The 6th DSA Assembly

Interreligious Relationships - An Earthly and Spiritual Journey

Preaching Workshops in Africa Zimbabwe & Zambia

DSE: Dominican Footsteps in Paris

IDYM Group Formation and Strengthening (St. Lucia & Trinidad & Tobago)

Formators’ Workshop – USMID

Federation of Vietnamese Dominican Sisters - Training Course

PAPER CLIP NEWS

Inter-Congregational Dominican Institute of St. Thomas (IDIT), Vietnam

Puerto Rico’ Report After the Hurricane Congregation “Nuestra Señora de Fátima”

Event in Progress

Upcoming Events

Theme of the Assembly: “Dominican Women Sent to Preach the Gospel: Renewing our Commitment to Evangelization at the Grass-roots for the Transformation of the Continent”

Domestic Sisters of Apostolic Life in Africa gathered from June 3rd to the 8th to celebrate our 6th Continental Assembly. 29 Delegates came from 13 Apostolic Congregations in 10 African countries and met together to share our lives and ministries as Dominican ‘women preachers’ cont’d p. 2

Do save the date in 2019!

12th – 18th May, 2019
La Salle, Casa Generalizia , Rome
of the Word. We gathered to strengthen common bonds and forge new ones; to evaluate and discern new DSA goals for the next 6 years; to listen to and participate in relevant and inspiring addresses given by guest speakers, some of whom were representatives of the Friars, Dominican Lay and Youth Partners. The assembly gave Sisters opportunity to reflect together on the keen reports given by the DSA coordinators and promoters; to reflect on pressing justice and peace issues of the Continent; to elect new leadership, and also celebrate Eucharist as well as pray morning and evening prayers together. The languages of French and English were used at the Assembly.

Sr. Faustina Jimoh, O.P. the outgoing Continental Coordinator opened the Assembly. With energy and warmth, she welcomed all delegates, guests, facilitators, translators and secretaries; some guests were from U.K., Rome and U.S. Sister recalled that 20 years ago in 1998, the first DSA Assembly was held in this very venue of Dimesse, and she called on “our forebears” and their wisdom to accompany us, as we reflect on our ministries in the context of contemporary Africa.

Some highlights of the Assembly were the Keynote Address of Sr. Christine Mwale, O.P. a passionate Dominican woman and past Continental Coordinator who reflected with us on the theme of the assembly: “Dominican women sent to preach the Gospel: renewing our commitment to evangelization at the grassroots for the transformation of the continent.” Sister delighted us with her image of women sitting in a circle around an earthen pot cooking on an open fire each playing her part to ensure that the fire does not go out. She thanked God for the ‘stick of fire’ Dominic used to enkindle the Order, challenged us to keep the flames burning, and as Catherine of Siena said, “be who God meant you to be and you will set the world on fire!”

Sr. Marie Therese Clement, O.P. International Coordinator of Dominican Sisters International reaffirmed DSI’s commitment to the African Continent, encouraging us to honour the many gifts with which we have been blessed. Sister challenged us to reflect deeply on the words of Jesus, to “give them something to eat yourselves;” it is we Dominican Sisters of Africa who are “best placed to feed your people.” In the light of our theme for the Assembly, we thank you Sr. Marie Therese, for this timely challenge.

Father Charles Ukwe, O.P. Socius of the Master brought the greetings of the Master General and expressed enthusiasm for all branches of the Dominican Family, Religious and Laity. He heartily affirmed the Sisters and Nuns, their important ministries of prayer, service and proclamation, and imaged the Sisters as akin to trailblazers in their moving out beyond their comfort zones.

The “Dominican Team” of JPIC (Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation) for Africa shared their wealth of knowledge, experience and unceasing work of justice for all people, and for the integrity of creation - none of God’s creatures should be ‘left behind’ in receiving respect, basic human rights and their birthright of prosperity and a peaceful life. The team included (in order of their addressing the Assembly) Sr. Cecilia Espenilla, the International JPIC Promoter for DSI; Father Mike Deeb, O.P. JPIC Promoter for the Friars and Representative at the UN in Geneva; Sr. Margaret Mayce, the U.N. representative for DSI in New
York; Sr. Mary Tuck and Sr. Jareen Aquino who represented DSA at a two-week U.N. Meeting on the Status of Women.

Father Kenneth Chukwuka Nkadi, O.P. Registrar of the Dominican University at Ibadan, Nigeria and Communication Promoter at the University, spoke with the delegates about the necessity of attaining skills for preaching the Word truthfully and effectively in the modern world. This education needs to be made available to the Dominican Family. Mr. Jean-Claude Loba Mkole, spoke of the life and activities of the Lay Dominicans in Africa. He cherishes collaboration with the Sisters and hopes this relationship will be furthered. The Youth Movement was represented by Sharon Awiti and John Churchill, who shared their experiences of what they are doing to promote and live out the Dominican mission; they spoke as Dominican youth of the future, and passionately solicited the support of the Sisters in the area of their spiritual formation, and financially as well to enable them to achieve some of their goals. The delegates and all at the Assembly were enriched and challenged by these thoughtful and inspiring presentations.

Having deliberated richly on the issues presented at the assembly, we articulated our goals for the next six years, which include paying greater attention to Justice and Peace as an area which presents the greatest challenge for our continent, and to pay particular attention to abuse of women in its varied forms; continuing to strengthen communication and collaboration among ourselves and with the wider Dominican family so as to more effectively carry out our mission; formation – both initial and on-going in different aspects to enhance both our personal growth and of our mission in the continent.

The last session of the Assembly focused on elections of our new leaders, who were embraced with joy and with all delegates promising their support. Our new DSA Continental Coordinator is Sr. Venentia Velephi Muthembu, O.P., while the Continental Promoter for JPIC is Sr. Mary Tuck. The zonal DSA Coordinators and JPIC Promoters, who were chosen by consensus in zonal groupings, were welcomed with arms open wide, and with the encouragement of the Assembly.

The 6th DSA Assembly concluded with the Eucharist Liturgy celebrating God’s unconditional love for all Creation. Indeed, the Spirit of Love is within, around, under, above all of us who attended this spirited and challenging gathering of Dominican women - Preachers of the Word.
INTERRELIGIOUS RELATIONSHIPS - AN EARTHLY AND SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

By: Sr. Patricia Madigan, O.P.,
Dominican Sister of Eastern Australia &
the Solomon Islands

“No peace among the nations without peace among the religions” (Hans Küng).

The modern drama of global movements of migration and its accompanying challenges of intercultural integration is one of the most challenging realities of our age. I have been fortunate to have been involved in the ministry of interreligious relations for many years. It has been a journey that has been full of inspirational moments, deep engagement and learning – a spiritual journey as well as in other aspects of relationship in the Australian context.

Mrs. Maha Abdo, Muslim Women Association CEO with Sr. Trish

Australia’s population at the last census held in 2016 was around 25 million people, with Christians 52% (including 22.6% Catholic), Muslims (2.6%), Buddhists (2.4%), Hindus (1.9%), Sikhs (0.5%), and Jews (0.4%). 30.1% of Australians say they have “no religion.” More than 26% of people living in Australia were born overseas, while 52.7% of people in Australia have one or more parents born overseas. Although English is the main language in use, immigrants have come from about 200 countries and speak more than 300 languages. Places of worship for all the major religions are found in almost every major city.

Having grown up in an increasingly multicultural Australian society in the years after the second world war, one of my early ministries as a Dominican religious woman was as Catholic chaplain to a large secular university in Sydney. Here my work was ministering to people of all faiths and none. I became aware of a need to be more familiar with Catholic teaching in the area of ecumenical and interfaith relations. This led me to further studies which included a M.Phil. at the Irish School of Ecumenics, Trinity College Dublin, followed by a doctorate in Islamic studies at Sydney University supervised by a Muslim professor.

Then, while working with the Diocesan Ecumenical and Interfaith Commission in the Catholic Church in Sydney, I found myself collaborating on various levels – with grassroots people in parishes, with faith leaders, and with organizations in the wider community such as the Australian National Dialogue of Jews, Christians and Muslims.

Participants – Asia-Pacific Regional Interfaith Dialogue (JPC)
Cont’d INTERRELIGIOUS RELATIONSHIPS ...

(ANDJCM), government agencies such as the Federation of Ethnic Communities Council of Australia (FECCA), and Regional Interfaith Dialogues organized by governments in the Asia-Pacific.

When women of the different faiths got together we noticed how often interfaith forums neglected to recognize the wisdom of women’s faith experiences and the importance of women’s contributions to their faith communities. Out of this emerged the Women’s Interfaith Network (WIN) in which women of nine faiths - Aboriginal, Bahá’í, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Muslim, Jewish, Quaker and Zoroastrian - met regularly to share their faith and to interact with the wider Australian community, such as providing women speakers for public forums. Another significant experience was jointly planning a diocesan Muslim-Christian pilgrimage to visit religious leaders and places of religious significance in both Istanbul and Konya (Turkey), Rome and Assisi.

One cannot be involved deeply in interreligious relations without also learning and growing in understanding of one’s own faith. For example, through contact with many Muslims in daily life I have come to appreciate Islam both as a religion and as a way of life. Muslims and Christians have a shared humanity, and like Christianity, Islam is one of the three great monotheistic faiths of the world. Muslims worship the same one God (whom they address as “Allah” using the Arabic word for God) who invites all human beings into a relationship of devotion which also must find expression in an ethical way of life. My deepening contact with Islam has given me many new insights into my Christian faith. It has challenged me over some “lost” elements of Christianity. It has brought new appreciation of some “taken-for-granted” aspects of my Christian belief. And it has broadened my perspective, encouraging me to look beyond a “tribal” or sectarian approach (in which the welfare of “my” group – whether ethnic, cultural or religious is paramount) to the “common good” of our society as a whole.

In surprising ways, contact with Islam has led me to a new appreciation of the deepest mysteries of my Catholic Christian faith – especially, perhaps most unlikely of all, new insights into Christian belief in the Incarnation and the Trinity. The Islamic witness is first and foremost to a transcendent God, beyond any form of representation or imagery or containment in the material world. From this perspective it is, ultimately, a reminder to us all of the transience and relative insignificance of material things. As a consequence, this has encouraged me to reflect more on the meaning of the Christian belief that God, in Jesus, embraced human form and entered fully into the human condition. Jesus’ solidarity with us shows that God takes the world and human life seriously. Therefore, in Christianity the material world, despite its ephemeral nature, is affirmed as the place of our salvation. I see the Christian insight – one of taking seriously the material world and the human condition and all that it entails – as being complementary rather than contradictory to the Islamic understanding. Both have something important to teach us.
From my experience, I believe that there are some important elements in all positive interreligious relations.

First, on the personal level we must be sincerely grounded in the knowledge and practice of our own faith – otherwise we have nothing to share with others. This does not mean that we must have all the answers. Learning and growing for everyone involved is an important part of interreligious relations. A most important aspect of dialogue is being able to really listen.

Secondly, growing interreligious relations in the social and political context is important on three levels which interact with each other – the personal, communal and political. At the personal and grassroots level, this can begin with even a few committed people. At the wider community level, engaging influential community leaders and organizations such as business and sports groups, church communities in interreligious activities is paramount. In the larger political and social context, a society needs symbolic actions from political and religious leaders to provide positive role models and examples of interreligious relations. Our recent popes have been exemplary at this. If any one of these levels is missing a society is likely to experience difficulties in its intercultural relations.

As Australian Jewish commentator Rachael Kohn observed: ‘No one today can watch the news and not realize how precious and rare our gift is. We owe our society much more than just being good Christians, Jews, Muslims and Hindus….. We owe to the whole society our commitment to produce harmony, understanding compassion and above all a great and deep respect for human life and dignity. If we do not, then who will?’

Gathering of Australian National Dialogue of Christians

PREACHING WORKSHOPS IN AFRICA

Dominican Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart (Zimbabwe & Zambia)

By: Sr. Doris Regan, O.P./ Sr. Joan Williams O.P.

ZIMBABWE

On Friday, April 6, 2018 Doris Regan O.P., Dominican Sister of Peace and Joan Williams, O.P., Dominican Sister of Grand Rapids arrived in Harare, Zimbabwe, Africa after two days of travel to offer a preaching workshop to the sisters. Sr. Rudo Shungu Matsika, O.P. Regional Prioress of the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred
Heart of Jesus in Zimbabwe, along with the sisters at the motherhouse welcomed them.

The preaching workshop began on Monday, April 9, 2018 with twenty-four participants comprising women associates, four Dominican youth, finally and temporarily professed sisters and one recently ordained diocesan priest who celebrated the 7 a.m. Mass each day. This gave sisters Doris and Joan the opportunity to preach each day as part of the workshop. The days were full except for tea times in the mornings and the afternoons. Some of the participants worked and fitted in the workshop around their work schedule as they could.

Sisters Doris and Joan had given various preaching workshops for Delegates of the Word in Central and South America (in Spanish) as well as workshops in English in Saint Lucia to the Dominican Sisters of our Lady of Delivrande and Sisters of St. Catherine of Siena, Etrepagny of Trinidad/Tobago. These had been basic workshops concentrating on the method of preparing a preaching that centered on elements of text, context, social reality, central message, personal experience, the process of putting a preaching in order, practice and then the preaching. For the workshops in Africa we prepared what we called “A Contemplative Approach to Preaching,” something initiated at a workshop Doris and Brian Pierce had offered in Lima to a Biblical Study group. There were three built-in moments for reflection as they moved along the steps. Different types of prayer offered (Lectio Divina, Centering Prayer, Psalms) and participants for example, were asked to write their own Psalm, their own prayer using their imagination etc. The Lectio Divina was emphasized and was well received by participants.

A piece on Women Preachers in the Old and New Testament which the Sisters responded to well was added. A component of Dominican women preachers was also offered, and Sr. Doris did her Mary Magdalene preaching for the 29th.

Besides the personal time, participants worked in groups of four. Each person preached to her group and Doris and Joan moved from group to group and hearing the individual preachings. Group members evaluated each other.

On the last day, the participants did a written evaluation of the workshop and certificates were given to each one.
On April 16th, Sisters Doris and Joan flew to Ndola, Zambia for the second workshop. There were 20 participants including 4 second year candidates at the Ndola Center house and Sr. Cristine Mwaba, Regional Prioress of Zambia. Also included were some older sisters (retired teachers), temporary and finally professed sisters. The Sisters from Fatima, a community a short distance away, commuted daily to the workshop. The age variety added a positive dimension to the sharing. With daily liturgical celebrations as was done in Zimbabwe, the participants went through the same contemplative approach focusing on the Word and themselves as echoes of that Word in our human reality, as Jesus was.

The evaluations from Zambia mention Lectio Divina as an eye opener and that the practice of preaching was an empowering experience that enhanced their Dominican Identity. Although they found the schedule a bit tiring in the afternoon, they liked the group work.

In addition to the workshop time with the sisters, Joan and Doris participated in celebrations, experienced the birth of a baby, visited the Victoria Falls and drove for many long hours in the countryside.

They returned home on April 30th, still in awe at the experience, at the sense of Dominican Mission that they experienced and the wonderful missionaries that they met.
On Sep 12, 1217, the first group of brethren sent by St. Dominic arrived in Paris, the then capitol of theological studies. Since then the Dominicans have established strong roots in Paris: preaching, teaching and praying together. Although the French revolution has destroyed many of the buildings and much has physically changed today, one can still trace back the footsteps of early Dominicans and derive inspiration. With this goal, a group of 16 Dominican apostolic sisters from different congregations in Europe started our pilgrimage in Paris on Apr 26, 2018.

Like the first brethren, we started at the square in front of Church of Notre Dame. Sr. Maria Catharina Chevreau, who is well-versed with the Dominican history in Paris and has long experience in guiding pilgrim tours, had prepared a guided-walk with 12 stops in the footsteps of the early Dominicans. The walk was drafted according to the map of Paris from 1610. We were enriched by the expertise of Sr. Chevreau and the history of Order: visiting the churches where St. Dominic prayed; the place where master Albert lectured open air because the conference halls were not big enough; the streets that the students took to the universities; student lodges; possible sites of the quodlibet debates and the location of the convent of The Jacobins 1217-1790. All that remains of the first convent is a commemorative plaque, discrete on a wall above the shops and restaurants. Among a pool of Pantheon tourists and Sorbonne students, stood the 16 of us looking up at the plaque, remembering the legacy of the Dominicans who lived there and singing a song to St. Dominic.

We participated in the liturgies in the city’s two largest churches, Notre-Dame and St. Sulpice. The guide at St. Sulpice gave us an elaborate and detailed historical account of the church, its architecture, art and the astronomical gnomon that inspired Dan Brown. We passed by the church of St. Médard, known for the notorious inscription, ‘The King forbids God to work miracles in this place’ and we also visited the basilica that is a monument of national penance, Sacré Cœur. We sang vespers with the Benedictine sisters of Sacré Cœur de Montmartre and had the privilege to meet with one of the sisters who told us about the history of Sacré Cœur and the foundation of her congregation. Although they are Benedictine sisters, since their mission is deeply rooted with the perpetual adoration at Sacré Cœur, they wear a white habit, not very different from the Dominican habit.
The pilgrimage was not just walking in the footsteps of the early Dominicans but also getting in touch with the communities of Dominican brothers and sisters currently in Paris. We visited Ecole Sainte-Geneviève, a school that is now run by the sisters of Dominicaines de Notre Dame du Très Saint Rosaire de Monteils. Sr. Marie France gave us a tour of the school and their apostolic work. On Sunday we participated at the mass with the brothers at Couvent de l’Annonciation and heard from Fr. Eric de Clermont-Tonnere about the diverse activities the brothers are engaged in.

Thanks to the DSE Coordinator, Sr. Else-Britt for organizing this pilgrimage for a diverse group. The 16 participants represented 6 congregations and 8 nationalities. The pilgrimage gave us the opportunity to go beyond cultural and language barriers and together deepen the roots of that which unites us: the Dominican vocation. The joy was evident throughout the pilgrimage even in the midst of physical exhaustion. The willingness of the sisters to communicate with each other, sharing the experiences of their call and apostolic activities, sometimes even if they didn’t speak a common language but only exchanged a few words, signs and gestures or just a smile, was admirable.

Thanks to the tour coordinator, Sr. Ragnhild Marie for excellent planning and organizing not only the practical details of the pilgrimage but also making sure that at every important step of the pilgrimage, we had the opportunity to meet and receive firsthand information from persons with the knowledge of local history. She was also the translator throughout the pilgrimage and the navigational guide: our very own GPS.
This mission Project came together as the result of conversations between DSI and IDYM regarding bond-strengthening between Dominican Sisters and IDYM and to respond to the reality of countless Dominican youth worldwide, whose principal Dominican reference are Dominican Sisters’ Congregations.

For this mission, specifically focused in the Caribbean, the established goals were:

i. to work with both Sisters and Friars in St. Lucia to sensitize youth about IDYM, to assist the sisters and friars in initiating IDYM group(s)

ii. to gain a better grasp of the reality of the movement in relation with sisters and the Dominican Family in Trinidad & Tobago and to assist the sisters in strengthening the movement.

Saint Lucia:
All the activities were accompanied by Dominican Sisters of Our Lady of Delivrande, The Dominican Sisters of Etrépagny and Dominican Friars. Since the Movement does not yet exist in St. Lucia, I began by joining two youth retreats coordinated by the pastoral team of St Joseph the Worker Parish in Gros Islet, in which the sisters are involved.

During the first youth retreat (March 15-18) over 80 youth ages 16-20 gathered. Both Fr. Michel Francis, the Parish Priest and Vicar General of the Archdiocese and Ms. Beverly Best, Parish Youth Coordinator were very welcoming and allowed me to join all planned activities during the retreat. I was able to have time to informally and formally chat with both youth attending the retreat, and young adults collaborating as big brothers and sisters. Both groups were targeted as potential IDYM members since the movement covers ages 18 to 35, adapting of course to each country’s reality.

The second youth retreat, (March 23-25) for youth ages 9-15 had over 100 participants. Since this was not the main target group for IDYM, I was given the opportunity to participate as a “big sister”, so I could spend more time and chat with other young adults participating in the same way. During this retreat I had the opportunity to make a
The Sisters, the two Friars, Fr. Michel and I, had the opportunity to share a very productive meeting on March 26. I presented an overview about IDYM, its history, context, countries of presence and focused on the benefits of belonging to the Movement for the youth. I especially emphasised that DYM groups are not just pastoral groups, but young adult groups where we promote the youth as actors of their own Christian and Dominican commitment, based on the 4 pillars of Dominican Life, making them therefore actively involved in the preaching mission of the order. Of course, I explained, engagement in this mission as IDYM, is hardly possible without the advice and support from Sisters and Friars, to whom IDYM looks up to, not only in terms of guidance, counselling and spiritual assistance, but also as reference of “how to stand” as a Dominican.

I had the opportunity to visit Port of Spain from March 21-23 and met with the Youth Movement there. They were started by the Dominican Family there and have been working closely with the Dominican Sisters of St Catherine of Siena. Sr. Arlene Greenidge, O.P. is the one designated by her Congregation as liaison person and to provide support to the Movement. The support system for the Movement in Trinidad & Tobago is shared among two congregations of sisters, the friars and lay Dominicans.

We discussed ways of strengthening the Movement by recruiting new members and to become more visible in the mission. Some members who are involved in schools as well as the sisters planned to conduct a campaign at their schools in an effort to make the Movement better among young people. They also planned to develop a Dominican Family Directory to encourage sharing and collaboration among them. IDYM’s Commission will continue to encourage the group in Trinidad & Tobago and journey with them in strengthening their mission.
Our 2nd encounter among formators of Italy since last year was held on March 8 and 9. Despite the general strike of March 8, approximately 40 participants (sisters, friars, nuns gathered for the workshop at San Sisto, Rome.

Sr. Viviana Ballarin spoke to us about accompaniment (journeying with) in the formation of Dominican identity in multicultural communities and in a changing world using her wide experience in government and formation.

To journey with someone is to walk with them like Jesus, like Dominic; it also evokes for us itinerancy for preaching in a world that is itself constantly in motion.

**What type of formation for the future?**

- Assume and not flee from the complexity of our time because, God is present in it. We should live it patiently.
- Welcome God as the only Lord of our lives and testify of our belonging to Him.
- Have the courage to persevere in charity practiced in life and in work.

Fr. Vivian Boland, Socius of the Master General for Fraternal Life and Formation, took up the theme of multiculturalism a few steps further and spoke about interculturality. He leaned on the philosopher Martha Nussbaum to deepen the dimensions of interculturality which is fundamentally, a recognition of the basic needs of the person and which therefore implies dialogue, mutual understanding between people and groups. He highlighted that the experience of interculturality is not absent from the New Testament. The Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles and the Letters of St. Paul give various examples. But we also see how the sinful nature of the human person discriminates and closes him/herself to diversity.

The new “Ratio Formationis Generalis” has highlighted the fact that beyond our own cultural identities, there is a Dominican culture, which in fact is not always seen clearly. It would be an interesting exercise to confront our own cultural values with those of the Dominican spirituality, for example on silence and the protocol for welcome in various cultures. In addition, Fr. Vivian then spoke about his functions as Socius and some planned related projects.

The next day, our guest was Fr. Loic Marie Le Bot, Provincial of Toulouse who presented the situation of the Church in France and the repercussions on religious life. In his introduction, he reminded all that the religious vocation must be understood within the context of its mystery rather than a question of management: What must we therefore do? We might, for argument sake, say that even Jesus was mistaken in his discernment of the choice of his Apostles! He noted there are several elements for formation in the Ratio and related some concrete examples of challenges that we are faced today, in his own province.

Our Workshop ended with a festive and fraternal meal with our sisters of San Sisto.
At a meeting of the Federation of Vietnamese Dominican Sisters held on September 2, 2017, the General Prioresses agreed to organize a common study programme for Prioresses and formators of all nine congregations of the Federation. This was one of the planned activities in commemoration of the 22nd Anniversary of the establishment of the Federation.

Taking some issues and regarding sex, sexuality in the socio-religious context of Vietnam today, the theme chosen for the formation course was “Religious Sisters toward the life of chastity and sexual education for the youth in the secular world today.”

Over 136 sisters including General Prioresses superiors and formators of 8 Congregations were present (Bui Chu, Tam Hiep, Rose of Lima, Lang Son, Thai Binh, Phu Cuong, Ba Ria, and Bac Ninh). There arrived at the Pastoral Center of St. Martin de Porres – Ho Nai, belonging to Vietnamese Dominican Province of Our Queen of Martyrs from the North to the South of Viet Nam. After the sisters had checked in and received the handouts, they all gathered together in the big hall at 7:15 to warm up with funny dances and orientation for the day. Sr. Mary Dinh Thi Sang, General Superior of Dominican Sisters of Tam Hiep, and the President of the Federation of Vietnamese Dominican Sisters, gave her salute and applauded to all participants on behalf of the Federation.

“It is so significant to gather together here during the Easter Octave” Sr. Sang exclaimed as she expressed her best wishes of joy and peace of the risen Lord to all participants.

Sr. Mary Sang emphasized that the purpose of the training course was to help the sisters of every congregation in the federation of Vietnamese Dominican Sisters to deepen the elements for building a life of chastity and to discover or face
changes and challenges of the world today. More importantly, she said that it was significant for all to spend this time together studying, living and sharing experiences on how to adapt, adjust, advance and educate ourselves, those in formation and others in living and celebrating the vow of chastity and how to educate the youth about sexuality.

Sister stressed that although each congregation has its own context, formation programme and customs, offering this course was not something redundant or useless, because above all, it aimed to strengthen the unity and collaboration among members of the federation and provided the opportunity for sharing, common life and activities vital to the health of Dominican life and mission in Vietnam.

Sr. Agnes Mai Thi Chau, General Superior of Dominican Sisters of St. Rose of Lima, and secretary of the Federation, introduced Sr. Cecilia Vu Trang Nhungh, General Superior of The Congregation of Sisters Lover of the Holy Cross of Thanh Hoa. Sr. Cecilia is known as a good lecturer of Moral Theology and has wide experience experiences in teaching with funny, practical stories related to the topic that aided the participants understanding and made them comfortable with the subject.

As Dominican Sisters in the context of Viet Nam, a communist country, we all agreed to the need to respond and to witness to people by a simple and chaste life which often runs counter current to modern social trends.

Most of participants agreed that one of the main difficulties that the youth face today in living out their sexuality is the proper use of the communication media, thus affecting their ability to fully engage in community and manage their personal commitment to consecrated life.

Some of the questions posed during the sessions were: What is the remedy for this issue? How to help our sisters become mature in their use of technology and at the same time remain faithful to vows and practice the virtue of chastity? How to help our sisters grow up joyfully and fully express who they are? How to create a rich environment that nurtures friendship in community and that enables each member to express her love and care for the other?

During the session with Sr. Cecilia participants were exposed to how all aspects of the life of a person is involved and connected in the development of their sexuality. She also presented some of the developmental changes that are faced at various psychological stages of a person and some areas that could induce crisis in one’s life.

After three days of learning and exchange, participants felt more confident to put what they obtained during the class and learnt during the sessions and from one another into practice.

On the fourth and last day of the course, participants were very happy with the presentation of Mr. Paul Do Manh Cuong, PhD, a well-known
It’s really challenging for religious today in the very context of Viet Nam, most participants agreed with what Dr. Cuong presented and explained throughout his sessions. All participants were invited to look into the reality of life happening around them daily that seem to be ignored and ask how to balance our lives as religious women in the midst of the many challenges that we face. The time together went by quickly. However, the good news for all after such a gathering was that participants had enjoyed the time together and had learnt much. Most participants expressed satisfaction with the chosen theme and with what the two speakers presented during four days. Over 97% of participants expressed their desire and hope to for such programme annually.

We all had much to say on this crisis of morality and absence of virtues in our society. According to Mr. Cuong, sex education is not to prevent, establish or build up more barriers to sexual expression, such an approach he continued, would make people become defensive and then come to a deadlock. The foundation of sex education is to assist the youth to discover the value of responsibility living and to help channel their energies meaningfully through a balanced life of work, recreation and prayer.

Thanks be to the Risen Lord who has gathered us here and then sent us back to our communities and the environment in which we are assigned to carry out the entrusted mission. May the joy of Christ's Resurrection encourage our spirit and enliven us with gifts of faith, hope and love so that we can continue to proclaim Christ to our culture in new and engaging ways.

HAPPY EASTER! Halleluia! Halleluia! Halleluia! ☠️
INTER-Congregational Dominican Institute of St. Thomas (IDIT), Vietnam expresses gratitude.

On behalf of the Prioresses of the Congregations in Vietnam, Sr. Teresa Nguyên Thi Quynh Giao, the Directress of the Institute, expresses her deepest gratitude for the support received from DSI and shares these 2017-2018 Opening School Year and Graduation photos with you.

This study programme is offered by the Institute as a collaborative initiative of Dominican Congregations in Vietnam. They offer a three-year programme of study for Junior Sisters.
Puerto Rico was hit on September 20, 2017 by Category 5 Hurricane Maria, devastating the island almost completely and leaving it without electric, telephone and internet service. What was worse, it that it left many families homeless.

Our sisters who are in the different missions on the island, offered their help promptly to the affected people; the sisters, the staff and the volunteers of the centers and institutions of the Congregation all gave their help. They worked hard even though they were also affected. In conjunction with some governmental and no governmental entities, they were able to provide assistance to affected families, especially emotional and spiritual help, as well as meeting some basic needs of food, clothing medicines, etc. Thanks to a proposal made entitled "United for Puerto Rico," we were able to raise some funds to help several families to purchase construction materials that used to repair their houses.

At the level of the Congregation, we were also very affected by the hurricane; our elderly and sick sisters now live in adapted spaces at the Generalate without all of the necessary care facilities. Gradually we are improving those spaces that they occupy and will purchase a generator with greater capacity to better maintain the flow of oxygen for those who need it and purchase some solar panels to generate electricity.

My sisters and I thank you from the heart for the help that you have given to us and continue to provide through prayer and monetary donations.
DOMINICAN SISTERS AFRICA (DSA)
This year the African continent hosted 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 was Sr. Christine Mwale, O.P.

PAST EVENTS

DOMINICAN SPIRITUALITY WORKSHOP IN HUNGARY
This workshop is organized by Dominican Sisters Europe (DSE), will be held in Köszeg under the theme “Women in the Bible” presented by Fr. Philippe Lefebvre OP from Fribourg, Switzerland and Sr. Nazik Matty, OP from Iraq, both Biblical Theologians.

CODALC & CIDALC FORMATION COURSE FOR DOMINICAN FORMATORS
This Course will be held in Bogota, Colombia in the “Casa de Encuentros Santa Luisa” under the Theme: "The formed community as a formed ecosystem"
The responsible are Fr. Rafael Colomé, O.P. & Sr. Viviana Sisack, O.P. are responsible of this course together the sisters and friars of the Order.
For more information you can contact for the friars: Fr. Adhemar Ángel Ventura, O.P. to the mail: promotorfe.cidalc@gmail.com or adhemarangel@hotmail.com
For sisters' information please write to Ms. Rosa Pérez Godínez to the e mail: secretaria@codalc.org The Registrations could be made until June 30, 2018

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

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