

# Monialibus

Nuns of the Order of Preachers



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young people, faith and vocational discernment

**SYNOD**  
of BISHOPS

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**LETTER**  
**FROM**  
**FR. CÉSAR VALERO, OP**

My dear Sisters,

Night is closing in here in Rome, still warm despite approaching autumn. I review in my mind and in my heart my visits to your communities, my encounters with you. I still have communities to know, but in these years, I have learned a lot and also enjoyed our meetings, which I thank you very much. I have a special appreciation for being with you, among you, as a brother and a servant, without any other addition or pretension. Maybe this is the reason for the joy and freedom that this service generates.

I'm not sure why I'm telling you all this. Actually, I was reflecting on the eleven points that we will study in a few days here, in Rome, with the presence, participation and representation of all the Dominican monasteries of the world.

I also thought about my conversations with you. And two comments from two of you came to me strongly. In different places and times. A sister once told me, perhaps with a certain tone of resentment and even distrust: "Why is the Order so busy with the nuns now?" Another, on the other hand, expressed the following: "Thank you for taking care of us! For so long we have been a no man's land...!".

It is possible that these last decades the Spirit of the Lord has helped us to realize that we are part of a whole: of the apostolic project of Saint Dominic at the service of the Church, and that we want to live as such.

In this time of grace that the Church herself offers to the contemplative feminine life, her heart, the Apostolic Constitution of Pope Francis, *Vultum Dei quaerere*, and the Instruction *Cor orans*. I would like that in our meetings, reflections and work to adapt our reality to these new demands. We are blessed with these two beautiful realities:

First, the consolidation of our *communio*. Thus, in communion, everything will be more intense and strong; and the result more full and complete to PRAISE the greatness of the Lord, to PREACH the wonders of His Love and to BLESS Him and all who cross our lives.

Thus, in communion, it will be easier for us to relieve each other of the adversities and sufferings that sometimes attack us.

Thus, in joyful communion, superabundant in the joy of being what we are, we will be vigilant to destroy any pernicious circle of individual or partisan interests; we can attract other dreamers, dreamers of communion and fraternity to build the world desired by God our Father.

And second, the possibility of opening the door of a bright and exciting future for those who wish to assume in their lives this wonderful path, which the Instruction *Cor orans* itself offers us in its first words: "Prayerful heart, guardian of gratuity, richness of apostolic fruitfulness and of a mysterious and multiform holiness, is the contemplative feminine life in the Church."

May St. Dominic accompany us and inspire us to make it a reality.

With brotherly affection:

Fr. César Valero Bajo, OP  
Promotor General of the Nuns

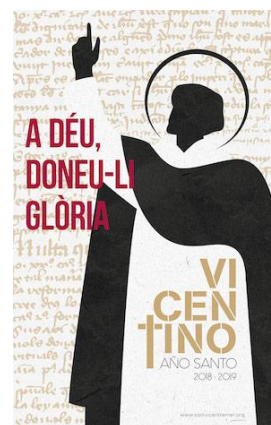
(Original: Spanish)



# Year Dedicated to St. Vincent Ferrer

## Announcing the beginning of the Holy Jubilee Year

### First Part



On April 5, 2018 all the associations and Vincentian entities of Valencia participated in the proclamation of the Holy Jubilee Year granted by the Holy See, at the request of Cardinal Antonio Cañizares, to the dioceses of Valencia, Orihuela-Alicante, Segorbe-Castellón and Tortosa, on the occasion of the sixth centenary of the death of St. Vicente Ferrer, patron of the



Valencian Community. The Dominican Family as well as religious and civil authorities were present. The ceremony took place in the cathedral and began with the inaugural lecture under the title "St. Vincent Ferrer, man of his time and today", by Fray Vito T. Gómez García, op., Professor Emeritus of the Faculty of Theology of St. Vincent Ferrer and Promoter of the Causes of Canonization of the Province of Hispania. In his lecture he said that "St. Vincent was a theologian

and philosopher in the full sense, with the ability to observe, listen, admire, pity, be tuned into the needs of others and fight for a necessary renewal ...it is a challenge for the present to bring his doctrine to our fellow citizens, so that St. Vincent will continue to preach in today's Europe and in today's world urgently in need of a new evangelization."



The opening of the Holy Year took place on April 9th at the solemn Pontifical Mass in the cathedral, where the decree granted by the Holy See was read. The homily was preached by Fray José Manuel Alcácer, op. To follow the tradition of the preaching that the Dominican saint did in the 14th century, he preached from the pulpit of the Cathedral that is preserved next to the main altar.

In his preaching, Jose Manuel Alcácer summed up St. Vincent's life as that of a man of "faith,



hope and passionate love for Jesus Christ, which pushed him to preach the Gospel everywhere" at a time when the world was "very away from God" and that his evangelization was also civilizing for "condemning abuses and injustices; contributing to a better way of life that promotes the dignity of man."

In this small article, we want to approach the figure of our brother, Vincent Ferrer who was born in Valencia on January 23, 1350, at a time when Christians, Jews and Muslims lived together, with the complexity that this entailed. The city, like much of Europe, was recovering from the recent black plague that ravaged cities, towns and villages. His family belonged to the emerging bourgeoisie, his father was a notary. The place where his house was, in the Calle del Mar, is still preserved and is familiarly called "El Pouet", or El Pocito, (the little well) where many devotees still go to drink and where there is a community of Dominican friars.



Vincent knocked on the doors of the neighboring Convent of Preachers of Valencia in early 1367. On February 5, 1367, he received the Dominican habit. In that convent, today an army barracks, is reconstructed the cell he occupied. Possibly the Dominican life that he found was not going

through its best moments, due to the decrease of members because of the great black plague, but Vincent chose to be a Dominican.

He was trained in the studies of the Order in Valencia, Barcelona, Lérida and Toulouse. In the *Studium Generale* of Lleida, he met the professor of Law, Pedro de Luna, who in time was going to be very important in his life. But above all in Lerida he came into contact with the Venerable Tomás Carnicer, who was novice master and "a man of great spirituality and very dedicated to prayer". The holy life and the style of preaching of Tomás Carnicer marked him deeply and helped him to enter into Dominican mysticism, a spirituality of incarnation, of open eyes, to see the goal of life and at the same time the reality of each day, with its poverty and the possibilities and to sow in it the seeds of the Gospel.

In Barcelona, he studied Theology, Sacred Scripture and Eastern languages. From that time on, love for the Word will always accompany him. The depth of his linguistic, historical and exegetical knowledge and the quotations placed by him on the margins of a copy of the *Summa* of St. Thomas, prove to what extent Vincent took advantage of his student days.

The time spent in various centers of study, the trips to complete his training and the interest he put into everything, made him well aware of the problems of his time and his people. Vincent was an intellectual, deeply knowledgeable of Sacred Scripture. They say that he seemed to know it by heart and always carried the Bible with him. He could engage in controversies with the rabbis in Hebrew since at that time these debates were very frequent in Spanish lands. He converted many to the True Faith.

He was a professor in Barcelona and when he returned to Valencia he was entrusted with the teaching of theology in the cathedral school, from 1385 to 1390. His energetic and practical nature impelled him not to remain closed within the limits of the classrooms and the books; he was interested in and intervened in public affairs. Some examples among many: the foundation of the Orphans and Homeless College that he founded in 1410, under the care of the Beguines, when he was passing through Valencia. After 600 years and many vicissitudes, it is still open. Through his **intervention**, the School of Grammar was founded in 1412. This would be the forerunner of the University of Valencia, which finally would be founded in 1499.

He intervened as mediator in litigation between the secular clergy and religious. He lived in a turbulent time, politically, ecclesiastically and socially, in a world that thought that the end of time was near; he tirelessly preached the conversion of heart that the Gospel asks of us.



Besides being very saintly and well prepared, Vincent was a great communicator. His sermons could last for hours and keep the attention of his listeners, something that today seems

impossible. Although he spoke in Valencian and Latin, his listeners understood. Today we would say "they stayed connected". No doubt, the force of his life coherent with the Gospel also projected the truth that he lived.

If the treasure of every man is manifested in the quality of his relationship with others and the environment that surrounds him, we deduce that Vincent had to be a man with a fascinating and attractive personality. But every person is not just relationship-communication, it is above all interiority and from there, from that interior, the relationship comes out as a result. That's why it's easy to get to this question. What was his interior life? What was his secret? One answer may be that, above all, he was a man in love with Jesus Christ and passionate about holiness; who sought and knew how to see the precious pearl of the Kingdom of heaven and put orient his life at the service of the one thing necessary. In him as in all, there would also be zones of shadow, but God was transforming them into light.

Fray Alfonso Esponera, op., who is an authority on St. Vincent, says that Vincent was a preacher convinced of his connection with his founding father, Dominic de Guzmán. The witnesses of his canonization process say so. **The Treatise on the Spiritual Life**, the only work written by him that has reached us, conveys what he thought Dominican life should be with frequent references to St. Dominic. This treaty, according to Fr. Marie-Vincent Bernadot, op., was one of the most read at the end of the Middle Ages and even years later. Some biographers mention the Treatise as frequent reading of Savonarola, St. Ignatius de Loyola, and St. Vincent de Paul. St. Teresa shows signs of knowing him well by referring to him in chapter XX of her life.

Another scholar of his sermons and treatises reflecting on the attention that aroused the public, *says that today, although we know part of his work and value it, we lack what happens at the moment. He compares it to trying to recover the speech of the professor during a class, from the notes of his students. We would arrive at a content, but not to the form of expression. The writing is only a reflection of a preaching that was very successful and that means that he had a lot of resources used wisely— gestures, expression, voice intonation, anecdotes ....all this disappears in the written text, although it has a great value.*

We get a little closer to Vincent, this fascinating man who "electrified" the masses, in the review of his life in the Breviary of the Order, which tells us that he put all his gifts of nature and grace, developed with passion, at the service of the mission of the Order, of the Holy Preaching. His apostolate brought about many fruits of conversion.

May this year be devoted to knowing his personality, his way of being a Dominican, and above all his love for Jesus Christ and all the men, whom in a first greeting he called *¡bona gent!* Good people! May it be a new call to holiness and to preach the Gospel.



*Sr M<sup>a</sup> Thérèse of Jesús Gil, op  
Monastery of the Immaculate  
Federal House and Novitiate  
Torrent, Valencia (SPAIN)*

(Original: Spanish)





## FEDERAL ASSEMBLY

### FEDERATION

### “OUR LADY OF PREACHERS”

(France, Norway, Switzerland)

**La Sainte Baume, 28th May – 3rd June 2018**

For the communities of a Federation, the general assembly is always an intense time and all the sisters prepare for it with great care. This year’s assembly was awaited with even more eagerness because since the last assembly, two new documents relative to the nuns’ life had been issued. The last one, “*Cor Orans*”, was published just a few days before our meeting. It had been announced in the apostolic constitution “*Vultum Dei Quaere*” on contemplative life, but nobody knew if it would be available before our meeting. We have been lucky, for it was issued on 15 May and our assembly was due to begin on 28 May. Many thanks to the Brother translator!

This Federal Assembly was for me a “*first*”. I thank again my community for its trust and the possibility to experience this beautiful time!

I had my journey planned beforehand but then I had to change my itinerary at the last moment due to a train strike. But thanks to this strike, we went car pooled with our sisters from Prouilhe and tasted the joy of seeing again, not only the two delegates, but also the whole Prouilhe community who welcomed us on our way.

The Federal Assembly was taking place at “*la Sainte Baume*” a place of pilgrimage where St. Mary Magdalene is venerated and even, according to some, would have dwelt. All the



historians do not agree with this, nevertheless everybody knows that St Mary Magdalene’s presence is quite strong in “*la Sainte Baume*”. We were accommodated in the guest house run by our brothers of the Toulouse Province. All the Communities of our Federation were represented: 13 French speaking monasteries situated in France, Switzerland and Norway. It was a great joy to again see sisters that I had no opportunity to meet with for ages, and also to meet those that I did not know yet. Joy also to see again the brothers.

La Saint Baume is a beautiful place, where the Internet connection does not function and the mobile phone signals are very poor! Therefore a dreaming place for everyone who does not want to be disturbed by the new technology of communication. But – well – for a federal assembly it was rather complicated and I was very frustrated, not because I am an Internet addict, but because I had not been able to feed my community on what we were doing, day after day, as I had promised them! I was really very disappointed. I felt as if I was not fulfilling my duty of delegate! Well, I told myself: one cannot have at the same time the splendid landscapes of Provence and... the Internet connection!

From the very first day we began with a joyous, simple and quick mood! We had a lot of discussions about the new instruction for the female contemplative life “*Cor Orans*” which will



be law for all the monasteries soon. We were blessed to have Fr. Philip Toxé with us, a good and ...funny canonist. Yes, one can be a very competent canonist and also be funny. Unfortunately, these qualities are not given to all canonists but they can be acquired!

Fr Philip helped us to read this document. I encourage you to read and study it. We looked closely at some of the changes asked by the instruction, among them the duties and powers of the president of the Federation, of her council and more particularly on the formation of the nuns. It is a document issued with the intention of helping female monastic communities and



it seems to me that we should read it in this spirit. It encourages communities of the same order to move towards greater collaboration and to fight isolation.

As our assembly was an elective one, we spent a good bit of time in *Tractatus*, a very Dominican practice! First for choosing the new president of the

Federation and then her council. I have been very impressed by the quality of these exchanges, with the respect towards the persons, the very good and very peaceful atmosphere, the attentive listening and the freedom of speech. Even if the *tractatus* took a lot of our time, it was a very joyful and fraternal time during which we searched to form “*one heart and one soul*”. Thanks to the sisters who have accepted different services. All the best for the work!

We read together the different reports of the federal charges: the outgoing president, our federal assistant, the sisters who have served the Federation during these past 4 years or even more for some. After each report, we looked for ways of improving the running of the Federation in the future. A very free exchange that I much appreciated.

Thanks to this assembly, I had the joy of meeting the community of St Maximin who welcomed us for a Eucharist and a very fraternal meal. A very heavy rainfall, while we were peacefully praying in the chapel, caused some damages but this did not dampen our spirit...

Sure, there was a lot of rain during this spring, even in Provence!

Thank to all the sisters of the Federation and to the brothers who participated in this assembly for a time of exchanges, sharing, joy, unanimity, and for new plans. I went back to Dax full of thanksgiving for our Dominican vocation and our Federation.

We all share the same evangelical ideal, the “*sequela Christi*”, the same charism, Dominic’s, according to the same rule, the same life of prayer and study, in view of the same service, the

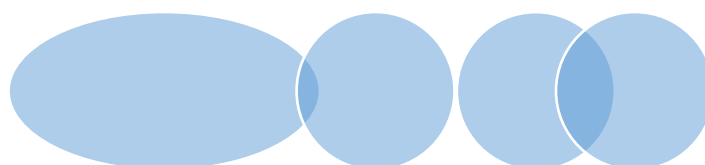
salvation of souls. We do not choose one another but we are bound together by Dominic. May we live by his charisma, “*dwelling together in unanimity, having one mind and heart in God.*”

I entrust myself to your prayer.

Fraternally

Sr Marta-Dominique o.p.  
Monastery of Dax (France)

(Original: French)



## Dominican Gormandize

You may have the occasion one day to receive an exquisite cake from the friends of your monastery—the kind for which your only desire is to keep eating it. Inevitably, because of good manners (and the Rule of St. Augustine), it would be inappropriate to do so. At the very least, you should try all the same to get the recipe!

I enjoyed an excellent dish from May 28 to June 1<sup>st</sup> 2018 at the Convent of our brothers in Sainte Baume (France). I speak not only of the colossal *rum babas* confectioned by the brothers at the conclusion of the Assembly of our Federation of Our Lady of Preachers, but the Assembly itself. Yes indeed, fantastic! You must believe me, and given that, yes, believe me, I won't even make you beg for the recipe (as it seems that it might be useful for everyone to have up their sleeve...).

To begin, the main ingredients of this Assembly 2018:

- The Federal President (Sr. Jean-Thérèse of the monastery of Orbey) and her outgoing councilors
- The assistant of the Federation, Br. Denis Bissuel, OP
- The Prioresses and delegates of the monasteries of the Federation comprised of 13 monasteries: 11 in France (one of which is on the Island of Réunion), one in Norway and one in Switzerland (mine)
- A Brother Secretary and Canonist, Br. Vincent Tierny, OP

- A second Brother Canonist and moderator at the Assembly, Br. Philippe Toxé, OP
- Reports on multiple Federation activities of the last 4 years
- A most welcoming and brotherly community of friars
- An Instruction just barely promulgated a few days earlier (and not even in French):

#### *Cor Orans*

- St. Mary Magdalene, hostess of the environs, Patroness of Preachers
- The spirit of Sr. Dominic and most of all: The Holy Spirit

#### **How to proceed?**

The secret, which depends more on a certain *savoir-être* (to know how to *be*) than on a *savoir-faire* (to know how to *do*), has to do with a preferential choice for that which unites us in relation to that which differentiates us. It has been proven that the precariousness of our communities, but also mutual familiarity, fruit of the life of the federation, favors this state of spirit.

That being said, the “ingredients” assembled alternately for liturgical prayer and work sessions, around breaks and meals that were at once fraternal, joyous, and copious, heading off to the monastery of St. Maximin or on pilgrimage to the grotto of St. Mary Magdalene. Even though united, they should not be so mixed together that they become an undifferentiated conglomerate. Bound together: yes. Indistinctly mixed up: no; and the one binding is of course none other than the **Holy Spirit**. His gifts effect unity in presenting themselves as **compassion** for the sorrowful or painful situations of our communities, in the **respectful listening** of each member, in **positive and constructive words** concerning situations and persons (and even the instructions of the CICALSAL!), in tranquil **assurance** concerning the achievements of our federal life, in **dynamism** that urges us not to rest on our laurels but to move forward, in **refusing to nitpick**, in **humor** rather than melodrama, and in **gratitude** for each one’s investment in the Federation and for the vitality of our communities.

It would be useless to water the whole thing with **joy**, for it surges up on its own accord from all this (one might say, “The meat makes its own gravy...”).

#### **The outcome:**

A Federation confirmed in its mission of mutual assistance between monasteries, provided with a new president (Sr. Agnes of Chalais) and a new council, ready to work from *cor unum* (one heart) on the integration of the new norms of *Cor Orans*, but also on the organization of federal days around the theme of sanctity, and even innovating by mobilizing around an ecological approach.

#### **The taste:**

It will last for 4 years without going bad. Quite the contrary!

Why not try it?

Sr. Anne-Sophie, OP  
Monastery of Estavayer-le-Lac, Switzerland  
(Original: French)



## Federation of the Immaculate Torrent (Valencia) – SPAIN

We met May 18-24 in the Retreat House of “La Purisima” in Alaquas (Valencia)—the Nuns of our Federation of Argentina, Chile and Spain—in order to celebrate the **X Elective Federal Assembly** and to reflect upon the present and future of the communities that compose the Federation in the light of the Lord’s Holy Spirit and with the orientations of *Vultum Dei Quaerere* and the new Instruction for the contemplative life, *Cor Orans*, published by the CSCLSAL just a few days before, precisely on May 15.

I would like to explain something about how we lived these days:

The sessions were opened by the reading of a letter from the Master of the Order, Fr. Bruno Cadore, expressing his closeness to us—other letters from the Provincial of Spain and the brothers and sisters who are accompanying us with their prayers and love were on a large table in the hall so that everyone could read them. There was voting to elect scrutators and a secretary for the Assembly, resulting in the election of: Sr. Sandra Muñoz, of the Monastery of the Immaculate (Maule de Yerbas Buenas, Chile); Sr. Maria



Joseph Almarcegui, of the Monastery of Holy Mary of the Pilar (Zaragoza, Spain); and Sr. Maria Rosario Botella of St. Domenec de Sant Cugat des Valles (Barcelona, Spain).

Afterwards, we met for commissions to formulate the job description of the new Federal Prioress. Later, there was a very interesting talk by our Religious Assistant, Fr. José Ramón López de la Osa, OP. Following that, we had a period of reflection, silence and prayer, waiting for the Spirit.

**And** ... finally, the 20<sup>th</sup> arrived. A Pentecost party for those who make history, because with this Guest of the Soul history is filled with meaning. With this infusion of the Spirit, we began the day with much hope. After the Eucharist in the morning, we elected the Federal Prioress. It lasted only a few minutes, because following the Holy Spirit, united in heart and will and the names on the ballots, ... we re-elected once again, Mother Maria Therese de Jesus Gil.



Because it was a postulation, we hoped the rapid decision would be accepted by the Congregation for the Religious Life. The following morning we already had the *placet* [yes] to the Postulation and so we could continue the work of the Assembly.

A parenthesis to describe without words, because it is impossible, everyone's joy and the organized party, embraces, congratulations ... the gift of a beautiful bouquet of flowers, that Sr. Maria Teresa asked to be taken to the sacristy ... Letters, greetings of congratulations for Mother Maria Teresa and also many adherents to the Assembly, supporting us with prayers and affection. **Thank you for everything!** And above all: **Congratulations, Mother! THANK YOU once again for accepting this Federal service.**

But ... we soon had to begin the work of electing the Councilors which, like everything, went very quickly. The Council was constituted very soon.

We thank God also for the gift of these Sisters who assist the Federation with their joy and generosity!

On the 22<sup>nd</sup>, we gathered for the commissions to work on the different suggestions that the communities had sent to the Federation pointing out the needs we had to confront for the next period of time. We mainly reflected upon the state of our communities, formation and vocation promotion.



At noon we had hugs and sisterly sharings with the Sisters of the Community of the Immaculate Conception, our Federal house and Novitiate, which was about a 10 minute walk from where we were celebrating the Assembly. It was a joy to see that the Sisters who share in the common novitiate. There were 10 Sisters, age 30 and over from different monasteries. They recalled stories of their life as Novices which we enjoyed a lot. After that, we continued with the work of the commissions.

On the 23<sup>rd</sup>, we started the plenary sessions, and the commissions presented their work. The secretary read it and the Assembly followed the text projected on a large screen. It was a simple task but very useful so we could avoid making too many paper copies.

In the afternoon, we had a pleasant surprise. As in Valencia, we celebrated the Vincentian Jubilee Year, commemorating the 600<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of St. Vincent Ferrer. We visited the house where he was born, or better, the place where his house was located, familiarly called "Pouet" (*pocito* in Valencian dialect) and the Royal Convent of the Preachers founded in 1239. This was on the land that King James I granted to Miquel de Fabra (a disciple of our father St. Dominic) so that the convent could be founded. Saint Vincent entered here and later Saint Louis Bertrand.

In 1836, the friars were expelled and confiscate by Mendizábal. Currently, the old convent of the Preachers is the seat of the General Headquarters of Land Availability, also known as the General Capitanía. The visit was arranged by Fr. José María Alcácer,





OP, Prior of the house of St. Vincent Ferrer (Pouet) and Colonel Don Estaban González Concepción, "Gentleman Juror of St. Vincent". We were guided by an Army Captain who has worked for many years on the entire restoration process and maintenance of the building. From this

experience, he had information that could be described as "first-hand". We were amazed and enjoyed seeing so much beauty.

The Church's Renaissance façade is a "*reredos* in stone" with the images of St. Vincent Ferrer, St. Dominic and St. Louis Bertrand. There is the gothic cloister, and the refectory, now converted into the Throne Room, presided over by a huge painting of the king. There is the ancient Chapter Hall, now the "Lounge of Palm Trees", because of its very four thin columns in the form of palm trees, which sustain the vault. There is the Chapel of St. Vincent, where Mass is celebrated everyday with access for the public. This Convent of St. Dominic was declared a Historical Artistic National Monument in 1931.

We celebrated Vespers in the Chapel dedicated to St. Vincent and we returned to *Pouet* to take advantage of the Jubilee. A bus took us and returned us to the house of spirituality.

We were very happy and grateful for this gift that prepared us for our work. We finished dinner and went back to the conference room to continue work. We had to make up time!

On the 24<sup>th</sup>, after breakfast we went to the Monastery



of the Immaculate where the Assembly would conclude. We left in groups, some walking, others in cars. At 10:15, we continued the remaining and pending work on specific points for clarification or proposals to approve. We concluded the X Federal Assembly with a very emotional and significant act.



Sr. Lucia Maria Puig, Mistress of the Federal Novitiate in Mendoza (Argentina), read a letter addressed to the Federation on behalf of the four monasteries in Argentina that are carrying out the procedures for the start of a new

Federation in that country. She and Sr. Adriana Maria Colombres, Prioress of the Monastery of St. Justo (Buenos Aires), delivered to the Federal Prioress in the name of those monasteries, a small monstrance, as a sign of gratitude for everything received from the Federation of the Immaculate Conception.

At the time the first group arrived in Argentina, they brought a chalice with an inscription alluding to what it would mean for the future of Dominican contemplative life in that land. After more than 50 years of that first challenge the Federation undertook, they left us a small monstrance on which they wrote: ***“United in the one same Bread and in the one same love. Your Sisters of Argentina.”***

The meaningful end of the Assembly was that the new challenges are also for us something that should involve us in the common search for the “God of now”, which is also the “Federation of now”, in the Order and the Church

Sr. Maria Rosario Botella, OP  
Monastery of St. Cugat del Vallès  
Barcelona, Spain

(Original: Spanish)

# Together on the way a Federation Colombia



At the request and invitation of our sisters of the Monasteries of Colombia, in the person of M. Teresita de la Caridad, Prioress of the Santa Inés Monastery of Bogotá we were in Colombia from July 31 to August 4 — M. Catalina Almeida, Prioress of the Santo Domingo de Guzmán Federation in Ecuador, Br. Armando Villalta Salazar, OP, Federal Assistant and your servant, Sr. Irene.

The current location where the new and beautiful monastery of Santa Inés is located, is an hour and a half from Bogotá, in the sector of Tenjo, five kilometers from the town, in the middle of a beautiful botanical forest with part of the mountain. The landscape seen from the monastery has no waste, everything invites peace, contemplation, prayer...

It is a gift from God, to be part of a family as wide and welcoming as our Dominican Order. We were received with exquisite fraternity and delicacy by our sisters.

On the afternoon of July 31, we had a meeting in an atmosphere of trust and simplicity with the entire community of Santa Inés, including those in formation. We shared briefly responding to concerns and questions about the topic of Federation.

We participated in the initiative they had taken in the Monastery of Santa Inés, naming two sisters as organizers of the Federation Project, with the mission of entering into dialogue and creating a bond of communion with the other monasteries of Colombia. Moved by this desire,

they fraternally visited the communities, where they were welcomed with joy. This initial approach to dialogue they have lived as a moment of grace and reconciliation.

On August 1 - 2, we faithfully follow a schedule proposed by M. Teresita. The topic of the Federation was fully reviewed in the light of the Apostolic Exhortation *Vultum Dei* and the Instruction for the Contemplative Life, *Cor Orans*. Fr. Armando Villalta, developed his presentation with a slide presentation:

The monasteries "su iuris"

- Federation:
  - Steps to follow to start the process of forming a Federation.
- The Federal Prioress and its impact on the communities
- Federal Council
- Other Federal Officials
- Initial and permanent formation



Several questions and concerns arose that were clarified. The sisters were able to understand the essential value of the structure of Communion that the Federation supposes. In a climate of sincerity and closeness of sisters we shared part of the process that we lived in the monasteries of Ecuador before taking the step to form the Federation. One of the common fears that appears is to think that they are going to transfer several sisters to

other monasteries and another fear is that the Federation is going to start forming a common novitiate. As we discussed, the ill-founded fears were dissipated and they were able to understand that a Federation involves a slow process of construction and that each Monastery is called upon to do its bit in search of the common good.

We had the joy of knowing the Monasteries of Duitama and Sogamoso. It was an opportunity that was used to dialogue briefly with each community on the topic of Federation. In a climate of fraternity, dreams and hope, we verified that the land was ready for the planting of the new Project in Colombia.

Everything is possible when we open our minds and hearts, letting the dream of our Father Saint Dominic become our common project, allowing the strength of COMMUNION as a river of living water, to bring down fears, both fears and doubts. Then there is the great miracle of knowing SISTERS IN ONE HEART AND ONE SOUL.

Sor Irene Díaz, OP  
ICN member for South America  
(Original: Spanish)

# *The beauty of contemplative life*

## *Our mission in the Order*

### *Europa Utriusque*

From the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> September 2018 our Euromon meeting in the region of Europa Utriusque took place in a beautiful retreat house situated in Krzeszowice, near Krakow. This was our fifth regional meeting (the first was in Prague in 2005 and the second in Germany in 2008) and our third time availing of the wonderful Polish hospitality we receive here. These meetings would not be possible without the generous support of our brothers and sisters in the Order, especially regarding their help with simultaneous translation (Polish/German/English) and arrangements for transport. In addition we have received generous donations towards our expenses from the Provinces of Poland, Teutonia, South Germany/Austria and Portugal and from the Lay Dominicans in Dusseldorf, Germany – for all

this we are truly grateful.

The theme chosen for this year's meeting was - ***The beauty of contemplative life – our mission in the Order of Preachers -***

VDQ, *Cor Orans* and LCM. A preparatory



committee representing the language groups met in Krakow in May 2017 where we delegated various tasks – we were able to continue with the preparatory work via email.

This year we were 25 nuns coming from 14 monasteries in Poland, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Norway, Portugal and Ireland. While this is only the fifth time holding a meeting for our whole region, the prioresses and delegates from the monasteries in Eastern Europe and the German speaking monasteries have been meeting annually, according

to language groups, for over twenty five years – each inviting representatives from the other language group.

Throughout the meeting, while gently challenging and encouraging us, the support, concern and care of our brothers in the Order was exemplary. The promoter for the Nuns, fr César Valero Bajo OP was present with us for the whole meeting; the Master of the Order, fr Bruno Cadoré OP and the procurator general, fr Benjamin Earl OP were with us on Saturday and Sunday; fr Philippe Toxé, former procurator general was also present. The Polish Provincial, fr Paweł Kozacki OP and the promoter for the nuns in the Province of Poland, fr Tomasz Nowak OP, were also with us – their presence was very much appreciated by our Polish sisters as the Provincial is the Religious Ordinary for the Polish monasteries.

Our first morning, after introducing ourselves and our communities, Sr Stanisława, our representative on ICN and fr César gave us detailed reports on their role and work on behalf of the nuns. In the afternoon Sr Marie, prioress of the Prague community, shared a reflection on Scripture and Faith based on the Book of Job. This was followed by sharing in small groups and a short plenary session.

On Day 2 fr Philippe Toxé spent the whole day on his presentation on VDQ and CO – which was very helpful and prepared us for the following two days. Fr Bruno and fr Benjamin were with us on Day 3 and until after lunch on Day 4 – it would be impossible to give a detailed report within the limits of this article but I will do my best to give a little taste of what we experienced during these days.

Fr Benjamin's presentation focused on the themes identified for discussion at the Macro-Encounter scheduled to take place in Rome at the end of September. For the remainder of the time he, fr Bruno and fr César shared their reflections and answered our questions.

Reflecting on the Incarnation of the Eternal Word of God and our vocation in the Order of Preachers, fr Bruno reminded us that the Word became flesh and lived among us because He desired to come close to humankind and in turn to inspire us to open our hearts to come close to Him. The Order of Preachers announces this coming of the Lord and our vocation as nuns in the Order of Preachers is to be open places of silence and listening where this conversation between God and the world takes place – so that humankind may not forget that Someone desires very much to enter dialogue with us. Contemplatives keep alive in our world in silent prayer this conversation with the Lord – the nuns bring the intercession of the whole Order before the Lord, being preoccupied always with the salvation of all people. In order to do this we must first live fraternity in our communities – we must preach communion by the witness of our lives. Our community life is to be a human way of life – we must not overlook our humanity and the importance of showing gentleness, kindness and respect in our relationships with each other. We must preach communion by our own conversion to communion. We have a responsibility towards our older sister to ensure that we take good care of them and we all

have responsibility for ongoing formation – not to become more intelligent but to become more free – free to live a human way of life. He also said that the nuns have a powerful capacity to convoke the whole Order and encouraged us to make Advent a time for prayer for peace and justice and invite other members of the Dominican Family to join us in prayer.

In his homily at the opening Eucharist the Polish Provincial suggested the need to be ready to be surprised by the Holy Spirit and certainly as the meeting progressed it was quite obvious that the Holy Spirit was present among us, helping us to overcome some of our fears and reservations regarding the possibility of forming an association of the whole region with all its diversity of language and culture.

On our final day fr Bruno again encouraged us to see these documents from the Holy See as opportunities to reclaim our true identity as Nuns of the Order of Preachers and invited us to think together with the same concern for our future - we need to trust in the Lord who calls us in hope to seize this precious moment. These structures are also a means for being faithful to the spirituality of our Father Dominic - governance and oversight of monasteries are the things he mentioned in the only letter we have from his hand to the nuns in Madrid.



As this assembly does not have the faculty to make decisions regarding our monasteries, we reached a consensus that Sr Stanisława will circulate a questionnaire to all the monasteries asking if they are open to explore the possibility of entering an association with the other monasteries of the region etc. The answers will be co-ordinated by a small working group and preparations for the next regional meeting will follow.

In concluding the meeting fr César mentioned that the communion of our monasteries in the midst of the social reality of this region can be a parable of communion and a wonderful

preaching for societies around our monasteries. If we live our life with passion maybe others will be attracted to join us. He encouraged us to convoke young people to our monasteries to share with them our life – for this we need patience and perseverance. The future of the Order and of our monasteries is in God’s hands but if we live deeply today we open doors for our future. Adjusting our life to comply with VDQ and CO is a Kairos moment – a moment of grace – where the Holy Spirit is working with us – may St Dominic intercede for us. Fr César left us with 3 imperatives: love each other, take care of each other and share our communion with the society around us.

On Monday morning after Eucharist and breakfast we bade farewell to each other, happy to have shared these four days together and now to return to our communities and share with them some of what we have experienced. Once again we are very grateful to Sr Stanisława and to all our Polish sisters who welcomed us so warmly to their beloved country.

Sr M Breda OP (Drogheda)

(Original: english)

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## **THIS IS THE WORK OF THE LORD... COCHABAMBA (BOLIVIA)**

***"It is the Lord who has done it, it has been a clear miracle"*** (Ps. 117, 23)

Dear Sisters, since the last time we shared the joy of our community blessings and the consecration of our Monastery Church, our Good Father has not stopped blessing our small community. At the end of the year we had the joy of receiving our sister, Sr. M. Esther who returned home from completing her canonical novitiate in order to prepare for her First Profession on January 6, 2018. There was immense joy sharing with the faithful who are close to our community and their families. Meanwhile, the construction work on the Monastery was well-advanced and concluded at the end of February. It was blessed on March 15th.





Another of our joys and blessings was to receive two more Sisters from the Monastery of St. Catherine in Lima, Peru. They unite with this Work of God and in this way complete the necessary number so our Monastery can fulfill the necessary

requirements for Canonical Erection. It is a dream after months of waiting. It was with much emotion that we received the Decree of the Erection on the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, June 8th of this year.

After this introduction I want to have our sister, Sr. M. Esther share about her vocational call!

*Ave María!*

*“Dear Sisters, I decided to begin by thanking God with the words of the psalmist who says: “If the Lord does not build the house, in vain do the builders labor” because now my beloved land of Bolivia has a Dominican monastery to raise its songs of praise and supplication to our Loving Lord.*

*From when I decided to consecrate myself to the Lord my heart was divided, because my first contact with the consecrated life was with the sisters of apostolic life; but there was something within me that impelled me to seek a more intimate union with Him, a deep desire to save souls. I felt responsible that because of my poor prayers there were many souls suffering in purgatory and many people who did not know our Savior. Unable to be divided anymore, I decided to do a month-long Aspirancy in a monastery and since the Lord granted me the Dominican charism, I started my search. It was not easy. Cochabamba is big and the Sisters no longer lived near the city. As the saying goes: “asking, you get to Rome”; so with great hope, asking, I arrived at the Monastery of Saint Dominic.*

*Living there for a month marked me deeply in two ways: the time of personal prayer with the Blessed Sacrament in silence and the fraternity of a very united and cheerful community despite the difficulties involved in founding a monastery.*

*When I decided to enter the monastery, a priest told me that not all sisters could be founders. Much courage was needed: courage to leave your monastery, your country, to live in community with sisters of different monasteries. All this means dying a little so that God will make a new community.*

*I understood that literally, but when I had to leave my monastery for my time of formation (since the monastery was not canonically erected) I was able to value even more my sisters in community, all the personal, psychological and spiritual sacrifices that all of them have made during these years of foundation. As I said earlier, I had to do my year of novitiate in the*



*Monastery of Saint Catherine in Arequipa, Peru. It was a very enriching experience. I could appreciate its authenticity. Although we are all Dominican nuns, each monastery is unique with its own traditions that characterize it. One of the beautiful gestures that I had from the formation community was to maintain my unity and ties of fraternity with my original community; a gesture that was manifested by granting me the grace to participate in the blessing and consecration of the Church.*



*After the canonical year I returned in December 2017, with the joy of making my first vows. My surprise was greater that the construction of the monastery was almost completed.*

*As you know, Sisters, one of the things that characterizes our contemplative life is silence, and that*

*was another of the sacrifices that my beloved sisters had to go through with all the machinery and workers in the construction that lasted almost two years; but with the grace of God and the economic and spiritual help of the founding monastery the work were completed.*

*On March 15, 2018, we had the Solemn Mass of Thanksgiving and the Blessing of the Monastery of Saint Dominic. As Qoheleth says: "a time to build ..." Everything has its time, now for us, it is time to live.*

*As on November 21, 2008, five nuns came to Bolivia with the joy and excitement of completing the Dominican family in this country; nine years after the journey and facing all their difficulties, on June 8th at the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus; so we, too, had the joy of receiving the promulgation of the Canonical Erection of the first*



*Dominican Monastery in Bolivia. Father Master Bruno Cadore named as the first prioress, Sister Mary Eufemia of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Pinedo Ochoa.*

*I thank our beloved Lord and my community for giving me the opportunity to be a part of this monastery and to be able to share the difficulties, joys, dreams, hopes that come with forming a new community."*

How can we not take advantage in this sharing of all the effort, work and affection with which our sisters of the Federation Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary of Peru have accompanied us, and especially the Monastery of Saint Catherine of Arequipa, the founding monastery.

Sor Eufemia, OP  
Monastery of Saint Dominic  
Cochabamba, Bolivia

(Original: Spanish)

# «Your people will be my people»

## Ruth, 1-16

When she says these words to her mother-in-law Naomi, Ruth is making a radical choice: she is leaving her own people to belong to another race. This text from the Bible came into our minds over and over again as we were working with friends to prepare our official entry I to the new Diocese, and it was a great joy to hear the Bishop Mon. Gianni Sacchi, saying at the end of the celebration of the Eucharist: “Thank you for coming here, among our – now your own people!”



There are unique moments in the life of a nun or a community when words that have been spoken, heard, repeated, take on a completely new meaning: how often have we heard someone say that we are at the heart of the Church? And

every one of us believes it! But then there comes a time when you no longer just believe it: you know it, you have direct experience of it. We’ve been living here by now for three months, celebrating the Liturgy of the Hours and the community Mass in the Sanctuary, day after day having direct experience (again!) of the tenderness of God that is made manifest in meetings, in the faces of the people who approach our choir after Mass – or in the new bread we found hanging on the door handle the day we arrived! It’s of small importance if even when we celebrate Vespers only a few people (so far!) come up to join us in prayer, but we *know* we’re here for these people, for this “people of God” who have welcomed us with affection and joy, counting on our presence.

*Our* people: we are consecrated by God, to God, for this people of *ours*, whom we don’t know yet, but to whom we belong. On 1 September, at 5 pm, there wasn’t a single free seat in the Sanctuary: those present were the people we’ve got to know in the past few months and others who have followed us from our old premises.

With them there was the whole Dominican Family, *our* Family.



There were our sister nuns from four monasteries, Azzano, Pratovecchio, Montefiore and Bergamo, and we are still grateful to this last for having taken on the juridical responsibility for our foundation at the beginning, almost twenty years ago.

There were brethren from the communities of Turin, Chieri and Agognate, who will be the closest to our monastery. Br César was there, greatly impressed by the welcome we have received; Br Giuseppe Sabato, Vicar of the Master of the Order for the Italian monasteries; and Br Massimo Rossi representing the Prior Provincial. And there were Br Viktor Hofstetter and Br Carlo Avagnina, who with Br Timothy Radcliffe supported and accompanied the birth of our community.

In addition, all the Dominican Sisters present in the Diocese were there to welcome us, as well as those we had known in Turin, and the lay Dominicans from several fraternities: some of them we were meeting for the first time!

We were also surrounded by various priests from our new Diocese and others from the Diocese of Turin who celebrated with us – “setting us on our way” on this new adventure.

The celebration began, then, with a long procession during the singing of the refrain “Laudate Dominum” which accompanied the singing of the Magnificat, and ended with the singing of the Salve Regina and O Lumen Ecclesiae.

Just before that, our Prioress Sr Gabriella thanked all those present and absent who had made it possible for us to be here:

*“Thank you to all the friends (there are so many of you!) who have been and are close to us: with you and through you we have grown in humanity, we have shared the hope, the joy and the effort of faith and of everyday life. Without your help we would never have been able to move house in such a short time and to have already organised (almost!) what is now our monastery. Thank you all, from the bottom of our hearts”.*



There followed a long ovation that took our breath away, so powerful was the emotion and the feeling of being embraced by the Church. The Bishop spoke then, before dismissing the congregation, pointing out our mission in very simple words that seem prophetic: “May your lives express the beauty of God and his tender love for humanity”.

Before leaving the Sanctuary, the Prioress read the prayer with which we entrusted our community to the Virgin Mary, venerated here as Mother of God.

With this prayer, which we consign to each one of you and to your communities, remember us to the Lord, that our lives may be to his glory and for the salvation of our brothers and sisters.

*Mary, Mother of God,  
we are here, today, before you,  
in this Sanctuary  
where you are venerated as Our Lady Queen of Crea,  
to begin a new stage of our progress as a monastic community.  
With trust and hope we entrust ourselves to you as we take the first steps  
as living members of the Church that is in Casale  
which today welcomes us with fraternity and joy.  
You who are the Prophetess of the newness of God,  
make us capable of seeing and pointing out the actions of God in this moment of history, which  
can always renew every existence and situation in life.*

*Virgin of silence and of listening,  
who embraced in your body the Word of Life,  
make us witnesses of the joy of belonging to the God of all mercies.  
Sister of the poor,  
who always watch over the little ones, the oppressed, those on the outskirts of history,  
teach us to give voice to those who have no voice,  
with the hope you have given us in the Magnificat.  
Strong, free woman, who made God's project your own,*

*grant that we may embrace the Spirit that reveals to us the Truth of your Son.  
Mother of mercy,  
teach us to be sisters at the side of those who feel lost or marginalised,  
of those who find it hard to believe, of those who are looking for light for their existence.*

*Mary, Mother and sister,  
intercede for us and for all our brothers and sisters in the Church of Casale,  
for our Order,  
for all those who have given us and still give us the gift of their friendship.  
With your Son, Jesus, our Lord,  
watch over each one of us, Mary,  
Watch over our community and guide our progress.  
Amen.*

With the whole community,  
Sr Gabriella op, Prioress  
Monasterio di Moncalieri, Italia

(Original: english)



## Three weeks at the Monastery of Rweza, Burundi

In 1974, the community of Taulignan, France, founded a community of Dominican Nuns in Rweza, Burundi, Africa. In 1988, this community, now entirely composed of native sisters, became autonomous while keeping its close ties with its founding community. In 2018 it marked the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its canonical erection.

The community of Taulignan felt it appropriate that I, the current prioress of the founding monastery, be present at the anniversary celebration. Brother Antoine Desfarges, a friend of our community and Benedictine from the Abbey of Bec-Hellouin in Normandy, France (benefactress of the Rweza monastery) volunteered to accompany me. I accepted his offer with joy, happy to have a brother to share in my trip, in spite of not having been an airplane for more than 40 years(!). So, on June 24 (having left France the evening before), I found myself in the Brussels airport, my heart beating. Having never been to Africa, I was eager for this new adventure and ready to embark on a journey of eight hours to our destination in Bujumbura,

capital of Burundi. I was not going to miss any part of the landscape which passed before my eyes as I prepared myself to encounter this country, its terrain, and, most especially, the faces of the sisters.



When we arrived at 8 p.m. at Bujumbura, Sister Claire, prioress of Rweza, was waiting for us at the airport with Brother Liboire, a Dominican friar from the convent at the capital. What deep and joyous emotion to experience our simple yet profound fraternal communion, the blessing of belonging to a universal Order! We had to stay overnight in the friars' convent before setting out the next day to Rweza. It was a pleasant night spent under a mosquito net, covered with anti-mosquito cream because, as good Europeans, we fear the diseases carried by these little beasts. We arose at 6 a.m. for 6:30 a.m. Mass at the convent of the Missionaries of Charity (the friars' Mass was in the late afternoon). This placed us in the world of the "Other." The chapel was filled with faithful of all ages, even children, all dancing joyfully in their faith. The Mass in Kirundi (the country's language) was word for word that of the Roman Church, which both of us French were grateful for! A first marvelous contact with the faith of this land whose inhabitants are 80% Catholic.

It was a three-hour car trip to Rweza, situated at a plateau of 1700 meters; here the distances are calculated in hours and not in kilometers, since the majority of the population travels on foot. This is a people who walk. During our journey, the brother who drove us explained and responded to the questions we asked about the country and its inhabitants. While I listened, I could not stop marveling at the beauty of the land, the superabundant vegetation, bananas, eucalyptus, palms, the fields of tea and coffee, and the hills.

The country is aptly named "Land of a Thousand Hills" because of its gentle rolling hills. My heart beat faster when we arrived at the monastery compound, my heart and eyes opened wide to embrace my sisters and hear to their names.



The community is composed of 18 sisters: 4 temporary professed, 3 novices, a postulant with the sweet name of Violette, and an aspirant on the way. The buildings are located on a plateau, opening onto a magnificent landscape of hills where the green of the vegetation alternates with the red of the earth, an invitation to silence and contemplation. Three weeks of common life unfolded, the first, wholly



dedicated to the celebration of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the monastery's independence, was joined to the temporary profession of Sister Marie Bernadette and Sister Marie Espérance. The second was a tour of the country and its Christian history, and the third "studious" week was spent sharing in knowledge (through lectures, chant).

The preparations for the June 30<sup>th</sup> celebration were undertaken with feverish excitement. I observed sisters carrying cookware, cushions, and mattresses (all on top of their heads, of course), always ready to smile for photos, astonished at my astonishment! The day of the celebration arrived. Bishop Stanislas Kaburungu (Emeritus Bishop of Ngozi) presided at the Eucharist. Bishop Kaburungu had first received the sister foundresses (including our Sister M. Pascale who is still alive at Taulignan!) in the diocese and supported them, so his presence made for a beautiful continuity. The choir invited everyone in the congregation, friends of the community and the sisters' families, to sing joyfully and wholeheartedly the wonderful hymns in their lovely language which is as sweet as its hills.



We white-skinned foreigners joined in the dancing, praying with body and soul, despite feeling rather clumsy in comparison to the graceful and supple movements of the Africans. At the Offertory Procession, the two newly professed sisters crossed the chapel, the gifts in baskets carried upon their heads with such poise, simplicity, and

nobility. After the Post-Communion Prayer, a series of speeches were given: the history of the monastery by a Dominican friar then a brief word from me on the unity of our communities and my joy at being there, followed by more remarks given by a friend of the community, the brother of one of the newly professed sisters, and the bishop. What a wonderful experience of the spoken word, an art form in this country where the importance of oral communication produces natural orators! Then came the reception, which was for me a continual spectacular fashion show of loincloths, every one more colorful than the others, while lovely children engaged in delightful and free-spirited dancing!

After a welcome Sunday rest, it was a day to discover the country. Leaving at 6 a.m. in a minibus loaned by the chancery, we visited the site of the country's first parishes, traveling across varied landscapes to roadside villages, which revealed the poverty of the inhabitants (neither water nor electricity, of course), where people walk, laden with provisions, bunches of bananas, and material. The roads are lined with this population who walks. Where are they going? Where are they coming from? In search of 10 liters of water and then carrying it back...so the day passes swiftly; the government's social services has a lot of work to do, even though it is making efforts to build schools where the children may have access to education. But in the evening these children return to their small family houses, where they speak only Kirundi, without electricity...

Highlights from this amazing trip, which was almost a complete tour of the country (which is roughly the size of a French administrative department), include the size of the churches, filled to capacity every Sunday, the superabundance of vegetation which evoked for me the third day of the Book of Genesis, with its freshness and new beginnings. Then, we went on a brief sightseeing tour of one of the sources of the Nile River, symbolically charged with the shadow of Moses and our Bible, before reaching the village of Buta, site of the graves of 40 young seminarians, "The Martyrs of the Christian Fraternity" who died (in 1997) because of their refusal to yield to the demands of their murderers that they identify themselves by their (Hutu or Tutsi) ethnicity.



From these white tombs, a spirit of youth, of life, emanates from this place, a life stronger than death. "Do not fear those who can kill the body." The sanctuary is just as impressive for on its walls are the faces of these young men, surrounded by white and black angels! This remarkable place makes one silent yet it also proclaims the universal call to brotherhood, an oasis of greenery as beautiful as the gift of these young people who would not be separated from the love of their brothers.

We also visited the site where the first missionaries arrived and hid the first cross at the end of the 19th Century. This cross was preserved by the community of the first Christians here, where it is held in veneration. What a weight of faith and history to acknowledge in living the Eucharist today at this site of the country's first Eucharist!

Finally, after a last week at the monastery with its simple rhythm of community life, we returned to Bjumura to catch our flight back home in the middle of the night; but in our suitcases we brought back Sr. Justine Marie, the novice mistress, for a six-month stay at the monastery of Taulignan. (Now it is Sister's turn) to set out and discover! The Order is truly universal and what a great joy that it is so! IMANA ININHAZUE! (May God be praised!)

Sister Dominique, op  
Monastery of La Clarté Notre Dame, Taulignan, France

(Original : French)



## Construction project of the Monastery of Vietnam

At our CIMOP meeting in October 2017, Sister Theresa shared with us the good news that they had finally obtained permission from the government for the construction of a Monastery. By request she wrote a little article for Monialibus. Here is what she shares with us:

*"... I hesitate to send the letter to Sr. Prioresses and the Sisters. However, I am encouraged by your reminder. I am still working hard with the government in our country about the building. Please read my letter and put it in the Monialibus if you think that it is good thing.*

*Sr Theresa"*

## The Letter from Vietnam Monastery:

The Dominican Monastery of Our Lady of the Holy Spirit  
572/C Ngu Phuc, Ho Nai 3, Trang Bom, Dong Nai – Viet Nam  
Tel: 0 (84) 251 398 4822 – Email: danviendaminh@yahoo.com

July 23, 2018

Dear Sister Prioress and the Sisters,

Happy feast of St. Dominic, our Father!

I would like to send you warm greetings from our Dominican Nuns of the Monastery in Viet Nam.

I, the undersigned, is Sr. Theresa Bui Thị Tam, OP, Prioress of the Dominican Monastery of our Lady of the Holy Spirit. Our Monastery was founded in 2002 by the Farmington Hills Monastery in USA and officially erected by the Holy See on March 25, 2014. Currently we have 10 nuns, 5 novices, 1 postulant and four aspirants. Total 20 members.

After many years of waiting in prayers and patience we have got the written permission from the government for building the monastery in the year of 2018. We are delighted that thanks to this permission, our real monastery is to take shape, and most importantly we are able to welcome those who are interested in Dominican monastic life.

Without God's help, we can do nothing with this big project. We trust in our Lord's providence, that He will build the monastery for us through His children, and you are among them.

We plan to build the monastery with all ground floor with roof tiles on a hill in three stages from 2018 to 2020:

The first stage:

- A long wall around the land
  - The Chapel
  - Library and archives
  - A house for Novices and work rooms
  - Refectory and community room

-The second stage:

- A house for professed Sisters
- Parlor and guest house
- A house for postulants and aspirants

-The third stage:

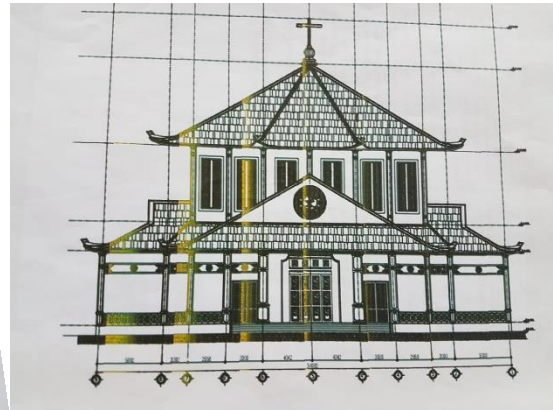
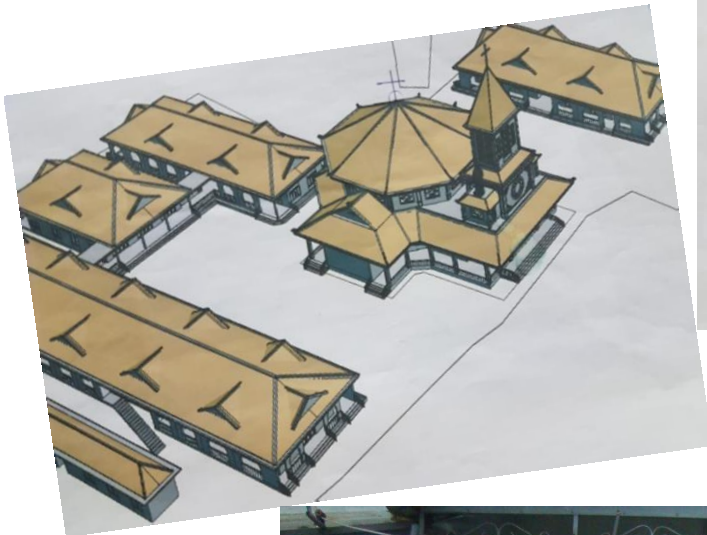
- The Infirmary
- House for new candidates

**TOTAL COST FOR THE BUILDING: 1,096,419.88 Euros**

We humbly ask for your prayers and generous help to do God’s will for us, for the benefit of the Order and for the Church. May our Lord bestow countless graces upon you through the intercession of St. Father Dominic, our dear Father.

Sincerely in St. Dominic,  
Sr. Theresa Bui Thi Tam, OP,  
Prioress

(Original: English)



*Thank you Sr. Theresa for entrusting your project to us all – this way it becomes really our project and makes us responsible for the future of **our** monastery in Vietnam. Our fraternal prayers will accompany you and we promise to keep our eyes open to see where and how concrete material help can be found! May God bless you; may He grant you all you need to bring this beautiful project to completion!*

# THE DOMINICAN MONASTERY IN VIETNAM

## WELCOMING THE STATUE OF THE LADY OF FATIMA

On February 13, 2018 at 6:30 p.m, the sisters gathered to welcome the Statue of the Lady of Fatima. Father Peter Dinh Quang Manh Hung, OP, celebrated the solemn reception and the mass for the community and a large number of parishioners attended. After the Mass, they took turn for adoration before the Blessed Sacrament and said the Rosary praying for the Church, Diocese of Xuan Loc and for the world.



At 4 p.m on February 14, Ash Wednesday, the Sisters brought the statue of Mother to the "promised land". At 5 p.m. the Novice Sisters offered flowers in a simple filial manner before the Holy



Mother. Sister Teresa Tam, OP, Prioress, gave "The Holy Mary's look" sharing very heartily before the celebration of the Mass. Father Dominic Trinh Dinh Cuong, pastor of Ngu Phuc Parish and Father Fx. Nguyen Thanh Hoai, SJ, offered the Mass of Ash Wednesday and anointed ashes for about 1000 attendees.

Fx. Nguyen Thanh Hoai, SJ., gave a very lively and witty, easy-to-remember homily... The singers of the parish were in purple uniform, singing devoutly and wholeheartedly.

After the Mass, Fr. Dominic Pham Trong Xuan, pastor of Lo Duc Parish and a large number of parishioners came to welcome the Statue of the Holy Mother to Lo Duc Parish though it was the first day of the Lunar New Year 2018. The liturgical community waved their hands, saying "good bye" to the Holy Mother of Fatima, remembering how much precious the time when she stayed with them. It is believed that her abundant blessings always remain with her little children to accompany, sustain and protect them in all steps of their life.



*Sr. Theresa Bui Thi Tam, OP*

# “LETTING THE LIGHT SHINE BRIGHTER...”

## Celebrating the 100th Anniversary of our Monastery

In 2012 the North American Association of Dominican Monasteries held its General Assembly at the Motherhouse of the Dominican Sisters in Springfield, IL. Our Master, fr. Bruno Cadore, joined us for a few days as we discussed the difficult questions of the viability of our monasteries, our future and most importantly how our monasteries are places where the Word of God is pondered and preached through hospitality to those who come.

The assembly theme once again sparked our dream of building a new addition where we could more adequately welcome the people who come to our monastery: from the families of the sisters and friars and young women discerning their vocation to the anonymous person who comes each day to spend time in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament or the person who comes to the tiny office in the vestibule to get a Perpetual Enrollment or to purchase something from the tiny closet we called the “gift shop”.

You see, on October 2, 1919 when Mother Mary Imelda and fourteen sisters came from the Perpetual Rosary Monastery in Union City, NJ they had plans to build not just a monastery but a BASILICA in honor of our Lady of the Rosary! It would have fifteen side altars each dedicated to the Rosary. If you have been to the Basilica in Lourdes, France, you know just what I mean. The founding community started out *at the Ter Mer Estate on 63 New England Avenue here in Summit*. The community grew rapidly and they were crammed into that spacious house and the annex that was built to give them more workrooms and more tiny, tiny cells.

Not only that, just a few months after the sisters came to Summit a group of laypeople from Paterson, New Jersey came to the makeshift monastery on pilgrimage and a year later a round stone chapel was built that would be the site of future pilgrimages to Our Lady of the Rosary. That 1921 pilgrimage had an estimated crowd of 2,000! During the years leading up to World War II an estimated 50,000 pilgrims would come to that little chapel to honor Our Lady. There were special buses and trains to Summit. Dominican friars would preach a sermon and there were processions along the streets and down Springfield Avenue. At that time Summit did not have a very big Catholic population so such processions were not received warmly!

The crypt chapel of the future basilica was started in 1925. However, the Great Depression and a debt of \$120,000 halted the building progress. The crypt chapel was covered with tarp and the Sisters could only pray and work for the day when they could continue. Finally, in 1937, permission was given to resume building but with the caveat that the ENTIRE monastery and chapel would have to be built on the existing crypt chapel! Plans were radically altered and the nuns’ living space was sacrificed so that a large chapel could be built. The chapel holds about 350 people and is about the size of our parish church down the street. The nuns’ choir has 52 choir stalls with much fewer cells for Sisters! The living areas of Chapter Hall, Infirmary, Community Room, Kitchen, refectory and cells, are all a mere 6 feet (not even 2 meters) off of the Choir and Chapel.

The old monastery was used as a guest house but in the 1960's the old monastery was demolished leaving the community to create an apartment in the basement for guests.

Over the years there were preliminary sketches to build onto the monastery but the sheer amount of work and costs would shelve the dream. In 2008 we renovated our kitchen and refectory and again drew up plans for a new wing which would not only have an area for guests but additional cells and infirmary. But it was not in God's timing as the very week we went public with our plans to begin fundraising the stock market crashed!

After the General Assembly, the plan was revived as a group of friends of the monastery offered to form a committee to help us plan for the future especially as the monastery was beginning to show signs of needing major repairs. The plans of 2008 were reduced and fundraising began in earnest with the goal of completing the new wing by the time of our 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2019.

Thanks to so many, many friends and to our contractor, Mr. James Prisco, the project was given a real push and we broke ground on January 23, 2018. The crew hasn't stopped since that day. Part of the enclosure wall was demolished and the foundation laid and each day brings visible progress. The whole project has been the means to expand our trust in Divine Providence because from the start we were told that there was no way we could raise the money needed. Costs have risen and we are still in need of about 1 million dollars but God has provided all through this project in ways we could have never foreseen or imagined and we can only trust that "He will bring this good work to completion".

It has been an exciting time for the community. There has been some upheaval with the noise and the daily presence of a work crew along with other contractors inside the monastery and within the enclosure. Electrical and water shut offs are a nearly weekly occurrence not to mention the rewiring of our telephone and internet. We've adapted and welcome the quiet of the evenings and weekends with renewed appreciation.

Planning and designing the new wing was driven by multi-faceted needs. Probably the top priority was to make sure that our monastery and chapel are completely accessible to all and not prevented because of the stairs. The new wing will allow for complete accessibility including the guest rooms, dining room, etc. The floor of the "old parlor" was partly torn up to create a





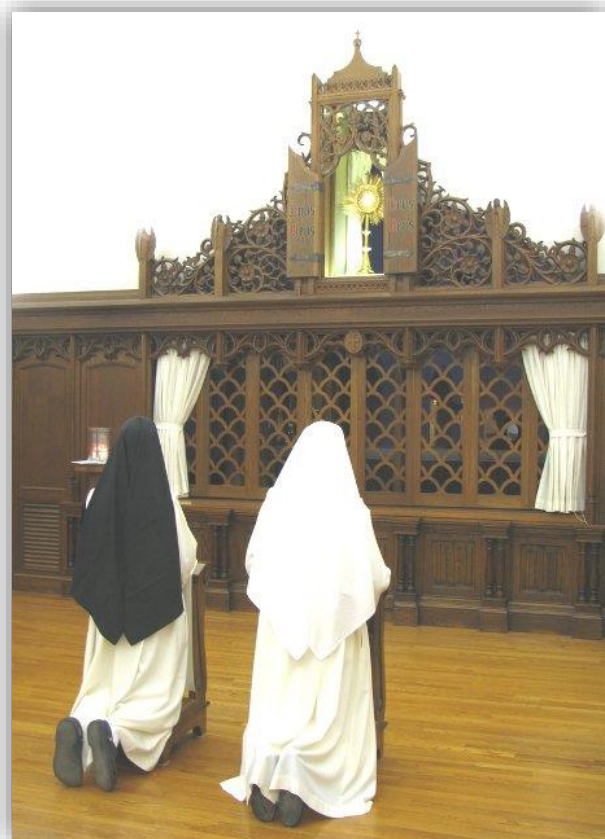
ramped hallway to the chapel, a project that should have been simple but revealed a maze of water and heating pipes set into a concrete sidewalk!

The ground floor will be for us and include workrooms and a physical therapy/exercise room and technology/phone rooms which will give the sisters privacy on the phone and a place for videoconferencing, online courses, etc. In the current monastery there was no place to have a phone conversation without everyone around hearing it because when the monastery was built only the prioress used the phone.

Our community is opening our Centenary Year on October 2, 2018 with celebrations to take place throughout the year. It is also the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the dedication of our chapel. We have petitioned the Holy See for a plenary indulgence for those who make a pilgrimage to our monastery during this jubilee year. In the spring we hope to have the dedication of the new wing and open house. Within the jubilee year 2 of our Sisters will be celebrating their own jubilees of profession. Sr. Mary Catharine's 25<sup>th</sup> in November and Sr. Mary Martin's 50<sup>th</sup> in June. Truly this is a year of many blessings for which we thank God for his goodness and mercy.

Sr. Mary Catharine Perry, OP  
Monastery of Our Lady of the Rosary  
Summit, NJ USA

(Original: English)



# "THE DOMINICAN FAMILY TO MEET YOUNG PEOPLE"

We present a summary of the meeting of the Dominican Family that took place in Caleruega in the month of July. This year the motto was: *The Dominican Family Meet Young People*.



Two Nuns from the Monastery in Vitoria, Spain participated in the meeting, who, since the last issue of *Monialibus*, requested this collaboration about the current reality of young people and its implications for the Order concerning them. It was the fruit of reflection on the announcement of this meeting. We consider it important for the nuns, to get a little closer to current feelings of young people, to listen to them and learn their situation and outlook.

The meeting was accompanied by brothers and sisters experienced to work with youth and who are in direct contact with them. Thus, the importance of their exhibitions, their study and their experiences, with an ever new and forward-moving unity.

## YOUNG PEOPLE

The first presentation was given by Sister Isabel Gorriz Moreno, DEIC. The title of her talk was, *The young person on the way to Emmaus*.

Sister spoke to us from her deep involvement with young people and gave clues on how to accompany young people; how to “be experts in humanity” (with patience, perseverance and mercy); “to fell not only as companions, but also accompanied” or “to transform the dialogue into a proclamation of the Gospel” (with hospitality, teaching, formation, realism, respect ...); trying “to set on fire the Word of God in their hearts” (each encounter is an opportunity for humanization).

She proposed for us to meditate on this phrase: “Remove your sandals, for the ground is holy...” - *and the ground represents each young* (Exodus 3:5)

The next presentation was given by Fr. Vincent Niño, OP. His presentation was very intense and interesting. In less than an hour, our Brother, who is the current director of the FESD (Teaching Foundation of Saint Dominic), which includes various Dominican schools in Spain, showed us the objectives of this platform: for everyone together to enhance the our charism and to unify formation criteria that makes us more authentic under the Dominican prism.

Friar Vincent had to summarize the points that I will now detail. He even gave us all a description of the current world that is in complete continuity with the road map of our young people and their projects.

He analyzed the topic by going through the following points:

- **Who:** Young people are a diverse group , but with much in common
- **When:** [i.e. age] They are approximately from 15 to 35 years of age.
- **Where:** There is talk of a fluid society, the new digital continent, and the “in” and “out” (in respect to the Church) youth; besides other sociological traits: absolute knowledge, technology as driving progress, globalization, economy as a social mediator, individualism as an anthropological focus, environmental impact as the first ethical concern, religious secularization, the role of the family ...
- **How:** According to the surveys of the SM Foundation and pre-synodal works, subjectification of the self, diversity as the construct of reality, uncertainty about the future ...
- **Why:** This dealt with what they seek, what they ask, what we can find and what we can ask of them.
- **How the Order responds to them:** Communitarian accompaniment, integration of the Dominican experience, gerate questions ...
- **What do we expect them to reply:** Open question ...

And, above all, what is most important to us: to being JESUS to all young people. I hope that someday his presentation can be published in a magazine or book and can provide us with that freshness with which his speech was developed.

What is clear is that we must get rid of those fears that paralyze us when we talk with young people. We must stop thinking that we have nothing to say, that they are not at all interested in us, because a moment can unexpectedly arises where all that changes, and suddenly the young person wants to talk. We must know how to listen and welcome him or her unconditionally.

We are young when we have questions. But there is an age where youth is clearly a stage: from 17 to 25 years old. This period is especially well-differentiated. Then, other factors lengthen or conclude it.

Friar Vincent's presentation was *in-crescendo*: In the midst of chaos where it seems that we cannot dialogue with young people, suddenly a lamp is illumined. There is in the youth of today an appreciation of the person of JESUS OF NAZARETH, because He is credible. I believe that this is where we have to go. We have to take them to JESUS, only from there will hope spring up anew. We have to let go of our concerns and our desires for great things.

The young people who are “IN” and the youth who are “OUT” – What does this mean? Those who are at home and those who are not and do not want to enter... It is necessary to go out to meet them!

We have to face the fact that not knowing how to talk with young people does not mean that we can no longer talk to them. The search for a path by which to travel together is not impossible. Now, before the Synod, we must accompany young people who come to us so that they themselves can make their own journey of faith—looking for what we sometimes lack: consistency, patience, attention, affection, closeness, listening. We must put all these factors at the service of all those who want to approach us.

The meeting continued with an outpouring of testimonies, exciting projects, where they especially invited us as contemplatives, who can contribute more than we think from the monasteries.

The program continued with various panels in which were presented various circumstances and projects of the Dominican family:

- Vocational Youth Ministry by Fr. Félix Hernández and Julia Moreno
- Dominican Youth Movement by Ángela Burquet
- Volunteers of the Dominican Family for the Amazon jungles by Alexia Gordillo
- Pastoral Challenges in the high Schools by Ignacio Antón
- Esnalar Goroups of Oviedo by fr. Richardo Aguadé



The Dominican Youth Movement (PJV) has prepared a **YEAR OF DOMINICAN YOUTH IN SPAIN** (October 7, 2018 – December 22, 2019), for the Synod of Young People with Pope Francis, October 3-28 of this year. We will be celebrating this YOUTH year.

On the morning of Sunday, July 15, Friar José Luis Ruiz Aznárez, OP, vice-provincial, accompanied us with a very interesting presentation:

***Looking with hope to the future.***

The reflection was based on two documents: “Young people, preaching outside the preaching” by Fr. Felicísimo Martínez, and the letter of the Master of the Order, Fr. Bruno Cadoré, on the Synod for Youth. Emphasis was placed on the complementarity between the stages of youth and adulthood, the necessity of also preaching outside of the homily, of person to person (cf., *Evangelii gaudium*, 127-129), searching for the good of the other person (which requires “emptying oneself to be filled with God”), and the fact that “the Gospel teaches us to live”.

**YOUNG PEOPLE: PREACH OUTSIDE OF THE PREACHING!** A phrase of our Brother Humbert of Romans). Pulpits are not needed to proclaim JESUS CHRIST, any place is good.

Going to Caleruega and working in this framework for a day was brief but very intense. It gave us a hunger for more wisdom and more fraternity. God allowed us to belong to a family where

the certainty that we all help each other grow is real and invites us to enter a state of eternal gratitude.

No doubt we do not preach alone, we preach in a family.

We need to make ourselves known so that many young people will feel attracted by our charism to the Dominican life.

Thanks to Sister Lioba for giving us the opportunity to offer this testimony of the meeting.

Sr. Carmela, OP  
Dominican Monastery of Vitoria, Spain

(Original: Spanish)

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## DOM & GO - Young volunteers at the service of the monastery Douala - Cameroon

*«Master, it is good for us to be here».* Luke 9, 33



Wherever there is a monastery, there is always a desire on the part of some people to discover the reason for our smiling faces and our unshakeable calm.

From the rising of the sun to its setting, the regular life and its rhythm reveal the reality of our monastic life and its character: silence, prayer,

common life, study, and contemplation but also intellectual as well as manual work. That is what

gives us strength and courage to remain faithful, assured that we are focused on the transfiguration of our Lord Jesus Christ.

At present, our monastery is located in the suburb of Douala. This economic capital of Cameroon has grown considerably during these past twenty years, and now surrounds the monastery which was established in virgin forest land in 1975. In spite of this, the neighborhood remains rather quiet and enables us to live our monastic life in silence.

The community is currently composed of five solemnly professed sisters, a sister in temporary vows, a novice, and an aspirant in formation.

We welcome retreatants and those seeking rest or peace in our guesthouse. It actually has the capacity to accommodate more than 25 people but that is an expansion project for the future. Large prayer groups of more than 50 people can come for a day in our large multi-purpose hall.

The Dominican Lay Fraternity of Douala comes regularly to the monastery for retreats and days of recollection. The Dominican Youth group of the neighborhood also holds their weekly meetings at the monastery. This group of young people range in age from 15 to 30 years old and share in common prayer, lectures, and days of recollection accompanied by a Dominican friar. They are very involved in preparation for the liturgies.

The Eucharistic Celebrations on Sundays and feasts are planned by a choir of young people. The group marks 25 years of existence. The liturgy is very vibrant with the participation of around 250 of the faithful.



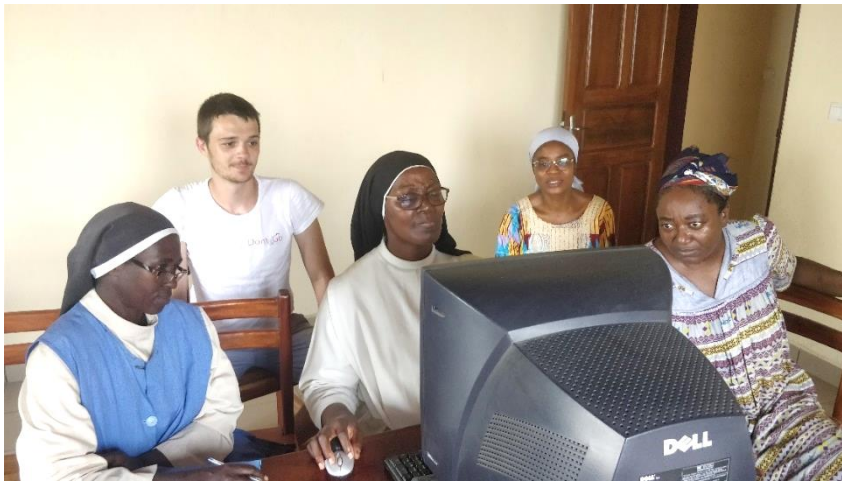
In addition to running the guesthouse, the nuns are engaged in many types of work. The first is the communion host department. As the only host maker in the city, the sisters produce hosts for 70 parishes in the diocese of Douala.

The sisters also have a sewing shop. Our priests as well as our seminarians are very happy to have their cassocks and liturgical vestments made here at the monastery.

The monastery property also allows the sisters to engage in farming and animal breeding. The nuns grow corn, pineapples, cassava, pistachios and also have fruit trees. They also breed a small herd of goats and a flock of sheep.

Since February 2018, we have welcomed two young French Dominican Volunteers from DOM&GO.

These volunteers have placed their expertise in computers, electricity, and agriculture at the service of the monastery for one year.



**DOM&GO** is the international volunteer service run by the Dominican friars of the Province of France. This association sends young people from 20 to 30 years old to Dominican communities abroad and welcomes volunteers from other countries to Dominican communities in France. Each volunteer

participates in the life of the brothers and sisters who receive them. The missions last from six months to a year. Close to 60 young volunteers have already participated in the program. Some are sponsored in prayer by Dominican nuns.

At Douala, two young men, Benjamin and Remi, live at the monastery guesthouse. Both are supervised by a friar from the convent at Douala. They help the sisters in many ways: giving courses in computers, planting pineapples, and animal husbandry. Their mission also includes visiting detainees at a nearby prison and assisting in the development of a field acquired by the friars. They participate in the very vibrant International Dominican Youth Movement (IDYM).



Here is an overview of our life at the Monastery of Douala. We give abundant thanks to God for the progress already made and we confide to the Virgin Mary and St. Dominic the future of our community as we place all of you in our daily prayers.



### **Important Dates of the Monastery Since 2014**

- **2014:**
  - Death of Sister Marie Gabrielle
  - Profession of Sister Augustine
- **2015:**
  - 800th anniversary of the Dominican Order: large celebrations at the monastery
  - Arrival of Sister Imelda from Burundi
  - Assembly of Dominican Nuns of Africa at the monastery of Douala
- **2016:**
  - Entrance into the Novitiate of Postulant Yolande Félicité
- **2017:**
  - Death of Sister Marie Rose
- **2018:**
  - Arrival of two Dom&Go volunteers to the Monastery.
  - Entrance of aspirant Kelly

The Dominican Nuns of Douala

(Original: French)



# EN HONOR DE SANTO DOMINGO

## Pan de Angeles en San Sixto

C T. et M. : Fr Orlando Rueda Acceveda op

Un di - a que fal-to'el pan  
7 Dm G7 C Em  
en el con-ven-to de san Six-to... tu pe-dis-te, fray Do-min - go;  
11 Dm G7 Am E  
que'hu-bie-ra pan pa-ra tus hi jos... y de pron-to'el re-fec - to - rio  
15 F C F C A7  
fue tes-ti-go de'un mi - la - gro: tus frai-les vie - ron... dos an - ge - les  
19 Dm G7 F C F C A7  
sir-vien-do'el pan que pe - dis - te. tus frai-les vie - ron... dos an ge les  
23 Dm G7 F C Em Dm  
sit vien-do'el pan que pe - dis - te. El a-mor se'hi-zo pan, el a-mor se'hi-zo  
28 G G7 C Em Dm G G7  
vi - no, El a-mor se'hi-zo fue - go, el a-mor se'hi-zo'a - mi - go,  
33 Am E7 F C F  
El a-mor fue'un mi - la - gro en tu me-sa fray Do-min - go: vi-si-ta-ron... los  
38 C A7 Dm G7 F C  
an - ge - les a tus frai-les en san Six - to.  
45 C Em Dm G G7  
Un di-a que fal-to'el pan en el con-ven-to de san Six-to; u u u  
50 C Em Dm G G7  
tu pe-dis te fray Do-min - go, que'hu-bie-ra pan pa-ra tus hi-jo - os;

54 *Am* *E7* *F* *C*  
y de pron-to'el re-fec - to - rio fue tes - ti - go de'un mi - la - gro:

58 *F* *C* *A* *Dm* *G7* *F* *C*  
tus frai - les vie ron\_\_ dos an - ge - les sir - vien - do'el pan que pe - dis - te.

62 *F* *C* *A7* *Dm* *G7* *F*  
tus frai - les vie ron\_\_ dos an - ge - les sir - vien - do'el pan que pe - dis -

66 *C* *Em* *Dm* *G7* *C*  
te. El a - mor se'hi - zo pan, el a - mor se'hi - zo vi - no, El a - mor se'hi - zo

71 *Em* *Dm* *G7* *A m* *E7*  
fue - go, el a - mor se'hi zo'a - mi - go, El a - mor fue'un mi - la - gro

76 *F* *C* *F* *C* *A7*  
en tu me - sa fray Do - min - go: vi - si - ta - ron\_\_ los an - ge - les

80 *Dm* *G* *F* *C*  
a tus frai - les en san Six - to.

Un día que faltó el pan  
en el Convento de san Sixto ;  
tú pediste, Fray Domingo,  
que hubiera pan para tus hijos ;  
y de pronto el refectorio  
fue testigo de un milagro :  
tus frailes vieron dos ángeles  
sirviendo el pan que pediste.

**El amor se hizo pan,  
el amor se hizo vino.  
El amor se hizo fuego,  
el amor se hizo amigo.  
El amor fue un milagro  
en tu mesa Fray Domingo:  
visitaron los ángeles  
a tus frailes en san Sixto.**

One day bread was lacking  
At the convent of Saint Sisto;  
You prayed Brother Dominic  
For bread for your sons;  
Then the refectory  
Was witness to a miracle:  
Your brothers saw two angels  
Giving the bread you prayed for.

Un jour le pain manqua  
au Couvent de Saint-Sixte ;  
tu demandas, frère Dominique,  
qu'il y eut du pain pour tes fils ;  
et aussitôt le réfectoire  
fut témoin d'un miracle :  
tes frères virent deux anges  
servant le pain que tu demandas.

**L'amour se fit pain,  
L'amour se fit vin,  
L'amour se fit feu,  
L'amour se fit ami.  
L'amour fut un miracle  
À ta table frère Dominique :  
Les anges visitèrent  
Tes frères à saint Sixte.**

Love became bread,  
Love became wine,  
Love became fire,  
Love became a friend;  
Love was a miracle  
At Brother Dominic's table:  
Angels visited  
Your brothers at Daint Sisto