

OP Family Matters

Newsletter of the Dominican Family in Australia, New Zealand, Solomons and Papua New Guinea

3rd December 2007

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From our Sisters in Pakistan

With heartfelt gratitude to Jesus, Mary and Dominic, this year we celebrated the initiation of three Novices into our community in Pakistan. This took place on the 7th of October, feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, where, 108 years ago the first group of nine sisters made their first profession in Gozo Malta and thus our Congregation was born.

We are also commemorating the 100th year from the death of our Benefactress cum Foundress, Ms Carolina Cauchi.

Another event this year is the profession of two Novices, on the 16th December 2007, Sr.Naveeda Sanober O.P. and Sr.Samona Gulzar O.P., and the Final Profession of Sr.Robeena Inayat O.P. Sr.Robeena has completed her M.A. in Religious Studies at IFRS in Manila in March 2007. She is assigned at the House of Formation and she will assist in this ministry both at home and outside.

It is encouraging to see these Pakistani Sisters eager to take over from the Maltese Missionaries and thus make the Church in Pakistan become more and more fruitful in the good works which they handle so bravely in these situations. Pray for their perseverance.

We ask you for Prayers for peace in this country so that our people may prosper.

Sr.Frances Farrugia o.p. Queen of Peace Formation House. Lahore. Pakistan.

Spanish Martyrs – excerpts taken from www.domlife.org

ROME, ITALY -- November 19, 2007--- Brian Pierce, OP (St. Martin) was among many Dominicans who witnessed the beatification of almost 500 Spanish Martyrs in Rome recently. He recalls the events and reflects on their meaning for us as members of the Order of Preachers.

I write these reflections, at the request of our brother, Carl Trutter OP, to share a few impressions of my experience of participating in the celebration of the beatification of the 498 Spanish martyrs this past weekend in Rome (all martyred between 1934-1937, during the Spanish Civil War). ...

Referring to the more than seventy Dominican martyrs soon to be beatified, fr Vito went on to say, "Tomorrow, here in this chapel of Santa Sabina, the picture of Buenaventura Garcia Paredes OP, former Master of the Order, will be venerated publicly for the first time. Many of these martyrs served as missionaries (in China, the Philippines, Peru, Central America and Louisiana). They are the fruit of Dominic's prayer, for it was there, at Peter's tomb, that the universal mission of the Order was confirmed by the Church."

It seemed only right, then, that the beatification of our brothers and sisters in St. Dominic (friars, sisters, laity and one contemplative nun) would also happen at the tomb of Peter. Under a lovely blue sky and a hot, autumn sun, Cardinal Saraiva presided at the beatification ceremony, along with hundreds of concelebrants (all wearing the religious garb of their respective martyrs) and tens of thousands of people stuffed into every corner of St. Peter's Square. Dominican women and men, lay and religious, from many different countries, but especially from Spain, were present for the celebration. Pope Benedict XVI also made an appearance at the end of the ceremony, greeting the crowd in several languages and leading us in the praying of the Angelus.

Before the beginning of the mass, several very moving excerpts from letters and testimonies of some of the martyrs were read. One testimony told of a layman removing his shoes before being led to his execution. When his persecutors asked why, he responded, "Jesus went to the Cross barefooted; I will too." He was shot with his arms outstretched in the form of a cross, praying for forgiveness for those who were about to kill him.

The evening before the beatification ceremony, at the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls, a poem was read that had been written by a lay Dominican, Antero Mateo García, for his Carmelite daughter on the day of her profession. Both Antero, a railway worker, and his wife had joined the lay Dominican chapter in Barcelona . On several occasions Antero had served as a "camillero," helping to carry the infirmed in cots on

pilgrimage to Lourdes . On August 6, 1936, while waiting for his wife and Carmelite daughter's arrival at the train station, Antero was detained. On the night of August 8, beneath the " Dragon Bridge " in Barcelona , he was executed. He was 61 years old.

At the head of the Dominican list of martyrs was the former Master of the Order, Buenaventura Garcia Paredes OP. As prior provincial, with residency in Manila in the Philippines, he helped to strengthen the missionary efforts in China and Vietnam, and purchased the property where the University of Santo Tomás is located today in Manila . In 1911 he helped to establish the presence of the Spanish Dominicans in the Tangipahoa region of Louisiana, USA . In 1926 he was elected Master of the Order, and finally retired to Ocaña, Spain a few years later. On August 12, 1936, at the age of 70, he was martyred in Madrid . Next to his body they found his rosary and breviary.

Another of the Dominican martyrs was a young Mexican by the name of Reginaldo Hernández Ramírez. Forced to flee the diocesan seminary in Guadalajara, he was sent to Spain where he entered the Order in Asturias . Known for his writing and language skills, as well as his gifts as an artist and painter, he was sent to Madrid to study Law very soon after being ordained in 1933. When the Republican persecution of the Church began to spread, he sought safe haven in the Mexican embassy, but was refused because he was a priest. Captured on August 13, 1936, he immediately identified himself to his captors, "I am the Mexican religious that you are looking for." He was executed the same day. He was 27 years old.

Also in this list of the 498 "Spanish Martyrs of the XX Century," we find the name of the first Spanish contemplative nun to be beatified. She is also the first Dominican nun to give her life as a martyr. Sister Josefina Saulea Paulis OP, from Barcelona, entered the monastery in 1905, where she served as infirmarian, chantress, procurator, prioress and mistress of novices. On July 19, 1936 she and her sisters were forced to flee the monastery and hide out in the homes of different families. She was captured on August 31 and interrogated for twelve hours. Despite many threats, she refused to reveal the whereabouts of the chaplain and other sisters. She was finally led outside to a waiting car, but before getting into the car she said, "If you are going to kill me, why don't you do it right here?" Her body was found the next day at the local racetrack. She was 51 years old.

And the list goes on and on.

[Preaching Resources for Advent](#)

www.domlife.org/preachingresources

Advent Prayer, Study and Action on behalf of Iraqi Refugees

<http://www.racinedominicans.org/>

Dominican Sisters Cabra Ireland

<http://www.dominicansisters.com/content/view/216/69/lang.en/>

[Advent Blessings](#)

Dear Friends,

as 'news' enters the 'silly season', schools and colleges break up for the summer holidays, offices and factories look towards the Christmas vacation, this is our last OPFAM for 2007.

May St Nicholas, that patron of Christmas

"Help us all in this busy, busy season not to miss the coming of Emmanuel in the days of preparation as well as on the feast itself.

Protect us from insincerity. May every greeting we send be signed with love, friendship and prayer. May our greetings so written, be fun to open and treasures to keep.

Protect us from shoppers' fatigue. Show us how to take delight in the marketplace, now transformed in beauty, lights and music. Save us all from anxiety over what to give so that we may concentrate on *how* to give.

Stand by the stepladder as we decorate our homes and trees and lives. May our decorations not be mute but rather singing symbols, sacred signs of the evergreen coming of the Lord of Life.

Most of all, help us to stay youthful, humorous, playful and dream-filled as we prepare together for the coming of Christ with Advent longing." *(after Ed Hays)*

All good wishes for a safe, happy and peace-filled celebration of the birth of Christ, and may our clocks and watches be blessed for the year ahead that we will be aware of the miracle of each second of life we experience.

Thank you all for your support and encouragement over the past 12 months. I regret to say that this will be 'your bloomin' lot', till May 2008, when this editor returns from a Sabbatical.

World Youth Day Contacts for the Dominican Family:

It's time to register, book flights and begin your pilgrimage to World Youth Day 08 in Sydney!! Be part of our **Dominican festival** in the days leading up to World Youth Day. Dominican Welcome Week will take place in Strathfield, Sydney on the 13th and 14th July and will include a program of speakers, inter-faith and inter-cultural activities, live performances and opportunities for prayer and liturgy.

Want to know more? Check out our website at www.opeast.org.au/wyd08. For more information email JTaranto@opeast.org.au (WYD Dominican Sisters of Eastern Australia and the Solomon Islands).

To find out more about what the Dominican Friars are doing, email Dom Murphy OP at dom.murphy@op.org
For regular updates of Dominican Family events, watch this space!

Dominican Calendar

- Dec-16 Bl. Sebastian Maggi (1414-1496) Italian, priest, celebrated preacher, reformer, confessor of Fra Girolamo Savonarola, O.P.
- Dec-22 Anniversary of the Approval of the Order of Preachers (1216).
The Dominican liturgical tradition gratefully commemorates Mary's intervention in starting and protecting the Order.