



# OPFAM

## Dominican Family Matters

*A Newsletter for the Dominican Family in Australia, New Zealand, Solomons and Papua New Guinea*

**Woe to us If we do not preach the Gospel!**

*Motto for the years leading up to 800<sup>th</sup> celebration in 2016; 2010 – “The Mission of Preaching”*

**10th August 2010**

*We pray for our brothers and sisters in Pakistan, and for the people among whom they minister. May they be blessed with the strength and courage it will take to live through the catastrophic situation in their country. Understandably perhaps, there seems to be no news available about their plight as yet.*

*There are communities in Bahawalpur; Warispura Faisalabad; Gulshan-e-Iqbal, near Hina Terrace Karachi; New Garden Town Lahore; Naqshaband Colony Multan; Okara; Satellite Town Rawalpindi; Sahiwal; Shahdara, and probably some others....*

### Dominican Thought for the Week

#### Justice and Peace

*“To foster a more compassionate world order through the promotion of peace and justice, integrity of creation and human rights, especially those of women”. (N. 3 of the DSI Goals)*  
*“Justice and Peace” is of concern wherever men, women and children are victims of injustice, illness, and violence. This is so because they are in fact dependent on their fellow men and women to arrive at a life worthy of their human condition.*

*It is necessary to act at least on four fronts:*

- a. Come to the help of those who are in situations of distress today, and some are in terrible distress.*
- b. Reorganize our own lifestyle so that there is a more just distribution of what all human beings need to live with dignity.*
- c. Try, by all means available to us, to influence the world trade laws in order to eradicate poverty and misery; which is the source of all violence.*
- d. Bring this world that God has so loved and continues to love, in our continuous contemplative prayer of praise and intercession.*

*(Sr. Marie Therese Perdriault, OP)*

### Dominicans and the Challenges of Thomism

*From 30th June to 4th July over 70 friars from 22 different provinces and vicariates assembled in Warsaw for a conference on "Dominicans and the Challenges of Thomism". Some of delegates were established scholars of high repute: Gilles Emery, Charles Morard, Serge-Thomas Bonino, Romanus Cessario, Emmanuel Durand, Lawrence Durand, Adriano Oliva, and more; others were students still working on their master's dissertation or PhD thesis. Two leading lights were unable to attend at the last minute: Thomas Joseph White (because of illness) and + Augustine DiNoia, the reasons for whose non-attendance were shrouded in the mists of Vatican secrecy*

*The big names gave the keynote talks at the general sessions, and the conference papers will be published, so there is no point in trying to summarise them here. In addition, there was*

plenty of opportunity for the beginners to offer their own short presentations to smaller groups, so that they could get useful feedback, stimulate discussion, and find other Dominicans working on similar topics. The various Thomistic institutes and periodicals had an opportunity to explain what they do. There was a range of positions, reflecting in part the particular concerns of provinces and regions - there was even a presentation on the interest shown by Thomas Aquinas by small groups of (non-Christian) scholars in China. The conference was also a great occasion for the brethren to meet each other, to pray and study together.

Talks were mainly in English, but a few were given in French. This may have been part of the reason that no Spanish-speaking friars attended. In fact, most of the attendees came from Europe or North America with the Poland and the Easter Province of the US being particularly well represented, and those from outside the region (Taiwan, Vietnam, Nigeria) were already in Europe for study or other similar reasons. The Australian province was represented by Joseph Vnuk, currently in Nottingham doing his doctorate on Thomas and sacramental efficacy.

Overall the conference was considered a great success, and there are plans to hold another one in Washington in three years time, hopefully with simultaneous translation facilities to make it as inclusive as possible.

## **General Chapter in Rome – 2010: 31<sup>st</sup> August-21<sup>st</sup> September**

*Time to pray for the blessings of the Holy Spirit and St Dominic  
on this important ecclesial event!*

The General Chapter, which is the highest authority in the Dominican Order, is an assembly of friars representing the Provinces of the Order, coming together to discuss and define matters pertaining to the good of the entire Order. When necessary it elects the Master of the Order. From the very beginnings of the Dominican Order, one can distinguish two types of General Chapter: Chapters of Provincials and Chapters of Diffinitors. To these is added the General Chapter, comprised both of Provincials and Diffinitors.

The General Chapter is above all a legislative assembly. A proposal becomes law for the whole Order only after having had the favourable vote of the three successive Chapters. These three Chapters thus constitute, in a certain sense, a unity, since it is in this triad of Chapters that, according to the spirit of the Order, the entire legislative power resides. The mechanism of the three successive Chapters is provided for in Dominican legislation with an aim of: a) stopping a new law from taking effect by way of improvisation or as the expression of a tendency of only one assembly; b) providing time for reflection on the opportuneness of the new law; c) avoiding facile and frequent changes which might create "confusion and bring ridicule upon legislation" (Humbert of Romans).

On 29 December 2009, the Master of the Order, Carlos Azpiroz Costa, issued the letter of convocation of the **General Chapter in Rome in 2010**. One of the tasks of this Chapter will be to elect the eighth-seventh Master of the Order. This will be the 290<sup>th</sup> General Chapter in the history of the Order since the Chapters of 1468, 1642 and 1952 were annulled or did not meet.

The members of the Chapter, or capitulars, include priors provincial, vice-provincials and vicars general, who are the superiors of the provincial or regional entities in the Order, and elected delegates of the provinces and vicariates throughout the world, as well as the Master of the Order, Carlos Azpiroz Costa, and the former Master, Timothy Radcliffe. There will be 130 delegates to the Chapter, not all of whom have yet been elected. In addition there will be six guests from the Dominican Family and six members of the Master's curia or council: the syndic or bursar of the Order; the socii, or general councillors who have responsibility for the Intellectual Life and the Apostolic Life; and three socii, or general councillors, responsible for the regions of Latin America and the Caribbean, Central and Eastern Europe, and North-West Europe and Canada.

Normally the General Chapter is hosted by different provinces of the Order but the Master and his Curia have accepted responsibility for organising the Chapter of 2010. It will meet in the [Salesianum](#), a conference centre maintained by the Salesians which is located between Rome and Fiumicino airport. Since the Chapter will not meet in a Dominican house or institution firm dates had to be provided to the Salesianum specifying when the Chapter would begin and end. The provincials were consulted on this point and expressed a desire that the Chapter should last no longer than three weeks. The General Chapter of Rome will thus be one of the shortest elective chapters in recent times. The earliest Constitutions of the Order, defined in the lifetime of Saint Dominic (c 1174-1221) stipulated that General Chapters should convene on the vigil of

Pentecost and were not to be prolonged beyond the Saturday within the octave of Pentecost. Perhaps we are reverting to tradition in opting for a shorter General Chapter.

The capitulars will come into residence on 31 August and the Chapter will begin on 1 September. Since the General Chapter is the supreme governing authority in the Order at the outset of the Chapter the capitulars will be asked to approve the rules of procedure and the order of business proposed by the pre-Capitular commission. In the first days the Chapter normally considers the *Relatio* or report of the Master which gives an account of how the mandates of the previous Chapter have been fulfilled. He also gives a reflection on the state of the Order and how he has exercised his office. It will be proposed that the Chapter divide into regional and linguistic groups to consider the contemporary challenges to the Order's life and ministry. The conclusions of these discussions will then be integrated into the agenda to be placed before the capitulars. The first stage of the Chapter will end with the election of the Master, which, according to the Constitutions, will take place on the fifth day of the Chapter, Sunday 5 September. After the election of the Master the Chapter will continue its work in commissions and plenary sessions and will conclude on 22 September.

Arrangements for the General Chapter have been underway for over a year. They began with the establishment by the Master and the General Council of a Commission charged with the task of preparing the Chapter. In recent months the work of preparation has been gathering pace. The Commission has been considering the Rules of Procedure, compiling questionnaires for the provincials and the regional meetings in order to identify the major areas of concern for the Order, asking for reports from various institutes and commissions responsible to the General Chapter, synthesising the responses and discerning topics and themes which might be presented to the Chapter, finding interpreters and translators, discussing timetables, arranging liturgical celebrations, transport arrangements, visa applications, secretarial staff, translation equipment, ensuring that a flow of documentation is maintained to the capitulars to ensure a proper management of business, finding chroniclers and photographers to record the event and inviting guests from the Dominican Family.

The next stage of the preparations for the Chapter involves the capitulars specifying the commission in which they wish to participate. This is a complicated procedure. The capitulars are asked to stipulate their preferred area of interest and their level of proficiency in the various official languages of the Order: French, Spanish and English. A measure of linguistic harmony has to be achieved so that the commissions function well, but the areas of interest and expertise of the capitulars have also to be respected. Everybody does not get their first choice!

Seven commissions have been proposed for the Rome Chapter. The titles have been taken from the opening sections of the Constitutions: De Sequela Christi – Religious Consecration; Study; The Ministry of the Word; The Formation of the Brothers; The Government of the Order; Economic Administration. There will also be a commission on the Laws and Constitutions of the Order. This commission has the task of ensuring the legislation of the Chapter is properly framed and incorporated into our body of law. The official text for legislation is Latin.

In order to ensure that the Chapter functions well in a short time it will be proposed that the Commissions divide into smaller sub-commissions each concerned with a particular aspect of the general theme for discussion and examination. In this way it is hoped that the often-expressed desire for Acts which deal with the more concrete and pressing areas of concern for the Order may emerge.

see [www.op.org](http://www.op.org)

## **Dominican Calendar**

Aug-4 Bl. Aimo Taparelli (1395-1495) Italian, married, later priest and famed preacher, inquisitor.

Aug-15 ASSUMPTION OF THE B.V.M. [S]

*Traditionally, the Order celebrates this as its special day of thanks to Our Lady.*

***Please send contributions – short paragraphs – about Dominican Life in your area to [archives5@bigpond.com.au](mailto:archives5@bigpond.com.au) – OFTEN!***