Dear Friends,

“Our God is moving forward on the road with us, [God] is among us, [God] walks with us. [God] saves us. [God] makes history with us.” Pope Francis recently spoke these words, and they resonate so true. How amazing and comforting to realize that God walks with and among all of us. In our 130 years in Houston and southeast Texas, our mission has taken us down different roads, and we have been blessed to travel each one of them.

In this issue of the Good News, you will read about some of the different roads we have traveled these past several months. Our justice ministry took us to Georgia, Austin and right here in Houston. We continue to collaborate with others to address the social justice issues of our time, and this summer we will join other women religious to promote just immigration legislation.

In January, we traveled east on Interstate 10 to Beaumont to reconnect with old friends and to meet new ones. What a wonderful trip! Long-time friends and supporters Mike and JoBeth Jenkins and Martin and Chris Broussard hosted a warm and welcoming reception for our sisters and supporters. We hope to travel to other cities where we have ministered to thank you, our supporters, and to share our memories and mission with you.

The sisters and I can never thank you enough for your continued and loyal support of our mission, our ministries and our retired sisters. May God bless you, heal you and fill you with light.

Blessings on you and your families,

Carol Mayes, OP
Prioress

Thank YOU

We gratefully acknowledge all those who contributed to this issue:

Sr. Mary Brenda, OP
Sr. Patricia Casey, OP
Sr. Heloise Cruzat, OP
Sr. Adrian Dover, OP
Sr. Annette Dworsky, OP
Sr. Mary Magdalen Hanel, OP
Sr. Wanda Jinks, OP
Sr. Carol Mayes, OP
Sr. Ceil Roeger, OP

ON THE COVER
Six Seville orange trees adorn our Motherhouse grounds. These trees are said to be direct descendants of a tree planted by St. Dominic in Rome. While the oranges are sour, they are the main ingredient in our orange marmalade.
In November, Sr. Ceil Roeger, OP and Sr. Eleanor Cresap, OP joined other peace activists in Georgia to participate in the annual SOA Watch vigil held in front of the gates at Fort Benning. This vigil, which began in 1990, calls for the closing of the School of the Americas (SOA) through vigils and nonviolent protest, as well as media and legislative work. SOA (renamed WHINSEC) is a combat training school for Latin American soldiers funded by the United States.

During the weekend, those present were updated on this past year’s activities. Everyone celebrated the news that Ecuador and Nicaragua were now among the countries that have agreed to stop sending troops and police to be trained at the SOA. Participants gathered for a rally, during which prisoners of conscience as well as survivors of violence in their home country gave witness to expose the legacy of the SOA. Later in the weekend, protestors solemnly processed and placed crosses with the names of victims on the fence in front of the SOA. Those present gave witness and called for an end to the SOA.

**NUNS ON THE BUS**

On Wednesday, April 17, sisters from different religious orders, advocacy groups and friends traveled to Austin to persuade legislators and Governor Perry to accept federal dollars to expand healthcare coverage to about 1.5 million low-wage Texas workers. Supporters from Houston, San Antonio, Dallas, Fort Worth and Corpus Christi rolled into Austin for a rally on the steps of the capitol before visiting lawmakers to ask for their support. Houston Dominican Ceil Roeger, as well as Sr. Simone Campbell and others, spoke at the rally urging lawmakers to do as the Gospel asks – to take care of the poor. Following the rally, sisters and supporters delivered more than 500 letters from constituents to the Governor’s office and visited individual legislators. The visits focused on encouraging the legislators and the Governor to find a “Texas Solution” to use the billions of dollars of federal tax money that our citizens have already sent to Washington to provide health care coverage for Texans.

**DANCING FOR JUSTICE**

In February, several Dominican Sisters participated in a Valentine’s Day dance sponsored by the Houston Rescue and Restore Coalition (HRRC) to support the movement “One Billion Women Rising,” a global movement that collaborates with others to effect change and raise awareness that one in three women on our planet will be violated in her lifetime. HRRC’s sock hop, which had dancing and music from the swing era through today, was one of tens of thousands of events held in 207 countries in support of the movement that brought men and women together to dance, rise up and demand an end to violence against women and girls.
SCHOOL NURSE AWARD

On May 8th, National School Nurse Day, Magnus Health announced the winners of its 2013 Achievement in School Health Excellence award. One of the two recipients of the award was Sr. Mary Brenda, OP, who became the nurse at St. Agnes Academy (SAA) this past year. Sr. Mary has lived with and cared for school children all over the world from small barrios in Bogota, Colombia to HIV orphanages in rural East Africa. Since being at SAA, she organized students to raise funds to drill two wells for a Dominican school in Kenya and this summer she and Sr. Jane Meyer, OP will take nine students there for a blessing of the wells and an immersion experience at the school. Sr. Mary also took students on a spring mission trip to the border of Mexico to repair homes for the poor. In her nomination of Sr. Mary, Amy Mattes, St. Agnes’ Athletic Director, wrote: “She has been a first responder in many situations with ill and/or injured students and faculty members. The day a student fell seriously ill with an asthma attack and cardiac arrest showed us how glad we were that we had Sister Mary in place…We can honestly say, our school nurse, Sister Mary Brenda, has made a world of difference in the health and safety of our school.”

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Our Dominican Family welcomed sixteen new members at a commitment ceremony in April. These new members completed their two-year formation process during which they learned the four pillars of Dominican life and learned to live the Dominican charism. During this past year, committed Family members selected their leadership team, and thirty new individuals began their inquiry into becoming part of our Dominican Family.
The Houston Chronicle has invited readers to nominate nurses to be recognized for excellence in their field. From the hundreds of nurses nominated in the Houston area this year, a panel of judges chose ten outstanding nursing professionals to feature in the Chronicle’s Salute to Nurses. The judges chose Doris Blakeslee Yordanoff, the nurse manager at our retirement home, as one of Houston’s top ten nurses. At a luncheon held in May during National Nurses Week, the Chronicle presented awards to Doris and the other top ten nurses and recognized the top 100 nominees. Doris, who has worked for the sisters for almost twenty years, is dedicated and devoted to all the sisters. Nursing is a ministry for Doris, and everything she does is out of love and respect for her patients. Doris is an exceptional nurse and caregiver at every phase of her patients’ lives, but her devotion to them is never more evident than at the last stages of life. She is present to nurse, to pray and to comfort. We are truly grateful and blessed to have Doris as our nurse and patient advocate. Congratulations Doris!
BASILIAN FATHERS HONORED

In December we honored the Basilian Fathers at our annual Advent Praise and Brunch. Sr. Carol Mayes, OP presented the Fathers with the Pauline Gannon award for their long service as chaplains to the Sisters. As early as 1930, a Basilian Priest served as Motherhouse chaplain, and since 1995, the Basilian Fathers from Dillon House have served as sacramental chaplains at St. Dominic Villa, our retirement home. Several years ago, we began the Pauline Gannon award to honor those with vision, determination and dedication, the characteristics of our second prioress, Mother Pauline Gannon.

WALK FOR JUSTICE

On Good Friday afternoon, members of the local peace and justice community came together in downtown Houston to walk the Stations of the Cross to commemorate the passion and death of Jesus. Fr. Richard Wahl, CSB, led the opening prayer, and students from St. Christopher Parish enacted the stations. The annual event is sponsored by Pax Christi, which extended an open invitation to organizations addressing crucial justice issues of our times to lead the stations. Those present walked with Jesus from the time he was condemned until he was laid in the tomb. The Dominican Sisters of Houston led station three, “Jesus Falls the First Time.” The reflection focused on the realization that Earth, our home, is suffering from the weight of environmental devastation. Participants celebrated the fifteenth station, “The Resurrection,” and were reminded of the hope that drives our work for justice and peace.

“The Spirit in the World Today”

In February we hosted a seminar at our Center for Spirituality entitled “The Spirit in the World Today” given by Donald Goergen, OP, PhD, who is a Dominican priest, lecturer and author. Goergen has published many articles and books in the areas of Christology and Christian spirituality. Goergen defines spirituality as ways the spirit is present, alive, and active in our life today. He observed that all people embody the Holy Spirit, and when we pray the Holy Spirit is praying within us. He noted that the best name for the Holy Spirit is gift.

Goergen told those present that the diversity in the universe implies that God loves diversity and that valuing diversity is a source of unity in the world. He spoke of the importance of being reverent and respectful of each other because we need to recognize and be respectful of God in one another. Goergen stated that the Holy Spirit is not only in our personal and ecclesial lives, but also present and active outside the church in other religious traditions, in the world and in all of creation.
**EARTH DAY**

On Saturday, April 20, we celebrated a special Earth Day evening prayer and labyrinth walk. Reflecting on the covenant that God made in Genesis with Noah and his descendants after the flood, Sr. Ceil Roeger, OP called for a theology of relationship, in which we as humans no longer have dominion over Earth and her resources or are just good stewards. Instead, we are called to be in relationship with God and creation and are reminded of our oneness with them. All creation comes from God, is sustained by God and gives glory to God. After the prayer service in the chapel, those present processed outdoors for readings on the four creation symbols (earth, air, fire and water) and to walk the labyrinth in prayer.

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**IN Memoriam**

**Sr. Marie Therese Moratto, OP+**

**FEBRUARY 27, 1913 – OCTOBER 21, 2012**

Sr. Marie Therese was born in 1913 in League City and baptized there at St. Mary’s Catholic Church. Her parents were born in Italy and immigrated to Texas. Sr. Marie Therese entered the congregation in 1937. She graduated from Incarnate Word College in San Antonio and received a master’s degree in education from the University of Texas. She began her teaching career in 1939 at All Saints School in Houston and went on to teach at St. Agnes Academy, St. Mary’s in Port Arthur, Sacred Heart Academy in Galveston, St. Mary’s in Taylor, and Newman School in Austin. She spent 24 years working as business manager for Bishop L.J. Reicher in Austin until her retirement to the Villa in 1984. Sr. Marie Therese was truly a grateful person, always thanking everyone so many times for even the smallest things that were done for her.

**Sr. de Lourdes Warren, OP+**

**OCTOBER 27, 1915 – MAY 8, 2013**

Sr. de Lourdes Warren, OP was born in Omaha, Nebraska to the late Royal George and Margaret Mickel Warren. After graduation from St. Agnes Academy, she joined the Dominican Sisters of Houston in 1932 and earned her B.A. from Incarnate Word College in San Antonio and her M.A. from George Peabody College in Nashville. An excellent teacher, Sr. de Lourdes taught in secondary schools in Houston, Beaumont, and Riverside, California, and from 1964-1975, she was Academic Dean at Dominican College. Study was integral to Sr. de Lourdes’ life and ministry, and she took classes in journalism, movie-making, management, design and Spanish. In 1983, she became a certified paralegal and worked as one until 1987. After retirement, Sr. de Lourdes volunteered in many ways such as researching family law, teaching ESL, and serving her Congregation. Throughout her life, Sr. de Lourdes influenced countless students and encouraged them all with her radiant smile.

**Sr. Thomas Margaret Zagst, OP+**

**MARCH 7, 1925 – JUNE 3, 2013**

Sr. Thomas Margaret was born to the late Thomas and Margaret Nagle Zagst in Shreveport, Louisiana. In 1934 she and her family moved to Houston after her father died. Sr. Thomas Margaret graduated from St. Agnes Academy in 1942, received her B.A. in English from Rice Institute in 1945, and later earned a M.A. from Catholic University of America. She was a natural scholar and teacher and taught at St. Agnes before joining the Dominican Sisters of Houston in 1949. Students were blessed to be in her classes at St. Agnes Academy, St. Pius X High School, Dominican College, Houston Community College (all in Houston), St. Anthony High School (Beaumont) and St. Francis de Sales (Riverside, CA). Sr. Thomas Margaret also served as assistant librarian at St. Mary Seminary before retiring in 2004. Her gift for teaching was enhanced and accompanied by her ready wit.
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!