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Dear Friends,

With this issue of the *Good News*, my term as Prioress will be ending. I have felt privileged, as have all the council members, to serve our community for the past six years. When we began our administration in 2010, our community’s finances had not recovered from the economic downturn of 2008, and we were confronted with a stark financial picture of our congregation. However, with the excellent advice from our investment team and the superb assistance of our sisters and staff, we made needed changes. Many sacrifices were made, but today our retired sisters are well taken care of and our retirement home has been updated extensively to serve us well into the future.

With great joy we have witnessed the growth and involvement of the Dominican Family. More than 140 members “walk side by side” with us. We continue to be engaged in our justice ministry, focusing on human trafficking, the death penalty, immigration, and workers’ rights; our peace and care of creation ministries; and our sponsorship of St. Pius X High School, St. Agnes Academy, and San Vicente de Paul Bethania, our mission school in Guatemala City. We also enjoy sharing our Spirituality Center with others in the wider community and hosting a variety of speakers.

In January we held our Chapter meeting, which you will read more about in this issue, and elected a new leadership team to guide and serve our community for the next six years. Although we are smaller in number, we approach the future with hope and joy, and with the help of the Dominican Family and our co-ministers, we will continue to try to make a difference in our world. We remain so grateful to all of you for your friendship and your support, which has ensured the continued success of our mission and ministries.

Gratefully,

Carol Mayes, OP
Prioress

**ON THE COVER**

Students at our Guatemala mission school, San Vicente de Paul Bethania, pictured with Sr. Mary Brenda, OP.

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**Thank YOU**

We gratefully acknowledge all those who contributed to this issue:

- Sr. Mary Brenda, OP
- Sr. Eleanor Cresap, OP
- Sr. Heloise Cruzat, OP
- Sr. Adrian Dover, OP
- Sr. Mary Magdalen Hanel, OP
- Sr. Wanda Jinks, OP
- Sr. Carol Mayes, OP

- Martha Ojeda
- Sr. Miriam Oliveros, OP
- Blanca Perez,
- Dominican Family
- Sr. Ceil Roeger, OP
DOMINICAN SISTERS HONORED

The Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty (TCADP) presented the Dominican Sisters of Houston with the David P. Atwood Founder’s Award at its annual conference held in Houston on February 20th. The TCADP established the award in 2010 in honor of Houstonian David Atwood, who founded TCADP twenty years ago. The Dominican Sisters were early members of TCADP and helped to coordinate vigils on evenings of execution. In 1997, we adopted a corporate stance against the death penalty and have sought opportunities for study and advocacy since that time. We host events on the death penalty featuring murder victims’ families and others with firsthand experience with the criminal justice system. We support TCADP’s Religious Outreach programs, including an Interfaith Statement of Opposition to the Death Penalty. The award honors those who have made a lifelong commitment to justice and was presented in gratitude for our longtime support of TCADP.

VIETNAMESE SISTERS

For several years, we have hosted Vietnamese sisters who have come to Houston to learn English and to earn their degrees. Currently, six sisters are living in community at our Villa. Two sisters (pictured left with Sr. Carol), who have lived with us for six years, are currently in Vietnam to make their final profession but will return later this summer to finish their Masters degrees at the University of St. Thomas. This past year, we were joined by four more sisters who are just beginning their studies and are tutored by our Dominican Family and our sisters. The Vietnamese sisters volunteer daily at the Villa and share their culture and traditions with us. The sisters are pictured here celebrating the Lunar New Year.
GUATEMALA SCHOOL
In March, Houston Dominican Sr. Mary Brenda visited our mission school San Vicente de Paul Bethania in Guatemala City. Sr. Mary spent time in the classrooms with the children and visited some of the children’s homes in the surrounding neighborhood. She witnessed the poverty in which the children live but also their successes at school. Sr. Mary reported:

“I was so blessed to spend my Spring Break with Sr. Miriam, her students and dedicated staff. I was most inspired by the complimenting grace of simplicity and efficiency. In addition to sharing the incredibly small physical space of the school, over 500 students and staff share an amazing sense of community and respect for one another. Nothing is wasted and all is shared! During my visit, I gained a deeper appreciation for some of the sacrifices that Sr. Miriam’s school families make in order for their children to have a Catholic education. It was so heart-moving to observe the love the people have for the Dominican Sisters who have walked in solidarity with them for so many years. This visit inspired me to want to somehow continue that legacy and to witness the walk of solidarity with those in need.”

Sr. Mary is the Registered Nurse at St. Agnes Academy and hopes to coordinate a mission trip for St. Agnes students to visit their sister school in Guatemala City.

800 YEAR JUBILEE
The Order of Preachers (Dominican Order) is celebrating its 800 year Jubilee with a series of events throughout the year. The Jubilee Year marks the issuing of the Bulls promulgated by Pope Honorius III eight centuries ago, confirming the foundation of the Order, in 1216 and 1217. The theme for the Jubilee Year is “Sent to preach the Gospel.” The Dominican Sisters of Houston and members of the Dominican Family gathered for a liturgy last November on the Feast of All Saints of the Order to open the Jubilee Year. In May Sr. Nancy Murray, OP (an Adrian Dominican) performed her one-woman play of St. Catherine of Siena at our Spirituality Center. This October 30th we will celebrate an evening of Remembrance and Thanksgiving with Evening Prayer and Labyrinth Walk. To end the Jubilee Year, the Dominican Friars are planning a closing celebration for January 21, 2017.
DONOR APPRECIATION

In May we hosted our annual donor reception to thank so many who support our ministries, our retired sisters, and our Guatemala mission school. Donors gathered at our retirement home, St. Dominic Villa, for refreshments, entertainment, and a heartfelt thank you from Sr. Carol Mayes.
GUATEMALA LUNCHEON

In April we hosted a luncheon to raise awareness of and support for our Guatemala mission school, San Vicente de Paul Bethania, in Guatemala City. Several of our friends and supporters invited guests to learn about our mission school, and Houston Dominican Sr. Miriam Oliveros, Head of School, came from Guatemala to share the wonderful successes of the children at the school despite their many hardships.
CATHERINE OF SIENA

As part of our 800 Jubilee celebration, Sr. Nancy Murray, an Adrian Dominican, came to our Spirituality Center and performed her one-woman show on the life of Catherine of Siena. Dominican Family member Blanca Perez enjoyed the Friday night and Saturday performances and noted that Sr. Nancy “steps immediately into portraying St. Catherine of Siena. She uses very few props, but makes you believe in who she is. She brings much energy and passion in interpreting the role.”

The performance tells the story of and gives insight into Catherine’s life. She was the twenty-fourth of twenty-five children and born a twin. Because she was very pretty, her parents arranged for her to marry a rich man at age eleven to benefit their family. Catherine refused and rebelled by cutting off most of her hair to make herself unattractive. She finally convinced her parents to let her remain single, but not without struggles. At sixteen, Catherine became a lay member of the Dominican order and devoted herself to charitable work for the poor and sick. Eventually she became more influential and made powerful friends. She is known for traveling with her followers to France and convincing Pope Gregory XI to move back to Rome to help his people with the on-going wars. However, Catherine’s own life was threatened in the process. She died very young at the age of thirty-three. Her body lies in a basilica in Rome; however, her head is venerated in San Domenico Church in Siena. Sr. Nancy’s performance was very well received. Her message for the audience echoed that of Catherine of Siena: “Be who God meant you to be and you will set the world on fire.”

Sr. Nancy is the oldest of nine children and grew up near Chicago in Wilmette, Illinois. She joined the Adrian Dominican Sisters shortly after high school and holds degrees in teaching, theater, and pastoral studies. A sister friend, who had been portraying strong religious women, died, and Nancy fulfilled her last wish by taking over the role of St. Catherine. Several of Nancy’s siblings, including Bill Murray and Brian Doyle Murray, are actors as well.
CHAPTER ARTICLE

In January we met for our Chapter of Affairs and Elections. At our meeting, we focused on answering the question, “What is being asked of the Dominican Sisters of Houston as they live into the future?” After much discussion and input, we concluded: we will find ways to pass on the Dominican charism and to provide awareness and education on climate change and related justice issues; we will witness to the Gospel by advocating for the voiceless; we will continue to support Dominican ministries with personnel, finances, and other resources; we will support our sisters wherever they are engaged in ministry; and we will continue to share our space as a place of welcome, hospitality, and prayer.

Members of our Dominican Family joined us to discuss how to focus our time and energies for the next six years. In our discussions, we also considered Pope Francis’ call to listen to the cry of the poor and the cry of Earth. Pope Francis calls for an integral ecology that requires comprehensive solutions to both environmental and human crisis, which are interconnected.

We then adopted the following focus statement:

[W]e, the Dominican Sisters of Houston, commit ourselves to focus our efforts, energy, and resources for the next six years on Integral Ecology. This is the lens through which we will assess our decision-making and our actions as individuals, as a congregation, and in partnership with others.

We also elected our new leadership team for the next six years beginning June 2016: Donna Pollard, OP will serve as our Prioress, Mary Jean Olsovsky, OP as Vicaress, and Antoinette (Kitty) Carter, OP as Councilor.

DOMINICAN FAMILY

On Sunday, April 24th, nine men and women made their first Commitment as Dominicans (pictured lower left). Each new member placed cards before the altar describing how they intend to live out their commitment. We are indeed blessed to have so many Dominican Family members choosing to “walk side by side” with us in the Dominican Charism. Our Dominican Family continues to grow with over 140 members including a thriving leadership team (pictured upper left).
ISLAMOPHOBIA

In February we hosted a presentation on “Islamophobia” sponsored by Pax Christi Houston, Center for the Healing of Racism, Houston Peace and Justice Center, and the Dominican Sisters.

Mustafaa Carroll, Executive Director of CAIR Texas (Council for American –Islamic Relations), began his presentation by explaining the basic tenets of Islam. Islam, from an Arabic root word meaning peace, is one of the three Abrahamic Faiths along with Judaism and Christianity. “Islam” literally means submission, obedience, and peace through surrender to the will of God. According to Islam, the purpose of human beings is to serve God by doing good deeds and by protecting the weak, the oppressed, and the environment.

Carroll then asked the audience, “What do people say about Muslims?” Responses characterized Muslims as terrorists, extremists, violent, and oppressive to women. These responses set the stage for the rest of the presentation.

Islamophobia is defined as a social anxiety, a hatred for, and prejudice towards Islam and Muslims.

People most often fear what they do not know.

As a result of many misconceptions, American Muslims face many of the challenges that other ethnic groups or peoples of other cultures face. They also face the “hate” factor that is fanned in the media and by extremist groups because of the actions of a few, such as ISIS. Carroll told us that we cannot deny that ISIS is a terrorist group. However, ISIS does not represent Islam or the vast majority of Muslims. CAIR’s vision looks toward the time when being Muslim carries a positive connotation and Islam has an equal place among many faiths in America’s pluralistic society.

Following the presentation, Dave Atwood from Pax Christi Houston moderated a panel with Rabbi Steven Morgan, Deacon Sam Dunning, and Reverend Ron Lister who offered responses from the Jewish, Catholic, and Christian faiths.

A discussion followed with questions and comments from the audience. A Latino father shared that he and his family live in a diverse neighborhood and have friends who are African American, Muslim, Asian, and Latino. All get along well, especially the children, who do not seem to harbor any of the Islamophobic prejudices and fears. The discussion ended on a hopeful note with several people recognizing that we need to talk with and learn from young people who seem to be more accepting of differences.

CAIR focuses on civil rights advocacy, education and outreach, media relations, and political empowerment.
WORKERS MEMORIAL VIGIL

April 28 is designated as a day to remember the thousands of workers who die on the job every year in traumatic workplace accidents, almost all of which are preventable. Houston Dominicans attended a vigil entitled “Mourn the Dead and Fight for the Living” in Houston. We heard stories of some of the 61 people in Harris County who died as a result of workplace injuries in 2015. Texas leads the country in the number of workplace deaths with 500 workers dying last year. During the vigil, we also heard stories of some who have been injured on the job, and because Texas is the only state that does not require employers to have workers compensation, these men and women are left to take care of their own expenses. The high numbers of injuries and deaths are caused by a lack of safety standards. Many workers are not given protective equipment or job training, and often they are required to work with or operate faulty equipment. Violations are not reported because workers fear losing their jobs, and undocumented workers fear deportation. In January the Texas legislature will once again be asked to pass laws that not only enhance safety requirements but also carry penalties for violations.

EARTH DAY

On Saturday, April 23rd, we celebrated our annual Earth Day evening prayer and labyrinth walk. The prayer service in the chapel ended with prayers expressing the gifts of the four elements (earth, air, fire, and water). Those present at the prayer service then processed outside with the elements to walk the labyrinth in prayer.
Sr. Paschal Hoelscher, OP
JUNE 4, 1921 - JANUARY 20, 2016
Sr. Paschal was born in Westphalia, Texas, where she and her seven siblings attended St. Mary’s Catholic School. The sisters at St. Mary’s were very influential in her young life, and Sr. Paschal knew from a young age she wanted to enter the convent. Four years after graduation from Rosebud High School, she joined the Dominican Sisters of Houston in 1942. She earned a BA in English at Dominican College and continued her education through workshops and courses in Theology and Education. Sr. Paschal joyously taught school for 58 years and loved teaching little children, particularly the first grade. Her contagious smile evidenced her love for her students and for everyone. She taught in Texas in Houston, Beaumont, Nacogdoches, Lufkin, Nederland, Rosenberg, and Taylor; in Riverside, California; and in Sulphur, Louisiana. Sr. Paschal served 36 years of her long career in Taylor, Texas, at St. Mary’s Catholic School. She retired from teaching in 2002 but continued to be active in schools and to tutor children. In 2006 she retired to St. Dominic Villa. Sr. Paschal was always close to her extended family and attended every family reunion possible. Sr. Paschal once said, “Being a Dominican Sister all these years has been very, very wonderful. It is a wonderful feeling knowing that I have had my dreams fulfilled.”

Sr. Clarice Sparkman, OP
OCTOBER 5, 1917 - JANUARY 10, 2016
Sr. Clarice was born in San Augustine, Florida, but her family moved to Houston when she was in elementary school. Following her graduation from Reagan High School, she entered the Dominican Sisters of Houston on June 15, 1934. She received a BA in mathematics from Mount St. Mary in Los Angeles, an MA from the University of Texas, and a PhD from the University of Texas. Her teaching career covered a wide spectrum, from first grade to university, the latter extending over 39 years at Dominican College (Houston), University of San Francisco, University of Santa Clara, and San Jose City College. From 2005—2009 she served as a consultant at San Jose City College and was very active in the California Mathematics Council. Sr. Clarice helped found the American Mathematical Association of Two Year Colleges and served as its second president. Throughout her career, she developed innovative instruction techniques and desired to help students, evidenced by her own words, “I wanted to work with students, not sit in a corner somewhere and write.” In addition to her love of teaching, Sr. Clarice loved to travel and visited numerous national parks and historical sites especially in California. Sr. Clarice retired in Houston at St. Dominic Villa in 2010. After retirement, she found a host of friends at St. Jerome parish and often expressed her heartfelt gratitude to all in the parish.
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 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 Dominican for life. A gift for eternity.

Save the Date

JUNE 26TH - JULY 2ND
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 30TH
Labyrinth of Remembrance & Thanksgiving, an 800 Year Jubilee event; 5:30 pm in St. Dominic Villa Chapel, 6504 Almeda Rd.