



# 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;*

**8th February 2011**

As part of the preparation towards the 800<sup>th</sup> year celebration,  
the Order's motto for 2011 is:

**"We hear them speaking in our own tongues of the marvelous acts of God"** (Acts 2:11):  
**Preaching and Culture / Community Preaching**

### Dominican Thought for the Week

Meister Eckhart says: "If a man were in an ecstasy, as Saint Paul was, and knew some sick man needed him to give him a bit of soup, I should think it far better if you would abandon your ecstasy out of love and show greater love in caring for the other in his need." 'Love' – there it is, that small Gospel word, that harbinger of the grace of attention, that reminder to us all of what contemplation – Christian contemplation – really means!

*Paul Murray OP, Preachers at Prayer, Dominican Publications 2003*

### We continue to pray for members of the Dominican Family around the world

who are suffering from the incredible number of natural disasters at this time: From fire and flood and cyclone in Western Australia, Queensland, Northern New South Wales, And Victoria and Mailata in the Solomons in our immediate area to Brazil, Sri Lanka, the United States, Iraq and Egypt.

### Extracts from Later Letters from Egypt

Sr Mary Ann Pevas OP (Lecturer in Economics at Winona State University, Minnesota, USA, who takes student groups to Egypt to study Islamic Banking).

*If any one would like the letters in full they can be obtained through [archives5@opeast.org.au](mailto:archives5@opeast.org.au)*

Monday 30<sup>th</sup> January

... I spoke with a couple of the Dominican Fathers in the Priory. The army tanks are surrounding the Priory mainly because of the library which is on their campus. That library is noted throughout the Middle East as a most unusual collection of Islamic and Christian texts which are used by scholars who come from far and wide to do research. Many of you will remember Father Rene who spent time in Racine studying English. Rene is the Director of that library. The rest of the Fathers do research on interreligious dialogue between Islam and Christianity. Their works are widely published.

Today the employees at the Priory and library came back to work and had little difficulty doing so. They and all can go out on the streets and shop for necessities, but petrol (gasoline) is becoming scarce I was told. The Metro, the underground transportation system is operating today and used by many. The army is everywhere and has publicly pledged to protect the protesters and the people. That is a good sign. The army is highly respected and what it supports will succeed. Their shift seems to be away from Mubarek but it is not clear whether or not Mubarek himself has ordered such support. Today the numbers of protestors were fewer but Tuesday will be different.

## The Master of the Order visits the Novitiate in Hong Kong, which is home to some young Australians...

The Master of the Dominican Order, Fr. Bruno Cadore, O.P., visited our Novitiate house on 19 and 20 January, during his fraternal visit to the province of the Holy Rosary. Impressively humble, and a true successor to St Dominic, he insisted on taking his own dirty dishes to the kitchen rather than letting us assist him. Again when he came to speak to us, he said to us that though we probably came expecting to listen, he was also here to listen, and wanted to know how each of us met the Order, and why we would like to be Dominicans.

Fr Bruno also told us that he worked as a pediatrician, specializing in childhood diseases. His work often brought him into contact with death, particularly death at a very early age, something which motivated him to explore religious life. He was looking for an answer to the question of death, and of life, "the life behind and beyond the life" as he put it. "Only God," he told us, "can see death straight." He was gradually led to the Order, though when he first started looking, he did not know any Dominicans and had had to look them up in a phonebook. The first Dominicans he met were the nuns. A little later he met the friars, and was struck in both cases by a sense of joyful fraternity, of a group of people happy to be and to pray together. By and by, he asked to join the Order, and soon after his novitiate, he was sent to Haiti, which was a crucial and joyful formative experience for him. He remembers for instance, that there, he saw God at work in changing the lives of people. Once, the description of the early Christian community, sharing everything in common, in the book of Acts (Acts 2:42-47) was being read, and one of the people in the congregation stood up and said "Why shouldn't we live like that?" Soon after they actually began the project and now there are several families living in common as in the book of Acts. Fr Bruno told us that he had been moved out of Haiti after two years there, and he'd always wanted to go back, but subsequent provincials had had other ideas, and eventually he was elected Provincial himself, and now as Master of the Order. Asked how he felt about being Master of the Order, he said that had an experience akin to that of profession. Just as he had accepted not being sent back to Haiti as an act of obedience, he also accepted this election as an act of obedience. He said that in being elected Master, he feels as if he is being called each day by his brothers to make his profession anew, and he hopes that he will continue to feel this for the next nine years.

He also told us that we learn about Christ in preaching, because we see God's grace at work in His people, and thus we are converted each day. He presented the preacher's task as especially being that of being a brother to the people, the people of God, as was St Dominic. The task for us is to identify ourselves with the people. The Order has a long tradition of identification with the poor and the underprivileged, in South America, for instance, with Bartolomé de las Casas, Antonio de Montesinos, and the fight for the rights of the Native peoples of South America. In this way, we need to unite ourselves to the mission of the Son of God, who was sent by the Father to show His love for the world, for each human being. Fr Bruno told us of the friar who occupied the room next door to him when he was Provincial, a man who had spent forty years in Afghanistan. Being extremely talented, the friar had tried to serve the people in many different ways, teaching elementary school, and high school, and in every other way he possibly could. He had eventually had to leave Afghanistan. And yet, he always spoke of them as "his people". His life had acquired its own significance, its meaning, in relation to his people. A preacher, he said, should be able to say of all people that they are "our people". He should thus be concerned about the salvation of all. Thus, our whole life needs to be a witness to the Gospel, and we need to allow ourselves to be transformed by Christ as revealed in *His* people, the people of God. He pointed out that our charism is primarily that we link our lives with that of the people, even though we do it in different ways. We are missionaries in what we are doing and in our self-dedication. For his own part, he said that he would be satisfied if he ended his life a Dominican. The Dominican way, he said, is not only to teach and to preach, but also to live a life. Asked about community life, he reiterated that it was the sense of joyful community that attracted him to the Order. Community life is an ongoing process, he said, which never ends. We need to strike a balance, he said, between prayer, community life, and our work or mission.

All in all, the visit of the Master was a wonderfully formative experience for us all. He helped us appreciate the importance of humility and of fraternity, of contemplation and of allowing ourselves to be transformed by God through his people. He showed us the vitality and reality of obedience in the Dominican Order, which means just as much that the Master is obedient to his brothers in the Order as that the brothers are to him. In the Dominicans, the Master is the one into whose hands all the brothers, directly or through an intermediary, make profession. In this way, he represents our unity, which transcends our underlying diversity. It is this unity – a unity which finds its ultimate source in the Blessed Trinity – which makes our diversity fruitful. The visit of the Master has given us novices encouragement in regard to our own vocation to this unity which is expressed in our order by putting ourselves quite literally into the hands of another person and promising to live our lives in obedience to God who speaks and acts

through our brothers in community, and to give ourselves wholeheartedly as brothers to His people, the people of God.

*Br Robert Krishna, (n) O.P per Fr Anthony Walsh OP*

## **Dominican Calendar**

Feb-12 Bl. Reginald of Orleans (1180-1220) French, priest, teacher, preacher, early Dominican, friend of St. Dominic, effective promoter of Dominican vocations.

Feb-13 Bl. Jordan of Saxony (1185-1237) [M] German, priest, renowned preacher, diplomat, "the first university chaplain", successor of St. Dominic as Master of the Order, effective promoter of Dominican vocations, patron of Dominican vocation work.

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