



OPFAM

Dominican Family Matters

Newsletter of the Dominican Family in Australia, New Zealand, Solomons and Papua New Guinea

23rd June 2008

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World Youth Day Sydney 2008! Tuesday 15th July – Sunday 20th July 2008.

Obtain the latest **Dominican Welcome Newsletters** on www.opeakst.org.au; email: wyd@opeakst.org.au

Dominican Welcome: 13th-14th July, Santa Sabina College, Strathfield NSW

“Inspired by the great Dominican woman- Catherine of Siena, the ‘Dominican Welcome’ seeks to ground our Dominican youth to journey humbly and faithfully with “the ‘Power of Two Feet’, In short- Contemplation and Action; before, during and after World Youth Day 2008.

We need to keep both of these elements in balance and if we don’t have the action with the contemplation then we are only walking on one foot and we limp.

Catherine of Siena was one of the most socially active, publicly influential and theologically piercing women in the history of the Church. When everything in the world around her was in chaos, in the church, in the market place, in government, Catherine always stood up for the truth.

1st Day: Sunday 13th July, 2008

12.00noon-1.00pm	Registration
1.00pm-2.00pm	Welcome to Country & Introductions
2.00pm-3.30pm	Interfaith Dialogue Session
4.00pm-5.00pm	Working for Justice, by Guest Speakers
5.00pm-6.00pm	Working for Justice Discussions
7.30pm-9.00pm	Eucharistic Celebration
9.30pm-10.30pm	Taizé Liturgy
10.30pm-12.00Midnight	Vigil & Quiet Time

2nd Day: Monday 14th July, 2008

7.30am-8.30am	Christian Meditation, with Laurence Freeman OSB
12.00pm-1.00pm	Talk on Christian Meditation, Laurence Freeman OSB
2.00pm-4.00pm	Indigenous Celebrations
4.00pm-5.00pm	Working for Justice by Guest Speakers
5.00pm-6.00pm	Working for Justice Discussions
6.00pm-6.30pm	Evening Prayer, led by the Dominican Sisters
6.30pm– 7.30pm	BBQ Dinner Evening
8.00pm– 10.00pm	Corroboree Celebration

Throughout the 2 days of the event, a '**Chill-out Cafe**' will be available for people to meet and mingle. **The Dominican Heritage Centre** which is on the grounds of Santa Sabina College will be open for guided tours on Monday 14th July between 9am-2pm, outside the event hours, group-tour appointments may be made by contacting Sr Elizabeth Hellwig through email at domadmin@opeast.org.au or phone at +61 (02) 97449511

The Dominican Friars invite you to: A Dominican WYD Gathering

Great Hall, University of Sydney
Wed 16 July 2008
4:00-6:30pm

All Creation Groans: The Debate over Creation and Evolution
Christoph Cardinal Schonborn, O.P.
Archbishop of Vienna, Austria

Seek His Face: Knowing the One You Witness
Fr Paul Murray, O.P.
Noted author and speaker on Dominican spirituality

A light supper will be available from 4:00pm, speakers' presentations from 4:30pm. Solemn Evening Prayer from 6:00pm, concluding with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. Liturgy Books will be provided for Solemn Evening Prayer. All pilgrims, Dominicans and friends are invited!

For further information: www.australia.op.org

*During the short time left, **our thoughts and prayers need to be with all those Dominicans** involved in the massive, complex organisation that is going to bring together World Youth Day – Bishop Anthony, our three Nashville Dominican Sisters and local Dominican Sisters, their co-ordinator, our teachers and students at the coal face, those billeting our Dominican students, those providing food and spiritual sustenance....*

Dominican Sisters hurt in bomb blast

MOSUL, IRAQ - June 23, 2008 -- On Sunday, June 17th a car bomb exploded near the Dominican Sisters convent in Telkeif. Four sisters were injured, two badly enough to be hospitalized and later released. Damage to the buildings was said to be extensive and the space uninhabitable for now. Reports of increased threats of violence to the clergy continue. Please keep the people of Iraq and the Dominican Family in prayer.

Maryknoll [Sisters of St Dominic] Missioner reports on effects of election violence in Kenya *By Sr. Paula Kuntz MM and Sr. Noel Doescher MM*

"To see a somber Kenyan in the midst of chaos and adverse circumstances is rare, but the day I went up the mountain to help distribute food to 1000 or more homeless people camped there, I was overcome by the haunted looks and unsmiling faces of the people quietly waiting for the food," says Sr. Paula Kunz, a Maryknoll Sister from London, Ontario, Canada. "In my 39 years of living among the ethnic groups in this area, this is the first time I have experienced such a feeling of hopelessness from these usually buoyant people."

The violence of the recent clashes which robbed people of their homes, their land and many family members started as a result of the presidential elections held in late December 2007. The voter turnout was exceptionally large and all went peacefully until news came trickling in that the opposition part of Raila Odinga which was originally in the lead had been surpassed by the party of the incumbent, Mwai Kibaki in votes. Fighting broke out in Nairobi especially in the slum areas and quickly spread to other towns especially to those along the road to the Uganda border. In the town of Eldoret, a church and its worshipers were set ablaze and as one woman tried to escape through a window in the church, her baby was torn from her arms and thrown back into the flames.

The Kitale area, where Sr. Paula has lived and worked since 1972, is about 60 miles northwest of the Ugandan border and is home to a mix of the 42 ethnic groups in Kenya. Though for the most part they live in

harmony together, underlying it all are the issues of land, unemployment and tribalism. Because these issues have never been properly addressed, there is an uneasy peace in the country.

When fighting broke out on the slopes of the mountainous area around Kitale, the army was sent in to restore quiet. They did this by extreme violence, rape and brutality causing the people to flee to areas of safety in the foothills of Mt. Elgon where camps were established. The Kitale area itself was spared violence and Sr. Paula was able to join a team which was taking food to the homeless in the camps. The Maryknoll Lay Missioners in the area and other religious communities all pitched in to help with this gigantic task. Ministering to the homeless and their needs became a full time work. Later when food supplies were dwindling, the government came with huge lorries, uprooted the people from the camps, drove them back to the areas where they had fled from and dumped them. Their houses were burned and their plots of land destroyed. They were left with nothing.

Koffi Annan, former Secretary General of the U.N., worked with the government leaders for some time trying to get across his idea that the government is for the people NOT for themselves. Because the unresolved issues have not been fully addressed, the uneasy peace remains. We continue to pray that God will give hope and peace to these beautiful people in this corner of his vineyard.

story and photos courtesy:

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[Inmates interested in Dominican Laity](#)

Grand Rapids Dominican Brings Message of Hope to Prison Inmates *Charles Honey Press Religion Editor*

GRAND RAPIDS, MI -- June 9, 2008 Sister Elizabeth Barilla, 93, rolled in a wheelchair past inmates playing basketball and raking spacious prison grounds. A pleasant breeze blew across what looked like a small-college campus, except for prisoners' blue togs and the sun glinting off razor wire. Indeed, Sister Barilla was on an educational mission at the Muskegon Correctional Facility. She was impatient to arrive for her monthly 6:15 p.m. class teaching the Bible and Catholic doctrine to a handful of the medium-security facility's 1,300 men.

She put on her nun's veil as a long-haired inmate named Marc opened the door and greeted her graciously. "Sounds like they put a playing card in your wheel," Marc joked about her whirring wheelchair. He took the chair from a prison staffer and pushed her to the classroom. She could have walked with a cane, but at age 93, Sister Barilla gladly accepted the ride.

It had been a long hike from the prison security checkpoint, where she walked through a metal detector, was patted down and held onto her veil. "They make me take it off because they think I'm hiding something," she said with a chuckle.

After almost two years of teaching there, the Grand Rapids Dominican knows the drill well. The former Catholic school teacher puts up with security hassles so she can bring the gospel to convicts. "It was Jesus Christ who came to save us and redeem us from our plight," she told five class members on a recent Tuesday evening. "All that he did for us showed the tremendous love God has for each and every human being. "We will share in God's glory someday. Isn't that wonderful?"

She began teaching prisoners after one of them requested a class about Dominican spirituality. Some inmates were interested in becoming Dominican Laity, people who strive to live according to the Dominican values of prayer, study, community and service. The Rev. James Motl, promoter of Dominican Laity for the Dominican Friars' Central Province, asked West Michigan's chapter of lay Dominicans to teach the inmates. They began doing so in the summer of 2006, with Sister Barilla joining them soon after. The prisoners originally wanted to join the Dominican Laity, but high inmate turnover and insufficient lay volunteers made that impractical, Motl said. However, a group of prisoners in Boston has joined the Order, and Muskegon inmates could apply for membership once out of prison, he added.

Bob Croft, one of about a dozen local Dominican Laity, remembers the first time he went to the prison with Sister Barilla. It was a windy February day and, at that time lacking a wheelchair, she had to stop to catch her breath while walking across the yard. "Here's this woman just determined to (teach) those people and spread the word of God," recalled Croft, of Grand Rapids. "It's really quite an amazing example."

"She's not afraid at all," he added. "She has a lot of courage and faith, and also a lot of charity to go in there and teach them the love of God." "God sends volunteers like her to provide most of the religious instruction to those of the state's 50,000 inmates who want it, said Russ Marlan, public information officer for the Michigan Department of Corrections. "These volunteers that come in and do this, they're just god sends," Marlan said. "A very important part of remaining crime-free is being around people involved in positive activities. That begins in prison."

Sister Barilla taught schools for more than 30 years after joining the Grand Rapids Dominicans. The Saskatchewan, Canada, native also taught in Hungary in the 1990s. She readily accepted the opportunity to teach prisoners, whom she regards as not so different from herself.

"Our guys, they're good guys," said Sister Barilla, her high voice carrying a trace of her Hungarian heritage. "You wouldn't be able to tell them from an ordinary man on the street. The biggest thing is, they realize they've made a mistake and want to do better." She relies on fellow volunteers like Ethelnyne Niewiekt to teach the basics of Dominican life.

Sister Barilla focuses on Scripture and theology. "One fellow said to me, 'You mean I have to forgive so and so?'" she recalled with an amused smile. "I said, 'Yeah, that's what Jesus was telling us.' 'I'm just trying to teach them what a true disciple of Jesus should be like.'" She taught that in her latest visit to Muskegon inmates. She and Niewiek had to pass through three security gates and carry hand-held alarms in case they had trouble. They never have had to use them.

"Hi, how are you sister?" a prisoner named Joseph greeted her with a handshake and a bow. "I was married to a Mary," he added with a laugh. He and a couple other class members had Bibles. Up to 20 men have been in past classes, but several have left after being paroled. "Instead of saying the whole rosary today, we'll just say the Hail Mary because we have a lot to do," Sister Barilla told them. They recited with her, "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee ..."

"She looked very much the teacher, sitting at a desk in a room lined with globes, books and posters. At the inmates' request, her topics were salvation, how to get to heaven and modern Dominican saints. Beginning with Adam and Eve's original sin, she explained King David was "a man after God's own heart" because he confessed his sins. "We are like David," she told them. "We go to God and say, 'I have sinned, have mercy on me.' Then we try to do better."

"The prison includes men serving life sentences for murder. Others have been convicted of criminal sexual conduct, armed robbery or drug offenses. Sister Barilla does not know what crimes her students committed, nor does she ask. She had the men turn to Matthew 25:31, which she called "our final exam with Jesus." She asked Joseph to read it. "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat," Joseph read, as Sister Barilla smiled. "I was in prison and you came to visit me." She then had Niewiek handout slips of paper listing acts of mercy, such as "visit the sick." The men took flame shaped "gifts of the spirit" such as wisdom. Staying on track "We can be practicing these gifts or works of mercy, because it will help us on the road to heaven," she said.

The inmates say her classes help them daily. "It helps to center my life a little bit, keep me on track where I should be," said Marc, a soft-spoken man who brought cups of water to the teachers. "It reinforces the knowledge that wherever I'm at, God's there."

"Steven, an immigrant from Baghdad, called the class "a blessing" that reminds him of church. "This is the only place I feel like I'm in the world," he said. Tony, who asked for the class originally, said it will help them in prison and beyond. "When someday we get released back into society, we'll be able to take all of this with us and be good, law-abiding citizens," he said. The class closed with a prayer, the men crossing themselves. As they left, Sister Barilla said, "I want you guys to know I pray for you every day." Joseph warmly answered, "Thank you. I pray for you everyday, and twice on Sunday."

Did you know that at least two Sisters in Australia minister in prisons?

Two new books

Preaching Justice: Dominican Contributions to Social Ethics in the Twentieth Century

Ed. F. Compagnoni OP and Helen Alford

Don't Put Out the Burning Bush: Worship and Preaching in a Complex World

Ed. V. Boland OP

Both available from Australasian Theological Forum Inc. PO Box 504, Hindmarsh SA 5007

Ph: 08 8354 2299; Fax 08 8354 2399 [Sorry! No web address]

Dominican Calendar this week

Jun-23 Bl. Innocent V (1224-1276) AKA "Peter of Tarentaise", French, pope (1276, first Dominican pope), scholar, administrator, Archbishop of Lyons.

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