



CHALLENGE

News from the Dominican Laity, Province of St Albert the Great

VOLUME 49, ISSUE 1

SUMMER 2008

Peace and Justice Briefs

Analyze the 2008 Food Crisis for Right Action

Riots over food prices have erupted in several countries around the world, including Egypt, Bangladesh, Haiti, and Cameroon, among others. The riots are in response to the sharp spike in the price of basic foods made from wheat, rice, and corn. Prices of these commodities have almost doubled in the last 12 months, but most of the increase has been seen and felt since January 2008. The reality is that there is enough food to meet the needs of the people; but when food is commodified and turned into a profit-making means, it is hoarded and stored in hopes of greater gain. This is one factor that is discussed in a resource from the Center of Concern (COC), a Catholic center which explores the current food crisis and the conflicting economic forces at work behind the scenes. The document can be found in pdf format at: www.coc.org.

Site Opens for Processing of Iraqi Refugees

The US government has opened its first permanent office in Baghdad to help Iraqi refugees settle in the United States, responding to criticism that the Bush administration has failed to help thousands of Iraqis whose lives are in danger because of their work with American organizations. This office will accept applications under a new law that permits entry to Iraqis who have worked for the US government; the American-led military coalition; contractors "closely aligned with the US mission in Iraq" that have received funding from the US government; and US-based media organizations and nongovernmental organizations. As many as 70,000 Iraqis could be eligible and there is no cap on the program. Ambassador James Foley said in an interview in early June that 1,141 refugees were settled in the United States in May and that he believes the administration will reach its goal of 12,000 for this fiscal year, which ends Sept. 30. More than 4.5 million Iraqis have fled their homes since the 2003 US-led invasion.

Police Raids of Illegal Immigrants Increase in the United States

In May, 260 illegal immigrants in Iowa were sentenced to five months in prison for violations of federal identity theft laws. At the same time, in the last year, local police departments from coast to coast have rounded up hundreds of immigrants for nonviolent, often minor, crimes, like fishing without a license in Georgia, with the end result being deportation. State lawmakers, in response to Congressional inaction on immigration law, are giving local authorities a wider berth. In 2007, 240 bills were enacted in 46 states, triple the number that passed in 2006, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. A new law in Mississippi makes it a felony for an illegal immigrant to hold a job. In Oklahoma, sheltering or transporting illegal immigrants is also a felony.

UN Secretary General Campaigns to End Violence Against Women

In June Spain signed on to the UNIFEM's "Say NO to Violence Against Women" campaign. The Say NO campaign is an Internet-driven advocacy effort that invites people to sign their names to a virtual book as an expression of public support and a call to decision-makers worldwide to make ending violence against women a top priority (www.SayNOtoViolence.org). UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said to the Commission on the Status of Women: "Violence against women is an issue that cannot wait. A brief look at the statistics makes it clear. At least one out of every three women is likely to be beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime. Through the practice of prenatal sex selection, countless others are denied the right even to exist. No country, no culture, no woman young or old is immune to this scourge. Far too often the crimes go unpunished, the perpetrators walk free. ...It is a campaign to stop the untold cost that violence against women inflicts on all humankind."

Justices Uphold Lethal Injection in the United States

The US Supreme Court in mid-April upheld Kentucky's method of execution by lethal injection. The 7-2 ruling set a standard that will not be easy to overcome in other states. At issue in the case was not the constitutionality of the lethal injection itself, the method specified by 35 of the 36 states that have the death penalty. Rather, the challenge was to the details of the injection's administration: the chemicals used, the training of the personnel, the adequacy of medical supervision, etc.. Five states have resumed killings by lethal injection.

From the President

by Ruth Kummer, OP

Herb Mather wrote *Don't Shoot the Horse ('Till You Know How to Drive the Tractor)*, a thin book



packed with wisdom regarding annual funding for Church ministry. This title could be applicable to the health and development

of chapter community life. (Community is one of our four pillars, along with prayer, study, and ministry.)

In our new formation program, the cognitive or study portion of formation has been finalized and updated (many thanks to all), while development of the affective, the heart of attitude and behavior, are frequently missing. In this context, we "shoot the horse" of relationships before and during the development of cognitive formation.

Chapter leaders have the responsibility to facilitate the process of community living, especially the goal of serving the timid and the weakest member, in addition to the stronger ones. One does not persist in making a member a replica of oneself, but assesses how an individual can best be supported in his or her own growth and enrichment process. At times the leader must be directive in a crisis, a coach to those who need affirmation, and consultative when a member needs practical advice.

Courtesy and respect towards others seems like a basic idea, for example, but we must all practice it. When there is a perceived injustice, it must be resolved in private. If we do not attain a resolution, we must seek the counsel of another person in an elected/appointed position. Leaders serve the members of a community for the benefit of all.

As an individual, each person occupies space in this universe for

Continued on Page 7

North American Unity

Central Province Hosts Inter-Provincial Delegates in Michigan

by Cyndi Ricard, OP, and
Norm Laurendeau, OP

The Lay Dominican Inter-Provincial Council met at the St John Retreat Center in Plymouth, Michigan on April 10-13, 2008. The Lay Dominican Delegates from the United States and Canada meet every 18 months to share concerns and to review procedures and documents toward a goal of reasonable uniformity. Among St Albert the Great attendees were President Ruth Kummer, Recording Secretary Cynthia Ricard, and Delegate Norm Laurendeau. St Albert Province was the hosting province for delegates from the Western, Eastern, Southern, and Canadian provinces, including the Vietnamese Vicariate.

Delegates Agree on Common Reading of *The Rule*

A new translation of *The Rule* that would be common to all the provinces was a major item on the agenda. Norm Laurendeau began the discussion by describing the procedures and issues that arose when translating *The Rule* and updating Guidelines for implementing *The Rule* within the Central Province. He further indicated that while it must be culturally comprehensible, translation errors must be avoided by always comparing it to the official Latin Rule. After considerable discussion regarding similar issues in other provinces, the Delegates agreed that it would be appropriate to have a common translation of *The Rule*. To implement this strategy, a committee of five was designated to produce a common translation reconciled with the Latin. The five members of the committee were Arvin Gallanosa (chairperson, Eastern province), Scott Farris (Southern), Norm Laurendeau (Central), Cathy Neugebauer (Canadian) and Gary Sims (Western).

Beginning Saturday afternoon and working late into the evening, the committee developed a translation suitable for presentation to the Delegates by Sunday morning, April 13. The process began by using the version of *The Rule* developed by the Central Province, with additional input from a British version suggested by Fr David Kammler, and a third version developed by the Southern province. The final translation arose through vigorous debate, compromise, and charity. Upon further discussion Sunday morning, especially in lieu of upcoming time constraints, the Inter-Provincial Council agreed that all Delegates would review the proposed translation and e-mail either their approval or disapproval to the chairperson of the translation committee. All delegates will subsequently be responsible for recommending approval to the Lay Provincial Councils of their respective provinces.

Help for Itinerant Dominicans

The Inter-Provincial Council also addressed the challenge of Lay

Dominicans moving from province to province because of job changes, retirement, or seasonal changes. Internationally, ways must also be found to welcome more effectively Lay Dominicans who move to the United States from other nations. In addition, for both domestic and international transfers, no method currently exists to ascertain the credentials of someone claiming to be a Lay Dominican who wishes to affiliate with a local chapter. To deal effectively with these new issues, the Council passed the following two motions:

1. Because of the increasing domestic mobility of Lay Dominicans, the DLIPC recommends that, when requested by any Lay Dominican who wishes to associate temporarily with another chapter, the president/moderator of the member's home chapter should provide a letter of introduction for that lay Dominican so that he or she can be reliably received with hospitality as a welcomed guest by the receiving chapter. The letter of introduction should include level of profession, his or her activities as a Lay Dominican, and other information relevant to community life.
2. Because of the increasing international mobility of Lay Dominicans, the DLIPC requests that our international delegate, Doris Stukes, bring the following request to the International Council for consideration: When requested by any Lay Dominican who wishes to associate permanently with a chapter in another country, the originating province should provide a letter of introduction for that Lay Dominican so that he or she can be reliably received with hospitality by the receiving province. The letter of introduction should include level of profession, his or her activities as a Lay Dominican and other information relevant to community life. Language translations should be provided if possible.

Other agenda items included formation, financial issues, and ongoing activities presented by each province. Highlights included the new formation program and associated workshop conducted by the Central province; the growth of new chapters in Central California within the Western province; the rapid growth of an on-line Lay Dominican bookstore (\$80,000 per annum) in the Eastern province; the recovery from hurricane Katrina in the Southern province; and the challenges posed by bilingual (English and French) meetings within the Canadian province. Common issues revolved around the realities of financing, especially concerning provincial newsletters. While the Central province still mails its quarterly newsletter to all members, the Eastern, Southern and Western provinces now dispatch their newsletters (monthly or quarterly) only via e-mail. Other items of interest: In the Eastern province, all chapters are now required to hold their elections at the same time of year; in the Western province, all chapters must write their histories, with an update due each year. For all prov-

Continued on Page 8

Preaching Corner

Who Do We Say That We Are?

by Laura Dejmek, OP
Co-Promoter of Preaching

We are all familiar with that great Christological question posed in the synoptic Gospels, "Who do you say that I am?" (Mark 8:29 and parallels), but I wonder how we would answer the question, Who do we say that we are? Certainly, I believe most of us would identify ourselves as Lay Dominicans, but do we identify ourselves as preachers? Certainly we know that preaching is our charism, but do we—deep in the marrow of our bones—believe that we are *first and foremost preachers*?

At the most recent Promoters of Preaching convention (held in Chicago, April 18-20), the issue of identifying ourselves as preachers appeared to be a Dominican Family-wide problem. As one Sister said, "We first identified ourselves as Adrian, then Dominican, and finally as preachers." I wonder, if that is an issue with which we Lay Dominicans also struggle. We enjoy our study—both individual and in community. We (myself included) delight in our pictures and statues of Dominic, Catherine, Martin, and all our favorite Dominicans, but I wonder, do we struggle seeing ourselves called to be preachers in all that we say and all

that we do?

Many of us are aware of the canonical limitations on lay preaching during Mass, but as Fr Motl pointed out in a recent editorial, there are other liturgical opportunities for preaching for lay persons: Liturgy of the Hours, wake services, presentations to RCIA, children's liturgies, etc. "Pulpit preaching" is only one type of preaching. It was interesting to note that the International Preaching Commission—comprised of all branches of the Order—was more concerned with the other avenues of preaching, rather than liturgical preaching. Our European Friars noted that poor Mass attendance shifts the major emphasis of *where* the majority of preaching opportunities are, namely *outside* the traditional realm of preaching, in the world, where *all* are called to preach the Gospel—lay and ordained.

So how can we form ourselves as preachers? Look for opportunities to speak about our faith. Are there opportunities at work where the news of the day is being discussed? Could we perhaps add a perspective steeped in the peace and justice of the Gospel? Can we speak up

Continued on Page 8

The Dumb Ox Medley



The Secret to St Thomas' Success

St Thomas Aquinas' entire life, right from his earliest childhood years, reflected an intense search for God and a total acquiescence to His will. At the age of 17, he told his family that he had decided to become a Brother Preacher. The family did everything to prevent him from doing so. He continued to wear the clothing of the Order even when they had been torn to shreds by his brothers during his imprisonment. Nothing could ever stop him. ... It was, then, in spirit, that he first gave himself to God; his body would follow—through studies and again later when he would teach, all the way to his refusal of an honorary position. He only wanted to teach and spread the truth!

One day, later in his life, when Jesus addressed Thomas to ask him what reward he wanted for his work, Thomas answered: "Lord, nothing other than you!" Is that not an example of the action of filial trust, putting aside all of one's personal will in order to give oneself to the One who could only give us what is best for us? Was that a way in which God tested Thomas' humility? The only reward that Thomas wanted was God Himself, the best of all rewards. If Thomas had studied, worked, and kept watch, it was in order to always delve deeper into an intimate relationship with God, for the

love and through the love of God.

There is a conflict between seeking God throughout one's entire life, which is a human activity, and seeing God "face to face" in an eternal moment, which is an angelic one. When it seems that we have found God, there is a danger in believing that we possess Him in his entirety, and a complacency in our spiritual life could lead us to distance ourselves from Him. That is why the search for God must be a continuous effort which constantly renews itself, a thirst that can only be quenched by the Source of Living Water. Thomas' life, just like that of the angel, was a "face to face" meeting with God—one through faith, the other in glory. ...

Through the grace of God, He revealed himself to Thomas. Let us remember here that Thomas never wrote a single line of text without having had prior recourse to prayer and contemplation. It was then, thus, that St Thomas' life was guided by the two wisdoms that he defined as: "The wisdom that man acquires through study ... allows him to have righteous judgment about divine things according to his perfect use of reasoning ... but the other wisdom, which is a gift from heaven, judges divine things by virtue of a certain com-

mon nature with them. It is a gift from the Holy Spirit ... through which mankind is rendered perfect in the order of divine things, not only by learning, but by experiencing these things within himself" (S.T. IIa-IIae, Q45:1, 2, 2a).

Thomas also said, with reference to his knowledge, that "he had received it from God and not acquired it through study or his own work."

In these two quotations, there is a conflict between what a person "learns," done in a discursive way and through reasoning, and what he or she "experiences" through intuitive knowledge (essential for an angel), that is, the perception of a total truth without having recourse to reason. However, we can also have this same type of experience. With the mystics, we call it "enlightenments" or "revelations," whether they are large or small, which come to the spirit without benefit of a sense of reason; but we always come back to the discursive search. Just like the angels, Thomas, more than most humans, benefited from such infused graces.

If the angels' adoration is immediate and perpetual, for mere mortals it is different, even if it exists within him or her as infused knowledge; it passes through different degrees of visions before coming to a beatific vision. God's

mercy follows it and our definitive choice will be the one we will make at the end of our life when we meet God "face to face."

From 15 Days of Prayer with Saint Thomas Aquinas by Suzanne Vrai and Andre Pinet

Editor's Note: As you know, St Thomas Aquinas was called the "Dumb Ox" by his classmates. He was a humble, shy fellow, and did not resist this bullying because, I speculate, he was confident of God's love. We can follow in his humble footsteps, by also trusting in His love, and like Thomas, by pursuing God with continual study.

His master professor, St Albert the Great, said of Thomas: "You call him a dumb ox; I tell you this dumb ox shall bellow so loud that his bellowings will fill the world."

This new section of the Challenge is the result of input from you, Lay Dominicans of the Province of St Albert the Great. Some have asked for more inspirational articles, others for more educational content. So I have made an attempt to gather a "medley" of articles into this section, a work in progress, which is open to your continuing feedback.

Dominic, a Man of Vision, 1170-1221

Dominic de Guzman was born in 1170 to wealthy parents in Caleruega, Spain. Not much is known about St. Dominic, compared to his contemporary, St. Francis. But we do know from eye-witness accounts, that he was a person of high—even heroic—idealism. In his youthful fervor while studying at the university, he once sold his precious books to obtain money for the poor. On another occasion, he tried to sell himself into slavery in exchange for a prisoner of war.

Once Dominic became a friar, he developed a radical commitment to evangelization using the itinerant life (mendicancy), a new concept at that time, and he traveled and preached in the European countryside of what today is Spain, Italy, and France. Itinerancy was necessary to spread the truth of the Gospel and counter heresies, but eventually itinerancy also became a metaphor for the expansion of the mind and soul in search of the truth.

Dominic was a man of vision and passion, living during turbulent times. While the Church carried out the vicious “holy war” of the Crusades, Dominic did not join the fight, nor did he preach the Crusade. And during a time when only bishops had the authority to preach—and had done so for hundreds of years—he advocated for the friars to join in the work of preaching. In addition, he recognized the needs of



women who sought truth and authenticity in their own lives, and worked to organize and teach them in communities, as they left the confines of their villages. This has been identified as Dominic’s “charism for women,” just one of many. He was as revolutionary as any saint.

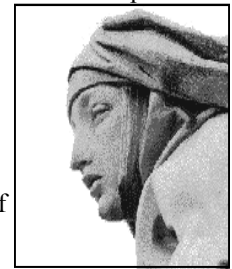
As a man of faith, ideals, and action—in love with the Gospel

and often going against the tide of the times—he was much like Jesus Christ.

Dominic founded his order to serve the intellectual needs of the Church—a task he called “the Holy Preaching.” When he died, a revered and well-known figure, 300 members of his order were working in eight countries.

Catherine, a Lay Dominican Peacemaker, 1347-1380

Catherine of Siena is the patroness of the Dominican Family and co-patroness of Italy. She was known for her peace-making skills during a time when women were illiterate. She is one of three women who are Doctors of the Church.



She went against the will of her parents when she joined the Lay Dominicans. She was often seen in her village of Siena visiting the poor and the sick in their homes and hospitals. She dictated many letters to people in all walks of life, and admiring crowds followed her everywhere she went.

Catherine was known for her laughter, and exuded gaiety and charm even in the midst of suffering. However, she also experienced criticism, accusations of ambition, of hypocrisy, and attempts were made on her life.

Beyond Siena, she was in the public eye as a peacemaker in family disputes, in feuds between cities, and between cities and the papacy. She corresponded directly with the exiled Pope in France to convince him to return to Rome, and worked for a restoration of papal authority and influence. On her deathbed she declared, “The sole cause of my death is the zeal which consumes me for the Holy Church.”

His ‘Charism for Women’ Was a Blessing for the Entire Family

by Marlene Laurendeau, OP

The exact identity of the first followers of Dominic de Guzman in Prouilhe is a very complex one, writes Sr Barbara Beaumont, OP, in her article, “The Coming of the Preachers” (<http://www.800.op.org>). She says that the women, converted from the Cathar heresy, set Prouilhe apart from other monastic foundations, reminding us that Jesus proclaimed that he has come “to call sinners rather than the virtuous, to heal those who are sick, as the healthy have no need of a doctor.” She continues, “It was essentially a charitable foundation, intended to take in women, recently reconciled with Catholicism, without family support or financial resources. These were the kind of aspirants who might not have been readily accepted in the conventional Catholic abbeys of the region.”

The community started with no financial endowments and was not affiliated with any established religious order; they were Dominic’s earliest followers. At first they stayed in two

or three private homes in the region, while Dominic traveled to find the funds to build a monastery. The monastery was eventually built for them, and families from the vicinity also donated their land and the fruits from their farms. Preachers (not yet friars) were also associated with it. “The status of Prouilhe as a refueling depot, with its early practicalities such as hospitality during preaching missions or financial support of the friars in their mendacity” were only a few of their contributions. The monastery was not an adjunct to the Family, but provided a clear apostolic purpose in its own right: becoming “directly implicated in Dominic’s work of salvation by the very fact that it admitted converts from heresy. And at the same time, the prayers of the sisters were complementary to the preaching mission in that they were in themselves efficacious for the salvation of souls,” adds Sr Beaumont. The same can be said for the laity, who were involved from the very beginning, although they were not granted a *Rule* until 1285 by Master Munio de Zamora.

What Is Dominican Spirituality?

What is the particular contribution of the Dominican Order to the spiritual traditions in the Church? Founded almost eight centuries ago, the movement of the Order of Preachers spread from one region to another, first in Europe and then to the Americas and throughout the world. Dominic de Guzman in the 13th century desired to bring light to the problems of his day by offering people sound theology in the form of preaching in the vernacular, something unheard of outside of the monasteries.

Dominic brought the riches of the East and West together, combining the traditions of the canon regulars, St Augustine's Rule, and the wisdom of the Desert Fathers, writes Guy Bedouelle, OP, professor and author of works on St Dominic and Dominican spirituality, in *Magnificat*. His successors as head of the order, first Jordan of Saxony and then Humbert of Romans, gave clear and practical spiritual teaching based on Sacred Scripture. Jordan of Saxony did this through his letters to Diana d'Andalo, a Dominican nun from Bologna, while Humbert did the same through his treatises on preaching.

"The recounting of the deeds of the

founder and the first friars retains the joy of a new understanding," Bedouelle says. The short work of St Dominic's nine ways of prayer offers an example, rare in the Middle Ages, that emphasizes bodily expression in prayer.

Speculative theology added to Dominican spirituality through the teachings of Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas. These theological geniuses left summaries, commentaries, prayers, and sermons. Then a new period opened up in Germany and Switzerland, at the end of the 13th and the beginning of the 14th centuries, among the pupils of Albert and Thomas. In Rhineland mysticism, the metaphysical speculation that Meister Eckhart represented, tried to "describe the unfathomable mystery of God, and attained such a depth that it is sometimes poorly understood," continues Bedouelle. Eckhart's disciple, Henry Suso, continued in his more emotional contemplation of divine Wisdom, while John Tauler was more pastoral in his sermons. Mirrored by the sisters' monasteries, this mysticism reached groups of lay people all along the Rhine Valley.

At the end of the 14th century, Dominican spirituality reached a high point in

Italy with St Catherine of Siena, a Lay Dominican. She gave us the *Dialogues*, a masterpiece that she dictated, because she was illiterate. This was a conversation between her and God during a difficult period of history in Europe. Bedouelle says that this masterpiece is "destined to be handed down through the ages for its stunning insights concerning Christ, who is the bridge between God and men [and women], and concerning the Church whose members are always in need of reform." She was a peacemaker in politics and among the warring families of Italy.

Bedouelle describes the Dominican spirituality of the 15th century as "masterfully pedagogical." "It does so by way of the rosary, in which occurs the perfectly simple contemplation of the mysteries of Christ. It also achieves the same end by means of Fra Angelico's painting, which preaches through beauty. In this way, the foundations of Dominican spirituality are laid down to be taken up by the following centuries," Bedouelle adds.

In the 16th century we have for example, Louis of Granada of Spain,

Continued on Page 6

Radcliffe on Freedom, Truth, Sexuality, and Healing a Polarized Church

This introduction and partial interview by Bill McGarvey, editor of BustedHalo.com, is reprinted here with permission from both McGarvey and Fr Timothy Radcliffe, OP. Part 2 will appear in a future issue.

As he bounds off the stage in his white friar's habit into the large audience in an Anaheim Convention Center ballroom, Timothy Radcliffe, OP, seems to have the energy of a man half his 63 years. He is away from the stage only momentarily to listen to a question from an audience member before he turns and moves quickly back to reclaim the microphone on the dais and offer his response. In person, Radcliffe gives the impression—at least to American eyes—of a delightfully eccentric and irrepressible British academic who wouldn't be out of place as a visiting professor at *Harry Potter*'s Hogwarts Academy (as one of the "good guys" of course).

That impression is not entirely unfounded. Radcliffe has taught, studied, and continues to live at Blackfriars in Oxford; but his career hasn't been spent in an ivory tower. This descendant of English wealth and privilege is deeply committed to issues of social justice and peace. For nearly 10 years he was the first Englishman to ever hold the position of Master General of the Dominican Order—the Order of Preachers. During those years he lived in Rome but spent most of his time traveling to visit Dominican communities all over the world. As a result, he has a unique, firsthand view of the state of the universal Church that he shares as both a lecturer (where he is in great demand) and an author.

Though some of his views have caused controversy recently—especially with regard to homosexuality in the priesthood—Radcliffe's thoughts on healing our polarized Church through dialogue are an important and persuasive reminder of Catholicism's universality and dynamism.

BustedHalo: Joy and freedom figure prominently in What Is the Point of Being a Christian? Sadly, it might be a revelation to some that joy and freedom are essential components to a Christian's life. Plenty of religious figures pay lip service to the

Continued on Page 6



Radcliffe

Continued from Page 5

joy and freedom you speak about, but their claims often ring hollow at best or turn out to be entirely hypocritical at worst. How is the joy and freedom you speak about different? How does one get on the path to finding it?

Fr Timothy Radcliffe, OP: A first step is not to take oneself too seriously. If one believes in God, and trusts in His providence, then we can regard ourselves with a certain affectionate amusement. God certainly does! There was a Victorian cartoon showing a wealthy business man, and it said, ‘I used to be an atheist until I realized that I was God.’

Secondly, what is special about Christian joy is that it is not opposed to sorrow. Many people try to live a hearty sort of joy, “Smile, Jesus loves you,” which suggests that all is fine. There is a lot of guilt about being sorrowful. It has been established that one of the reasons for so many suicides among the young is a feeling that it is shameful to be sad. But Christianity offers a joy which is large enough for sorrow; it is the joy of Christ which included Good Friday. The opposite of joy for us is not sorrow but hardness of heart, a refusal to be touched by the sorrows and joys of the world.

BH: *You were once quoted as saying, “Clearly a big challenge for Christianity is how to remain in contact with the millions of people who look for God but do not come to Church.” In many ways that’s our mission at BustedHalo. How do you propose the Church should do that?*

TR: I do think that BustedHalo is a wonderful way of doing that. It really is part of the Church’s mission. We have to be where people are. We have to be where the creative thinkers are—the film writers, poets, novelists, the academics—so that we can engage with them, learning from them as well as sharing our faith with them. The first thing that St Dominic did was to send his brethren to the great universities, both to study and to teach. We also have to be where the people are who have lost hope. We cannot expect people to come to Church unless we go first to where they are. This is what God did in Jesus, making his home with us so that we could be at home in God.

BH: *In a similar vein, you’re quoted as saying that “Christians should accompany people on their pilgrimages. Specifically we should travel with people as they search for the good, the true, and the beautiful.” Making that link between the good, true, etc., and faith is a difficult job, but essential, to my mind, if people will ever recognize God’s presence in their lives. Can you speak a bit about how you’ve made that connection in your own life and do you have any advice for other pilgrims?*

TR: One of the greatest people I have ever met was Marie-Dominique Chenu, a Dominican theologian who was a profound influence on the Second Vatican Council. When I lived in Paris, he was 80 years old. Every night he was out at meetings, giving lectures, making friends. He spent time with academics, trade unionists, artists, and he was always learning. Right up to his death he went on seeking. And when we met him in the common room late at night, he would always ask, “What have you learned today?” Every time one meets someone, they always have something to give you, an insight, an experience, a hint of wisdom. And if they see that we are eager to learn from them, then it is likely that they will be open to listen to us. I do believe that the gospel is good news that I want to share with people, but I also know that God is already in their lives, working perhaps invisibly, and so they have something to give to me.

BH: *Some professors at universities in the United States have commented that there is often open hostility among the faculty toward religion and religious institutions like the Catholic church (even at Catholic schools). Do you get that same sense at Oxford or other European Universities? Any thoughts on why that is?*

TR: I would say that the hostility in England is widespread, even if it is usually covered by a façade of English politeness. And it is present in most European countries too. I think that often it is the fruit of ignorance. People think that we Catholics believe all sorts of strange doctrines which are nothing to do with our faith at all. I was at a meeting with England and Italian politicians when Pope Benedict apologized for the some remarks that he had made in a speech which were taken, wrongly, as anti-Muslim. A famous politician asked me whether this meant that Papal Infallibility was over. He really did believe that Catholics thought that every single word any Pope said was infallible, even down to predicting the next day’s weather! So we have to try to let people know what we really believe! Also we have to be less afraid of real discussions within the Church. We must show people that being a Catholic does not mean brain death. The Church always had a wonderful tradition of debate and argument right up until the Reformation. After that time there has been a tendency to think that arguing is disloyal and that we must man the battlements against the enemy. We must relax! The Holy Spirit was poured upon the Church at Pentecost, and so we must be confident that we can face tough questions, risk disagreements, having faith that the Church will not come to pieces. If people outside see more intelligent debate within the Church, then there will be less hostility and suspicion.

Dominican Spirituality

Continued from Page 5

while in Portugal there is Bartholomew of the Martyrs, the mentor of Charles Borromeo. “In the following century, there is in France, Louis Chardon, the author of *The Cross of Jesus*, or there is Agnes of Langeac. In the 19th and 20th centuries, the Order is rebuilt after the ordeals of the French Revolution.” After that there are Dominicans from four different periods: Lacordaire; Hyacinthe Cormier; Bede Jarrett; and Marie de la Trinite.

What are the common denominators of these varied Dominican experiences? “First, there is a liking for going unceasingly to the center of the mystery of the Trinity, of Christ, of Mary, and of the Church. ... Then there is the experience of inner freedom that can go as far as the boldness of a Catherine of Siena. Finally, there is the joy of contributing to the salvation of souls by preaching the Gospel. In all this there is nothing particular, perhaps, yet everything is essential.”

Promoter's Corner

by Fr Jim Motl, OP
Provincial Promoter

I am writing this article as I am preparing to preach for Trinity Sunday. On this feast we celebrate one of the most ancient and mysterious beliefs of the Church. We profess to believe in one God who is, nevertheless, three persons. We believe that God is Father, creator, source of all that is. At the same time we believe that God is Son, Redeemer, and Word revealing all God wants us to know.



Because of our familiarity with parent-child relationships we can at least begin to think about what this might mean in God, but then our Christian heritage asks us to believe that the same God is Holy Spirit, breathing out God's creative force on creation, Jesus' Spirit poured into our hearts in baptism and confirmation. It is this person of God that tends to give us the most trouble because we have no easy comparison for the Spirit as for the Father and the Son. You can't say that the Holy Spirit is like a mother, because our creeds tell us that the Holy Spirit comes forth from the Father through the Son. Yet Scripture tells us that Mary conceived Jesus because the Spirit overshadowed her. To me this says that the action of God at every stage – creation, redemption through Jesus, and the continuing redeeming mission of the Church – shows that God always works in a way that shows that He is not a lonely, solitary figure operating in isolation. Rather, through creation and redemption God demonstrates that the very nature of God is to be and work together. The importance of this seemingly abstract dogma for us is that we are created and saved to live and work with others so as to show in whose image we are made.

St Thomas Aquinas thought that the nearest we can come to comprehending the reality of the Holy Trinity is to think of it as relationship. When we say that we are made in the image of God we usually mean that we can think rationally and make free choices based on our ability to reason, characteristics not shared in the same way by the rest of creation. Another way we are distinctly like God is our ability to relate to one another. This doesn't jump to mind as a distinctive way that we are like God because each creature relates to the rest of creation in one way or another. Among some animals there are life long relationships between mates and within families. Among humans, however, there is the possibility of developing life-changing relationships in a variety of ways: through marriage, through friendship, through voluntary associations. It is in our ability to live in relationship with others that we come closest to reflecting the mystery of the Trinity. It is in growing through relationships that we can best demonstrate to our world what we mean when we say we believe in a Triune God.

Before the 1987 revision of *The Rule* for Lay Dominican Fraternities,

there was less emphasis on community as one of the pillars of Dominican life. There were many active chapters offering strong support to members in living the Dominican life as lay persons, but one could also enter as a private member and gain the advantages of Third Order membership without belonging to a local community. One of the most important changes in the new revision was to require membership in a local chapter or group for aspiring members. From that point on formation for lay Dominican life was to be in and for community. One theological reason for this alteration was a deeper understanding after the Second Vatican Council of the importance of community for growing in our relationship with God. God did not send Jesus to save us as individuals but as members of a Church. That Church is most concretely realized in local communities of believers. It is often easier to identify with a more abstract and distant reality than with one which confronts us with the challenge of growing through relationship with people of differing personalities, preferences, talents, and gifts. It is precisely in meeting this challenge that we can enter most fully into our vocation of bringing an image of the Triune God to our world. That is why we have parishes. It is also why we now insist on chapter, pro-chapter, or group participation as a norm for Lay Dominican membership.

The difficulties in establishing and maintaining a voluntary local association like a Lay Dominican chapter are many. It is all well and good to cite the Trinity as a model, but as humans we lack that perfect understanding of other members that underlies the unity of persons and of action we find in the unity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. To arrive at anything like a community of human persons requires constant listening, acceptance of differences, and willingness to let go of personal preferences as the personality of the group develops. Successful community development requires skill in human relationships, but more importantly it calls for openness. In Christian community that openness is identified with a willingness to see the will of God manifested in the collective wisdom of the group. Of course the group itself must be responsive to the movement of the Holy Spirit that is brought to reality by the decisions of the larger community represented for Lay Dominicans in gatherings such as meetings of the Provincial Council, the Inter-provincial Council, and World Congresses.

It is always disappointing for me to hear of divisions in local chapters and groups. There will always be differences where two or three are gathered, even in the name of Christ. The challenge of living a Trinitarian life is to respect differences of opinion, of character, of talent and of gifts, and to open ourselves to what others are offering. We must always be cautious of letting a group be dominated by overly demanding personalities.

For us the model after Christ should always be St Dominic. Jesus showed us that to build a community we must sacrifice ourselves. Dominic was willing to surrender his vision to the will of the Order as expressed by the General Chapter of the Order. To proclaim the life of the Trinity, alive and powerful today, Lay Dominicans must excel, not only in prayer, study, and mission, but most especially in giving the world an example of vibrant, local communities of faith.

President Ruth

Continued from Page 1

a short period of time. The question to be asked is how do we enter the time and space of another with love and respect? Community life is just as important as study. Ask for direction, coaching, and consultation when it comes to these human relationships. Both people can become enriched in the process, both the inquirer and the leader. This connectedness helps to avoid confusion and hurt, helps the life of the chapter, and provides a better image of Lay Dominicans to others.

The Dominican Laity Inter-Provincial Council (DLIPC) meeting April 10-13, 2008, was a learning, praying, and sharing event (see Page 2). Our new Lay Dominican General Promoter Fr David Kammler, OP, was most generous with his time and talent at the meeting. Isn't there a saying about going around the world in 90 days? Well, Fr David set a new record: His visitation began on March 3, and he returned to Rome April 21. Fr David, Fr Jim, and I also spent one day with the Chaldeans at St George's in Shelby. The members there shared prayer, song, and served incredible food.

Many thanks to Fr David, a globetrotter for Lay Dominicans, and also to Fr Jerry Stookey for all his dedication to the Laity. Both brothers worked hard leading many of us to the benefits of the Lay Dominican Congress in Argentina.

Mark the date for the next Provincial Council Meeting at St John in Plymouth, MI, as Oct. 23-26, 2008. Please send the name of your delegate, with the address, phone (cell and home), and chapter name. At the same time, please update me on any new officers and the times of their terms.

Who Do We Say

Continued from Page 2

for those who are marginalized? Can we—always measured in kindness and gentleness—speak up when a “joke” is told at someone else’s expense?

Another issue that arose during the Promoters of Preaching convention is preaching with and through technology. The Promoters hope to gain some skills at utilizing and incorporating technology as one medium of preaching, which will then be passed on to all members of the Order. Another outcome of the meeting is to plan a preaching workshop. This workshop will be for preachers of all types—those who preach liturgically, catechists, RCIA coordinators, etc. Specifically mentioned was the desire to include Lay Dominicans—as both presenters as well as participants. Let us try and look at everything that we say and do as the actions of a preacher.

Perhaps we could begin each day in prayer, asking God to bless us in our preaching in everything we say and do. It could begin with something as simple as the message on our answering machine or voice mail. Could this be an opportunity to proclaim God’s love and peace?

Who do we say that *we* are? Let us respond heartily, “We are preachers of the Gospel!”

Inter-Provincial Delegates

Continued from Page 2

inces, the Acts from the International Congress in Argentina are currently in various stages of implementation.

Fr David Kammler, the newly appointed Promoter General for Lay Dominicans, offered the attendees a very moving slide show of his two-month trip visiting Lay Dominicans in Asia. He began by indicating that the Dominican Family worldwide consists of 6,000 friars, 3,000 nuns, 36,000 sisters, and 732,000 Lay Dominicans. He then provided a compelling perspective on various Lay Dominican programs and celebrations in Pakistan, India, Indonesia, Vietnam, the Philippines, Singapore, and Hong Kong.

Sr Durstynne “Dusty” Farnan, the Co-Promoter for Peace and Justice of the Dominican Family, provided an overview of justice activities in North America. Feedback from the Delegates focused on issues related to the “culture of life,” which many attendees felt was not given sufficient prominence on the agenda.

The next meeting of the Inter-Provincial Council will be hosted by the Canadian Province in Mississauga, Ontario, near Toronto, beginning on or about Oct. 1, 2009.

Provincial Promoter: Fr Jim Motl; **President:** Ruth Kummer; **Vice President:** Harvey Newcomb II; **Recording Secretary:** Cyndi Ricard; **Corresponding Secretary:** Karen Sabourin; **Treasurer:** Mary Lee Odders; **Formation Director:** Thomas Ryba; **Inter-Provincial Delegate:** Norm Laurendeau; and **Challenge Editor:** Marlene Laurendeau (e-mail: marlenelauren@aol.com) **Our Mission:** Called to a deeper relationship of love and service to God, we are members of the Dominican Order, who commit to live the Dominican charism as lay people. In collaboration with the Dominican Family, we work to promote social justice and peace in society. Supported by prayer, study, community, and ministry, we fulfill our vocation to proclaim the Gospel wherever we, as individuals, live and work.

Marlene Laurendeau, *Challenge Editor*

5 Mast Lane

Brunswick, ME 04011

ADDRESS SERVICE CORRECTION