

Christmas Message 2020

4th Sunday of Advent
Rome, 20 December 2020

Prot. 50/20/614 Letters to the Order

“What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes ... and touched with our hand concerns the Word of life...made visible; Him we preach...so that our joy may be complete.”

I John 1:1,3-4

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Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Christmas, whether in a time of pandemic or prosperity, is a celebration of the inscrutable nearness of God who **dwells within** and *among* us; a thanksgiving to our generous God who gives Himself as *gift*.

This year of the Lord 2020 is truly unexpected, unprecedented, unforgettable. Most of us celebrated the Easter Triduum, confined within locked doors; our hearts filled with anxiety about an uncertain future. But then, we turned our thoughts and set the eyes of our faith towards our Risen Lord

who enters through locked doors, greets us with his peace and dares us not to be afraid.

Now we celebrate Christmas, still struggling against this virus, protecting ourselves and our loved ones by keeping charitable *distance* from one another. Our song of *Venite adoremus* is muffled by masks and face shields. St. Paul exhorts us to behold with “unveiled faces” (2 Corinthians 3:18) the glory of God. Yet this year, we adore the beauty of the newborn King with covered faces. While our celebrations may be sparse and simple, we take hope and consolation in commemorating the birth of the *Emmanuel*, the God who is “*closer to us than we are to ourselves*” (St. Augustine, Confessions III, 6, 11).

Our fondest memories of Christmas are from our childhood, when Christmas trees seemed to tower over us, when a few pieces of candy seemed like an abundance of sweet things in our little hands. When we grew older, we realized that Christmas is not about feasting on delicious food but sharing food that feeds the hunger of our bodies and satisfies the hunger of our souls for fellowship and friendship; that Christmas is not about exchanging material gifts, but about the gift of presence, of time, of conversations, of simply being together as our brothers and sisters, with family and friends.

However, the question lingers: *How can there be Christmas Joy in a time of pandemic?* In many homes and communities, including some of our own convents, we have seats and spaces now empty, reminding us of loved ones we have lost this year. There would be no Christmas parties because money has been sparse due to loss of jobs and economic contractions. Because of travel and movement restrictions, the elderly would sorely miss the visits and embrace of their loved ones. Protective masks would hide the brilliant smiles of people singing carols, like “lights hidden under a bushel basket” (Matt. 5:15) which could not fully illuminate these dark December nights. *How can there be Christmas Joy in a time of pandemic?*

Our joy would be full, as the beloved disciple assures, if we preach what we have heard, what we *have seen with our eyes... and touched with our hand, the Word of life...made visible* (I John 1:1,3-4).

This is eloquently depicted by the beautiful painting of Sister Orsola Maddalena Caccia – of **the Blessed Mother allowing Saint Dominic to see and touch the baby Jesus, like a proud mother letting a dear friend hold her precious newborn**. This is Dominic’s beatitude, the joy of preaching the One he has heard, seen, and touched, the Word Incarnate.

This Christmas, as we embark on our celebration of the centenary of the *Dies Natalis* of St. Dominic, we ask ourselves: how have we *heard, seen, and touched* the Word this year? In many places, the incessant sound of sirens became a remainder of the pandemic. But it also meant that health workers continue to help the sick.

I learned from a friar here at Santa Sabina about the beautiful German word for nurse: *krankenschwester*, which literally means “**sister of the sick**”. A sick person is not just a patient, but a family member, one of our *own*. In times of disaster, we always see people who help and care for people. When things fall apart, we must always look for the “helpers”, persons who make us feel that all will be well even in the face of adversity; they give us hope. Surely, it is good to see one of them when we look at the mirror!

In recent times, even before the pandemic, proximity and touch have been treated with suspicion. They could be signs of abuse. With the threat of COVID-19, they have become acts of contagion and endangerment. Malice has tainted touch and rendered proximity as risky and reckless, tactile charity became taboo and terribly offensive. Paradoxically, maintaining safe distance as protection and prevention of viral transmission has been transformed into a sincere sign of our “nearness”, and genuine concern for the health and safety of others.

I am glad that in these trying times, we have *heard* and *seen* the manifold preaching and works of charity of our brothers and sisters, *touching* the hearts of so many.

Christmas joy is a gift which awaits us when we preach the One we have heard, seen and touched. It is no wonder that from the earliest times of our Order, we prayed:

May God the Father bless us,
May God the Son heal us,
May God the Holy Spirit enlighten us
and give us eyes to see with,
ears to *hear* with,
hands to *do* the work of God with,
feet to walk with,
and a mouth to *preach* the word of
salvation with...

Once I came across a story of a teacher who asked his students: how can you tell that the night is over and the day has begun? A student replied: is it when from a distance I could see a tree and I can tell whether that tree is an apple or an orange tree? The teacher said, not yet. Another student volunteered: is it when from a distance I could see an animal and I could tell whether it is a cow or a horse? The teacher said, not quite. The students chorused, then tell us how. The teacher said, it is when from a distance you could see a person and you can already see in that person the face of a brother or a sister. **When that happens, surely, the darkness of night has ended and the brightness of day has begun.**

For us Christians, darkness ends when we see in our brothers and sisters, in everyone, especially the poor, the very presence of Jesus himself. This is the true celebration of Christmas - to proclaim our faith in the Emmanuel, the God-who-is-with-us, the God-who-is-in-each-and-everyone of us. The question for us this Christmas is not only "who is Jesus for us?" but "**where** is Jesus in our fellows?" He is *Emmanuel!*

May the **light of Christ** shine *through* us,
to dispel the darkness *around* us, *within* us.
A Blessed Christmas to you
and all you hold dear!

Your brother,

Gerard Francisco Timoner III, O.P.
Master of the Order

New General Promoter for Justice and Peace

Brother Aniedi Okure, O.P., is the new General Promoter of Justice and Peace and the new Delegate to the United Nations.



He was appointed by the Master of the Order, Brother Gerard Francisco Timoner III, O.P., on October 25, 2020, and assigned to the Convent of Santa Sabina, Rome, on December 10, 2020.

Until his appointment as the General Promoter of Justice and Peace as well as Delegate to the United Nations, Brother Aniedi served as the Executive Director of the Washington DC-based Africa Faith and Justice Network (AFJN), and as a Fellow at the Institute for Policy Research (IPR) at The Catholic University of America. His key involvement with AFJN has focused on advocacy for just African policies and the formation of civil society groups based on Catholic social teaching, contextual social analysis, techniques and the mobilisation of groups for concrete advocacy on issues that impact their communities.

Previously, he served as the Coordinator of Ethnic Ministry at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), and as Vicar Provincial for North America and the Caribbean of the Dominican Province of St. Joseph the Worker, Nigeria and Ghana.

Brother Aniedi has diverse experiences in pastoral ministry in Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the United States, including serving as

youth chaplain, chaplain of the Nigerian Federation of Catholic Students, collaborator at St. Ambrose Parish in Boston, Massachusetts, chaplain of the University of Ife, Nigeria, chaplain of the Sisters of Saints Cyril and Methodius, and chaplain of the Geisinger Medical Centre in Danville, Pennsylvania.

He has taught at several universities in the United States and Nigeria. For many years he has conducted workshops and seminars on cultural orientation for international pastoral workers and the intercultural competence programme for professionals working in the field of immigration.

Brother Aniedi considers it an honour to be called to serve the Dominican family in the Curia: "I am grateful for the trust that has been placed in me. My first task, both in Rome and in Geneva, will be to familiarise myself with the field. I need to learn what has been done by my predecessors over the years, how each task has been carried out and how effective the initiatives in this field have been."

He has set as his number one priority learning about the Commission, about the environments in which members of the Dominican family minister, the challenges they face in their different contexts, and how they negotiate those challenges: "Knowing that we are spread across 120 countries, this will take some time, given the great diversity within the family and the divergent contexts in which we are called to serve."

He adds, "By getting to know the terrain, I hope to continue to build and strengthen solidarity within the family, but I will also try to link these coalitions beyond the Order, to other institutions that have a similar mission or that could be encouraged to be part of the mission of justice. There is strength in unity. An African - Ethiopian - proverb says that 'When spider webs unite, they can bind a lion'. The more we work together to solve problems, the better our results."

Recognizing the particular difficulty of these times, Brother Aniedi noted that, on the one hand, we have a growing trend towards globalisation while at the same time harbouring suspicions about a "single global agenda". On the other hand, we have entrenched nationalist and exclusivist tendencies

that have a world view divided along the lines of Them-Us. "And yet," he continues, "with the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, reality shows us that we are indeed all interconnected in this world. What is happening even far away from my reality should concern me. So the question is how we as a family negotiate within these trends. How do we collectively reflect on appropriate ways to make people understand that we are indeed a family of God, distributed in different contexts, regions and geographical areas, but nevertheless one family."

Citing Pope Paul VI, Brother Aniedi recalled that our interdependence is such that when one member of the family is debased, we are all debased; and when one member is elevated, we are all elevated. This interdependence, according to him, is very apparent in the global impact of COVID-19, such that there is a need to start imagining our world in terms of interdependence and connectivity.

He concludes, "The Dominican family has a rich heritage, a multitude of resources, talents and experiences. My goal will be to work with them to find innovative ways to use their treasures to mobilize us for better results." ■

New President of *Spem Miram Internationalis*

On November 12, 2020, the Master of the Order, Brother Gerard Francisco Timoner III, O.P., appointed Brother Juan Ubaldo López Salamanca, O.P., as President of the Council of "Spem Miram Internationalis" (SMI).



He succeeds Brother Krzysztof Poplawski, O.P., of the Province of Poland, who has just completed his mandate.

Brother Ubaldo is a son of the Province of San Luis Bertrán in Colombia. He is currently the General Promoter of the Laity.

Spem Miram Internationalis is an organization of the Order of Preachers under the direction of the General Chapters and the Master of the Order. It was created to manage the Order's solidarity funds and to seek new ways of supporting the formation of the friars and the mission of the Order. It operates under the direction of a Council appointed by the Master of the Order.

The current members of the SMI Council are Br. Richard Ounsworth, O.P., Br. Pablo Condrac, O.P., Br. Benjamin Sombel Sarr, O.P., and Br. Anthony Walsh, O.P. ■

Reception of the Encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* by the Dominican Family in Latin America and the Caribbean



In order to facilitate communication among the entities, to promote dialogue on themes of common interest and to support the ongoing formation of the Dominican Family in Latin America and the Caribbean, the coordination team of the Interprovincial Conference of Dominicans of Latin

America and the Caribbean (CIDALC) organised an online colloquium on the reception of the encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* on December 4, 2020, at 4:00 pm in Lima, Peru. Sisters, nuns, lay people and friars of the Dominican Family from all over Latin America and the Caribbean participated in this meeting. According to data from the different social media platforms, the event was viewed more than 2,000 times.

As we know, *Fratelli Tutti* is the third encyclical of Pope Francis' pontificate and in it he calls on all humanity to discover in love a force that should transform international relations, politics, economy and culture.

The meeting began with a word of welcome from Br. Luis Javier Rubio, O.P., *Socius* of the Master of the Order for Latin America and the Caribbean, and President of CIDALC. He stressed the importance of organizing events like this, in which, as a Dominican family, we can reflect and dream about our future as sons and daughters of St. Dominic de Guzman in this part of the world. After the welcome and the exhortation to work together, everyone recited the prayer of the meeting prepared by Sr. Adriana Colombres, from the monastery in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

After the prayer and the presentation of the speakers, Sr. Genoveva Saénz Quispe, D.I.C., began her intervention with a biblical reflection on the parable of the Good Samaritan and the merciful dimension expressed in the Gospel according to St. Luke, the text which inspired the Pope to write this encyclical. Sr. Genoveva explained what this Samaritan dimension represents for the Dominican sisters of Latin America and in general for the Dominican family in this time of pandemic, a way of being attentive to the needs of our suffering brothers who are left by the wayside.

Brother Gonzalo Ituarte Verduzco, O.P., a friar of the Province of Mexico, was the second speaker. He invited us to renew our commitment to the search for truth, reminding us that this is our motto. However, he added that it should not be our sword, that is, we have to make an intellectual itinerancy as Dominicans. Thus, leaving our securities, we may discover and enrich ourselves with truths found in other cultures and other religions in order to build

more inclusive and supportive societies, as *Fratelli Tutti* encourages us. And this is a great task for the Order which is called to proclaim the Gospel in the four corners of the world. He also recalled part of our history and the invitation made by various General Chapters to assume this task.

The third lecture was given by Dr. Jelson Oliveira, a lay Dominican from Brazil. Dr. Jelson began by asking for prayers for the thousands of people who have died as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic revealed great inequalities in Latin America in the fields of health, education, media, and others. He therefore asked all the branches of the Order to make not only an intellectual effort to understand the world in which we live, but also a concrete effort to participate, with compassion, in the transformation of this world into the Kingdom of God. This is through political actions that go beyond confrontations between left and right and seek authentic human development.

After the main presentations, the moderator of the event introduced to the Dominican family of the region the new members of the General Curia, who would collaborate in the task of the Master of the Order, Br. Gerard Timoner, O.P., to foster the development of the Order: Br. Florentino Bolo, O.P., of the Province of the Philippines, who is now the *Socius* for Apostolic Life; Br. Juan Ubaldo López Salamanca, O.P., of the Province of St. Louis Bertrand in Colombia, the new Promoter General of the Dominican Laity; and Br. Fernando García, O.P., of the Province of Mexico, the new Promoter General of the Nuns of the Order. Each took the floor to explain their new role and expectations as they begin their new ministry.

After the presentations, comments were shared by members of the different entities of the Dominican family: Marianella Parra Montero, a lay Dominican woman from Peru who is also a Doctor of Civil Law; Br. Kleyver José García, O.P., Vicar Provincial of Venezuela; and Br. Edgar Rubén Olmedo, O.P., from Paraguay. Br. Fernando Delgado, O.P., from the Vice-Province of Bolivia and Secretary of CIDALC, then spoke about the reception of the Encyclical in the Dominican family of his country. All of them underlined the importance of the organisation of the meeting and the serious task to be carried out by members of the Dominican family.

There is the challenge to put into practice in each nation the main pastoral orientations contained in the document, with special attention to those who find themselves in a marginal situation: the poor, women, migrants, etc.

Brother Carlos Cáceres, O.P., Provincial of Central America, presented a summary of the lectures, underlining their main theological, spiritual and pastoral lines in relation to the tasks that the Dominican family faces today in the region.

In conclusion, Br. Diego Orlando Serna, O.P., Provincial of Colombia, invited the participants to join in thanking the organizers of the event through a moment of prayer and a blessing in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. ■

RECEPCION DE LA ENCICLICA

"Fratelli Tutti"

en la Familia Dominicana
de América Latina
y El Caribe



Organiza: Equipo CIDALC

Programa

4:00 Conexión de las Comunidades.

4:10 Bienvenida y Presentación Fr. Luis Javier Rubio, O.P.

4:15 Oración: Sor Adriana Colombres, O.P. Monasterio de Buenos Aires.

4:20 Ponencia: Recepción de las dominicas a partir de su fundamento bíblico y teológico. Hna. Dra. Genoveva Saénz Quispe, DIC - Perú

4:35 Ponencia: Recepción de los dominicos y su aporte pastoral en América Latina. Fr. Gonzalo Ituarte Verduzco, O.P. - México

4:50 Ponencia: Recepción de la encíclica en la vida y la misión de los laicos dominicos en América Latina. Dr. Jelson Oliveira, O.P., Laico - Brasil

5:05 Consideraciones de representantes de entidades de CIDALC

5:30 Palabras conclusivas Fr. Carlos Cáceres, O.P. - Centro América

5:35 Oración final y bendición Fr. Diego Serna, O.P. - Colombia



Viernes,
04 de diciembre
04:00 a 05:40 pm
Hora Perú
 **CIDALC**

European Inter-Novitiate Virtual Conference on Dominican Sanctity



Over 27 novices and six Novice Masters, from Europe, gathered virtually via Zoom for a presentation from Br. Gianni Festa, O.P., Postulator General of the Order on Dominican spirituality entitled, "Rediscovering the face of the Father in the faces of his sons and daughters today".

Brother Gianni began by stating that 2021 will be an important year for the Dominican Family as we celebrate and remember the eighth centenary of the "*dies natalis*" of our Founding Father, St. Dominic. The term "Father" was intentional because a great number of men and women, over the centuries, have recognized the charism of fatherhood of St. Dominic, and have found refuge in him as sons and daughters, and brothers and sisters. "Founder" was also intended because, listening to the voice of the Spirit, attentive to the signs of the times and willing to discern God's will in the events and people he met on his itinerant journey, he gave life to the Order of Preachers.

He made the observation that St. Dominic mysteriously transmitted and revealed his holiness, to a number of the Blessed and the Saints who overflow our liturgical calendar. It is not a matter of history or exclusive holiness, but of a living, universal, vibrant holiness that goes beyond the limits and boundaries of time, language, culture, and geography. Even today, our blessed and saints admonish us not to forget the example and legacy

of our Holy Father Dominic. They encourage us to follow in his footsteps and trust in their friendship and help, today as in yesterday.

Brother Gianni discussed the attributes and heroic virtues of the twentieth century holy men and women being promoted for canonization by the Order, such as Marie-Joseph Lagrange and Juan González Arintero, the bishop and martyr in Algeria, Pierre Claverie, the apostle of prisons and man of compassion Jean-Joseph Lataste, the apostle of the Amazon José Álvarez Fernández, "Apaktone", the martyrs Giuseppe Girotti, Maura Clarke, Ita Ford, Jean Donovan, Dorothy Kassel, and Katerina Abrikosova, the laymen Giorgio La Pira, Piergiorgio Frassati, Élisabeth Leseur and Tilde Manzotti.

From these, our, holy brothers and sisters, we learn that Dominican holiness has always been considered as a powerful means of formation, unity, tradition, and identity for the Order. To study and read about these holy men and women, on whose shoulders we stand, is not a matter of simply knowing how and where we come from, but essential to know how we are to live and where we must direct our lives.

Brother Gianni, before he began the presentation, quoted Simone Weil, "The world needs saints who have genius, like a city where the plague is raging needs doctors." What a timely quote that inspires us to listen to the voice of the spirit, be attentive to the signs of the times, and discern God's will as Dominicans. ■



Priestly Ordinations in the Provincial Vicariate of Rwanda and Burundi



Two Dominican friars were ordained to the Priesthood in the Provincial Vicariate of Rwanda and Burundi, Province of Canada. They are Br. Olivier Kwihangana, O.P., a Rwandan, ordained on October 17, 2020 in the Chapel of St. Albert the Great House, Nyagatare, Rwandan; and Br. Désiré Bizimana, O.P., a Burundian, ordained on November 15, 2020 in the Dominican Friars Chapel, Bujumbura, Burundi. Their ordination, initially scheduled for August 8, 2020, in Bujumbura (Burundi), was celebrated separately because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Bishop Servilien Nzakamwita, Bishop of Byumba Diocese in Rwanda, who ordained Br. Olivier, emphasized in his homily that Br. Olivier was not elevated to the sacrament of the holy orders because he would be someone extraordinary but that he could, however, become so through his dedication to the service of the salvation of humanity for the glory of God.

Brother Raphaël Manikiza Uwineza, O.P., Vicar Provincial of the Vicariate of Rwanda and Burundi, congratulated the newly ordained priest and thanked those who had taken part in the ordination. He advised Brother Olivier to take firm steps as a priest, to stay in proximity with the faithful and to have synergy with all the brothers as well as all

involved in pastoral activity in a spirit of consultation and solidarity.

Ten priests, especially diocesans, and lay faithful were in attendance. The family of Brother Olivier and friends of Dominicans were there to rejoice with the brothers. However, many other people could not make it because of the restrictions on movement due to the pandemic.

During the ordination in Bujumbura, the ordaining prelate, Bishop Gervais Banshimiyubusa, of the diocese of Bujumbura, in his homily, urged Br. Désiré, to use the various gifts that God gave him for the salvation of God's people with a predilection for the poor. The Bishop further exhorted him to use the various gifts received from God to walk in the footsteps of some of the great Dominican figures like St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Albert the Great whose feast was celebrated the same day.

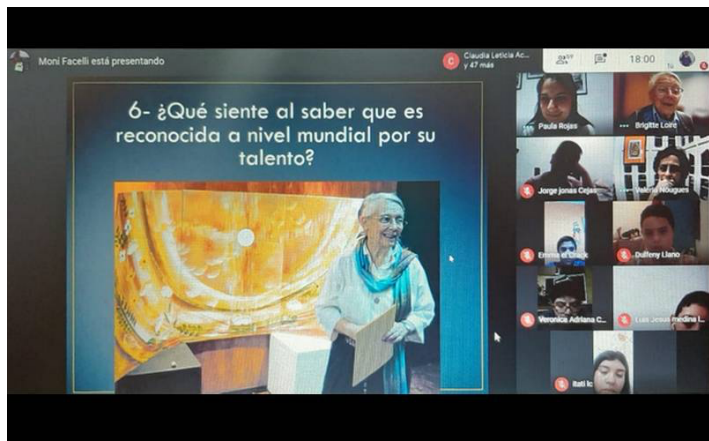
In attendance were Bishop Emeritus Evariste Ngoyagoye of Bujumbura, religious and diocesan priests, Dominican nuns from Rweza, members of the Dominican family from Burundi, family members of Brother Désiré, and friends of the Dominicans. Unfortunately, the Dominican friars from Rwanda including the Vicar Provincial could not make it because of COVID-19 restrictions.



In his word of thanks, Br. Désiré thanked God for his ordination. He thanked various people who played a significant role in his religious life including his parents, the Dominican friars, the Dominican Choirs as well as Radio Maria Burundi, for being instrumental to his knowing the Dominicans and for walking with him in the footsteps of St. Dominic throughout his formation.

Contributors: Br. Ezéchiel Rivuzimana, O.P., and Br. Callixte Habonimana, O.P. ■

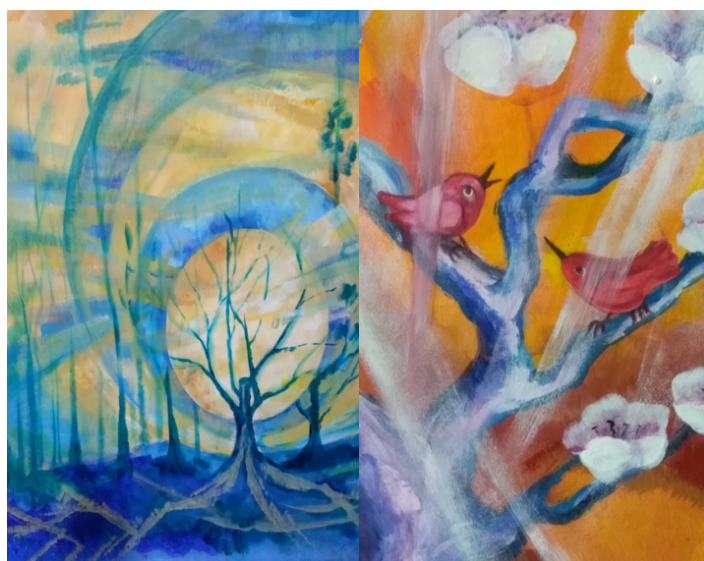
Radiant colours, a challenge to creativity in times of pandemic



The year 2020 has immersed us in a vital journey of multiple dimensions, to take care of our lives and maintain hope in uncertain contexts. From an educational point of view, this was a radical change, since in our country, Argentina, we only had nine days of face-to-face meetings with our students to suddenly go through a whole school cycle of virtual education. We took up the challenge of urgently training teachers to use the educational platform and to produce pedagogical materials for virtual teaching. We responded to the different needs of families, both economically and in terms of the complexity of accompanying the children, using the pastoral pedagogical proposals of our *Colegio La Asunción* in Santiago del Estero.

We base our educational pastoral proposal on a programme of evangelisation that makes possible

the incarnation of the Gospel from culture and the construction of knowledge. This is why we cultivate interiority and solidarity as concrete means in order to achieve an increasingly human culture. This year we have been able to systematise the work through projects that integrate the development of the capacities of our students. We would like to share the experience made from one of the primary school projects, entitled: "Radiant Colours" based on the question: How can I discover and transmit the joy of God's presence in my life?



The teaching team proposed to the pupils different learning points which were chosen from the study of the biography and artistic production of Sister Brigitte Loire, Dominican of the Incarnate Word: her life, her pastoral options, the commitment to art in Mexico, the use of colours, the analysis of some of her works including the Visitation, the geometric forms of her stained glass and above all the source from which she expresses her art which is her experience of God. The team discovered that it is possible to be a prophet from a work of art such as "*Las mujeres de Juárez*", because through it one can announce God's message and denounce injustices. From geography and the use of English, it was possible to locate the countries in which she lived and the important places in the Federal District. On October 19, we gathered as students and teachers in a videoconference with our beloved artist to listen to her personally and ask her some questions. This meeting was the culmination of this project, where the teenagers were waiting to meet the artist and the Dominican sister. Dialogue and listening to their experience of the encounter with

God reflected in each of her works surprised the students and those most inclined to artistic expression consulted her sources of inspiration. Brigitte shared important moments in her life, such as how she had to study art in the midst of World War II and also how she lives her commitment to Justice and Peace in Mexico from the perspective of an artistic preaching. The project concluded with a moment of spirituality and artistic production by the students, based on the inspiration coming from Brigitte's work and the presence of God in their lives, in the complex context of the pandemic.

This process, allowing the meeting of artists from the Dominican family in Latin America and the Caribbean, is one of the fruits of the Preaching, because we met Brigitte and our friendship made possible an educational pastoral encounter in a complex context, in order to sustain hope. In conclusion, this pandemic has made us discover possibilities that we had not thought of before, it has shortened distances and, despite the isolation we have experienced, it has connected us far beyond our physical borders. We hope that preaching in our Order will continue to meet the challenges that each context poses to our creativity, to make possible the encounters, dreams and shared life that give meaning to our daily journey.

*Contributor: Sr. Valeria Nougues, O.P.
(Dominican of the Holy Name of Jesus) ■*

INTERVIEW: Dominican Family and Human Rights: past, present and future

Br. Mike, the Dominican Family - especially in Spanish speaking countries - will be happy to receive a new contribution to Justice and Peace with this book. Can we still say that there are Dominicans who are dedicated to the defence of the most vulnerable? Where do we find them and who do they defend?

There remain so many Dominicans very dedicated to defending the most vulnerable – too many to list here. In the articles in the book by Sr. Tina and me there is a comprehensive account of what Dominicans are doing, and almost all of these are still involved in similar and even more profound ways. Some recent examples are:

- The ongoing defence of the land rights of the people of Dominican Republic by Br. Miguel Angel Gullon, O.P., and the Dominican Family. Radio Seybo, of which Br. Miguel Angel is the Director, has recently received a prize for the defence of human rights through the media in Latin America and the Caribbean.

- The Dominican Family in the Philippines challenging the government for its involvement in extrajudicial killings, resulting in Br. Victor Calvo, O.P., receiving threats.

- Caring for vulnerable children and fighting for their rights: street children in India, juvenile prisoners in Ivory Coast, children exploited in the artisanal mines of the Democratic Republic of Congo, child victims of war in Ukraine, abandoned children of migrants in Guatemala deported from the United States, many of whom have COVID-19.

- Supporting the families of victims of massacres in Colombia as well as mediation efforts between the military and armed groups.

- Support for vulnerable migrants and victims of human trafficking in the Philippines, USA, Canada, Spain, France.

- Defending the rights of indigenous people in Peru, Mexico, Guatemala, Brazil, Philippines, India, Indonesia.



– Challenging environmental destruction in Kenya, Brazil, DR Congo, USA.

– Promoting inter-religious dialogue in Cairo and Istanbul.

– In most countries, Dominicans are standing with and empowering poor and vulnerable people: women, the deaf, especially in providing education.



What are the urgent questions, addressed in the book, that challenge us in the preaching of the Dominican Family? (now and in the future)

The final statement of the Congress spells out all of the major challenges, but I can point to the following priority challenges emerging:

1. Embrace as an integral part of our Dominican charism the mission of justice and peace as constitutive to the preaching of the Gospel. This is nothing new! Every day, in our Morning or Evening Prayer, we read and pray for justice and peace.
2. Integrate Catholic Social Teaching and the defense of human rights into all aspects of the formation of the Dominican Family – brothers, sisters, nuns, laity, associates, priestly fraternities, youth, and other movements and members of the family.
3. Promote the study of *Laudato Si* as a means for teaching an integral ecology that combines the well-being of humans with the whole of creation.
4. Adopt and promote the Salamanca Process which calls on Dominicans, our educational institutions, and ministerial programs to direct our study, research, analysis, and

action towards addressing the challenges our world faces, thus creating a passionate synergy between our intellectual and apostolic lives.

5. Strengthen the Dominican presence at the United Nations by ensuring that the voices of those suffering human rights abuses are heard at the highest levels through the sharing of the Dominican family on the ground and by increasing resources dedicated to that mission and concrete justice and peace projects.
6. Support those who take prophetic stands, like our early brothers and sisters, against sinful structures of power that oppress people and violate the whole of creation (John Paul II: *Sollicitudo rei socialis* 36-37)

Within the framework of the jubilee celebrations of our Dominican Order, "Dies Natalis" of Saint Dominic, what does the book bring to our lives?

As we prepare to celebrate the *Dies Natalis* of our holy father, St. Dominic, this book reminds us of what primarily motivated him – following in the footsteps of Jesus. It was compassion for those suffering that burned in him, that led him to spend his life and all his energy in listening to people and touching their suffering or confusion. He was always searching for words of hope that would bring life to people. His theology and actions were never abstract. How can we do the same?

Do you have something special to say to the Dominican family?

As I come to the end of my mandate after seven years in this global mission, I thank God for the gift it has been for me. I have met so many wonderful Dominican brothers and sisters who have revealed to me God's love and mercy. So, as I return home to South Africa, I would like to thank all the members of the Dominican Family for your faithful collaboration, patience and especially the love you have shown me over these years! You have made me proud to be a Dominican!

Many thanks. ■



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