



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”

7th December 2010

Dominican Thought for the Week

‘Radical amazement transports us beyond ourselves and our preoccupations, rescues us from triviality and fuels hope—a contagious hope that ignites awe in the hearers of those preachers who abandon themselves to awe-inspiring grandeur and mystery.’

This amazement, says theologian, Dr Barbara Reid OP, leads us to ‘the very heart and mind of God’. As our understanding of the universe has increased with recent scientific developments, it is no longer sensible to think of God in the heavens. ‘Rather, God abides deep within, drawing us inward into love, and impelling us outward in mission in ever creative patterns of generative love.’

Drawing on the thinking of Abraham Heschel, Dr Barbara says this radical amazement must lead us to radical gratitude where nothing is taken for granted

‘It would be a mistake to think that living in radical amazement means that preachers simply float along in a cloud of unknowing instead of doing the hard work of critically analysing the realities of our world and studying rigorously the scriptures and tradition. Awareness of what is happening in our world so that we hear the cries of suffering and feel grief at the damage to our planet is ‘the spring of all creative thinking and preaching’.

An Irish Dominican Speaks in the House of Lords!

On Monday 29th November, Fr. Paul Murray OP, of the Irish province of the Order, gave a lecture in the House of Lords - the upper house of the English Parliament. It is surely the first time that a Dominican friar was invited to address such an audience. About two thirds of those present were members of the House. Also present was the English Provincial, John Farrell. Fr. Paul is based in Rome and is professor of spiritual theology at the Dominican university of Saint Thomas, “The Angelicum”.

Fr. Paul was asked to speak for an hour about “Contemplation: An Essential Ingredient of the Christian Tradition”. The talk itself was organized by The Royal Fine art Commission Trust in conjunction with Sky Television. The Sky people were there, and they filmed the talk which will be shown on Sky TV on 15th January at 5 pm, although date and time will have to be confirmed. After the talk a reception was held in the famous River Room (also within the House of Lords) and the Speaker of the House delivered some fine words of welcome to all those present.

Fr. Paul commented: “For me it was a remarkable experience, needless to say, quite unforgettable. And perhaps the greatest joy was the privilege of being able to share, as a preacher, some of the great and sacred texts from the Catholic spiritual tradition. I had been asked from the beginning by Lord St John of Fawsley to speak in particular about the Carmelite mystics, John and Teresa but, of course, I did manage to find space also for a few Dominican voices!”

Spirituality of Dominican Leadership webcast is on Dec. 11

The Dominican Leadership Conference is sponsoring an E-Conference on ‘The Spirit of Dominican Leadership: Responding to the Call of Shared Responsibility’ by Sister Margaret Ormond, OP. Margaret is the past co-ordinator of Dominican Sisters International, and is a speaker well known in international Dominican circles.

This presentation will invite participants to explore and release our God-given gifts through the network of relationships that we know as the common good.

Unfortunately, Australians can share in this conference on line, only at 3am on 12th December because of the time zones.

However, all is not lost! The webcast will be archived on the site of the Dominican Sisters of Peace website. Those interested will find it, after 12th December on <http://www.oppeace.org/>

Participants are invited to read Timothy Radcliffe’s letter to the Order “Dominican Freedom and Responsibility: Towards a Spirituality of Government.” This article is for background information only.. It can be found in his book “Sing a New Song” or it can also be accessed [online](#).

Another death in the Dominican Family

Fr John Orme Mills OP was 80 years old, and in the 40th year of his profession. At the time of his death he was assigned to Cambridge. He had been an editor of New Blackfriars, and chairman of the Eckhart Society. He was also editor of the book, Justice, Peace and Dominicans: 1216 - 2001. May he rest in peace.

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows, Part I

If you have followed the adventures of the Boy Wizard at all, you know by now that Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows, the final book of J. K. Rowling’s extraordinarily successful series, has been made into two films. The bad news is that you will have to wait until next summer to see the final episode. The good news is that there is more of Harry and his friends, and more of the story, to enjoy.

Part I has just opened and it has a different feel from the other films. One of the joys of the films is seeing Harry, Hermione, and Ron grow from kids to young adults. Daniel Radcliffe, Emma Watson, and Rupert Grint deserve great credit for the way they have matured in their roles. In particular Watson shines in this installment, as a serious, intelligent and lovely young woman, devoted to Harry while falling in love with Ron. Unlike any of the other films, Part I depends on the talents of the three young actors, since they are often alone. They have not returned to Hogwarts School since the death of Headmaster Dumbledore at the end of the last installment, Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince. Their young friends and adversaries are on screen only briefly. Actually, the adult wizards get little screen time either. But it’s enough time for Ralph Fiennes as Voldemort, Helena Bonham Carter as Bellatrix, and Imelda Staunton as pink-suited Dolores Umbridge to send shivers down your spines.

After Death Eaters create mayhem invading the wedding of Ron’s brother, Harry, Hermione, and Ron go into hiding in the countryside. There they also hunt for four Horcruxes, which contain parts of the soul of Voldemort. If the Horcruxes remain, Voldemort will be immortal, and thus continue his reign of terror for generations. The trio is also searching for the sword of Gryffindor, which can destroy the Horcruxes.

Without quidditch matches and the antics of the colorful Hogwarts teachers and students to entertain us, Part I is more adult in nature, as it deals with the loneliness and isolation of the trio, their grief at the loss of Dumbledore, and the dread of the eventual confrontation with Voldemort. In the wizarding world, the weight of the world is on their young shoulders. Out of frustration and jealousy, Ron leaves Hermione and Harry for a period of time, but eventually returns to fight the good fight. The friendship, loyalty, and courage of our three young heroes have never been more central to the story. In addition, there is no better example of loyalty and courage than Dobby, the elf emancipated by Harry in a previous installment, who returns to protect Harry from the Dark Lord.

At 2 ½ hours in length, and with fewer action scenes than the other episodes, Part I drags at times. Yet I appreciated its thoughtful, mature tone, with beautiful photography and great sets, particularly in the trio’s visit to the dark maze of the Ministry of Magic, with vertical and

horizontal elevators. The film suffers somewhat from being inconclusive, but, like Ron, Hermione, and Harry, we have to wait for the final showdown between good and evil. I'm eager for the final installment of what has become a very fine series of films bridging the gap from childhood to adulthood. I'll miss Harry, Hermione, Ron, and all the other Muggles and Wizards, after next summer, when their adventures have come to an end.

Tom Condon, OP

Dominican Calendar

Dec-8 THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY [S].

Dec-16 Bl. Sebastian Maggi (1414-1496) Italian, priest, celebrated preacher, reformer, confessor of Fra Girolamo Savonarola, O.P.; Fra. Girolamo was burned at the stake by order of Pope Alexander VI Borgia, 1498, for publicly criticizing the latter's immoral life style.

Dec-22 Anniversary of the Approval of the Order of Preachers (1216). The Dominican liturgical tradition gratefully commemorates Mary's intervention in starting and protecting the Order.

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