



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;

5th July 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

Theology is the human taking hold of the Word of God, the kneading of it, the shaping of it into human words and images, and the baking of it in the fire of critical thought, so that it can be received as the bread of life by God’s people. It cannot be the voice of only one group of the human family. If it is that, it becomes unbalanced, it risks becoming an instrument of mind-control and can lead to the alienation of those who do not belong to that group. Theology needs to have the full range of human experience in it – to be the voice of the poor as well as of the rich, of women as well as of men, of lay people as well as of the ordained. Today it needs to include very explicitly the voice women. Men may not be entirely incapable of speaking for the feminine side of our humanity, but there is not much sense in expecting them to do it all by themselves..Theology needs women in order to be fully theology. It needs women who have the time and the institutional space to do it properly and to the highest level.

Liam Walsh OP, in Building Bridges – Dominicans doing Theology together, Dominican Publications, 2005, P.202

Two Dominicans named ‘Venerable’

On the 27th of June 2011, Pope Benedict XVI authorized the Congregation for the Causes of Saints to publish decrees regarding two Dominican causes:

1- A miracle attributed to the intercession of the Venerable Servant of God Jean-Joseph Lataste (baptismal name Alcide Vitale), a professed priest in the Order of Friars Preachers and Founder of the Congregation of the Dominican Sisters of Bethany.- originally community of religious women made up of rehabilitated prisoners. Born in Cadillac (France) on September 5, 1832 he died in Frasnelle-Château (France) on March 10, 1869. The date for his beatification will be announced later. *For more information about Fr. Lataste see www.op.org*



2- The heroic virtues of the Servant of God Luigia (Gina) Tincani, Foundress of the Union of Saint Catherine of School Missionaries. Born in Chieti (Italy) on March 25, 1889 she died in Rome on May 31 1976. From now on she receives the title of “Venerable”.

Unfortunately most information about her life is in Italian. But there is some information in English on a few websites.... *Worth pursuing! Gina seems to have been very involved with university students.*

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 or (02) 9744 9511 during business hours.

Pray for peaceful independence day for Southern Sudan

Having recently returned from Kenya, and the meeting of Dominican Sisters of Africa, I can't help but pay greater attention to the plight of that beautiful continent—in particular, the ongoing violence in Sudan. Sudan is the largest country in Africa and the Arab world. After gaining independence from Egypt and the United Kingdom in 1956, the country experienced 17 years of civil war, from 1955 to 1972. This was followed by ethnic, religious and economic conflicts between Northern Sudan, whose roots are mainly Nubian and Arab, and Southern Sudan, which is predominantly Christian and animist. These conflicts led to a second wave of civil war, beginning in 1983. Due to the extreme political instability of the region, Sudan then fell prey to a bloodless coup d'état by Colonel Omar al-Bashir, who became the self-proclaimed president of Sudan in 1989.

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2005, which ended two decades of civil war which left more than 2 million people dead, while another 4 million were displaced from their homes, also recognized the South as a semi-autonomous region with the right to hold a vote of self-determination. This vote took place in a referendum held on Jan. 9 of this year, in which the people of Southern Sudan voted overwhelmingly to secede from the North.

On July 9, Southern Sudan will become the world's newest nation, and be officially recognized as an independent state. There was to have been a separate referendum to determine the future of Abyei, a disputed area on the border between the North and the South. However, due to a question regarding voter eligibility, the referendum was not held. While most residents of Abyei belong to the Ngok Dinka ethnic group and align themselves with the South, Abyei's fertile grazing grounds are used seasonally by an Arab nomadic group with allegiance to the North. What compounds the situation is the fact that Abyei is located near major oil fields, which both the North and the South claim as their own. Last month, troops from Northern Sudan moved into the region, sending tens of thousands of people who are aligned with the South fleeing for their lives, resulting in a major humanitarian emergency along the border. Just this week, however, leaders from the North and the South signed an agreement to demilitarize the region, and allow an Ethiopian peacekeeping force to monitor the situation. Thabo Mbeki, former president of South Africa, has been instrumental in bringing both sides to the table.

The concern now is the violence in Sudan's oil-producing state of Southern Kordofan. Clashes between Sudanese government troops, the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF), and members of the former southern rebel group, the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA), have displaced tens of thousands of civilians, with an estimated 300,000 people besieged, cut off from relief aid, and unable to escape the fighting. This new wave of violence poses a severe threat to Southern Sudan's peaceful transition to independence.

A peace network of Christian Churches, the Sudan Ecumenical Forum, is calling upon the international community to pressure both sides to fulfill their obligation to protect civilians. The Sudan Council of Churches is calling on the UN Mission in Sudan to rescue survivors, and on the international community to intervene in order to prevent a return to war in Sudan. Last week, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton met with Sudanese officials in Ethiopia, in an effort to mediate the conflict. Just yesterday, Susan Rice, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, addressed the Security Council regarding the situation in Southern Kordofan. She noted the alarming scope of human rights abuses, as well as the ethnic dimensions to the conflict. Ambassador Rice also mentioned reports of forces aligned with the North seeking out Southern forces and sympathizers, whom they arrested and allegedly executed. She concluded her remarks by reminding the Security Council members that "With the failure of their government to live up to its responsibilities, the Sudanese people have turned to the international community for protection, and we have an obligation to provide it."

While there are no Dominican sisters in the Sudan, there are sisters in countries along Sudan's border—namely, Kenya, Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic. In my June 8 Briefing, I mentioned the constant cloud of political instability under which our sisters live. Violence is rarely isolated to one area. We keep the people of North and South Sudan in prayer, especially as July 9 and Southern Sudan's independence approaches; and we pray that the violence does not overflow into the surrounding countries.

One way to place ourselves in solidarity with the Sudanese people is provided through the Solidarity with South Sudan Project. This is a consortium of 170 religious congregations, "...an act of communion between religious institutes of men and women, which are members of the Union of Superiors General (USG and UISG), and the Church in South Sudan under the direction of the Sudan Catholic Bishops' Conference."

Read the [Novena for National Building](#), based on the principles of Catholic Social Teaching, on the [Solidarity with South Sudan Project](#) web site.

Margaret Mayce OP, NGO in Special Consultative Status UN in www.domlife.org.

Dominican Calendar

- 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.
- Jul-8 Bl. Adrian Fortescue (1476-1539) English, husband and father, cousin of Anne Boleyn, martyred by Henry VIII, Lay Dominican.
- Jul-9 St. John of Cologne and Companions (+1572) [M] German, parish priest, martyred with 18 companions at Gorkum, Holland, by Calvinists, patron of Dominican priests in parochial ministry.
- Jul-13 Bl. James of Voragine (1226-1298) Italian, Archbishop of Genoa, hagiographer, author of the famous *Legenda Aurea* (The Golden Legend).

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