



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 800th celebration in 2016; 2010 – “The Mission of Preaching”

16th March 2010

Dominican Thought for the Week

...Evangelising ... consists above all in instilling in the people the evangelical values enunciated in the Sermon on the Mount: austerity, struggle for peace, mercy, purity of heart, hunger and thirst for justice, steadfastness under persecution, amongst others. More than what the profession of faith can express, what really matters is the capacity for loving, for giving oneself to the cause of the poor. What matters is to be in search of liberation, of a new society, of an 'other possible world', in which everyone will live in freedom, justice, dignity and peace. *Frei Betto OP in Dominican Approaches in Education, P.170*

Dominican Professions

We rejoice with Sisters Matilda Keniisa, Antonia Leoa, Esther Samele, Saniela Sapu and Maria Sikua who made their First Profession on 6th March, and with Hilda Kinika who will be received 13th March. These Sisters belong to congregation of Dominican Sisters of Eastern Australia and the Solomon Islands. Our prayers and our best wishes are with them as they continue their Dominican journey.

Death of Sr M. Vincent Ferrari OP (EA)

Sister M. Vincent died on 12th March 2010 at Newcastle. Many ex-students will be sad to hear of the death of this much loved Sister, teacher, boarding mistress. When Sister arrived at 'retirement age', she became devoted to sharing her wisdom and experience with students at Signadou campus of ACU, Camberra.

This ever gracious Sister was aged 85 and had been a Dominican for 66 years.

We offer our sympathy to her Dominican Sisters, to her family and to the many friends who mourn her. May she rest in peace.

Sr Elizabeth Connelly OP (8 July 1922 – 22 February 2010) (NA)

Some notes taken from the Words of Remembrance at Elizabeth's funeral – delivered by Sr Patricia Davis OP, Prioress of the Dominican Sisters of North Adelaide.

Sr Elizabeth Connelly died peacefully last Monday afternoon in the Flora McDonald Lodge Nursing Home in the 87th year of her life, and the 57th year of her religious profession as a Dominican.... Elizabeth was born in Hamley Bridge. SA....

During the Pacific phase of the Second World War Elizabeth joined the WAAF, and was trained in signals work. ...Following the War, she studied podiatry...

In February 1952 she came to St Dominic's Priory, [I wanted to] *“try to ascertain whether I could maintain a religious vocation. At the age of 29 years, my way of life had to undergo great changes.”*

Her decision to become a Dominican has surely been vindicated by her long years of faithful and fruitful service in the works of the Dominican community specifically, and in the wider Church more generally. She taught both primary and secondary classes at Rosary School, Prospect and here at St Dominic's Priory College, and led both of those school communities as Principal at various stages in the 50s and 60s. ...

In the mid-sixties Elizabeth became a missionary and spent several years working in our Dominican Mission in the Solomon Islands. Initially her ministry was teaching, but later she was appointed to the role of Novice Mistress and accompanied young Solomonese women who felt called to join the Dominican Order. We received a lovely tribute from the Sisters in the Solomons when they heard news of Elizabeth's death earlier this week. Sr Joanna Tebitara wrote:

Elizabeth can never be forgotten by many of us in the Solomons, and especially those of us whom she helped forming in our novitiate here at Loga. We remember her with great gratitude for the gift of herself to us [...]. She certainly was a good challenger and discipliner. We treasure these gifts and give thanks to Elizabeth for sharing them with us and we thank God always for allowing her to be part of our life and history in the Solomons.

On her return from the Solomons, Elizabeth undertook training in pastoral practice and in her retirement became involved in pastoral care at Calvary Hospital and the Mary Potter Hospice. She enjoyed this new dimension of her ministry to others..."

As our reading from John's Gospel reminds us, there are many "dwelling places" in God's house. Elizabeth believed that profoundly and she died prepared for, though perhaps not conscious of, the eternal dwelling place awaiting her once she had breathed her final breath. She has left us. And we are sad that we will never see her gentle smile or her beautiful blue eyes again. But we rejoice too that she is now resting in eternal peace.

Trial of Fr Peter Murnane OP in New Zealand

"Peter Murnane's trial on 2 charges of intentional damage of Government and other property and one of burglary began here in Wellington on Monday morning with the empanelling of the jury and the opening addresses of the Crown and the defence. Peter is defending himself, but his co accused, Sam Land and Adrian Leason are represented by barristers. All three admit that they were present and carried out the cutting of the fence wire and deflating of the dome over the spy satellite, finishing by setting up a shrine and praying until the security guards arrived to arrest them. However, the three defendants hope to run their defence as one of necessity, claim of right, and self defence (of those who are unable to defend themselves). They claim that they are following a higher law than human law in attempting to draw the attention of the public to the evils which are being perpetrated through the use of the information gained from the spy satellite, then fed into the echelon network in the United States. In particular, Peter wishes to highlight the evils of torture (and rendition) and the use of depleted uranium in the bombs used in Iraq and now in Afghanistan.

The Crown had finished giving its formal evidence by the end of the first day. Yesterday was devoted mainly to legal arguments in chambers. In the later afternoon, Adrian Leason began giving his evidence. Today the other two defendants will have their opportunity to defend themselves in the witness stand. Other witnesses will be called.

Surrounding the whole trial have been many vigils, Taize prayer sessions, a pilgrimage and last evening stations of the Cross (done by going from one important government building to the next, and highlighting the way in which these places - the Reserve Bank, The Cenotaph, the Government Security Bureau and others - reflect the last days of Christ's life on earth. There were 100 people present last evening walking in silence through the streets of Wellington between the prayers at each station. Some Dominican friars and sisters have been present throughout the trial as a prayerful means of support for all three of the Waihopai Ploughshares group, and Peter in particular.

Fr Kevin Toomey OP 10th March

From our Sisters in Nigeria

Jos, Nigeria: Sr Mary O. Ekwe OP, Dominican Sisters Gusau (Nigeria) sends a note about the massacre of Christians happened some days ago

MINING CITY TO MAIMING CITY

... Barely one year after the last crisis of November 28, 2008, the residents of the mining city woke up to another mayhem on the 17th of January 2010, as if that was not enough, in less than 2 months again the worst so far struck on the 7th of March 2010 which over 400 lives were lost. This was indeed a bloody one, innocent citizens were massacred including women and children for no faults of theirs. Imagine having a good meal in the evening and enjoying the moonlight as seen in most rural areas without electricity, going to bed at night and hoping to wake up on a Sunday morning to either go for a Sunday worship or visit the farms as the case may be but only to wake up to see that your fellow Christian brethren all murdered in cold blood in a certain village, will only bring feelings of hate and revenge. But a true Christian would say if you are struck on the right cheek turn the left for another. The big question is, for how long will you keep turning one cheek or the other? The recurrence of violence in Jos shows to a large extent that the authorities are doing little or nothing to address the situation. It's unfortunate that we do not have security in this country. Anybody wakes up and takes the law into his or her hand and goes most times unpunished. In my own opinion, the creation of 'Nigeria' as a country is a mistake. But what do we do about it? It's done and it's done. We just have to live with this mistake and learn how to live as brothers and sisters despite our diverse languages, cultures and religious beliefs. Our government needs to support oneness by first and foremost expunging the issue of indigeneship from our constitution.

Christians and Dominican Sisters of St. Catherine of Siena who live in this part of the country that is predominantly Islam, live in perpetual fear. We are not certain of what the next hour holds for us, we are too careful to talk about sensitive issues in public. We have to remain in these places to encourage the few indigenes who are Christians to remain strong in their faith. So far not a Dominican Sister is hurt, we thank God for that and we incessantly pray for the victims of these crisis. May they rest in the bosom of the Lord.

Haiti, Pakistan – reports of the Sisters in these countries plagued by disaster and unwelcome politics. See the latest entries on www.dsiop.org

Dominican justice promoters urge protection of Christians in Iraq

Members of a U.S. Dominican social justice committee that focuses on Iraq have asked the Catholic Bishops to use their influence in Washington to insist on protection for Iraqi Christians. In addition to the letter to the U.S. Bishops, members of the committee have issued an action alert to the 10,000 members of the Dominican Order in the United States, calling on them to fast, pray, and advocate with U.S. officials for protection of Iraq's minority populations.

The Latest re Iraq – 12th March – from Zenit, Vatican site

On Tuesday, Dominican Father Philip Neri Powell, of the philosophy faculty in Rome's Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas, posted a letter on his blog detailing the "terrible situation of our Dominican sisters in Iraq and the entire Christian community in Mosul."

The letter, written by Sister Donna Markham, prioress of the Adrian Dominicans in Michigan, related "very tragic news about the situation in Iraq. She explained that she had been with several Iraqi sisters who are currently in the United States.

Sister Markham stated that the Christians are all fleeing Mosul. She continued: "There have been murders and rapes of Christians there and for now they are fleeing to the Christian villages". Sister Maria [prioress of the Iraqi nuns] is very frightened about the safety of the sisters and the Christian people." "As of now, the five elderly sisters who have been holding down the Motherhouse are choosing to remain there because they do not want to lose their Motherhouse to the terrorists," Sister Markham said. She added that her Iraqi sister reported that "most Christians are making plans to evacuate from Iraq and, as a consequence, she does not know what will happen with her congregation." "She said they will follow the Christian people where they go, but where that will be is uncertain," the letter noted. "The sisters' families remain in grave danger and, as you can imagine, the young ones with us and with Springfield are terrified." Sister Markham lamented that "nothing is being reported" by many media sources.

Speaking on behalf of her Iraqi sisters, the nun asked for others to spread the word and to send prayers to the Christians suffering in Iraq. Over the past few weeks, a killing spree has claimed many lives. Among these, eight Christians were murdered in the span of 10 days, and many others are fleeing Mosul.

Some 15,000 Christians remain in the Muslim-majority city of Mosul, where their families have lived for 2,000 years. For this reason, Archbishop Louis Sako of Kirkuk declared a day of fasting and prayer at the beginning of the month for an end to the violence.

iPhone rosary and other devotional apps for Catholics

The iPhone's 140 million-plus applications now include one that helps Catholics pray the rosary.

Dave Brown, from the US, has invented a virtual rosary-beads "app" as a sign of thanksgiving after doctors found a successful bone-marrow match for his kindergarten-age daughter in 2008, curing her of her leukemia, the Catholic News Service reports.

As an information technology manager at a window and door company, Brown designed the app that has animated beads, which can be moved with a touch, said the report. Corresponding prayers pop up on the screen, along with devotional images.

The application knows which mystery to pray on which day. It even knows where the user left off if the rosary is interrupted. The app also has Spanish and French capability.

Dominican Calendar this week

No Dominican Feasts until the 5th April, because of the Lenten period.

Next OPFAM – 30th March

Please send contributions – short paragraphs – about Dominican Life in your area to archives5@bigpond.com.au – OFTEN!