

Praedicare



SISTERS OF ST. DOMINIC OF BLAUVELT PREACHING NEWSLETTER

Spotlight
On:
Holy
Preaching

CHAPTER OF 2011

Earlier this year, the Sisters of St. Dominic held their Chapter of Life and Mission. During much time of thoughtful contemplation, Sisters, with the help of Associates, set their course of direction for the next six years. Among the many statements of mission and action, were the following, which focus on preaching:

The charism of Dominican life is the Holy Preaching expressed through each member. We claim our identity as Dominican preachers in every realm of our lives. As contemplative preachers we strive to see the world through God's eyes and allow God to respond to the world through us in mission.

This edition of Praedicare will focus on these statements and how they are lived out.

REFLECTIONS FROM SR. THERESA LARDNER, OP

A Charism is a gift from God given to a person and/or a group to bring about the reign of God. Each member, by the grace of God, receives the Charism and uses it each time she responds to that call to bring God's reign of peace and justice into our world. Each member expresses the Charism in her unique way and at the same time contributes to the fullness of the expression of the Charism of the whole so that the Holy Preaching is recognized as our gift to the church and to the world.

Three of our members shared how they live the Holy *Continued on Page 2*

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REFLECTIONS FROM SR. THERESA RICKARD, OP

As Dominican preachers we are called to announce the good news of the gospel in every realm of our lives; to speak our faith explicitly whether in works of justice, acts of charity, in a classroom or counseling session, while preaching a retreat or in a catechetical event, in a food pantry or homeless shelter, in visiting the sick and homebound, in our parishes, around our local community or family tables or in small faith communities, in our congregational meetings and when we have the opportunity from the pulpit.

The mission of the Dominican Order is to effectively preach the Word of *Continued on Page 4*

REFLECTIONS FROM SR. THERESA LARDNER, OP

"The charism of Dominican life is the Holy Preaching expressed through each member."

Preaching in their lives and in their ministries. Sister Barbara Werner finds it very interesting how much of an impact is made by small things. On her desk sits a sign with her name and OP after it. When asked what "OP" stands for, she has the opportunity to share what being a Dominican is and what it means to her. To quote Sister Barbara, "I find myself sharing with the college students aspects of my life – I guess you could call it Holy Preaching... Preaching by example, being kind to the downtrodden, helping the underprepared are all ways that I feel I preach."

Sister Mechtilde in her ministry with young children shares that she has a number of non-catholic students. When she teaches about Baptism, they tell her, "Sister, I was not baptized and does that mean I am not a child of God." She reassures them that we are all children of God and that we can all live as disciples by acting with kindness, love and mercy. The heart of her preaching is, "stressing that God is a loving God who cares for all children."

Sister Anne Daniel believes in her heart and proclaims with her life that our interdependence on God and on one another is best expressed through our response to the fragile and broken realities that are found in every area of our shared existence. Our Holy Preaching compels us, she says, "not to refrain from opening our hearts to mend a flawed and suffering humanity because it is only through such selfless love that we begin to envision a new creation of celebrating Christ who lives within. What we see, what we feel and what we touch in the person of another must be written in our hearts, spoken in truth and changed by the witness of our lives." Indeed, that is the Holy Preaching....expressed so beautifully in the lives of some of our members.

Preaching Resources Corner - "Contemplate and give to others the fruits of contemplation."

Book: The Wisdom Jesus: Transforming Heart and Mind -- A New Perspective on Christ and His Message

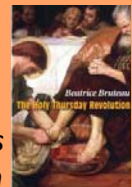
Bourgeault. Boston, Shambhala, 2011. *Through deep study and reflection of Scripture, Bourgeault offers new insight into Jesus as a wisdom teacher, assisting his followers in forming a deeper awareness of God.*



Book: The Holy Thursday Revolution

Bruteau. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005.

Using the ideal of the Holy Thursday Revolution, "moving from Lord to friend," Bruteau offers insights into what we can learn from Jesus in moving from a society of domination to that of breaking down barriers to love.



Film: The Way (available in Theatres)

Arc Entertainment, 2011. *After traveling to the Pyrenees mountains to recover his son's body, a father continues the journey his son had intended to take along The Way of St. James. This movie highlights the power of transformation and friendship.*



Film: Of Gods and Men (available on DVD)

Sony Pictures Classics, 2011. *Recounting the story of Trappist monks living and serving in Algeria during the 1990's, this film demonstrates the power of community, commitment to inter-religious dialogue, and the pursuit of peace.*



REFLECTIONS FROM
SR. MIRIAM CATHERINE NEVINS, OP

In the Preface to The New Wine of Dominican Spirituality, Paul Murray, OP identifies Dominican spirituality as “being alive in God for others.” Can you imagine any better way to spend one’s life? Yet we might well ask, so how is this done? Our congregational response “as contemplative preachers, we strive to see the world through God’s eyes and allow God to respond to the word through us in mission” is the proclamation accepted by each of us at the close of Chapter 2011. A challenge - of course, yet as Dominicans we have kept before us two powerful declarations of purpose; first “Veritas” – to seek truth, to uphold truth, to speak and to act in truth, and our second purpose “to contemplate and to give to others the fruits of our contemplation” impels us to attend to world situations and to work toward resolutions which meet the needs of many.

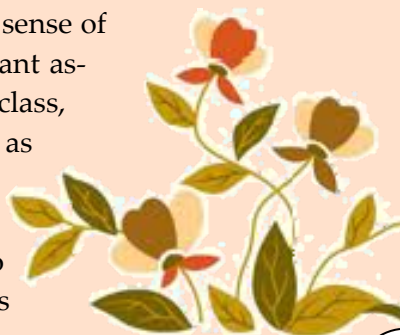
*“As
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Before we can preach – either by word or by example we must discern the truth. We ask for guidance; we seek God’s will; we trust in the power of the Holy Spirit to lead us; thus, we see the world around us as an extension of God’s love and goodness. Creation speaks to us of a loving, caring God who smiles each morning in the sun, and who weeps at man’s inhumanity to man. All that comes from God is good, so we read in Genesis (1:21) “God looked at everything he had made, and he found it very good.”

Has not each of us been awed by the grandeur of the mountains, the beauty and power of the ocean, by trees - shapes, colors, variety, by flowers – aromas, grace, beauty, by animals from chipmunk to elephants – all so different yet each contributing to the wholeness of creation. Yes, there is pain and suffering, disappointments and disasters, abuses and oppression, yet even here we have witnessed a goodness that is born of a desire to support and help another. Often this strength is provided from a source least expected to give it. When we see no visible answer, we trust that the Creator, our God of love, can somehow write straight with crooked lines, and some good will arise from the present difficulty.

The second part of the proclamation “... allow God to respond to the world through us in mission” is also a challenge, but far less daunting if we keep it simple. If we remind ourselves daily that we are God’s ambassadors to our world, allows us to serve more easily, to listen more attentively, and to speak more lovingly. As a child I learned God has no hands but yours and mine, so striving to be an instrument of good has been a life-long assignment. Recalling that each of us has been created in God’s image allows each of us when/if we remember it to bring God’s love and peace to a world hungry for such gifts.

When we open our hearts and our hands to those in need, we bring a sense of uniqueness to each individual. Our particular ministry is not the important aspect, what counts is our motive for action. If we tend the sick, teach a class, administer an organization, or prepare or serve a meal... and we do this as an act of God, we bring God’s presence to our world. In the Broadway production of “Les Mis” there is a beautiful line that goes “When we look upon another with love, we have seen a face of God.” As we go about our days, it’s a tremendous gift to allow God to respond through us to all we meet.



"We claim our identity as Dominican preachers in every realm of our lives."

God according to the needs of the church and culture of the day. Dominic lived and worked at a critical moment for the church. It was emerging from the Dark Ages, and there was a great hunger among the people to make sense of their faith. Dominic gathered women and men around his evolving vision of founding a community who would be preachers. But preaching for Dominic had a very broad and dynamic sense: it was not only to preach the good news of Jesus Christ, but also to form communities that—by the very way they operated, sharing their gifts and talents—would become what he called *Sacra Praedicationis* or holy preaching.

As a Dominican, I choose to minister at RENEW International precisely because I am able to fulfill the Dominican mission of advancing the Word of God in today's church and world through many and varied opportunities for formal preaching, but more importantly by forming and fostering communities of *Sacra Praedicationis* which we call at RENEW small Christian communities. In the environment of these small communities, people connect the Word of God with their daily lives thus encouraging the conversion of hearts and the transformation of the world through Christian action.

I feel very blessed to bring the Blauvelt Dominican charism of preaching compassion to the most vulnerable and calling others to a deep care for those who are poor and on the margins of our society as a constitutive element of being a Catholic Christian today. For me, the Dominican Sisters of Blauvelt are the "Holy Preaching" from whom I go forth strengthened and supported to preach the Gospel in every realm of my life.

PORTRAITS OF
 PREACHING



Sr. Maureen Murphy, OP with her hostess in Hong Kong, where she preached a retreat in October 2011. (Left)

Dominican Volunteers, Associates, Young Adults and Sisters share a meal for the Feast of Saint Dominic in August 2011 (Below)



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Sponsored by the Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt Preaching Team

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Praedicare: SISTERS AND ASSOCIATES
 PREACHING THE JUST WORD TOGETHER

Notable and Quotable

"In 1511 Montesinos preached his famous sermon against the oppression of the Indians and asked the question, 'Are they not human beings?'... Montesinos was inviting his contemporaries to open their eyes, and see the world differently."

Timothy Radcliffe, OP