

# Praedicare



SISTERS OF ST. DOMINIC OF BLAUVELT PREACHING NEWSLETTER

Spotlight  
On:  
Preaching  
Human  
Rights

## THE HISPANIOLA HOMILY 1511-2011 RECLAIMING THE TRADITION

The following is an excerpt from Sr. Arlene Flaherty's article, which was originally published on <http://www.domlife.org> in commemoration of the 500th Anniversary of the Hispaniola Homily proclaimed by Antonio de Montesino.

The powerful 16<sup>th</sup> century Gospel preaching of global solidarity and human rights which condemned the hegemony of colonialism and slavery on the island of Hispaniola, reverberates through Dominican history and across the landscape of Dominican mission. The small band of Dominican missionary-pastors who composed and preached the homily, continue to call their Dominican Family to re-claim its tradition, proclaim its truth, and extend its praxis of identifying, analyzing, ethically assessing, and engaging the challenges that shape Dominican mission and preaching today. The 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Hispaniola homily, invites us to cast the light of its content and its praxis on our contemporary mission contexts and preach its truth again with a renewed commitment to the Dominican charism, life and mission.

How often do you preach or hear a homily that evokes critical and ethical reflection on a contemporary social, political, ecological, or ecclesial concern? How often do you preach or hear a homily that provides a way for you to examine what you think, believe, or act around a critical contemporary issue? As you ponder your response, consider that *this* is the fundamen-

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## PROPHETIC AND COMMUNAL PREACHING

On this anniversary of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Dominican preaching in the Americas we remember and celebrate the prophetic and communal preaching of a Dominican community of Friars on the island of Hispaniola in 1511. The preaching of the gospel is an expression of the prophetic office of the church. Prophecy, a gift of the Holy Spirit, is entrusted to the whole community and also to particular individuals with a special gift to publicly proclaim the Word of God. Therefore, some members of the Christian faithful have a particular vocation and mission to preach a Word that emerges from and is in communion with the community's mission to preach.

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## THE HISPANIOLA HOMILY (CONTINUED)



Sr. Arlene Flaherty, OP

tal character of the Hispaniola homily; the homily was constructed in a way that it cast the critical and ethical light of the Gospel on the social reality to which Dominican mission was directed in Hispaniola. The Hispaniola homily of 1511 provoked and aroused its preachers and hearers to re-consider the assumptions that heretofore guided their thinking, acting, and believing around the conquest of the so-called 'new world.' In casting the praxis of Jesus and the principles of his Gospel on this reality, the Dominican homily challenged the inhumanity of slavery with the claim that all persons, by virtue of their origins in the Creator, are entitled to be treated with respect, human dignity and with assurances that these basic entitlements would be universally honored and protected. In other words, with these rights come the universal obligations that they be upheld. No personal, political, economic, or religious motive could trump these basic, universal human entitlements. And ultimately, any person or nation that consciously acts contrary to them, is acting in violation of the universal principles, the laws that enshrine them, as well as the Gospel.

In addition to establishing a tradition of praxis-preaching, the Hispaniola homily provides outlines of an emerging Catholic Social Teaching Tradition. Known today as "The Best Keep Secret" principally because this tradition is often muted in the preaching and teaching of the church, the corpus of CST and its guiding principles were shaped from the very same praxis of the Hispaniola preaching. Like the homily, the principles evolved from casting Gospel values on the contemporary context, engaging in social analysis, and prompting responses and actions that contribute to the shaping of a more just, peaceful, and sustainable community of life.

Dominican preaching, in the tradition of the Hispaniola homily, calls Dominicans to hold the Word of God and the principles of Catholic Social Teaching alongside the text of the contemporary signs and issues of the times. What do these traditions illuminate, interrogate, critique in our present day reality? How does our present day reality, illuminate, interrogate, and challenge the Gospel, the church's tradition, and the preaching for meaningfulness, adequacy, prophecy, and truth?

*"How often do you preach or hear a homily that evokes critical and ethical reflection on a contemporary social, political, ecological, or ecclesial concern? How often do you preach or hear a homily that provides a way for you to examine what you think, believe, or act around a critical contemporary issue?"*

### Preaching Resources Corner - Focus on: Preaching Justice

**Film: Even the Rain (available on DVD)**

Lionsgate, 2010. *While on-site in Bolivia filming a movie about Montesino, the film crew becomes aware of the exploitation of the indigenous people in that country regarding rights of water usage.*

**Book: Suffering + Salvation in Ciudad Juarez**

Pineda-Madrid. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011.

*Following the systematic killing of women in girls in Cuidada Juarez, Pineda-Madrid analyzes the economic, cultural and religious factors that contribute to the violence, as well as the theology of solidarity and resistance of the women living in Juarez.*

PORTRAITS OF  
PREACHING: SERVICE  
IN "HISPANIOLA,"  
(THE DOMINICAN  
REPUBLIC AND HAITI)



**WE ARE THE HOLY PREACHING**

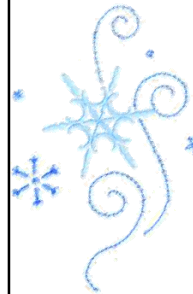
We are the "Holy Preaching"  
Standing up and speaking.  
On the road to somewhere  
Helping each other to get there.

We are the "Holy Preaching"  
Learning again and again,  
How to remember the past.  
Seeking justice and peace that last.

We are the "Holy Preaching"  
Leaning on five hundred years of truth,  
Montesino's words urge us to action  
Blauvelt Dominicans gaining traction.

We are the "Holy Preaching"  
Let us together journey forward,  
Making an impact on all we meet  
As we speak truth to all we meet.

Barbara Werner, OP



Sr. Arlene Flaherty with Little Sisters of St. Therese, an indigenous community in Port au Prince, Haiti during a visit for Catholic Relief Services (Top)

Sr. Didi Madden with children at an orphanage in Duval Roche, Croix-des-Bouquets, Haiti, while serving with Ministry of Presence (Above)

Sr. Mary Flood, M.D., with a mission group from St. Elizabeth Parish in Manhattan giving medical assistance in the Dominican Republic (Right)



Note: The statue of Montesino (pictured above left) was given to the Dominican Republic by Mexico and stands in the Capital, Santo Domingo. Although it is an image of Montesino's iconic preaching, locals say he is asking, "How much is the dollar worth?"

PROPHETIC AND COMMUNAL  
PREACHING  
(CONT. FROM PAGE 1)



Sr. Theresa Rickard, OP

From our Dominican brothers from the sixteenth century, we find a powerful precedent of the Word emerging from an intentional faith conversation of a believing community and then being preached from the pulpit. Antonio de Montesino, a Spanish Dominican ministering on the island of Hispaniola, preached a sermon that was a result of the whole community's reflection.

Montesino delivered a sermon on the fourth Sunday of Advent in 1511 condemning the unjust treatment of the Indians. Bartolomé de Las Casas notes that the courageous Dominicans prayed, fasted, and kept vigils in order to receive enlightenment—and after mature reflection, they decided to preach from the pulpit, and in public, that to oppress Indians was to go straight to hell. They all signed the sermon to show that it represented common sentiment and not that of the preacher alone (Las Casas 182-83). All preached the sermon and all suffered the consequences of preaching the truth to power. According to Manuel Hernandez, who was raised in the Dominican Republic, “Montesino, as well as Las Casas, are icons of freedom. We need to raise more Montesinos to be witnesses to justice and freedom. Just like the exploitation fought by the Dominican Friars, the exploitation of the poor continues today in the D.R. and needs to be a concern for people of faith, especially the clergy. The church today does not do enough for the poor.”

## *Praedicare* NEWSLETTER

*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*

“Considered by some to be a saint and by others to be a fanatic and close to insanity, Las Casas to this day is still very much an icon. He is the symbol of justice and the fight for human rights in Latin America. He led the way for many peoples fight for freedom and human rights. So, no matter what people thought of this Dominican monk, he made a great influence in the life and culture of the world.”

*The Colonial Zone Guide to the  
Dominican Republic*  
[www.colonialzone-dr.com](http://www.colonialzone-dr.com)

## *Upcoming Events*

### **Lent Reflection Series**

Wednesdays (Feb 22 - April 4)

12:15 PM

### **Ladies Irish Tea and Celtic Spirituality**

Sunday (March 25)

2:00 PM

### **Morning of Reflection for Women**

Saturday (March 31)

9:00 AM

**Visit our website for more information:**

<http://www.opblauvelt.org>