



# CHALLENGE

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

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## From the President

by Ruth Kummer, OP

The very title of an English translation of the 1285 *Rule of Munio of Zamora for the Penitents of Saint Dominic*, calls us to penance. Can we honestly say that penance or discipline is not needed in today's life? According to Mary Jo Leddy's book, *Radical Gratitude*, one might say penance is out of fashion. We tend to view penance as depriving oneself of creature comforts (one form of attitudinal penance). But how often do we consider gratitude as a discipline?



In Leddy's book, a young pre-teen boy who was adopted from an Eastern European country often tells his new "nona" (Italian for grandmother) how happy he is to come to her house. Of course, her homemade Italian food is good, and the surroundings on her 10 acres are an adventure, where deer, fox, rabbits, and coyotes roam, and even snakes dwell under the shrubbery. He delights in going out into the darkness to hear nature's sounds. Truly, this is radical gratitude from a young man who was accustomed to life on the streets and in an orphanage.

Have you ever considered the many stories and lessons in Scripture about whole tribes that were captured and taken to other lands? How often we are captured by our culture and enslaved to seek monetary goods and personal self-interest! We are not captured under great stress and taken to other regions, but within our own setting we are often captured and entrenched in a limiting life with the trappings of our culture--especially now that electronic buttons have a stranglehold on our very being!

When the last satellite is aged to dysfunction, will we have a radical gratitude to be free from the consuming grip of the bytes, gigabytes, *Continued on Page 7*

## Communicators Focus on Katrina Care

by Rebecca Peak, OP

On Jan. 18-21, 2007, communicators from 18 Dominican congregations and provinces were in New Orleans to attend the 10th Annual Dominican Communicators Network Conference (OPCOMNET), sponsored by the Dominican Leadership Conference. The meetings were held at the Dominican Conference Center near the St Mary's Dominican motherhouse.

A panel of speakers was featured to focus on fellow Dominicans' well-being since the Katrina storm more than 18 months ago. Some of the questions asked were, "How did the Dominicans in New Orleans do and how are they doing now?" Friars of St Martin Province, the Sisters of St Mary's, the Eucharistic Missionary Dominicans, and members of the Dominican Laity were asked to talk about their experiences: Panelists were:

- **Emilano Zapata, OP** (St Martin's), who said that all the friars now in New Orleans have a direct ministry in the city. There are no retired friars living in the city.

- **Noel Toomey, OP** (EMD), lost 25 years worth of files and professional memorabilia when flood waters filled the basement offices of the Archdiocesan Spirituality Center. The Center has found a new home--on the second floor of an adjacent building. Her home was on a rise and suffered repairable damage, but much of her neighborhood has yet to even start renovations.

- **Linda Pippenger, OP** (laity), lost her home, but has rebuilt and is now working with Beacon of Hope, a non-profit organization that is helping rebuild New Orleans neighborhoods.

- **Ruth Angelette, OP** (St Mary's), Principal of St Anthony of Padua School, found in the experience an opportunity to preach: "We lost our past, but there is new life in the resurrection ... if we keep the people at the heart of everything."

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## Dominicans Report to UN on Iraqi Refugees

*This is a joint statement submitted to the Human Rights Council in Geneva, March 12 - April 5, 2007, by Dominicans for Justice and Peace (Order of Preachers), Dominican Leadership Conference, Pax Christi International, Congregations of St. Joseph, Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, and five non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in special consultative status to the United Nations.*

Dominicans for Justice and Peace (Order of Preachers), Dominican Leadership Conference, Pax Christi International, Congregations of St Joseph, and Sisters of Mercy of the Americas express their deep concern for refugees and internally displaced people of Iraq. An estimated 100,000 Iraqis leave their country each month, including many of Iraq's best educated professionals. Approximately 2,000,000 Iraqis have fled since the 2003 invasion and about 1,800,000 Iraqis are internally displaced.

The humanitarian needs of the people of Iraq are urgent. Four years after the armed intervention by the coalition forces, the civilian population of Iraq remains the main victim of the prevailing security situation characterized by terrorist acts, action by armed groups, criminal gangs, religious extremists, militias, security and military

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## International Preaching Commission Meets for

*SANTA SABINA, Rome, March 12, 2007*— The first meeting of the newly created International Preaching Commission of the Order was held here February 11-14, 2007.

Quoting Fr Carlos Azpiroz Costa: "... [T]he grace of preaching had been given by the Holy Spirit to the entire family for the renewal of preaching in the Church and world."

The Commission explored a variety of questions and realities concerning how Dominicans collaborate in their preaching mission. The promoters of preaching have received information and a report on this meeting and are being asked to follow up within their own congregations and provinces to initiate conversation and

reflection.

Mary Catherine Hilkert, OP (Akron), reported that the meeting was a fruitful experience of Dominican collaboration and dialogue among the friars, sisters, and lay members of the Order.

She noted that the nuns were among the first to send their reflections on the preaching charism of the Order to Santa Sabina and that they supported the meeting of this Commission with their prayers as well. Hilkert commented that although the members of the Commission came from diverse contexts and had different concerns and expectations, the group

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## Open Letter to the Dominican Family

# Preaching Commission Reports on Preaching Project

*Following a petition from the General Chapter in Bologna (1998), and a report on the progress of the survey on preaching throughout the Order at the Krakow General Chapter (2004), the Preaching Commission was set up by the current Master, Bro Carlos Azpiroz Costa, to take forward the work of examining the question of the charism of preaching for men and women of the Order. The Krakow Chapter recommended discussion on two particular questions: 1) Is collaborative preaching by Dominican women and men, lay and ordained, essential to our witness to the Gospel? 2) How does profession in the Order of Preachers imply a commission to preach as a participation in the essential mission of the Order? The Chapter further recommended, "before the next chapter, a small meeting of theologians, historians, pastors, and canonists be held to evaluate responses, continue the reflection, and propose future steps to be taken" (ACG 108-112).*

We, the Preaching Commission of the Order of Preachers, met at Santa Sabina, the General Curia of the Order, Feb.11-14, 2007. This is our report of work in progress to all members of the Family.

### Address from Bro Carlos, Master of the Order

When Bro Carlos met with the Commission, he reminded us that the grace of preaching had been given by the Holy Spirit to the entire family for the renewal of preaching in the Church and world. He said: "In his time, St Dominic saw the effect of the lack of preaching of the Word of God on the Church and world of his day – the disciplinary reform of the Church was not enough." Bro Carlos put to us the following questions: What does the grace of preaching mean today? How do we bring about the renewal of preaching in the entire Order as essential to our common vocation? Within that context, how can we open and widen institutional authorization to preach? He concluded that this was not a task for the friars alone but needed the reflection of the whole family if the Order was to grow in all its branches.

### Preaching Survey

The starting point for the reflections of the Commission was the survey from friars, sisters, nuns, and laity from around the world on the Dominican charism of preaching. The compilation of the survey, completed by Bro David Rocks, OP, of the Irish Province in July 2006 [see *Challenge*, autumn 2006], gave us the foundation for our deliberations, and we are immensely grateful to all who took part. We hope that this report will inspire those who did not respond, to do so in the future.

There are many other documents and exhortations from General Chapters and Congresses on Mission, letters from the Masters of the Order, preaching and addresses to gatherings of the Family throughout the world. We therefore did not see it as our task to add another document to this rich heritage. Rather, we wanted to take account of where we are as an Order in responding to the grace of preaching and to underline the challenges we face. Our most basic challenge is rediscovering that preaching is at the heart of our vocation and identity. That requires of us a greater dedication to study and finding new modes of preaching in today's world.

### Preaching in Collaboration and Formation

We began with an analysis of our current reality related to our preaching charism in the Order, looking at the internal strengths and weaknesses and the external obstacles and opportunities. We are greater witnesses to the spirit of St Dominic when we preach together as the Dominican Family. As the message from the members of the international commissions of the Dominican Order, meeting in Fanjeaux in May 2006, stated—we commit ourselves to finding spaces to preach together as Dominic's Family. We note the differences in theological education between the various branches of the Order and consider theological formation to be essential for everyone in the Order, lay and ordained. We note with regret an occasional lack of emphasis on the preaching

charism. We need to re-appropriate the original inspiration that preaching should inform every aspect of Dominican life. Our houses, whether priories, convents, monasteries, or homes of the laity, have to become a 'Holy Preaching.'

### Words of Hope Leading into the Mystery

We affirm that our world is one hungry for the Word, that says 'yes' to life and all creation; that tells the truth instead of lies; that gives meaning to being human; that puts dignity before greed; that proclaims hope, especially to the poor and excluded; and that in short, preaches Jesus Christ.

Our preaching is a participation in the mission of the Spirit of God who extends the horizon of our concern to all of humanity, to the good of Creation and to a dialogue with those of all cultures and faiths. Jesus preached not just through words, but through his liberating lifestyle. Our lives need to reflect the Gospel we preach. Preaching has to be given priority in the Order and in the Church at large. It is our specific responsibility, not only to witness to the Gospel, but to proclaim it explicitly. We need to rediscover that zeal for the Word that liberates and gives meaning to God's creation.

We believe that all preaching should lead people to the mystery of God. This should be made manifest by our spirituality of joy, hospitality, contemplation, option for justice, the ongoing search for truth, and a passion for life.

### An Invitation to All

We recognize and celebrate the collaboration that already exists among the branches of the Order in many parts of the world. They include: joint preaching ventures, collaborative theological institutes, networks on justice

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## International Preaching Commission

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was in full agreement that preaching is at the heart of its vocation and identity.

The Commission was eager to invite all branches of the Order to explore the implications of that conviction for theological formation, for the lifestyle in our houses, and for more effective forms of collaboration among the branches of the Order (see article above).

The Commission was established in 2006 by the Master of the Order Carlos Azpiroz as a standing commission of the Order. When he met with the Commission in February, Carlos encouraged the members to consider the following questions: "What does the grace of preaching mean today? How do we bring about the renewal of preaching in the entire Order as essential to our common vocation? Within that context, how can we open and widen institutional authorization to preach?" He also remarked that this was not a task for the friars alone, but needed the reflection of the whole Family if the Order was to grow in all its branches.

Hilkert expressed the hope that those in positions of leadership in the Dominican Order in the United States and the promoters of preaching will take up the invitation of the Commission to find ways to structure conversations in our congregations, provinces, and area meetings around the above two questions and to send the results of those discussions to the Commission as a resource for its future work.

Members of the Commission are appointed for a four-year term. In addition to the questions listed above, future meetings of the Commission will include discussion of new forms of evangelization and the specific challenges that preachers face in diverse settings around the globe, the necessity of listening to the concerns of our hearers and the world before preaching, the importance of emphasizing the liberating power of Word and action on behalf of justice and peace as integral to our preaching of the Gospel, and study and discussion of the question of authorization for preaching by the non-ordained in the liturgical context.

## Editorial

## Why Dominicans Belong at the United Nations

by Eileen Gannon, OP (DLC/Sparkill)  
NGO Representative to the UN in New York

Why should Dominicans (and other religious organizations) be at the United Nations? According to Noel Brown, former Executive Director of UNEP, religious communities have a significant place at the United Nations because *they are all over the world*, including some very difficult places; *they do a lot with a little* in terms of resources; when the situation gets difficult, *they do not leave* the place or the people; they have a long history of *being with those who are poor*; and they come to the international policy table *with interests not their own*.

The Dominican Leadership Conference (DLC) represents the worldwide Dominican Family at the UN in New York. Dominicans for Justice and Peace [see article on Page 1] represents our Family at the United Nations in Geneva. Dominican sisters and brothers, men and women living in more than 101 countries, give us a wonderful opportunity to bring their experience to the United Nations, to share their stories, their realities, their hopes and dreams for their people with the United Nations missions and Secretariat.

To speak truth to power is our responsibility and our privilege; to be Dominican means no less. Our goal includes bringing the perspective of the United Nations to our Dominican Family and to support global action for justice and peace nationally.

These are goals which we share with the 192-nation member United Nations in its efforts to promote human rights and sustainable development in a world where justice will ensure human security and dignity for all.

Our areas of focus at the United Nations in New York are based on The

International Dominican Commission for Justice and Peace Call from Fanjeaux and the North American Call to Justice.

All of the issues are interrelated. For example, people who migrate are often poor, often searching for employment, or escaping from conditions caused by war and natural disaster. The challenge is to see the con-

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nections and to be aware that policy decisions and advocacy must be multi-dimensional. There is a clear focus for each of the committees on which we are members, but there is also the realization that the work of one is closely connected to the work of the other.

I hope you find this useful and that it compels you to join the effort for peace and justice. You are most welcome to come to New York and see Dominican preaching in action.

*This article can be found at the DLC website or on Domlife.org.*

## Iraqi Refugees

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forces. Growing unemployment, poverty, various forms of discrimination, and increasingly limited access to basic services prevent most citizens from realizing their economic, social, and cultural rights.

In addition to being a grave violation of the right to life, the ongoing insecurity remains a major obstacle to any efforts for the reconstruction of institutions, for the economy of the country, and for a return to normalcy in the lives of the people.

An immediate response to the humanitarian crisis is to attend to the basic needs of those who have left their homes because of the ongoing war in Iraq. Middle Eastern countries, including Syria and Jordan, have shown openness in welcoming the refugees. As the numbers have increased, the overburdened public services of the host countries are becoming overwhelmed by the increased refugee population. According to United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) estimates, Syria has taken in 1,000,000 Iraqis; Jordan, 750,000; and Egypt, 80,000-130,000. The United States has taken in 463 Iraqis since the beginning of the 2003 invasion; however, the US Administration announced on February 15, 2007, that it would grant asylum for up to 7,000 refugees over the next year.

As the war continues and more civilians flee, neighboring states are having difficulties absorbing the influx of refugees. Jordan, a country with a population of only 6 million, already has a refugee population of 1.5 million registered Palestinian refugees, and the new refugees are causing the population to grow more quickly than is manageable.

The host nations that receive the refugees generally do not provide Iraqis with any official status and therefore become the equivalent of undocumented workers. Middle-class Iraqis may be teachers, blacksmiths, architects, hair-dressers, etc., but because of their status, they are forced to look for work in the informal sector, where jobs are hard to find. Others are afraid to seek jobs for fear of their undocumented status being discovered, which could result in deportation to Iraq.

Medical and mental health needs are unmet. Children are denied education, except in some private schools where costs make this prohibitive. Employment, even in the informal sector, is difficult to find. Social services are generally unavailable.

The Palestinian refugees who were living in Iraq are also in crisis. Palestinians are the most vulnerable refugees fleeing Iraq because they have nowhere else to flee. They already lack proper documents to leave their host country and are currently living in extremely difficult conditions at border sites.

The immediate care of those who have left their homes because of the ongoing conflict in Iraq is urgent. The United Nations refugee services must dramatically increase resources and the international community needs to respond immediately by providing resources and support for basic safety, food, clothing, and shelter. Current refugee assistance efforts are extremely under-funded.

**Recommendations:**

Dominicans for Justice and Peace (Order of Preachers), Dominican Leadership Conference, Pax Christi International, Congregations of St Joseph, and Sisters of Mercy of the Americas strongly recommend that:

- The international community through the United Nations seeks ways and means to provide basic services including food, clothing, and shelter to the Iraqi people who have left their homeland seeking refuge in neighboring countries.
- Medical and educational services be provided to the Iraqi refugees in their host countries.
- Western countries open their doors to the Iraqis as they seek safety and security for their families, including the United States, Great Britain, and the Allied Nations who are currently in Iraq.
- The United Nations refugee effort seeks support from the international community so that basic services are provided for the Iraqis who have been displaced and are living in other regions of Iraq.

We also urge the international community through the United Nations to take with utmost seriousness its responsibilities for the monumental and long-term challenge of the recovery and reconstruction of Iraq, devastated both by long-term sanctions and the ravages of war.

The following NGOs without consultative status also share the views expressed in this statement: Adrian Dominican Sisters Office of Global Mission, Justice, and Peace; The Partnership for Global Justice; and Passionists International.

## From Around the Province . . .

At **Queen of the Rosary Chapter** in Milwaukee, Mary Lee Odders was elected Moderator and Rosalie Durante, Secretary-Treasurer. Congratulations to Peggy Stobb, originally of the Racine area and currently living in Florida, who is celebrating 50 years of living as a Lay Dominican. . . . March is recruiting month for prospective members at the **Mary Magdalene Informal Group** in Indiana. In the past five years since the group's inception, bulletin inserts have been used to attract prospects, as well as notices in the diocesan newspaper; this year members will also be handing out Dominican Laity brochures to local hospitals through their pastoral care departments and to area churches in the diocese. . . . The **St Rose of Lima Chapter** in Dubuque, meets at the Stonehill Care Center. They usually pray the Liturgy of the Hours and sing prayerful songs led by Sr Marilyn Schlosser, OP. . . . The **St Martin de Porres Inquirers' Group** in the Kansas City area (Missouri and Kansas) has become an Informal Group, with seven people regularly attending meetings. . . . Last September, Ann Borders made Temporary Profession and Ed Dale was received. The group is studying the Beatitudes and peace and justice issues. . . . A new group is meeting, the **St Catherine of Siena Informal Group**, at St Jude's rectory in Joliet, Illinois. They will have their first finally professed member this summer. . . . The **Blessed Sacrament Chapter** in Farmington Hills, Michigan, met with the cloistered nuns there and recited the rosary and the office of the dead for Albert Reames. . . . The **Holy Rosary Chapter** in Minneapolis is discussing articles by Friars R. B. Williams and Christopher Kiesling. . . .

## Professions and Anniversaries Celebrated at St Louis

On February 4, 2007, the Dominican Laity Chapter in St Louis, Missouri, celebrated anniversaries of six members who have been professed for 25 years or more. The Chapter also witnessed the profession of four new members, with a fifth professed two weeks later.

Dorothy Elliott and Olive Miller were professed 58 years ago. Olive has been inactive for a number of years for health reasons, and Dorothy is still Formation Director for the chapter. Joseph Komadina, a past Chapter Moderator; Noel Holobeck, the chapter's representative to the Provincial Council; Wes Lohr, the current Moderator; and Olivia Ochoa, also a past Moderator, were honored for more than 25 years of life as professed members of the Dominican Laity.

Following a Chapter meeting, newer members made profession at Evening Prayer celebrated with the Friars of St. Dominic Priory, where the Chapter meets. Michael Porterfield, a graduate of Aquinas Institute of Theology in St Louis, made Final Profession before Wes Lohr and Fr Jim Motl, the Provincial Promoter for Dominican Laity. Michael is Associate Formation Director for the Chapter and is working on a doctorate in psychology at the University of Missouri at St Louis. Three more new members then made First Profession: Donna Chesanek, mother of nine; Robert Hughes, a home-health provider and member of the Racine Dominican Associates; and Kimberly Naegle, a student at Aquinas Institute.

On Feb. 18, Dr Eleonore Stump, Professor of philosophy at St Louis University, a recognized authority on the history of philosophy, made her first profession as a Lay Dominican before Wes Lohr and Fr Michael Mascari, Prior Provincial of the Province of Saint Albert the Great, and personal friend of Dr Stump.



Left to right: Wes Lohr, Fr Jim Motl, Dorothy Elliot, Robert Hughes, Kimberly Naegle, Donna Chesanek, and Michael Porterfield.

## Midwest Dominican Serves in Iraqi War as Chaplain

by Jo Napolitano  
Tribune staff reporter

CHICAGO, IL, Feb. 15, 2007--There were sights it will take years to forget: head wounds, stumps where arms and leg should be. But it was the courage of the wounded, the reluctance of even the most seriously injured soldiers to cry out in pain, that most struck Rev Robert Barry, OP (St Albert).

Barry, who teaches religious studies and medical ethics at St Xavier University in Chicago, is a lieutenant colonel in the Illinois Air National Guard, based in Springfield. In addition to his work there, he has twice visited Germany's Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, where American and NATO soldiers are treated for some of the most dire battlefield wounds. He will return this summer for another six-week tour, he said.

Barry, 59, recently received the Meritorious Service Medal from the military for outstanding non-combat work with more than 1,000 soldiers in Germany--men and women he prayed with and counseled as they came to terms with their injuries. Some of the soldiers suffered heart attacks; some were covered in burns. But they always seemed more concerned about one another than themselves, Barry said.

The soldiers receive initial treatment on or near the battlefield before being flown to Germany. From there, they are taken by bus to the hospital. One by one, they walk or are carried out, dirt from the battlefield still in their hair.

Barry said the chief of chaplains warned him to be careful at Landstuhl. "It can eat you alive," Barry recalled him saying. It was true.

"For me, the hardest part is when you go in and see a new patient," Barry said. "You're coming up to the door and you get that first glance in the room. You look to see if there are any lumps under the bedcovers that aren't there."

When Barry would return to check on men and women he had greeted, he would ask them if they needed anything, such as clothes, toiletries, or a phone card to call home. Then he would gently ask each soldier to tell the story of his or her injury.

"They need to tell their story," Barry said. "I think it helps them understand."

Finally, Barry would ask if they would like to say a prayer, and most said yes, he said. So he would sit at their bedsides, asking God to give them strength to heal, patience to make it through recovery, and thanks that they're still alive.

"We pray a lot because the wild card for these injured troops is infection, especially for the ones hit by bomb blasts, which blow filth and dirt into

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# Scriptures Insist that We Conform Our Lives to Demands of Justice

by Fr Michael Mascari, OP,  
Prior Provincial, St Albert the Great Province

Too often we limit the Church's concern for justice to 20th century reflection upon Pope Leo XIII's great encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, as if the Church had no social teaching, no interest in justice and peace before that time. Nothing of course, could be further from the truth.

The Scriptures insist that we conform our lives to the demands of justice. The prophet Isaiah rails against the new moons and festivals of Israel, begging the people to make justice their aim (Is 2:14, 16). ... Jesus condemns the Scribes and Pharisees who insist on the payment of tithes but neglect justice and mercy and good faith (Mt 23:23). He who was baptized to fulfill all righteousness (Mt 3:15), blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice and who suffer persecution for the sake of justice (Mt 5: 6, 10). This cry is heard as well among the Church Fathers. ...

In light of the dramatic character of the prophetic and patristic utterance, the response of St Dominic to a famine in his native Spain appears mild, almost sentimental. In the process of his canonization it was recalled that as a student at Palencia, Dominic sold his manuscripts written in his own hand, saying, "I will not study on dead skins when living men are dying of hunger." A moving gesture certainly and revelatory of the man Dominic would become, yet probably quite limited in its impact on the starving people of Palencia. ...

We cannot follow Christ authentically if we are callous to the obligations that others legitimately make upon us. ... [I]n the *Prima Secundae*, St Thomas Aquinas treats the virtue of religion within his broader discussion of justice. Developing the insight of Aristotle that justice at its heart is a *habitus* by which we render to others what is their due with a constant and perpetual will, Aquinas argues that justice recognizes the claims that others have upon us, including God himself. When we respond to those claims without difficulty, without compulsion, and without hesitation, we have acquired the *habitus* of justice.

Nevertheless, like every *habitus* in the Thomistic understanding, justice achieves its robust and dynamic fullness only when it is informed by divine grace. For authentic justice has its source in God himself, whom St Thomas identifies with the very essence of justice. In an incomparable and inexpressible manner, God gives to each of his creatures what is their due gladly and unstintingly. The virtue or *habitus* of justice then leads us to recognize our duties to God and to one another and then to meet them. To God is due the praise and reverence and love that are his first as our Creator, but also as our Savior. To our neighbor is due the dignity, honor, and respect that belong to each of us as individuals made in the image and likeness of God.

We cannot pretend to possess the virtue of justice if we lack either of these orientations. A person who is interested in rendering to God what is his due through his daily prayer and devotion without concern for his neighbor and the obligations that are

rightly owed to him cannot be regarded as just. Justice is not limited to the altar, to the Christian community, to our families, and friends. It extends to all people and requires that we promote their flourishing at every level of life, physical, social, legal, economic, and spiritual, precisely because this well-being is their due. ...

"Nevertheless, like every *habitus* in the Thomistic understanding, justice achieves its robust and dynamic fullness only when it is informed by divine grace."

However, as Dominicans we know that justice, like all of the virtues, is not primarily an obligation. Rather it is a means to our happiness and to our ultimate beatitude. When we give to God and our neighbor their due, we enter into a right relationship with them. This right relationship is the *sine qua non* for every experience of real community. For it is only through our properly ordered commitment to one another, by which we participate in the activities, cares, and struggles of our neighbor, that we are able to actualize our own humanity and our Christian identity. As we know from St Thomas, our human happiness, as well as our divine happiness rests in our ability to enter into communion with others. There can be no real happiness therefore in this life or in the next without the virtue of justice.

Because justice is directed toward the other, because it brings about right relationship with the other, it is like that most perfect of all the virtues, the virtue of charity, which also points us toward the other. In the same way that the will tends toward the good, so love is inclined toward what is outside of itself, namely the beloved. When this love leads us to friendship with God and friendship with one another for the sake of God, then we have been given the grace that informs all of the others virtues. It is this divine gift that the New Testament calls *agape* and that we know as charity.

This marked resemblance between justice and charity is recognized by St Thomas when he speaks about the relationship between justice and mercy, as virtues that are not opposed but are related to each other as potency to act, where mercy fulfills, perfects, and goes beyond what is required by justice. Pope Benedict XVI in his recent encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est*, recognizes a similar dynamic. Although the encyclical focuses upon charity, his discussion of justice is germane. The Pope makes clear that justice and charity have not only a personal dimension, but a communal one as well. As individuals we may possess these virtues, but we do so also as communities. Where the practice of virtue of charity most properly is the task of the Church, the exercise of justice is primarily the responsibility of the state. According to this vision, the just ordering of society belongs not to the Church but to

the autonomous sphere of politics. Nevertheless, it is not divorced from faith or from the Church. For the *habitus* of justice, where with a lasting and constant will we render to each person what is his due, depends upon the exercise of prudence and the use of our practical reason. As in all things, faith purifies reason and perfects it in such a way that reason will function at its greatest capacity. In the words of the Pope, the role of the Church is "to help form consciences in political life and to stimulate greater insight into the authentic requirements of justice." This should be the task of the Order and of the Province as well. ...

The promotion of justice is not about pet projects or ideologically driven causes. It is not about party politics or the agenda of the left or the right. Too often in the past, justice and peace have been marginalized from the life of the province because it has been identified with specific groups or factions who have been perceived as imposing their views upon the rest. In an Order which has always prized *disputatio* as a means to grasping the truth, such an approach is doomed to fail. Moreover, the promotion of peace and justice should not be limited to discrete occasions when we act. Rather it should be a *habitus*, or disposition, in the Thomistic sense of that term. As such, the promotion of justice should permeate the life of the province so that we can act easily and without great effort on its behalf. ...

"For it is only through our properly ordered commitment to one another, by which we participate in the activities, cares, and struggles of our neighbor, that we are able to actualize our own humanity and our Christian identity."

We should be asking ourselves how we as Christian leaders can inform consciences and help to purify the practical reason of men and women whom we serve so that political decisions will be made that are consistent with the demands of justice. This will call for hard work by each of us, research, study, and social analysis, including clear and flexible thinking that is not prone to the slogans or ideology of the left or right. More than anything else it requires our constant commitment to prayer, so that we may be truly receptive to others, that we may give them their due, and that in the words of the prophet Ezekiel, our hearts of stone might indeed be replaced with hearts of living flesh.

Your brother in St Dominic.

*The original letter by Fr Mascari to his brothers on the Feast of St Martin De Porres, 2006, can be read in its entirety in IDI (International Dominican Information, February 2007).*

## Katrina

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• **Cindy Thomas, OP**, principal of St Mary's High School, told of how the St Mary's Sisters and staff worked to keep the students and teachers of St Mary's High School in touch during their displacement and to help them want to return to New Orleans. Most of the teachers and 84 percent of the students have returned to the renovated school.

In addition to the panelists, other voices included the Dominican Sisters of Adrian, who are working in New Orleans East to assess the needs of people there. Cyrilla Zarek, OP, and Eileen Myers, OP, reported that they visited about 8,000 homes over several months. Only about 10 percent of the homes actually have people living in them. Many are in FEMA trailers.

Eucharistic Missionary Dominican Diane Hooley, OP, shared stories about hospice care patients who were caught in the storm. She also talked about the work she does with families who having lost everything, are now losing a loved one to cancer or other terminal illness.

OPCOMNET communicators went out to visit neighborhoods and places where Dominicans live and work. Miles of neighborhood and rows of homes are empty shells of what is left—some gutted, dark, and windowless; other stores and houses look like they were bombed out yesterday. The Kmart, McDonalds, and other shops in a strip mall stand abandoned. Churches are boarded up. Houses still display the marks of rescue workers who noted the day of their visit and if they found any of the dead.

The airport and tourist areas of the city are open and look much as they did before the storm. However, even in the tourist areas there are differences: The shops on the River Walk, for instance, if they are open at all, close early because there are not enough tourists visiting to make it economically feasible to keep them open later.

According to Shirley Bodisch, OP (St Mary's), who attended the conference and provided logistical assistance, New Orleanians want to "come home." But their homes will never be the same again. Currently, she said, about 40 percent of the population has returned

and is living in about 20 percent of the city.

The communicators pledged to publish a series of stories and photo essays that will convey the story of Dominicans in New Orleans and the realities of the city. They recognized that most Dominicans, indeed most US citizens, are not aware of the continuing struggle to survive and recover. They agreed that this is an ongoing story that needs to be told, not just once, but over time, and they made the commitment to keep updating the rest of the Dominican Family.

The conference also celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary and honored the Friars of St Albert Province for helping pioneer electronic preaching and in particular, Fr Al Judy, OP, for his role as Web-friar. Fr Judy was presented a commemorative plaque during a very festive Mardi Gras style banquet on Saturday night.

Other conference agenda included a *Best Practices* session that offered members insight into a number of communications projects, and Dusty Farnan, OP (North American Co-Promoter of Justice, Peace, and Care of Creation), shared her thoughts on strengthening the relationship between justice and communications.

## Preaching Project

*Continued from Page 2*

and peace issues, media, joint catechetical teams, collaborative formation, itinerant preaching teams, and pastoral ministry. We invite you to share with us your own experiences of collaboration and your hopes, difficulties, and dreams of how we can work together more fully in the future.

We invite you to continue this reflection on how we as individuals and communities make preaching the priority that structures and animates our Dominican life: contemplation, study, community life, and ministries. Please share with us models for making our houses a "Holy Preaching."

### Challenges and Tasks

Two of the challenges that face us are: 1) the Fundamental Constitution of the Friars of the Order in relation to our present historical reality as Dominican Family, and 2) the authorization for preaching by the non-ordained in the liturgical context. We recognize that we wrestle with these questions in different contexts but consider them fundamental for the preaching. We also began to discuss the need for a Constitution for the Dominican Family. As a Commission, we have begun to discuss these questions, but they require prayer, study, and disputation of the entire Family. We invite you to join in this project and share with us the fruits of your contemplation.

Our future tasks include: finding new forms of preaching as a Dominican Family; gathering suitable resources; emphasising specific formation for the Holy Preaching in every branch of the Order; stressing justice and peace as an integral part of evangelization and therefore of our preaching, and in particular the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as a justice focus. Our international commissions meeting in Fanjeaux-Prouilhe in 2006, committed themselves to taking the MDGs on board as an issue for the whole Order [refer to sidebar on MDGs]. How do we preach them? How do we make the whole family more aware of the centrality of preaching to their being Dominican and especially the laity? How do we encourage study, not for its own sake, but as an evangelisation of the intellect?

We recommend to all branches of the Order in their upcoming congresses and meetings to put these issues on the agenda and to discuss them as daughters and sons of St Dominic and to share their insights with us.

If, after this first meeting, we will have stimulated debate in the Order about the centrality and the modes of preaching, then we are on the right track to renewing Dominic's dream of praising, blessing, and

preaching. We look forward to hearing from all branches of the Order so that we can continue our work in a participative way as the Dominican Family.

*Signed by all members of the Commission: Mary Catherine Hilkert, M. Viviana Ballarin, Blanca Guerrero Gomez, Duncan MacLaren, Allan White, Sidbe Semporé, Daniel Cadrin, Felicísimo Martínez Diez, Marcio Couto, Chrys McVey [Petronille Kayiba].*

## What Are MDGs?

In September 2000, the United Nations Millennium Summit in New York took stock of global poverty. The member nations, including the United States, pledged to work towards ending extreme poverty and to do so through global cooperation and action. From this commitment there emerged the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which set out a series of achievable goals to reduce poverty, disease, and deprivation by the year 2015. These goals are: 1) eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, 2) achieve universal primary education, 3) promote gender equality and empower women, 4) reduce child mortality, 5) improve maternal health, 6) combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases, 7) ensure environmental sustainability, and 8) develop a Global Partnership for Development. For the Catholic Campaign Against Global Poverty, see: <http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/globalpoverty>.

## Dominican Chaplain

*Continued from Page 4*  
open wounds," he said.

Still, he said, he saw miracles everywhere. While he delivered the sacrament of the sick more times in Germany than in his entire 33-year career, he gave last rites only two or three times.

"I don't think most people realize the capacity of military medicine," he said. There were moments of joy amid horror--tales of soldiers near death who somehow pulled through--but it was hard on Barry.

"I had a terrible case of post-traumatic stress disorder," he said. "After my first tour, I came back in pretty bad shape." He returned to the United States angry, though at no one in particular.

Barry's work in Germany is just his most recent overseas assignment. He helped establish a medical clinic in a remote area of northeast Argentina in 1994 during a cholera epidemic. He started deployments to the Middle East in the mid-1990s, heading first to Prince Sultan Air Base in Saudi Arabia. He traveled to Kuwait in 2002 and later worked in Qatar.

*This article is from Domlife.org.*

## Promoter's Corner

by Fr Jim Motl, OP



As I write my contribution for this spring issue of *Challenge*, it is Ash Wednesday. Fresh in my mind are the words at Mass this morning of our Prior here at St Dominic's Priory in St Louis, Fr Michael Monshau. He challenged us to focus on interior renewal this Lent. While Dominican life must integrate an interior life of prayer with an exterior life of ministry, he urged us during Lent to focus on the interior life of discipline and prayer that must underlie a fruitful life

of ministry to others.

He pointed out that Lent is a time for strengthening our ability to say "no" to those things that distract us from our relationship with God and with one another in God. By the time you read this, Lent may be over or nearly over, but I think the advice is appropriate at any time for Lay Dominicans. The origins of Dominican Laity lie in a medieval Order of Penance. Its purpose was to encourage lay people to begin reform within the Church by bringing their own lives into conformity with the life and death of Christ through saying "no" to those things which could take them away from wholehearted commitment to the Way of the Cross. I pray that this Lent is/was for you a time for growing closer to Christ through penance.

Several of you have contacted me during the past several months about correspondence from our eastern Province of St Joseph concerning the name of our organization. In case others have been puzzled about this controversy, I will repeat here my response, some of which older members may well remember. In the early 1980s the Rule and name of what was then known as the Third Order of St Dominic were changed. The new name adopted for lay members of what had been the Third Order was in English, "Fraternities of St Dominic." Allowance was made for altering the title in places where a direct translation of the Latin title did not seem appropriate. Because of the use of the word "fraternity" in our country for exclusively male organizations, a number of the provinces in

our country chose to use the title, "Dominican Laity."

The Province of St Joseph chose to continue using the "Third Order" title. Last year our present Master General forbade the continued use of that term. The eastern Province has now chosen to use the name, "Fraternities of St Dominic." This term has the advantage of distinguishing professed Lay Dominicans from other lay people associated with the Dominican Order in other ways, e.g., as associates of Dominican Sisters' congregations, Dominican youth groups, etc. It has the disadvantage of implying, in our country at least, exclusive male membership. Since Fr Carlos, our Master, did not object to the use of other terminology, I see no reason for us to change our use of "Dominican Laity" unless the Provincial Council of Lay Dominicans wishes to do so.

In a related matter, Fr Carlos has also asked that lay members of the Order of Preachers, when they affix "OP" after their names, also use a prefix such as "Mr, Mrs, Ms" when there might be confusion as to which branch of the Dominican Family they belong. This would be the same as a priest using "Fr" or a sister using "Sr" in such circumstances. I believe this is appropriate in signing public documents or correspondence when the context does not make evident how the individual is associated with the Order.

In late April the Lay Dominican Provincial Council will meet in Plymouth, Michigan. At this meeting I think it will be important to begin looking ahead to composing a new slate of officers for the Province. I suggest that each chapter look within itself for talent that could serve the whole Province as President, Vice President, Treasurer, Recording Secretary, and Corresponding Secretary. Some of these offices are elective, some appointive. Each chapter should have a *Dominican Leadership Handbook* that describes the offices and their duties. When you find that you have someone that could fulfill these duties, give the information to your Provincial Council Delegate. I will be suggesting in April that this Council select a Nominating Committee to prepare for the following Council meeting a list of suitable candidates.

I pray that you may have a glorious Easter even in these troubled times. Be for our world a sign of the triumph of Jesus Christ!

## President Ruth

*Continued from Page 1*

medianet, and instantaneous connections (when the power and mechanical gadgets actually work)? Can we free ourselves periodically from IPODS, cell phones, and the "Bluetooth" to experience radical gratitude? This is not apparent as one goes on daily errands downtown or on university campuses. People think that they are *connected*, but they appear to be robots and miss the very life in their presence. (Did you ever have the experience of connecting to a system for service and then after considering the menu items to select, you are told that an internet address can be used instead—assuming that you have a computer?! Or, have you ever wasted time speaking to a human being on the phone who then refers you to a person in another country who has limitations as to your question of need?)

All is not a criticism, but a challenge to what is supportive to the gift of life! In conclusion, a reflection on Catherine of Siena, prayer 19, and a memento from a meeting on Dominican Family: "Open the eye of your understanding and look into the depth within the deep well of divine charity. For unless you see, you cannot love (*or have gratitude building a positive penance*).

### In Gratitude for Our Dominican Family Members

Therefore, in gratitude, I thank those who have given the gift of funds for the International Congress. The amount is not the issue, but the sharing with the community is what counts: Geraldine Weber, OP, Chicago, IL; Queen of the Rosary Dominican Laity Chapter, Milwaukee, WI; Marion Keegan, OP, Crofton, MD; and Mrs Raymond Williams, OP, Indianapolis, IN.

At this time we do not know of any contributions that might have been sent directly to Rome. Is it possible for each chapter, pro-chapter, or informal group to send a stipend?

In gratitude for the many years Jill O'Brien, OP, has prepared the

minutes for the Provincial Council. She has asked to be relieved as the Secretary of the Council because her job requires her to continue to a larger degree in her work. She will be attending and reporting on the preaching conference and is willing to assist the new Secretary. Please contact me: Mrs Ruth Kummer, OP, 3904 Golfside Road, Ypsilanti, MI 48197-8616. Phone: 734-434-0195. E-mail: [r.kummer@worldnet.att.net](mailto:r.kummer@worldnet.att.net).

In gratitude to Treasurer Mary Lee Odders, OP, who keeps us solvent. Each quarter she provides us with a report and any changes we need to address.

In gratitude for the all the hard work of the Formation Committee in upgrading the documents to a digitized format. The hope is to have it available at the International Congress in Buenos Aires, March 17-24.

In gratitude, since Fr Motl will be unable to say Mass on Sunday, April 29, at the Provincial Council Meeting, a visiting priest will be available. (Chapter, pro-chapter, and informal group moderators, please be prepared to give highlights, written and oral, of your group at that meeting.)

In gratitude for the opportunity to serve the Province, but my term ends in 2008. The topic will be an agenda item at the April meeting. Some thoughts to consider: The candidate must be a professed Dominican willing to serve the needs of the community; must have computer skills; and be willing to interface with many entities and at times, take calls late at night.

When you read this I should be back home—but for now, *Adios!*

Thank you to everyone who returned their 2007 provincial dues notice with dues payment. It was printed on bright yellow paper and mailed to your home address in early January. If your checkbook register shows that you have not yet paid, please mail your \$30 check (\$40 for two members in the same household) payable to Dominican Laity: Dominican Laity Office, PO Box 085451, Racine, WI 53408-5451. Your dues pay for the production and mailing of this newsletter, as well as our operating expenses incurred for your benefit. If you are on a fixed income, instead of \$30 consider \$5 to cover newsletter costs. Thank you!—*Mary Lee Odders, Treasurer*

## Dominican Liturgical Calendar—Second Quarter, 2007

### April

5- St. Vincent Ferrer, priest (M)  
10- Bl. Anthony Neyrot, priest/martyr  
13- Bl. Margaret of Castello, lay Dominican  
14- Bl. Peter Gonzalez, priest  
17- Bl. Clara Gambacorta, nun  
- Bl. Maria Mancini, nun  
19- Bl. Isnard of Chiampo, priest  
- Bl. Sibyllina Biscossi, lay Dominican  
20- St. Agnes of Montepulciano, nun (M)  
27- Bl. Osanna of Kotor, lay Dominican  
29- St. Catherine of Siena, lay Dominican/ doctor  
of the Church (F)  
30- St. Pius V, pope (M)

### May

4- Bl. Emily Bicchieri, nun  
7- Bl. Albert of Bergamo, lay Dominican

8- Patronage of the Blessed Virgin Mary  
over the entire Order of Preachers  
10- St. Antoninus of Florence, bishop (M)  
12- Bl. Jane of Portugal, nun  
13- Bl. Imelda Lambertini, nun  
15- Bl. Andrew Abellon, priest  
- Bl. Giles of Portugal, priest  
19- Bl. Francis Coll Guitart, priest  
21- Bl. Columba of Rieti, religious  
- Bl. Hyacinth-Marie Cormier, priest  
24- Translation of Holy Father Dominic (M)  
27- Bl. Andrew Franchi, bishop  
28- Bl. Mary Bartholomew Bagnesi, lay  
Dominican  
29- Bl. William Arnaud, priest, & companions,  
martyrs  
30- Bl. James Salomonio, priest

### June

2- Bl. Sadoc, priest, & Companions, martyrs  
4- St. Peter of Verona, priest/martyr (M)  
8- Bls. Diana and Cecilia, religious (OM)  
10- Bl. John Dominici, bishop (OM)  
12- Bl. Stephen Bandelli, priest  
18- Bl. Osanna of Mantua, lay Dominican  
20- Bl. Margaret Ebner, religious  
23- Bl. Innocent V, pope

(S) Solemnity (F) Feast  
(M) Memorial (OM) Optional Memorial  
\* Office for the Dead is prayed

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### 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

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