



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”

29th November 2010

Santa Sabina, Rome
25th November, 2010

Dear sisters, dear brothers,

A great many of you in these last few weeks have shown your solidarity for the sisters and brothers of Iraq, who are struggling, together with their fellow citizens, with the recent resurgence of violence that has once more struck the Christian communities of this country. These displays of fraternity that unite us are a strong and precious support for Iraq's communities. And through them, we also express our solidarity with the whole population of the country that is oppressed by this violence.

In these days when we are about to begin our celebration of the season of Advent, it is with a renewed vigour that we should affirm once more our hope in the arrival of Him who comes to dwell among us and so bring Peace. Several months ago, at the time of another of these terrible outbreaks of violence, a young survivor declared that nothing, not even the death that had just occurred, should make us renounce love. In the face of violence, he thus witnessed to the only true strength and dignity of man.

To unite us with all those in the world who hold this hope, and in communion with all the oppressed Christian communities today, in particular those of Iraq, I suggest that you make the First Sunday of Advent a time of prayer for peace, in your conventual Churches and your communities. This time could last for the whole of Advent, and give rise to a moment of prayer together with the Dominican Family.

May the Lord of Peace fill the world with his justice and give the grace of peace in abundance!

Your brother
Fr Bruno Cardore OP
Master of the Order

Dominican Thought for the Week

We are gathered at Maryknoll for one reason - to be inconvenienced by the truth. We are here today not to congratulate ourselves on our beautiful feet. We are here today to be grateful that we have feet and these boots are made for walking. We are here today to remind ourselves to get on with preaching, to not become so comfortable and at home with the Word, that we grow complacent, or worse totally disillusioned, by the either/or restrictions of our country or our church. There is something remarkably ebullient about being Dominican. The truth is, Dominicans are stupefyingly free! It is time to humbly claim that freedom as a family, take our stand in the pulpit of the world as Dominic did, as the Holy preachers did at Prouille, as the Dominican community did in Santo Domingo. Our family home is the Word. Isn't it time we realize that what holds us together also sends us out to all the corners of the world. Isn't it true we have family in Iraq and Ireland and Haiti? Pakistan and Vietnam and Hungary? Kenya and Canada and Peru? Isn't it true that our family can be found on every continent, speaking and listening and preaching and learning in hundreds of different languages and dialects? Sometimes the

truth is so close to us, so much a part of us, we miss it. *Sr Ann Willits OP speaking at the Dominican Leadership Conference October 2009*

Congratulations!

To **Fr Timothy Aihora** who was ordained to the ministerial priesthood on 27th November by Archbishop Adrian Smith SM at the Holy Cross Cathedral in Honiara.

To **Br Paul Rowse** who will be ordained on 4th December by Bishop Anthony Fisher OP at Mary Immaculate and St Athanasius' Church Manly.

May both of you be richly blessed as you enter this new phase in your ministry in the Order of St Dominic.

Blessings

on our Dominican brothers in the Solomon Islands as they gather in Assembly from 28th November, and elect a new Vicar Provincial.

A Tribute to the Sisters from St Lucy's School, Wahroonga

St Lucy's has unveiled a plaque to commemorate the continuing legacy of the Dominican Sisters who founded St Lucy's and Prouille schools. Around 15 Sisters were able to attend a liturgy to celebrate their commitment to education, particularly the education of children with vision impairment.

Prioress of the Dominican Sisters of Eastern Australia, Sr Judith Lawson, likened the sisters' work to a mustard seed that has grown into a huge, flowering tree: "They were women of very deep faith and trust in God. They believed if they were doing God's work the school would flourish and it was so," she said.

Sisters presented St Lucy's with a small orange tree descended from St Dominic's orange tree at Santa Sabina in Rome.

Following a liturgy, there was an elaborate morning tea prepared by St Lucy's India class. Over muffins and scones, the Sisters reminisced about Sister Martha's delicious cakes and the convent's rugged living conditions that included a resident, spitting possum. Former Prouille teacher, Sr June Peck, described convent life as hard work but: "pretty good... we're still here... and it is absolutely wonderful to see the developments in the school and the pupils".

One such pupil, Michael Boorne, is now a successful entrepreneur. He attributes his success to St Lucy's specialised teaching and the nuns' rigorous standards. Former St Lucy's Principal, Sr Val Grimson says the sisters had to be strict to prepare the children to compete in a demanding world: "We knew our students needed to work harder than other children to overcome their difficulties. They received a well-rounded education from a dedicated staff and it was pleasing to see a number of them go off to university". *Christina Barriere for St Lucy's*

Today St Lucy's School continues to provide excellence in education for children with disabilities, and is a significant part of the mission of the Dominican Sisters of Eastern Australia. Prouille School is a diocesan Primary School and is an important member of the Dominican Education Network.

Advent Evening Prayer

All Dominican Family members are invited to join the Sisters at Evening Prayer on each Sunday of Advent, at 5.30pm in Santa Sabina Chapel, Strathfield.

Dominican Sisters in Iraq New book, 'Drawn by Love,' tells story of congregation

For the first time in their 133-year history, a small congregation of Iraqi Dominican sisters is sharing the compelling story of their community's founding and unfolding in a turbulent region, under unusual ecclesial circumstances. In a new book titled, "Drawn by Love: A History of the Dominican Sisters of St. Catherine of Siena," Sister Marie Therese Hanna, OP, former prioress of the congregation, tells the story of their founding as a lay community at the end of the 19th century, to present day Iraq where the Catholic sisters are striving to rebuild their country even as the Christian minority is being persecuted in the aftermath of the U.S. invasion seven years ago.

The Baghdad church bombing on Oct. 31, described as "worst attack on Iraqi Christians since the American-led invasion in 2003" (New York Times, Nov. 7), has been followed by bombings of Christian homes in Baghdad that is certain to increase the mass exodus of Christians, who have inhabited the region since the earliest days of Christianity. In "Drawn by Love," Sister Marie Therese recounts the story of an earlier persecution of the Christian minority that took place at the start of World War I, where thousands of Christians were massacred in what is now southeastern Turkey and northern Iraq. The horror of the persecution is told in the stories of several "Catherinettes," as the women in the lay Dominican community were known, who survived the ordeal.

Notwithstanding the threats and danger, as the book recounts in its final chapters, the St. Catherine Dominicans are dedicated to working alongside their Iraqi brothers and sisters—Christians, Muslims, Kurds, Yazidis, and others alike—in their mission of helping to build a new, nonviolent future for Iraq. The 280-page history provides a unique lens through which to view the tumultuous history of Iraq; the story of the sisters is intimately tied to that of the Iraqi people, whose welfare remains their abiding concern.

According to the book, the religious community was founded in Mosul in 1877 by women of diverse Eastern Catholic and non-Catholic traditions (Chaldean, Syriac, Orthodox, Armenian, and Nestorian), under the guidance of the Dominican mission in Mesopotamia. In what was then part of the waning Ottoman Empire, the laywomen were engaged in teaching missions in what is today northern Iraq and southeastern Turkey and Syria. The modern state of Iraq was created by the colonial powers after the Ottoman Empire was vanquished in World War I.

In 1928, the lay community obtained canonical recognition from Rome as a pontifical institute. This not only meant that native Iraqis were able to take their rightful place among Catholic women religious worldwide, but also, uniquely, the churches of the East and West came together, under one roof, in their communion. Native Christian women, representing various Eastern rites, joined to establish a Roman Catholic religious institute, within the global order of Dominicans. The Congregation continues to honor and celebrate the diverse rites, liturgical languages, and traditions of its women, now mainly Syriac and Chaldean, as well as the Roman Catholic rite.

Proceeds from the sale of the book will be used to help finance the higher education of the congregation's young sisters. Their training—in peace studies, medicine, pastoral care, psychology, theology, and other fields—is a priority for the congregation, in their mission of forging a better future for the people of Iraq. "Drawn by Love" is being published by [Sor Juana Press](#), a small imprint established in 2002 by Adrian Dominican Sisters and Latina women of the Texas borderlands. The book's publication is being underwritten by various funders, including the Conrad N. Hilton Fund for Sisters and the Federation of Dominican Sisters USA.

Published in English and Arabic, the book includes 20 pages of photographs and a map illustrating the sisters' mission areas. The book was translated from Arabic into English by Sister Aman Miriam Mansoor, OP, with Adrian Dominican Sister Joanne Screes, OP. Sister Aman Miriam was studying in the United States until August 2010, when she returned to Iraq after obtaining a master's degree in Leadership in Education with a focus on peace studies. She is now teaching at her congregation's high school in Baghdad where a majority of the students are Muslim. Adrian Dominican Sister Elise D. Garcia, OP, editor of the book, lived with Sister Aman Miriam at the Adrian Dominican Motherhouse in Adrian, Michigan, when Sister Aman Miriam first came to the country in 2005. Adrian Dominican Sister Aneesah McNamee, OP designed the book, with the assistance of Rawaa Possa, a friend of the St. Catherine Sisters in Iraq, who laid out the text in Arabic. Adrian Dominican Sister Carol Coston, OP and Sister Margaret Ormond, OP, Prioress of the Dominican Sisters of Peace, helped secure the funding.

The book represents a cross-cultural collaboration among Dominican women, who stand in solidarity with their sisters in Iraq.

The book will be available Dec. 3 from Sor Juana Press and through the Adrian Dominicans' [Weber Shop](#). Visit the [Sor Juana Press](#) web site to see more images and read an excerpt from the book.

Dominican Calendar

Dec-1 Bl. John of Vercelli (+1283) Italian, priest, 6th Master of the Order, preacher, earnestly promoted devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus in consequence of the commission to do so given him and the Order by Pope Gregory X in implementation of the Second Ecumenical Council of Lyons (1274), on the way to which St. Thomas died. Church appointed patron of the Confraternity of the Holy Name.

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