Dear Friends,

This year is a busy one for our community. In June we opened Chapter, during which we convene throughout the year to discern the affairs and direction of our community and to elect the leadership who will then carry out the decisions made for the next six years. June 2016 will mark the end of our current leadership’s term and the beginning of the next chapter for our community. Although there will be changes within our community, we remain true to our mission and ministries as we have for over 130 years.

In 2016 we will also celebrate 800 years of Dominican preaching. St. Dominic de Guzman founded the Order of Preachers in 1216 to proclaim the Gospel in every corner of the earth. We celebrate and remember all the great Dominicans of the past such as Thomas Aquinas, Catherine of Sienna, and Martin de Porres, and we continue to be inspired by them all.

And we continue to be inspired by you, our dear friends. This issue of the Good News includes our Annual Report of Gifts, which fills me with abundant gratitude. The sisters and I cannot thank you enough for your generosity. Thank you for supporting our mission and for remembering our retired sisters. Thank you for your friendship and for the many ways you have touched our lives. Please celebrate Mass with us in our chapel any Saturday evening at 4:00 pm. We would love to reconnect with you. May God continue to bless you, heal you, and fill you with light.

Blessings to you and your family,

Carol Mayes, OP
Prioress

We gratefully acknowledge all those who contributed to this issue:

Sr. Heloise Cruzat, OP
Anne Doyle, Dominican Family
Sr. Mary Magdalen Hanel, OP
Sr. Wanda Jinks, OP
Sr. Carol Mayes, OP
Sr. Miriam Oliveros, OP
Paula Porter
Sr. Celie Roeger, OP
Kevin Smith, Dominican Family

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CLIMATE CHANGE

During the first week of October, several of our sisters attended meetings near Chicago hosted by the Dominican Sisters Conference (DSC), an organization representing 4,000 women religious serving in the US and beyond. Over 400 Dominican Sisters from around the United States gathered to discuss global warming and each community’s response. DSC members have prepared many months for the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Convention on Climate Change that will convene in Paris in December. DSC members will be attending the Conference in Paris, have endorsed a Climate Investment Proposal to promote investment in climate solutions, and have written letters to Congressional leadership and President Obama asking for a binding agreement at the Convention that commits the world to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

JOURNEY OF HOPE

Journey of Hope...from Violence to Healing is an organization created by families of murder victims. The organization conducts public education speaking tours and addresses alternatives to the death penalty. This past October the Dominican Sisters of Houston hosted members of Journey of Hope who were in town to give several presentations throughout the Houston area. Members stayed at our Meeting Room facilities, and we hosted a luncheon with clergy to discuss death penalty issues at which Archbishop Emeritus Joseph Fiorenza and members of Journey of Hope spoke.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The Dominican Family created its Human Trafficking Study Action Committee (HT SAC) to help fight the social injustice of human trafficking in Houston. Kevin Smith, the committee’s chair, explained that during the committee’s first year, members studied the issue of human trafficking and learned the scope of the problem globally and here in Houston. “For much of the same reasons that Houston is a vibrant center for business, commerce, and international trade, it has also become a hub for human trafficking in the US. Proximity to a major port, rail, and interstate highways make Houston an ideal distribution point for trafficked persons, especially for victims from south of the border. Unfortunately, Houston’s population and economic prosperity have also created a demand for trafficked persons, both for the sex industry and for forced labor.”

The committee also spent time learning about the organizations in Houston dedicated to stopping human trafficking or helping restore the lives of victims rescued from it. These organizations then spoke to the entire Dominican Family to increase awareness. In January the committee will show a film about how small efforts can make a huge difference and the importance of seeking Fair Trade goods. The committee will also host an educational bus tour of locations in Houston where trafficking is prevalent.

The HT SAC has identified that there is a critical need among the anti-trafficking agencies for housing for the rescued victims and has begun work on a project that could start to fill this need. Kevin wrote, “It’s very ambitious, but all good works start with small steps...much prayer will be required to determine if/how we could start to fill this gap.”

Kevin noted that the side benefit of the committee’s activities has been the building of community. “Despite the topic, we have had a good time studying, praying and working together. If you are interested in working with us, please ask anyone on the Human Trafficking Study Action Committee and we’ll get you involved!”
San Vicente de Paul Bethania, our Guatemala mission school, recently completed its 2015 school year, and Sr. Miriam Oliveros, OP, our head of school, reports that her students and teachers accomplished all their goals set for the year. In August, forty third graders made their first communion, and last month the entire sixth grade class of 59 students graduated. Our children continue to succeed despite living in the Bethania neighborhood, which is plagued with drugs, violence, and poverty and where on average only 30% of students graduate from public school. To ensure children at our school continue to receive a good Catholic education, we hosted a fundraising luncheon this fall to share with others the amazing work being accomplished at San Vicente each day. A critical need among the anti-trafficking agencies for housing for the rescued victims and has begun work on a project that could start to fill this need. Kevin wrote, “It’s very ambitious, but all good works start with small steps… much prayer will be required to determine if/how we could start to fill this gap.”

2015 JUBILARIANS

In August, the Dominican Sisters of Houston celebrated the 60th Jubilee of Sr. Eleanor Cresap, OP, Sr. Mary Ann Giardina, OP, and Sr. Sheila Hackett, OP and the 25th Jubilee of Sr. Ceil Roeger, OP. Bishop Brendan Cahill, Diocese of Victoria, Texas, presided at the Eucharistic Liturgy held in the Dominican Sisters Meeting Room. In September, we celebrated the 75th Jubilee of Sr. Benignus Galiano, OP and Sr. Raphael Bordages, OP, and Archbishop Emeritus Joseph Fiorenza presided over the Eucharistic Liturgy in our chapel at St. Dominic Villa.

Sister Raphael Bordages, OP (Diamond Jubilarian of 75 years) is from Beaumont, Texas. She graduated from St. Anthony High School in Beaumont and received her BA degree from Dominican College, Houston. Sr. Raphael spent over fifty years in elementary education, serving Catholic schools in the Dioceses of Beaumont and Galveston-Houston, in Austin, Orange, Lufkin, and Nacogdoches, Texas, and in Riverside, California. Sr. Raphael was principal at Sacred Heart School and St. Mary of the Purification in Houston. After retiring from teaching, Sister Raphael served as a sacristan at our chapel in St. Dominic Villa and as a Villa receptionist. She also tutored English at St. Austin’s Center. Sr. Raphael currently resides at St. Dominic Villa.

Sister Benignus Galiano, OP (Diamond Jubilarian of 75 years) is also from Beaumont, Texas. She graduated from St. Anthony High School in Beaumont, received her BA degree from Dominican College in Houston, and received her MA in speech and drama from Texas.
Woman's University in Denton, Texas. Sr. Benignus spent over fifty years in active ministry, serving at elementary, junior high, and high school levels in Texas and California for thirty-two years, in religious and adult education for fourteen years, and in social justice outreach in the Guadalupe area for seven years. After retiring, Sr. Benignus served on the sacristan team at our chapel in St. Dominic Villa and as a Villa receptionist. Sr. Benignus currently resides at St. Dominic Villa.

**Sister Eleanor Cresap, OP**
(Diamond Jubilarian of 60 years)
is from Christ the King Parish in Houston, and is a graduate of St. Agnes Academy. Sr. Eleanor began her teaching ministry in 1957, serving in Texas schools in Houston, Galveston, and Port Neches and also serving in Whittier, California. Sr. Eleanor returned to her childhood parish and served as principal of Christ the King School in Houston. After retiring from teaching, Sr. Eleanor was on the staff of the Jesuit Volunteer Corps. She is actively interested in social justice issues and is currently the Administrator of our retirement home, St. Dominic Villa. several community service projects.

**Sister Mary Ann Giardina, OP**
(Diamond Jubilarian of 60 years)
is from St. Joseph Parish and a graduate of St. Anthony High School in Beaumont. She began her teaching ministry in Galveston at Sacred Heart School in 1957. Sr. Mary Ann continued her ministry in education at St. Pius X in Houston, Central Catholic High School in Galveston, St. Agnes Academy, Dominican College in Houston, and Notre Dame School in Kerrville. After teaching, she served the Dominican Sisters as a council member and as treasurer. Her ministry also included administrative assistant at St. Agnes Academy and administrator of the Raphael Community Free Clinic in Kerrville. Sr. Mary Ann currently resides at St. Dominic Villa where she volunteers as a receptionist.

**Sr. Sheila Hackett, OP**
(Diamond Jubilarian of 60 years) was born in Ireland into the Parish of Ardfinnan and graduated from Convent of Mercy High School in Erie, Ireland. In 1957 Sr. Sheila began her teaching ministry as an elementary school teacher at St. Anthony in Beaumont, Sacred Heart in Galveston, St. Elizabeth in Port Neches, and St. Mary in Whittier, California where she also served as Principal. Sr. Sheila also served as Principal at St. Francis de Sales High School in Riverside, California. She taught English at Notre Dame High School in Riverside, California, St. Pius X High School in Houston, Paraclete High School in Lancaster, California, and Marian Christian High School in Houston. Sr. Sheila served as historian of the Dominican Sisters of Houston and as head librarian at Reicher High School in Waco. She is currently the librarian at both Scecina Memorial and Bishop Chatard High School in Indianapolis.

**Sr. Cecile Roeger, OP**
(Silver Jubilarian of 25 years) is from Fort Wayne, Indiana and grew up in Most Precious Parish there. Sr. Ceil graduated from Central Catholic High School in Fort Wayne. As a registered nurse, Sr. Ceil began her career in nursing prior to entering the Dominican Sisters of Houston. After becoming a Dominican Sister, she chose nursing as her ministry and served as a nurse in San Antonio, at Memorial Southwest in Houston, and at Bethany Hospital in Chicago. Sr. Ceil also served as Administrator of St. Dominic Villa, our retirement home. She is currently the Promoter of Justice, Peace and Care of Creation for our community and collaborates with several social justice organizations in the Houston area. Sr. Ceil also serves as Communications Director for the Dominican Sisters of Houston.

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**SUMMER CONFERENCE**

This past summer, several of our sisters gathered with members of other Dominican orders and attended a conference hosted by the Dominican Sisters of Blauvelt, New York. Attendees were asked to examine and envision an enduring future in which the Dominican mission is carried out in new and creative ways and with new relationships in response to the needs of the times and the reality of today’s congregations. Attendees also looked at how Dominican congregations could partner together to move towards the future.
FALL SPEAKER

This fall Dr. Stephen Klineberg spoke on a number of topics affecting Houston today. He described the evolving demographics of Houston and explained that no city more clearly exemplifies the changes that are refashioning the social and political landscape across all of urban America. Dr. Klineberg discussed the challenges of continually creating a livable Houston. He first noted that transportation remains an area in which Houston needs to find better solutions. He then expressed that early childhood education must be a priority. Dr. Klineberg stated that if third graders are not reading at a third grade level then their chances of graduating from high school greatly diminishes. Whether a child will be reading at the appropriate level in third grade is determined by whether he or she attended preschool.

Dr. Klineberg is a professor in Rice University's Sociology Department, has received a dozen major teaching awards, and is the founding director of the Kinder Institute for Urban Research, which tracks the changes in the demographic patterns, economic outlooks, experiences, and beliefs of Harris County residents.

POVERTY IN HOUSTON

In October the Dominican Family Poverty Committee invited two guest speakers to address two different aspects of poverty in Houston. City Councilor Jerry Davis, who represents District B, one of the poorest districts in Houston, spoke about the realities of poverty, and the sense of isolation and disenfranchisement experienced by many poor people. Mr. Davis emphasized the need to address the roots of poverty by providing excellent educational and mentoring opportunity for children, starting with universal pre-k programs. He also addressed negative stereotypes about poor people, emphasizing the people he represents are hard-working and family-oriented and have a genuine desire to provide a better future for their children. Then Dr. David Buck, Director of Health Care for the Homeless, Houston, and a Dominican Family member, spoke about the health care needs of Houston’s homeless, and the importance of recognizing the dignity of each individual. He also addressed the efforts to consolidate health services for the homeless and the poor in order to provide more effective care and to reduce costs.

FOUNDERS’ DAY

Each year we celebrate our Founders’ Day on September 29th, the date in 1882 when twenty Dominican Sisters from Columbus, Ohio arrived on Galveston Island, founded the order, and immediately opened Sacred Heart Academy. And the rest, as they say, is history. This year we celebrated with an evening prayer service in the chapel at the Villa followed by a lovely dinner. Pictured is Mother Mary Agnes Magevney, cofounder of our Dominican order and our first prioress.
We are truly blessed to have such generous and loyal support from so many donors. Thank you for valuing the mission and ministry of the Dominican Sisters of Houston and for allowing us to carry out successfully our work for the people of God. Your gifts to our Partners in Mission Annual Fund are inspiring and support all of our sisters’ work. Your loyal support of San Vicente de Paul School in Guatemala helps to better the lives of so many children. And finally, your generosity towards our retired sisters is deeply appreciated. Thank you for honoring them for their many, many years of service. May God bless you, heal you, and fill you with light.

Thank you!

ANNUAL FUND DONORS

Dominican Society
We are deeply grateful to these individuals who gave leadership gifts of $500 or more to our Partners in Mission Annual Fund during the August 1, 2014 to July 31, 2015 fiscal year. We are blessed to have their faithful commitment to our mission.

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Mission Statement

The mission of the Dominican Sisters of Houston is to study and address the crucial justice issues of our time; to preach and teach the Gospel without regard to risk; and to help transform social structures that oppress the powerless.
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2014-2015 Gift Report

(Gifts received from August 1, 2014 – July 31, 2015)

Total Giving: $1,271,000

Partners in Mission Annual Fund: $530,800

Major Gifts: $401,800

Guatemala: $132,100

Grants: $99,000

Retirement Fund: $85,500

Bequests: $19,200

Other: $2,600
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Sr. Doloretta Bieter, OP+

MAR 23, 1930 - SEPT 15, 2015
Sr. Doloretta was born in Austin, Texas. She attended St. Mary’s Catholic School in Austin and attended the University of Texas where she graduated with a BA in Music and English. After graduation, Sr. Doloretta joined the Dominican Sisters of Houston in 1952. She was inspired to enter the convent by the many Dominican Sisters who had taught her and by her aunt, Sr. Mary Paul Byrne, OP. Sr. Doloretta received a MA in music education in 1958. She taught for over 30 years, teaching at St. Agnes Academy, St. Pius X High School (member of the founding faculty), St. Mary, Sacred Heart Catholic School in Austin, O’Connell High School in Galveston, and St. Francis de Sales Catholic School in California. She loved teaching, especially eleventh grade English and music. In 1990 Sr. Doloretta moved back to Houston and spent the next 20 years ministering to the sick in St. Francis de Sales Parish. Sr. Doloretta felt a real connection to those she served and after retiring remained very connected to the St. Francis de Sales community.
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.

Visit our gift shop inside St. Dominic Villa for a variety of handmade items such as baby accessories, seasonal crafts, needlework, and gifts for any occasion.

Monday – Friday from 9:30 am – 3 pm and Saturdays following 4 pm Mass. Please call ahead (713.440.3720) and we will meet you at the shop!