

In this issue

- Letter from The President'
- Regional News
- Bookstore News
- ICLDF
- DIALOGUE
- Contest Winner
- Plenary Indulgences
- Food for the Soul & Poetry Contest
- Question of Faith
- Dominican Rule & Commentary
- Te Deum & De Profundis
- Divine Mercy Congress
- CREDITS



Letter from the President

As we begin a New Year I recall one of Frank Sinatra's (yes, old *Blue Eyes*) classic hits entitled "It Was a Very Good Year!" This song is a "look back" over a life time by an aging, and from the lyrics slightly risqué, fellow who concludes that "I think of my life as vintage wine from fine old kegs from the brim to the dregs." Well for some of us it may have been vintage; for others it might have been rather bitter and in some cases full of sorrow. Most of us though fall in the vast middle - occasional moments of grace, joy, and achievement sandwiched between days of tedium, spurned graces, and missed opportunities.

When I look back on my year, I have to recall in particular the promise I made so blithely in the January 2007 *eLumen* letter where I wrote about New Year's resolutions. Perhaps as a reaction to the over-indulgence of our society and my own, at times, misplaced priorities one of my resolutions was that in '07 I would try to donate as much to the suffering and needy children of the world as I spent on care and feeding of my pets and the wildlife inhabitants of my back yard. Like many New Year's resolution this was easy to make and, again, like so many harder to keep.

So, how did I do? First off, one of my dogs tripped on icy porch steps and tore off a toenail involving emergency cares, surgery, ointment, and pain pills. Next, it was special food for the cat. Then one of the dogs developed not only a heart problem but was diagnosed with Cushing's disease. These require two very expensive medicines daily. Summer saw a severe drought in this area and with normal food in short supply, the area around the backyard feeders looked a little like a scene from Hitchcock's movie *The Birds*. Add all this to just regular pet food and I have to tell you that mid-year I was beginning to have second thoughts about this whole resolution thing especially as I saw the totals for pets and various children's charities add up.

I figured that I should pray about this. Now you may consider this trite, but if prayer is a conversation with the Father and if the twists and turns of daily life are often God's way of making a point, I thought why not talk this over with Him and try to see what the point may be? I came to the conclusion, although I am certainly no great theologian, that God does have a sense of humor and was using this to point out that indeed I needed to rearrange my priorities. Even though I thought I lived a pretty simple life, I found that there was much I could shed. I took a step in having trust that in honoring my resolution God would provide enough for me and would provide more than enough to share with both the kids and the critters. The resolution stands for another year.

As we go along in life we all keep picking up things that not only distract us but also actually hem us in. We hoard our treasure, which may be our time, our money, our knowledge, and even our love. Eventually we have to learn, as our Father

Dominic did when he sent forth the Brothers, that only that which is cast out upon the wind truly reaps the greatest harvest. The Good News is “news” only when given out and to do that we can’t be hoarders but spenders. We have to spend the treasure whatever our particular treasure may be. Isn’t that the essence of trying to live a Dominican life?

Have a wonderful spendthrift New Year

Ms. Dorothy Murphy, O.P.
 Provincial Council President
redceltop@starpower.net

BLESSED NEW YEAR!

Letter from the Promoter General for the Dominican Laity

*Happy Christmas and
 a Blessed New Year 2008 !*



*¡ Feliz Navidad y
 Prospero Año Nuevo 2008 !*



*Joyeux Noël et
 une Nouvelle Année bénie 2008 !*



*Buon Natale ed
 un benedetto Anno Nuovo 2008 !*



*Frohe Weihnachten und
 ein gesegnetes Neues Jahr 2008!*

Dear sisters and brothers in St. Dominic,

«Unto you is born this day a Saviour ...» –There were shepherds, to whom by messengers of God, were preached the Gospel of Jesus’ birth. It took place in the fields of Bethlehem, which means: the every-

day life of their occupation. « ...and they publicized widely the saying which was spoken to them about this child. » (cf. Luke 2, 11+17). That means: There were shepherds, who as first preaching «laity» disseminated the message of the Incarnated Love of God.

The many sisters and brothers, who belong today, either integrated to or associated with, the Lay branch of the Order of Preachers, are the «shepherds» of our time. The Gospel of



Christmas tells us: *GHIRLANDAIO, Domenico
 (1449–1494)*

Not the political and religious centres of power and their representatives are definitely decisive. Salvation rather comes from places and people «on the border». Persons, until now marginalized and despised, are evaluated by God as beloved and highly esteemed.

As Promoter General for the Laity of our Order of Preachers, I should like to wish you and your communities the necessary self-confidence and the dynamism which motivated the shepherds of Bethlehem as apostles of the Incarnation to spread the received joy.

By your active cooperation in preaching the Gospel may many others in your environment be given to regard, like the shepherds of Bethlehem, the sense of their life in a new light, because God adopted in Jesus Christ our human nature, all barriers which divide people from each other, are in the end unnatural and negotiable!

In that familial connection I wish you from Rome/Santa Sabina:

Happy Christmas and a Blessed New Year 2008!

Your «Co-shepherd»—Fr. David M. Kammler, OP

Regional News

Region One

Mrs. Faith Flaherty, O.P. r.f.flaherty@comcast.com

Our Lady of Mercy Chapter, MCI Norfolk / Trenton was blessed with two excellent speakers this past month of December. On the 2nd, we had Dr. Marina McCoy facilitate a discussion on Mother Theresa. We were assigned specific chapters from her biography, *Let There Be Light*. It was interesting to note that Mother had visited the prison right next door to MCI Norfolk in the 1980s and some of our brothers had been there. They said the predominant feeling at the time, (when one was in her presence) was that she emanated holiness. You just felt like you were seeing and meeting a living saint.

In the light of this recollection, plus recalling the terms the media used to refer to Mother Theresa, we could readily see that the common opinion was that Mother Theresa was a very holy woman. Holding this thought, one can feel the depth of despair Mother Theresa must have felt when you juxtapose what she was going through (according to her letters in *Let There Be Light*.) She must have felt like a veritable hypocrite.

Mother had thoughts that God may not even exist. At times, she wondered if she was an atheist. So with the heart of an atheist, she continued doing her work. No wonder Richard Dawkins and other current prominent atheists called this hypocritical.

But Dawkins and his ilk don't understand spiritual growth. What Mother Theresa experienced was her own version of a "dark night of the soul." She came to see that God was guiding Mother's inner life to experience what the people she ministered to experienced. She had to see what they saw. She had to feel what they felt. She had to be one with them.

Using spiritual eyes, Mother was blessed with her "dark night of the soul." She truly was a holy person and a living saint.

OLMC was again blessed with a talk given

by Brother Minlib Dallh, OP, comparing Christian Mysticism and Sufism. Br. Minlib is a Dominican student brother from the Southern Province of St. Martin de Porres, who is studying Islam. Presently he is living in Hartford, Conn., where he is going to school. Br. Minlib Dallh, OP's, home is Burkina Faso.

Brother began with a history of Christianity and Islam. We were amazed at how closely mysticism in both traditions was similar. In fact, some say that Sufism was begun by Christian converts to Islam. We also learned that the Sufis' understanding of Mary is very close to our Catholic understanding. Maryam is considered a prophet herself because she gave birth to a Prophet.

OLMC had also invited Muslims to come. We had about five. They listened politely and then all got up, en masse, and departed. Br. Minlib then explained to us that Muslims pray five times a day, much like we pray Morning and Evening Prayer. They had left to pray. Sure enough, after about fifteen minutes, they all came back.

Our brothers in Trenton, N.J., had also asked the Muslims in their prison, for questions. So Br. Minlib answered and explained different extremes of Islam, political and spiritual alignments. The Muslim guests in our group also answered our questions.

It reminded me that the first step in understanding others different from ourselves is not to fear them, but rather to communicate with them. They really are not so different from us. We all worship God. We are all the children of Abraham. We all obey the same Ten Commandments; and we all desire personal sanctification.

Mrs. Faith Flaherty, O.P.

Region Two

Ms. Anna Donnelly, O.P. rdonnella@stjohns.edu

An elective meeting of Region 2 was held at **St. Vincent Ferrer Parish Hall, NYC** on Oct. 20, 2007. Region President Anne Thorn (Newburgh) wel-

came a total of 36 persons from nine chapters and three pro-chapters representing Newburgh, Ossining, New York City, Staten Island, Rockville Centre, Union City, Summit, Caldwell, Rahway, Hawthorne, Brooklyn, and Flushing. Regrettably, Provincial Council President Dorothy Murphy was prevented from attending by unexpected Amtrak difficulties.

Anne strongly stressed the importance of chapter officers' regularly communicating to their chapter members information provided by Region 2, the Provincial Council, and through the *eLumen* monthly newsletter. Helen Tice, *eLumen* designer, urged members to contribute chapter news items, and to share issues with those who have limited or no computer access. Please send news items and e-address changes to prouille_1216@comcast.net. Anna Donnelly (NYC) offered a reflection, "Silence and Mary" on the positive values of silence in the spiritual life and moments of silence in Mary's life.

Following a review of the rules for elections, 22 (later 23) voting members made their choice for the three-year term offices of president, secretary, and delegate to the Provincial Council: Irene Gifford (Ossining) was chosen as president, Maria Soellner (Rockville Centre) as secretary, and David Sutton (Newburgh) as delegate.



Our newly elected: from left, Ms. Maria Soellner, OP, Regional Secretary, Mr. David Sutton, OP, Delegate, Fr. Carlos Quijano, OP, and Ms. Irene Gifford, OP, Regional President.

The group participated in the parish noon Mass, and after lunch, Rev. Carlos Quijano, OP,

continued the Marian theme for October with a presentation on Mary and the Rosary, focusing on seeing Jesus through the eyes of Mary. Assistant President Nancy Fitzsimmons (Caldwell) reported on the region treasury, and once a tax ID is established, will choose a bank for the region, since the lay fraternities are to be financially independent within the Order. Nancy commended Anne Thorn for her superb work as President for three years; Anne was warmly and enthusiastically applauded by all. The Molloy, Mastic Beach, and Union City host chapters generously supplied beverages and light food for the meeting. The next Region 2 meeting is scheduled for Saturday, April 12, 2008, again chosen by members to be held at St. Vincent Ferrer Parish Hall, New York City.

Ms. Anna Donnelly, O.P. Donnella@stjohns.edu

Region Three

Mrs. Donna Smith, O.P.

covicon123@yahoo.com

No submissions for January

Region Four

Ms. Marianne Jablonski, O.P.

veritas18@verizon.net

No submissions for January

Region Five

Ms. Therese Errigo, O.P.

OPThirdWashDC@aol.com

Twenty-four members and friends of **St. Dominic's** chapter attended a mini-retreat on Saturday, December 1, 2007, with Fr. Gerry Lessard, O.P., at St. Dominic's Church. Fr. Lessard presented a program on "Water, Blood, and Spirit: A Trinitarian Spirituality and the Seven Steps to God."

Fr. Lessard explained mystical numbers in the Scriptures, especially three and seven, yet also twelve. Using 1 Jn.5:5-9 as the basis, the passage about the Water, the Blood and the Spirit, he went on to identified dozens of triads, and how they

seem to belong to different groups. For instance, some triads are of the Order of Nature, or the renewal of nature by Christ. Others are of the Order of Salvation, and stem directly from the Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension of Our Lord. To each step in nature, another in salvation is added, giving us six, finally culminating in a supreme seventh. These 7 steps to God are as follows:

- The Passover of the Outermost Self
- The Purgative Stage
- The Passover of the Sensitive Self
- The Illuminative Stage
- The Passover of the Inmost Self
- The Unitive Stage, and
- Mystical Marriage

We were grateful for Fr. Lessard's talks and generosity in sharing with us his knowledge of the Trinitarian God and the 7 steps to Him. It was a great start for a meaningful Advent for all members of St. Dominic's chapter. Thank you, Fr. Lessard!

Maria Moy maria.moy@sba.gov

The **St. Thomas Aquinas Pro-Chapter, Charlottesville, VA** has adopted an Apostolate which we have named "Living the Rosary." Our apostolate is multifaceted, reflecting the many diverse talents of our group and our varied states and stages in life. Our older folks will be our Rosary prayers when they cannot be with us; others of us will be making string Rosaries for the armed forces, some will be making beaded Rosaries which we can sell to raise funds and which we can give as presents to mark significant events for members of our Parish or shut-ins we visit. When we meet together to make Rosaries we will listen to Scripture or Church Documents and then we will publish the fruits of this contemplation on line in a site other members are developing to link with our Parish website. This way we hope to live the Rosary in all aspects of our lives, praying, listening, making, teaching, giving and visiting.

We sponsored a Holy Hour on the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary on October 7. During Adoration we prayed the Rosary in the Dominican manner. The Holy Hour was quite well attended by parishioners as well as Lay Fraternity members.

On the weekend of October 27-28 we joined our parishes' Alternative Gift Fair and sold children's books and books by Dominican authors, or about Dominicans, and other books with a Catholic focus. The book sale is our yearly fundraiser. We also sold note cards and Christmas cards designed by our talented Jeanne McKee. The profit from the sale of the cards is being donated to the Dominican Nuns of St. Dominic's Monastery in Linden, VA.

We have obtained permission from our Pastor to make a direct appeal for funds for the Nuns which we did at masses in November.

Mrs. Robbie Gibson, O.P.
robbie_oc_gibson@yahoo.com

Region Six

Mrs. Mary Cantwell, O.P. MDLCJTC@aol.com

The **Fenwick Chapter** is pleased that Fr. George Schommer, O.P. has become its new chapter promoter. Fr. George was re-assigned to St. Gertrude parish in Cincinnati, Ohio in November. He assisted a Lay Fraternity chapter in New York, and he is eager to help again in Cincinnati.

Mr. David Burleigh, O.P.

On December 9, 2007, the **St. Catherine of Siena Chapter, Columbus, Ohio**, celebrated the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass with our spiritual assistant, Fr. Luke Tancrell, as celebrant and we all rejoiced with Sharon Gilmore and Grace Harman as they each made their Final Promise. We equally rejoiced with Bob Kratzenberg, Sandy Petruzzi and Matthew Paulus as they each made their First Promise. We ask God's blessings as well as the blessings of St. Dominic, St. Catherine of Siena and all of our Dominican saints upon each one of them. We thank God for the gift of their lives and presence within our chapter.

It was a blessing, also, to have our sister Catherine Chen, O.P. with us at this meeting. She will be staying in Columbus, Ohio, until April when she will return to her home in China.

Mrs. Mary D. Cantwell, O.P.

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Pray without Ceasing!!!
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Bookstore News!

After many months we finally can direct you, as of JANUARY 1, 2008, to our new website so you can browse the catalog and order using credit card payments (even pay your dues by credit card).

We still have a lot of building to do such as adding more illustrations and descriptions, so be patient with us please. We have placed orders for a lot of new titles expected in any day and are trying to get reprints of Dominican classics for you. We could have waited until everything was perfect, but we wanted to start the New Year with this step forward in serving the needs of our members.

The address is www.dominicanbookstore.com

Check it out and let us know what you think. Better still, order something.

This notice would not be complete without thanks to the Friars at the House of Studies, especially Fr. Vandegrift, who never gave up on helping us get our web connection, Elissa Speckman faithful volunteer from Bishop Fenwick, Silver Spring, MD., who donated all the equipment, and Monica Walker of St. Thomas Aquinas Chapter, Charlottesville, the techie who travelled many times the 250 miles to Washington and also spent endless hours at home to work this all out for us.

Dorothy Murphy redceltop@starpower.net

Thank you all for your hard work and dedication.





**International Council
of
Lay Dominican
Fraternities (ICLDF)**

Mrs. Laurie Biszko, O.P.,
BISZKO@aol.com

It was Saturday morning, March 17 and the early flights had landed. Word quickly traveled throughout the retreat center that we had about an hour until the first of the registrants would arrive. We all started racing around finalizing our arrangements. My committee set up in the refectory where we formed an assembly line to sort through the nametags. To save money we opted to have them printed in Argentina; however, the printer really didn't understand what we wanted and there were several unexplained delays. One of my committee members actually drove to Buenos Aires to pick them up that morning and now we faced the task of sorting them into alphabetical order and identifying them by language. They were supposed to have a blue (French), red (Spanish) or green (English) stripe on them to identify the primary language spoken by the attendee. Instead, they had a name, country and large blank space.

It was decided that we would improvise by cutting colored strips of adhesive and applying them to the tags. We were cutting and sorting as the first bus arrived. Someone called out "they are here" and we raced to the vestibule.

All were ecstatic to meet the first arriving delegates. Many of them had been traveling for days. Somehow, we managed to have a nametag for each of the first group and they processed through registration without a hitch. The rooms were ready and volunteers from the local Dominican laity helped carry luggage and assist with housekeeping issues. I had about twenty young volunteers available for the day to help with luggage and other related issues. Most importantly, they had cars and were able

to go out and buy large containers of mosquito spray because somehow the news of this Congress reached *Argentinean Swarm Headquarters* where millions of mosquitoes lay in wait. As the first bus arrived carrying delegates, the first cloud of hungry mosquitoes descended upon the retreat center. I live in the Northeast and I have experienced hot humid summers with fierce mosquito infestation, but I assure you that these were no ordinary species. In fact, Dorothy Murphy and I were in Racine, Wisconsin for a DLIPC meeting several summers ago and suffered the attack of the Central Province mosquitoes out by Lake Michigan, but they were nothing compared to these Latin American dive bombers. Going out for a walk was out of the question and a large can of spray was placed next to every entrance. Each time the door opened, mosquitoes would come in and soon the official dance of the congress was swish, swat, slap and squash. Patricia Kelley, (ICLDF/Europe) was covered from head to toe with red bumps; however, in keeping with the enthusiastic spirit of the participants she and other delegates composed a tune to sing along with the dance and soon delegates were singing and swatting without reservation.

With Saturday being the arrival day for delegates there was ample time for casual meeting and conversation. The mosquitoes gave everyone something to talk about and they served as the proverbial "ice breaker".

For ICLDF members it was a major event to process all the delegates and meet all the unexpected challenges related to hosting a large group. That night we held a St. Patrick's Day celebration thanks to the generosity of (translator) Sr. Veronica Rafferty, OP and her community. After all, what would March 17th be without the wearing of the green?

We had made no provisions in our budget for any social activities involving party-type beverages. In fact, we opted for water on the table at mealtime just to keep the budget reasonable, so it was a nice surprise when Sr. Veronica announced that her community

would treat us. We had spontaneous singing, laughter, lots of green attire and a great first night together as we honored St. Patrick. Even in the remote regions of Pilar, could be heard the strains of “when Irish eyes are smiling”. The delegates went to bed tired, happy and ready to begin their work the next day.

ICLDF members soon moved from party mode back to business with the scheduled wrap-up meeting. Every time I saw Fr. Jerry he would say, “we need to look at the issues forms”. The only problem was, we didn’t have time. So, after the review of Saturday activities and the schedule for Sunday was discussed, we decided to meet the next night and finalize the issues forms and commission assignments.

As previously mentioned, Belen held a wrap-up meeting at the conclusion of each day. It was then that we reviewed the day from our personal point of view. The sessions usually lasted a couple of hours because we not only discussed what went well, but we also solved problems and scheduled changes. Afterwards we reviewed the upcoming program schedule for the next day. The Sunday schedule included the official opening of the Congress, greetings and salutations from dignitaries and then a bus ride into Buenos Aires where we would attend Mass with the community at the Basilica Nuestra Senora del Rosario, Convento Santo Domingo. After the Eucharistic celebration we were the guests of the local Dominican community who hosted a brunch in the courtyard gardens of the convent. The weather was perfect, there were no mosquitoes and the hospitality was outstanding.

After the gathering at Santo Domingo we traveled by motor coach and on foot to see the sights of the city. My partner for the day was Inam Dabish, the delegate representing Iraq. Inam is Chaldean and lives in the USA; however, she is in contact with her family and friends who live in grave danger as Christians in Iraq. Meeting Inam was one of the greatest gifts that I received during the Congress be-

cause she shared personal insights from her efforts in reaching out to the Iraqi Christian community. I will invite her to share these stories with you and at the completion of my series; delegates from around the world will begin to tell you their personal stories and experiences both at the Congress and in their Dominican communities.

Since we would be meeting in plenary on Monday morning the deadline for issues forms and assigning commissions was looming close. Sunday was a success and all the delegates were ready to get to work. They were curious as to what commission they had been assigned, but I could not give them an answer. Fr. Jerry and I met immediately after the ten o’clock wrap-up session and we began the tedious work of balancing the commissions.

There were six commissions and each delegate had listed their first, second and third choice. There were three languages and there were several areas of expertise to be considered. Also, there were problem areas in some provinces that needed to be addressed by assigning a delegate to a specific commission where he or she might find an appropriate solution. There were personalities to be considered and also cultural differences in interpretation. Those differences would be good in balancing the commissions and encouraging lively discussions and debate. We began the process by identifying the first choice selection, then language, and areas of expertise, cultural components and other factors to ensure the best possible experience for all delegates. We actually were able to assign the majority of delegates to one of their top choices and then we gave the list to Fr. Brian Pierce, OP who would be coordinating the translators and interpreters for the commission work. It was three o’clock in the morning when we finished and I still had to review the certification forms that were turned in that night. I decided to sleep. The forms would have to wait until tomorrow.

Next: *The translators said “Impossible”*



Dialogue

*From the life of St. Catherine of Siena
By Blessed Raymond, pt 2, chap. 3, Sec. 137, 138*

The Lord Jesus had appeared to Catherine in the form of a beggar scantily clothed asking her in turn for pieces of clothing to protect him from the cold....she gave all she could, taking from her- self, the family, and maid's clothing in order to fulfill his request. He left, and this follows....

137—That night, however, as she was at prayer, the Saviour of the world, our Lord Jesus Christ, appeared openly to her in the guise of that beggar, carrying in his hand the vest that she had given him, but encrusted now with pearls and sparkling jewels. “Beloved daughter,” said he, “do you recognize this vest”? She said she did, but that it had not been embellished with jewels when she had given it away. Promptly came his reply: “Yesterday, with unstinting generosity, you gave me this vest to clothe my nakedness, shielding me with the warmth of your charity from the biting cold and from the shame of going in rags. Now I in turn will give you, from out my sacred body, a dress invisible to other eyes but visible to your own. It will keep warm your outer and your inner self against suffering from the cold, until the time shall come for you to be clad with glory and honour in the presence of the angels and saints.” With that he drew out from the scar of the wound on his side, a dress of blood-red colour, refulgent with rays of light, and made to measure for Catherine herself. With his own hands he clothed her in it, saying: “This dress, with all it stands for, I give you as your own while you are still on earth. It is the sign and the pledge of the garment of glory with which, when the time comes, you will be clothed in heaven.” Then the vision disappeared. But the power this gift brought with it was so in-

tense that it took effect not only on Catherine’s soul but her body also. From that time onwards she never wore more clothing in winter than in summer. She always found one outer and one inner garment sufficient. Never afterwards did she put on extra clothing or wear a cloak against the winter cold, for, as she told me herself, she never felt it. Aware of being covered always by this dress, she never felt the need of any other along with it.

138—Let me draw the Reader’s attention to a special favour which Catherine received by occasion of the foregoing events. Following in the footsteps of the great Saint Nicholas, she gave her alms whilst concealing her own identity; imitating the glorious Saint Martin, she gave in charity the very garment she was wearing; and then, like them, she was rewarded with a vision of her Saviour and with words of commendation from his lips. But over and above this, in her case was added the promise of Infallible Truth that she would receive for her act of charity an everlasting reward; and to crown it all she was granted a token, perceptible at all times to her senses, of how pleasing to the giver of all gifts were the gifts that she herself had given. But what further significance are we to see in our Lord’s promise that he would exhibit that silver cross of hers on the Day of Judgment, and again, that he would clothe her in heaven with a garment of glory? Was it not an explicit assurance not only of her final salvation, but of the lofty place in glory that awaited her? Was it not a disclosure of his own decree of predestination to everlasting glory in her regard?.....Such signs and revelations are not to be regarded as of little significance. For if the soul that is granted certainty about its



Announcing



The Hidden Word of the Month Contest

Congratulations



Ann Fennessey



But where is Ann Fennessey?
If anyone knows Ann, please tell her
to contact Faith at r.f.flaherty@comcast.net

bare final salvation and nothing more, is filled with joy and consolation that no tongue or pen can express, what must be the consequence of the certainty of being destined for a high place in glory in heaven? It is this very certainty that afterwards bears fruit in a great increase of every virtue: patience, courage, self-control, zeal and diligence in deeds of holiness, faith, hope, and charity, and the waxing ever stronger of every virtuous habit.

At the start of the new year this example in the life of Catherine reminds us of the passage from Gal. 5:22, "But the fruit of the Spirit is charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, longanimity."

May the Holy Spirit inspire each one of us to grow in holiness and love in the coming year.

Mrs. Karolyn Whitney Smith, O.P.
kwsmith@optonline.net

Monthly Prayer Requests

Please pray for Mr. David Sutton, O.P., who had back surgery (herniated disc, L4) on December 31, 2007. Dave is a member of Most Holy Rosary Chapter, Newburgh, N.Y., and Region 2's Third Delegate to the Provincial Council. We pray for a speedy and complete recovery. God bless you, Dave.

In SD/SCS,
Mrs. Anne Thorn, O.P.
Region 2, Immediate Past President

Special plenary indulgence for Lourdes pilgrims

A special plenary indulgence has been authorized by Pope Benedict to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Virgin Mary's appearance to St Bernadette at Lourdes.

The indulgence has been authorized in an effort to encourage faith and holiness, and is available to anyone taking part in either a public or private devotion to the Virgin Mary.

Catholic News Service reports that the head of the Apostolic Penitentiary Cardinal J. Francis Stafford says Christians can turn to Mary in their effort to become more holy.

"Mary calls the faithful to her son and his sacrifice and to the love of the Father," Cardinal Stafford said.

He added that the indulgence can also be applied to the souls of the faithful in purgatory.

Catholics can receive the indulgence during two time frames.

Pilgrims visiting the Massabielle grotto, where Mary appeared to St Bernadette, during the Lourdes jubilee year, which runs for a year from this Saturday (8 December), the feast of the Immaculate Conception, to next year, (8 December 2008).

Pilgrims who visit any public sanctuary, shrine or other worthy place dedicated to Our Lady of Lourdes may also receive the

indulgence between the nine days from 2 February to 11 February.

Cardinal Stafford said that, to obtain the special indulgence, one must fulfill the normal requirements set by the Church for all plenary indulgences. These include the person going to confession within a reasonably short period of time, receiving the Eucharist, and praying for the intentions of the pope, all in a spirit of total detachment from the attraction of sin.

Plenary indulgences not impossible

The Catechism of the Catholic Church defines an indulgence as "the remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven, which the faithful Christian who is duly disposed gains under certain prescribed conditions." (CCC 1471). Indulgences are either plenary (when all punishments are remitted) or partial (when only part of that punishment is remitted).

Plenary indulgences demand that one be free of all attachment to sin, but partial indulgences do not require this. Partial indulgences remit the amount of temporal punishment that would be remitted by performances of penances for the designated period of time.

Indulgences may be gained only for oneself or for the souls in purgatory, but not for other living human beings.

The conditions for gaining a plenary indulgence

Pope Paul VI set down a number of norms relating to indulgences at the end of [*Indulgentiarum Doctrina*](#). Norm 7 states:

To acquire a plenary indulgence it is necessary to perform the work to which the indulgence is attached and to fulfill three conditions: sacra-



mental confession, Eucharistic Communion and prayer for the intentions of the Supreme Pontiff. It is further required that all attachment to sin, even to venial sin, be absent. If this disposition is in any way less than complete, or if the prescribed three conditions are not fulfilled, the indulgence will be only partial, except for the provisions contained in n.11 for those who are "impeded."

It is worth reading the other norms because they deal with some of the practical questions that arise from these conditions. It is "fitting" that Holy Communion and the prayers for the Holy Father are recited on the same day as the indulgenced work is performed. But the sacramental confession could be made "several days" before or after. This is often interpreted as "a week or so". However, the Sacred Penitentiary, in the Decree: [The Gift of the Indulgence](#), stated:

It is appropriate, but not necessary, that the sacramental Confession and especially Holy Communion and the prayer for the Pope's intentions take place on the same day that the indulgenced work is performed; but it is sufficient that these sacred rites and prayers be carried out within several days (about 20) before or after the indulgenced act. (n.5)

The "Heroic Act of Charity"

Is it more charitable to gain indulgences for others than for oneself? There used to be a popular devotion called The [Heroic Act of Charity](#) whereby people offered to God for the souls in purgatory all the satisfactory works they would perform in their lifetime. This included all the indulgences gained by the person. However, it was a voluntary thing. More charitable? Perhaps a person who has sinned a lot needs to gain a plenary indulgence for themselves first! Maybe we don't need to worry. Offering indulgences for the souls in purgatory is certainly such a charitable thing to do that it would be a case where "charity covers many a sin."

Do you have to be baptised, in a state of grace, etc?

Yes. You need to be baptised and in communion with the Church because this is a matter of the Church's jurisdiction. You need to be in a state

of grace because if the life of grace is killed by mortal sin, our good works cannot gain supernatural merit for ourselves. (However, Bellarmine was of the opinion that a person in mortal sin could gain an indulgence for the souls in purgatory because the soul in purgatory would not be posing any obstacle to grace. This view was disputed...)

Questions of intention

"In order that one who is capable may actually gain indulgences, one must have at least a general intention to gain them, but does this apply to when meeting the conditions for receiving the indulgence?" No. If you went to confession on Saturday, for example, you could decide on Tuesday to say the Rosary in a Church with the intention of gaining the indulgence. It would not matter that you had not intended to gain the indulgence at the time you went to confession.

A "general intention" can be made simply by praying at the beginning of the day, making the intention to obtain all the indulgences that you can gain that day. When you look at the works prescribed for partial indulgences, we could all gain lots of partial indulgences every day by making a general intention.

Detachment from venial sin

The most problematic condition is:

[...] the complete exclusion of any attachment to any sin, even venial,

This is not a new provision in the reform of Paul VI. Lépicier in his book *Indulgences, their origin, nature and development* reported a controversy which was widely current in his own time. Some theologians considered that the actual gaining a plenary indulgence was very rare.

[...] whilst with regard to plenary Indulgences, they teach us in a dogmatical tone that exceedingly few are those who can gain it, and fewer still are those who actually do gain it – perhaps a holy nun in some remote corner of the world, or some saintly hermit dead to this life and its concupiscence (page 341).

In countering this severe view of indulgences, Lépicier observed that falling into venial sin is not the same as having an affection for venial sin:

From the first, no man, however holy, excepting Christ, and His Blessed Mother, can call himself free; but many should be, and in reality are, free from the second. How can we imagine faithful souls, that are anxious to please God, and daily seal this desire with the Bread of Life – and their generation, thank God, is not extinct – how can we imagine such as these to be willfully attached to that which, though not causing eternal death, yet is infinitely injurious to the Divine Majesty? (page 343).

If there is any doubt about the more lenient view of “detachment from venial sin”, it is perhaps worth noting that this view was expressed in 1895 by a Roman professor of theology.

More recently, in the [grant of an indulgence for the Year of the Eucharist](#), the Apostolic Penitentiary restated the conditions for gaining a plenary indulgence. However, when speaking of special conditions for those who are infirm, the official English translation reads:

[...] as long as they are totally free from any desire to relapse into sin, as has been stated above.

We may treat the more “lenient” view as common teaching since the Church clearly intends to grant plenary indulgences that can be obtained by the faithful every day. It would not seem reasonable to do this if it were almost impossible to gain them in practice.

We may therefore encourage people to carry out the works prescribed for the gaining of a plenary indulgence (including, for many, a return to the sacrament of confession) without discouraging them by the rigorist opinion that a plenary indulgence can scarcely ever be gained in fact. It is also a good thing to pray before doing the indulgenced work, asking God to take away all affection for venial sin and conceiving in our hearts a hatred of any sin since all sins displease God who loves us so much.

Sources:

“Questions of Faith,” Di Bona, Raimondo, *eLumen*, October 2005, p. 3

The [Hermeneutic of Continuity Blog](#) by Fr. Tim Finigan, <http://the-hermeneutic-of-continuity.blogspot.com/> Wednesday, May 10, 2006.



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FOOD FOR THE SOUL: POETRY & PROSE

This column has been established to showcase the writings of our Lay Dominican Sisters and Brothers. We all have our story to tell, some in prose, some in verse, but all necessary to who we are. Please avail yourself of this opportunity to share your talents with your Dominican Family. As a family we celebrate everyone's contribution.

Book Review on *Dominican Penitent Women* (Classics of Western Spirituality) (Paperback) by [Maiju Lehmi-joki-Gardner](#) (Contributor, Editor), [Daniel E. Bornstein](#) (Editor), [E. Ann Matter](#) (Editor), [Gabriella Zarri](#) (Author)

Dominican Penitent Women is the first comprehensive introduction in English to Dominican penitent spirituality. The book examines Italian lay women's ways of life through religious rules, hagiographical texts and their own writing from the 13th century into the 16th century.

Lehmijoki-Gardner's collection of writings by and about medieval Dominican penitent women is an excellent collection of primary sources in translation. The text is divided into three sections. The first contends that as a result of recent studies the formal Dominican penitent rule was not written in the 1280's (as long thought) but rather after 1400. The penitent way of life contrasts two rules, the *Ordinationes* of Munio Zamora written in 1286 for the penitent women of Orvieto and the Dominican Penitent Rule, written in 1402 and approved by Pope Innocent VII in 1405. It is only with this latter rule, long misattributed to Munio that formalized relations between friars and penitent women and men were established.

The second section comprises hagiographical accounts of these holy women. This also constitutes the bulk of the collection.

The third section is devoted to the writings of Dominican penitent women less known such as Columba of Rieti, Osama of Mantua, Stefanna

Quinzani, Lucia Brocadelli and Catherine of Siena. This shows that penitent women followed events of their time and were versed in theology.

The translations are clear and accurate. The various introductions put each text in its historical content. An appendix lists the known penitent beatae in Italy along with the most recent editions of works by and about them. Most importantly, this book makes available works that have not been translated into English. Finally, this book is an excellent collection that cannot help but become an invaluable resource for scholars and lay Dominicans.

Catherine of Siena is among the most studied of medieval saints, yet her fellow Dominican penitent women have attracted so little attention in the English speaking world. Hopefully this book will help fill in the gap. I highly recommend this book.

Mr. Raimondo Di Bona, O.P.
Greater Boston Pro-Chapter
Lay Fraternities of St. Dominic



4th Annual OPrize for Poetry

The 4th Annual OPrize for Poetry is the first "open" competition – meaning that there will be no set theme. Members of the Order of Preachers may send in any poem on any subject as long as it preaches the Gospel in some way.

Important: + Do not send prayers
+ \$10.00 fee for every poem entered, no limit on number entered. Send entries to:
oprizeforpoetry@hotmail.com

OR

OPrize for Poetry
P.O. Box 6331
Chandler, Arizona 85246

Entry Dates: Jan. 1, 2008,
to June 30, 2008



Question of Faith

Question: *Where do you Lay Dominicans get your sources for your formation?*

Answer: Somehow I don't think you mean the location. We purchase them from the LFSD Bookstore in D.C. dominicanbookstore@gmail.com

However, all material used in formation must be in accordance to our Rule, (pp. 5-6, II, 11-13), and are as follows:

The Word of God

Liturgical Prayer

The history and tradition of the Order

Contemporary documents of the Church and Order

Awareness of the signs of the times

Thus, all of the standard material utilized in Dominican formation is done so for the express purpose of advancing the specific preaching mission proper to the Laity. Because we live in the world with the People of God—those who believe and those who do not—an awareness of the signs of the times or of those contemporary issues that affect the People of God is vital to their mission. To study Scripture, the history and tradition of the Order, and contemporary documents of the Church and Order, without studying the signs of the times, is to study in a sheltered environment that cannot, by its own methods, advance the specific preaching mission proper to the LFSD. Erik Borgman, in his book, *Dominican Spirituality*, wrote “The first thing that is striking about this story—and it is by no means unimportant—is that it is set in the street and in the pub. The events take place in the midst of the feverish energy which is part of the world of living and surviving, the all embracing and all permeating struggle for power and reputation, even in the thirteenth century.” (p. 36) “Dominic began to preach because while he was talking to the Innkeeper he discovered that God is

not primarily present in a harmony cut off from the world, but precisely where things matter to people in the world.” (p. 38)

The Bologna Document on the Dominican Family (1983) states: “so that we might be effective preachers, we see ongoing formation as a central task. Our study is above all, of the Word of God.” (#4.3)

The Priorities of the Order themselves each speak about the necessity of understanding the signs of the times. Catechesis requires knowledge about the culture and the milieu that is reflected as the signs of the times. Political issues and issues of ideology are primary in understanding interactions in both our country and in the larger world.

Also important, and the fourth priority of the Order is: “Use of the mass media in the preaching of the Word of God. Mass media has revealed as perfectly obvious the *drama of our time*: the disjunction between human culture and the gospel message, between human words and words of faith. The mass media is, today more than ever, the privileged instrument for communicating words and ideas and contribute to effective proclaiming the Gospel in its entirety.” (*Think eLumen*) The importance of studying contemporary issues is so that words of faith may be compared and contrasted to human words to help everyday living and in preaching the Gospels.

In conclusion, formation must be dynamic and not passive, active and not sheltered. Most importantly, formation must be centered in contemporary issues, which are those issues that affect the People of God so that they may be seen in the light of sacred Scripture and Church teaching. Study then must include Scripture and the writings and traditions of the Church and of the Order.

From Robert Curtis, O.P.L. Most Holy Name of Jesus Province
Dominicana: A Guidebook for Inquirers, School-boy Press, 2004, pp. 100-103

February's Question: *My parish hosted an ecumenical holiday service. Upon leaving the church, a little boy asked me why I was blessing myself. I explained, as well as I could, (considering the surprise question and the age of the inquirer) Baptism, Original Sin, and sacramentals. But upon discussing this incident with friends, I was told that Mother Angelica said that we Catholics should not bless ourselves when leaving the church, only upon entering. What would be the rationale behind this?*

If you wish to answer, or have another Question of Faith, email Faith at

r.f.flaherty@comcast.net

New Publication

WALKING WITH ST. DOMINIC

by Fr. Peter B. Lobo, O.P.

From the Dominicans of India, this book by Fr. Lobo, noted spiritual author, offers unusual reflections and meditations on Dominic's way of following the path of Jesus.

\$20 - including shipping

Email: Dominicanbookstore@gmail.com

or call 202-529-5300 ext 124

From the Book Store

Large and small pendant crosses are not available. These items had been supplied by the shop at Santa Sabina in Rome. That store is closed for the foreseeable future.

But...we have now located an alternate source here in this country who will make them for us. We will have stock on these items sometime early next year. We will let you know when they are available. Thank you.



HAVE A BLESSED,
HOLY AND
PROSPEROUS
NEW YEAR



Dominican Rule & Commentary

By: Mr. Raimondo Di Bona, O.P.

Rule 11 — “The object of Dominican formation is to form adults in the Faith, capable of accepting, celebrating, and proclaiming the Word of God. Each Province is to establish a program of (A) formation in stages for new members; (B) ongoing formation for all, even for members without direct access to a chapter.”

In the July-September 2007 of *Luminaria*, newsletter from the Southern Province of St. Martin de Porres, Dr. Lanie Le Blanc, O.P., wrote an article on “Focus on Formation.” I will begin the commentary by quoting her. She states, “A vital focus within the Dominican Laity is our formation. The basic formation we received as Inquirers and Candidates (and now give to others) is the foundation upon which our pledge for life long learning, and ongoing formation rests.” Concerning study she says, “When we think of ‘formation,’ however, we might think only of ‘study.’ This is not accurate. Our formation as Lay Dominicans must be balanced among the four pillars of prayer, study, community, and apostolate. Throughout our time as professed Dominican Laity, our lifetime, we must continue to grow in our understanding of all four pillars. That is what each of us promised to do at our permanent profession.”

Lay Dominicans met for the International Congress in Argentina in 2007 for the purpose to revise and update their commitment to the life and mission with the other branches of the Order of Preachers. One of the resolutions passed was on Study and Formation. It stated, “we are to (1) develop a written formation program in each province; and (2) include recommended contents, such as for Initial Formation: Dominican Spirituality, the Pillars, Life of St. Dominic, and the Rule. On-

going formation would include Dominican history and tradition, documents of the Church and of the Order; justice/peace/care of creation; and Christology.”

In our Province we have a new set of revised modules for the Postulancy program that are now readily available. The ten Novice modules are now completed, also. Soon they will be available. Likewise, in the immediate future our Directory will be revised, after which new copies of the Rule and Directory will be published.

The following is an overview of the essentials in the various stages of formation in our province. Terminology and particulars might well change as the new Directory is updated.

Stages of Formation

For New Members

Making a Temporary Commitment

Phase 1: Period of inquiry-information

Postulancy-6 Lessons, 6 months or more

Candidate for Admission into the Order

Phase 2: Period of discernment-and more information

Novitiate-10 Lessons, 10 months to 1 year

Novitiate begins when the candidate is received into the Order as a Novice in the Rite of Admission.

Phase 3: Period of Temporary Profession (Promise)

Candidate makes a promise to live by the Rule for 3 years.

Rite of Temporary Profession (Promise)

This is a time of probation.

Making a Permanent Commitment

Phase 4: Options for Temporary Professed

Make Life Profession—Promise

Withdraw from the Order

Make renewal of Temporary Promise for 1 year at which time the Professed makes Profession for Life or withdraws.

Rite of Permanent Profession (Promise)

For All Professed Members—Ongoing

For Members without chapter access—homebound.

Te Deum

On November 4, 2007, **St. Dominic's Chapter (503), Washington, D.C.**, had two ceremonies. Edward Dever was Received and Joan Cobbs made her Temporary Promise.

On December 9, 2007, the **St. Catherine of Siena Chapter (603), Columbus, Ohio**, celebrated the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass with spiritual assistant, Fr. Luke Tancrell, as celebrant and we all rejoiced with Sharon Gilmore and Grace Harman as they made their Final Promises. We equally rejoiced with Bob Kratzenberg, Sandy Petruzzi and Matthew Paulus as they each made their First Promise.

May the blessings of Almighty God descend upon all of you.

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For Siena Circle and Biblicists

A Web site launched by the Vatican Congregation for the Clergy allows researchers to access Bible verses with exegesis from doctors of the Church or cross reference liturgical texts with commentaries from Church Fathers. The site at www.bibliaclerus.org offers six categories in nine languages. It also gives the option of downloading the site's content.

The nine translations of the Bible, including Hebrew and Greek, can be read side-by-side, as can the Eastern and Latin Codes of Canon Law.

The Congregation for the Clergy announced the Bible site on Dec. 8, as it marked the nine-year anniversary of the launching of the dicastery's Web site at www.clerus.net.
ROME, DEC. 10, 2007 (Zenit.org)

De Profundis

One of the nice traditions in the Dominican Family is our regular prayers for our dead. Please have a Mass celebrated for all the deceased members of the Dominican Laity in the Province of St. Joseph, U.S.A., and in particular for our brothers and sisters below. I also ask everyone to pray one Rosary for our deceased members:

Mrs. Amelia (Millie) Scott, O.P., who was Prioress (Moderator) of St. Catherine of Siena (#404) of Pen Argyl, Penn., from 1985 to June 1993, went home to God on August 14, 2007.

NAME: Ms. Margaret L. Whalen, O.P.

RELIGIOUS NAME: Rose of Lima

CHAPTER: St. Catherine of Siena #303

CHAPTER LOCATION: Rochester, New York

FINAL PROMISE: November 8, 1965

DATE OF DEATH: October 17, 2007

NAME: Ms. Grace Zeffora, O.P.

CHAPTER: St. Catherine of Siena #303

CHAPTER LOCATION: Rochester, New York

FINAL PROMISE: April 2006

DATE OF DEATH: August 2007

NAME: Miss Carmela V. Cari, O.P.

RELIGIOUS NAME: Sr. Frances Marie

CHAPTER: St. Catherine of Siena #204

CHAPTER LOCATION: Staten Island, New York

FINAL PROMISE: May 24, 1936

DATE OF DEATH: October 29, 2006

NAME: Miss Grace Ciancio, O.P.

RELIGIOUS NAME: Sr. Mary Dominic

CHAPTER: St. Catherine of Siena #204

CHAPTER LOCATION: Staten Island, New York

FINAL PROMISE: April 28, 1968

DATE OF DEATH: January 9, 2007

Divine Mercy Congress



Remember our sisters in your prayers. Please have a Mass celebrated for all deceased members of the Dominican Laity in the Province of St. Joseph, U.S.A., and in particular for our sisters mentioned in this *eLumen*. Also, pray a Rosary for all our deceased members.

Please send the names of those who have died to r.f.flaherty@comcast.net, so that they can be included in our continued prayers for the dead.

Planned at Vatican
April 2-6, 2008

Our Lady, Queen of the Most Holy

Rosary, pray for us.

Our Holy Father Dominic pray for us.

St. Catherine of Siena, pray for us.

‘The first world congress on Divine Mercy will have ecumenical and interreligious overtones, according to the secretary-general of the event.’

St. Catherine of Siena Writings Available in Braille

Over the past several years, thanks to some generous Catherine of Siena enthusiasts, the works of Catherine in English have been gradually transcribed into Braille. So far the *Dialogue*, *Prayers*, and one volume of the *Letters* have appeared, and just now Suzanne Noffke's *Catherine of Siena: Vision through a Distant Eye*. If you are interested in access to these volumes, contact EVR Braille Services (Emelita de Jesus), at
**1906 Bonita Avenue
Burbank, CA 91504**

Father Patrice Chocholski said this as he announced that online registration for the 1st World Apostolic Congress on Mercy is now open on its Web page
www.worldapostoliccongressonmercy.org.

The congress on Divine Mercy will be held April 2-6, 2008, in the Vatican's Paul VI Hall. The date was chosen to coincide with the third anniversary of the death of Pope John Paul II, as Divine Mercy was a major theme of his pontificate.

Credits

DECEMBER 2
FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 8
FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

DECEMBER 25
NATIVITY OF CHRIST



www.3op.org

HEAR YE, HEAR YE, READ ALL ABOUT IT!!!!

Any News????

Any chapter or regional news, email submissions to your Regional Editor See eLumen Credits below.

eLumen Credits:

Fr. Juan-Diego Brunetta, O.P. Provincial Promoter juandiego@op.org
Lay Fraternities of St. Dominic – Province of St. Joseph, USA

Mrs. Dorothy Murphy, O.P. Provincial Council President redceltop@starpower.net

Editorial Staff:

Mrs. Faith Flaherty, O.P. Managing Editor r.f.flaherty@comcast.net
Mrs. Helen Tice, O.P. Layout & Design Editor prouille_1216@comcast.net

Regional Editors:

Mrs. Faith Flaherty, O.P. Region 1 r.f.flaherty@comcast.net

Ms. Anna Donnelly, O.P. Region 2 Donnella@stjohns.edu

Mrs. Donna Smith, O.P. Region 3 covicon123@yahoo.com

Ms. Marianne Jablonski, O.P. Region 4 veritas18@verizon.net

Ms. Therese Errigo, O.P. Region 5 OPThirdWashDC@aol.com

Mrs. Mary Cantwell, O.P. Region 6 MDLCJTC@aol.com

Contributing Writers: Mrs. Karolyn Smith, O.P. Dialogue
Mr. Raimondo Di Bona, O.P. Dominican Rule and Commentary



May you be blessed with the peace, joy, hope,
and beauty of Christmas

Staff of eLumen

Faith Marianne Anna Ray
Donna Helen Therese Mary Karolyn