Dear Friends and Family,

In this Spring 2009 Mission & Ministry issue of the Good News we take the opportunity to highlight the Dominican Sisters of Houston in some of our important and varied ministries. Consistent with our Dominican mission of preaching and teaching Gospel values, our congregation is committed to working to transform those social structures that oppress the powerless.

Engaged in the work of...

TEACHING young people and families in primary, elementary, secondary, Montessori and special education; and

MINISTERING to those in nursing homes, to the sick in hospitals - Ben Taub in Houston and St. Elizabeth’s in Beaumont;

to families with no access to health care - by founding a clinic in Kerrville, Texas to deliver health care to families who, without the Raphael Community Free Clinic, would have none;

to women with children and those without children, assisting them to get their lives together - Santa Maria Hostel and Wellsprings village;

to communities needing healthcare in Kenya, a school in Guatemala, a neighborhood improvement project in Mexico;

to and with collaborators seeking to promote Peace, Justice and Care of Creation;

to communities in need of organizing and to parishes;

to those seeking a peaceful spirit through the meditative movement T’ai Chi Chih and through Days of Prayer;

to children and families without access to sufficient food, creating and maintaining a Community Garden and sharing the harvest with those in need;

...our sisters share energy, talent, hope and dedication. All of these ministries are supported by the Villa Sisters, those who are retired and live at St. Dominic Villa. They pray daily for all of us and for all of those with whom and to whom we minister.

We invite you to enjoy this issue - the sisters’ stories included are not exhaustive - we will continue to add to them. As Partners in Mission with the Dominican Sisters of Houston you participate in each and in all of them.

Bless you and thank you!

Adrian Dover, O.P.
Acting Prioress
Knowing the Joy of Teaching
St. Joseph Catholic School

Lucy Sala, O.P.
Houston, TX

I am proud to be a member of the Dominican Sisters of Houston, TX whose mission is to preach and teach. For forty-seven years I have taught children from the ages of three years to ten years old. My classroom is a community of little learners. Not only do we learn to read, write and count, but we learn to treat one another with respect and kindness for we know that we are all in God’s family. Laughter, happiness and excitement burst forth from these young children. They thrill to see the beauty and changes in nature — red, yellow, orange leaves, a sweet smelling flower, squirrels leaping from limb to limb, clear blue skies, dark stormy rain clouds, rumbling trash trucks emptying the bins, Ms. Volker walking her dogs, the anticipation of what will happen next while listening to a story — all reasons to love life and expect God’s goodness.

Our school community includes teachers, staff members, parents and grandparents. Each of these is always willing to volunteer and help with anything we ask of them. The joys, hardships or problems of our children and their families are our deep concern and reason for prayer. My ministry at St. Joseph Catholic School is living, loving and giving of myself in more ways than just “teaching”. We are truly a Christian community of children, parents, staff and teachers. I think Dominic would approve...even if I never “preach from the pulpit.”

In the Heart of the School is the Library
Blanche Gothia, O.P.
Houston, TX

I have been carrying out my ministry in library work for 40 years, beginning as an elementary teacher and later becoming the principal of St. Anthony Cathedral School in Beaumont. In 1968, I taught English and was media coordinator at the library of St. Agnes Academy. In 1998 I was called to become a librarian at Mount Carmel High School, where I remained until 2001. Immediately thereafter I went to work in the Library of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament Motherhouse, where my ministry continues today.

I truly believe that awareness and understanding effects positive change in the individual and in society through education. Nurturing positive change in my students has been the cornerstone of my career. Being a religious first, I’m convinced the Lord has had a hand in the last 40 years of preaching and teaching. I believe the library, or learning center, is the “heart” of any educational institution. However, learning goes far beyond the words in textbooks. The full and well-rounded education of the student comes from the experience of deep spirituality and the example of preaching the word of God that is an integral part of the student-teacher bond.

Special Educator
Port Neches - Groves H.S.

Katie Gaspard, O.P.
Port Neches, TX

Working with the Special Needs students is a fulfilling ministry. My students in 9th - 12th grades have many types of special needs for a variety of conditions: Attention Deficit Disorder, Hyperactivity, Multiple Personalities, Schizophrenia Tendency, Autism (Aspergers), Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Anger Management Disorder and those who are emotionally disturbed.

Still, they learn English, math, science, social studies, social skills, study skills and health.

My ministry is changing behavior and affirming the self-worth of all my students. Most of my students have very little self-esteem and feel if no one cares about them. They lack confidence in themselves and are ready to give up. I provide a positive atmosphere and work with the gifts that they have. They learn ways to handle frustration and anger without using violence. Each improvement is acknowledged and celebrated. They are encouraged not to give up and to keep trying.

It is my job to help prepare the students to function in society. I teach the students that it is okay to get angry but it is not okay to take your anger out on someone else. It’s how we deal with anger that makes us the person that we are. Each time I give a lesson it is preaching because I use that moment as a learning moment in how to handle situations in a positive way and how to accept correction without taking it as a personal attack...I see myself as having influenced in a positive manner the people that I work with in my department. The administration sees me as a reliable teacher who has accomplished a great deal in the special education department. I am called upon to assist others in the department with various concerns/needs.
The mission of Santa Maria Hostel is to empower women and their children to become alcohol-and-drug-free.

Santa Maria is one of the largest facilities in Texas to offer women trauma-informed, residential and outpatient treatment and aftercare services which are essential to long-term recovery from substance abuse. Treatment for our women can last anywhere from 30 to 90 days in the residential facility, followed by outpatient services, and/or transitional living.

What attracted me to the Houston Dominicans was their emphasis on women and children’s issues. Hence, in my ministry, working for an organization that serves women and children, I am living out the mission and vision of our community. Many of the women who come to Santa Maria have few resources whether financial, medical, work opportunities, or housing. Many of our women also suffer from psychiatric disorders.

As a volunteer coordinator, my main responsibility is to attract volunteers that can help our women and children. Even though I do not work directly with the women, I am at the facility every day and can see the changes in appearance and behavior as the women stay with us for treatment.

Apart from the administrative aspects of my ministry, I also fulfill a representative function; I am called on for speaking engagements and attend many fairs promoting our organization around the city. I also help organize many of the special events, such as our annual Gala.

Sometimes I have an opportunity to sit with my volunteers in the Cuddles Program rocking and holding babies, or to attend a spirituality class modeled on the Lectio Divina.

The fun part of my ministry is that it provides me with many opportunities to use my creative spirit. Whether it is coming up with Halloweens’ “Create a Witch” project or decorating our courtyard with Christmas decorations for Christmas parties, volunteers and residents alike are all engaged and have a great time!
Missionary Preaching in Mexico
Therese Warden, O.P.

My full name is Sister Mary Therese Warden, O.P. I was taught by Dominicans at All Saints School and at Saint Agnes Academy. I was the valedictorian of the class of 1951.

Upon graduating from St. Agnes Academy, I knew I wanted to be a Dominican Sister who taught others as I had been taught. With no opposition from my parents, I entered the Houston Dominicans on September 24, 1951.

I began teaching at the age of twenty in September of 1953 and have continued until this time. It took some time to get college degrees — taking classes during the school year and the summer. My first major, a B.A. was in English with a minor in Spanish. My mathematics degree is a M.A. and my theology degree is a M.A.P.S.

I have taught grade school and high school and have been an elementary school principal. In high school I have taught Spanish, religion and mathematics.

Now, I am the Promoter of Preaching for our community and continue as an active preacher. I have also been privileged to take many missionary trips to Guatemala and various other places in Mexico. During these trips I have done manual work — mixing cement and building chapels. I also taught religion and “played with the kids.”

But my main mission has been to preach with my actions as did St. Dominic. I am grateful for all the opportunities I have had to preach and teach and I look forward to more missionary trips.

A Community Builds a Water Tower in Kenya
Mary Brenda, O.P.

The raising of the Bordages Tower Water Tank in Kenya has been completed by Mary Brenda, O.P. and a volunteer brigade! In December 2008, the fifteen foot steel structure was raised from the ground to its standing position to supply water to the Clinic. Mary brings the report of the exciting project:

Monday, December 8...
Eighteen men carried it from the welding site to its tower location, then used ropes to pull it into the post holes, where they first leveled it, then cemented it into its permanent post where it stands watch over the outreach vegetable garden. After that the structure was painted and a protective fence put around the bottom. Afterwards, everyone enjoyed a Feast Day Lunch cooked by me on the outside grill.

Tuesday, Dec 9...
The first thing in the morning the men secured the flooring to the top of the tower, then welded on an anchoring frame to keep the boards from bending after weathering in the sun. Then came the big feat of raising the tank.

Fourteen people participated in the moving and then elevation of the 10,000 liter tank to the top of the 15 foot tower. This procedure took over 3 hours to accomplish. Lifting it was a bit tricky because the platform on the top of the tower didn’t have much room for the men to step backwards as they pulled the ropes upward. Most of the work had to come from the 10 of us on the ground to hoist it up, first with our arms, then by using long support poles, planks, extension ladders, and anything else tall that we could find to lift it higher and higher, inch by inch to the next level. At one point we were even using an auto car jack to get it raised the next few feet.

This was quite an exhausting ordeal. At one point the lid fell into the tank so we had to send our little receptionist Linda into the top hole to retrieve it and then pull her out again. She proved well that she might be small but no doubt mighty! At the end of the day I was counting my blessings that no one was hurt or fell off the tower. Fourteen of us did what a hydraulic crane should have done. Perhaps an addition to the “Seven Wonders” of the world!!!

The Bordages Tower Water Tank is officially raised.

From top: A mission in Mexico where Therese Warden ministers to an elderly woman, Mary Brenda with the Bordages Water Tower, a volunteer named Linda, and a group of happy workers that just raised the water tower.
Galveston Reads
CHRISTUS Literacy Center
Barbara Ann Collins, O.P. and Julian Giglio, O.P.

The Galveston community is in need of help, as Sisters from the Houston Dominican Congregation of the Sacred Heart, provide a critically-needed service for basic literacy classes. We believe that the ability to read and write, to understand and be understood, is critical to personal freedom. We recognize literacy as an integral element in the broader goals of economic opportunity and security, social justice and dignity.

The CHRISTUS Literacy Center changes lives by focusing on life skills. Here adult students have an opportunity to acquire skills that enable them to be effective in their roles as members of their family – to help their children in school and by staying safe; to be active in their community – by voting or volunteering; and in their workplace – by advancing their position in life.

The request for a literacy program came out of an increased demand and long waiting list at the local community college. Literacy classes are especially needed in Galveston’s East End neighborhood. Too many adults here struggle with illiteracy. This cycle prevents adults from completing job applications, using a checkbook, and having an understanding of what their children are learning in school and to be able to read with their children.

The Literacy Center offers a professionally designed and tested curriculum that enables the staff and volunteers to teach and tutor the basic literacy student. We complete an assessment to determine the individual needs of the clients after which they are matched with a staff member or tutor.

We spent six months studying the literacy need in Galveston and have been in actual operation for eight years. We offer classes four days a week. Currently we have enrolled 37 students who are in various levels of study. We are proud to say that our students are from multi-ethnic backgrounds and this difference places everyone on the most basic level and allows everyone to help each other through the program. Some of our students have gone on to the local community college and enrolled in the GED preparation classes.

Teaching on the Island
Galveston Catholic School
Barbara Ann Cernosek, O.P.

I am “BOI” – born on the island, Galveston of course! My educational background was formed at St. Mary Cathedral School, Dominican High school, and I graduated with a degree in education from Sacred Heart College. I have taught in the primary, elementary and high school levels in California, the Sabine area, Houston and Galveston.

I continue to attend workshops and seminars to keep updated, at institutions such as Mt. Saint Mary’s in California, Notre Dame University and SMU.

My life as a Dominican Sister has been a fulfilling one… I love to study, to pray, to sing, read, e-mail and keep in contact with former classmates and former students – I even enjoy small mail! The community recently gave me the gift of a sabbatical at the Siena Spirituality Center in Water Mill, New York. I still communicate with several of the sisters in our group.

Traveling to the lands of Dominic deepened my understanding and love for the Order of Preachers.

Where you can find us at work - Dominican Sisters of Houston - Ministries

All Saints Church, Houston TX
Archdiocesan of Galveston-Houston, Houston TX
Ben Taub Hospital, Houston TX
Camp Kapture School of Environmental Education, Plantersville TX
Christina St. Elizabeth’s Hospital, Beaumont TX
Christian Literacy Center, Galveston TX
Christina Southeast, Houston TX
DeBakey VAMC Medical Center, Houston TX
Diocese of Brownsville Catholic School Office, Brownsville TX on San Juan Mexico
Dominican Sisters Motherhouse, Houston TX
Dominican Sisters Office of Justice, Peace and Care of Creation, Houston TX
Dominican Spirituality Center, Houston TX
Emmanuel House, Ocean Grove NJ
Galveston Catholic School, Galveston TX
Greater Harris County 911 Emergency Network, Houston TX
Houman/St. Christopher Church, Pasadena, TX
Inmate Word Count Library, Houston TX
Interfaith Education Fund, Austin TX
Jesuit Volunteer Corps, South Houston TX
Kelly High School, Beaumont TX
Loya University, New Orleans LA
Magnificent House, Inc., Houston TX
Our Lady of Fatima School, Texarkana TX
Port Neches Groves High School, Port Neches TX
Ralph Community Clinic, Kerrville TX
Rice University, Houston TX
Sacred Heart School, Rockport TX
S-4IVE: Program, Catholic Charities, Houston TX
San Juan City College, San Juan, CA
San Vincenzo di Paul School, Guatemala City, Guatemala
Santa Maria Hostel, Inc., Houston TX
Sorina Memorial High School, Indianapolis IN
St. Agnes Academy, Houston TX
St. Bakhita Mission, Nairobi, Kenya
St. Catharine Montessori School, Houston TX
St. Dominic’s Villa, Houston TX
St. Francis de Sales Church, Houston TX
St. Francis de Sales School, Riverdale CA
St. Francis of Assisi School, Houston TX
St. Genevieve Parish, Thibodaux LA
St. Helen Catholic School, Georgetown TX
St. Joseph Catholic School, Waco Texas TX
St. Joseph Church, Houston TX
St. Mary School, Orange TX
St. Mary School, Taylor TX
St. Mary’s Parish, Taylor TX
St. Paul X High School, Houston TX
St. Teresa Church, Carthage TX
Texas Medical Center, Houston TX
Widows’ House, Houston TX
What's in a Name?

**Raphael** – the angel of healing

**Community** – the Clinic’s focus is serving the local community of those who have no access to health care within a large radius of Kerrville, Texas. The Clinic receives no government assistance. It is a ministry of the community and serves the community;

**Free** – care is FREE. It costs nothing to bring a sick child or an ill older person to the Clinic. There is no payment up front – a client can make a donation and many do, or a client can come to the Clinic if he, she or a family has no money. All clients are treated with the same care, concern and attention; and to identify the future issues we

**Clinic** – a place of healing body and spirit.

The Raphael Community Free Clinic in Kerrville, Texas is a unique Dominican-Franciscan collaboration. It is produced and sustained by people in the heart of the Texas Hill Country who use the Clinic and by the broad spectrum of generous donors from the Hill Country and beyond who provide for it financially and with contributed services.

From day one of dreaming about this special place, everything was done right, step by step, meticulously guided by the founders, Dominican Sr. Mary Ann Giardina and Franciscan Sr. Marge Novak. Sr. Marge, a nurse practitioner, recognized the urgent need to provide health care for people of the area who could not afford it, and who had no access to care or insurance. Sr. Mary Ann, formerly the Treasurer for the Dominican Sisters of Houston, had a recognized ability for management, and was a friend and natural partner for this endeavor.

Every word in the clinic’s name - Raphael Community Free Clinic - is significant and deliberately intended to communicate its purpose to the people who use it and support it.

Prior to opening the Clinic, a needs assessment of demographics, income and specific needs was undertaken and revealed that in 1996 60% of the clinic’s potential clientele had incomes of $10,000 or less annually. All were uninsured.

The Raphael Community Free Clinic first opened one day a week from 5-10 pm in a space in Notre Dame Parish Hall. On the first night in driving rain and darkness, the sisters arrived to find a full to overflowing parking lot of cars and clients. Word had spread and the clinic averaged 50 people a night. Soon after, a more permanent 2200 sq.ft. facility was donated by a generous local shop owner/benefactor. By Spring of 1998 the clinic was open full time.

In 2001 a new 6000 sq.ft. building on 2.3 acres of land, was dedicated. The site and new building was fully paid for by donors before completion. And the entire project was brought in under budget. Principals are: Sister Marge Novak, O.S.F. (Clinic Director; Mary Ann Giardina, O.P., Clinic Administrator and CFO); full time bilingual medical assistant Sylvia Mendez; and volunteer coordinator (since 1996) George Hrdlicka.

Dr. Karl Hagenmeier is the Clinic Medical Director and Dr. Lisa Rouse follows up regularly with OB patients. Many other doctors in the community are available for consultation. Sid Peterson Memorial Hospital and the Hill Country Radiologists offer their services.

Other significant statistics are: 8,000 patient files, 125 patients seen weekly and over 525 prescriptions filled weekly. The real story here are the numbers of pre- and post-natal care for women and infants, the care for children, and the treatment with dignity of the overwhelmingly poor general population of the Hill Country of Texas who without the Raphael Community Free Clinic would have no health care, but with the clinic have access to excellent health care with dignity.

A Call to Justice

Promotion of Justice, Peace and Care of Creation

Ceil Roeger, O.P.

Houston, TX

It is said that as Dominicans we should preach with the Gospel in one hand and the newspaper in the other. My ministry is to provide the “newspaper.” My purpose then, is to study the issues and provide the resources and tools for advocacy at the local, state, national and international levels.

I do not do this alone. As members of the larger Dominican family, I represent the community when the Justice Promoters of North America meet. We meet every two to three years to assess current justice issues and to identify the future issues we will address. When we met in July of 2006, we adopted “A Call to Justice.” This document outlines the issues we identified at our meeting.

Recognizing that all that is comes from God, we adopted a framework of care of creation on which we build our ministry as justice promoters. The issues we identified fit into three categories—Care of Creation, Culture of Peace, and Global Partnerships. At the congregational level, I chair the meetings of the Justice, Peace, Care of Creation Commission. Members of the commission come together to discuss and to develop a focus around the various issues.

At the local level, this is done in collaboration with others in Houston, Harris Co. and Texas. To name a few, we stand with the members of the Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty in our prayer and our actions. In recent months, we have joined with members of the Houston Coalition for Immigration Reform. The Dominican Sisters were among the first to join with others to form coalitions to combat human trafficking in our city and Texas. Internationally we stand in solidarity with Dominicans throughout the world. An example of this is our solidarity with the Iraqi Dominican Sisters and people of Iraq. First opposing the devastating sanctions, we followed with protests against the war. We are now advocating on behalf of the 4 million plus Iraqis who have been displaced from their homes.

From top: Mary Ann Giardina O.P. and Marge Novak OSF with a volunteer at Raphael Clinic, Ceil Roeger with other collaborators for Peace & Justice.
As a parish minister at St. Genevieve Church, I am part of a vibrant community of men and women who actively participate in the work of the church. In all these aspects of my ministry, I am engaged in some form of proclaiming the Word of God in subtle ways.

It might happen while I am giving the 4th grade religious education class a tour of the church, explaining the signs and symbols of God's presence. It is part of our RCIA exploration of what it means to be an adult Catholic. It happens informally on Wednesdays after Mass when the community gathers for coffee and conversation. It takes place when I am sitting in a hospital room listening to the words of a terminally ill patient.

Opportunities for preaching and teaching often surface unexpectedly. In these and other moments I am often aware that I am the one being gifted with the faith of those around me. Together our parish community experiences the sacredness of our ordinary lives. Together we create an awareness of social and environmental injustices and concerns that impact the larger world. I am a partner in our Christian mission to preach the Good news, a ministry we are all called to by our baptism.

Tai Chi Chih is gentle movement that relaxes and energizes through a series of 20 moves that are easy to learn and enjoyable to practice. My ministry as a Tai Chi Instructor began in 1996 in Beaumont at the Holy Family Retreat Center. It was there I began including lines from Scripture that seemed to fit the movements of Tai Chi Chih. One could call this Moving Meditation. With our busy world, it is hard for some of us to sit still and be at prayer, but this gentle movement helps us to keep grounded and focused. It is in the silence and slow movements that we are able to focus and be attentive to God’s presence in our lives.

Dominic walked from town to town, speaking about God, or to God, in his ministry to preach the Good News. I hope that helping the participants to slow down and be present in the moment, will aid them in their own ministry to also preach the Good News in their respective vocations.

In my ministry of education, the motto, “Veritas!” guides me. St. Dominic’s mission was reaching the truth by reaching into the Scriptures. He wanted people to be informed, then to be formed by the message and transformed by living God’s word!

As a teacher, I am involved in the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, based on Montessori principles of education. This method introduces a child to the Scriptures and liturgy through the use of hands-on materials. This allows the child to come closer to God, to meditate, to fall in love with God. Isn’t this what our faith is all about? This Catechesis takes the basics of Catholicism and encourages a prayerful spirituality in a prepared environment called the atrium. What a joy this experience has brought to me personally! Another part-time ministry is my work in our Dominican Sisters’ Archives. In this place, I engage in the sacred duty of keeping records of our community history, as well as preserving significant artifacts and important documents pertaining to the sisters. The past certainly shows us our foundation of mission.

As a Dominican, I indeed know I belong to Dominic’s Order of Preachers, and like Catherine of Siena, we cherish our community and its place in the church. Most of my preaching is to young children, giving the hidden energy of the gospel. Conveying the unconditional love and mercy of God is a challenge at times, but the path is shown us and it is up to us to follow. The Good Shepherd is faithful!
Providing Nourishment

Dominican Sisters Community Garden
an Affiliate of Urban Harvest
Heloise Cruzat O.P. - Houston, TX

I serve as Vicar for Religious for the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, and I am a part-time teacher of English as a Second Language at the Family Road Literacy Center, in the Sharpstown neighborhood. Also, working weekly with volunteers in the Dominican Sisters’ Community Garden, I serve as their liaison with our Dominican congregation.

Nurturing the environment has been a consistent focus point of the Dominican Sisters since the early nineties. Our Community Garden was established in 1995 as a vehicle to promote organic agriculture and as a means to help nourish people in need.

Vegetables and produce, easily averaging 1000 pounds each year, are donated to local pantries. We have always had a faithful cadre of volunteer gardeners. We have been from the very beginning a small garden community of friends who share joys and sorrows, who celebrate together, and who work whole-heartedly for a common purpose.

Keeping Us Safe

The Greater Harris County 9-1-1 Emergency Network
Lavergne Schwender, O.P. - Houston, TX

As Executive Director of the Greater Harris County 9-1-1 Emergency Network, on July 1, I will be present when we receive the keys to the Network’s new building (where I will be able to look out my window and watch the horse track)! We will take possession of this wonderful new facility in October.

I am blessed to be part of a dedicated staff whose members provide emergency 9-1-1 service to more than 4.2 million people in Harris and Fort Bend Counties. Greater Harris County installs and maintains the infrastructure that allows the Network to provide the most efficient, technologically advanced system available to deliver 9-1-1 emergency calls to local public safety agencies. Our goal is to provide and equal level of 9-1-1 service to anyone, using any device, at any time.

Greater Harris County is the 2nd largest 9-1-1 system in the country, servicing 48 cities in two counties. Our greatest challenge to date is to make sure that every device that pretends to be a phone actually can connect into the 9-1-1 infrastructure. Too often these devices do not. Also, recently, we have collaborated with the U.S. Justice Department on the Human Trafficking issue.

Montessori Education
St. Catherine Montessori School
Edna Ann Hebert, O.P. - Houston, TX

Saint Catherine’s Montessori School was founded in 1966, by Edna Ann Hebert, O.P. and Shirley Owens, O.P. Formerly known as Dominican Montessori, it is the third oldest Montessori school in Houston and the first Montessori school to include basic religious doctrine in its curriculum. Sisters Edna Ann and Shirley both hold diplomas from the Association Montessori Internationale (A.M.I.) and serve as lifetime members of the Board of Directors. Sister Edna Ann still teaches at the school’s Reading Center, while Sr. Shirley is now Montessori Directress at Sacred Heart School in Rockport, TX.

In 1973, the school formed a non-profit corporation to receive and maintain funds for educational purposes. Sustained by the motivation and work of dedicated parents and friends, it is financially supported by benefactors, grants, and private donations. Over its history, Saint Catherine’s Montessori School has been located in four different sites. It was first located at the old St. Agnes Academy building until it was sold in 1974. It then moved to a building at Holy Rosary Parish, where the primary classes were located, and eventually expanded to another building at Bering Memorial Methodist Church where the Elementary classes were located. In 1983 the school moved to 2510 Westridge, where they occupied a 20,000 sq ft. castle-inspired building.

In August of 2006 St. Catherine’s moved to its fourth and final location at 9821 Timberside, near Loop 610 South between Stella Link and S. Main. St. Catherine’s Montessori occupies a beautiful new building on 7.4 acres and is in the process of applying for LEED certification. Special features include a gymnasium, sports field, beautiful gardens, and water and land areas for the study of plant and animal life.

Saint Catherine’s Montessori School is affiliated with the Catholic School District of the Diocese of Galveston-Houston and is accredited by the Texas Catholic Conference Education Department which is recognized by the Texas Education Agency.

From top: Heloise Cruzat O.P in the Dominican Sisters’ Community Garden with a volunteer, Lavergne Schwender O.P displaying the rendering of the Network’s new building, Edna Ann Hebert O.P in front of St. Catherine Montessori School and reading with a student.
Experience the beauty of God’s Creation

Camp Kappe School of Environmental Education
Thomas Ann LaCour, O.P. - Plantersville, TX

“God calls us all to care for creation and to care for each other. The children are our future. To them we preach and teach the Gospel message and encourage partnership in spreading the Word to the world.”

Go Green!
Do you want to receive your Good News via e-mail? Call or e-mail Mamie Marx at 713-440-3710 or mmarx@domhou.org. Send us your e-mail address and let us know!

Sisters at Work in the Community
A TRADITION OF SERVICE FOR OVER 125 YEARS

A s principal and teacher at S.E.E., I meet approximately 1300 5th graders, 75-100 teachers, and 125-200 parent chaperones every year. The classes give all an insight to vital natural resources that we all depend upon: water, food, land, energy, and more.

All are invited to some hands-on experience to learn about these resources. What better way to learn about pollution in water than to seine for critters or enjoy a fishing experience. Students and adults get the opportunity to spend a half-day living as citizens of another country and experiencing the unequal distribution of natural resources. Besides experiencing nature, students learn self-sufficiency and the skills of working together. Adults learn what their children are capable of doing for themselves and the benefits of following through and being responsible for their own actions. All experience the beauty of God’s creation; they learn better ways to care for creation, and gain a better idea of what might be our fair share of the earth’s natural resources.

God calls us all to care for creation and to care for each other. The children are our future. To them we preach and teach the Gospel message and encourage partnership in spreading the Word to the world.

A s a staff chaplain at Christus Hospital St. Elizabeth in Beaumont, Barbara Leah White, O.P., fulfills the hospital’s mission of “extending the healing ministry of Jesus Christ.” She has been in hospital ministry for the past 10 years and visits oncology, general medical and gynecology patients on a regular basis. As a chaplain she is on call at night every other week, for emergency calls, and assists patients during the day with advance directives to the physician, for medical power of attorney, and with out-of-hospital Do Not Resuscitate Orders. She participates in liturgical worship as a lector and Eucharistic Minister. She also counsels patients, families, and staff on death and dying issues and serves on palliative care, oncology, and ethics committees.

The life of Mary Frances Heins, O.P. changed with Hurricane Ike. There is Before Ike and After Ike. Pre-Ike Mary Frances (Fran) was a teacher and administrative assistant at Galveston Catholic High School fulfilling the Dominican mission of teaching. Post-Ike she serves wherever needed especially as an assistant with the Guatemala Mission Fund. She is an Ike evacuee from the island, all photos from an Ike evacuee from the island, all photos from an Ike evacuee from the island.

Thomas Ann LaCour, O.P. - Plantersville, TX

Top of page: Thomas Ann LaCour at Camp Kappe
Bottom of page, clockwise from top left: Barbara Leah White OP, Mary Frances Heins OP, Raphael Bordages, O.P., Camilla Micheletti OP, Sharon Steglich OP, Assumpta Campbell OP, Lucia Schexnayder OP

For more information, please visit domhou.org.
The soul of one who serves God
always swims in joy
always keeps holiday
and is always in the mood for singing.

- St. John of the Cross

Marygrace "Ginger" Peters, O.P.
February 23, 1942 - February 21, 2009

“Hope always means waiting for something we cannot see... isn’t that what Ginger preached to us through her life?
Although cancer shortened her time with us, Ginger enabled us to see more precisely, more acutely, more perceptively what life is all about. She didn’t just visit the world; she tasted and savored every moment as she embraced the world and every living thing in it. Ginger had the uncanny ability to put people at ease - her wonderful smile and her infectious laughter always filled the room. As a member of a community of preachers and as a minister of the Word, Ginger lived the Word and preached not only by what she said but by how she lived her life - a wonderful example to us of what it means to BE the holy preaching.

- Donna Pollard, O. P.

Margaret Conrad, O. P.
April 25, 1918 - December 2, 2008

Sr. Margaret was a preacher in every sense of the word. We thank you Margaret for the example of your life – you will be forever in our thoughts, our prayers and in our hearts.

- Donna Pollard, O. P.

Miriam Ulm, O. P.
June 27, 1938 - February 1, 2009

I can truly say she was a model of faith, she touched many of the individuals who cared for her and I thank her for the gift of her presence in my life.

- Lydia Dehado, O. P.

Benita Kelley, O.P.
December 25, 1926 – February 3, 2009

We have been deeply blessed to have Sr. Benita with us in this final decade of her earthly journey. Sr. Benita was, indeed, faithful to her promise to God made that first night in the convent. May she now experience the hundredfold promised by her Lord.

- Heloise Cruzat, O. P.

Edwardo Daly, O.P.
April 7, 1921 - February 10, 2009

"Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour." How appropriate is this scripture for Sr. Edwardo. She knew not the day nor the hour, but you can rest assured that she was ready. She spent her time with others and doing for others. We will miss her deeply.

- Julie Greig, O. P.

Margaret Conrad, O. P.
April 25, 1918 - December 2, 2008

Sr. Margaret was a preacher in every sense of the word. We thank you Margaret for the example of your life – you will be forever in our thoughts, our prayers and in our hearts.

- Donna Pollard, O. P.

Celestine Pena, O. P.
August 19, 1918 - May 3, 2009

When Pope John Paul II died, the people spontaneously cried out: “Santo subito” – sainthood right away! While we are not seeking canonization, we have confidence that Sr. Celestine has entered her new home – *santa subito!* How fitting it is that her final journey was on Good Shepherd Sunday and on the wings of the Feast of St. Joseph the Worker.

- Heloise Cruzat, O. P.
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