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"Go, Tell his disciples He has risen from the dead...!"  
(Mtt. 28:7)

Go, Tell his disciples He has risen from the dead...!

(Mtt. 28:7)

Do save the date in 2019!

12th – 18th May, 2019
La Salle, Casa Generalizia, Rome
BIT BY BIT, LIFE RESUMES ITS COURSE IN MOCOA, COLOMBIA
Extract of Report from the Dominican Sisters of Charity of the Presentation, Mocoa presented to DSI. (Sandra Toussaint, DSI)

On 31st March 2017, the city of Mocoa, Colombia where our Dominican Sisters of Charity of the Presentation have several missions, lived through the greatest tragedy in its history. Many districts were submerged under massive landslides containing huge boulders and rocks owing to consistent and heavy rainfall over several days. It had been 60 years since the inhabitants of Mocoa experienced natural disasters of such magnitude. Seventeen (17) districts were affected, five of which were almost totally wiped out.

The number of recorded deaths were at about 320 with over 400 injured and approximately 600 unaccounted for. This was a time of great pain and disorientation for the inhabitants whose family, friends and neighbours could not be accounted for and who had lost their homes and other possessions. Such massive landslides have been described as a direct result of deforestation, and poor land mismanagement policies in the region.

Sustainable Economic Support

The Dominican Sisters of Charity of the Presentation, established in Colombia since 1873 immediately sent 10 of their sisters to aid and support affected families. Thanks to the generosity of Dominican Sisters and Laity worldwide, the Sisters of the Presentation in Mocoa (Sisters Reyna Elvira Itzep, Carmen Ester Pardo, Liznarda Casanova (resident of Mocoa village), Carmenza Avellaneda, Pastora Marín) began to search of families with whom they were in contact before the disaster, in an effort to know their needs provide immediate, concrete and effective assistance and a concrete assessment of the needs of the people describing the precariousness of the situation. Their focus was to provide more than relief as a first response. They invited the people to present long-term projects based upon their situation after the disaster. From August 15 to 18, 2017, driven by the desire to develop and support productive pro-
Cont’d BIT BY BIT, LIFE RESUMES ITS COURSE IN MOCOA...

Projects intended to restore the long-term earning capacity to a group of identified inhabitants, the sisters received the first nine (9) projects namely, Graphic Arts (1), Food and catering (5), Construction (1), Hairdressing (1), Agriculture (1). The first eight (8) projects were presented by 8 families which facilitated the support of 13 adults and 11 children. The ninth project was an agricultural grouping of 4 families, 8 adults and 5 children. 37 people were thus able to return to a normal life, thanks to the financing of these 9 first projects.

Psychosocial Support
On October 8, 2017, six months after the disaster, the sisters invited families to a day of psychosocial support involving a liturgical celebration, a sharing of experiences of the disaster and a presentation on funded projects and the training program. Each family or family group was able to introduce themselves, to talk about their activity and to report on the difficulties that they had encountered in its development and roll-out. The meeting ended with a shared meal.

Ongoing Projects

Nine (9) other projects are under study. Conscious that the reconstruction of the economic and social fabric of the community cannot be limited to the financing of projects but must be accompanied by strategic management support of the entrepreneurs, the Sisters took a further step in establishing training sessions for the first Project Leaders led by an accountant on January 30 and 31, 2018. The topics covered during this training were financial language, how to keep accounts, entrepreneurship and management.

Financing
To date, the amount paid to families amounts to 39 million pesos (€10,735.00) and 35 million Pesos (€9,610) is yet to be paid for the implementation of the agricultural project.

Two Sisters in the company of families involved in the agricultural project.
DOMINICAN SISTERS OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA AND THE SOLOMON ISLANDS

Eighth General Chapter October 2017

By: Sr. Julianna Drobik OP
Dominican Sister of East Australia and the Solomon Islands

The Congregation of the Dominican Sisters of Eastern Australia and the Solomon Islands held their Eighth General Chapter in Sydney last October. 2017 was also the 150th anniversary of the congregation, remembering when eight pioneer sisters arrived by sailing ship from Ireland on the 10 September 1867 to begin a foundation in Maitland NSW at the invitation of Bishop Murray.

As part of the celebrations of this sesquicentenary, all the sisters able to be present - from novices to platinum jubilarians, from ages twenty-six to ninety-six, Australians and Solomon Islanders - gathered as one congregation from two countries for the Kairos Days prior to the formal proceedings of the Chapter. The theme for the gathering, “See I am doing a new thing…” inspired by Is. 43:19, provided a rich foundation for the Chapter. The Kairos days were filled with vibrant liturgies and rituals, opportunities to gain greater understanding of our various cultures, earnest discussion and much rejoicing in our common Dominican life.

The final event of the Kairos Gathering was the joyful and culturally rich Mass of the Holy Spirit, celebrated by Fr Anthony Walsh OP, Provincial of the Dominican Friars of the Assumption Province. Many co-workers and friends joined the sisters for this celebration. At the conclusion of Mass, the Chapter delegates were sent forth with the blessing of the full gathering to complete the formal matters of the
Cont’d DOMINICAN SISTERS OF EASTERN ...

Chapter over the following five days. The Chapter elected a new Prioress, Sr Mary-Clare Holland and Leadership Team, including for the first time two sisters from the Solomon Islands. The Chapter reflected on the Directions for the next four years and our growing awareness of our place in the Asia-Pacific. We made a deeper commitment to understanding the complex issues within and beyond our borders, including cultures and belief systems, the environment and the effects of peoples’ dislocation in the Asia-Pacific region. Empowerment of women through advocacy and support of sisters and projects that serve to build up women’s human dignity and greater involvement in stewardship of the whole of creation were also important directions.

Ever mindful of the recent Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Australia, we stated our commitment to respond to the recommendations of the Royal Commission and to continue to implement the highest professional standards across all our ministries.

The new Leadership Team commenced its term of office on the 29 January 2018, aware that we stand on the shoulders of the many courageous women who have gone before us, supported and loved by our sisters in two countries and grateful for our connection to the wider Dominican family across the world.

TO BE PRESENT - TO BE SENT

Celebration of the 60th Anniversary of the Foundation of Dominican Sisters of St. Catherine of Siena, Thanh Tam, Vietnam

January 2018

By: Sr. Marie Constance Tran thi Sam, OP
Former DSI Continental Coordinator, Asia Pacific & Sister of St. Catherine of Siena, Thanh Tam

On the occasion of the 60th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Congregation of Dominican Sisters of St. Catherine of Siena, Thanh Tam, Xuan Loc Diocese, Vietnam (January 21st, 1958-2018), our sisters from every corner (Vietnam, USA, Thailand) have come back to our Mother House to attend The Jubilee Celebration.

On the evening of January 19th, 2018, before the Thanksgiving Mass, there were several rituals to venerate our ancestors, especially those who organized the first group of sisters as a Congregation, our deceased superiors and sisters as well as our benefactors. Fr. Joseph Nguyen Duc Hoa - Prior Provincial of our Queen of Martyrs in Vietnam Province presided the Mass. In his sermon, Father Joseph expressed his fraternal thanks to the sisters, at the same time he recalled the early years of the Congregation in which the Dominican Brothers tirelessly collaborated in gathering and training the
sisters in the Dominican spirituality. For several years later, until 1975, the sisters of Thanh Tam collaborated with the friars in teaching at their schools.

The Provincial remarked that the Dominican Sisters of Thanh Tam had not had many opportunities in their long history to expand, especially in the socio-political context of their exodus in 1954 when the country was divided between the communists and the free world; then in 1975 when the entire country came under communist rule. The sisters, he described faced extreme hardship however, trusting in God who can turn the impossible into possible, “they have grown and prospered” he emphasized, “with 443 professed sisters, 354, in Vietnam, 89 in the USA, along with 41 novices, 19 pre-novices and 70 aspirants.”

Sr. Maria Madalena Pham Thi Huy, the Priorress General expressed the Congregation’s deepest gratitude to Fr. Prior Provincial and to the Vietnamese Province of the Friars for having accompanied and supported the Congregation through all means possible.

To mark this special event, the Congregation established a new mission in Tam Đa, Hà Tĩnh where the people have been affected terribly by The 2016 marine life disaster caused by polluted water discharged from toxic industrial waste illegally disposed of in the ocean.

To commemorate the Jubilee, the entire congregation of sisters will bear a respective seal in the form of a cross and flame to remind them of their mission in proclaiming the Good News of Peace.

On Saturday morning, January 20th, about 1,200 guests most of whom were the parents and relatives of sisters, superiors, brothers and sisters from other Congregations, including the Gabriel Brothers from Thailand, gathered at the Mother House to attend the main Jubilee Program. At the Opening Ceremony in the auditorium, our Priorress General, Sr. Mary Madalena Pham Thi Huy delivered her welcome speech in which she highlighted that “the Event of 60 Years Jubilee is a chance for our sisters to recall the history of the Congregation with gratitude, to live the present with passion and look forward the future with hope and with firm conviction to be witnesses to Jesus Christ on all frontiers under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The young sisters presented a brief history of the Congregation so vividly through dances and songs, that the audience talked about their different emotional experiences of the celebration.

The Thanksgiving Mass at 10:00 was the pivot of the Celebration. The main celebrant was Bishop
John Do Duc Ngan – the Assistant Bishop of Xuan Loc Diocese who concelebrated with Fr. Joseph Nguyễn Đức Hòa, OP. - Prior Provincial of Vietnamese Province and about 70 other Priests. The community of about 1600 guests and sisters of the Congregation gathered at the Mass at which the mixed choir of Dominican Brothers and our sisters sang, helped to make the Ceremony joyful and more meaningful as it reflective of a true family spirit of our Dominican Family.

The Agape party after the Mass was the occasion to express their joy and unity in the Church, in the Dominican Family and their own sisters’ biological families. They offered heartfelt gratitude to the Almighty and Providential God for all that they have received in 60 years and for all that they shall receive in the years to come. This event was a reminder to all to be grateful to God, to respect the contribution that each one makes, to live the Dominican life wholeheartedly and to be witnesses to God’s Mercy, glory and God’s salvation of everyone.

“My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,... for the Almighty has done great things for me.” (Lk 1,46,49)

LAUDARE-BENEDICERE-PRAEDICARE

Congratulations!

to all Sisters
of
Congregations
Celebrating
Anniversaries
&
Jubilees this quarter!
Dominicans across North America have been collaborating on a number of projects for many years. Here is an update on several recent and important efforts.

**How Canadian Brothers, Sisters, Nuns, and Laity Advocate for Immigrants.**

In October 2017 I had the opportunity to visit several congregations in North America that do not belong to the Dominican Sisters Conference in the United States. Sister Marcelline Koch, OP, the North American Justice and Peace Promoter and I visited two Canadian congregations: the Dominicaines de la Trinité (Dominican Sisters of the Trinity), Shawinigan, Québec the and Les Dominicaines Missionnaires Adoratrices (Dominican Missionary Adorers), Québec City, Québec.

In September 2013 Sister Raymonde Dussault, Prioress of the Dominicaines de la Trinité, was inspired by Pope Francis when he said “the empty convents belong to the flesh of Christ that are refugees.” She took this to prayer and gathered 15 sisters in Montréal to consider which of their houses in Montréal was underutilized. The leadership team decided to offer their Generalate House. The house was sold to the Dominican Friars for one dollar. A committee was formed and for 18 months they worked on plans for the house. The Foyer du monde was dedicated April 26, 2017. Brother, Sisters, Nuns and laity have put their resources at the service of immigrants and refugees. Families and women are welcomed for up to two years as they seek housing and employment in Montréal.

When the Dominicaines de la Trinité sold their house in Montreal they renovated a school building in Shawinigan, Quebec. Half of the building serves as the home of Les Moniales Dominicaines de Berthier (Monastery of Our Lady of the Rosary). The chapel and dining room are shared by the two groups.

**Shawinigan, Quebec**
African and US Congregations Work to Share Resources on Dominican Charism

How do we assure that our Dominican Charism will be handed down to future generations? Can we work together with our lay partners to inspire others to follow the vision of St. Dominic?

To answer these questions, 18 Dominican Congregations in the United States and the Missionary Dominicans of the Sacred Heart in Zimbabwe, Zambia and Kenya have united in a pilot planning project to do just that. Funded by the GHR Foundation: Futuring Dominican Charism for Mission, Sisters and Lay Partners Together brings all these congregations together. The aim of the project is to develop and deepen relationships and the collaboration necessary to advance our Dominican charism both within and between the United States and Africa. The animators of the project want to broaden our global sisterhood and deepen our understanding of Dominican charism for lay partners and Sisters. By sharing common resources, we can strengthen our capacity to educate lay partners and Sisters. The planning phase should lead to the development of a realistic implementation plan by the summer of 2018.

The International Coordinating Committee includes Sisters from Africa and the US along with Sisters Marie Therese Clement, Faustina Jimoh and Gene Poore representing Dominican Sisters International.

Collaboration south of the Canadian border

Climate Solutions

The Tri-State Coalition for Responsible Investment under the leadership of Sister Pat Daley, a Dominican Sister from Caldwell, New Jersey, has worked tirelessly to create opportunities for congregations to invest in climate solutions. US congregations have made a new commitment to pool investments into a new Climate Fund, which will focus solely on supporting alternatives to fossil fuels.

Dominican Archives Project

Many congregations in the US have been concerned about the best way to preserve their archives. A consultant has been hired to examine the archives of Dominican congregations in the United States. The study is being conducted to determine the best way to preserve archives and to make them accessible to future generations. The question of where to house the archives in different parts of the country will be a topic of discussion.

Charism and Sponsorship of Educational Institutions

The Dominican Alliance, a group composed of seven Dominican congregations in the Midwest region of the United States, is looking to collaborate on ways to promote and inspire Dominican charism and Catholic identity in educational institutions when Dominican Sisters no longer serve as administrators of the schools or serve on the boards.

For the past 10-15 years the Dominican Association of Secondary Schools (DASS) has shared best practices on how to imbue our schools with the Dominican charism and values. Their website (www.dominicanschools.org) offers resources of interest which might prove useful in the formation of boards and lay leaders.
MISSION BRIEF

January—March 2018

FUTURING DOMINICAN CHARISM FOR MISSION, SISTERS AND LAY PARTNERS TOGETHER

Dominican Sisters and lay partners from the 18 DSC Congregations in the US and the Dominican Sisters and their lay partners in Zimbabwe, Zambia and Kenya have engaged these past 9 months in the Dominican Sisters International “Futuring OP Charism planning project” supported by the GHR Foundation. Sr. Gloria Marie Jones, the Project Coordinator, extends special thanks to all who have participated in this significant project that is opening up new paths for collaboration and growth among the aforementioned congregations. In time, it is hoped that this project will serve the wider DSI family in its efforts to train and support sisters and lay partners in their collaborative preaching missions.

So far, this phase and the next of the project is viewed as a pilot and the emergent fruits will be used to develop stronger, and more strategic objectives and programmes which could be adapted for cultural relevance in our various countries of mission.

In addition to the various working groups in the USA and Kenya, Zambia and Zimbabwe who are working on their assigned segments of the project, an international coordinating team composed of 3 Sisters from the USA, (the project Coordinator, Sr. Gloria Marie Jones, Sr. Gene Poore, DSI’s Continental Coordinator for North America and Sr. Patricia Twobill, Prioress of the Sisters of Peace), 4 sisters from Africa representing the realities of the three countries under study (Sr. Angela Mwaba, Sr. Chama Mwila, Sr. Kamfwa Mutale General Prioress of the Dominican Sisters of the Sacred Heart and Sr. Faustina Jimoh, DSI’s Continental Coordinator), and Sr. Marie Therese Clement, DSI’s International Coordinator.

The unfolding process thus far has involved the following:

Gathering of study material
A. The creation of “Snapshots” that captured key statistical information of each US congregation and each of the aforementioned African countries.
B. The hopes and dreams of sisters and lay partners that emerged through responses to posed Futuring Questions.

Engaging the information
C. Eighty-five “Reflection Circles” involving 604 sisters and lay partners in the US and Africa participated in discussion of the study material and identification of areas calling for shared action.
D. The study and synthesis of reports from each Reflection Circle using the SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Threat) framework.

Discerning the path forward
E. Five regional Discernment Circles were formed in the US involving a sister, lay partner and newer member from each participating congregation. One Discernment Circle in Africa is bringing together sisters from the 3 countries.
F. The US Discernment participants, 52 in number, are studying the Reflection Circles material and are charged with identifying what emerges as important areas/actions to include in the project Implementation Plan.

Developing the Implementation Plan
G. May 8 – 10 the US Visioning Team, composed of 19 Dominican Sisters and lay partners will gather in Columbus, Ohio to develop a draft of the
Implementation Plan focusing on actions to strengthen collaboration among US OP DSC congregations and collaboration with our Sisters and their lay partners in Africa.

I. May 28 – June 1st the International Coordinating Council will meet in London to study the Implementation Plans and finalize the direction for our future collaboration.

H. In April the Dominicans in Zimbabwe, Zambia and Kenya will gather to develop their draft of the Implementation Plan to strengthen their collaboration in Africa and collaboration with our US OP DSC congregations and lay partners.

We count on your prayer for the Spirit’s guidance as we work together to create a shared future full of hope!
Dominican Sisters from two different countries and cultures came together in Adelaide recently for a unique reunion where they could reminisce about their shared missionary work.

In 1956 Australian Dominicans responding to the call of the Church set out as missionaries for the Solomon Islands. The first small band included two friars, two lay nurses and four sisters, two of whom – Sr Amata Clarke OP and Sr Philomena Cooper OP – were members of the Cabra community in Adelaide.

In the following year, Sr Christopher Slattery OP joined them and subsequently Sisters Francesca (Anne) Hogan, Gregory (Colleen) O’Callaghan, Kieran (Frances) Gaynor and Augustine (Enid) Wood, all from Cabra, also served in the Solomon Islands. Sisters from the North Adelaide Dominican community were also part of the Solomon Island mission for a number of years.

The Australians provided primary schooling, nursing care in clinics and a range of pastoral and educational work for many years.

In the late 1960s, two young Solomonese women requested entry to the Dominican sisterhood and were followed by many others. As their numbers grew the Australian Sisters gradually withdrew and handed over to the locals.

Today there are 31 professed sisters and several novices/aspirants, who are part of the Congregation of Dominican Sisters of Eastern Australia and the Solomon Islands.

In Sydney for their General Chapter in October nine of the older sisters from the Solomon Islands, all of whom knew the early missionary sisters well, took the opportunity to visit those still remaining in Adelaide, and others who had visited the Island communities over the years.

A joyful weekend of dinners, morning and afternoon teas, and just sitting and chatting passed all too quickly before the Solomon sisters returned home via Sydney.
Cochabamba, the centre of Latin America, of Bolivia, more commonly known as Llajta, close to one million inhabitants, land of fighters (water war), specially of women, heroines of Coronilla, Adela Zamadio, etc., for a long time, has suffered deforestation, the excessive city growth, constructions in agricultural areas, deviation of natural river beds, lakes and dams which has caused water shortages, drought and the appropriation of this resource by multinational corporations. It is here, that "we preach in times of drought," the theme used of this justice and peace meeting.

With the motto “we preach in times of drought,” and after hearing, knowing, analysing and reflecting on the reality in which our Bolivarian and other countries of Latin America and the Caribbean live, we want to make known our position concerning the contamination of the environment and the water shortage as a consequence of irrational activities of mining companies and/or multinational corporations whose sole objective is profit at the expense of human lives and the destruction of the environment. These reflections were accompanied by Dominican Interprovincial Conference of Latin America and the Caribbean (CIDALC), Dominican Confederation of Latin America and the Caribbean (CODALC), Dominican Family Counsel of Latin America and the Caribbean (COFADALC) Dominican Sisters and other participants of the justice and peace meeting/workshop.

We believe that water is a gift from God and nature which we should take care of, while keeping in mind our survival and the future of generations to come. It is life that unites us in the fight for human dignity and the dignity of all beings! With concern, we see how deforestation, the burning of pasturelands and the systematic exploitation of our forests affect the water cycle. The deforestation brings an increase of carbon dioxide in the air due to the fact that live trees store the carbon in their fibres and when they are cut, it is released once again into the atmosphere. The carbon dioxide is one of the principal greenhouse gases, therefore, the cutting of trees contributes to the danger of climate change. Moreover, there is adequate management of garbage and waste that affect global warming. We insist that the authorities take care of the water, and not commercialise it at an excessive profit since it's of common benefit and should be accessible to everyone equally.
We are called to recover our relationship with God, with ourselves, with one another and with nature, bearing in mind that we are debtors, and we need to be thankful for the wisdom of those who have fought and have given their lives to building a good and just life.

We, the Dominican Family, share this most profound dream of the compassion of God, the compassion of St. Dominic, and the option of each one of our founders to continue weaving networks of solidarity and fraternity. Our presence at the United Nations fortifies this on-going fight for justice and peace. We propose and encourage that in our countries, Dominican Justice and Peace be established and integrated with existing networks for the defence of human rights.

We invite the entire order to make peace and justice a lifestyle that commits us to look after the dignity of the human person and the care of water, to continue being preachers of grace in defending the excluded and minorities with our life testimonies of everyday living in the different areas where we are present.

We hope to meet in Lima, Peru next, to continue deepening our discussions on some realities that demand our attention as women and men of justice and peace.

Once again, this year, Union of Dominican Major Superiors of Italy (USMID) was able to organise its usual encounter between Christmas and the beginning of the New Year. Approximately 50 sisters from 12 Dominican congregations participated in this workshop which served as an opportunity for ongoing formation and mutual self-discovery among the sisters. The chosen theme was Communication. It was first introduced by two scripture readings: The first analysed the manner in which Jesus communicates with his interlocutors, in the case of the Samaritan woman.

The second, presented by a student sister, was a semiotic reading of the pericope of the calmed storm, after which the sisters shared their own thoughts and practices of how they communicate the Word of God.

A whole day was devoted to the means of communication. Led by two experts who complemented each other well, they were able to meet the expectations of the sisters, those who handle technology with ease for a long time as well as those who struggle to keep up with all the innovations.
During the last morning, we wanted to celebrate together the "month of peace" that the Master of the Order had launched. They welcomed the testimony of a Colombian priest who lived in his own flesh, the violence inflicted on the people and his presentation on the present situation in the country helped us to better understand the complexity of the local situation. Peace is still a long way that always requires our prayers!

**USMID’s National Encounter**

**Dominicans in communication**

How to Communicate the Faith Through Social Media Today

1st session:  Languages and Contents

2nd session:  Culture and Society

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**DSE DÜSSELDORF MEETING IN OSLO**

5-7 January, 2018

By:  Sr. Agnes Lalu OP
Dominicaines de Notre Dame de Grâce

They have come together to pray, study, reflect and share on the theme “Incarnation and Human Dignity – A Dominican Spirituality for Catholic Social Thought”. It was also a time for exchanging stories and updates, recreation and by simply enjoying each other’s presence and appreciating the beauty of belonging to the Dominican family.

Just as the wise men from the East (Magi) left their own country and went to Jerusalem in search of the new born king whose star they have observed at its rising and have come to do him homage (Mt. 2:1-2), some Dominican sisters from Europe left their home convents and gathered in Oslo, Norway for the yearly “Düsseldorf meeting”.

This annual gathering for young sisters has been held at the convent of the Dominican Sisters of Catherine of Siena in Düsseldorf Angermund for the past eight years.
In 2018, this meeting for young sisters took place for the first time at Katarinahjemmet (convent of the Dominican Sisters of Notre Dame de Grâce) in Oslo from the 5th to the 7th of January. Sr. Marie Laure Larcher OP set the tone for the theme by giving a concise and interesting presentation on Jacques Maritain and Human Dignity. Sr. Marie Laure belongs to the Dominicaines du Saint Nom de Jésus in Toulouse, France.

The main speaker, Sr. Helen Alford OP who is the former dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences and currently vice rector of the Angelicum, gave an enriching lecture on Dominican Spirituality and Catholic Social Thought enfleshed in the lives of Dominican men and women. Knowing the stories of these dedicated Dominicans in their passion for Preaching Justice in light of the Joyful, Luminous, Sorrowful and Glorious mysteries of the Rosary was truly inspiring!

Participating sisters were from Germany, France, Latvia, Portugal, England, Ireland, Austria, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Switzerland, Spain and Norway.

This event was made possible through the leadership of Sr. Else-Britt Nilsen OP, national coordinator for Dominican Sisters Europe and her councilors Sr. Franziska Madl OP, Sr. Edel Murphy OP, Sr. Mary Laure Archer OP, Sr. Barbara Bonfante OP and Sr. Lúcia Petres OP.

Special thanks to the following: Carla Bertana for her simultaneous translation in both English and French, Sr. Anne Bente Hadland, prioress and the sisters of Katarinahjemmet for their hospitality in hosting the meeting, the Dominican brothers in the Oslo Priory for the use of their conference hall and Fr. Rory Mulligan, SM for celebrating the Sunday Mass.
For the past six years, the Dominican Sisters International (DSI) has been sending sisters to participate in the United Nation’s Commission on the Status of Women through the efforts of the UN-NGO run by Sr. Margaret Mayce, O.P.. This commission invites the Thinkers-Shakers-and-Doers to work together and strengthen their relationship to make our society a better place for all, especially for women and girls. The theme for this year is “Empowering Rural Women and Girls.”

This CSW62 is currently being attended by eleven sisters coming from different parts of the world. These eleven Dominicans represent all the continents under the Dominican Sisters International.

Below are the names of the participants:

- Sr. Trish Madigan - Eastern Australia (Dominican Sisters of Eastern Australia and the Solomon Islands)
- Ms. Rosa Maria Sanchez - Mexico (Laity, Volunteer San Martin de Porres Convent in Chapas)
- Sr. Else-Britt Nilsen - Norway (Dominicaines Notre Dame de Grace)
- Sr. Juana Sanabria – Paraguay (Dominican Sisters of Monteil)
- Sr. Cecilia Espenilla – Philippines (Dominican Sisters of St. Catherine of Siena)
- Sr. Tabiria Tabeaua - Solomon Islands (Dominican Sisters of Eastern Australia and the Solomon Islands)
- Sr Mary Tuck - South Africa (King Dominicans)
- Sr. Jareen Aquino - Tanzania (Maryknoll Sisters of St. Dominic)
- Sr. Roberta Miller – USA (Dominican Sisters of Peace)
- Sr. Christin Tomy – USA (Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa)
- Sr. Mary Ryan - Western Australia (Dominican Sisters of Western Australia)
Each sister brought her vast knowledge, experience and understanding on the current situation of women and girls from the grassroots level. They are currently involved in ministries and issues that focused on:

When the sisters first met and gathered at the Sower’s Room at Mariandale, Sr. Margaret Mayce invited them all to share something about themselves. They shared about their passions, interests and their ministries. The “word cloud” of ministries highlighted the focus of their ministries – WOMEN-EMPOWER-JUSTICE-ISSUES. It is but appropriate that the passion/ministries of the sisters are in-line with the gathering’s main agenda: the status of women and girls.

The passions and interests of this UN-NGO-CSW’s participants come from the different roles and responsibilities that they currently have and from past professional and pastoral experiences of their respective ministries. They are not just Dominican Sisters to the people whom they accompany, they are also:

Knowing the backgrounds and passions and ministries of the sisters, it is appropriate to share their hopes for this two-week gathering:
A common theme among the participants is the desire to bond and build Dominican relationships. With their different and yet similar experiences, all of them are open to learn more and expand their minds with all the things that they will be experiencing and learning during the UN CSW62.

Christin Tomy shared her hopes, “to soak in as much as I can, and then wring it out for others when I get home. Specifically, I hope that what I learn can help me better situate my work in a global context. I also hope to form bonds with my OP sisters and learn about how they’re living out our shared mission.” The other participants also share similar hopes for this gathering.

All the preparations and logistics would not be possible without the hard work of both Sr. Margaret Mayce and Ms.Viviana Garcia, Dominican volunteer. **Muchas Gracias!**

The participants hope to share their reflections with everyone for the whole duration of the CSW62. **May this two-weeks be a time of bonding and learnings for all of them.**
MISSION BRIEF
January—March 2018

REFLECTIONS FROM SOME PARTICIPANTS

Sr. Jareen Aquino O.P. — “Indigenous Women Transforming Power”

Being with Dominicans from around the world, as much as we may be strangers to one another and speak different languages, is also always a little bit like coming home. Margaret and Viviana have been wonderfully helpful and hospitable with us, helping us navigate NY transit and getting oriented to the UN.

The session on indigenous women was particularly powerful and I hope to hear / take part in more conversations on this topic as the week goes by. Particularly powerful for me was the peripheral mention of how indigenous women lead the charge for care of Earth and solutions to climate change during my morning session. They grow a wider variety of crops than men, to practice communal agriculture, and to save seed. We only need to look to rural indigenous women for the solution to climate change.

Sr. Christine Tomy O.P. - “Indigenous Women Transforming Power”

Common themes dealt with were:
• Link between political and personal autonomy.
• Linking the high-level work of the UN to the realities of the lives of indigenous women.
• The critical nature of exchanges between and among indigenous women and other women for leadership building and support.
• The transformative power of community organizing among indigenous women.
• The criminalization of women activists as a tool of oppression.


A panel discuss of young Chechen women of their experience of being mentored during their formative years at university. In being enabled to critique aspects of their culture and socialization which might be holding them back in their potential to achieve, in an atmosphere of friendship and support with professional guidance, each young woman was impressive in her determination to overcome obstacles and fulfill her potential. I was moved by the way they described how they were enabled to move beyond their fears, to succeed in such areas as architectural studies and psychology and to become the person they dreamed of being.

Sr. Mary Rayan O.P. — “They say I Ruin Families: Women’s Human Rights Defenders’ Experience of Backlash.”

This session highlighted how difficult it can be for frontline workers in rural and remote places in Australia, and no doubt throughout the world. The quote for the heading is one of the things said to Workers by men whose partners and families have gone to shelters after domestic violence and abuse. The need to educate the general public about domestic violence and how unacceptable and destructive it is. Education with young people about healthy relationships may effect changes in attitude that leave no room for violence from either party.

“Preventing Human Trafficking among Rural Women and Girls: Integrating Inherent Dignity into a Human Rights Model”

Another session, hosted by the Holy See on the trafficking of women and girls. A very powerful presentation by a Filipina, survivor of sex trafficking, received a standing ovation. Besides explaining the horrific experience, she described how she regained her sense of self and move forward with hope. She received support from several Women Religious communities. Other speakers highlighted the inherent dignity of all people and stressed the need to educate both boys and girls about the importance of equality, which assists with respectful relationships.
MISSION BRIEF
January—March 2018

PAST EVENTS

CPDI & USMID: FORMATOR’S COURSE FOR ITALIAN DOMINICAN COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN (UN-NGO—CSW)

DOMINICAN PILGRIMAGE IN PARIS
Sisters will visit the Dominican sisters in the city where many before us have left traces of their faith. Pilgrims will walk the Latin Quarter and Marais (Jewish area), they will visit St. Sulpice, St. Etienne du Mont, Montmartre and will pray with different communities.
Other activities are visits and liturgical celebrations at Notre Dame, St. Gervais, Sacré Coeur, a visit to one of the Friars’ convents in Paris.

DOMINICAN SISTERS AFRICA (DSA)
This year the African continent hosts its assembly from June 3-8 in Nairobi Kenya under the theme “Dominican Women Sent to Preach the Gospel: Renewing our commitment to evangelization at the grass-roots for the transformation of our continent”. The guest speaker will be Sr. Christine Mwale, O.P. Approximately 85 participants are expected. Srs. Cecilia Espenilla O.P., International Promoter for Justice & Peace, Marie Therese Clement, International Coordinator of DSI and Faustina Jimoh, O.P. Continental Coordinator for Africa will participate.

DOMINICAN SPIRITUALITY WORKSHOP IN HUNGARY
This workshop will be developed for sisters of the English language, eventually if someone needs a translator it is possible to bring your own translator.
The theme will be "Women in the Bible"
Venue: Köszeg, Hungary
More details will follow from our Hungarian Sisters.

CODALC MEETING OF THE SOUTHERN CONE OF JUSTICE AND PEACE
This Meeting will be held in San Miguel de Tucuman, Argentina in the Bethlehem House, at the foot of Aconquija Mountain.
Under the Theme: "Salamanca Process: way to guard human dignity".
For more information: María Teresa Tenti de Volta mttenti@outlook.com Fr. Pablo Condrac OP pc@op.org.ar

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 8–9
March 12–23
April 26 – 30
June 3–18
July 13–17
Aug. 31– Sept. 2

DOMINICAN SISTERS INTERNATIONAL

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