



# 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;*

**28th June 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**

On the whole we don't take Jesus seriously – whether we call ourselves Christians or not. There are some remarkable exceptions, but by and large we don't love our enemies, we don't turn the other cheek, we don't forgive seventy times seven times, we don't bless those who curse us, we don't share what we have with the poor, and we don't put all our hope and trust in God. We have our excuses. I am no saint. It is not meant for everybody, surely? It's a great ideal, but it is not practical in this day and age.

... we must learn to take Jesus seriously, and it is precisely in this day and age that we need to do so. In fact, what we need to take seriously IS this day and age, our times. We do not often live in a kind of dream world that does not take the threats and challenges of today seriously enough. There are Christians who think that one can take Jesus seriously without taking too much notice of what is happening in the world around us. Jesus' spirituality was thoroughly contextual. He read the signs of his times and taught his followers to do the same (Mt 16:3-4) We take Jesus seriously when, among other things, we begin to read the signs of our times with honesty and sincerity. *Albert Nolan OP, Jesus Today*

### **Congratulations to Dominican Sister honoured with NAIDOC award**

A Dominican religious sister will receive a National Aboriginal Islander Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) award for her services to the Aboriginal and Catholic community, said a report from the *Advertiser* on Adelaide Now.

Sister Doreen Hynes, 77, has always sought justice for others, and equality in education, the report said. One of her most rewarding activities is providing private English and Maths tutoring to Year 5-11 indigenous students.

The awards are part of a ceremony this Sunday to raise public awareness of indigenous culture and issues, particularly for the 2000 indigenous Catholics and their families in South Australia.

Sister Hynes, a member of the Cabra congregation, said she was humbled about receiving the award and that her passion for teaching Aboriginal children stemmed from an early interest in justice and peace.

"I want real justice for everyone. Some good has happened, but some (indigenous people) have had a very hard road." *From Cath News 28.6.2011*

### **Dominican Preaching Retreat (Sept 2011)**

Two Dominican Preaching Retreats will be offered in Sydney in Sept/Oct this year. The first one at The Centre at Randwick (22-29 September) still has a few vacancies for members of the Dominican Family. The Preaching Team consists of Sr Ann Willits OP (USA), Fr Brian Pierce OP (Rome), Sr Judith Anne O'Sullivan OP (NZ) and Fr Ken Petersen O.Carm (Warburton Vic). The focus of the retreat will be reflection on the scriptures proclaimed each day in the liturgy, celebration of the Prayer of the Church, and time for meditation. Spiritual direction is an option for those who wish. Participant contribution for the six days (fully inclusive) is \$500. For further information contact Sr Jill Shirvington OP at [jshirvington@opeast.org.au](mailto:jshirvington@opeast.org.au) or (02) 9744 9511 during business hours.

## Dominican Sisters of Africa General Assembly Report

...The highlight of our time together was the workshop led by Sr Petronille. She used the method of *SEE, JUDGE* and *ACT*. In order to analyse reality in the light of God's Word, it is necessary to understand scriptures, read the Bible and consult the doctrine of the Church. This method could be used to look for a way forward for us as Dominican women in Africa.

**FIRST STEP:** What is the problem and how do we see the problem? If this is the problem, what is the will of God? What does God want? This will take us to where we see the situation with eyes of faith. We look for the positive aspects that show "God's will."

**SECOND STEP:** Who are the victims in this specific incident? We may discover that we could be part of the problem and will need conversion.

**THIRD STEP:** Turn towards the future. We should come up clearly with options for commitment. We define the action to do and steps we need to take and commit ourselves to an action. The process concludes with an evaluation. And then the process starts again. We need to read the signs of the times to preach effectively in other words "We cannot preach without reading the signs of the times."

She explained more fully the connection between preaching through apostolic service as Dominican women and how this proclamation of the Word can be implemented by Dominican women in Africa. In her explanation she stated that the specific charism of ALL Dominicans whether men or women is preaching. All the women of the Order have the charism of preaching. We are women called to preach. The root of the word "to preach" is "to announce/proclaim the Word of God". This can be done in many different ways. In the past, for the women, preaching was limited to and signified "service of charity". The Biblical meaning of "preaching" is both "to say and to do". – that is, saying and the doing are inseparable. In the past, the understanding of preaching for men and women was that the men take charge of the saying, and the women take charge of the doing. This, in the paraphrased words of Sandra Schneider's, Dominican women today are not only to be seen as the hands of the Church, "the apostolic arm of the church", but also its voice, and equally partners with the men in the mission of apostolic preaching (recognised as different from the ministerial preaching of priests). In a similar way, Dominican brethren are called also to encompass preaching as service of love. Preaching is not only the proclamation of the Word, but also translates into action that transforms our lives. Dominican women should be able to express in words the rationale of their actions. Sisters are already proclaiming the Word of God in different ways, e.g. they are lecturers (in sacred studies), are involved in parish catechesis. Another aspect of service is that preaching is an opening to humanity in general, not just to Christian, as Dominicans we need to welcome women and men who do not know yet, or have not yet heard that our God is a God who loves us. This message needs to be proclaimed clearly in word and action.

She continued to say in Africa, it is a challenge for women to talk in public. Women do not have the right to speak for themselves but are expected to talk through men. But today, with the declaration of human rights, theology of creation and feminism, we discover that all people have a right to express the word. There are many dynamic women today who do studies such as economics, and are articulate; are able to express their faith in their own words. Women have the capacity to express their living experience. We, as women, often limit ourselves to the service of charity. We are challenged to free the word of Dominican women and empower them to free their own word. The future depends on our identity as African women and we need to face it honestly.

After the introduction we worked in Zonal groups answering the following questions:

- i. What are the main problems affecting Africa today?
- ii. What are the main challenges to the mission of the Church in Africa?
- iii. What does preaching mean for us as Dominican women in the Africa context?
- iv. How would we achieve these priorities?

Answering these questions we realized how much we have in common as sisters working in the African continent. The highlight of the discussion was what we saw as needing to be taken forward. Some of the issues that came up were, we need to continue with collaboration in our own countries, and across the different countries in Africa, looking at the role of DSA/DSI/the Order and the different Congregations, focus on DSA goals, improve communication – including learning French or English as these are the languages used in Africa, have an address book with the different communities in Africa and also a list of contact persons per country of DSA and JPIC and have a DSA common project.

The workshop helped us look at the needs of our Zones realistically in order to make decisions on the way forward. We had also to look at the human resources in order to look forward. From [www.dsiop.org](http://www.dsiop.org)

## **Dominican priest wages peace through dialogue in troubled Pakistan**

The odds that a Catholic priest can help bring peace and make interfaith dialogue and religious tolerance flourish in troubled Pakistan would seem long.

Some 35,000 people have been killed in the country since Sept. 11, 2001. In a population of 180 million, 96 percent are Muslim, 2 percent are Hindu and Christians are but 1.8 percent. Extremists – perhaps 10 percent of Pakistanis, while 90 percent are peaceful people – grab the headlines in the seemingly endless wave of religious violence.

But Dominican Father James Channan is an optimistic man, and has been for the 35 years he has waged peace in Pakistan, the last 14 years as regional coordinator for San Francisco-based United Religions Initiative, the world's largest grassroots interfaith organization.

Father Channan was in San Francisco for speaking engagements this month and said that he continues to be inspired to bring people of different faiths together, in particular accommodating Muslim-Christian dialogue. "In Pakistan I see great hope," said Father Channan. "The dialogue is not just coming together, sitting around a table to talk and have a cup of coffee. My work is aimed at having dialogue at every level of life."

The United Religions Initiative was launched in 2000 by the former head of the Episcopal Church in California, Bishop William Swing, as a kind of United Nations for religions. Officed in the Presidio of San Francisco, it is now a global network of more than 500 grassroots organizations, called Cooperation Circles, dedicated to peace and justice through interfaith and cross-cultural cooperation. It has a presence in 78 countries.

Father Channan manages the URI effort in Pakistan, having organized 44 interfaith groups, as well as directing a new Dominican Peace Center in Lahore with a similar agenda. Each of these groups has an emphasis, while all of them keep front of mind working toward bringing down Pakistan's staggering illiteracy rate of more than 50 percent, and giving people a lift out of poverty. The poor, he noted, often succumb to the temptation of joining radical extremists. "People are poor and they lack vocational training," said Father Channan, a 59-year-old Pakistani. "We work with them. Another group may work for children in schools, promoting harmony in the minds of children. Another may make posters that demonstrate a sense of unity and peace. Another group is working for the betterment of women, promoting education, providing them with vocational training, and helping women who become victims of domestic violence and also who have been sexually abused," he said.

It is not uncommon, he added, for Christian women to be kidnapped and forced to convert to Islam. Those women are helped as well, he said. The work is accommodated by mutual respect and the rewards are meaningful, but Pakistan is a dangerous place for minorities, he said.

Indeed, the country's lone Christian cabinet member, Shahbaz Bhatti, the federal minister for minorities who was an outspoken critic of Pakistan's blasphemy laws and a Catholic, was assassinated in March, triggering condemnation around the world. His position has not been filled. Meantime, a radical Islamic party this month launched a campaign seeking a ban on the Bible, described as a "pornographic" and "blasphemous book." In recent years, the homes of 300 Christians have been set afire.

"Nobody in Pakistan is safe," said Father Channan. "A person goes to the market, whether Muslim or Christian, and she does not know whether she will be coming back home or not. Police officers are not safe. Our army is not safe. Our political leaders are not safe. Our human rights leaders are not safe. Some of them have been killed," he said.

"I don't feel safe. However, I am not afraid to do the work which I am doing," said Father Channan, "to promote harmony, to bring reconciliation, to bring a message of respect and tolerance. That is my mission. That is what I am inspired to do, and it was what Jesus Christ taught me by his example." He added, "He suffered. He died, and he rose up on the third day, so that is a great model for me and an inspiration." *Author: George Raine June 21, 2011*

[Catholic San Francisco Online](http://CatholicSanFranciscoOnline.com) ; [www.op.org](http://www.op.org)

## **Dominican Calendar**

- Jul-4 Bl. Pier-Giorgio Frassati (1901-1925) Italian, as a Lay Dominican took the name Bro. Jerome after Fra Savonarola, whom he venerated as a saint, popular among his peers, ardent athlete, tireless servant of the poor, apostle to his fellow university students in Turin, he died after 6 days with polio.
- Jul-7 Bl. Benedict XI (1240-1304) AKA "Nicholas Boccasini", Italian, pope (1303- 1304, second Dominican pope), 9th Master of the Order, Bishop of Ostia, diplomat.

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