



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;

25th October 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

Sunday, 23 October: **“No human being is illegal”** – Ex 22, 20-26 -*fr Brian J. Pierce, OP*

If we read the Bible from beginning to end, we cannot miss noticing that there is a lot of movement of people. In the book of Genesis, Abraham and his family are called by God to leave their Chaldean homeland of Ur and began a long journey to the land of Canaan. Thus begins our ancient story of faith, rooted in the land we call the Holy Land. “God said to Abram: leave your country, your people, and your father’s family and set off to the country that I will show you ... Abram set off just as God said” (Gen. 12,1.4).

The book of Exodus continues with the story of Moses and God’s people flight from Egypt. Obedient to God’s call, Moses and his people begin the second great emigration – from Egypt back to Canaan, back to the land of God’s promise.

The migration of peoples is nothing new. It is *not* a modern phenomenon. From the beginning of time, people have set off as migrants and pilgrims – to find a home in a faraway land. Our contemporary experience – of Africans migrating to Europe, of Eastern Europeans migrating to western Europe, of Latin Americans emigrating to North America, of people of the Middle East migrating to Australia and New Zealand – is nothing new. Pilgrimage and emigration are as old as humanity itself. We are a pilgrim people, and because of faith, we trust that God journeys with us.

Our first reading from the book of Exodus today has these great, ancient stories as a back-drop: “You shall not molest or oppress an alien, for you were once aliens yourself in the land of Egypt. If ever you wrong them and they cry out to me, I will surely hear their cry” (Ex 22, 21-23).

God has walked with the people for many generations, aware of their suffering, their hopes, and their vulnerability. The alien, the migrant, has a place of great respect and dignity in God’s heart, and therefore, in our Judeo-Christian story.

This theme appears frequently in the New Testament, as well:

In the story of Jesus’s birth, for example: Joseph and Mary travel to the village of Bethlehem where Jesus is born – a town that is not their own.

In Matthew’s Gospel, the holy family is forced to live in exile in Egypt – as undocumented immigrants – a family fleeing political persecution.

Is not the very *incarnation of God’s Son and his coming to live among us as one of us* not God’s own story of emigration to a distant land?

And finally, after the death of Jesus, a great period of persecution forced the disciples to disperse into every corner of the known world. It is a great paradox that Christianity spreads as the result of violence and persecution.

Our world today is a world marked by the movement and migration of peoples. Immigrants and refugees are always vulnerable. They leave the known world that they call “home” and set off – at great risk – to an unknown land. Most of us are the children and grandchildren of refugees and immigrants – many of whom left their beloved homeland because of war or famine. Is this not why God’s words in the book of Exodus are as important today as they were in ages past? “You shall not molest or oppress an alien, for you were once aliens yourselves in the land of Egypt.”

In today's gospel Jesus makes it very clear that love of God and love of neighbor cannot be separated. There is not one without the other. "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart... and you shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments.

So, what is the problem? Why does our world keep skirting the issue? Women and children are especially vulnerable to the vultures of human trafficking – and yet politicians (many of whom call themselves Christians) continue to push laws that blatantly oppress and cause suffering for immigrants and refugees. "You were once aliens yourselves!" God cries out. "Read my lips, people!" Spouses are split apart, parents torn from their children – all because of laws that deny basic rights and dignity to persons who have had to leave their beloved homeland to survive.

So, what side of the border do I stand on regarding this issue? Moses and his people had to flee the oppression of Egypt. Mary, Joseph and Jesus had to flee the oppression of Herod. Many of our ancestors fled oppression and hunger. God was always with them. Will today's immigrants and refugees find only walls and barbed wire fences in the very same land where our ancestors found hope, and jobs, and land to work, and hope? Will today's immigrants find hatred and rejection in a land where our grandparents found a God whose name is LOVE? Now it is our turn. For God, for whom *all land is holy*, no human being is illegal – NEVER!

Our Western Australian Sisters!

Congratulations to Sr M. Regina O'Neill, who continues as Prioress, and her new team: Srs Joan Carville, Marlene Laracy, Mary Ryan and Margaret Scharf. May they be blessed with all they need to lead their Congregation in its next phase.

Dominican Centre for Research and Inter-Faith Dialogue, Indonesia

Between 12-14 November Fr Johanes Robini Maranto OP, from the Dominican Centre for Research and Inter-Faith Dialogue (CRID) in Pontianak, Indonesia, will be visiting Sydney. There will be an opportunity to learn more about the interfaith situation in Indonesia and Asia generally, and also the work of Dominicans at CRID, on Saturday 12 November at Rosary Lodge, Strathfield, between 2pm and 4pm. If you would like to join us, please advise on domadmin@opeast.org.au

Dominican Calendar

Some very significant feasts occur around this time:

Oct-27 Bl. Bartholomew of Vicenza (1200-1270) Italian, Bishop of Cyprus, later of Vicenza, administrator, founder of a crime-fighting group.

Oct-28 Ss. SIMON AND JUDE [F] First century Jews, saints, apostles.

Oct-30 Bl. Benvenuta Boiani (1254-1292) Italian, virgin, cured through the intercession of St. Dominic, extreme ascetic, penitent, experienced visions and diabolic assaults, greatly devoted to Our Lady, Dominican Laity.

Bl. Terence O'Brien OP (1600-1651) Irish, bishop, martyr

Bl. Peter Higgins OP (1600-1643) Irish, priest, martyr

Nov-1 ALL SAINTS DAY

Nov-2 ALL SOULS DAY

Nov-3 **ST MARTIN DE PORRES** (1579-1639) [F] Peruvian, first a Lay Dominican then a Cooperator Brother; infirmarian, barber, worker among the poor, remarkable wonder-

worker, Church appointed patron of social justice, cooperator brothers, and hair dressers, canonized 1962.

Nov-5 Bl. Simon Ballacchi (+1319) Italian, cooperator brother, catechist, gardener, blind.

Nov-6 Ss. Francis de Capillas, priest; Alphonsus Navarrete, priest; and Companions, martyrs. [M] These Dominican martyrs of Japan and China (1617 to 1748) of Spanish and native nationalities are celebrated together. St. Francis de Capillas was declared the Protomartyr of China by the Holy See,

Nov-7 ALL SAINTS OF THE ORDER OF PREACHERS [F] Priests, Nuns, Cooperator Brothers, Dominican Laity, Sisters

Nov-8 ANNIVERSARY OF ALL DECEASED DOMINICAN BROTHERS AND SISTERS [M] Priests, Nuns, Cooperator Brothers, Dominican Laity, Sisters

Nov-14 Bl. John Liccio (1426-1511) Italian, priest, preacher, administrator.

Bl. Lucy of Narnia (1476-1544) Italian, married, virgin, cloistered sister, mystic, stigmatist; lived in obscurity, but made known by miracles at her tomb.

Nov-15 ST ALBERT THE GREAT (1206-1280) [F] German, Bishop of Ratisbon, now known as Regensburg, in S. Germany, theologian of renown, philosopher, scientist, diplomat, teacher, inventor, teacher of St. Thomas Aquinas, called great already in his lifetime, criss-crossed his diocese on foot and so nicknamed "Doctor Boots" by his contemporaries, "Universal Doctor" of the Church, Church appointed patron of scientists, medical technicians, proclaimed Doctor.

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