

MONIALIBUS

**Nuns of the Order of Preachers
International Bulletin - N° 38 - April 2018**



**You, eternal
Trinity, are the
Artist and I your
handiwork...**

**You are in love
with the beauty of
what you have
made.**

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With Fraternal Affections

Dearest Sisters:

With these lines I want to thank you for all the best wishes and greetings you sent me for the celebration of Easter in this year of grace of 2018. They all radiate an invitation to hope, peace and love that come from the Risen Lord, as well as joy.

I want to share with you my reflections of the last weeks, particularly during Holy Week. I have been persistently impressed by the thought and idea that the Lord Jesus Christ humbly entered upon his last and tragic day as a consequence of a very concrete personal life. His life was upright and consistent with the Father's will.

Because He went through the world doing good ; because he offered by his words and deeds the loving and merciful face of the Father; because he dignified the marginalized by his forgiveness and welcoming them to simply being human; because he made religion a filial and trusting relationship with the Father of all; because he lived fearlessly and unmasked all injustice, falsehood, violence and oppression: ... for all this, and so much more, he was judged, condemned and executed.



His integrity, his upright life in the Truth that came from the Father, has captivated me and has reminded me of the integrity of life assumed, even heroically, by so many sisters and brothers of our Dominican Family. Dominic de Guzmán was a righteous man, and so was Catherine of Siena, without enumerating so many others. Both of them conformed their righteous lives to the integrity of the Lord Jesus Christ. This made them "living gospels", "eloquent preaching" for their contemporaries.

I cannot help but wonder, dear sisters, if our personal and community standards reflect evangelical integrity.

The Crucified and Risen One from the dead, reminds us with the total dedication of His life, that this is a key that must always be present in our evangelizing action. Without this evangelical integrity of life, our apostolic actions, however beautiful and applauded, will only be masks, empty masks of an inauthentic soul.

The Crucified and Risen One from the dead, continuously demands that we center our lives on the loving face of God, which is hidden, yet encompasses us in the mystery of His Son's Cross, and in the present crosses that painfully overwhelm the lives of so many of God's daughters and sons. Without this centrality in the Father's salvific will, our entire life loses its reason for being.

The Crucified and Risen One from the dead, becomes a constant call to strengthen our fraternal communion, fearlessly to leave the comfortable and sterile nests of well-being in which temptation calls us to establish ourselves. Christ invites us to embark upon the risky pathway of generosity, which becomes service, welcome, the embrace of forgiveness, and feast of renewed love. Without the witness of all that this implies, can we consider our prayer sincere, our words truthful, our speeches and devotions inhabited by the Spirit of God?

The Crucified and Risen One from the dead, is a pressing invitation to keep alive the plea and intercession before the vast molten ashes human suffering.

A few weeks ago I was moved by the words of Pope Francis to a young Romanian man. The young man had asked him about the "why" of his suffering. Why had his mother abandoned him when he was born; why did he grow up without the loving warmth of a shelter for children in the same circumstance; why, as an adult, after searching and finding his mother, did she welcome him with coldness and indifference? ... The pope replied that he had no answers to his questions, that adults can be wrong, often paralyzed and blocked by fear. He also said: "When I read your letter I cried and prayed for you." Then I remembered St. Dominic, praying and sobbing, moved inwardly by the pain of humanity.

Without this intercession of tears, perhaps our fraternal and universal love might become only a beautiful formula, stripped of divine tenderness.

The Crucified and Risen One from the dead is a whisper, sweet and intimate, keeping trust alive, even in the midst of the greatest losses. This is because the Crucified One lives, and His Life, where there are no more wounds, is His most precious gift for each one of us. We know this fullness is awaiting us. It is the joy of victory and festive music; the joy of those who know their definitive destiny, and anticipate it, here and now.

With my supplications before the Crucified and Risen One from the dead, to increase the gift of authentic communion with Him, receive my Easter greetings and my gratitude for all the good each of your monasteries offer to the great human family.

With fraternal affection,

Fr. César Valero Bajo, OP
General Promoter for the Nuns
(Original: spanish)

“THE SERVICE OF THE DOMINICAN GOVERNMENT”

THE RELATIONSHIP OF AUTHORITY / OBEDIENCE

The Federal Monastery "Santa María de Guadalupe", in the state of Mexico, had the joy of being the headquarters of a course for prioresses, subprioresses and formators of the monasteries of the Federation, with the theme: The service of government in the Dominican family, taught by Fray Luis Javier Rubio Guerrero OP, socius of the Master of the Order for Latin America and the Caribbean. We had 29 sisters from 12 different monasteries and at various times we were also accompanied, pleasantly, by our Assistant fray Fernando A. García Fernández O.P. It was an intensive and very enriching course during December 2-4, 2017, both for its contents and for the conviviality between the sisters.

This Federation has the peculiarity of meeting frequently, either by courses or Assemblies, which take place every two years, one intermediate and another elective. There is also the formation of the novices and two years of common study.



The beginning of the meeting was made by sharing how we live in our communities: the exercise of authority and obedience. When these values are not fully understood, fractures arise within community relationships. The basic thing is to understand that exercising authority is a service. It was explained to us that the service of government in Dominican life is conceived, from its origin, as an authority marked by democracy. It does not impose itself as a power, on the contrary, our Father St. Dominic trusts us to be free and responsible. The Order was born delegating the highest authority to the chapters.

Starting from the etymology of the word government and comparing it with that of power, manipulation, persuasion in our postmodern age, it motivated us to renew the conception of

authority and obedience. In the Dominican tradition they are a relationship that facilitates living the preaching in our mission as nuns. We reviewed some biblical passages that speak of authority and obedience, in the Old Testament: the prophets and the kings; in the New Testament: with the authority of the Son, God Incarnate.

We reviewed the instruction **The Service of Authority and Obedience** of the Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and the Societies of Apostolic Life, reflecting on the seven priorities of the authority and the six tasks of the superior in the mission. We deepened our understanding of the style of government in the Order and it also gave us some practical advice. It was a time of reflection, revision and pleasant coexistence with our brothers and between us.

We thank the Master of the Order Fray Bruno Cadoré, O.P and our promoter of the Order, Fray César Valero Bajo, O.P for supporting us in everything, especially, for sending us to Fray Luis Javier Rubio, O.P. In the same way, we thank Fray Luis Javier for sharing with us these important issues for our Dominican community life; also our gratitude to our religious Assistant fray Fernando García O.P, for his constant support and accompaniment.

I will explain in summary the content of this course, which I think may be useful for the sisters of the other monasteries of the Order.

THE SERVICE OF DOMINICAN GOVERNMENT

The minutes of the Trogir Chapter in Croatia state: We have an Order that is marked by democratic authority. It is not power that defines our way of exercising authority and that must be printed in our lives as Dominican religious. We are an Order, and we have a "Father" as Master of the Order, not a General. This results in concrete consequences for the daily exercise of government in our community. It is important to understand that it does not consist only in organizing ourselves, or in immediate ways, it is not simply efficiency, but: preaching of the Gospel, bearing witness. All this implies much more dialogue, more meetings.

We are have a government where freedom is the essential thing, a freedom at the service of preaching. And thus have the opportunity of a better service, both for the community, and for society, evangelizing and witnessing to the people of God. Our main preaching is the very fact of being Dominicans and Dominicans "who live like brothers, children of St. Dominic.

The issue of authority is linked to obedience. Obedience to the brothers gathered in chapter. There is a bad exercise of authority, both by sisters who do not have this role, and by the sisters who assume this service from an understanding of an authoritarian, monarchical, unilateral and pyramidal government. When someone violates this institutional framework, then there is a bad exercise of authority. When force or violence is used it becomes clear that authority has failed. Therefore, it is important to exercise authority within the institutional framework in which it is granted, and thus not to violate the freedom of individuals. People are not things, they have a dignity that must be respected; we can not treat the sisters as things, with violence—not recognizing the freedom of the other is authoritarianism. The powerful are terrible, power struggles are very strong in our society. We live in that ambiguity, we discredit authority. The circle of roles is confused, as a result the relationships suffer. The reaction modes are different in this situation:

- The "ostrich" mode for whom everything is fine
- The one that blocks and does nothing.
- The one who shields himself from the fear of facing the situation and joins it.

¡SISTERS IF WE DO NOT GET ON THE TRUCK, WE WILL MISS THE RIDE!

In postmodernity, what prevails is individualism, there are no absolute truths, everything is relative. The temporary, the culture of discarding, everything disposable. There are no paradigms, pillars, lighthouses, etc. because the institutions have lost credibility. If today we do not believe in obedience, we are not willing to listen, either. When authority exerts violence, then that authority is despotic, and loses strength. How to recover values that are immutable, not changing. How to reconstruct what has been lost in our communities? What do we have to do to rebuild?

Domnic wanted this form of government that would give the person freedom to serve as a preacher. The authority is to obey God and the Community. To obey you need to listen. Authority requires prudence, good sense. When the dimension of FAITH is lacking, the exercise of authority and obedience is difficult.

AUTHORITY AND OBEDIENCE IN THE BIBLE

In the Old Testament, authority is presented as an absolute. In the New Testament authority is embodied. Jesus has that authority that comes from the Father and performs it in the service of men; to heal, to liberate. Jesus grants authority to his apostles to better serve the brothers.

Today there is a desire for identity that qualifies us, that recognizes us. In religious life we opt for the ideals of the Gospel and put it before our egoistic self, so that Jesus may be known. Like John the Baptist, we give way to Jesus, so that others may know him. The evangelical counsels are a way of life, the way to transform our true being. Service, charity and compassion for others. ¿What does Jesus' attitude to the exercise of authority tell us?

THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN CONSECRATED LIFE

The document The Service of authority and obedience of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.

Find the balance: community and individuals. We are to live fully in the consecrated life, not to suffer, and self-realization has to go through the community environment, always seeking the COMMON GOOD. Avoiding falling into individualism and barracks. In order not to fall into this, we need the constant relationship with the Lord Jesus. Listening to the will of God.

"WE WANT TO SEE YOUR FACE" through the apophatic path, the mystic, the path of experience. External mediations to interpret the will of God. The motions of the Holy Spirit, the reference of the founder, the community, the prioress.

- Personal Life
- Communitarian Life
- The Life of Mission



THESE THREE REALITIES GO TOGETHER AND ARE IMPORTANT, WE ALWAYS HAVE TO BE IN COMMUNITY DISCERNMENT

Search for ways that motivate participation and that commit, as our Constitutions says: what corresponds to all must be consulted by all, from the listening of each of the sisters.

- Promote community discernment.
- Cultivate constant dialogue without losing heart. "How does God see each of the sisters?"
- Be free of prejudice.

Authority is a humble service. Everything for the MISSION. "Whoever obeys is guaranteed to be in the mission".

DOMINICAN GOVERNMENT

Dominican government is not a recipe for cooking. Dominic wanted to found an Order that was free to devote himself to preaching. "EVERYTHING IS ORDERED TO PREACHING". Freedom manifests itself in our way of governing. The sisters have to give the prioress compassion. Dominican government is to share responsibility. It is at the root of fraternity. It shapes us as brothers.

When we give profession to a brother we have to think if he has the ability to live together with others for a lifetime. DOMINICAN GOVERNMENT IS CAPITULAR, AND IT HAS TO FACILITATE THAT THE WORD OF GOD IS INCARNATED, "I PLACED ITS DWELLING AMONG US". OUR MISSION IS TO BE USEFUL FOR THE SALVATION OF SOULS. Nothing paralyzes Dominican life so much as individualism, Pope Francis tells us: "the great evil in our days is selfish individualism".

The best advice is common sense, surround yourself with people you can draw upon. We are not the protagonists of the work, it was already begun before us. "Unanimity = only one soul". Everything will fail if we do not do it as a community.

Strength implies vulnerability. Our government is based on trust in the sisters.

GOVERNMENT OF THE DOMINICAN NUNS

Common life occupies the main place in the Dominican reality. Common life that is constituted as the task of all and the prioress with the subpriority, will promote a good atmosphere. The life of the nuns is not an addition in the Order of Preachers. The nuns are an essential part of the Order; we are preachers. When we do not have a clear understanding that our life is for the mission of the Order, it weakens. "How is the Order? How are you living the charism?"

We remind the Order that what is essential is preaching.

There must be a primary concern: sick, elderly and training. The Prioresses have to be flexible. Dispensation is the lubricant to facilitate the path of compassion. The most beautiful thing about Saint Dominic is his humanity and his flexibility; "Compassionate with everyone." He was a normal, kind, affable, affectionate man. The office of the prioress and government is a service for **unity in the community, unity in charity**. The misión will come out of communion. We have a Triune God, God is communion, God is relationship, God is generosity.

THE SERVICE OF PRIORESS, THE SUBPRIORESS AND COUNSELORS

1. Be a factor of communion: service in order to the common good.
2. Information, communicate to the community. "What affects the community is everyone's responsibility.
3. Lead and encourage the participation of all the sisters in community meetings.
4. To take care of formation, to favor it constantly in each one of the sisters.
5. Take care that the formation and the way of the monastery is in line with the Federation's training plan. Be in a fluid communication.
6. Ensure that the political and ecclesial reality is up to date.
7. The Archives must be kept in order and adequate.
8. Exhort, encourage, accompany each of the sisters; worry about each one, without excluding any.
9. Caring for and watching over the times for communal eucharist, liturgy, prayer, formation, personal reading, recreation, work and rest. All these dimensions are important and to each one give your time.
10. Be an exemplary reference of life for the entire Community. The example of life will be the clearest manifestation that, from silence, a significant presence can be offered that constitutes a true and effective preaching.

Sr Lorena Barba, op
Monasterio: Guadalajara,
Mexico
(Original: spanish)



Federation

“Our Lady of Preachers”

Every monastery of nuns of whatever order is autonomous, but in 1950, in the difficult context of the post-war years, Pope Pius XII asked the nuns to become federated for the sake of mutual fraternal assistance.

On February 22, 1958, the Sacred Congregation for religious erected and constituted the ‘St. Dominic’ federation and the ‘Notre Dame’ federation of monasteries of nuns of the order of St. Dominic in France. The two federations had the same statutes, but they each lived Dominican life in their own way. In the 1970’s, a closer collaboration was established between these two federations. In 1998, with the number of communities decreasing, the two federations united the monasteries of Dominican nuns in France, Switzerland, and Norway into one federation, called the ‘Our Lady of Preachers’ federation. Today this federation includes around 200 nuns in 13 monasteries.



The federation has as its goal the strengthening of the bonds of fraternal charity and solidarity that unite the monasteries. It aims more particularly at collaboration in the formation of sisters, as well as at information, reflection and mutual help in the face of the diverse problems that the monasteries might encounter.

The instruments of the federation are: the federal assembly, the federal president, and the federal council. A religious assistant, a friar of the Order, is assigned to the federation, appointed by the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.

The federal assembly gathers every four years for its ordinary elective session. It is composed of members by right: the new president, the out-going president, the new councilors and the out-going councilors, the prioress of each monastery, and the delegates: one nun from each monastery, elected by the monastery chapter. The federal assembly elects the president and the councilors and their substitutes and then it reviews all questions pertaining to the goal of the federation and gives directives for the upcoming four years.

Each of our monasteries has its own particular aspect due to its history, location, and way of living Dominican monastic life, and the federation respects this legitimate diversity within the common vocation that is an enrichment for all the nuns and a source of joy and of inspiration.

Some forty years ago the novice mistresses, solicitous to guarantee the sisters in initial formation a good and solid foundation in theology, launched a theological formation program of five years per cycle. The novices and temporary professed gather together for a session of 12 days in which Dominican friars and sisters or other teachers introduce them to the different branches of theology. These sessions are also very important for the mutual knowledge and fraternal bonds that are created between the sisters of different communities. It is thanks to this common formation that our relationships are straightforward and trusting and that a true fraternal communion exists between us.

The prioresses gather once a year for reflection and exchange on some topic pertaining to their office and to give community news; the bursars have a formation session every two years as do the novice mistresses, held with the Dominican friar formators of novices and student brothers.

The federal days were created in 2012 so that all the sisters of the federation who so wished could meet around some theme and live a powerful experience and a good moment of friendship and of sisterly communion. The first days at Cîteaux had as their theme *The Word of God*, and those of Fanjeaux in 2015 that of *Christ: a mystery of encounter, a mystery of joy*.

The mutual help promoted by the federation more and more takes the form of a loan of sister to another community for a few days or months: today any little thing can threaten the equilibrium of prayer and work in our already diminished communities, and a temporary reinforcement is a true gift.

Despite the fragility of our communities, each of them is vibrant and radiates to those around it thanks to monastic hospitality, to the liturgy which is open to the public, and to the different proposals offered according to the proper charism of each monastery, often in partnership with the brethren – retreats for youth, conferences, a school of prayer, etc.

The monastic branch of the Order in France places its trust in the Lord. If we have difficulty understanding why vocations are rare, we nevertheless know that He who called us to follow Him in the house of St. Dominic will be with us every day. Might He perhaps wish the monasteries to be places where hope is lived very concretely from day to day?

Sr. Jean Thérèse OP
Federal President
(Original: french)

My journey of study in the monastery

When I was asked to share what comprises my study life, at Orbe I was disturbed, even embarrassed, sensing that others would have been in a much better position than I to do so. Therefore, I did it very simply, mentioning first of all my background and then sharing with you a few reflections on my translation work and on my studies on Julian of Norwich.

Background

A preliminary remark: it happens that I did not have any distance learning theological formation with the faculty of Strasbourg, I had a formation by tutoring, a little in English... (one must be allowed one's faults!)

During my earlier years in religious life, the Bible was a brilliant discovery for me, especially the Old Testament, with which I was only slightly familiar at the time of my entrance. I took myself to learning biblical languages, alone in part, then with a

woman who was a retired Hebrew professor and a member of the Jewish community of Colmar. The Bible was and remains my sustenance of choice.

There came nevertheless a moment when, having developed my own method and interpretive lens, I was surprised to turn around and no longer find myself renewed in my rapport with the Word of God. I reflected and thought that I must find an author who would accompany me and open horizons to me, in order to consider things from a renewed perspective.

Then I remembered that about twenty years earlier, I stumbled by chance upon some extracts from texts of Julian of Norwich, and that, seduced and charmed by this figure, I promised myself to return to these writings. I read some texts in French, then in contemporary English, then in 14th century English. I also found a saying of Thomas Merton which affirmed that Julian of Norwich was the greatest English theologian after Newman! Intrigued, I read the texts a bit more closely, trying to discover the theological content. I can say that Thomas Merton's affirmation was well founded.

I have also read the principal works of the great spiritual figures of 14th century England:

the anonymous author of the *Cloud*, W. Hilton, Julian, but I avoided Richard Rolle. Moving from one thing to the next, what I took in the beginning for a small, well restricted and delineated literary sector became in a year or two an enormous puzzle, where it was occasionally difficult to find myself again: I mean to say that it is difficult when one works alone, self-educating with a few small means of discovering what the important theological currents are that carry or influence one author or another, and to situate them in a lineage. It seems to me to be a consideration of some importance.

Thanks to Divine Providence getting involved, I broadened my circle of relations and got in touch with certain competent persons who were British medievalists by trade. This is how I made the acquaintance of Marthe, British medievalist by trade, with



whom I was launched into the adventure of translation for publication. I hold her in high esteem. We work together regularly, and she teaches me a lot. It was thus that we published a short work on Walter Hilton edited by Arfuyen. Thereafter I was able to respond to one or another request for discussion on English mysticism.

This entire adventure would not have been possible without the reassurance and marked support of Sr. Jean-Thérèse, Prioress, and without the benevolence of the Sisters of my community, for which I thank them very heartily.

The presence of sisters, brothers, friends and their support are precious, even indispensable for anyone who launches, with a bit of recklessness—at least at the beginning—into this kind of undertaking. One cannot venture alone without advice, outside assessments and counsels, without guides, documents.

During chance meetings with one another, and conversations and exchanges I've been able to have, I have learned an enormous amount. I have especially learned to respect the work of others, to appreciate it. I have discovered that the work of research is based not only on a personal effort but also in the objective and frank confrontation with the work of others, with other approaches. I have learned that to work together in collaboration is also to give positive criticism in order to seek to improve whatever can be improved in a work. I have also learned that the work and the improvements thereof are without end. Exchanges concerning one another's intellectual work, concerning their questions, their joys and their frustrations, are truly for me the place where a profound brotherhood and friendship are woven together...

The field of work is quite extensive, and this fills me with wonder. Thanks to my little projects I have discovered authors, theologians, philosophers and others who I would never have read or approached if I had not attempted to discover the sources of Julian's work...a question without end and without bottom about which everyone wonders.

The work of translation, in collaboration with Marthe

To do a work of translation is something important by way of making a passage, namely from one's own world to the world of an author. When I translate a spiritual text, I begin by receiving it and attempting at first to become familiar with it, then I appropriate it to myself, so that next I can, as I am able, give it over to my language and culture. It has often happened, working with Marthe, that I am seized and bedazzled by the profundity, the originality of Julian's text, or by a certain aspect of her theology of which a mere reading barely scratches the surface. To perform a work of translation is truly to enter into the meat of the text, to use the expression of Origen. This entry into the meat of the text can become at certain moments a spiritual experience that can be likened to the parable of the merchant who finds a pearl of

great price. It has therefore been given me to experience the reward granted by the Lord to the servant who was faithful in a few things. And it is a joy for me.

To interpret, to translate, is to transmit. It is really in effect to transmit and give to others that which seems important to us, nurturing in the tradition of the Church the idea that there is consequently an equal responsibility in the choice made in the texts that one ‘offers’ to others. Marthe and I agree that this aspect of the question is very interesting.

This work of transmission, of gift to others can also be for me personally a source of sadness or anxiety in the Augustinian sense of the term. This heritage that is so rich, this profound wisdom that one can discover in the Scriptures and the thinking of the Church—who is interested in any of it nowadays? How are we to offer all this to our contemporaries who seek without a goal? How can we give to eat to those who believe they already know every cuisine and every flavor and have lost their appetite for them? For me it is a great question, and I have no response if not to share my testimony and continue working.

The study of Julian’s theology

It is perhaps the most personal and most lonesome part of my research—the slow, hidden part of moving the work forward.

It is also the place where I can “enlarge the space of my tent,” as the prophet Isaiah says (54:2), discover new spaces, deepen things, and explore pathways anew. In short, it is the place where new horizons are given free reign and where I can give myself over to the pleasure of learning, of discovering. I believe that for me, continual learning and discovery are important and constitutive to a life that is humanly and spiritually joyful, despite the moments of doubt, fatigue or dejection.

In conclusion, I have said that we must little by little allow Christ to be the seal on our forehead, confiding to Him our memory, our thoughts, our intelligence that He might illumine and sanctify them, that He might make our study and reflection fruitful. Christ is the seal on our heart in order that the fruit of our study might make our hearts suppler, more docile, more human, and more open in prayer. Christ is the seal on our arm in order that in a way our prayer and our study extend into our daily actions, making themselves concrete in the work of our hands in service of our sisters and our brothers.

Sr Claude-Pierre,
Monastère d’Orbey, France
(Original: french)

NUNS AND BRETHERN, AN EXAMPLE OF COLLABORATION

“LENT IN THE CITY” (2017)

We are well aware of the importance and value of the complementarity of brothers and sisters in the Order and, for us, between brethren and nuns. The daily routine, for instance, manifests it in the chaplaincy tasks often discharged by our brethren, the retreats they preach; and in return, if I may say, the support we give them when they visit us, entrust their concerns and request our prayer, etc...

But a concrete collaboration in a specific apostolate is quite uncommon. Several monasteries of our Federation have already participated in “*Carême dans la ville*” (*Lent in the city*), an initiative our brothers of Lille launched several years ago: preaching on the Net during the time of Lent, among other proposals. There we were bound with our brothers for a common purpose: helping a large number of people to be renewed in their faith, wherever each one may be, accompanying him/her, and making this blessed time of Lent fruitful for them.



The general theme, not an easy one, was: "This is my body". The daily preaching of each week was entrusted to a Brother, and one week was given to a monastery. During our jubilee year, we accepted the request and were given responsibility for the third week, with the theme of the Samaritan woman.

The preaching itself is the most important part of this ministry, and Fr Benoît Ente, who was then in charge, attends to it meticulously.

For a first step, in the monastery, we personally prepared the texts (according to a precise numbers of characters); then we corrected one another, improved our inputs and after that submitted the proposed texts to Fr Benoît who then edited them. Each brother did this work for his own week, independently of the others.

Then, and this is where the collaboration was really enriching, we gathered together in our guest house, *La Source*, for a small week of work. The purpose was to read over together all the texts that will be presented on line to about 120,000 internet surfers.

Practically, each provisional text was read by the author, then displayed on a screen. And in a very thorough way, we worked on the wording so as to get the best result: a meaningful language, understandable, enriching for each one whatever be his/her culture. In our team, Quebec, Cameroon, the Parisian area, the Lille area, other French regions and, of course, Switzerland, were represented. We spent a full morning working upon only one text! All this was done with great respect for the individual, his/her way of expressing him/her self, without hurting the primary author. We had succeeded in the challenge!

This created very strong bonds between us: a shared Lenten retreat lived around the end of Advent. But afterwards, we had to part from one another... Everyone preparing the next stage of work:

- The more personal work of recorded reading of his/her own interventions.
- Be ready to respond to the feedbacks of the surfers on the site.

Besides, the Sisters had to record the offices of Vespers for their week. And, of course, be active receivers of the numerous prayer intentions entrusted by the retreatants and shared between the different praying people associated with the retreat in the City. But there, the collaboration with the brethren is less visible.

We wish that you too would one day have this kind of experience. It is very demanding but also very rewarding. Don't hesitate if such an opportunity comes your way.

Hna. Marie-Christiane, Monasterio de las Dominicas de Estavaller-le-Lac. Switzerland
(Original: french)

MY FIRST ICN MEETING

When Sister Lioba asked me to write an article for MONIALIBUS about my experience of a first International Commission Meeting, I was a little daunted. What would be of interest to a worldwide audience of nuns? As I left the Commission meeting in October, one of the members thanked me for bringing a different perspective to the table so I thought in this article I would try to describe both my first experience at a Commission meeting and my first experience in Europe.

The trip began at the George Bush Intercontinental Airport in Houston, Texas, U.S.A. The reception in Houston is often very friendly. As I approached the security check, a security guard asked me if I was a Dominican. When I replied yes he said he had been telling the other guards that I must be a Dominican because I was in black and white and Dominicans wear black and white. He went on to tell me that Dominican Sisters taught him in grade school on Galveston Island (an island off the coast of Texas in the Gulf of Mexico) a school where my mother had also taught. As I boarded the plane, one of the flight attendants quipped that now he would have to behave. "Yes," I replied, "for the next 11 hours." "Oh, no, I have not behaved that long in my entire life!" He proceeded to call me "Mother Teresa" for the duration of the flight. Making my way down the aisles, I could hear murmurs, "A habit. You don't see that often anymore." Everyone seemed quite pleased, though, to have me aboard and greeted me with smiles. Our destination was Frankfurt, Germany where I would catch a connecting flight to Bologna. When our bursar told me my itinerary, I was intrigued. I had not expected to go to Germany. I am a quarter German. My German great, great-grandparents were the last of my ancestors to immigrate to the United States in the late 1800s so it seemed fitting that this would be the first European country for me to visit. The woman next to me put on the plane's flight path so I knew when we were passing over Ireland and England, some of my other ancestors native lands. I couldn't help marveling that while all of them made the passage by boat over weeks, I could make the trip within half a day. I kept thinking, "I can't believe I am doing this!"

The German airport looked practically identical to those in the U.S. as did the one in Bologna. Clothing styles were also the same. If it were not for the occasional German over a loudspeaker, I really would not have been able to tell I was in another country. I was surprised to see that all the signs were in German and English. This was the same in Bologna, although there it was Italian and English. I noticed American candy and Coca-Cola sold everywhere and wondered if this was for the Europeans or American tourists. The only differences I could discern in the Frankfurt airport was that it was not as ethnically diverse as the airports usually are in the U.S. and that you could purchase sausage in vending machines.

Especially after the Jubilee Year, I imagined that Dominicans must travel frequently to Bologna and not be an unusual sight. However, given the reaction to my boarding the commuter plane, I thought this must not actually be the case or, if so, it must not be customary to travel in the habit. To my relief, Sister Paola Panetta was waiting for me at the gate in Bologna and asked me to wait while she went to meet Fr. César. We were the last to arrive. Sister drove us to Idice, and I was surprised that I could understand what she and Father said in Italian. It would be the last Italian that I understood. On arriving at the House of Spirituality where the meeting would be held, we were greeted by the prioress of the Sisters of Blessed Imelda and by Fr.



Mario Jarbares, O.P. our translator. They led us into the dining room where the whole Commission was gathered. Since half of us were new and MONIALIBUS had not come out yet, we did not know who each other were or from where we came. The new members of the Commission did not necessarily know who was new or a veteran. We had brief introductions that would be more formal the next day, October 20, 2017, when the meeting began in earnest. Meeting the members of the Commission was like meeting family members you have never met before. Even though you do not know each other, there is an immediate connection. With family members, this is because of blood; with Dominicans it is because of our shared spiritual family. It turned out that everyone present could either speak English or Spanish so Fr. Mario usually only had to translate from one of these languages into the other.

The meetings lasted about six hours a day, sometimes more when smaller groups worked through siesta time. I knew that the different members of the Commission gave reports on their regions, but was surprised at how full the agenda was. The first day we had to elect a secretary of the Commission and a representative to the International Council of the Dominican Family. This was hard for me because I really did not know the other members of the Commission yet and it felt like voting blind. I have served for the last five years on the Council of our North American Association of Dominican Monasteries. I felt like this was good preparation for the International Commission Meeting, although our Council meetings last for only three days, not five, and are conducted in only one language. Listening to the simultaneous translation took a lot of concentration. I did not feel alone, though, as I could see other members of the Commission struggling to understand. Even though communication could sometimes be challenging, our shared way of life was evident. Occasionally, after a remark, the whole room would burst out with the laughter of recognition at just how universal some of our experiences are. I was deeply impressed by the sisterly concern of the members of the Commission for the nuns of their region and their love for our way of life. Meals were probably the most challenging. With Spanish as the native language of five of the nuns on the Commission and the two friars, it was definitely predominant. The Spanish and the Italians were also able to communicate with each other. It could get lonely not being able to follow the banter or to talk with those around you. I regretted knowing so little Spanish, but was grateful for the little I did know. I was impressed when half the Commission met to draft a document that summarized what the Commission had said in response to the questions posed to the Order in preparation for the upcoming Synod with Youth. We worked without a translator and actually were able to come up with a summary that satisfied the Commission.

There were occasions where it felt like being a postulant again not knowing exactly what to do or what was expected. The first day at Mass, I was second in line for communion. I did not pay attention to what the Sister in front of me did, but noticed that the chalice was being offered. When I went to take it, I was baffled because it



was evident that Father did not want to hand it to me. I was completely mystified so the next day I watched to see what the Sisters were doing. I was surprised to see that the communicants took the host and dipped it into the Precious Blood. While I had on occasion received communion by intinction, I had never seen a do-it-yourself intinction. In the United States this is not permitted. On the occasion when we said Evening Prayer in English, I was asked to lead. When I began with, “God, come to my assistance,” I was met with sidelong glances and shakes of the head. What was wrong? Afterwards I was told it should have been, “God, come to my aid,” as it is in the British breviary. Now I was using the translation approved for The Antilles, Bangladesh, Burma, Canada, the Pacific CEPAC, Ghana, India, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea and The Solomons, The Philippines, Rhodesia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Uganda, and the United States of America, which was the only one

I had celebrated the Office in. So even with English I was not completely on familiar ground. These were small differences and usually it was just amusing the slight confusion they would cause. I suppose the biggest surprise for me was towards the end of the meeting when the Sister who served our meals became disturbed at my putting my napkin in my lap. I had noticed that others did not so, but had not really thought about it. I did not realize it was not a universal custom and was sure it was not particular to America. Later I quizzed my British brother-in-law as to where he put his napkin. "In my lap," came the prompt reply. So the custom was British and not Continental. With the Office I had not been British enough and now I was being too British!

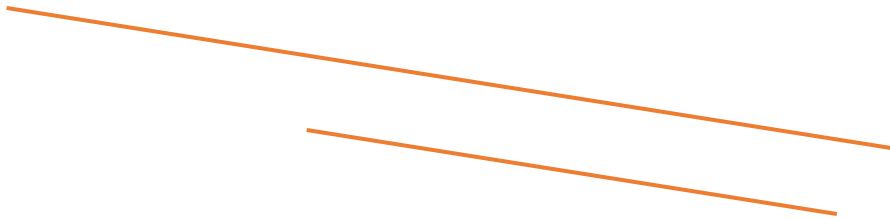
Technology was another matter. Many of the nuns on the Commission were far more adept at using it than I even though much of it came from my own country. I was advised to bring a good phone to the meeting. I had never used a smart phone before and felt awkward carrying the slippery thing. However, the other nuns were taking beautiful pictures and video clips with theirs, which they generously shared. I am very grateful as they greatly enriched the chronicle of the meeting sent to my region. I could not help noticing the omnipresence of the smart phone both in Frankfurt and Bologna. In the airports, on the streets everyone was looking at their smart phone. The only person I saw without a smart phone was the Master General. (He had a flip phone.) I actually thought more people were on their smart phones in Bologna than back home in the U.S., if such a thing is possible.

On the morning of our departure, I was reminded of the friars' saying, "Eternity is nuns saying goodbye," as nuns dived into the taxi for one last farewell hug, but the friars were smiling. On my return trip to Frankfurt, we flew over the Italian Alps and I could not help but think of our brother Pier Giorgio. The German authorities wanted to know what I had been doing for the last week. When I said I was at a meeting nuns they ask if I had been at the Vatican. "No, I wish," I replied.

The Americans were even more thorough. I found it was harder to get back into my country than to leave it.



*Submitted by Sister Mary Rose Carlin, O.P.
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(Original: english)*



A NUN IN THE DOMINICAN INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JUSTICE AND PEACE

The mission that leads the Order in preaching and working for justice and peace, is, without a doubt, a sign that characterizes the sons and daughters of Saint Dominic de Guzmán. Last year I received the appointment as a member of the International Commission of Justice and Peace (CIDJP) from Bruno Cadoré, Master of the Order. It was the first time that the nuns of the Order participate in this meeting. For that reason, I want to share my joyful and hopeful experience of the meeting that took place in Geneva on September 28-29 and then at the Monastery of Estavayer-le-Lac, September 30-October 3.

I begin by introducing you to Fr. Mike Deeb, OP, the General Promoter of Justice and Peace in the Order. He is also the permanent delegate to the UN, but above all, he is a



friendly and simple brother. I admired the rhythm of team work that marked the days of the meeting; the time was very well used. There were a total of 22 delegates representing all the branches of the Order.

Meeting the brothers and sisters; listening to their reports of working with each other to promote justice and peace; and united in the same cause, made me aware of the great responsibility we nuns have to support and accompany them with our lives of prayer. We are an active part of this delicate mission although our contemplative vocation is not understood. We are spiritual mothers to those who are exploited and suffer the consequences of violence, war, corruption, exploitation, power. These realities are not foreign to us because several of our monasteries are situated in vulnerable areas. Pope Francis reminds us of borders and the periphery.

An enriching and stimulating moment was to witness the work done in the United Nations; the session room was filled with representatives from around the world, deliberating and deciding on different aspects of human rights. The members of the Council present a project; the other delegations of several countries propose amendments; and then, the arguments, for or against, are presented, followed by a vote.

The themes we listened to that morning were:

- Gender violence against women
- Death penalty
- Right to conscientious objection in military service
- Conflict and violence in Syria

While it is true that we do not hear the whole context, the tension and indifference is notorious when approving the points. National sovereignty many times justifies blocking decisions. But countries such as the United States, China, and Egypt protested the death penalty. This was a display that failed to strengthen the sacred dignity of human life.

Respect for the criterion of what each country expresses by the diversity of cultures is famous, however, there can be a high level of diplomacy and indifference. National interests are above the common good of all.

Sister Margaret Mayce, from DSI (Dominican Sisters International), who is our representative at the UN (New York), said in her speech, that the work she performs as well as in other instances, is of presence and perseverance. It requires a lot of prudence and patience. There are no immediate results; it means maintaining a voice that remembers the values and rights *par excellence* of the human being and the kingdom. She encouraged us to remain vigilant, promoting justice and peace in our places of justice and peace.

Staying in the monastery of Estavayer-le-lac enriched and nurtured the bonds of the Dominican Family. We felt at home; our sisters welcomed us and treated us with exquisite fraternal charity. The beauty of the Nuns' liturgical singing and the celebration

of the Eucharist were the spiritual ingredients that gave flavor to everything else ... At the beginning of each work-day, we also shared moments of silence and prayer prepared by groups, with the distinctions of our Order: diversity, surprise, creativity and spontaneity.

I thank God and the Order for this magnificent opportunity to learn about the realities we face in today's world. It has been an awakening. Now I have burning in my heart and prayer, faces and names of specific brothers / sisters who bravely fight and denounce the oppression of the weakest, such as Fr. Miguel Angel Gullón, OP, from the Dominican Republic, who coordinates *Acción Verapaz* and *Radio Seybo*, with the Dominican Family. He accompanies families who were cruelly evicted at 3 am by the Central Romana, the (Sugar Consortium).

Sr Irene Díaz, O.P.
Member of “Justice &Peace”
(Original: spanish)





SOLEMN PROFESSION

Sister Chiara – Moncalieri Italy

My name is Sr Chiara Giordanino, I am 35 and on 27 January this year, a sunny Saturday afternoon, surrounded by many relatives and friends, confreres and sisters, in the presence of several priests from our Diocese of Turin and of our future Diocese of Casale, I made my Solemn Profession in the hands of my Prioress, sister Gabriella Mauri. This was the first Solemn Profession in our Community!

Nine years ago, fresh from my degree in Medicine, when I nervously crossed the threshold of the “Maria di Magdala” Monastery, wishing to confirm the intuition I felt burning in me, namely that I was called to contemplative life as a Dominican, I had not the faintest idea of the road opening before me. I knew I was the first young woman to enter as a postulant, I knew I was

entering a small community (at that time there were only five nuns) founded only nine years earlier, still waiting for official recognition from the Holy See; I was told



immediately that the life of the Dominican nuns was a life gifted to the Order, and there was no certainty that the Community would grow and persist in time. In addition, the idea of a possible move to new premises was beginning to circulate, together with the dream of future foundations... In short, no one was giving me any guarantees, I was being offered a new life!

During my formation I had the joy of seeing the Community grow, be transformed, by way of critical moments and times of Grace, opposition and approval, until we received the longed-for “canonical establishment as *monasterium sui iuris*. Thus when I was just a novice I found myself listed as one of the founding Sisters: a one-in-a-million experience! I smile when I think of this, and I thank the Lord who wanted a foundation for us marked by weakness, to make it clear that our strength comes from him and not from ourselves. And I think of the faith St Dominic had in his novices, whom he sent forth to preach for all their inexperience.

In the past nine years, almost from the very beginning, I have been immersed in community life, for the current structure of the monastery makes it impossible to separate Novitiate from Community. It was a decidedly challenging and, at the same time, enriching experience: no formalisms, authenticity that even struck sparks (we all have strong characters!), freedom to express yourself and to be who you really are, together with the grave responsibility of learning to handle your emotions, a profound, restorative experience of mercy received and given, a pathway of mutual trust and acceptance, in the knowledge that the Community is built by all of us, from the very start. Sometimes, I admit, I wanted a bit of peace, of “normality”, but I always came to realise that the Lord was calling us all to follow him, not to sit back and relax. When the dream of a new monastery began to take shape, although I was only a junior, I was involved in the search for the common good, and I was several times consulted and listened to, even in Chapter. I can witness to the fact that this experience, in no way taken for granted, marked me profoundly and made me love my Community even more!

Among the many gifts I have received, I want to share with you the splendid experience of the Dominican Order and Family. A few weeks after starting my postulancy, in fact, together with the Italian Dominican novice friars, at that time resident in Chieri (not far from Moncalieri), I attended a course on initiation into *lectio divina* held in our monastery by S Paola Panetta, who is now a member of the International Commission of the Nuns. During my novitiate I returned the visit, so to speak, joining the novice friars in Chieri for the courses on the Rule of St Augustine and initiation into praying the psalms, held respectively by a Dominican Sister and a Swiss friar. Almost every year I have had the opportunity to attend the courses of formation for young nuns organised nationally in Italy and held by confreres and sisters – two of these were again in Chieri, where we stayed in what had been the novitiate); and also weeks living with the young women in formation at the monastery of Pratovecchio (Arezzo), dreaming of a shared Novitiate. The list of experiences, of Communities encountered and visited, of nuns, friars, lay Dominicans and Sisters I have met would take up too much space, so I will limit myself to the most recent gift, linked to my Profession. A month earlier, when trying to work out how many people would be invited to the celebration, we realised that

neither our monastery nor, much less, our small chapel could hold them all. So the friars in Chieri, bound to our Community by a long-lasting friendship, joyfully opened the doors of their Priory and their beautiful 13th-century church. The result: truly a “Sancta Praedicatio”, with the whole Dominican Family present: nuns from the monasteries of Bergamo and Pratovecchio, friars from the Priors of Chieri and Turin, lay Dominicans from the Chieri Fraternity, Sisters from the Unione San Tommaso and the Bethany Sisters. Moreover, the Eucharist was presided by our Metropolitan Archbishop of Smirne (Turkey), Br Lorenzo Piretto op, who has long been a friend of the Community; and this gave a breath of the international and the missionary, as well as the fraternal, to the celebration.

I thank the Lord for all I have received and prepare to pack our boxes in readiness for the Community’s imminent move to the Sanctuary of Crea, in the Diocese of Casale



Monferrato: the mission has just begun!

Sr Chiara
Giordanino op
Monastero
Maria di Magdala
(Moncalieri, Italy)
(Original: italian)



SOLEMN PROFESIÓN

Sr. Mary Cathy



As my Solemn Profession approached and I reflected on my life, I could not help thinking of my younger years – a life without God – with no hope in view, compared to



a life now that is with God and in God in a very deep way. If someone had said to me 13 years ago that I would be in a monastery and making my Solemn Profession I probably would not have believed it. 'God's ways are not our ways'.

The Lord does work miracles and I am a living proof of what God can do. A priest friend reminded me a number of times that I should have taken the name Sr. Mary Grace at my Reception of the habit, because I too can say what Our Lady said in her Magnificat -'the lord has done marvels for me.' I thank and praise God for this gift he has given me, unworthy as I am for such a gift. When I had been

accepted by the council and community for Profession I sat in choir and inside I was bursting with joy. I'm not one for showing these emotions but I quietly thanked God again for this wonderful gift of Himself to me.

It was very meaningful for me to make Profession on the 2nd Feb. Through our Profession we freely and deliberately offer ourselves to God, with all that we are and have – which is in fact His gift to us. This is what Our Lady does on the feast of the Presentation. She gives back to God His gift to her, Jesus, who will be the Ultimate Sacrifice.

On my Profession day the sun shone brightly in the blue sky from early morning until dusk – symbol of the joy which radiated from my community, family and friends all day long. I feel I had prepared well for the day – both spiritually and materially. My one prayer was that the Lord would touch the hearts of all who attended – especially those who do not know the Lord in their lives. I was happy that my family were eager to participate in the readings and the Prayers of the Faithful. Several of my friends from the Legion of Mary attended – between them they bought me my ring – a very meaningful gesture for them and for me. All branches of the Dominican Family were represented – Lay Dominicans, Dominican Sisters and 17 Friars, including 2 student Brothers. The only sad note was the absence of my dear mother who passed away nearly 3 years ago but no doubt she was with us in a deeper way.

As my Profession approached, the ring took on more significance for me. I am reminded that, St Agnes, when she was faced with a proposal of human marriage said, 'I am already married – my Lord Jesus Christ has bound me to Himself with a ring'. I know that God will always be faithful (Tim 2: 13). I hope and pray that the ring will always be a reminder to me of God's faithfulness and that I will be faithful to Him and His covenant and the vows I profess.

Sister Mary Cathy- Drogheda, Ireland
(Original: english)





DAYS OF BLESSING AND GRACE FOR OUR PERU

“UNITED BY HOPE”

From the moment that the news arrived that the Holy Father would visit our nation, there was a festive atmosphere, especially in Puerto Maldonado. At last, those without a voice would have a voice.

It was planned that Francis would visit three cities: Lima, Puerto Maldonado and Trujillo. He would arrive on the 18th of January in the afternoon and stay until the 21st. The nuns of Arequipa, Cusco and Quillabamba wanted to see the Pope in Puerto Maldonado, since the Bishop is a Dominican. This is a mission land, where the first missionary Dominicans arrived just over one hundred years ago. However, they gave us the news that the Holy Father wanted to meet with the contemplative nuns in the Sanctuary of the Lord of Miracles in Lima; all excited we made phone calls to the Monastery of the Nazarenas, who are the custodians of the Sanctuary of our beloved Lord of Miracles, to get tickets, lest we stay in the street... unfortunately the Carmelite nuns of the Monastery of the Nazarenas were not empowered to give any answer on the matter. They told us that we would have to wait for the invitation of the Episcopal Commission. So, we waited. I think we were very impatient. Finally, we received a certain number of invitations. We sent our data to give our respective credentials, otherwise we could not enter.

When we learned that Father Master was coming to Peru to receive the Holy Father in Puerto Maldonado, we did not want to miss the opportunity of meeting with him. So on the 18th in the morning Fray Bruno celebrated the Eucharist in the Monastery of Santa Catalina in Lima. Then we enjoyed the succulent breakfast offered by our Sisters. The Federal Council then met with Father Master, Fr. Luis Javier Rubio OP, assistant for Latin America and the Caribbean and Fr. Juan José Salaverry, OP, assistant to our Federation. We spoke about formation topics, especially about the experience of the intensive course of seven months that was prepared for our junior sisters, with quite positive results. At noon, the Fathers traveled to Puerto Maldonado. In the afternoon, all the nuns in all our communities were watching TV to see the arrival of Francis! We experienced the thrill of seeing our Sweet Christ on earth--as St. Catherine called him--stepping on the land of Peru. It was exciting to see the huge number of people in all the streets where the Pope was going to pass. The Holy Father came to our nation after making his visit to the brother country of Chile. He looked tired, but in spite of everything his special attention to the children and to the President of the Republic and his wife was not lacking. Also, a lady neglected the security and could touch the hand of the Holy Father who was already on the move in his popemobile. We were all captivated by his simplicity, his strength. He never ceased to greet the people waiting for him on the roads. His fatigue reached the limit and he said goodbye to everyone until the next day, because



he had to make the trip to Puerto Maldonado at 7:00 AM where he had to be at the airport.

This pastoral visit had the theme "UNITED IN HOPE". Motivated by this motto, we prepared for this meeting. In Puerto Maldonado the Holy Father had a meeting with the peoples of the Amazon. There the Holy Father heard the reality of our indigenous brothers and warned that the original Amazonian peoples have never been so threatened "as they are now" and deplored "the deep wounds" that the region and its original inhabitants suffer. He also spoke about human trafficking, illegal mining, and the devastation of nature. This meeting was very emotional, even we watching cried tears. In the afternoon,

during his speech at the Government Palace, Francis raised his voice, the audience was mostly politicians, from the President of the Republic to political leaders, including Keiko Fujimori. Here he mentioned the impact of corruption and asked for a "culture of transparency". "Corruption is avoidable and requires the commitment of all," he said. On the other hand he said: "I come to Peru under the motto" united by hope ". Let me tell you that looking at this land is in itself a reason for hope."

The next day the Pope, visited Trujillo. One of the meetings was held on the beach. Since the day before people were waiting, despite the rain and the next day the summer heat, everything was endured, with the only hope to see the Pope even for a quarter of a second. The Supreme Pontiff delivered a speech that addressed various problems, including the effects of El Niño, on the coast and the insecurity of citizen in the north of the country.

And then there was the moment expected by the Nuns: Sunday January 21st. Our appointment with the Pope was at 9:15 in the morning, with the prayer of Terce; but as the nuns wanted to see the Pope up close, we got up early and we started forming our line at 5:30 in the morning. At 7:00 AM they opened the doors of the Monastery. Sitting in the front were the sisters who had celebrated their golden jubilee, then the silver jubilee and in the back the youngest.

Around nine o'clock in the morning the Bishops arrived we were already waiting ... suddenly the applause! Emotions overwhelmed us; we wanted to touch the Pope. We all cheered Viva el Papa, Viva el Papa! Anyway, you can imagine, it was all hullabaloo. The Holy Father presided at Terce and after the brief reading we prepared to listen to his message.

He began by saying, "How good it is to be here in the Sanctuary of the Lord of Miracles, so frequented by Peruvians. He told us that we should live very grateful and happy to be daughters of God. We should never forget this. We should renew this joy in our daily prayer, since this is the nucleus of our life and what is more, our prayer is missionary because it crosses the walls of our cloisters. Also - he said - we must keep the fire of Love burning and if one is weak, ask, ask without ceasing, since the power to love is a gift from God. He encouraged us to intercede for all, to be like the friends of the paralytic who brought him before the Lord. Be scoundrels. Do not be ashamed to intercede for the pain of humanity, in this way we cure the pain of so many brothers. For this reason it is said with all certainty that the cloistered life enlarges the heart. The one who has a shrunken heart is not fertile, complains about everything, becomes a collector of injustices. In a convent there will be a place for those who open their hearts and know how to carry the fruitful cross of love, the cross that gives life. Our relationship with the Lord make us capable of feeling in a new way the pain, the suffering ... Always stand with your arms up like Moses, with your heart thus asking. And as soon as possible, not only help with prayer, but with a specific service, without disrespecting the enclosure. In the parlor sometimes one can do so much good. He also asked us to pray a lot for the unity of the baptized, of the consecrated, of priests and of Bishops. And finally, he exhorted us not to give room for gossip in our monasteries, because, gossip is similar to a bomb thrown by a terrorist. He invited us to strive in fraternal life. Only in this way, those who come close

to us will be able to taste the beatitude of fraternal charity. And he ended: "Dear sisters, know one thing, the Church does not just tolerate you. It needs you!"

Before saying goodbye in his popemobile the Holy Father went to the Cathedral to pay homage to five Peruvian saints. During the prayer, he thanked everyone for their work in life. "We thank you in a special way for the holiness that flourished in our land. Fertilized



by the apostolic work of Toribio de Mogrovejo, magnified by the prayer of St. Rosa of Lima and St. Martín de Porres, adorned by the missionary Francis Solano and the service of St. Juan Macías."

In the encounter with the religious, priests and religious, the axis of his speech revolved around the virtue of being beacons of light and encouraged us to live with joy; to laugh in community and not the Community.

The proximity to the most vulnerable, the simplicity and strength of Pope Francis were his best testimony. He was admired, heard and respected not only by Catholics, but also by those who are not in or who are far from the Church. His message has opened a path of hope in our nation.

*Sr Rosa Luz Manrique, O.P.
Priora Federal
Federación Nuestra Sra. Del Rosario- Peru
(Original: spanish)*

FRANCIS VISITED ME AND GAVE ME HOPE!

JANUARY 20, 2018, a day that undoubtedly, will forever be marked in the history of our lives, and that will remain alive and passed from generation to generation.

A year ago this experience was very distant and unattainable. Probably we would not have lived it in such a special way, and we would have not been like family. And it really was one of the experiences that leave a mark on the heart and make our spirit grow.

I finish writing this almost two months later, and the good thing that he left us was the Good News of the pastoral visit of his holiness, Pope Francis to our country, PERU. That was news that without thinking caused a huge revolution, and I say revolution because



everything began to change unexpectedly; families took another meaning in their homes, the elderly gave smiles and glories to Heaven, the young people overflowed with joy making a mess for the visit of a faithful friend and the little ones full of dreams wanting to embrace the one who represents their pastor, such like sheep of a flock following in his footsteps.

With thousands of events happening in our country, waiting for the arrival of our pontiff was made shorter. Starting in January we had to finalize details in the three cities he would visit: Lima, Puerto Maldonado and Trujillo. At the beginning everything was very complicated, but hope was growing in our hearts and everything turned out as we thought.

It was January 18, 4:00 pm; the day had come! The media announced in all its splendor the arrival of Pope Francis in the city of Lima: "HE HAD FINALLY ARRIVED IN PERU"! Believe me, when we saw him get off that plane, we broke down in tears; our friend had arrived, the one who always encourages us and never stops praying for us. Someone for whom all young people began to sing from the soul and with all our lungs: "How can I not love you! How can I not love you! You are Pope Francis, Vicar of Christ, who has come to see us." The next day, January 19, he was already on his way to Puerto Maldonado, a black and white place, not literally but only that it's like our house, because it's full of Dominicans. Upon arriving there, Pope Francis was received by our beloved Father of the Order, Br. Bruno Cadore O.P. in the company of Monsignor David Martínez OP, Bishop of the Apostolic Vicariate of Puerto Maldonado.

Together they went to the "El Principito" shelter, where, in a very particular way, our bishop filled with the spirit of Dominic, caused confusion among the children of the native communities (as he looked just like Pope Francis) who presented great artistic dances for our smiling Pontiff.

While he was in Puerto Maldonado, in Trujillo, we could not waste time. Almost the entire city was paralyzed, all were on their way to Huanchaco, where it would be the scene of a spectacular sunrise liturgy; the various parish communities made a pilgrimage with exceptional fervor carrying their sacred images, surrounded by a living faith in search of hope. And so Huanchaco was filled, the sun began to hide, the stars began to appear and it was time to start the great vigil, all together and united in prayer for the early arrival of our Vicar of Christ in the warm north of Peru. That night, one did not feel uncomfortable despite the breeze of the sea and the rain. We all praised and prayed deeply. That night was the most magical of our lives.

When day arrived it cleared and we were ready to receive him. That day was a different dawn for all of us as brothers and sisters waited for that plane that would fly over the esplanade.



January 20, 2018, 8:00 am — in the distance, you could see a big sign: he was near! Pope Francis landed in Trujillo. Our joy was so indescribable that right now I write these lines with a matchless smile. Soon, he was received to the beat of the beautiful Marinera dance presented by the young people of Trujillo. Instantly, he came to Huanchaco, where a sea of faithful awaited his blessing. It was time for the liturgical celebration. No matter where we were, although we were a bit far, the only thing that mattered was knowing that he was there and that we were going to hear his celestial homily. Soon the Eucharistic celebration ended. We did not waste time and we flew like Andean condors. We had a goal and we were not going to stop until we got it. So, we were running desperately to get there in time, to see it happen at least for a second.

Tired, but still animated, we arrived at our parish house, which was very close to the next point to which our beloved Pope Francis would arrive. We had lunch together, caught our breath and went back on our way to the meeting place. At 3:00 pm Pope Francis was in the main square of our city, where he had to leave to meet all the priests, sisters and religious communities to whom

he left a message so full of mercy and love: "young people walk fast, but it is the old people who know the way". Those words still resonate in our hearts, as if it had only been yesterday that we had it so close and heard it. After that speech, he had to return to the Plaza de Armas. All of us would wait for him, we even remember the precise moment when everyone gathered together and with one faith, cupping our hands, we shouted with one voice with all our hearts: "FRANCISCO, FRANCISCO, HERE WE ARE," when suddenly he stopped, turned and raised his hand to say hello. THAT SECOND, ONLY THAT PRECISE SECOND WAS THE BEST OF OUR LIVES.

Now it has been more than a month since he visited Peru, and we still have that wonderful feeling of having him so close. All the messages he left us resonate, and even tears fall when remembering such an indescribable moment.

If someday someone asks, what was the best thing that happened to us in the history of our lives, believe me we would say a thousand times, FRANCIS VISITED ME AND HAD HOPE FOR ME.

Carolina Castro - MJD
Trujillo – Perú
(Original: spanish)



YOUTH PASTORAL

YOUTH PEOPLE STILL HUNGER FOR GOD



From August 21-24, 2017, at the Monastery of St. Catherine of Siena (Quito, Ecuador), we had a Vocation Conference for Young People who wanted to know more about our Dominican contemplative life.

Our Federal Mother Catalina de Jesús Almeida, O.P., sent invitations to the four Monasteries so as to work together as a federation. We were mutually enriched by this meeting with the young people.

The theme was: ***“I am at the door calling”***; *Do you dare to open to Me? “God Continues to Call at your Door”*, if you hear Him ... Answer.

We were all awaiting that morning for the arrival of the young women. The doorbell rang and the community and the Sisters who would be with them went to the main door forming a semi-circle. When the door opened, we met the girls, whose eyes said to us, “I’m hungry”, “I’m

thirsty”. I intuited in my heart through their welcome embrace that they were saying ... “Give us to eat, we desire to be filled, because we faint from hunger for God.”

The retreat of this group is a thousandth of a thousandth of 100% of the youth who have been given the opportunity to taste a new dish, totally free, making the passage from Isaiah a reality: **“It is the Lord Who speaks: Listen, all you who are thirsty, and those who have no money; Come, buy grain; come without paying for wine and milk.”**

With delightful creativity, they were offered as their first dish one of the pillars that support our contemplative life. We offered them, as little girls who cannot yet assimilate solid food, appetizers to savor little by little in silence, without spoiling them for the more delicious delicacy of the stronger main dish—the Eucharist—with its nourishing companion of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. Finally, as the dessert, they tasted the community life.

We experienced that young people are hungry for God, although they do not know that they are hungry for their Creator. As the Federation of Saint Dominic in Ecuador, we are trying to go out to meet hungry young people, who think that a mobile phone, the internet, a Tablet, a laptop or the latest technology device is everything in their lives. We know that, without realizing it, they seek to fill their interior emptiness. It is their souls that ask for help, because they are drowning from so much superficiality.

In the center patio of our Monastery, which is a homey and spacious place, we presented an energetic program, entitled: “Weaving the spider web”, which translated into our language is: “Weaving friendships and creating fraternity”. Through this strategy, we learned their names, their places of origin, why they had come and what they hoped to take away from this meeting. Everyone said they wanted to know about our life, meet Jesus, and a few said without any hesitation, “I want to be a nun”.

Fr. Orlando Rueda, O.P., who preached the retreat to the student-brothers of our vice-province, visited us and greeted the young women. He encouraged the girls in a fatherly way to open the doors of their hearts in order to allow Jesus to enter; to become friends with silence; to hear the voice of God Who gently calls us by our names.

The retreat talks offered objective guidelines and a clearing of doubts about vocational issues. One of the phrases that shook them was: “God gave us a vocation at the moment we were conceived in the womb. Now we have only dust it off and discover to which vocation God has called us.”

As a symbol of disconnecting from noise, and being amazed by God, the young women stripped themselves of all their technological devices at the time of the Offertory. During a break, we visited with Fr. Armando Villalta, O.P., prior of the vice-province St. Catherine of Siena (Ecuador). Father Villalta shared how St. Dominic de Guzmán founded the Order of Preachers and the nuns. Father told them a little about our lives, then he mentioned the great range of Orders and Congregations that are a very valuable treasure the Church possesses.

The whole community participated on the last day of the meeting. We answered concerns that arose in the group and shared some of our vocation stories. We, in turn, listened to the young women relate their experiences of these days. It was an enriching moment for all. They joyfully expressed having become a little closer to the Lord, some with tears in their eyes. They said they felt very welcomed by the warmth of our Dominican family, even more than in their own home.

They realized this through silence, prayer and liturgical singing. They discovered that Jesus has always been in their lives and that they felt loved by God. We were surprised by the initiative they took when asking us if we would repeat this encounter with longer days, because they felt that they had just awakened to something new. ... We decided to have another vocation retreat in February 2018.

I want to finish this account with the words of St. Paul, Romans 10:14: “Now, how can you invoke the one in whom you do not believe? How can they believe in Him, if it has not been announced to them?” I dare to add one more question: “How are young people going to satisfy their hunger, if we are not able to give them to God, or teach them how to taste the Love of the Divine?”

*Sr Yolanda Pico, O.P.
Federación Santo Domingo de Guzmán
Ecuador
(Original: Spanish)*



vocational encounter

OF THE DOMINICAN FAMILY

IN MEXICO



An encounter with young people is always a spark of joy in our life; the young person is looking for meaning, the meaning of his life, in search of adventures that mark his destiny, in search of great ideals, answers, challenges, utopias—in search of God. As

the Dominican family here in Mexico we had the great experience of meeting with young people, in order to promote our Dominican life—friars, nuns and sisters of apostolic life. It was a very pleasant experience full of joy and enthusiasm. The openness and availability that the young people showed in living this time with us was admirable. The

young people were very open and willing, both in the themes and in the fraternal life. There was great acceptance despite the differences, as they were men and women, professionals and students.

As a Dominican

nun, sharing what GOD does in our lives, not only with our brothers and sisters, but





also with young people who have a very ambiguous conception of us, is a very rich experience. Personally, it helps me to value the richness of my own life, the greatness of our mission in the world as daughters of such a great Father, Saint Dominic.

Not everyone understands a life of enclosure when today there is a lot of emphasis on "freedom", in breaking boundaries. In our experience there were expressions such as "I thought they (nuns) no longer existed ...", but as we got to know each other and know the importance of the life of prayer, not only in the consecrated life but in the life of every human being, we experienced that we all need GOD in our life and a life with Him makes us meet with others and allows us to act accordingly.

At the end of this short journey, in our closeness to the participants, there was no shortage of those who would approach us to ask us to have them present in our prayer. That a young man ask for prayer for himself, is much to ask, is to make a statement that in Christ we find the meaning of life and the answers to so many questions and false pleasures that the world gives them as successes. For me that represents already an achievement of GOD, the power to recognize that only with his grace we can find the path that leads life; and that a young man asks with all his heart, is the proof that youth is not lost, but only confused and in need of our GOD.



May the Lord grant us this grace as He did our Father Dominic, who found his mission and strength in life, in prayer, knowing that it is GOD who acts through us, so that all may come to the knowledge of the TRUTH.



Sister Fabiola Aguilar Frías O.P.
Federación de Santa María de Guadalupe, México
(Original: spanish)

Internacional Meeting

with the group of Dominican instructors at Prouilhe

This year we were pleased to welcome a group of about forty friars, all instructors in the various provinces of the Order, accompanied by fr Orlando Rueda Acevedo, Socius for Apostolic life, fr Vivian Boland, Socius for **Fraternal Life and Formation** and fr Charles Emeka UKWE,



Socius for Africa. The project for a two-week training course on the “Holy Dominican sites” as an itinerant session was the wish of fr Bruno, implemented by fr Orlando! Caleruega, Toulouse, Fanjeaux and Prouilhe, La Sainte-Baume in Provence then Bologna and Rome ...

It was a joy and a blessing to celebrate Mass both brothers and sisters together on Friday 20th April for the feast of St Agnès of Montepulciano. We were so happy to share lunch together in a fraternal way in the guests’ dining room. All the continents were represented and thanks to

the linguistic talents of each one, a joyful Pentecost of the international character of our Order was really felt by everyone.

Sr Lioba, Monastère de Prouilhe
(Original : french)

Homélie de la Messe – Homilía de la Misa – Homily of the Mass

Chères sœurs de Prouilhe, chers formateurs de l'Ordre : Etre ensemble ici aujourd'hui est, sans doute, un merveilleux signe de l'idéal de Dominique. Voici réunis ensemble les premières filles de l'Ordre et les formateurs des premières étapes de la vie dominicaine des frères. Vous avez tous en commun le privilège d'être les premiers dans la naissance de la vocation dominicaine.

Ustedes, queridas monjas de Prulla y queridos formadores de la Orden reunidos en este primer lugar de la vida de la Orden, son un signo maravilloso del ideal de Domingo. Las primeras monjas y los formadores de las primeras etapas de la vida dominicana de los hermanos. Todos ustedes tienen en común el privilegio de ser los primeros y las primeras en el nacimiento de la vocación dominicana.

You are together, the first nuns and the formators of the first stages of the Dominican life of the brothers. You

all are a sign of the first steps of every Dominican vocation.But I would ask you all a question according to the word of the Lord on this day: would you able to receive in your communities a person who persecuted, imprisoned and murdered Christians? Would you accept Saul of Tarsus in your vocational groups?

Si vous avez accepté avec foi le récit des Actes des Apôtres, accepteriez-vous Saul de Tarse comme candidat à l'Ordre ? Seriez-vous capables de recevoir dans vos communautés une personne qui a persécuté, emprisonné et assassiné des chrétiens ?



¿Aceptaríamos hoy en nuestras comunidades de formación un joven como Saulo aun sabiendo que ha sido el promotor de grandes persecuciones y asesinatos de los seguidores de Jesús? ¿Seríamos capaces de recibirlo como postulante o novicio, o estudiante para la Orden? ¿Sabían ustedes que « Carino », el hombre que asesinó a nuestro hermano San Pedro Mártir, después de cometer este crimen ingresó a la Orden y fue aceptado como fraile dominico?

Did you know that « Carino », the man who murdered our brother Saint Peter Martyr, after committing this crime, he joined the Order and was accepted as a Dominican friar?

Saviez-vous que “Carino”, l’homme qui a assassiné notre frère Saint Pierre Martyr, après avoir commis ce crime, est entré dans l’Ordre et a été accepté comme un frère dominicain ?

La lumière a laissé Paul aveugle pendant trois jours, comme un nouveau souvenir du tombeau. Et puis l’envoie pour annoncer la Bonne Nouvelle avec le témoignage éloquent de sa propre conversion. La lumière peut changer tout dans notre vie, la lumière du Christ Ressuscité peut transformer un criminel en apôtre, en prédicateur.

The light envelopes Paul and leaves him blind for three days, as a reminiscent of the tomb. And then he sends him to announce the Gospel with the eloquent testimony of his own conversion. The light can change all in our life; the light of the Risen Christ can transform a criminal into an apostle, in a preacher.

La luz envuelve a Saulo y lo deja ciego por tres días, como una reminiscencia del sepulcro. Y luego lo envía a anunciar el Evangelio con el testimonio elocuente de su propia conversión. La luz puede lograr que todo cambie en nuestra vida, la luz del Resucitado puede transformar a un criminal en apóstol, en un predicador.

Y esta la misión de una monja dominica y de un formador en la Orden: ser LUMEN ECCLESIAE como Domingo; ser luz desde la oración contemplativa o desde la labor formadora, para transformar las vocaciones en antorchas de luz que iluminen el mundo...

This is the mission of a Dominican nun and for a formator in the Order: to be LUMEN ECCLESIAE like Dominic; to be light from contemplative prayer or from the formative work, to transform vocations in light ... in light to illuminate the world. ..

Voici la mission d’une moniale dominicaine et d’un formateur dans l’Ordre : être LUMEN ECCLESIAE comme Dominique ; être lumière depuis la prière contemplative ou du travail comme formateur, pour transformer les vocations en flambeaux de lumière pour illuminer le monde.

*Fr. Orlando Rueda Acevedo, op.
Socio para la Vida Apostólica*



¡INNOVATION!



At the International Commission Meeting in 2017, it was proposed that two new sections be added to *Monialibus*:

- 1- One would list new publications of books or music by the nuns.
- 2- The other would provide a section where monasteries could offer equipment or goods that they no longer use, e.g. host making machines, embroidery machines, to any monastery that might be in need of them. In this section, monasteries could also let their needs be known for equipment and the like.

This could provide a splendid opportunity for solidarity among the monasteries and wise stewardship of our material resources.

Please send your contributions to Sister Lioba Hill: CIMOP18@free.fr