Dear Friends,

In an apostolic letter written last November, Pope Francis counseled us to look to the past with gratitude, to live the present with passion, and to embrace the future with hope. What wonderful advice to guide each of us as we journey through our lives. Our community is filled with gratitude to have served in all our ministries and to have connected with each of you in some way.

We also remain passionate about our mission today and committed to addressing the needs of others in the world. We are passionate about our thriving schools, our justice ministry, and our mission school in Guatemala City, where we seek to lift our precious students out of poverty through education. In this issue of the Good News, we focus on just a few things about which we are passionate - education, our community garden, the betterment of immigrants, peace, poverty, and our Dominican Family who live the Dominican charism so well.

Finally, Pope Francis asks us to embrace the future with hope - a challenging task at times! Romans states, “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.” I pray that we may all abound in hope as we look to the future. May God continue to bless you, heal you, and fill you with light.

Blessings on you and your families,

Carol Mayes, OP
Prioress

ON THE COVER
We celebrate the 20th anniversary of our community garden.

Thank YOU
We gratefully acknowledge all those who contributed to this issue:

Sr. Patricia Casey, OP   John Hensley, Dominican Family
Sr. Eleanor Cresap, OP  Sr. Wanda Jinks, OP
Sr. Heloise Cruzat, OP   Sr. Carol Mayes, OP
Sr. Adrian Dover, OP     Sr. Ceil Roeger, OP
Anne Doyle,            Diana Turney, Dominican Family
           Dominican Family
Sr. Mary Magdalen Hanel, OP

Dominican Sisters of Houston Council: (left to right)
Prioress, Carol Mayes, OP, Patricia Casey, OP
Julie Marie Greig, OP and Antoinette “Kitty” Carter, OP
SISTER HONORED
In May, Msgr. Kelly Catholic High School in Beaumont honored Sr. Emily Bordages, OP for her fifty years of teaching French at the high school. To celebrate her golden anniversary, 600 friends, former students, parents, and family members gathered for a dinner at Kelly to honor her, her family, and the Dominican Sisters of Houston. Kelly’s principal, Roger Bemis, presented Sr. Emily with a wonderful scholarship established in her name.

Several people gave personal tributes to Sr. Emily, including two former students, current faculty, and Sr. Jane Meyer, OP (former teacher and principal at Kelly). The Most Reverend Curtis Guillory, SVD, DD, Bishop of the Beaumont Diocese, gave the invocation and a tribute, as well.

Those who toasted Sr. Emily expressed gratitude for her years of service, for her wonderful teaching, for the care and dedication she gives her students and their families, and for her years of coaching from the stands as Kelly’s biggest sports fan. Sr. Emily is a native of Beaumont and joined the Houston Dominicans along with four of her sisters.

POVERTY STUDY
Our Dominican Family, a group of over 140 lay women and men committed to living the Dominican charism, formed a Poverty Study-Action group to tackle the issue of poverty in Houston. Anne Doyle shared the group’s activities over the past year. “As a group, we felt we needed to educate ourselves about the poverty situation before we could take effective action.” The group read *Nicked and Dimed* by Barbara Ehrenbach, and watched a documentary film, *The Line*, both of which describe living at or below the poverty line in the U.S. Dominican Family member Laura Perez-Boston spoke to the group as well. She described the difficulties that low wage workers face in Houston, particularly the problem of wage theft by employers. The Poverty Study-Action group planned the February meeting for the Dominican Family as a whole and asked Laura to be the main speaker.

Over the past year, the group decided to take action in two areas. First, the group decided to support Angela House, which ministers to women released from Texas prisons. The Poverty group sponsored a food drive and a supply drive for Angela House and has planned several pot-luck dinners with its residents. Second, the group has plans to help form support groups for people who are actively engaged in poverty ministries. Members of the Poverty group have taken the first steps to possibly begin a support group for social workers doing HIV ministry with the Harris County Health Care System.

As for the upcoming year (2015-2016), Anne states, “Our Poverty group hopes to continue and expand our support of Angela House, possibly assist in the development of support ministries for social workers and others directly engaged in poverty ministries, start a political advocacy campaign in support of legislation to benefit poor people, and support efforts to expand access to pre-k education for children living in poverty. In an effort to continue our own education on poverty, we have asked Sr. Ceil Roeger, OP to speak with our committee about other poverty issues in Houston, and ways that we might partner with the Dominican Sisters in creating awareness and action to reduce poverty.”
COMMUNITY GARDEN
20TH ANNIVERSARY

This spring marks the 20th anniversary of the Dominican Sisters’ community garden. A committee of our sisters installed the garden in April 1995, and our community blessed it in June of that same year. Since 2004, Sr. Heloise Cruzat, OP has been our garden liaison. Our garden is a reflection of our community’s commitment to live and act in an ecologically responsible manner. Our garden serves to educate and involve others in organic gardening, and we donate our harvests to relieve hunger locally. We produce on average 1,000 pounds annually and are supported financially by faithful donors.

From its beginning, the Dominican Sisters’ garden has been a member of Urban Harvest. We continue to rely on Urban Harvest’s expertise and planting guides for our four seasons of cultivation and its volunteer contacts for garden work. Throughout 20 years of gardening, we have welcomed and are very grateful to so many volunteers. Our garden is a beautiful urban treasure with its six beds, trellises, abundant produce, seating, birdbaths, flowers, and butterflies!

SOA

Last November, the Dominican Sisters of Houston participated in the annual vigil and protest of the School of the Americas (SOA) in Fort Benning, Georgia. The School (renamed WHINSEC) is a military training school for Latin American soldiers funded by the United States. The SOA movement seeks to close the School through nonviolent protests, vigils, and legislative action. Those gathered in Fort Benning remembered the victims of SOA soldiers, including six Jesuit priests and two women whose murders 25 years ago in El Salvador became the catalyst for the movement.

ST. AGNES CELEBRATES SISTERS

St. Agnes Academy celebrated the Dominican Sisters of Houston during National Catholic Sisters Week in March. The school organized activities to give students a chance to express their gratitude for the sisters and for their ministries. Students created and signed a huge banner, which was part of a display at St. Agnes that included photos of the sisters and a timeline of our order.

During the week, a group of students visited our retirement home. The girls brought homemade treats, played musical instruments, sang, and recited poetry for the sisters. The students also brought about 15 thank you letters for each sister in the congregation that students had written. The sisters were touched by students’ letters and lovely visit.
COMMUNITY CELEBRATIONS

Our community hosted several celebrations this spring. In February, we hosted a luncheon to raise awareness of and funds for our Guatemala mission school, San Vicente de Paul Bethania in Guatemala City. Head of School Sr. Miriam Oliveros, OP came to Houston to share the wonderful successes of the children at the school, despite many hardships. In April, we celebrated 15 new Dominican Family members at their Commitment Eucharist and Ceremony, which was followed by a lovely reception. Our Dominican Family continues to grow with over 140 members sharing and living the Dominican charism. Lastly, in May we hosted our annual donor reception to thank so many who support our ministries, retirement, and Guatemala mission school. For the second year at our donor reception, the Vietnamese sisters residing at the Villa performed songs of gratitude for our guests.
CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS

Last December, our retired sisters enjoyed two wonderful dinners at the Villa to celebrate the Christmas season. The Knights of Columbus Council #14700 from St. Michael Catholic Church in Houston and their wives shared a delicious catered dinner with the sisters and transformed the community room at the Villa into an elegant dining room. Later in December, the “Spirit Cookers” in Houston cooked a wonderful dinner for the sisters as they have for many years at Christmas time. This annual visit from the Spirit Cookers gives the sisters and cooks time to reconnect and catch up on the events of the previous year.

IN Memoriam

Sister Veronica Borski, OP*  
JUNE 30, 1924 - MARCH 24, 2015
Sr. Veronica was born in Richards, Texas and graduated from Anderson High School. After graduation, she decided to do her part in the war effort by working for Sheffield Steel as a crane operator in Texas and in California. After the war, she made another life-changing decision, joining the Dominican Sisters of Houston in 1945. She lived the consecrated life faithfully for over 69 years. Sister Veronica earned her BA from Dominican College, an M.Ed from Our Lady of the Lake, and her nursing degree from UT Health-Science Center. Sr. Veronica’s teaching and school administration ministry included schools in Houston (St. Mary, St. Augustine, Assumption, St. Thomas More, Christ the King, St. Catherine Montessori); Beaumont (St. Anthony, St. Pius X); Austin (Newman School, St. Austin, Sacred Heart); Taylor (St. Mary); and Whittier, CA (St. Mary). From 1978-1986 and 1990-2015 she ministered as a nurse. Whenever help was needed, Sr. Veronica was the first to volunteer. Her sense of responsibility and generous gift of self until the work was done was evident throughout her life of service.

Sr. Mary Kay Bailey, OP+  
AUGUST 4, 1937 - MAY 17, 2015
Sr. Mary Kay was born in Kilgore, Texas, but her family moved to Houston when she was in elementary school. After graduating from St. Agnes Academy in 1955, she joined the Houston Dominicans. She earned her BA in mathematics from Dominican College and her MA in theology from St. Mary University in San Antonio. Her students remember her as an excellent teacher in Houston (St. Peter the Apostle, St. Pius X); La Marque (Queen of Peace); Galveston (Galveston Catholic, O’Connell); and San Antonio (Antonian). In 1972, she began her ministry in Religious Education in San Antonio and in the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council Office. She also spent several years in pastoral administration in Pleasanton, Texas (St. Andrew, Sacred Heart). While serving her community for six years as a Council member, Sr. Mary Kay continued her pastoral ministry in Sterling (St. Paschal), Carlsbad, Texas (St. Theresa) and later in Brenham doing adult faith formation. She retired to St. Dominic Villa in 2012. Sister Mary Kay will be remembered as always eager to engage anyone with a meaningful discussion on almost any subject, but particularly about liturgy or theology—truly a Dominican.
ADVENT PRAYER

In December, we celebrated the season of Advent at our annual Advent Morning Prayer and Brunch. Several Dominican Family members helped lead morning prayer. Phyllis Chappell performed a liturgical dance, Paul Antolik cantered, and Debbie Sieck served as Homilist. Debbie spoke of the practice of self-compassion as a call from God, reminding us that we are not truly able to love another until we have learned to love ourselves.

Following Morning Prayer, Sr. Carol Mayes presented Hunter Nelson with the 2014 Pauline Gannon award for his many years of service to the Dominican Sisters of Houston. Hunter established many years ago a vacation fund for the sisters in honor of his aunt Sr. Davidica Nelson, OP. Many of Hunter’s family were present to celebrate our tribute to him.

PRAYER VIGIL

On April 22 Dominican Sister Ceil Roeger, OP participated in the Interfaith Immigration Coalition prayer vigil held outside the Dilley Family Residential Center. The detention center in Dilley (a South Texas town of about 3,600 people) was built to detain women and children who have fled their home countries to escape poverty and violence. Sr. Ceil noted that during the vigil, protestors prayed for the women and children being detained and for an end to family detention.

LECTURE SERIES

In March the Dominican Sisters’ Spirituality Center presented a lecture series entitled, “Surprised by God’s Unexpected Word” presented by Brian J. Pierce, OP. Pierce spoke of God as the Word arising from silence. He also spoke of how each of us must have enough space in our hearts to allow God’s word in. He explained that when the Word enters us, the Word calls us to newness, changing our lives and setting us on a new path. Life is a journey, and we are changed along the way. On our journey, we don’t have to have all the answers; we just need to keep walking in faith, learning along the way to hear the cry of the world.

Brian J. Pierce, OP is a Dominican Friar of the Province of St. Martin de Porres, USA. Brian was one of several Dominicans to found a community of preachers in Honduras, and he later served for three years as the Promoter of the Dominican Family in Latin America and the Caribbean. He has recently finished a six-year Rome-based ministry with the contemplative nuns of the Order of Preachers worldwide. He has written four books and in January was a member of a Dominican Delegation to Iraq.
Today’s Kindness Grows Tomorrow’s Blessings

The Dominican Sisters of Houston’s legacy in Catholic education and services is deep rooted, and we continue today to serve and to preach the Gospel. When you name the Dominican Sisters of Houston as a beneficiary of your will, life insurance policy, trust, or retirement plan, you help ensure the future of our mission. If support of our mission and of our sisters is part of your legacy giving in your will or estate plans, please let us know. We would love to thank you for your generous commitment. If you are considering remembering the sisters as part of your estate planning, please contact us today at 713.440.3707.

DOMINICAN REMEMBRANCE
A Domican for life. A gift for eternity.

Save the Date

JUNE 29 - JULY 4
Dominican Sisters Summer Camp for girls at Circle Lake Camp in Pinehurst, Texas.
For information call 281.684.8011; brochure and registration forms are on our website, www.domhou.org.

OCTOBER 24
Labyrinth of Remembrance & Thanksgiving; event begins in St. Dominic Villa Chapel, 6504 Almeda Rd.