

MONIALIBUS

Nuns

Order of Preachers



International Bulletin– N° 41

October 2019

SUMMARY

	Page
Letter of Fr. Gerard, Master of the Order	2
Congratulations to Fr. Gerard	3
Letter of Fr. Cesar, promoter of the nuns	4
Federation "Our Lady, Mother of Africa"	6
Federation "The Most Holy Name of Jesus", Columbia	11
Federation "Mary, Mother of Grace", Argentina	15
The Vietnamese Nuns join the General Chapter for Vespers	19
The Joy of Meeting ...	23
Retreat for the Dominican Nuns of Spain,	27
The Well and the Mirror ...	29
10th meeting of the Czech and Polish Noviciates	33
Theological Formation Program for Nuns	35
Theological Formation – Monastic theological studies	36
Fusion of the Monasteries of Syracuse and Springfield, U.S.A.	40
Monastery of Marbury : 75th Anniversary of Foundation	41
BLESSING OF CENTENNIAL WING, Monastery of SUMMIT	43
In honor of the Virgin: HIMNO DEL ROSARIO	46

Monialibus is the official International Bulletin of the Nuns of the Order of Preachers published by the International Commission of Nuns (ICN) twice a year in April and October. It is available at the website of the Order -- www.op.org



Editorial board

- General Editor: Sr. Carmen Maria, Monastery of Torrent (Spain) - E-mail: sfeinma@gmail.com
- Coordinator for English: Sister Mary Catharine, Monastery of Summit (USA)
E-mail: smc@summitdominicans.org
- Coordinator for Spanish: Sr. Maria Ángeles, Monastery of Torrent (Spain)
E-mail: sormariaangelesmartinez@gmail.com
- General Coordinator: Sr. Lioba, Monastery of Prouilhe (France) - E-mail: sr.lioba.op@orange.fr

Letter of Fr. Gerard



Dearest Sisters,

I am taking advantage of your publication *Monialibus* to address you with great happiness and feelings of true fraternal love for all of you in this service that the Brothers have asked of me as Master of the Order.

At this time I can only recall the feelings Saint Dominic de Guzmán had for you all, with whom he shared so much and such intense moments at the beginnings of the Order both in Prouilhe, as here in Rome at the monastery of San Sisto.

I thank the Lord for the precious gift all of your monasteries mean for the Order and for the Church. What a beautiful mission we have before us, dear Sisters! From our

encounter with the Lord and His Word, to be the generation of communion for the Order, for the Church and for the entire human family. I think of the power that Saint Dominic puts into the construction of the fraternal communion in all the communities of the Order, carefully protecting the constant growth in one heart and one soul in Christ.

Together we will have to face the work that the new directives of the Holy See requires of us with the Apostolic Constitution *Vultum Dei quaerere* and the Instruction *Cor Orans* which has already begun at the meeting held in Rome in October of last year. I trust that with the contribution of all the communities, and those of the experts who can help us, we will be able to adapt to what is requested of us, while preserving the Originality and what is most genuine of our Dominican charism; and thus offer it to the Church for its mission and enrichment.

I place into your hands and your praying hearts all the needs of the Order in its evangelizing mission, of the Church in Her fidelity to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and of the whole human family, especially those groups who are suffering the most from life's difficulties. May your sacrifices and intercessions be, by the action of the Holy Spirit, strength and hope for many. And may the brightness of His joy fill us all as a precious gift.

Your Brother in Saint Dominic,

Fr. Gerard Francisco Timoner III, OP
Master of the Order

(Original: Spanish)

Fr. Gerard Francisco Timoner III, op
New Master of the Order



Thank you, Fr. Gerard!

The nuns will always accompany you with love and prayer in the mission so difficult but also so beautiful that you have been entrusted...

We wish that Saint Dominic always accompanies your steps and blesses all your efforts for the good of the Order.

GO AND PREACH...!



Dear Sisters,

With grateful memory to Fr. Bruno Cadoré, OP, and in a hopeful welcome to Fr. Gerard Francisco Timoner III, OP, Master of the Order, I extend my greeting always full of fraternal love and my best wishes for the life of all and each one of you.

I have found it particularly beautiful and significant that both brothers, Fr. Bruno and Fr. Gerard, have finished and started their respective services as Masters of the Order alluding to prayer, communion and preaching.

You, good experts in the constant, attentive and silent encounter with the Mystery of God, know well that without prayer and a sacramental life it is difficult, very difficult, to walk with joy and generosity in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus Christ. Hence my word of encouragement to continue diligently and carefully maintaining this contemplative and prayerful dimension in your communities as a precious gift and eloquent reference for the entire Order.

When you receive this new Bulletin of "Monialibus" we will be in October, traditionally for us very focused on the prayer and spirituality of the Rosary. The beautiful celebrations that you organized in your monasteries on the occasion of the Pilgrim Rosary of the Jubilee of the Order come to mind. Keep making the Rosary prayer a reason for attraction and preaching for so many people. Actually, when we pray the Rosary and we do it with contemplative depth we are going through the pages of the Gospel and facilitating the encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ and his message of love, communion and salvation.

Undoubtedly, prayer will lead us to strengthen and fortify our communion; to discover the face of the Lord who has placed himself at our side. Today it takes on particular significance for the world around us, which observes the creating of communion. A delicate and constant task, which always demands our attention and commitment. Without it, without fraternal communion, our preaching, no matter how hard it may be, would lack a soul. It would not go beyond being "a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal."

Preaching claims the preacher to be "a living Gospel", as was St. Dominic de Guzman.

With particular intensity I have thought in recent months that the commission that the Lord Jesus Christ left to his disciples to: "**Go and preach**", which also concerns us directly as members of the Order of Preachers, has a direct relationship with the style and configuration of the life of the disciples and preachers with the contents of the Gospel, with the Lord's own lifestyle.

The question quickly arises: Do I preach with a life that is always a gift of love, forgiveness, understanding, and hope, for others?

For your prayer and reflection I leave you a breakdown of the imperative of the Lord: "**GO AND PREACH**", with the desire that it be a help for you in your generous surrender to the cause of the Lord; and through you and your prayer and intercession, also be of benefit to the entire Dominican Family:

GO AND PREACH: Wield the walking stick, because the road will be long, because your tiredness will bite you and discouragement will assail you.

GO AND PREACH: Wield the staff of the Good Shepherd. He always walks with you, and it will be your stronghold and strength.

GO AND PREACH: Wield the staff of the prophet. You will be the voice of the God-Friend-of-life, and you will point out strongly and you will push away vigorously everything that damages, enslaves and destroys it.

GO AND PREACH: Welcome the Word, make it the life of your life, in it is light and meaning, truth and hope, love and salvation.

GO AND PREACH: Welcome the Word. Let it be honey in your mouth, fire in your heart, blessing on your lips.

GO AND PREACH: Welcome the Word. May It boost your life and work. Let it be not hollow speech, but always a gift of love.

GO AND PREACH: with a life based on coherence with the Gospel, illuminated by the light and clarity that only the Risen One can offer. And then you will do as Mary, his mother: "She always spoke of Him, even if she did not pronounce his name."

With fraternal affection:

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

(Original: Spanish)



NEW FEDERATION

"OUR LADY, MOTHER OF AFRICA"

(BENIN, BURUNDI, CAMEROON, KENYA, ZAMBIA)

Since 1990 that the African Nuns started to meet together in preparation for the first meeting of the International Commission of the Nuns which took place in 1991, this was our tenth meeting of reflecting and sharing together. We usually meet in one of our monasteries and we try to rotate from one monastery to the other as much as is possible.



Our regional meeting this year was planned to take place in our monastery of Divine Mercy, Kabwe-Zambia but due to the fact that some Sisters could not get a Visa to that country, within ten days the meeting was relocated to Karen-Kenya. This change made it impossible for the Adoration Sisters of Nigeria who wants to be integrated as nuns of the Order, to attend and also Sr. Christine, one of the Sister from our monastery in Toumi, who attended the Macro-Meeting with me.

The meeting this year was special because we planned it for two weeks 16th -30th March, since we had to work on the Statutes of our region plus other issues. We all arrived by the 16th but started the meeting on the 18th. The Promoter, Fr. Cesar Valero arrived on the 20th and left on the 25th to visit our monastery in Benin. Unfortunately, the Socius of the Master for Africa, Fr. Charles Ukwe could not make it because of other duties. We really missed his presence as a

canonist. All in all with the experience of Fr. Cesar in his work as he moves from place to place, he helped to explain the questions we asked but made it clear, we had to make our own decisions and take responsibility for them. We were also helped by Fr. Arnold A. A., who acted as translator since we were using English and French. At this meeting we did not need a Spanish translator since the monasteries that use Spanish were not present. Some of our Dominican Friars and some Religious Priests who celebrated Holy Mass in the Sisters Chapel those weeks, aware of why we were there, also supported ,encouraged and challenged us through their homilies/reflections.

We started the meeting with reading the minutes of the last meeting 2016 then we went on to the reports of the Representative and those of the monasteries. After that we went straight to the statutes. Taking into account the Macro- Meeting, the letter of the Master directing us on what to do and our own efforts on trying to work on our statutes since 2017, we then discussed with the background of what we had done in our various communities. Each community was represented by the Prioress and a delegate. From what each community discussed and sent to the secretary and she compiled, we read each number in English and French, discussed and voted. This took the greater part of our meeting but at the end we were very happy with our efforts it being the first time we were doing such a work and with none of us with any experience of how a Federation works. At the moment our Statutes are in process of being approved by the Holy See and when this is done we will learn more.



The most excited moments of our work was when we decided on the name of our Federation **“Our Lady, Mother of Africa”** whose feast day is celebrated on 30th April. The other thing was, that before the election of our President, we invited a Religious Priest to talk to us **about leadership: what it means, its abuses and the benefits of leadership.** Then we had the TRACTATUS and at the end of it all, **Sr. Marie Therese from Kenya was elected President.** The interesting thing is, Sister was not one of the participants and since she was a member of the hosting community, we then brought her to become part of the meeting. It was wonderful to see how she immediately tried to accommodate herself to the duties that the assembly conferred on her especially when we came to looking at the future of our federation,

arrangements about the Sisters transportation... In electing the Councilors, we tried as much as possible to choose Sisters from different monasteries.

- **Sr. Marie Therese – Federal President, (Karen, Kenya)**
- Sr. Therese Claire – 1st Councilor and secretary of the Federation, (Bambui, Cameroon)
- Sr. Mary Martin – Financial Administrator, (Karen, Kenya)
- Sr. Sapience - Oversee on Formation, (Rweza, Burundi)
- Sr. Josephine Marie, (Akwa-Douala, Cameroon)
- Sr. Mary Ndegwa- Councilor- in reserve to fill in when there is need, (Kabwe, Zambia)



In making a plan of action for our new baby federation, we put the following foremost:

✚ To try to know one another better, be in solidarity, share our giftedness...

In this respect, the Federation knowing very well that it was new and poor, decided to share part of the little funds we had to each monastery as TALENTS (Mt 25:14-30) to work with and use part of it if the community does not have what to eat and then from time to time send something gained from it to the federation Fund. This came up because some members can hardly contribute to help keep up the Common Fund, let alone pay their flight. We all appreciated this idea and promised to do our best.

✚ Another step was to see that the Nuns learn a second language. This will facilitate the meetings, gain time, spare money from hiring translators and help interaction among monasteries...

In this area we beg the monasteries to assist those who need and request to visit and learn one or another language even out of Africa. Here I will like to thank the monasteries in France which have accepted to help some of our Sisters to come and learn the French language. We take the challenge that the Order has offered us to work internationally and which Cor Orans has taken on, to assist one another as much as we are able...

✚ We also looked at the area of formation and were planning how to carry on with formation at all levels and with those in positions of responsibility. Immediately we challenged the Councilors to learn another language before their meeting next year. We planned that since we have our meetings in each of our monasteries, as time goes on and we learn the languages, we will be using the language of the hosting community in the meeting. This is meant to spur the Sisters to work hard in learning another language.

✚ Due to the fact that many of our countries are having political instability, this is delaying our plans of trying to have courses together, so we have encouraged each community to try to be improving itself while looking forward for a chance to have something in common.

Africa is one of the newest and the smallest federation. If it were a matter of choice, we would have said we are too small to form such a structure, but since the Holy See is the one that has



asked us to and the Order encouraged us to form this body, we obey. We will surely be needing aid in all areas to help us function well as a federation.

The Order counts ten monasteries in the African soil, and the Adoration Sisters. Out of these ten, the Monastery in La Reunion is Federated in France, three monasteries are federated in Spain (Olmedo), of the remaining six, only four are SUI JURIS monasteries the other two are still in foundation. You see then that even though there are not many monasteries in Africa, those which are there are not part of the federation. When you look at the statistics of the nuns in our federation, it is 80. From the three Olmedo foundations 52, La Reunion we don't have numbers, Adoration Sisters 21 members. That makes more than 75 plus the numbers of La Reunion. From this you can see that there are more than 80 Sisters who are not yet part of our federation of 80 members. In short even though there are nuns in Africa who might have been of much help to us who know very little about federations, they are not

yet part of us to boost our efforts. We hope one day there will be an understanding way out in this regard.

For one thing our monasteries enjoy and appreciate our Dominican Contemplative life. They also enjoy and value their African culture knowing that neither the Church nor the Order is static. Living our lives as Dominican Contemplative nuns in Africa is our cherished value. If our life is for the salvation of souls then it must start with those among whom we live and work, to let them know who we are and what we are about and by so doing open their minds or draw them to higher things. They must feel that we love and care about them despite the fact that we will not approach or interact with them in the same way that the Apostolic Sisters would do.

Our gratitude goes to the Holy See for the appreciation, encouragement and challenge, given to the Women Contemplatives through the documents *Vultum Dei Quaerere* and *Cor Orans*. We thank the Order for reminding itself and the Nuns that they were, are and will continue to be a part of the Order of Preachers which is in the Church. We are positively proud of this fact and want to do our best to contribute to its growth in whatever small way we can. We thank ourselves as monasteries worldwide for our Sisterly collaboration, directly, through the Federations or through the International Commission of the Nuns of the Order. Let us continue to witness to the reality that we are all children of God the Father our Creator, following his Son Jesus Christ, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and the intercession of Mary Our Mother, in the footsteps of Our Holy Father, St. Dominic De Guzman, the Joyful Friar.

Sr. Marie-Juliette Kilanir, O.P. (Representative in the ICN)

(Original: english)



FEDERATION

"THE MOST HOLY NAME OF JESUS"

COLUMBIA

At the meeting of the nuns held at the Monastery of Saint Agnes, on August 8, 2016, on the occasion of the 800 years of the Approval of the Order of Preachers, we began the process of a Federation in Columbia.

This providential meeting provided the opportunity to meet with Father Fr. Ivan Fernando Mejia, OP, promoter of the nuns, who presented us with the document VULTUM DEI QUAERERE "THE SEARCH FOR THE FACE OF GOD", on the female contemplative life, written by the Pope Francis and dated June 29, 2016.



The possibility of a Federation was broached again on August 1, 2018, with a request made by the Monastery Saint Agnes of Montepulciano along with Father Armando Alonso Villalta Salazar OP, Religious Assistant of the "Federation of Saint Dominic de Guzmán", of the Monasteries of Nuns of the Order of Preachers in Ecuador, of the Federal President of Ecuador Sr. Catalina Almeida, OP, and Sr. Irene Diaz, OP, Representative of the International Commission of Nuns.

Some commitments were made to give way to the future Federation of Monasteries in Colombia:

- Intercommunity discussion led by the Monastery of St. Agnes
- Request the Monastery Chapters to vote yes or no to the approval of the Federation, and why.
- Review the Statutes of the Federations of Ecuador and of the Immaculate in Spain.

On August 14, 2018, the Monastic Chapter was held in which the Federation was approved by a majority vote, taking into account VDq 30 and CO.

On August 22, memorial of the Queenship of Mary, we received a statement from Fr. Angel Villasmil, OP, who we asked to join us at the beginning of our Federation. He suggested we reread LCM, have a conference on the Statutes of some Federations and study VDq and CO. On September 12, 2019, we received from Fr. Ángel Villasmil, OP, a draft of the Statutes for the sisters to analyze, question, suggest and propose.

The Monastic Chapters, in order to review the draft Statutes sent by Father Angel Villasmil, OP, were given the following guidelines:

1. The number is read, 2. The discussion is opened, 3. The amendment deemed appropriate is made, if any, 4. The vote is included on whether or not to include the amendment, 5. The final text is voted on amendment included.

Meeting at the Monastery of the Holy Spirit in Sogamoso - Boyacá

Under the presidency and advice of Fray Ángel Villasmil, OP, the Prioresses and delegates of the Monasteries met, from October 8 to 10, 2018, in order to coordinate and define the Statutes of the Federation.

The Monastic Chapters are to approve:

- The canonical erection of the Federation
- Approval of belonging to the new Federation
- Consultative vote for the “terna” for the Federal Assistant

The prioresses and delegates of the Monasteries of the Order of Preachers in Colombia met in the monastery of Ocaña, under the presidency and advice of Fr. Angel Villasmil, OP Fray, on November 3, 2018, feast of St, Martín de Porres with the following agenda.



1. final vote of the name of the Federation
2. Appointment of the Prioress who will serve as liaison with the Holy See until the election of the Federal Prioress: Sr. Teresita de la Caridad, OP
3. Letter writing

4. Concluding letter of the Foundation process of the Federation of the Most Holy Name of Jesus.

The Monasteries had joined forces to keep alive this initial motivation which gathered strength in the different meetings with Father Ángel Villasmil, OP, who had been chosen by the Monasteries to give us advice and each Community had some courses and meetings during their stay in Colombia , since he lives and belongs to the Vicariate of Venezuela of the Province of the Rosary.

The Monastery of Saint Agnes, had by approval of the Monastic Chapter, petitioned the San Luis Bertrán Province, which gathered in an elective Chapter, in March, to come under the jurisdiction of the Province, which was accepted by joy by the friars. From the beginning, Fr. Diego Serna O.P., the new Provincial, showed his great desire to cooperate with the Federation Project.

All the Monasteries have worked consciously and happily on the contributions to the modification of LCM, sent by Mother Irene of the CIM to whom we will have eternal gratitude for their support with our project

On May 28, we received a communication from Fr. Benjamín Earl OP, Procurator General of the O.P., on behalf of the Master of the Order, Fr. Bruno Cadore, OP that the Sacred Congregation for Religious Life and Institutes of Apostolic Life, had approved all the documentation presented and the statutes of the new Federation of the Most Holy Name of Jesus, of the Dominican Monasteries of Colombia and the appointment decrees by Sr. Teresita de la Caridad for the preparation and convening of the First Federal Assembly as well as the appointment by the Holy See of Fr. Carlos Mario Alzate OP, as First Assistant to the Federation, who will preside over the elections of Prioress and Federal Council in said Assembly .

On June 11 of this year, Sr. Teresita de la Caridad, the Prioresses of the Monasteries, and the Religious Assistant met, with the Provincial in a preliminary way to officially communicate all of the above. Together they set the dates of the First Assembly, from August 26 to 30 and defined the Commissions, and so launched the new Federation formed by:

the monasteries of Santa Ines (Bogota), Santissimo Rosario (Boyaca), Our Lady of the Graces of Torçoroma (Ocaña), Espiritu Santo (Sagamoso).



To date, I promise to send information and photos of the outcome of this, which, trusting in the Mercy of God and the fraternal and spiritual communion of all, we expect a happy development.



With the certainty that we live this Contemplative life, guided by the protection of our Virgin of the Rosary and united in the Charism of our Father St. Dominic de Guzmán, I send a fraternal embrace.

Sr. Teresita de la Caridad, OP

Prioress of the Monastery of St. Agnes of Montepulciano

(Original: spanish)

Sister Maria Aurora de Jesus, op

**First federal president
Monastery Santa Ines, Bogota
August 28, 2019**



NEW FEDERATION

"MARY, MOTHER OF GRACE"

ARGENTINA

Dear Sisters:

We are a recently erected federation. We have been asked, through this newsletter, to share with you about how we have been living, since others are living scattered throughout the whole world.

To do this, we have to go back a long time, because we cannot omit what composes our roots and makes solid what we are living.

We are four communities located in Argentine, who for a few months, have been enabled to be part of a new federation. So we have formed the Federation of the Immaculate, composed of monasteries in southern Spain, Argentina and Chile.

Our communities have about twelve Sisters, although one monastery has only six members. We have as our main source of income the production of hosts or also the making of ornaments and images.

What we can now start is based on what we have received as part of this federal family. In effect, this Federation began even before Pius XII promulgated *Sponsa Christi*, in which he promoted the grouping of monasteries into federations.

The Federation of the Immaculate arose from a situation of poverty in which the monasteries in Spain found themselves, because of the thirty year civil war of the last century. The prophetic vision of the Dominican friar, Fr. Marceliano Llamera, OP, together with the great souls of the nuns, and of course, of God Who blessed them. It was possible, from the ruins of the post-war period, to bear the fruits of renewal of these Spanish monasteries. Great efforts and sacrifices had to be made by our elder sisters, but all with the generosity and joy of doing it for God and seeing that, at the same time, He gave them abundant vocations.

But the generosity did not end there, it was not closed in the lands of Spain. A monastery of Buenos Aires,



Argentina, was in a needy situation. They were advised to ask for help from the Federation of the Immaculate, by the then-Provincial of the Dominicans, Fr. Manuel Fortea, OP. The nuns of Buenos Aires offered three years of prayer and sacrifice for this. Instead of receiving four nuns from heaven which they had requested, they were sent eight. God did great works in those Sisters, who arrived from Spain, leaving everything: their communities, their families, their land, their customs, in those times when there was no communications as now, to launch into what the Lord had asked of them. Those who had requested help knew how to welcome with great humility, openness and availability all the changes that this meant, which was a decisive factor. Thus, in a short time they achieved a material and spiritual resurgence, and more importantly, they formed one soul and one heart.

This was the beginning of a flourishing also in the eight monasteries of Argentine and Chile so that, a few years later, a community from Spain, whose building was in ruins moved to Argentina. They received the help of the other monasteries of Argentina and Chile, from which some foundations came later for both countries.

That gaze of faith, that generosity, this openness to the needs of others and availability to God's plans, is that vocations, years later were drinking from the lives of these older sisters, when we began to enter. And not only of the Sisters living in the Americas, but also in Spain, whom we were getting to know through letters, newsletters, federal visits, etc. How much we learned from the daily preaching of these Sisters! This is the basis of the new foundation; these are the roots of a little reckless project, if we look at our poverty.



The idea emerged little by little, when the Federal Mother, Sister Maria Teresa Gil, OP, before the accumulation of issues, began suggesting that we reflect upon the possibility of forming a new federation among the monasteries of this area.

This idea matured for several years in the communities. It seemed to us that now there were needs for the monasteries in Spain. We did not want to be separated from them. But we also saw that our problems were different; for example, the great geographical distance made it difficult to deal with some issues.

Finally, in October 2017, after consulting with the prioresses of the monasteries, the federal Mother, in a circular letter, requested that each Chapter decide about the beginning of a new federation. This would be the subject of a meeting of prioresses and delegates to be held within two months.

Thus, in the month of December we gathered in a monastery located in the mountains, whose beautiful and silence landscape helped to move forward the work of proposals. It helped us to think together about our future as a mission of the Order, in a climate of listening and of great respect and also of freedom. The Federal Mother sensed the trust and realism, and proposed the need to take steps in this initiative, accompanied by experience and support of the federation of the Immaculate from whom we had received so much.

Relying on this and God's help, four Argentinean monasteries launched us upon this adventure, aware of our poverty and with the confidence that God accomplishes His works. Right then, a coordinator was elected and also an advisor from our Friars for this stage of the pre-federation.



The year 2018 was marked above all by the preparation of the necessary documentation to request the erection of the new federation. We had to put together our Statutes, which we were doing while we awaiting the

new instruction mentioned by Pope Francis in *Vultum Dei Quaerere*, in order to adapted it to the new norms.

We finished drafting the Statues at a meeting in the monastery at Buenos Aires. Then-Master of the Order, fr. Bruno Cadere, on visitation of Argentina and Chile, asked us that some representatives of the nuns of the monasteries in the area meet with him.

This encounter was a time full of joy to hear the successor of St. Dominic speak to us from the depths of his friendship with the Lord. Without cutting down on time, Fr. Bruno answered all our questions about the life of the nuns and the new challenges.

The atmosphere of fraternity, dialogue, seeking consensus and joyful communion marked all of our work, and produced the fruit of a common text drawn from the contributions of the monastery Chapters, and was approved at this meeting.

After waiting for the results of Fr. Bruno's "Macro-Meeting", with the representatives of all the nuns of the Order in September/October, we could send the documentation to Rome, requesting the erection of the new federation. The Advent of 2018 was marked by awaiting the Messiah, and also by waiting the response of the Holy See, knowing that this last latter would extend well beyond Christmas. Like the Poor of Yahweh and with the Virgin, we had an open heart to what they would answer. And if they said no?... could a few monasteries form a federation? ... were we already part of a federation? Daughters of the Church, we knew that the will of God would be manifested, but the waiting did not fail to have its intrigue and anxiety.

So we began in 2019 to see how to make our family part of the great Dominican Family. In this year the General Chapter will be held, with the election of a new Master of the Order. In our country also, the Provincial Chapter will be held, with the election of a new Father Provincial; and we expect the response to our request and, following this, our First Federal Assembly will take place with all that that means.

On May 28, we received with joy the response: the Congregation canonically erected the new federation with the name we indicated: "Federation of Mary, Mother of Grace". It was a day of jubilation in our communities, although if we thought about it a little, there was also a certain fear before the adventure of throwing ourselves into something so big, given our poverty. But God, Who has helped us until now, will continue to be with us. A few days later, we received the news that Fr. Jorge Scampini, OP named appointed our advisor. This joy added to the previous one, because Fr. Jorge is a dear and appreciated brother, and has been accompanying us in this stage of preparation.

The following days we received greetings from our Sisters of the Immaculate Federation, among others. Mother Maria Teresa told us in a letter: "The 'newborn' Federation is a beloved fruit, a sign of the vitality of the Spirit in the Church and in the Order. God has accompanied us during this time and what a joy to know we will always be united."



Sister Estela del Carmen Medina, 1st Federal Prioress

From there began the stage of preparation for our First Assembly. It will be held between August 31 and September 7. We ask that you accompany us with your prayers, so that the Spirit enlightens all our reflections and decisions, and thus, everything will contribute in favor of our contemplative life, so that in turn we can make the contribution that the church expects of us and that all may be for the glory of God.

*You Sisters of the Federation of Mary, Mother of Grace
Argentine/Chile*

(Original: Spanish)

THE NUNS JOIN THE GENERAL CHAPTER FOR VESPERS

Dominican Monastery of Our Lady of the Holy Spirit

In the spirit of love and communion with the General Chapter of the Order of Preachers being held in Bien Hoa, Vietnam, on Tuesday evening, July 16, 2019, at the invitation of General Secretary of the General Chapter, Fr. Joseph Ngo Si Dinh, our twelve nuns, in obedience and honour came to attend the Vespers with all Capitulars at the House of Xuan Loc Diocese.



Months before the opening of the General Chapter, we unanimously, despite being in the little space of the Monastery, have turned our hearts to the General Chapter and Capitulars with prayers in the Laud and Vespers with various intentions. We have earnestly prayed that it is the Most Holy Trinity who works in the General Chapter 2019 to enlighten Capitulars and attendees in order to bring about good results as the will of God, with decisions and directions to serve the Lord, to renew the fraternal life and to bring benefit for others in the new context of society.

We gave thanks to God for **our participation in the Vespers**, though brief and celebrated in French. We perceived the profound communion which we believed was God that linked our Dominican brothers and sisters. In different languages, we offered God thanksgiving and praises and prayed for God's blessing upon the General Chapter.

After the reading of the Word of God, a sister shared briefly about the Word of God as well as our affection for the General Chapter in English.

The words shared then were translated into French and Spanish and shown on the screen for all Capitulars to join us. In the sharing, we expressed our happiness to be present with the new Master of the Order, the Capitulars, and members of the great Dominican family to give praise and bless God at the Vespers. We also shared some thoughts about true love expressed in sincerity, which St. Paul mentioned in the epistle to the Romans. Sincerity is good feelings and attitudes that people give to each other. It is not what pretends to be superficial, but it is honesty, love and uprightness.

We also remember what our Lord Jesus taught the disciples: "Keep salt in your heart and live in harmony with one another." (Mk 9, 50). Inspired by the Word of God, we know that in common life, we need sincerity and salt of love to keep harmony. It is tolerance, forgiveness and mutual respect. We firmly believe that only the Holy Spirit can give us a sincere heart to live with our Lord and our brothers and sisters.

After the sharing, we also invited the Dominican brothers and sisters who were present to continue praying in a special way for the Capitulars so that through the General Chapter 2019, they receive special gifts from the Holy Spirit to be able to recognize the signs of the digital age which is full of challenges and changes; at the same time to set out new directions for the next years in the future of the Order.

At 19:30 pm after Vespers, we were guided to the dining room to have dinner with the Capitulars. It was such a cordial fraternal meal.



First of all, we came to greet the new Master of the Order, Fr. Gerard Francisco Timoner III, to offer him our affection and congratulations. We were happy to be the first nuns to meet him, and to give him the small gift we had prepared. He was delighted to receive us with the joy of a father, a brother and now as the Master of the Order in the role of a guide full of love for us. We were also introduced by the General Secretary to the Capitulars and the other Dominicans at the meal. Little as we are, we were so honoured and grateful for the love and appreciation that the Capitulars and brothers and sisters in the great Dominican family reserve for us.

Since it was a buffet, people chose their favorite dishes and came to sit at tables to eat. We were also invited to join the Capitulars and friars at their tables.

It was truly an international meal with a variety of languages as people came here from many Provinces and a number of different countries around the world. However, we perceived the happiness with joy on everyone's countenance, with mutual understanding manifested by laughter. We are beginners in speaking English but we all felt close to the Capitulars, priests, friars who are like close brothers and sisters. We gave thanks to God and holy father St. Dominic who gathered us in the same Dominican house and gave us communion and such close friendship. May God help the brothers and sisters in the great Dominican family to always maintain and grow in the affection, love, and mutual respect and may this spirit spread widely as a sign of love as Jesus himself taught.

During the meal, we were taken many photos with the friars to give us beautiful memories of the meeting. In particular, many friars asked us to remember them in our daily prayers. We saw how humble they were to ask us feeble nuns to pray for them to follow God's will and fulfill the mission entrusted to them by God and the Order.

We promised to them and we also promise ourselves that we will remember our brothers and sisters in the constant prayer to God even in solitude, so that the seeds of the Word of God sown by the brothers and sisters may bear plenty of fruit.

We were again given the opportunity to talk to the new Master of the Order before the dinner ended. Humbly he shared with us that now he is only a novice, many things are waiting in his new mission and he needs to learn a lot from his brothers. We understand his thoughts, worries and challenges he is going to face.

We firmly believe that the Holy Spirit is always with him and that the predecessors will give him their zealous support. For our part, we promise to pray a lot for him so that God can work in him and Father Dominic will assist him in the mission entrusted to him by God and the Order.



Finally, the Master raised his hand to give all of our nuns his blessing. He prayed that the Holy Spirit would come upon us and teach us how to pray and please God. The new Master also asked us to continue praying for the General Chapter in the coming days.

After that, we were also honored to meet the two former Masters of the Order: Fr. Timothy Radcliffe and Fr. Bruno Cadoré. These are worthy former Masters and particularly great benefactors of our monastery. Fr. Timothy Radcliffe was indeed the first father of the Dominican monastery in Vietnam because he himself had longed for and wholeheartedly sought, encouraged and called the first sisters to gather and consecrate their lives in solitude to serve the mission of the Order by prayer. As for Father Bruno Cadoré, he visited us in person many times, shared and taught us the spirit of

the nun and wrote letters to strengthen the mission that the family had entrusted to us. Due to the limited time, we could only give them brief greeting. However, we sensed their love and affection for us as fathers towards daughters. In particular, Father Timothy Radcliffe also offered a prayer and blessed us as we gathered around him.

We left for our small, simple Monastery after dinner and got back to our own hearts after the bustling and joyful hours to pray silently to God. Since the opening of the General Chapter, we have directed our attention to the developments of the General Chapter through news and pictures. We are now delighted and happy to be present to perceive the sacred and cordial atmosphere of the General Chapter, realizing much more the importance of the General Chapter among the challenges of the new situation. Although living in solitude, we are not indifferent nuns, and outsiders but we are sisters in the great family that God has built up all over the world.

Attending the General Chapter, listening to the new Master sharing and communicating to the Capitulars help us love the Order more. We are even more convinced of the noble mission that St. Dominic and the brothers and sisters in the Order unceasingly believe and place in each of our nuns. May our Lord Jesus bless and bestow abundant graces upon the new Master and each of the brother and sister in the Dominican family so that He renews our love, consecrated life and mission of evangelization. As a result, more and more starving souls will be satisfied with the sacred bread and the living water from the source of God's merciful love. Amen!

Teresa Ngoc Lưu

A Postulant of the Dominican Monastery in Vietnam

(Original: English)



The Joy of Meeting...

On July 28, 2019 after the Holy Mass and Morning Prayer, the capitulars ate a hurried breakfast in order to visit some Dominican Convents, Congregations and the Monastery in Ho Chi Minh and Xuan Loc Dioceses. At 8:50 am ten cars were ready at the campus of the House of the Bishop of Xuan Loc, Dong Nai.

At 9:00 am the cars drove to the different places bringing the capitulars divided into groups to visit the place that they had chosen the day before: Saint Albert Convent, Mai Khoi Convent and Man Coi Convent in Ho Chi Minh City; the Congregations of Phu Cương, Thanh Tam, Tam Hiep, Monteil (France) and the Monastery of Our Lady of the Holy Spirit in Dong Nai Province.

The fourteen capitulars, guests and Sr. Theresa Tam were in the car that drove to Saint Martin Convent. Here, the novitiate is located with fourteen young novices of the Province of the Queen of Martyrs. About fifty Fathers and Brothers were waiting for the capitulars in joyful and affective brotherhood. Fr. Francis Xavier Thanh, OP, Prior, gave a nice discourse to welcome the capitulars with peals of applause and laughter. Afterwards, they guided the distinguished guests to visit the Chapel of the brothers, the Shrine of St. Martin de Porres, the house for retreats or meetings containing more than 100 cells, the big room displaying the beautiful statues of Jesus, the Virgin Mary and the Saints, the place for caring and healing patients and the disabled.

At 11:30 am all the guests were welcomed to the refectory to have a big lunch with the Brothers of the Convent in an atmosphere of joy.

At 13:30 pm, Father Gerard Timoner, the new Master of the Order, and nine other capitulars visited the Sisters of the Congregation of Phu Cuong at the Saint Martin Convent. They all were welcomed and visited the retreat house and other places.



At 14:30 pm twenty-four guests were ready in two cars to visit our Dominican

Monastery near the Saint Martin Convent. It is only 15 minutes away. We passed through the

“promised land” on which we will build the permanent monastery. There are two ponds for raising fish and many fruit trees.

Located on a small lane, among the simple houses, our monastery is "hidden" amidst the rhythmic noises of the sawing machines and the splitting of wood in the carpentry workshops nearby. The special silence is enjoyed when the workshops close on Sundays. However, this Sunday in our monastery special sounds were heard: sounds of a variety of languages, people greeting one other in Vietnamese, English, French, Spanish.

First of all, we invited the visitors to the Chapel for Eucharist adoration. A moment of silence...then the hymns: "Salve Regina and O Lumen" resounded. Everyone was immersed in the praise of our Blessed Mother Mary and the joy of gathering with St. Dominic in the communion of brothers and sisters in the Dominican family.

In this atmosphere we remembered more than 800 years ago Father St. Dominic being present among the first nuns at Prouille. I also recalled how he received and lived the Gospel. Perhaps he did not stop at becoming the “Mother, and brother of Jesus”. But with his passionate love and in the good Providence of God, he brought together his brothers and sisters who were bearing in their souls their restlessness to engage in making everyone belong to God’s family. Such is our Dominican family: "While the brothers and sisters and laity fraternity belonging to the Order" preach the Holy Name of Jesus Christ all over the world, "the nuns in solitude seek, contemplate and plead with him, so that the Word from the mouth of God can be fulfilled and not return in vain” (Is 55,10). LCM 1.II.

As Dominican nuns, our lives are secluded behind the cloister, isolated from the world. Every day, we live among familiar faces, but in mind and soul we bear other faces as well: the faces to whom the Dominican brothers and sisters are serving and preaching the Word, the faces of the people we have never met. And even those who come to ask us to pray for them, those who are suffering war, flight, unfair life; fathers and mothers in tears and wrinkles on their faces imprinted with affliction, helplessness out of the fact that their children fall into the traps of the world today ... they are in our prayers, in our joy and sadness.

I love holy Father St. Dominic. The most imprinted image in my mind is his face with tears and prayer begging before the Cross: "Lord! What will be the fate of sinners?" Today, while we were turning to Father St. Dominic and singing: "O lumen", we were here, Dominican priests, friars with different nationalities and voices from distant lands, all singing the same language, carrying the same heart and affection, as a family we live together in prayer and mission to serve the Word.

Then we mingled together outside in the small courtyard of the Monastery. There were a few languages spoken when we conversed, honestly speaking, for my part, I did not understand all the things that the priests said, and also guessed that they did not understand our poor English. But it was interesting because the more profound language that we all spoke and understood was the language of spiritual and beautiful love.

In visiting us the Capitulars from the General Chapter at Xuan Loc probably had in their minds a number of concerns and were searching for the good of the future mission of the Order. That's

what St. Dominic used to do in his lifetime, he used to stop by the monastery of the nuns to find rest and to entrust the footsteps and concerns of the brothers' mission to their prayers.



Our meeting took place with a snack and was brief. Before parting, they each thoughtfully introduced themselves. They came from Philippines, Argentine, Hong Kong, Spain, Venezuela, America, Italy, France, Belgium, Africa, Germany...but became close and familiar in the big Dominican family. We each, in turn, introduced ourselves. When I heard the introduction of each Capitular, I thought of peoples, countries that they represented, from there contained so many good things, cultural and social challenges for the mission of the Word from each region of the world.

After that Fr. Gerard Timoner asking our Lord for the blessings to all of us and every one saying "good bye" and wishing "see you again" to each other.

The door was closed after they left our Monastery at 15:30pm. There are so many seeds of the Word out there that our brothers and sisters are sowing, and they themselves are the leaven mixed in the immense dough of this life. We continue our "duty" with a new and more enthusiastic love for the mission of the Word. Paul plants, Apolo waters, but God himself makes the seed grow.

Like Mary, Our Lady of the Holy Spirit, patron of our monastery, day after day in this monastic life we beg and receive the Holy Spirit, so that the seed of Word that our brothers and sisters are sowing bears plenty of fruit and look forward to the day when everyone becomes "the Mother and Brother of Jesus".

The Sisters of the Monastery in Vietnam

(Original: English)



RETREAT FOR THE DOMINICAN NUNS OF SPAIN

CALERUEGA

What was once a dream, became a reality. Our dear ex-Master of the Order, whom Pope Francis made Archbishop Coadjutor of Bahía Blanca in 2015, and became the Titular Archbishop of the same diocese in 2017, handles his large diocese, fulfilling the task entrusted to him by the Church. It seemed almost impossible to see him again in Caleruega, but the Lord prepared everything so that he could come.



We had the retreat for all the contemplative Dominicans of Spain, and we were 56 nuns from the 4 Federations. A good number less than on previous occasions that these types of retreats were convened, and due, no doubt, to the fact that today's communities are less numerous than years ago.

Although knowing this, he wanted to gather us again to take advantage of the fact that he came for the *ad limina* visit of the Argentinian bishops with Pope Francis at the Vatican. It was a unique occasion: that of being in Europe and being able to count on a few days before returning to his Argentinian diocese. It was the perfect time to not delay any longer this visit to Caleruega.

As a Dominican, he has always loved Caleruega (the light, broad horizons and the firm rock, which molded Dominic's heart and soul, as he likes to say), and has come many times from 1998 to 2010, the year of his last retreat for the nuns and the year in which he concluded being the Master of the Order and returned to his country.



We felt very comfortable during the retreat: enjoying his company and being able to be together in the house of our Father Saint Dominic. They were really days with words of life, days of grace ... and seasoned with that closeness and friendliness that characterize him, both before and now. He has been a welcoming father with a big heart, treating the nuns as Saint Dominic treated them, like his first daughters in the Order and always so dear to him.

He wanted to talk to us about biblical characters, as in previous retreats, but this time they were women characters from the Old and New Testaments. All of them were brave, with an unwavering faith, with the wisdom that comes from God and with that feminine way of acting before the world. We have much to learn from them about our consecrated life today. He explained how each of these women has contributed to our formation as contemplative Dominicans.

We thank God for all that he has given us, for the great fraternity we experienced and for the preaching that serves as a reference and that, depending on us, will always continue to help us.

We saw clearly that Bishop fr. Carlos Azpiroz op is still very much ours and we are still his daughters, because he made us feel that way.

Sr Adela Santamaría, CALERUEGA

(Original: Spanish)



THE WELL AND THE MIRROR...

Spiritual Exercises in Caleruega Eight-hundredth anniversary of the incorporation of the community in the Order of Preachers

Dear sisters and brothers of the great family of Christ and the small and endearing family of Dominic. What I propose to convey to you is not precisely a chronicle of the Spiritual Exercises that we had in Caleruega from May 11-16 of this year 2019, but rather that kind of rereading made after having lived something important in the path of faith which is our life as Dominican contemplatives.

It was the community of Caleruega that had the wonderful idea of opening its days of Spiritual Exercises to all the communities of Spain who wished to participate in the prayerful celebration of their Eight-hundred years of joining the Order of Preachers in 1219. A brilliant idea and a blest insistence in an invitation that managed to gather more than 60 nuns from different convents and different nationalities. In this way, the preacher of the Exercises, Monsignor Carlos Azpiroz Costa OP, former Master of the Order, instead of having only the community celebrating its eighth centenary, had a large and very diverse group of restless-hearted sisters eager to rest in the only One that can be the rest for the human heart.

Two images have helped me synthesize the experience:

- **The Well** (source of the charism), silent witness of the birth of Dominic and, in a way, of the birth of our Order.
- **A mirror** (God and the brothers and sisters, from the past and the present): that simple element that reflects what is before it and allows us to recognize the figure reflected in it, at least externally, although in some circumstances may even show something of the interior life of a person.



The Well

The invitation that M. Margarita made to each of our communities was bold for a time when there is much to do but few sisters! But she did. She dared to challenge our poverty, to summon us and gather us in the Cradle of our Dominican family. The "well", the symbolic source where we drink of the charism that Dominic received, and through the

centuries is still alive and gives life!

Caleruega brings us back to the spring where it all started, which tells us about Dominic. Its serene landscape, its calmness; the breaking of its stones, of its imperturbable strength and tenacity. The fraternal welcome of our Sisters and Brothers is a prolongation of time in the heart of Dominic who loved everyone and everyone was loved by him. Caleruega teaches us, simply by staying as a witness of the past; it reminds us of the rock from which we are carved and that is why it gives us strength: to live the present with passion and build the future with hope.

The Mirror

In the book of Proverbs 27, 19 we read: "As the face is reflected in the water, so man looks at himself in others." In these days we could see ourselves as in a mirror, in the loving gaze of God, and in each of the biblical women that Fray Carlos made real and present before us.

The liturgy, which very well prepared and organized by the Novice Mistress and the novitiate of the Federation of Our Lady of the Rosary, gave us the opportunity to praise, bless and proclaim our God, in his very mystery; while recognizing where and how we were, we yearn with more certainty for the goal to which we tend. We had long moments of silence and solitude. The church and the nun's choir, "Grandmother Juana's" little kitchen-chapel, the chapel of what was the friars' novitiate, the Rock of St. George, our own rooms, and for the early risers who enjoyed walking in the early morning—these were silent witnesses of intense moments of prayer.

The great biblical women were the human mirrors that Fray Carlos presented to the eyes and ears of the heart: Eve, the mother of the living; Sara, who laughed at the promise of God and received fertility as a gift; Rachel, the beautiful shepherdess who, in the desire to be a mother, exclaims: "Give me children or I shall die"; Shipra and Puah, the Hebrew midwives who challenged and overcame the cunning of Pharaoh; Mary, the sister of Moses and Aaron; Many others followed them until we reached the New Testament where the one stands out among all: Mary, the Mother of the Son of God.

Jesus, the Incarnate Wisdom, learned from women. He began his days learning from his mother how to speak, to name what he wanted, to observe; to look at the world, at men, at God; to pray, to contemplate. He learned from women the proportions of flour and yeast to water, not to mend an old garment with new cloth. He learned experientially, as Mary sings in the Magnificat, that mercy overcomes justice.

Of the women of the New Testament Fray Carlos spent time with Elizabeth, Ana, the daughter of Jairo, the woman healed on the Sabbath, the Samaritan woman, Mary of Bethany, Martha, the women of passion. In their varied vocations, they all have a common denominator: they accepted God's plan and became involved in it with all their minds, with all their strength,

with all their hearts, and, with all their limits.

Another mirror was that of personal or group conversations. It is worth mentioning the ones we had at breakfast with our table mates: anecdotes, stories of our vocations, the current state of the communities to which we belonged and what was spontaneously emerging in the conversations.

There we noted the old song that Fray Carlos quoted in one of the talks: "The same thing happens to me as to you..." Each community goes through what Fray Carlos synthesized beautifully with two words: "abundance" and "shortage". Abundance of years and shortage of youth, abundance of spaces and shortage of those who inhabit them, abundance of trades and shortage of those who exercise them. And, with all these "abundances" and "shortages", coexist generous surrender and hope against all hope in which God has called us and will fully bring what has begun in each and in our monasteries, in the Plan of God counting on our weaknesses and, not by the paths we imagined or wanted, but those that He thinks fit.

From the spring of the Dominic charism and recognizing ourselves before the sight of God who is love, before the holy women who preceded us and before our sisters who share in the present time in the contemplative Dominican life in Spain. We celebrated the 800 years of the incorporation of our Sisters into the Order; we asked pardon and we took time to remember and renew "our First Love".

On the 13th, with a solemn Eucharist we begin the 800th birthday of the incorporation into the Order of our sisters. We bear witness that the songs, homily and dance of our youngest sisters and common joy helped us commemorate the Virgin of Fatima.

After lunch, we were invited by the community of Caleruega to their workroom, for the celebration of their 800 years. There we found a huge table prepared four delicious cakes made by our sisters. We sang "happy birthday". The Prioress, Sister Margarita, blew out the candles of the cake and said a few brief words among which I was impressed by a phrase: that we live united in the future as united as we have lived now. A precious desire and perhaps prophetic announcement of the future of our monasteries in Spain!

On the afternoon of the 15th, we had a penitential liturgy using the format of the request for forgiveness made by St. John Paul II in the year 2000. We implored the Divine Mercy on humanity wounded by sin and for the sins that as a Church we committed throughout the centuries until today.



The last day, May 16th, we prayed Vespers, with the Blessed Exposed. We passed spontaneously one after another in front of His sacramental presence. Each one carried in her hands a card distributed by Fray Carlos, dedicated and signed by him in the corner. In it he invited us to write the motto of our profession or some meaningful phrase from our years of monastic life. While the sister talked "face to face with Jesus" songs were interspersed and texts of Scripture were read. It was an intense moment of personal and community prayer that made us all united in our "first love", with the history of our life and with the decision of the present to continue on our way to the future. When we left the church, we realized that it was raining. Until then the days were clear and sunny, ideal for these types of meetings.

To finish : a huge THANK YOU! to: our sisters from Caleruega for inviting us and participating in this eighth centenary, to Fray Carlos, for his tireless and fraternal dedication to his sisters that resulted in liturgical celebrations, talks, reading while we ate, personal attention to all who asked for it and his precious sense of humor. Thanks also to our Federal Prioress who supported this initiative. The Community of friars of Caleruega, as always, made us feel at home and attended to all our needs and more. We also cannot forget our Communities that sent us and remained praying for us.

THANK God for calling us to be part of the beautiful Dominican Family

*Sr. Maria Luisa Navarro Ramos OP
Monastery of the Holy Trinity and St. Lucy,
Orihuela (Alicante) - Spain*

(Original: Spanish)



10th Meeting of the Czech and Polish Noviciates

It has been already 10 times that the noviciates from the Czech Republic and Poland had a chance to meet for a 5-day-reunion. Those meetings have taken place since 2014. We come together twice a year in one of the Polish or Czech monasteries.

The goal of our meetings is common formation. Up until now three of the meetings were focused on religious vows and others on prayer and some other topics.

Our last reunion took place at St. Anna Monastery (near Czestochowa, Poland) from May 20th to 25th this year. Spiritual conferences and our conversations were focused on the community life and solitude. The participants came from the monasteries in Znojmo (Sr. Růžena, a novice mistress, Sr. Cecilie, a temporary professed sister, Sr. Jordana, a novice and Denisa, a postulant), St. Anna (Sr. Zdzislawa, a novice mistress, Sr. Magdalena, a temporary-professed and Sr. Elia, a novice), Radonie (Sr. Jacka, and Sr. Miriam, a temporary-professed), Prague (Sr. Pavla, a novice mistress) and Krakow (Sr. Jacka, a novice mistress).

For the first two days Fr. Radoslaw Broniek, O.P. from Krakow spoke on the spirituality of the Desert Fathers. He focused mainly on Evagrius Ponticus and his teachings on *acedia*. We analysed a few excerpts from the texts of the author, which gave us a basis to talk further about the silence and the solitude in our monastic life. Sr. Růžena from Znojmo, gave us a talk on St. Dominic's vision of the female Dominican monastic life. The speech was followed by a fervent discussion. Our last spiritual conference was given by Fr. Lucjan Sobkowicz, O.P. who is a chaplain at St. Anna monastery. It was an introduction to our reflection on the community life according to the 12th chapter of St. Paul's Letter to the Romans.

During that meeting we had an occasion to visit the Jasna Gora Monastery, the most important Marian shrine in Poland. For some sisters of the Czech Republic it was the first time to the Chapel of the Miraculous Image of Our Lady of Czestochowa. We could also visit the place that is seldom made available to pilgrims. Our guide, Sr. Faustina (an Ursuline sister) showed us the interior of the monastery's library that contains many precious books of great historic value. During our tour we also found out that the Pauline Order has a great reverence to St. Thomas Aquinas who had a constitutive influence on their beginnings. That explained why St. Thomas was portrayed on the ceiling of the library and on one of the beautiful ancient desks there.

To summarize I have to say that every reunion is a great occasion to get to know each other better, to hold conversations in which we try to break the distance caused by the language barrier. It is also an occasion to get to know the community that hosts us by praying

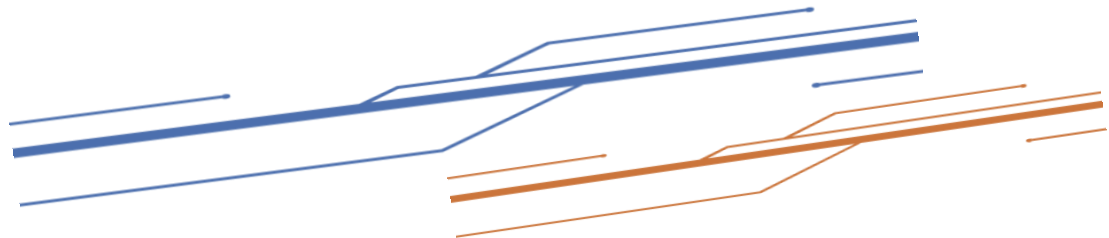
with them and by sharing some moments of their community life. At every reunion we hold at least one recreation with the local community. This whole experience allows us to feel not only a part of our own community but also a part of the entire Order which we can see in its beauty and diversity.



I've already participated in eight reunions and I am really glad that we will have another occasion to meet again very soon. This time the reunion will take place in Krakow. Our main theme will be the liturgy.

Sr Miriam OP
Radonie, Poland

(Original polish/English)



Study Programs for Junior Professed Nuns

The first cycle of two study programs for junior professed nuns in the **North American** Region began in 2019.

The Theological Formation Program (TFP) is a program held at the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, D.C. since 1990.

The Monastic Theological Studies Program (MTS), begun in 2010, is a program sponsored by the North American Association of Dominican Monasteries. It is held in a member monastery of the Association. Below are descriptions of each of the programs.

*Submitted by Sister Mary Rose Carlin, O.P.
Monastery of the Infant Jesus
Lufkin, Texas, U.S.A.
(Original: English)*

Theological Formation Program for Dominican Nuns: Cycle I (2019-2020)

The two weeks between June 22 and July 6 saw many comings and goings at the Priory of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., U.S.A.; surely it was “business as usual” for the friars, as it has been for eight hundred years. During these two weeks, however, they were joined in worship, meals, and study by seven nuns representing five monasteries in North America and Kenya (the Monastery of St. Jude in Marbury, Alabama, the Monastery of Our Lady of the Rosary in Buffalo, New York, St. Dominic’s Monastery in Linden, Virginia, the Monastery of Our Lady of Grace in North Guilford, Connecticut, and Corpus Christi Monastery, Karen, Nairobi), assembled to begin a new cycle of the Theological Formation Program for Dominican Nuns. Administered by the Pontifical Faculty, the four-year program’s emphasis on Thomistic theology includes two weeks of intensive classes each summer at the Dominican House of Studies, preparing sisters for subsequent coursework and written assignments to be completed throughout the year with the assistance of tutors. Liberal use of library facilities, including borrowing, scanning, and printing privileges encouraged further pursuit of topics of interest. Sisters hardly noticed Washington, D.C.’s summer heat during their stay in the newly-refurbished, air-conditioned convent on the Priory’s grounds.



His Excellency Archbishop Augustine DiNoia, OP formally opened the program on Sunday, June 23, with a talk on intellectual inquiry into the mysteries of our faith and its essential role in Dominican life. Classes began with a running start on Monday, June 24, with Rev. Raymund Snyder, OP offering a sweeping introduction to philosophy (*Philosophy: Thought in the Service of Faith*). During the second week, Rev. Thomas

Petri, OP delved into themes appropriate for an introductory theology course (*Theology: The Way of Divine Wisdom*).

While a spirit of intellectual seriousness characterized the participating sisters, they were no less eager to cultivate bonds of friendship among themselves, evidenced during informal recreation periods and in the consideration shown for others during the two weeks. With the wise guidance of Rev. Gabriel O'Donnell, OP (Program Coordinator), along with the warm hospitality of Prior Rev. Aquinas Guilbeau, OP and all of the brethren, the program promises to continue to strengthen Dominican contemplative life and enrich the lives of young nuns as they ponder the Word.

-Submitted by Mother Mary Dominic Brumfitt, O.P.

Monastery of Our Lady of the Rosary

Buffalo, New York, U.S.A. - (Original: English)

Monastic Theological Studies

Our Monastery of Corpus Christi in Menlo Park, California was still wrapped in the stillness of night as we four sisters-in-formation made our way to the choir for a visit with Jesus, then slipped quietly to the kitchen. Our novice mistress and another sister were busy preparing sack lunches and a good breakfast of eggs and toast to send us on our way. Hugs and good-byes exchanged, we loaded up into the waiting van and headed to the San Francisco International Airport to catch a flight to Houston, Texas, where we would meet five other sisters-in-formation from across North America.

The Monastic Theological Program, or MTS, is offered by the North American Association of Dominican Monasteries (NAADM) for nuns who have professed, or will shortly profess, simple vows. It is a four-year program of philosophical and theological studies intended to introduce the nun-in-formation to more advanced study that we can then pursue for the rest of our monastic life. Each year begins with a two-week session of intensive classes taught by Dominican friars. This year, the first week was an introduction to philosophy taught by Father Brian Chrzastek, O.P. of the Province of Saint Joseph, Eastern U.S.A.; the second week was an introduction to theology taught by Father Philip Neri Powell, O.P. of the Province of Saint Martin de Porres, Southern, U.S.A. After the two-week class session, we return to our own monasteries to “unpack” what we received, write topic papers, and prepare presentations to be given to our classmates at the following year’s two-week session. But MTS is more than just a program to sharpen our Dominican pillar of study. It also provides exciting opportunities for a nun to grow in the pillars of prayer, community and preaching.



For this four-year cycle of MTS, four monasteries of NAADM sent sisters-in-formation to participate: one sister from the Monastery of the Infant Jesus in Lufkin, Texas, one sister from Queen of Peace Monastery in British Columbia, Canada, three sisters from the Monastery of Our Lady of the Rosary in Summit, New Jersey, and four from Corpus Christi Monastery, in Menlo Park, California.

Those of us who traveled from the other three monasteries, traveled an average of 1,960 miles, or 3,110 kilometers. That’s farther than driving from Rome to Moscow!

For most of us, this was the first time we’d visited another Dominican monastery other than the one we entered. And, because our homes and monasteries are situated in vastly different regions of North America, we also have different cultural experiences and ways of expressing the values of Dominican life. Some of our monasteries are older (for North America) and were built in a more classic European monastic style, with stained glass windows, an enclosed cloister, Gothic arches and other architectural details. Other of our monasteries were built more recently, in a more modern architectural style, and have taken into account resources available and the contemporary needs of the local community. Our respective horaria and details in observances also reflect the needs of our respective communities. So it was an enriching experience to see Dominican values lived in another monastery and hear stories from one another about each other’s home monastery.

One of our first activities was to take a tour of the monastery and meet some of the sisters. We delighted to see and learn how many things were the same as “home” and intrigued by differences. It wasn’t uncommon to hear as we went, “oh, that’s a great idea!” Or, “this is how

we have this arrangement, etc.” We also grew eager for the opportunity to see another of our four monasteries – next year, the community at the Monastery of Our Lady of the Rosary in Summit, New Jersey will host the MTS classes.



But beyond architecture and the structure of the regular observances, the two weeks gave us a wonderful and unique opportunity to meet and begin to form bonds with each other. This seems especially vital given the increasing importance of interdependence between monasteries and the developing role of Federations/Associations. If we are to effectively share the fruits of our contemplation with each other and provide needed support and collegiality, we first need to know and begin to understand one another. It was also liberating to concretely realize “I am not alone.” That is, there are other sisters-in-formation who are experiencing the same difficulties, challenges and blessings that come with being formed as a Dominican nun.

Our first time in choir for liturgical prayer was, in some ways, like returning to the postulancy. The content of the prayer, naturally, was the same, but the intonations, and the details of the way the prayer was expressed was different for most of us –the configuration of the choir, the procession flow for communion, using English versus Latin for some of the hymns and prayers, etc. The hosting community was exceedingly gracious in providing us the guidance we needed to participate more fully and soon we were, more or less, in the flow of things again.

All this gave us an opportunity to deepen our understanding of the essential values of Dominican life versus structures that can and should be adapted to time and culture. It was a beautiful experience to enter into the life of the hosting community, as much as our classes and studies would allow, and live Dominican prayer in that place. Ultimately, we can begin to see how much more we share in common than what we have in differences.

The MTS experience also gives each of us sisters-in-formation a personal challenge and opportunity for deeper examen – each of us was formed in a particular environment with one community that has become familiar. We can become very comfortable. Suddenly, we were

in a new place, with a new schedule and new people. And God allowed us a time of testing: How solid am I in my formation? Am I truly as formed as I think I am to remain at peace interiorly when all exterior to me has changed and is highly intense, to hold on to the values of Dominican life while adapting to current needs, my sisters, unexpected opportunities and surroundings?

We sisters-in-formation were the recipients of the most sublime preaching of our Order – the reconciliation of all in Christ. For we were welcomed with open arms, with hearts full of love (and as big as the Texas skies), and hands eager to serve and make us comfortable. We preached to each other with our common sharing and examples of preserving silence and prayer, despite our being out of our



element. And we preached to all those we met along the way – the active Dominican sisters from Puerto Rico who were serving in the area and a Dominican friar from India who chanced to visit while we were there; the people in the airport and on the planes who couldn't help but notice a group of nuns in full habit and who were eager to share their stories and ask for prayers, and many more along the way that we shall never know.

Our newly elected Master of the Order, Father Gerard Timoner, III, O.P., recently emphasized that “we are preachers”. It is not what we do, it is who we are. The whole experience of MTS takes a vital step in forming the cloistered nuns of North America into the preachers Jesus is calling us to be for our generation and world today.

*Submitted by Sister Marie Dominic of the Incarnate Word Clemens, O.P.
Corpus Christi Monastery, Menlo Park, California, U.S.A.*

(Original: english)



Fusion

of the Monastery of the Perpetual Rosary in Syracuse, New York, U.S.A. with the Monastery of Mary the Queen in Springfield, Illinois, U.S.A.

On March 11th, 2018, Sister Anna Marie Pierre, O.P., prioress of the Monastery of Mary the Queen in Springfield, Illinois, U.S.A. received a letter from Sister Helen Ann Rollins, O.P. the then prioress of the Perpetual Rosary Monastery in Syracuse, New York, U.S.A. suggesting a union between their two monasteries.

Sister Helen explained that for some time her community had been discerning their future. It had become impossible for her community to overcome the many problems that afflicted it. They were a community of nine nuns, eight of whom needed skilled care.

After several visits to the Syracuse monastery, together with many conversations with both the prioress and her sisters, the Springfield community agreed to honor their wish for assistance and proceeded with the initial process for a request of a union between monasteries.

On September 24, 2018, the Congregation Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life signed the decree permitting not a union but a fusion.

Sister Anna Marie received the decree the first week in October 2018. The nine sisters of the Perpetual Rosary Monastery in Syracuse, New York, are now members of the Monastery of Mary the Queen in Springfield, Illinois.

However, prior to the decree, permission was granted for six of these nuns to be admitted to a Carmelite nursing home in New York, since their conditions were urgent.

The Monastery of the Perpetual Rosary in Syracuse was founded from the Monastery of the Perpetual Rosary in Camden, New Jersey in 1925. When the monastery in Camden closed in 2013, their remaining nuns also joined the Monastery of Mary the Queen.

*Submitted by Sister Mary Rose
Carlin, O.P.
Monastery of the Infant Jesus
Lufkin, Texas, U.S.A.*

(Original: English)



75th Anniversary of Foundation

Monastery of St. Jude in Marbury, Alabama, U.S.A.

At the **Dominican Monastery of St. Jude in Marbury, Alabama, USA**, we are celebrating our 75th Anniversary of Foundation beginning August 17th. Our monastery has a unique history as the first interracial cloister founded in our country.

In the 1930's in America, segregation of African Americans from the white population was strong, especially in the Southern States where extensive segregation in such things as schools, transportation, and public utilities was mandated by law. In the North, a less pervasive form of racial distinction was maintained by social custom. The Civil War had freed the African slaves only 50 years before, within living memory of many. Several religious communities of black Sisters had been founded, such as the Oblates of Divine Providence in 1829. St. Katherine Drexel founded the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament for Indians and Colored People in 1891, but although they ministered to those of other races, they could only accept white candidates at that time because of social pressure. There were no cloistered communities which would accept African Americans.

In this social climate, Mother Mary of Jesus, Prioress of the Dominican Sisters of the Perpetual Rosary in Catonsville, Maryland, in the South of the United States, saw as in a vision a race riot with a crowd of angry people with clubs in hand engaged in a violent struggle. A dark-skinned man in a Dominican habit—St. Martin de Porres—walked through the crowd holding up a rosary in his hand and pointing to a monastery on a hill with Sisters of all races praying the rosary with arms outstretched before the Blessed Sacrament. As he passed through, the mob knelt in prayer, their weapons turned into rosaries in their hands. This dream became the inspiration to found an interracial monastery.

After the death of Mother Mary of Jesus, Mother Mary Dominic and Mother Mary of the Child Jesus received permission from their superiors to find a bishop who would receive their



foundation. For years, they wrote letters to bishops across the country. “An interracial community? Not prudent in my diocese at this time,” many responded. Several positive answers ended in disappointment. Finally, after receiving permission to write only once more, mutual friends put them in contact with Archbishop Thomas J. Toolen of Mobile, Alabama. Providentially, there was a priest in his diocese, Fr. Harold Purcell, who had founded a mission to the African Americans. Named the “City of St. Jude,” it included a trade school, hospital, parish church, and, he hoped, nuns with Perpetual Adoration. Our Mother Foundresses were welcome indeed.

On August 17, 1944, our Foundresses left the Catonsville monastery to make their new foundation. Fr. Purcell had renovated a farm house out in the country in Marbury, next to another mission to the African Americans, as he could not build in Montgomery because of the ongoing World War II. The new interracial monastery was featured in various newspaper and magazine articles across the country, priests and Sisters told others about us, and young women of many races responded: black, white, Asian, Hispanic, Native American. This fulfilled our Foundresses’ dream, and they always were careful to emphasize our unity in Christ rather than any racial differences. When the farm house grew too small for the community, we built our permanent monastery here in Marbury, in this peaceful rural setting, rather than in the city.



Like over half the Dominican monasteries in our country, our community was founded as cloistered contemplative Dominican Sisters of the Perpetual Rosary; we became Nuns of the Order of Preachers in 1995. In America today, being an interracial community is nothing special, thank God, as many communities have Sisters of different races and even cultures, and no one is excluded on account of her race. We continue to serve Jesus and Mary in our Dominican contemplative life in continuity with our Perpetual Rosary heritage. We try to maintain our heritage of Dominican chant, using some of Fr. Augustine Thompson’s work at dominican-liturgy.blogspot.com, and have shared organ accompaniment for the Dominican Graduale with some other monasteries of nuns. Since 2006 we have been receiving the most recent generation of vocations, new life for our community.

You can read our special 75th Jubilee Newsletter here: marburydominicanuns.org/wp-content/uploads/75Newsletter.pdf or visit our website at MarburyDominicanNuns.org.

*Submitted by Sister Mary Jordan Friemoth, O.P.
Monastery of St. Jude
Marbury, Alabama, U.S.A.*

(Original: English)



CENTENNIAL WING BLESSING

On Saturday, May 18th, our archbishop, Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, presided the Mass of Thanksgiving and Blessing of our Centennial Wing, attended by nearly 200 guests. The Cardinal was joined at the altar by several priests, including Rev. Kenneth Letoile, O.P., provincial of the U.S. Eastern Province of St. Joseph. After Mass, we nuns joined our guests in the new wing's foyer where Cardinal Tobin performed the Rite of Blessing. Afterwards, the Cardinal proceeded throughout the building, accompanied by Sr. Mary Martin, our prioress, to bless each room with holy water. The Open House followed, with sisters stationed throughout the building to direct our guests in their explorations. Among the attendees, we were pleased to welcome Nora Radest, Mayor of the City of Summit, who was also present at our Groundbreaking in January 2018.

After viewing the Lower Level, the guests enjoyed a luncheon in our enclosure garden in perfect weather. All were impressed by both the beauty and functionality of the new wing's design and construction, especially the seamless integration of the addition with the existing building.

The addition features an entrance foyer with exterior and interior ramps for the full accessibility of our visitors to the wing and the chapel. Off the foyer are the Reception Office (where we



nuns greet our guests), the Cloister Gift Shop (featuring religious books and items and our own Seignadou Soap and Cloister Candles products), a large and small parlor, and our Guest Wing. Since its opening, we have welcomed a non-stop stream of the guests: sisters' families and friends, vocation inquirers, and friar retreatants. The three guestrooms (with private bathrooms) accommodate a total of six guests. A living room and dining room with a breakfast bar with sink, dishwasher, and small refrigerator complete the space. The new guest area represents a major upgrade from our former basement guest room.

Within the enclosure side, there is an elevator to the Lower Level, two offices, a pantry, and storage closets. The entirety of the Lower Level of the new wing is within the enclosure and contains a spacious sewing room, exercise room, and two small conference (phone) rooms. We decided to honor several of our saintly Dominican brothers and sisters by naming rooms in the wing after them. St. Martin de Porres has the Janitor's Closet, Bl. Benvenuta watches over the Reception Office, and Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati claims (of course) the Exercise Room!

The Centennial Wing's Blessing happened exactly five years from the official opening of our fundraising efforts. The significance of that date certainly renewed our gratitude for the Lord's Providence for all the marvels He had done in gathering the many people who helped us put this dream into action and bring its happy completion. The Lord provided us with a talented and dedicated Centennial Campaign Committee and a stellar design and building team of architect Justin Mihalik and contractor J.R. Prisco, Inc. Most importantly, He inspired the many benefactors whose donations totaled close to \$5 million dollars. More than ever, we continue to echo with the Psalmist, "How can [we] repay the Lord for His goodness to [us]? (Ps 116B, 12)

*Submitted by Sr. Judith Miryam, O.P.
Monastery of Our Lady of the Rosary
Summit, NJ, U.S.A.*

(Original: English)





Virgen

HIMNO DEL ROSARIO

Amplio y rítmico

Can - te - mos, Se - ño - ra, tu dul - ce re - ga - lo, quir -
rit.
nal - da de li - rios del jar - dín de Dios. Can -
tempo
te - mos, Se - ño - ra, tu dul - ce re - ga - lo, quir -
poco rall.
nal - da de li - rios del jar - dín de Dios.

¡Vir - gen del Ro - sa - rio! ¡Rei - na de los ma - res
y las tie - rras to - das que il - lu - mi - na el sol!
O - ra - ción dea - mo - res, ca - de - na de flo - res con
acel. un poco
que el mun - do ci - ñes a tu co - ra - zón, sal - te - rio de ro - sas que un
án - gel can - ta - ra e - soes tu ro - sa - rio, per - fu - me y a - mor.

