Dear Friends,

This fall, we continue to discern and reflect on issues that impact our congregation and our mission and charism as we plan for the future. However, while looking to the future, we enthusiastically continue the work in our current ministries. We remain faithful to our sponsored schools, St. Agnes Academy, St. Pius X High School, and San Vicente de Paul Bethania in Guatemala, and continue to partner with others to address and to end human trafficking, racism, and the death penalty. We continue to study, pray, and preach through advocacy on the immigration crisis and the treatment of migrants, their children, and families. We embrace the words of Pope Francis to pray for the heart that will welcome immigrants.

In October, Jose Enriquez, Laura Henderson and I attended the national conference of the Resource Center for Religious Institutes. The opening session focused on the dignity and treatment of immigrants as is instilled in us by our faith. The opening prayer enumerated the many times the bible (in Genesis, Deuteronomy, Leviticus, Job, Psalm 146, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Zechariah, Acts, Romans, Colossians, Hebrews, Matthew, Luke, and John) commands welcoming the stranger, the refugee, the widow and orphan, and the poor with love, justice, kindness, and mercy.

In her keynote address, Sr. Norma Pimental, Executive Director of Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley, spoke about her work with immigrants and refugees at the Texas-Mexico border. She encouraged us to perform ordinary works with extraordinary love for this vulnerable population and to create a culture of encuentro by reaching out and fostering dialogue and friendship with people who are neglected and ignored by the wider world. In doing so, we can learn to respect and restore human dignity to others; in turn, we experience the face of God and our own humanity is restored.

This issue of the Good News includes our annual report of gifts to our mission and ministries. We can never thank you enough for your generous support, and we know that you are instrumental in helping us carry on our mission today and tomorrow. Truly, your friendship remains one of our community’s greatest blessings. May God continue to bless you, heal you, and fill you with light.

With love and in prayer,

Donna M. Pollard, O.P.
Priress

On the Cover
In early July, about 30 temporarily professed Dominican women and their formation teams stayed with us while on retreat. They gathered on the 4th of July for their opening session and included St. Dominic in their Independence Day festivities.

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Thank YOU

We gratefully acknowledge all those who contributed to this issue:

Sr. Eleanor Cresap, OP
Sr. Heloise Cruzat, OP
Sr. Adrian Dover, OP
Pilar Hernandez
Sr. Wanda Jinks, OP

Judy McCullough, Dominican Family
Sr. Donna Pollard, OP
Sr. Ceil Roeger, OP
Sr. Pamela Van Giessen, OP
SEASON OF CREATION

Once again, we joined people around the world of all denominations to celebrate the Season of Creation. From September 1st through October 4th, we intentionally focus our faith on the care for creation through prayer, action, and advocacy. This year’s theme was “Web of Life,” which emphasized Pope Francis’ words that all of creation is integral to the web of life.

During the Season of Creation, on September 7th, the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word hosted an Ecumenical Observance for the 2019 World Day for the Care of Creation at the Villa de Matel. We co-hosted the event with several other religious and environmental groups. Archbishop Emeritus Joseph A. Fiorenza led prayer along with clergy from area Catholic, Baptist, Lutheran, Episcopal, Unity, Methodist, Evangelical, and Orthodox churches. The joint prayer service was an opportunity to give thanks, to repent, and to bear witness to all of Houston of our unity in declaring that climate change is an ethical imperative to be addressed.

On October 4th, the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, our community gathered in the Villa Chapel for prayer to close the Season of Creation and to remind ourselves of Pope Francis’ words “to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.”

EVENING PRAYER

We gather in our chapel for evening prayer daily, but on special occasions we continue our celebration as a community with dinner and social activities. On September 29th, we celebrated our Founders’ Day, the anniversary of the arrival in Galveston of the 20 Dominican Sisters from Ohio who founded our congregation. Sr. Heloise Cruzat, OP preached at evening prayer, remembering the faith of the founding sisters as they embarked on their journey to the unknown wilderness of Texas in 1882. Sr. Heloise noted the parallel between the importance of the founders’ time and this moment in our history. Just as our founders began a new and unimagined chapter, we begin a new and as yet imagined chapter as we plan for the future of our mission and charism. On All Souls’ Day, we gathered for our annual Evening Prayer and Labyrinth Walk of Remembrance and Thanksgiving, and on November 7th, we celebrated Dominican Saints Feast Day with prayer and preaching, followed by dinner and a movie in the Villa community room.
The crisis at our country’s southern border motivated members of our community, the Dominican Family, and friends to visit El Paso this summer for a weeklong Border Awareness Experience (BAE), an immersion experience hosted by Annunciation House (AH), a house of hospitality for migrants and refugees. The BAE is not a volunteer opportunity, but rather an opportunity to listen and learn, to put a face on the immigrant and refugee, and to experience the culture and realities of the many groups who live and work at the border.

Our group visited shelters for migrants, attended federal criminal court hearings on illegal re-entry cases, and met with border patrol. We met with an attorney at the Diocese of El Paso Migrant and Refugee Services, which provides immigrant legal services and legal rights programs in the detention centers. The attorney explained that the concept of “get in line and wait your turn” to enter the US is an unrealistic way to immigrate from Mexico and Central America because the process takes about 30 years and strictly limits who may apply. We met with the founder of the Farm Workers Center, which helps migrant farm workers who are without housing, often suffer from wage theft, and lack protection from injury. We also met with a detained migrant solidarity group that, among other things, raises bond money and advocates for and empowers detainees.

Our group stayed at an AH shelter mostly for women seeking asylum who were disabled, with children, or pregnant. The shelter is a place for them to stay while figuring out next steps and contacting family in the U.S. Many women shared their stories, which were filled with violence and devastating loss. We also heard stories of undocumented migrants who had been deported after working in the U.S. for decades. Over and over, the stories told were of people in desperate situations who did not willingly choose to leave their homes but did so in the face of danger. With our BAE leader, each day we discussed and reflected on what we had learned and witnessed about the treatment of some of God’s most vulnerable people, especially migrant children who while in our country’s care have died, become ill, or been traumatized by family separation.
October 10th is World Day Against the Death Penalty, a day to advocate for the abolition of the death penalty. Since 2003, advocates around the world have organized to raise awareness of the conditions and circumstances that affect death row prisoners, their families, and children. This October 10th, we gathered with other abolitionists in Houston in front of the Harris County Criminal Court Building to protest, to distribute flyers, and to talk with passersby about the death penalty abolition movement and Harris County’s historically high rate of executions carried out by the state.

ANTIRACISM EVENT

In October, we hosted local author Joel Goza to speak on his recent book, *America’s Unholy Ghosts: The Racist Roots of Our Faith and Politics*. In his book, Goza examines how the ideologies of three enlightenment philosophers, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Adam Smith, helped form our racist institutions and continue to foster racial inequality in America. The age of reason was also the age of “race craft” when ideas of white supremacy began to shape America’s religious and political ideals to justify the institution of slavery. Christianity in the white church became about soul salvation without questioning how one’s intimacy with God is threatened by indifference to injustice and to the broken and abused in our world whom God loves. Goza asserts that lessons from Martin Luther King and the Prophetic Black Church provide a way forward for America to achieve a religious faith and political system infused with mercy, justice, and equity. After Joel presented his overview, he sat down with Beatrice Stewart and Maureen Bacchi to discuss his book and what is needed today to begin addressing America’s racial divide.
This summer and fall, we continued to participate in prayer and action events with our partners for immigrant rights and respect. In July, Lights for Liberty vigils were held nationwide to end detention camps and the inhumane treatment of migrant children and families. Dominican Sisters and Dominican Family members attended vigils in Houston and El Paso to peacefully promote human rights and respect for the dignity of all persons. In August, we joined FIEL Houston and other immigration advocates for an El Paso Strong solidarity action at City Hall to speak out against hate speech and violence after the horrific shooting in an El Paso Walmart, during which the shooter targeted members of the Latinx community.

As part of the Catholic Action for Migrant Children movement, we participated in the Migrant Mondays Project. We gathered in the Villa Chapel every week in September to pray on behalf of children detained at the U.S. border and for those children who have died in U.S. custody. Later in the fall, we joined the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, members of St. Michael the Archangel Catholic Church, and others in the Houston community in solidarity and prayer for justice as the U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments on the legality of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Program. We prayed the rosary in front of the federal courthouse and prayed that our God of justice, compassion, and truth touches the minds and hearts of the attorneys, justices, and all Americans to uphold the DACA Program.
ART SHOW

In August, Sr. Pamela Van Giessen, OP’s artwork was on display at the Art League Houston where she has been taking classes in landscape painting. Several of our sisters attended the opening of the exhibit and thoroughly enjoyed the art on display. Sr. Pam has been painting and drawing since her childhood and in high school, but landscape painting and oil as a medium are both new to her.

Sr. Pam finds her art classes relaxing and during class becomes totally immersed in her painting. She stated, “I am thoroughly enjoying the classes and the interaction with the teacher and students. I’ve already developed my own 'style' of landscape painting which is very impressionistic.” Sr. Pam plans to continue classes to improve and to develop new techniques such as portrait painting.

CHRISTMAS CONCERT

During the week before Thanksgiving, 47 third and fourth graders from the Pasadena School District performed for our sisters in the chapel at the Villa. The Garfield Elementary Gator Honor Choir, directed by Abbey Veliz, stopped by the Villa to sing carols and to share some Christmas cheer as part of their winter tour.
This summer, the Dominican Sisters of Houston celebrated the 60th jubilee of Sisters Thomas Ann LaCour, OP, Lauren Lindee, OP, Sharon Steglich, OP and Stephen Anne Zawacki, OP. Archbishop Emeritus Joseph A. Fiorenza, DD, assisted by Bishop Vincent Rizzotto, DD, JCL, Reverend Bill Bartiniski, and Reverend Dan Warden, presided over the Eucharistic Liturgy, which was held in the chapel at St. Dominic Villa. Prioress Donna Pollard, OP thanked the Jubilarians for their combined 240 years of ministry and service to God, the Church, and to the Dominican community. Immediately following the liturgy, the congregation continued the celebration at a reception at the Villa.

Thomas Ann LaCour, OP was born in Beaumont, Texas. She graduated valedictorian from St Anthony Cathedral Catholic School in 1959 and entered the convent that fall. She graduated from Dominican College with a BA in Education, taught science and math for nine years at St. Joseph Catholic School and served as principal at St. Mary’s Catholic School in Whittier, California and St. Jerome Catholic School in Houston. For two years, she taught at the Houston ISD Outdoor Education Center, after which she opened the School of Environmental Education, providing environmental education for the Catholic schools in the surrounding dioceses. In 1985, Sr. Thomas Ann received her MA in Agriculture and Wildlife Sciences from Texas A&M University. As a leader in environmental teaching, she has been acknowledged by the Outdoor Education Institute of Texas A&M, the Texas Outdoor Education Association, the Texas Water Commission, and Keep Texas Beautiful.

Lauren Lindee, OP was born in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. After moving to Houston, she attended St. Anne Catholic School and graduated from St. Agnes Academy. In 1959, Sr. Lauren entered the convent after being inspired by the Dominican Sisters who taught her. For over 42 years, she taught in our Houston schools including St. Christopher’s Catholic School, St. Mary’s Catholic School, St. Catherine’s Montessori School, St. Anne’s Catholic School, Resurrection Catholic School, St. Pius X High School, St. Agnes Academy and Marian Christian High School. She also taught at St. Elizabeth Catholic School in Port Neches, Texas. In 2006, Sr. Lauren became the Director of Religious Education at St. Genevieve Church in Thibodaux, Louisiana and served there until her retirement this summer. She continues to enjoy many hobbies and to educate herself through biblical studies.
Sharon Steglich, OP grew up in Port Arthur, Texas and attended St. Mary’s Catholic School and Bishop Bryne High School. Sr. Sharon entered the convent in 1959 and earned her BA in Education from Dominican College. She lovingly and patiently taught first grade for 51 years at the following schools: St. Mary’s Catholic School in Houston, St. Anthony Cathedral Catholic School in Beaumont, and St. Mary’s Catholic School in Port Arthur, during which time the school served as a demonstration school with Sr. Sharon as the Primary Coordinator of the Individualized Instruction Program. After leaving Port Arthur, she taught at St. Mary’s Catholic School in Orange for 27 years and at Queen of Peace Catholic School in Houston for the last seven years of her teaching ministry. Sister Sharon continues to serve on the Board of Directors at St. Catherine’s Montessori School and to serve her community in countless ways.

Stephen Anne Zawacki, OP was born in Houston and attended All Saints Catholic School and St. Agnes Academy. She entered Sacred Heart Convent in 1959, graduated from Dominican College with a BA in English, and earned an MA in Administration from the University of San Francisco. Sr. Stephen Anne taught primarily first grade in Houston at St. Peter the Apostle Catholic School, St. Augustine Catholic School, St. Christopher Catholic School, and St. Francis de Sales Catholic School; in Galveston at Sacred Heart Catholic School and Galveston Catholic School; in Riverside, California at St. Francis de Sales Catholic School; in Texas City at Our Lady of Fatima Catholic School; and in Austin at Dominican Academy. She served as principal at St. Francis de Sales in Riverside, St. Anne Catholic School in Houston and Dominican Academy. She served as Dean of Students at St. Agnes Academy and as Assistant Superintendent of Schools in the Austin Diocese. Sr. Stephen Anne has enjoyed teaching at our summer camp for girls and currently resides in Galveston.

GARDEN

Cristo Rey Jesuit College Preparatory once again included our community garden in its day of service. Students from the junior class worked hard adding mulch and compost to the garden. The student volunteers were a pleasure to have, and we are so grateful for their service.
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 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 years of service. May God bless you, heal you, and fill you with light.

Thank you!

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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, 2018 to July 31, 2019 fiscal year. We are blessed to have their faithful commitment to our mission.

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<td>Gracie Lowell</td>
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<td><strong>Total Giving:</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,916,075.00</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Partners</strong> in Mission Annual Fund:</td>
<td><strong>$542,050.00</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Retirement Fund:</strong></td>
<td><strong>$415,020.00</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Guatemala:</strong></td>
<td><strong>$355,510.00</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Bequests:</strong></td>
<td><strong>$600,630.00</strong></td>
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<td><strong>$2,875.00</strong></td>
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Mary Abell
Carol LaFleur
Nancy and Kenneth Doise
Mary and Mark Goodwin
M. Claude Lane, OP
Agnes and Jerome Bourgeois
Bill Lawton
Stephen Anne Zawacki, OP
Rosalie K. Leone
Frances and Kenneth Novak
Mary Lera
Thomas A. Lera Jr.
Thomas Lera
Thomas A. Lera Jr.
Sharon Lerner
CEIL ROGER, OP
Anne and David Crowley
Vincentia Lilly, OP
Amie and John Crowley
Linda Longoria
Frances and Kenneth Novak
Janice A. Maresh
Dorothy Maczali
James S. Marshall
Joyce and Louis Bordages
Lenora Martinez
Michael Cacioppo
Bebet McConnell
Lucia Schemnayder, OP
Camilla Micheletti, OP
Yvette and Jim Crumbliss
Turner Moore
Stephen Anne Zawacki, OP
Marie Therese Moratto, OP
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Mary Pat White, OP
Norman and Patricia Chersky
Carl Ferraro
Stephen Anne Zawacki, OP
Marilyn Wisniewski
James Broussard
† Indicates honoree is now deceased

We hope we have correctly recognized each gift and friend. If we have missed your name or if it is listed incorrectly, please accept our sincere apologies and call the Advancement Office at 713.440.3707.
Mary Grace Wohlwend
Cynthia and Richard Rose
Mariana Wood, OP
Frann Johnson
Thomas Woods
Janna Hamilton
Doris Yordanoff
Dominican Sisters of Houston
Barbara Ann Cernosek, OP
Benignus Galiano, OP
Dolores Goerlich
Stephen Anne Zawacki, OP
Miguel Zaldivar
Frances and Kenneth Novak
Brenda Zapalac
Joyce and Louis Bordages

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John and Isabelle Chapman
Barrie and Larry Ewing
Garland Kerr and James Blackburn
Cindy and Charles Raimond
Rosemary Rule

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Gift in Honor of ~
Gift given by ~

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Mary Abell
Kelly Biddle, OP
Peggy and Sam Biddle
Emily Bordages, OP
Michael Cacioppo
Margaret P. Green
Marie Bordages, OP
Regina Dennis
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Raphael Bordages, OP
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Arthur Ettler, Jr.
Frances Weatherly
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Marion Ronquillo
Paula Porter
Sharon Steglich, OP
Dominican Sisters of Houston
Lisa, Asher & Cate Thompson
Mary Abell
Debbie Walden
Charles Anne Solomon, OP
Therese Warden, OP
Michael Cacioppo
Barbara L. White, OP
James and Barbara Schattle
Stephen Anne Zawacki, OP
Dominican Sisters of Houston

Mural with a quote from St. Oscar Romero inside one of Annunciation House’s migrant shelters
The Dominican Sisters of Houston’s legacy in Catholic education and service 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.