



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;

8th March 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

JUSTICE AND THE INTELLECTUAL LIFE

I have intentionally connected our commitment to justice with our commitment to the intellectual life because in recent discussions the two frequently have been placed in a false dichotomy. Both are intimately tied to the preaching mission of the order. Study has always been envisioned in the Dominican tradition as "for the sake of the preaching," and the Dominican commitment to justice is grounded in the conviction expressed by the Synod of Bishops: "Activity on behalf of justice is a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the gospel."

We are not dealing here with either blind social activism or ivory-tower academia. Rather we are challenged at this new moment in our tradition to re-understand the profound connection between "doing the truth" and "seeking the truth," between praxis and theory, between action and contemplation. The prophetic stances and activity that are called for today (precisely because the gospel is frequently in contradiction to values of our culture) cannot be unreflective or beyond critique. No social or political stance can be identified totally with the gospel. On the other hand, the reign of God can be announced only if it is also made present in our world. The justice and love of the gospel have to be enculturated in very concrete ways. Here I think we need to admit that our danger as Dominicans is more to over-theorize than to take stands or act unreflectively.

Further, the very motto of veritas, so precious to us, is at stake here. The truth of the gospel is not an abstract theoretical truth -- it is the living truth of discipleship. Only in the following of Jesus can we come to understand the gospel. In our day we are called to forge even deeper links between action and contemplation as we search for a spirituality which is political and, at the same time, mystical.

Just as there is a deeply reflective dimension to action on behalf of justice, there is a profoundly pastoral focus to Dominican study. This does not mean that our study is directly pragmatic, but again, that it is contemplative. Whatever the field of research, reflection, and critical inquiry, we search for the implications of our study for humanity. Ultimately, then, we search for God who is to be found at the depths of human experience and at the heart of reality.

Are we cultivating that aspect of our charism today, especially among the newer members of the Order? One of the cultural trends that has seriously affected the church anti-intellectualism. The complexity of the culture in which we are called to be prophetic as well as the very spirituality of the order (which incorporates study as a dimension of the contemplative life) requires that we find new ways of being persons and communities committed, to seeking, speaking, and doing the truth today.

Mary Catherine Hilkert

100th Anniversary of International Women's Day

International Women's Day is an occasion marked by people around the world. Today women on all continents come together to celebrate their common history of struggle for equality, justice, peace and development.

In celebrating the 100 years of International Women's Day we are reminded of the distance women have travelled and the many barriers and obstacles yet to be overcome.

And so they have: Aung Sung Suu Kyi standing valiantly against the tyranny of a military junta, the raped and brutalised women of the Congo tenaciously pursuing their violators to the courts and our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women taking the lead in the fight against Indigenous poverty. There is cause for celebration but also the realisation that the girl child in many parts of the world is trafficked, has no access to education, is exploited at work and deprived of a childhood. Today we celebrate the 100 years of effort to overcome marginalisation and discrimination and welcome renewed efforts to give women everywhere freedom, justice and equality.

Adapted from Libby Rogerson and Anne Kelly

A Prayer

Women are a reflection of the glory of God. Today we honor the women of all times and all places:

Women of courage.

Women of hope.

Women suffering.

Women mourning.

Women living fully.

Women experiencing joy.

Women delighting in life.

Women knowing the interconnectedness of the human family.

Women honoring the sacredness of the relational, the affective.

Women quietly tending the garden of human flourishing.

Women boldly leading the transformation of unjust global structures.

Women seeking Wisdom.

Women sharing Wisdom.

Women receiving Love.

Women giving Love.

Women: life-giving.

Women: the image of God.

Loving God, we celebrate your faithfulness and love.

On this day we commit ourselves to the promotion of the full humanity of all women everywhere.

We know that whatever denies, diminishes, or distorts the full humanity of women is not of God.

Help us to be faithful to your call to love. Amen.

Source: The Centre of Concern

News from Darwin

The New Year in Darwin has seen more departures and arrivals of those studying English in the program. Sr Duyen Truong returned home to Vietnam after gaining a number of Certificates, just in time to accompany another 'ex-student' of the Darwin Project to take part in a Dominican Formators' course in the Philippines.

Meantime, Sr Anna Marie Dwiyanti from Indonesia continues her studies, and has been joined this year by Sr Karina Widiastuti, also from Indonesia. These are the final two students to take up scholarships under the Darwin Project. Anna Marie, a highly qualified nurse, has worked for many years in the Diocesan-owned clinic in Purwokerto in Central Java. She is the Supervisor of 15 health workers (doctors, nurses and aides) serving the poorer people in the surrounding population. Approximately 60 patients daily, including a large proportion of children, pass through the clinic. This is one of a number of health services (hospitals, clinics, aged care services) under the umbrella of the Dominican Sisters' Health Foundation. Within this management body, Anna Marie has chief responsibility for promoting Research and Development. Her particular interest is enquiring into the deeper causes and more effective treatment of the various ailments. Through gaining greater proficiency in using English, Anna Marie hopes to link into wider regional or international health service networks, thereby enabling better access to the latest medical information.

Sr Karina Widiastuti works in education. After teaching secondary mathematics for some years (the area of her specialist training), Karina has served as Principal of St. Mary's Elementary school (enrolment 800, staff 45) in the West Java city of Cirebon. In reading the 'signs of the times', since 2008 St. Mary's has been seeking to address the educational opportunities and demands of globalisation by offering bi-lingual education (Indonesia and English) in both science and mathematics. In this context, it is particularly important for Karina to enhance her own bi-lingual capacities so that she can lead by example in encouraging both staff and students to prepare themselves for now and the future. Both Sisters will continue their studies until Easter 2011.

G Kelly op Darwin, 7 March 2011

Dominican Calendar

There are usually no Dominican Feasts celebrated during Lenten days.

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