wanted to put itself at the service of the Algerian people and become a Church of encounter. Bishop Henri Teissier, former Archbishop of Algiers, close friend and confidant of Pierre Claverie, even called it *“a church for Muslim people”*. *“The keyword of my faith today is dialogue; not by tactics nor by opportunism, but because dialogue is constitutive of the relationship of God to men and men to each other”*, written by Pierre Claverie who disliked the superficial dialogue of convenience. True dialogue, in his eyes, is demanding, it supposes to recognize the uniqueness of the other and to want to enrich our differences. The passion of his life was to discover what the next Muslim Algerian could teach him, including the search for God. Without syncretism, without easy unanimity.

### **The taste of friendship and a plural, non-exclusive humanity**

Coming from a Mediterranean background, Pierre Claverie had a warm temperament which allowed him to make beautiful friendships. Learning the Arabic language, he had particularly sought to “learn Algeria”, to be part of it and feel like his Algerian friends. He did it with passion during the decades after independence where everything was to be built in this country. There he put all his talents and his whole heart, engaging in projects of solidarity and development. But he did it also in the dark hours, when violence fell on the country, killing all those who had the taste of what he calls *“a plural, non-exclusive humanity”*, an Algeria where difference is perceived as a richness and not as a threat. Refusing the caution that his friends advised him, Pierre Claverie had publicly declared his solidarity with the Algerians, writers, artists, intellectuals, who fought for an open and plural Algeria. The destiny of the Algerian women was particularly close to his heart. He paid for it with his life. This beatification is not, therefore, a way of setting the Christian victims apart from a tragedy that has left tens of thousands dead. This should be on the contrary, as Bishop Jean-Paul Vesco, successor of Pierre Claverie in Oran, said, an opportunity to celebrate the loyalty of a Church which has wanted to

remain in solidarity at the time of the ordeal and therefore to celebrate the friendship with the Algerians.

### **A life given for love**

The meaning of this testimony must therefore be clear: the 19 “martyrs” of the Church of Algeria are not beatified because they were murdered, but first because they chose, in times of danger, to remain in complete freedom, despite the risks, *“beside the sick friend, holding his hand, placing a wet cloth on his forehead”*, as Pierre Claverie wrote after the death of the monks. It is the testimony of love for Christ, for the Church and for the Algerian people that they have given, that the Church wants to recognize, to celebrate by using them as examples for the universal Church where all those who are on the path need role models who can show them the way.



Bl. Pierre Claverie OP

To understand something of the ‘ordinary’ heroism of these men, treat your soul to an extraordinary film about their lives: [\*Of Gods and Men\*](#)

### **Role models for our time**

To beatify together these nineteen witnesses of faith and love is rich in meaning. Pierre Claverie, Christian of Chergé, brother Christophe have written a lot of the meaning of their life. Most of the others, especially the nuns, have lived their testimony in discretion and humility, but it is absolutely the same testimony that is given. The Church therefore offers us as examples of the men and women whom we can feel close to. These are role models of holiness for our time.

It is a grace for the entire Church. We hope that Algeria is thus encouraged in its work of healing and reconciliation.

### **Summary Biography**

Pierre Claverie was born in Bab el-Oued the 8 May 1938, in colonial Algeria. His family resided in this country for five generations.

When he left for France in 1958, in the middle of the “battle of Algiers”, to begin his university studies, he becomes aware of having lived until then in a colonial bubble, ignoring the other, the Algerian Muslim, seen only through clichés. An intense deep search leads him to religious life in the Dominican Order.

At the end of his studies in philosophy and theology, he returns to Algeria in July 1967 and finally discovers “his” country. He learns Arabic and is passionate about discovering a newly independent country, learning the Arabic language and making many Algerian friends.

For 15 years, he is with Bishop Henri Teissier, one of the closest collaborators of Cardinal Duval, who understood that the new mission of the Church in Algeria was not to be a Church of Embassy, a survival of the past, but a church for Algeria, an Algerian Church. Its mission is not to convert Muslims, but to accompany a country that is being rebuilt and to live with the Algerians the adventure of friendship and encounter.

His clarity of analysis of situations and his spiritual depth earned him to be chosen on the 5<sup>th</sup> June 1981 as the Bishop of Oran, a small diocese according to the size of its faithful Christians, but very rich in nationalities who live in a special way in profound harmony with the Algerian society. When the violence descends on the country, Pierre Claverie chooses to put the structures of his diocese even more at the service of the needs of the Algerian population.

At the time of the violence of the 1990s, he made the choice to speak, in solidarity with his Algerian friends - intellectuals, artists, women - who campaign for an open, non-exclusive Algeria. His own experience allows him to speak eloquently about the meaning of encounter and friendship. In the spring of 1996, he publishes *Lettres et messages d'Algérie*. His courageous words went beyond the borders and this led to his assassination on the 1 August 1996, a few weeks after the assassination of the Trappist monks of Tibhirine who are today beatified with him. At his funeral, the massive population of Oran came to weep for "their" Bishop.

The wish of the Church of Algeria is that this beatification enhances the friendship that these witnesses of faith wanted to live with their Algerian friends.

*fr Jean-Jacques PERENNES, OP*

**Congratulations** to Sisters Patricia, Diana, Ann, June, Patricia and Maureen who are celebrating, together with Sister Valerie, 445 years of Religious Profession and dedicated service among the People of God. We give thanks for the witness of their well-lived lives, and ask that God will continue to bless them with God's richest surprises!



**We ask your prayers** for the three Sisters who will make Final Profession as Dominicans on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2019 at Holy Cross Cathedral Honiara. May they be blessed with long, healthy and Gospel-inspired lives to carry out their mission as Preachers among the people of the Solomon Islands, and the Dominican Sisters of Eastern Australia and the Solomon Islands. *Sisters Hilda To'osi, Mary Davis Kerehaioha and Hilda Kinika.*



### **My Dear Young Friend, a new book by Archbishop Anthony Fisher**

*“What is my life for? What are my passions, hopes and ideals? Where do I belong and get my identity and meaning? Where, ultimately, will I find that ‘infinite joy’ for which I was made and my heart craves?”*

Speaking directly to the deepest desires of young Catholics to do more and be more, Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP identifies these questions and others as being those that occupy the hearts and minds of young people in the introduction to his new book, *My Dear Young Friend*.

In 40 short letters on topics such as truth, vulnerability, friendship, leadership, the problem of suffering, fear, vocation, mercy and new beginnings, the Archbishop provides short but nourishing answers to the big questions of life.

The letters in the book, Archbishop Fisher says, address questions that young people have raised with him over the years, throughout his pastoral ministry. “Ponder, puzzle, wrestle with them,” he invites the young reader. “These are matters worth struggling with, laughing and crying over.”

Launching the book at the World Youth Day 10th anniversary celebrations in Sydney, Archbishop Fisher encouraged young people to not just think quickly, but deeply.

“The challenge is to slow down and quieten down, enough to digest it all, exercise our critical judgement, sort out what’s really worthwhile,” he said.

He exhorted the hundreds of young people present to aim high: “Not only should you think deep, you should also think big. Think in terms of your country, your Church, the whole natural world and the whole social world”.

Finally, Archbishop Fisher reminded them to see the future and the possibilities that lay ahead as a mission and not a burden, reminding them that God always provides the necessary graces for the tasks with which he entrusts them.

[The book can be obtained from Pauline Book Stores]

### **Theology of Contemporary Art, by Felix Hernandez Mariano OP**

This new book is an exploration of the work of fellow Dominican Kim En Joong, an internationally recognized artist, especially in stained glass. The book deepens, from a theological perspective, the different elements that make up Kim’s work: colour, shape, light and composition... a perspective that leads us towards the contemplation of the Mystery that is God.

[Available from ATF Press at [www.atfpress.com](http://www.atfpress.com)]