



OPFAM

Dominican Family Matters

*A Newsletter for the Dominican Family in Australia,
New Zealand, Solomon Islands 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;

20th September 2011

**“We hear them speaking in our own tongues of the marvellous acts of God” (Acts 2:11):
Preaching and Culture / Community Preaching**

Dominican Thought for the Week

As Dominican family we are a unique model of church. We are a visible manifestation of Dominic’s spirit. As a family, we do justice. As a family, we give witness. As a family we preach. As a family we have made the Word our home.

Perhaps the most motivating passage for the Dominican family can be found in Paul’s letter to the Romans 10:14-18.

But how can they call on him in whom they have not believed?

And how can they believe in him of whom they have not heard?

And how can they hear without someone to preach?

And how can people preach unless they are sent?

As it is written, *How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news.*

It was the year 1510, eighteen years after Christopher Columbus had stumbled upon the lands we now call the Americas, that the first group of Spanish Dominican friars arrived on the island of what we know today as Haiti and the Dominican Republic. The first group of four arrived under the leadership of the twenty-eight year old vicar provincial, Pedro de Cordoba. By September of that year, there were fifteen or sixteen Dominicans on the islands, all of whom had in some way been influenced by the spirit of renewal that was emanating from the Dominican priory of San Esteban in Salamanca. It did not take the Dominican’s long to speak out against the injustice, the inhumanity they found in La Espanola.

The community gathered and together they wrote the homily that their brother Montesinos would deliver on the next Sunday. There was nothing convenient about the way they went about preaching the truth. It was five hundred years ago that our brother preached the words the community had written, calling for the end of encomienda system and defending the rights of the indigenous people. The most powerful line still sears our hearts, examining our contemporary communal conscience. “Are they not humans too?” And remembering we say, may humanity never again perpetuate such injustice.

We gather this morning as a family of preachers, at home with the Word. And we ask as all of the family who have gone before us in the last eight hundred years, “What will we preach? How will we live?” We must not respond too quickly. These questions are not about ministry, or community. These questions are about mission and the common life. Mission and common life are much broader than ministry and community. This is 2010, this is not the early part of the thirteenth century, this is not 1511; this is the United States, this is not Prouille or Bologna or Hispaniola. And yet we too live in an urgent time and urgent places. We see what members of our Dominican Family saw in their life time. Look around, what do you see? Do you not see the visible absence of God in our world? But do you not also see the invisible presence of God in our world? *Sr Ann Willits OP*

Parable Retreats

We welcome to Australia Fr Brian Pierce OP (promoter of the Dominican Nuns, author and preacher), Sr Ann Willits OP (Sinsinawa Dominican Sister, author and preacher), Sr Judith Anne O'Sullivan (New Zealand Dominican Sister, spiritual director) and Fr Ken Peterson O.Carm (Sancta Sophia Meditation Community, Victoria) who have come to guide 40 members of the Dominican Family in 2 retreats ranging over the period 22nd September – 9th October.

Parable retreats include meditation, personal reflection on the liturgical readings of the day, preaching, morning and evening prayer, daily Eucharist and prayer companionship.

Retreatants will welcome your prayer for them at this time, and will include the wider Dominican Family in their prayer.

Dominican Education Conference

Saturday 24th September- Monday 26th September 2011

Siena College, Melbourne is busily preparing to host the biannual Dominican Education Network Conference. The theme of the Conference is Social Justice, which will be approached through scripture, the social teaching of the Church and the social issues of our times. The program will include workshops, student drama and art exhibitions. 150 delegates have registered, representing Western Australia, New Zealand, South Australia, Queensland, Victoria, New South Wales and 2 Dominican Sisters from Indonesia.

“The conference theme- **‘We Must Dare to See What is Before our Eyes’**, focuses on human rights issues. In planning for the conference, we have been inspired by a Dominican story and a sermon preached in the Dominican Republic by Antonio De Montesinos 500 years ago. In 2011, excerpts from this sermon will be preached in Dominican churches around the world on the fourth Sunday of Advent. The story is about the Dominican community challenging unjust practices of the Spanish conquistadores. When questioned by the conquistadores as to the authority of Montesinos, the community responded that they spoke with one voice and that he preached on behalf of all the Dominicans based in Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic at the time.”

Keynote speakers include:

Sister Toni Harris OP, International Co-promotor of Justice and Peace for the Dominican Order;

Mr Julian Burnside AO QC, who has acted pro bono in many human rights cases, in particular concerning the treatment of refugees;

Dr Rose Marie Prosser, who works with senior staff in primary and secondary schools, and at the Yarra Theological College in the areas of theology, scripture and spirituality;

Ms Deborah Kent who works in the area of adult faith formation, and has a background as a member of the Archbishop's Religious Education Task Force, and co-founder of RASNET, support association for teachers of Religion and Society in Victoria.

Sisters and lay people will conduct six workshops around social justice and St Dominic, St Catherine of Siena, Justice Programs in Schools, the journey towards reconciliation and authentic partnership between aboriginal and non-aboriginal people, the power of immersion programs, ‘Sacred Sound Journey’; the sexualisation of girls in the media and popular culture; human rights in the classroom and youth homelessness.

It is with great joy that we see that the Dominican charism continues to inspire and challenge lay leaders and staffs of schools in the Dominican tradition. We trust that our wider Dominican Family will pray for the success of this significant gathering.

Building Bridges Not Walls

A small number of the Dominican Family are involved in prison ministry in Australia and New Zealand. The Australian Catholic Bishops' Social Justice Statement 2011-2012 was launched this week at ACU, North Sydney. It is an exploration of the current Prison and Justice system in Australia.

'I recommend reading [Building Bridges, not Walls](#) for it is well-researched, contains real stories and incidents from inmates' lives, and gives practical steps one can take to make a difference.' Sr June Peck OP, prison chaplain. The statement can be seen on line at Australian Catholic Social Justice Council site.

[A really useful site about St Catherine of Siena](#)

<http://www.drawnbylove.com/> articles, images, texts, quotes, official documentation

500th Anniversary

Wonderful resources for Social Justice issues, with special emphasis on the Montesinos Story, and the presence of the Order in South America over 500 years. The Site is www.domlife.org

Pilgrims of Truth, Pilgrims of Peace

You are invited to attend this gathering which will coincide with the invitation from Pope Benedict XVI to leaders of the world's religious traditions to gather in Assisi for a **prayer day of peace**.

Keynote speaker: Sr Trish Madigan OP is Chair of the Commission for Interfaith Relations in the Diocese of Broken Bay and Director of CIMER (Dominican Centre for Interfaith Ministry and Research – www.cimer.org.au). She recently returned from Northern Iraq where she took part in a research project "Three Generations of Women in Iraq."

A gathering of reflection, dialogue and prayer for peace and justice in the world.

When: 27 – 28 October **Where:** Mary MacKillop Place, 80 William St, North Sydney

Cost: \$130 full program

More info: Kim Davis, director.opw@catholic.org.au (02) 6201 9867 *RSVP:* 7 October 2011

Sponsored by the Bishops Commission for Church Ministry

Dominican Calendar

Sep-20 Bl. Mark of Modena (+1498) Italian, priest, studious contemplative whose preaching converted many.

Bl. Francis de Posadas (1644-1713) Spanish, priest, celebrated preacher, reformer, worker among the poor, author.

Sep-28 Bl. Lawrence of Ripafratta (1373-1456) Italian, priest, eloquent preacher, spiritual director, novice master of St. Antoninus and Bl. Fra Angelico.

The 16 Martyrs of Nagasaki Saints: Lorenzo Ruiz, husband and father, Protomartyr of the Philippines, member of the Rosary Confraternity (+1637); Dominic Ibañez de Erquicia, Spanish (+1633), and James Kyushei Tomonaga, Japanese, and 7 other Dominican priests; 2 Dominican Cooperator Brothers; 2 Lay Dominicans; 2 parishioners of Dominican missions, canonized 1987.

Oct-3 Bl. Dominic Spadafora (1450-1521) Italian, priest, missionary preacher, teacher.

Oct-4 **OUR HOLY FATHER FRANCIS OF ASSISI (1182-1226) [F] Italian, saint, deacon, founder of the Order of Friars Minor (Franciscans), preacher, stigmatist, friend of St. Dominic, Church appointed patron of ecologists, merchants, Catholic action; co-patron with St. Catherine of Siena of Italy, canonized 1228.**

Oct-5 Bl. Raymond of Capua (c.1330-1399) Italian, priest, 23rd Master of the Order, reformer, confessor and biographer of St. Catherine (April 29).

Please send contributions – short paragraphs – about Dominican Life in your area to archives@opeast.org.au – OFTEN!