



OPFAM

Dominican Family Matters

*A Newsletter for the Dominican Family in Australia,
New Zealand, Solomon Islands 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;

27th September 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

“We must dare to see what is before our eyes” – theme of Dominican Education Conference, 2011

**As centres of learning
in the Dominican tradition,
on the 500th anniversary of the sermon on human rights
by our brother, Antonio de Montesinos,
we seek to give a voice to God’s created
who suffer injustice or threat
from political, economic, legal, educational, religious or other systems.
In a context of consumerism and individualism,
with our earth at risk,
We seek to lead change in our place of calling,
and commit ourselves to:
*being a voice in the community for just action
providing an education in truth and justice
acting sustainably
maintaining integrity through ethical practices in our schools.***

Signed by representatives of the following conference participants:

All Saints College, St Mary’s Campus Maitland NSW
Cabra Dominican College Adelaide SA
Catherine Sullivan Centre Strathfield NSW
Corpus Christi Primary School Waratah NSW
Holy Rosary School WA
Prouille Primary School Wairoonga NSW
San Clemente High School Mayfield NSW
San Sisto College Carina QLD
Santa Sabina College NSW
Siena College Camberwell VIC
St Catherine’s School SA
St Columban’s Primary School Mayfield NSW
St Dominic’s Catholic Primary School Auckland NZ
St Dominic’s College Henderson NZ
St Dominic’s Primary School Melbourne VIC
St Dominic’s Primary College North Adelaide SA
St Joseph’s School Queenstown NZ
St Lucy’s School Wairoonga NSW
St Mary’s College Adelaide SA
St Mary’s School for Hearing-Impaired Children Wantirna VIC
Trinity Schools Southland NZ
Dominican Sisters from
Dominican Administration Centre Strathfield
Cabra South Australia
Indonesia, New Zealand
Promotor of Charism in Schools Strathfield
Promotor of Justice and Peace Dominican Sisters International Rome
Fr Hilary Martin, Assumption Province

Are you looking for a significant ministry in a parish?

The Catholic parish of Saint Mary's in Dandenong is seeking to employ a full time fully accredited (desirable) Pastoral Associate beginning in 2012. Please apply in writing; including the names of two referees to:

Father D.D O'Brien, (Parish Priest).

Saint Mary's Parish Centre, P O Box 22, Dandenong, Victoria 3175.

Or by email to: stmarys@iprimus.com.au

Enquiries about the position may be directed to (03) 97914611 or the above email address.

This position has been held and developed and recommended by Sr Margaret Fields OP who is retiring soon.

Closing date for application is Friday, October 7th.

A 21st Century Catherine

Dressed in white mop-up suits, with "Citizens Weapons Inspection Team" printed on the back and "Disarmament Specialists" on the front, **Dominican Sisters Ardeth Platte, Carol Gilbert and Jackie Hudson** entered Minuteman III silo N-8 near Greeley, Colo., on Oct. 6, the anniversary of the bombing of Afghanistan. They cut single links in the chains securing the gates in the outer and inner fences surrounding the silo. They left the gates open and peeled back a section of the fence, opening it to reveal the presence of a weapon of mass destruction. They poured their blood, in the form of a cross, six times on the 110-ton silo lid and on the tracks that carry the lid to the firing position. Then, in a ritual of prayer and symbolic disarmament, they used household hammers on the silo and the tracks. The nuns were arrested, jailed, charged and convicted of obstructing the national defense, which is listed under sabotage and destruction of government property — felonies that carry up to 30 years in federal prison. They refused an offer of personal recognizance, knowing that they could not in conscience abide by conditions of their release (which forbid civil resistance) as this nation prepared to mount another war. The nuns hoped to bring attention to the weapons of mass destruction covering more than 1,950 square miles of Colorado farmland (33,700 square miles in other states). The 49 nuclear-armed missiles in Colorado had recently been refitted with W-87 nuclear warheads, each with an explosive power of 300 kilotons (about 25 times the size of the Hiroshima bomb). The trial, which began March 31 in a Denver federal court, was preceded by a hearing Feb. 21 at which defendants' motions for dismissal were denied. The sisters could not defend their actions using international law or the Nuremberg war crimes trials as a defence during their trial. At their trial, the prosecution offered many witnesses from F. E. Warren Air Force Base in Wyoming. They testified that the nuns did nothing to interfere with national defence or the mission of the base and that neither the bloody crosses nor the pinging of their hammers damaged, contaminated or destroyed the cement or rails. Testimony on the value of property damaged could not meet the \$1,000 required for felony destruction. Yet Judge Robert Blackburn denied defence motions, for a directed verdict of acquittal. Stripped of every other defence, the nuns testified that their intent was to uphold national and international law (which they couldn't discuss) and to call for the disarmament of weapons that inflict unspeakable, unconscionable and indiscriminate devastation and death. They were simple and eloquent in their orange jail suits. They were convicted of two felonies: obstructing national defence and damaging government property. From media interviews with jurors after the verdict, it was clear that jurors understood that the nuns had done something wrong and that they were required to bring back a guilty verdict. The jury had no sense of the seriousness of the charges. Federal sentencing guidelines require that the Judge sentence them to between 72 and 97 months in prison. As the United States seeks to find Iraq's alleged weapons of mass destruction, it becomes clear that exposing America's own weapons of mass destruction is difficult and costly. The Minuteman III in silo N-8 is a weapon that is illegal under international law. Its use would kill combatants and noncombatants indiscriminately. It would poison the Earth for generations. The nuns believe disarmament is essential, and that even the threat to use nuclear weapons is illegal. They acted to try to stop an ongoing crime. Sister Platte, who represented herself, said in her closing argument: "Sister Carol and I left Jonah House Community in Baltimore, where we feed hundreds, where we grow food to share with those in need. We carried tools that were not threatening, in obedience to the Biblical mandate: 'They shall beat their swords into plow shares, their spears into pruning hooks. Nations shall not pick up swords against nation, nor train for war anymore.' We are all brothers and sisters. When, we ask, are we going to practice this?" The nuns are living a faith that teaches love- of enemies. The nuns are calling us to our senses — reminding us that

violence never works and that military spending, at the rate of \$11,000 a second, results in far-reaching impoverishment.

Elegy for a Peacemaker: Jackie's Song of Justice

Jacqueline Hudson, OP (1934-2011) passed away on August 3, 2011.

Jackie was a prisoner of conscience and was incarcerated for her actions a number of times throughout her life. During her last imprisonment, her health deteriorated and she was released from prison in Ocilla, Georgia several weeks before she died.

This is a personal reflection of a life well lived, filled with courage, passion and patience. Jackie lived so clearly out of her own conscience that there were times when her courageous actions defy logic. Both of us grew up in Saginaw, Michigan, belonged to the same parish, attended the same school and grew up in the same neighborhood existing in different generations. We both became Dominicans of Grand Rapids and through our years together in religious life, we were grounded in the spirituality and history of Dominican life.

Jackie became steeped in the paradox of the Gospel story, in the example of our founder, St. Dominic, and the long tradition of women religious living the evangelical counsels. Our sister, St Catherine of Siena provided a backdrop of living a passionate life of love and justice, speaking courageously to religious and political leaders. In addition, the non-violent peace movements led by Dr Martin Luther King, Jr, Mahatma Gandhi and Dan and Phil Berrigan awakened us to the critical needs of peace and justice in our world.

In her early years, Jackie was a music teacher, teaching piano, choral and instrumental music in both elementary and high schools. Throughout her years, she sang in a musical group of Dominican Sisters known as the Mellow D's. Her finely-trained ear led her to listen carefully to the politics of war and she began to address the discord of violence and war within our country.

As members of our congregation studied and prayed over the problems that were emerging in our schools, it became apparent that violence in the streets of our cities was escalating. Drugs became increasingly available and our cities were becoming dangerous to the life and well-being of the students. Searching for reasons for this increase in violence, our Sisters became aware of systemic corruption. Several Sisters began to explore civil resistance as a way to call attention to the ways in which our country chose to solve problems by acts of violence on a large scale such as the ultimate and dangerous use of nuclear weapons.

In 1990, after much discussion, prayer and study, our congregation developed a policy that cleared a path in which a member was free to pursue a way to live out her desire to address the violence in our world through non-violent civil resistance. A member, in dialogue with congregational leadership about the overall discernment and not the specific action, could decide that acting in civil resistance was an act of conscience in her case. The member would act as an individual and not in the name of the congregation. The congregation would support the member for her personal needs, but would not assume any costs associated with the act of civil resistance, e.g., legal matters such as bail and lawyer fees.

The clarity of this policy provided our congregation with the freedom to care for and support those who are spent time in prison. We became aware and sensitized to the violence within the legal and prison institutions because of our brave and committed women. We have been able to provide pastoral, psychological and spiritual support beyond our imaginations. Our bonds of community and the ways of living the common life have held fast, even behind bars. With great fidelity, Jackie maintained her membership as a vowed religious in our congregation. Along with her justice community, she kept us aware of the destructive nature of the use of nuclear weapons. We continue to be challenged to pay attention and to speak and act against violence particularly regarding the use of nuclear weapons.

In 1993, Jackie moved to Bremerton, Washington where she joined a peace community involved in social justice issues. She became certified as a commercial driver and drove a bus in the city system in order to support her contribution to the congregation's common good. She once said, "I liken myself to St. Paul, who was a tent maker to pay his expenses and still gave himself time for ministry."

With her friends, Sisters Ardeth Platte and Carol Gilbert, also Dominican Sisters ~Grand Rapids, and a faithful justice community, she participated in demonstrations and ultimately in acts of civil resistance for the cause of nuclear disarmament. Jackie pursued the root causes of violence that are hidden deep in the politics of the arms race and the build up of our country's nuclear weapons. Along with her justice community, she studied over many years the destructive invisible and hidden attitudes, behaviours and actions that led our country to systemic violence. These forces lead our country to violence beyond our comprehension since they are

capable of destroying the entire human race. Jackie ultimately believed that the pursuit of military dominance through nuclear weapons was illegal under international law and U.S. treaties.

For Jackie, the process of justice making was a complex activity of naming the powers, unmasking the powers and engaging the powers. This requires bringing a critical perspective to the political, economic and cultural institutions. One must have the courage to break the silence and confront the structures of abuse. Jackie did this in countless ways, by letter writing and by crossing the lines in challenging the laws that protect the secrets of destruction Jackie acted in civil resistance and willingly faced the consequence of violating the law, which took her to prison where she lived patiently over long periods of time.

In the abusive atmosphere of the prison culture, with its diminishment, hatred and violent treatment of persons, Jackie spoke out on behalf of justice and compassion. Her witness and courage were sources of strength and inspiration to all who knew her.

Jackie passed on to a resurrected life on August 3, 2011. She has not left us with volumes of notes or letters to solve the systemic violence embedded in the build-up of nuclear weapons. She simply confronted the systemic violence and bore the consequences of her choices. She followed Jesus and lived her life according to her conscience. She chose to walk a difficult journey true to her convictions as did Jesus -faithful to the end. Jackie leaves us a beautiful song for justice. It is one that is filled with harmony and balance, with movements of passion and conviction. It is a complex work of carrying out a clear melody in a complicated world filled with ambiguous entanglements. Her voice is clear and her life is well lived. She leaves us with a legacy of melody we can remember and play in our hearts, of a courageous, heart-filled love longing for justice. Rest in peace dear Jackie, dear beloved Sister!

Lucianne Siers, OP Dominican Sisters of Grand Rapids,
Dominican Co-Promoter of Justice for North America
Executive Director of the Partnership for Global Justice, NYC
September, 2011

<http://www.jonahhouse.org> - see interviews and tributes to this brave woman – a Catherine of our times.

Pilgrims of Truth, Pilgrims of Peace

You are invited to attend this gathering which will coincide with the invitation from Pope Benedict XVI to leaders of the world's religious traditions to gather in Assisi for a **prayer day of peace**.

A gathering of reflection, dialogue and prayer for peace and justice in the world.

When: 27 – 28 October **Where:** Mary MacKillop Place, 80 William St, North Sydney

More info: Kim Davis, director.opw@catholic.org.au (02) 6201 9867 *RSVP:* 7 October 2011

Sponsored by the Bishops Commission for Church Ministry

Dominican Calendar

Sep-28 Bl. Lawrence of Ripafratta (1373-1456) Italian, priest, eloquent preacher, spiritual director, novice master of St. Antoninus and Bl. Fra Angelico.

The 16 Martyrs of Nagasaki Saints: Lorenzo Ruiz, husband and father, Protomartyr of the Philippines, member of the Rosary Confraternity (+1637); Dominic Ibañez de Erquicia, Spanish (+1633), and James Kyushei Tomonaga, Japanese, and 7 other Dominican priests; 2 Dominican Cooperator Brothers; 2 Lay Dominicans; 2 parishioners of Dominican missions, canonized 1987.

Oct-3 Bl. Dominic Spadafora (1450-1521) Italian, priest, missionary preacher, teacher.

Oct-4 ***OUR HOLY FATHER FRANCIS OF ASSISI (1182-1226) [F] Italian, saint, deacon, founder of the Order of Friars Minor (Franciscans), preacher, stigmatist, friend of St. Dominic, Church appointed patron of ecologists, merchants, Catholic action; co-patron with St. Catherine of Siena of Italy, canonized 1228.***

Oct-5 Bl. Raymond of Capua (c.1330-1399) Italian, priest, 23rd Master of the Order, reformer, confessor and biographer of St. Catherine (April 29).

Please send contributions – short paragraphs – about Dominican Life in your area to archives@opeast.org.au – OFTEN!

NEXT ISSUE: 11th October