Fran Angelico, St. Dominic worships the Crucifix

National Museum of San Marco - is an art museum housed in the monumental section of the medieval Dominican friary dedicated to St Mark, situated on the present-day Piazza San Marco, in Florence, region of Tuscany, Italy.
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Rome, 27 July 2020

To all the members of the Dominican Family

**Dominican Month for Peace 2020**

Prot. 50/20/360 Promoter of J&P

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Warm greetings from Rome!

After three years of demonstrating global Dominican solidarity with our brothers and sisters who are trying to bring hope in situations of violence and war, the Dominican Month for Peace has now become a regular part of the annual programme of our Dominican Family. We started with a Latin American focus on Colombia in 2017. We then moved to an African focus on the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2018. And finally, in 2019, we moved to an Asian focus on India. We now have the pleasure to announce that, for 2020, we will move to Europe where the focus of our annual Dominican Month for Peace will be on **Ukraine**.

As before, the period of this focus will be Advent, when we are all waiting for the celebration of the mystery of the coming among us of the Prince of Peace. Our focus on peace in Ukraine will therefore start on the First Sunday of Advent (29 November), run for the whole of December, and culminate on the Church’s World Day of Peace on 1 January.

Each year, we have noticed a progressively marked increase in the number of solidarity activities organised by Dominican communities in all parts of the world. Masses have been celebrated, creative prayers have been offered, awareness of the focus country has been raised, art forms have been produced, embassies of the focus country have been contacted, and money has been raised for the selected projects. All of these expressions of solidarity have been deeply felt and appreciated by our Dominican Family in these countries. They have been encouraged and strengthened to continue their difficult mission, even in the midst of continuing violence and injustice!
Our focus on India in December, 2019 is still fresh in our minds. In the wake of the Synod on Youth that took place in October, 2018, we tried to reinforce this priority of the Church by including a particular focus on peace as it applies to youth. With this priority in mind, and while forms of violence are prevalent at so many levels of the huge and complex Indian society, our focus was on countering violence, in the form of deprivation and abuse, against children, women and “tribals” (indigenous people), struggles in which many Dominicans are present. Attached please find a report of the impact of the Month for Peace on the projects supported: Project Bloom for street children in the Dominicans’ Indian Centre for Integrated Development (ICID) in Nagpur; and the Dominican Family Safe Childhood Project to train trainers to address child sexual abuse. Contributions from 28 communities of Dominicans worldwide amounted to US$66032.

Attached you will also find an update from the Dominicans in the Democratic Republic of Congo on how the contributions of 21 communities of the worldwide Dominican Family for the 2018 Month for Peace have been spent - in developing a Peace Education Centre.

So now, in 2020, we will focus on Ukraine. Even in the midst of the escalation of the COVID-19 pandemic, the war with Russia and separatists still rages in the eastern Donbass region since April, 2014. Yet people throughout the country feel the impacts of the war. Dominicans are very involved in several processes and projects that promote peace and accompaniment of victims of the conflict. As we did last year, there will be a particular focus on peace as it applies to youth, which is a major concern of the Dominicans there. Thus, while several projects will be highlighted in which the Dominicans in Ukraine are contributing to the search for peace in the country, one project in particular will be the focus of our attention to provide spiritual and financial support. This is the St. Martin de Porres Center in Fastiv, which, for many years, has been caring for socially disadvantaged children: orphans, street children, sick children and children from disadvantaged families. Since the start of hostilities in Eastern Ukraine, the Center has opened its doors to children whose childhood has been poisoned by war. It has adopted more than 220 children from the combat zone, and offered them psychological and spiritual support and the opportunity to recover in a safe environment.

Closer to the Month for Peace, in September or October, you will be sent more information and materials on Ukraine and on the Dominicans there to assist you with content for the prayers, preaching, awareness-raising and other activities that you will organise. Meanwhile, as a next step, we urge you:

- to appoint a coordinator for the Month for Peace for your entity,
- to inform our promoters of Justice and Peace, fr Mike Deeb un@curia.op.org and Sr Cecilia Espenilla jp.dsi@curia.op.org of the name of the coordinator appointed for your entity,
- to allocate time for possible events in your regular programme for that month,
- to maintain the spirit of communion and shared action with the entire Dominican Family in the world by ensuring that this Month for Peace focuses on Ukraine and not on another country or even the needs of one’s own country. Solidarity with other places and challenges can be carried out in a complementary way, according to the capacities of each entity or congregation.
- If you or anyone else in your community has ideas on useful and creative ways to highlight this focus, if you have discovered useful materials, videos, etc about Ukraine, or if you, yourself, have been able to produce materials, songs or works of art, please feel free to share them with us as soon as possible by sending them to both fr Mike and Sr Cecilia. We will then do our best to incorporate your suggestions and diffuse them widely. If we can all collaborate more in the preparation of this event, it will certainly
have a much greater impact. [Sr Cecilia will finish her mandate in September and fr Mike will finish in October, but their successors will then take over.]

Thank you very much for your cooperation! We pray that, through this small action, solidarity amongst us all can continue to grow and, in turn, enable our preaching mission to have a greater impact in bringing Good News to our world.

In St Dominic,

fr Gerard Timoner
Master of the Order

Sr Cecilia Espenilla
DSI International Promoter for JPIC

fr Mike Deeb
General Promoter for Justice and Peace
ORDINATION TO DIACONATE OF BRO. PERKASH DOMINIC OP

Vice Province Pakistan, 26th July 2020

"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." 1 Peter 4:10

Bro. Perkash Dominic, OP was ordained deacon by his grace Archbishop Sabestian Francis Shaw on 26th July 2020 at Peace Center Lahore. He comes from St. Francis Xavier Parish Sargodha of Islamabad Rawalpindi Diocese. The last year 2019 he completed his theological studies from the National Catholic Institute of Theology, Karachi. Presently he is serving in the provincial office as a secretary. Last month after fulfilling the requirement of our Dominican Constitution and Canon Law of the Church, Fr. Younas Shahzad, OP the Prior Vice Provincial of Ibn-e-Mariam Vice Province Pakistan and his council approved him for the ministry of the diaconate.

As his Grace Archbishop Francis Sabastian Francis Shaw announced the date of ordination to the diaconate of Bro. Perkash Dominic OP the wave of joy flowed in the whole Ibn-e-Mariam Vice-Province. Bro. Perkash went to Holy Rosary Priory Faisalabad for retreat which was given by Rev. Fr. Paschal Paulus, OP (Parish Priest and Regent of Studies).

26th of July was the day full of blessings for the Dominican Family of Pakistan. Because on this blissful day one of the sons of St. Dominic presented himself for the service of the people of God through the ministry of the deacon.
The liturgy of the diaconate was held at Dominican Peace Center Lahore. Due to COVID-19 social distance was observed and only the council members and representatives from each community were invited to take part in the ceremony of diaconate along with his parents. The choir was led by the Dominican sisters.

During the Eucharistic Celebration, His grace Archbishop Sebastian Francis Shaw addressed to the candidate and explained to him the importance of this special ministry in the church. His grace said that your ministry is very sacred you must show the element of service in every way not only at the altar or during the Mass. You must love the disfigured people and those who are going away from the Lord. For the service of love, you don’t wait for a particular situation but be ready always for everyone and everywhere to serve the people.

You must also remember these words of the gospel during practicing this ministry that “the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Mathew 20:28). He also congratulated the family of brother Perkash Dominic OP and the Vice-Province of Pakistan and wished the new deacon best of luck for the new ministry. In the end, he said I hope you will prove to be good steward in the church.
At the end, Rev. Fr. Younas Shahzad OP expressed the vote of thanks to his grace for his availability and for performing this sacred rite. He also addressed the words of gratitude to all the friars and especially to his council. After the final blessing, the cake cutting ceremony took place and the group photo was taken as the remembrance of this great historic event in the life of Ibn-e-Mariam Vice Province Pakistan.

Fr. Younas Shahzad, OP
BEGINNING OF THE CAUSE OF BEATIFICATION OF MOTHER ELMINA PAZ-GALLO

The Archbishop of Tucumán accepted the request of the Dominican Sisters of the Most Holy Name of Jesus to start the process of beatification of its founder, Mother Elmina Paz-Gallo.

The one who makes the request on behalf of the Congregation is the Postulator of the Cause, Fr. Gianni Festa, of the Order of Preachers, who lives in Rome. In the Eucharist of thanksgiving to be celebrated in the Chapel of Dulce Nombre on Saturday, August 8th at 8:00 p.m., the Edict of Msgr. Carlos Sánchez will be announced, by which he agrees to initiate the diocesan phase of investigation of the heroic virtues, fame of sanctity and signs of the Servant of God Elmina Paz. This is the first step in the beatification process.

The mass will be broadcast on the following channels and social networks:

- [CHANNEL] Hermanas Dominicas del Santísimo Nombre de Jesús
- [PAGE] Archdiocese of Tucumán
- [PAGE] Hermanas Dominicas Tucumanas

The edict publishes the Supplex Libellus (supplication document) and invites all the people of God to provide useful information to the Cause. This information, of any gender, be it personal or private written testimonies, or authenticated photocopies of documents or letters, can be sent to the Dominican Sisters of the Most Holy Name of Jesus, Address: Rivadavia 945 from Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
The entire process is guided by a commission appointed by the Archbishop, made up of the following members: Episcopal Delegate, Pbro. Marcelo Lorca Bathrobe; Promoter of Justice, Pbro. Leonardo Valoy; Notary, Lic. Cecilia Campi de Llanes; Deputy notary, Pbro. Carlos Torres.

The sense of postulating Mother Elmina so that her name is among the Saints of the Church lies in the desire to make known the life of this great woman from Tucumán so that she may be evangelical inspiration for all the People of God. Elmina Paz was valued in her sanctity by her contemporaries and, since her death, the recognition of her virtuous life has remained until today. Spontaneously and constantly, people continue to entrust themselves to her as an intercessor of divine grace. Elmina's words, works and gestures continue to be a source of inspiration to follow Jesus Christ in our time, motivating the life of faith, educational commitment and solidarity with the most vulnerable in our society. It is vitally important to present, spread and propose as a way of sanctity a woman who lived as a lay person, wife and mother for 29 years and then 24 years, as a Dominican religious. This breadth of Elmina's spiritual experience is inspiration for women and men who follow Jesus, embracing different states of life.

Elmina Paz was born in Tucumán on September 10th, 1833 and died in this city on November 2nd, 1911. In her funeral, Father Ángel María Boisdron, her spiritual director and confessor, highlighted the integrity of Elmina's life, who gave herself totally for the cause of the gospel. The repercussion of her life was not only in Tucumán but in the whole Argentine Republic, being reflected in numerous articles in different newspapers in the country, which confirmed her reputation for sanctity.

Daughter of Manuel Paz and Dorotea Terán, she married at the age of 24 in 1857,
with Napoleón Gallo, a man of strong political militancy. As a result of this marriage, their daughter María Jesús was born. She died at the age of three. She was widowed on June 1st, 1886.

Elmina was characterized by a deep sense of solidarity, her house was open to all the poor, she cared for every abandoned person in society: beggars, the sick, the elderly and orphans. She was engaged in numerous charitable associations, with great prominence. While she was living in Santiago del Estero, she participated in associations linked to the Dominican Order, especially the Secular Third Order. Upon moving to Tucumán, she collaborated with the Charitable Society, becoming its president, which allowed her to assume responsibilities with the most unprotected in society. At the same time, she joined the Dominican Third Secular Order of Tucumán, a space in which she interacted with Fray Ángel María Boisdrón who would become her confessor and spiritual director and later co-founder of the religious Congregation that they founded in Tucumán.

The summer of 1886-87 found Tucumán in a health crisis caused by the cholera epidemic that affected the entire population, especially the most vulnerable sectors. The urgency to find a suitable place to care for orphans, motivated the Dominican friar Ángel María Boisdrón, to request help for the children from Elmina Paz de Gallo, who despite her recent widowhood did not hesitate to help: she decided to dispose of her assets, transform her home to accommodate those in need, and even more, personally take care of the orphans.

When Elmina Paz began her work and transformed her home into an asylum on December 28th, 1886, she responded much more than expected. “Not only with my money but with all my life I will help these orphaned children. My house will be theirs ”, these were the words that she addressed to Fr. Ángel María Boisdrón, expressing the deepest desire of her heart. This first Asylum for orphans of the Province, had in February 1887 almost a hundred boys and girls.

The charitable experience of Elmina and of the first women who accompanied her was so strong that they decided to choose a life consecrated to God and those most in need. This gave rise to the foundation of the congregation of Dominican Sisters of the Most Holy Name of Jesus, on June 17th, 1887. The Congregation was affiliated with the Dominican Order on July 4th, 1888 and approved by the Holy See on September 7th, 1910.
The Museo-Archivo Elmina Paz Gallo, place of her memory, was inaugurated in May 2006, it is a site museum, since it is located in the room where Elmina lived and where you can see the objects that belonged to her and which talk about her life and mission.

To learn more and contact:

http://www.elminapazgallo.org/

Facebook: ElminaPazGallo

Instagram: @elmina.paz.gallo

Twitter: @elminapaz

Email: postulacionelminapaz@dominicastuc.org

Videos about Elmina:

Elmina Paz Gallo 1833-1911 (SPANISH)

Forget myself: the walk of the soul of Elmina Paz (SPANISH)

In remembrance of Elmina Paz-Gallo. 130 years (SPANISH)
The Western Dominican Province has a new way to learn about the Truth, Goodness and Beauty of the Catholic Faith – the Truth in 60 series.

Presented by some of your favorite Dominicans, this series of short videos about the Catholic faith is our gift to you, and another way we’re trying to help the faithful continue to stay connected and grow in faith during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The videos cover a lot of ground, such as short biographies about the saints, the ins and outs of liturgical music, whether you have a guardian angel (yes!) and how they help you, cohabitation, and even a series on the Book of Revelation – one of the Bible’s most misunderstood (and misused) texts. There are even some you might not expect, like our video on spiritual zombies.

For the next few months videos will be released twice every week on Sundays and Wednesdays.

Previously, these videos were exclusive to the OP-West app, but we know that times have been difficult, and we are greatly saddened that your access to the sacraments of the Church and lively presentations of the truth have been radically interrupted. Therefore, we hope that these videos can serve as a valuable resource to you.

May God bless you. We continue to pray for the health and safety of you and your loved ones.

Watch it now!
What are we to make of St Alexius, a man who abandoned loving parents without notice and hid his identity when he met them again? Is this Gospel inhumanity?

Under the Dominican church of San Clemente in Rome, lies a fourth century basilica. Its decoration in parts is marvellously preserved, and one can see there a fresco sequence depicting the life of one St Alexius, a fourth century ascetic. Alexius has long been venerated in the East; in the West, however, and despite his being a Roman, he only seemed to find any
devotion from the 10th century. He was born into a well-to-do Christian family, and was destined for a prominent future. When he came of age, with the prospect of an arranged marriage in view, he fled to Syria, leaving not a word to his parents, and disguised himself there as a beggar. Over years, he subjected his body to such austerities that he became quite emaciated. Yet by and by, a strange sequence of events led him back to Rome, where he was accepted again into the house of his parents: it was not that they had recognised their son; they thought this wizened figure a charity case. And he refused to reveal his true identity to them. Rather, he kept up his asceticism in a little cubby-hole of the house. Only when once he died, did his parents find the body with a note: this was your son. That, of course, is not the end of the story: the last part of the fresco shows St Alexius being carried away by an angel to his eternal reward.

On a first reading, I imagine we are inclined to consider this a poignant but finally happy tale. There can be no doubting that Alexius fulfils in exemplary fashion to the Lord’s most difficult demands:

To another he said, “Follow me.” But he said, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.” He said to him, “Leave the dead to bury their own dead...” Another said, “I will follow you Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home.” Jesus said to him, “No one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.” (Luke 9.59-62)

Truly, we can say that Alexius hated father and mother for Christ’s sake, and was rewarded for it not only in the hereafter, but in a fashion while still on earth by being returned to his parents. At the same time, we surely must feel some unease at the way he conducted himself. For any other motive, we would certainly call it heartless (if not wicked) to abandon one’s loving parents without a word; and strange to fall in with them again and give no hint of it, until it was too late.

In fact, Alexius’ story strikes me a little like the plot of certain Greek tragedies, in which these failures and successes of recognition are often an important driving force (Aeschylus’ Choephoroi or Euripides’ Ion or Iphigeneia at Aulis are good examples). Think of the emotional turmoil the ‘end’ of the story may well have begun for Alexius’ parents: the resentment or confusion of past abandonment and his unwillingness even to show himself to them when he came back. I would suggest that it this tale is also tragic in a more than literary sense. While we often use ‘tragedy’ to refer to any catastro-
Phe, historically artists and philosophers have struggled to distil a more refined and richer definition of the tragic. One important such definition goes as follows: a tragic situation is one in which a protagonist is, through no fault of his own, confronted with two inalienable but mutually exclusive goods, and forced to choose between them. A classic Greek instance of this is Sophocles’ Antigone: Antigone, the heroine, must choose between family loyalty and the peaceful stability of her city. Tragedy depends on an idea that there really are undeniable goods, which we can apprehend and appreciate as rational creatures endowed with free will; at the same time, however, it insists that the universe laughs in the face of our dignity, by confronting us with the shame-faced irrationality of capricious fate.

People have typically thought the tragic worldview, thus understood, as fundamentally incompatible with the Christian worldview, for two reasons. First, we Christians believe that, however messy and unpleasant and impossible things seem here below, in the end all shall be well and all manner of thing shall be well and all shall be well. Impossibly tricky or tragic situations will be shown at the last to have been contained in God’s providence, when he shall wipe away the tear from every cheek. For now, we must be patient and endure. Second, we know very well that there can never be a really insoluble conflict of goods in Christianity, for God alone is the one highest good: we can never choose against him, and in every decision we face on earth, however difficult, we must choose what will lead us back to our loving Creator and Redeemer. So tragedy gets the moral situation of humans wrong.

Both these reasons for the incompatibility of Christianity and tragedy are, I think, true, but they are not immediately satisfying; they don’t seem to get the whole picture. We may know that in the end everything is going to be alright, but we cannot necessarily feel the consolation of it now; we are in our rights to ask whether present evils are really justified by the fact that God will fix it in the end. I think we would not be honest with ourselves if we could not see some reason for complaint here. If you want to be reassured that this isn’t just impious, then read the Book of Job, or pray with the Psalmist, “Hear my voice, O God, as I complain…” – we have a warrant in divine writ for making our grumbles heard.

As to God as the highest good. That’s undeniable. Even so, there is a paradox running through our relationship to the created order, which St Thomas Aquinas expresses in a meta-
physical vein. Things have all their being and goodness entirely from God, and he could deprive them of it at any moment; at the same time, we want to say that God is generous enough that things have a being and a goodness that is really their own – they are not nothing more than pale reflections of divinity. This tension informs the whole of the Church’s teaching about marriage and celibacy: marriage, an exclusive love of another person, is good and written into the created order; at the same time, putting aside that love for God’s sake can be something even better. If that holds true of a romantic partner, how much more does it hold of our relationship to our parents? Alexius was hardly giving up nothing much of value.

“Blessed are they who mourn: for they shall be comforted.” Our mourning is for the present, and Christian living will cause us to mourn. We shouldn’t shy away from that fact – we must not fear to grieve what God takes away from us or demands us to give up, even at the same time as we must do our best to follow after him with undivided hearts. It would be inhuman and a denial of his gifts of nature, not to mourn their death into the order of grace. It is the job of a monk to mourn, wrote St Jerome – to mourn the dying to self that is necessary to live to God. Only after this life shall we be healed sufficiently, and all things with us, that even our losses will count for glory.

Image: 11th century fresco depicting the life of St Alexius in the 4th century basilica beneath San Clemente, Rome: on the far right one can just see Alexius’ deathbed. (Wikimedia Commons)

Br Bede Mullens O.P.
Br Thomas reflects on the rising wave of acts of persecution against Christians in the West and how we might respond as witnesses of the Gospel.

‘The only Church that illumines is one that burns’ – Spanish Anarchist Slogan spray painted on the walls of the Chapel of the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid

Nantes Cathedral has gone up in flames, treated as suspected arson with three fires which seem to have been independently set. The statistics from 2019 are
incomplete but from January to March, in France alone, the French Bishops Conference reported 228 violent Anti-Christian attacks, mostly to Catholic churches. In February 2019, the French interior ministry detailed 1063 ‘anti-Christian acts’. These range from stealing tabernacles from churches, setting fires, desecrating the Blessed Sacrament to attacking people. In the ten years from 2008 to 2018 according to French government figures there has been a 250% increase in anti-Christian attacks on religious sites.

We should not forget during the ‘enlightenment’ under auspices of the French Revolution thousands of Catholics were guillotined and many more exiled. The enclosed Carmelite nuns of Compiègne were martyred; what threat did these women pose? These nuns who spend their entire lives in prayer behind convent walls? Do not fool yourself into thinking this could not happen again. Do not tell yourself this was long ago. In 1903 France’s secular republican government forcibly removed the Carthusian monks from the Grande Chartreuse, seizing their property and expelling them from the country. Carthusian Monks also live a hermit-like life but their very existence was a counter-witness to the swelling tide of secularism. This was 1903, not revolutionary 1789 or the reformation of 1538. These were people who thought they were clever and enlightened – people who had thrown off the ‘shackles' of superstitious religion just like today. Similarly today, society has found itself in a position where polarised political sides have convinced themselves through their own rhetoric that they have a superior mind – that they are enlightened – and those who are not are dangerous and must be eradicated. Look at the state of political discourse and the lost art of disagreement.

If I suggested to my Catholic friends that anti-Catholicism and attacks both emotional and physical against Christians are rising, most would have a tale to tell. Even my friends who do not practise their faith are embarrassed to tell friends they are Catholic. It is also true to say most would not want to talk about this publically for fear of being further ridiculed or shouted down by people who think it threatens to obscure other social justice issues. When I have suggested to most of my non-Christian friends that anti-Catholic attacks are increasing, most laugh.

The idea that Catholicism could be persecuted –particularly in the lands that were once Christendom– is laughable for secularists, but does this not prove the point? ‘Not necessarily' might come the reply; after all we usually laugh at
things we find ridiculous. This is true, even when the laughter conceals our own prejudices.

In 2018 I was disappointed by an art piece commissioned by BBC Scotland in which someone impersonating a priest lifts what looks like a giant mini-cheddar, clearly imitating the sacred moment at Mass when the priest elevates the Body of Christ for all to adore. I remember doing the same when I was 7 years old because I wanted to be a priest. The impersonation in the 2018 piece for the BBC was not done in love but anger, disgust and ridicule. ‘Tastes like cardboard and smells like hate’, says the voiceover. It says to the Catholic, ‘your most sacred beliefs are invalid and I have no respect for them’. I found this just as ugly as I find the homophobia it attempts to protest. Is lashing out in pain more likely to create or destroy? To build up or tear down? But, comes the reply, some things need tearing down.

When I complained about this to my friend, who had posted it, he laughed. This is a sort of invalidation that says, ‘you have nothing to be upset about’. I further told another friend about the various violent acts which have recently been committed and whilst he recognised this was sad he innocently said, ‘I do think there has to be space for criticism and even mockery – we aren’t perfect and we have to remember that any objects of devotion are always meant to point towards a truer reality... my main objects of devotion though are the poor and hurting, and they face so much more violence and vandalism.’ I saw this as another invalidation, ‘yes this is sad but not as sad as X’. I do not see these objects of devotion, the poor and the Cathedral as being in competition or separate – to quote Cardinal Dolan, ‘it's a package deal’. It is precisely because they do point to a truer reality that this is so painful for Catholics. In these acts the poor ones of Christ are targeted, the Church closes so they have no pew to sleep on at the back of Church, those who are hungry for Christ in the Eucharist cannot draw from that well of living water; the list goes on.

St. Joseph’s Parish in New Haven, Connecticut, served by Dominicans had satanic graffiti painted on its doors on the 17th of July 2020. On the 16th, a statue of Jesus was toppled and beheaded in Miami and a statue of Mary was spray-painted red. On the 15th a statue of Mary was beheaded, on the 10th a statue of Mary in Boston was set on fire and another in Brooklyn was sprayed with the word ‘Idol’. On the 11th a man drove his car into a parish in Florida and set it on fire while people were preparing for Mass and on the same day...
the 249 year old San Gabriel mission in the archdiocese of L.A was burnt down.

On International Women’s Day in 2019 over a dozen churches in Spain were sprayed with pro-abortion and anti-Catholic graffiti, iglesia = muerte, ‘Church = Death’, Pecadora y orgullosa, ‘sinner and proud’. Some acts of violence against the community are overlooked because they think they are justified in protesting, seemingly by any means, the Church’s position on life for the unborn. At the same event some locks of churches were sealed with silicon to prevent the faithful from entering to worship. There was an ‘art’ exhibition where a pornographer took consecrated hosts from the Church, which Catholics believe to be the Body of Christ, and spelled out the word ‘paedophilia’ with them on the floor of a gallery. This was defended by the government. Does evil committed now justify acts of violence against a whole community? Also, in 2019 a series of videos in Venezuela showed priests and bishops being attacked by crowds in public when trying to defend their churches from being desecrated and burned. With the various scandals in the Church – from paedophilia and sex abuse to financial crimes and the judgementalism or pride from the clergy, it is easy to see why people are angry with the Church. When my grandmother was dying we called six different presbyteries trying to find a priest to anoint her and no one came; what are the odds this is the only time this happened? This is also how the morale of many good clergy has been shredded, why the authority of the Church is in tatters – this is why the personal call to holiness is so important.

If you want to read more about this phenomena across Europe you can download the Observatory on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians in Europe’s report here.

In my own life as a habited religious I have been harassed in the street, but what should one expect for being dressed as such? Some still believe ‘religion is the opium of the masses’; that Christians have it easy and are never challenged. This is delusional. Atheistic secular political ideology is the opium of the masses, sport is the opium of the masses, pornography is the opium of the masses, technology is the opium of the masses. The idolatrous messianic treatment of Trump, the idolatrous cult surrounding football and the idolatrous worship of pleasure through pornography, the all-consuming idol of economics. Worship is not dead; we have merely changed what we worship.
Shall we despair? By no means! Despair is a luxury. We must do the hard work, evangelise. You were born for a time such as this, sent by Jesus Christ your Saviour!

A lack of willingness to evangelise is anti-Catholicism of a different kind, it is antithetical to the Gospel and the Church of Christ. Jesus Christ died for all people, how can we abandon them? No. In the words of my brother, Herbert McCabe, ‘... if we do not love we are dead already’.

The Spanish Anarchists are right when they say ‘The only Church that illumines is one that burns’... when the Church burns with divine charity in the heart of every Christian person. This hatred and evil will spur us on all the more fervently to evangelise, to tell the truth, to show the compassionate love of Jesus Christ who desires all souls to be saved.

The wrong thing to do would be to keep our churches closed and attempt to hoard our seed in the barn, that seed which is Christ himself. All people need Jesus, especially those who have committed these crimes. We can work to restore people’s faith in Jesus and his mystical body the Church through our devotion to the poor, marginalised and oppressed, through the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. Those works of mercy are common place in the Church but not common place enough – Pope Francis has tried to make it clear every parish should be a bustling hub for this kind of activity. The people who want to burn down our churches do not want to burn down that authentic Gospel living, but what they deem to be dominating power structures. They are posing that fundamental question given to us by those great theologians known as the Bee Gees, ‘How deep is your love?’ Let us show them that the Mystical Body of Christ is Cathedral of Mercy for the poor – those who do not know God’s love and do not feel the love of the Church, those who persecute us or want to punish us for our sins.

In some ways my friend who drew my attention to devotion to the poor was right. As Jesus says, we will have the poor with us always.

In this time of COVID-19 we have been cut off from the Eucharist, but Jesus has always been with us in the indwelling of the Trinity in our souls and through the charity we have shown for one another. Our churches have been closed but we have always been the body of Christ. Our economic structures and educational institutions are crumbling but we have realised how important our relationships are with each other, that people matter more than economic
benefit. When our churches burn in the West, just as they have for centuries in the East, we can be faithful to Jesus and ‘seek first the kingdom of God’. We live in the freedom of the Glory of God knowing that the Father loves us and he will never let anything happen to us that he cannot bring good out of. The People of God are the salt of the earth and Jesus Christ the Light of the World dwells among us – he is our hope. We have a great gift the world does not have, and we will share it.

Trust in the Lord.

*Br Thomas Thérèse Mannion, O.P.*
Pope Francis sends a message to an online seminar on human trafficking, and calls this form of modern-day slavery a scourge against human dignity.

The Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Argentina recently held an online seminar to mark the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons.

In a message sent by Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Parolin, Pope Francis described modern-day slavery as “a scourge that wounds the dignity of our weakest brothers and sisters.”
The Pope said our contemporary world is “sadly marked by a utilitarian perspective that views others according to the criteria of convenience and personal gain.”

This selfish point-of-view, he added, keeps others from experiencing the fullness of their unique and unrepeatable humanity.

**Eradication of scourge**

Given the dramatic situation of people being used for commercial gain, Pope Francis encouraged everyone in their “commitment to the total eradication of this scourge.”

He also expressed his support for “efforts to assist survivors and collaborate decisively in building paths that lead to the common good and the full realization of human life.”

The Pope concluded his message by blessing the seminar’s participants, and invoked the protection of Our Lady of Luján.

**Increased vulnerability**

The seminar was held Thursday on the Zoom video conferencing platform under the title “Together Against Trafficking in Human Beings”.

The 600-odd participants represented various sectors working to fight the scourge of modern-day slavery. These included Church representatives, politicians, humanitarian workers, and officials from Argentina’s judiciary.

Event organizers expressed satisfaction that the Covid-19 pandemic did not force a cancellation of the seminar.

“The need to raise public awareness on this issue has grown,” they said, “since the current circumstances have created greater potential for vulnerability and favored an uptick in the exploitation of people.”

By Vatican News
PROPOSALS FOR THE PRAYERS FOR THE ORDER (ACG 2019, 448)

ORDERLY INTERCESSIONS (ACG 2019, 448) We invite you to follow us on Ordo Praedicatorum’s social networks: Facebook and Instagram. Every day we update the intentions for the Order. Every day, the friars of Santa Sabina Convent present these petitions. To join us in this prayer, we are publishing the chronogram.

ODD MONTHS (January, March, May, July, September, November)
* = specific intercessions with own form

*01 Watch over our brother..., Master of the Order;
   – grant him wisdom and prudence and bless our whole Order with vocations.

Pour out your blessings on our brothers of the (Vice) Province of ... and the whole Dominican Family in ... ;
   – make them faithful in preaching your Word and bless our Order with vocations.

02 : Province of Hispania / Spain, Equatorial Guinea, Dominican Republic, Cuba, Paraguay, Uruguay and Argentina.
03 : Province of Toulouse / Southern France, Reunion Island and Haiti.
04 : Province of France / Northern France, Scandinavia, Baltic States, Equatorial Africa and the Arab World.
05 : Province of St. Dominic in Italy / Northern Italy and Turkey.
06 : Roman Province of St. Catherine of Siena / Central Italy.
07 : Province of St. Thomas Aquinas in Italy / Southern Italy and Greece.
08 : Province of Teutonia / Northern Germany and Hungary.
09 : Province of England / Great Britain, Grenada and Jamaica.
10 : Province of Poland / Poland, Ukraine, Belarus and Russia.
11 : Province of Bohemia / Czech Republic.
12 : Province of Croatia / Croatia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Slovenia.
13 : Province of Portugal / Portugal and Angola.
14 : Province of the Netherlands / The Netherlands.

Curia Generalizia – Fratres Ordinis Prædicatorum
15 : Province of Ireland / Ireland, Iran, Trinidad & Tobago.
16 : Province of Mexico / Mexico.
17 : Province of Peru / Peru.
18 : Province of Colombia / Colombia and Puerto Rico.
19 : Vice-Province of Ecuador / Ecuador.
20 : Province of Our Lady of the Rosary / Spain, Korea, Myanmar, South Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, East Timor, Japan and Venezuela.
21 : Province of Belgium / Belgium.
22 : Province of Argentina / Argentina and Chile.
24 : Province of Malta / Malta and Albania.
25 : Province of Canada / Canada, Japan, Rwanda and Burundi.
26 : Province of the Holy Name / Western United States.
27 : Province of Upper Germany / Southern Germany and Austria.
28 : Province of St. Albert the Great / Central United States.
29 : Province of Australia and New Zealand / Australia, New Zealand, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea.
30 : Province of Brazil / Brazil.

*31 : Welcome into your kingdom the departed brothers and sisters of the Dominican Family;
– and continue to bless our Order with vocations.
EVEN MONTHS (February, April, June, August, October, December)
* = specific intercessions with own form

Pour out your blessings on our brothers of the (Vice) Province of ... and the whole Dominican Family in ... ;
– make them faithful in preaching your Word and bless our Order with vocations.

01 : Province of Switzerland / Switzerland.
02 : Province of Vietnam / Vietnam, Thailand, Laos, Canada and the United States.
03 : Province of the Philippines / Philippines, Sri Lanka and Indonesia.
04 : Province of St. Martin de Porres in the United States / Southern United States.
05 : Vice-Province of Pakistan / Pakistan.
06 : Province of Central America / Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Panama & Costa Rica.
07 : Province of Nigeria & Ghana / Nigeria, Ghana & Zambia.
08 : Province of India / India.
09 : Vice-Province of Congo / Democratic Republic of Congo.
10 : Vice-Province of Southern Africa / South Africa, Zimbabwe and Malawi.
11 : Vice-Province of the Queen of China / Taiwan.
12 : Province of Slovakia / Slovakia.
13 : Province of Saint Augustine in West Africa / Benin, Ivory Coast, Senegal and Burkina Faso.
14 : Vice-Province of Bolivia / Bolivia.

Be with ... as they follow Christ in the footsteps of St Dominic;
– make them faithful to their calling and bless our Order with vocations.

15 : The communities under the jurisdiction of the Master of the Order.
16 : The Nuns of the Order.
17 : The Lay Dominicans.
18 : The sisters of Dominican Congregations.
19 : The members of the Priestly Fraternities.
20 : The members of the Dominican Secular Institutes.
21 : The members of the International Dominican Youth Movement.
22 : The novices of the Order.
23 : The members of the Dominican family in regions of violence and injustice.
24 : Those who work in the academic institutions of the Order.
25 : Those who have been entrusted with the formation of new Dominican vocations.
26 : Our brothers and sisters entrusted with the ministry of reconciliation.
27: The sick and elderly members of the Dominican Family.

*28: [The brothers and sisters who face difficulties in their vocational journey.] Guide our brothers and sisters facing difficulties in their vocational journey:
– help us to support each other in our calling and be open to new vocations.

*29: Grant your blessing to the benefactors of the Order and fill them with your grace;
– reward their generosity and bless our Order with vocations.

*30: Grant your blessing to the employees and volunteers working in the service of the Order and fill them with your grace;
– reward their generosity and bless our Order with vocations.

*31: Welcome into your kingdom the departed brothers and sisters of the Dominican Family;
– and continue to bless our Order with vocations.
Calendarium Liturgicum
Ordinis Prædicatorum
We’ll be publishing soon our Photo Album: General Chapter Biên Hòa 2019.

We are waiting for your requests.