

In obvious delight, Adele Myers, OP, expresses joyful gratitude for the many blessings of God and for the universal praise of her work. She stands in front of a stained-glass window she created.

Photo by Kathy Gardner for Sparkhill's The Journal News



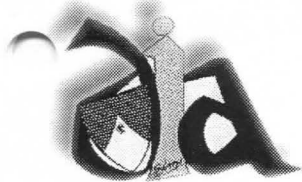
Adele Myers, OP, Receives *Fra Angelico* Award

The Dominican Institute for the Arts (**DIA**) selected Sister Adele Myers, OP, of Sparkill, NY, as the 2004 recipient of its prestigious *Fra Angelico Award for Excellence in the Arts*. The award is given annually to a Dominican artist who is publicly recognized for artistic excellence. At the meeting in Racine, Wisconsin, last August, Adele was surprised to be named as this year's recipient. Attending the gathering and rejoicing with her were Sisters, friars and associates from the United States and abroad--all members of the worldwide Order of Preachers.

In presenting the award, **DIA** President Barbara Schwarz, OP, cited the accomplishments of Sister Adele, who creates relief and freestanding sculpture using cement and fresco. Her work is exhibited often throughout the East and is included in public and private collections. Barbara quoted Adele's morning prayer, imitating Thomas Merton as he prayed "for patience and the spiritual strength to avoid cowardly solutions, falsity and insincerity in my work."

Adele, who lives at the Dominican Convent and maintains a studio there, designed stained glass windows for the chapel and for the Meditation Room at Dowling Gardens, an assisted living facility, both in Sparkill. She also created a sidewalk mosaic for Thorpe Village and for the convent chapel's outdoor Gathering Space, literally, as Barbara mentioned, "taking her holy preaching to the street." Adele's *Via Dolorosa*, a cement and fresco Way of the Cross, can be seen at St. Thomas Aquinas College's chapel in Sparkill.

[continued on p. 7]



Board President Offers Reflections

It is a privilege to assume leadership responsibilities with the Board of the Dominican Institute for the Arts. I am a Racine Dominican acquainted with the arts as a piano performance major. My experiences in leadership have included leading my Racine Dominican community and working in various church ministries throughout the country, especially in Tennessee, Virginia, and now in Willmar, Minnesota.

With deep appreciation for all that has been in **DIA** we now move into a new and challenging time. If ever there was need for the arts it is now in this period of global and national unrest.

When you chose me as your president, I promised to be a clear and collaborative leader, a woman ready to risk for the sake of our **DIA** vision. I hold an excitement within me to bring to reality the dreams of the members and to enlarge our circle of membership. I ask that every member join the Board and me in that excitement.

The integration of preaching, justice, and the arts is our Dominican privilege and call. May each of us, with our particular art form, strive to contribute to this Dominican vision. Yes, we have been empowered by the earth; we now evolve, create, and praise our Creator God. As the psalm taken from our Eucharist at the recent **DIA** conference stated, "Restless is the heart until it comes to rest in You. All the earth shall remember and return to our God."

Hold fast to that vision, my Sisters and Brothers. As members of **DIA** may we develop courageous spirits and generous hearts, carrying the torch of the Holy Preaching to all the world.



Jean Ackerman, OP



A Note From the Editor

Mary Fisher, OP

Cordial greetings to you all! I am honored to be next to Jean on this page; I, too, your new editor, want to introduce myself. I'm afraid the only "new" part about me is the title, however, since I've been around for a long, long time!

I have been a teacher since I was seventeen, missioned to spread the Good News in schools and universities in Wisconsin, Ohio, Michigan, and New Mexico. English literature and composition, drama, and theatre arts: these were—and still are—my favorites. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve **DIA** by using some of the skills honed during my "salad days," when I was young, fresh, and green.

I ask for your help and patience as I try to follow the inspiring lead of those who have gone before. Only contributions from you will make this newsletter dynamic. I hope you will share with all members of the **DIA** by sending me photos, articles, reports, etc. about you and your ministry. The deadline for the next issue is **January 6, 2005.**

Editor: Mary T. Fisher, OP: smtfisher@hotmail.com
5635 Erie Street, Racine, WI 53402-1934
Board Liaison: Jean Ackerman, OP
Masthead: Deborah Marie Butcher, OP
Logo Design: Irene Mary Diones, OP

DIA Newsletter Vol. VI, No. 3: October 2004

DIA Praises *Gathering 2004*

"*The memories linger on!*" promises an old song. And so they do for the 79 **DIA** participants who attended the *Gathering* at Racine, Wisconsin, July 31-August 3.

Siena Center itself, located on the shores of Lake Michigan, proved one of the highlights of the meeting, with its "surroundings so conducive to creative expressions," as one member noted in her evaluation. High on the list of favorites was the spirit of joy, openness, and trust, as well as the camaraderie, bonding, and mutual affirmation. Those attending expressed deep appreciation for the warmly gracious hospitality afforded them by residents at Siena.

Speakers and workshops, well-organized and relevant, elicited commendation for the planning committee, especially for Janet Weyker, OP, (Racine), whose chapel hanging visually illustrated the theme of the meeting: "Enlivened by Earth, we evolve, we create, we praise."

Creativity and praise abounded during the gathering, exemplified by the interpretive dance of Angel Mendez, OP, the magic of Daniel Rolland, OP; the liturgy, prayers, and other instances of the integration of art with our Dominican charism. Exhibits drew expressions of admiration, even awe. Workshops on painting, poetry, music, sculpting, photography, film, among others, presented multiple ways of preaching. Addresses by Carol Coston, OP, and Ellen Kozak provided inspiration and information.

An inter-active session on film-making led by Dominic DeLay, OP, was an eye-opening treat for many. An evening "Coffee House" provided more opportunities for sharing both

serious and light-hearted moments. Original music compositions by Dominicans Michael Burke, Rudolf Loewenstein, Elaine Taylor, and others combined contemplation with the arts of poetry and music.

Cheerful members viewed even the long walks down the corridors as something positive. "There's lots to look at along the way," one noted; while another wrote, "I liked the distances. I got more than 10,000 steps on my pedometer daily!"

Of course, an all-important event at the gathering was the election of Board members, covered elsewhere in this issue of the Newsletter.

A wise dictum advises, "*Always leave 'em wanting more.*" Some wanted more time, more occasions for excursions, more opportunities to appreciate the scenery and art. "But," says Janet Weyker ruefully, "there's the rub. In order to include more options in the schedule, we would need to add another day to the gathering. With that, costs rise; some may not be able to afford the extra cost or time."

Nonetheless, one enthusiastic evaluator echoed the sentiments of many when she wrote: "**Everything was just wonderful--from start to finish!**"



Dominicans Jo Eilese Hukle and Raphaela Lee enjoy working with clay during **DIA's** 2004 *Gathering*.

(Photo supplied by Jeanne Stickling, OP)

Homilist Questions, Probes at Sunday's Liturgy

Those participating in the Sunday liturgy at the Siena Center chapel during the **DIA Gathering** on August 1, 2004, listened with obvious attention and appreciation to Suzanne Tracy, OP, as she preached. Many asked for copies of her homily, or at least for notes.

Such requests are a tribute to both Suzanne and the congregation, for the homily is not a "pat-'em-on-the-back-and-make-'em-feel-good" kind, but a serious and soul-searching examination.

"How many of us," she asked, "have sifted through earthly belongings of a family- or community-member to realize that anything we cling to is at best only breath, vapor, or a wisp of air?" The transitoriness of life, she continued, "proclaims vividly that all things are limited. Yet life itself is precious, though fragile and vulnerable. "We have a choice," Suzanne contended, "whether we hoard life with greedy grabbing or honor life with real reverence."

In a passage of experience and insight the homilist declared, "We have great dignity as human beings. But at times. . .the temptation to clutter our lives with stuff is strong. . . Have you been overwhelmed at how much you've accumulated when you try to pack it all up and move?"

Suzanne closed her homily by quoting another preacher who began: "What are you **WILLING** to give up in order to gain the Kingdom of God? And what are you **NOT WILLING** to give up?"

Then he sat down. And so did she.

Messages From Our Members

- Members of the Planning Commission for the 2005 *Gathering* at Adrian, Michigan, are: **Augusta Barry** (Columbus), **Mary Boyce** (Maryknoll Missionary), **Joella Miller** (Adrian), **Jean Vianney Norris** (Kentucky), **Thomas Marie Shelley** (Kentucky), **Elaine Taylor** (Sinsinawa), and **Jeanne Stickling** (Adrian).
- If you have room," **Elizabeth Michael Boyle, OP**, modestly informs us, "you might mention that my book, Preaching the Poetry of the Gospels, won a First Place Award in the 2004 competition sponsored by the Catholic Press Association." Congratulations to you!
- The Holy Preaching reaches as far as Oslo, Norway, where the Nobel Peace Prize is awarded. There hangs some work of **Adele Rowland, OP**. She chose attendance at the recent *Gathering* over being present for her show in Oslo's Great Hall. Kudos and thanks to you, **Adele!**
- **Amy McFrederick, OP**, writes from Kansas about how she and **Rebecca Otter, OP**, planned, organized, and presented a "mini-Gathering," called "Evoking the Artist Within" for their Great Bend Congregation. "It was our attempt," she explains, "to recognize, call forth, nurture, and encourage the artists in our community to engage in their art as a means of soul-expression, contemplation, and preaching." For two days last July, fifteen Sisters and a lay-woman artist attended sessions of prayer led by **S. Joel Cristoph, OP**; engaged in contemplation of God's work in nature, and an exploration of each woman's inner life and beauty. Breakout sessions included experience and experimentation with drawing, calligraphy, clay, sketching, watercolors, dance, and song-writing. Days ended with sharing, demonstrations, and spontaneous prayer. "General reaction was very positive," **Amy** asserts, "with many asking for a week-long Artists' Retreat, using the same format." How about that for initiative, creativity, and carrying forth the message?

Glimpses of DIA Gathering 2004

Dominican artists and artist "wanna-be's" made good use of the workshops (studios) offered at this year's Gathering. Whether molding clay, twisting jewelry wires, weaving, creating fountains, designing stained glass, planning photographs, silk-painting; praying by using water colors, percussion and keyboard, interpretive body movement, the ringing of bells; or sludging with

paper-in-the-making, women and men donned "grubbies" or aprons and tackled their media with gusto. Requiring less physical handling of materials, other sessions dealt no less enthusiastically with creating cards, poetry, and imaginatively free writing; appreciating and discussing fine films. Happy faces and sighs of satisfaction testified to the joy found in creating a thing of beauty.

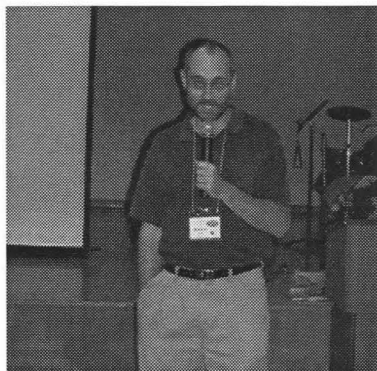
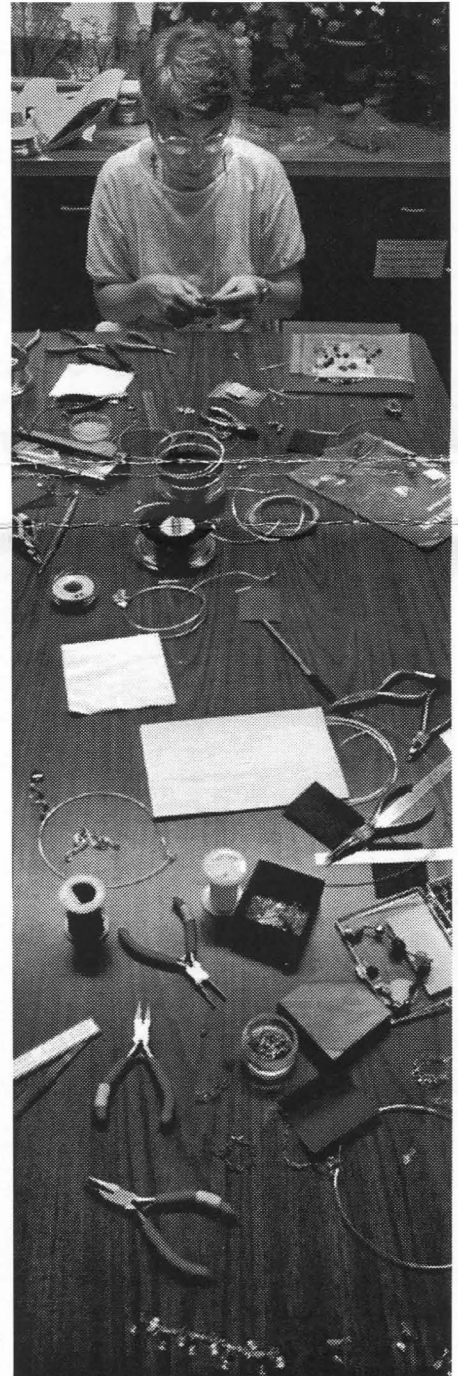
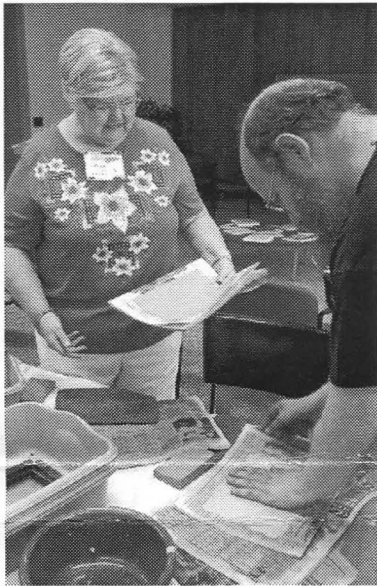
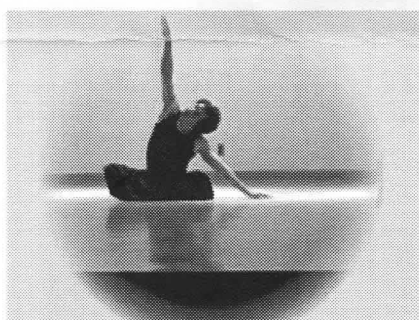


Photo credits: top left and both in center column: Sam Lucero, Herald Citizen, Milwaukee; right column: Scott Anderson, Journal-Times, Racine; others: Elaine Des Rosiers, op.

'The Holy Preaching' Thrives Among Us



We listened to each other; we shared with each other—hopes, dreams, stories, lessons learned. With joy radiating from every participant, how could we help but feel the Spirit of Love present in an almost palpable way. That Spirit permeated not only the attention given to more serious speakers, but also the *joi de vivre* evident in the evening breaks, the camaraderie during meals, the delight of the Coffee House hours. Music, magic, dance, drama, poetry—an outpouring of self and talents which mirrored that of Creation itself! What a Gathering—what a Group! Who could ever forget them?



Adele Receives Award [cont.]

A native of New York, Sister Adele earned her undergraduate degree at Fordham University. While studying art at Notre Dame University she was awarded a Myron C. Taylor fellowship to Villa Schifanoia, a graduate school for art and music in Florence, Italy. Here she earned an M. A. in fine arts.

Adele, well known in Rockland County, NY, founded and directed the highly acclaimed Thorpe Intermediate Gallery; she taught art at Albertus Magnus School and at St. Thomas Aquinas College, and is currently curator at the STAC's Azarian McCullough Art Gallery. One of the first appointees to Rockland County's Art in Public Places Committee, Adele was the first recipient of the Rockland County's Executive Art Award.

The **DIA** is justifiably proud to count Adele among its members; we congratulate her for the honor **DIA** has bestowed on her, and for the loving recognition she has so deservedly received.

Brigid Believes in Bringing Joy

Inspired by ideas shared at **DIA's Gathering 2004**, Brigid Bray, OP, approached the San Antonio Senior Center early in August. She asked if any art workshops or other activities had been scheduled there. When the civic leaders answered in the negative, Brigid showed them a few of her paintings, asking if they might be interested in sponsoring a showing. This time the response was a resounding affirmative.

Brigid's show, "The World From a Paint Brush," featured approximately twenty-five paintings, covering a vast variety of subjects, and ran from August 19 - 31. Using acrylics and water-colors, Brigid says she tries to create an atmosphere of happiness by presenting details found in nature. She also "tells a story" through her paintings. Thus she is able to share her own deep joy in the Creator and in Her/His wondrous creation.

Kathleen Ministers Through Music

Kathleen Loewen, OP (Racine) —teacher, liturgist, musician—may wear a variety of hats in the course of a normal day, but the one she prefers is the one that seems to combine all three talents.

For more than five years, Kathleen has been offering music appreciation sessions to the Sisters at Siena Center. Once a month she gathers with them to listen to classical music.

Sometimes they talk briefly about the composer and the particular piece of music; other times they engage in a conversation about the type of composition or the period in history during which it was written, and the way that affected the composer's work.

Most of the time, however, is spent listening and enjoying the music. "I am gratified," Kathleen says, "to learn of the hunger for music among our Sisters and the appreciation they have for learning more about various works. I delight in later conversations when someone tells me she heard this-or-that piece and was able to recognize it because of our sessions together.

"Music has the power to inspire, to refresh, to heal—much as good preaching, teaching, and worship can. I hope I can continue to bring Holy Preaching to others through music," she concludes.



Brigid happily shows some of her paintings as she prepares to share her art with the senior citizens of San Antonio, Texas.

Contemplative Art is 'Holy Preaching,' Swanson Believes

"I have spent most of my life trying to put together my call to be an artist with my call to be a religious."

[So opens an essay written for this Newsletter by Sister Thoma Swanson, OP. This article delineates Thoma's philosophical ideals and personal efforts to correlate her two vocations. The editor, limited by space, was forced to omit some passages from the work, but hopes that interested readers will contact Thoma and ask for either an oral or written synthesis of her engrossing and vibrant ministry.]

My true art of that [early] time was the watercolor paintings. This was a clandestine art—I quietly painted everywhere I went, but almost never framed and displayed the paintings. . . My paintings were my way of communing with God, of appreciating the beauty of creation. . . .

I did not consider these painting real art since they were only inspired by the natural world, and the watercolor technique I used was simple and free. Making these paintings was important to me as a way of integrating my life and paying personal homage to the Creator. It was a long time before I realized that these paintings were indeed saying something, and that their voices were a kind of preaching. . . .

Finally I saw clearly how important it is that we act on our realization that God has given us the arts for important reasons. Through the arts we express externally our emotions and feelings. Not only does this support our mental and physical health; it also gives us a small experience of the unique joy and delight that the Creator has in His continuing grand work. . .

It can be hard work to keep our artistic expression honest and always a reflection of our true selves. The essence of our expression cannot be borrowed from another artist; it must be developed over time from our own experience and passions. . . .

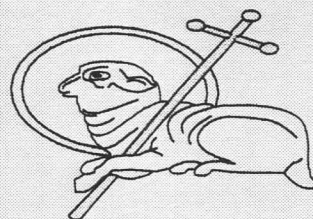
The artist who is also a religious must understand her work in relation to the Creator.

It is at this point that the artist can finally see what her art is called to be: an art that is the overflow of her years of meditation and contemplation. It is an art that somehow preserves the special vision—even quirkiness—of her own personality, yet totally participates in the whole Christian world view. It is an art that enables others to see what she sees and feel what she feels, and for a moment to experience with her the exaltation of the [human] creator in the vast universe of the Creator.

This art, when achieved, is indeed the **Holy Preaching!**

What kind of art do I make now that I have arrived at this insight? The best things I have made are, I think, part of that overflow of contemplation. Scripture is the basis for most of my work. Is it Holy Preaching? I can't answer that question because I don't set out to preach directly but simply to present the truth with passion in my own forms and colors. If people sometimes find my work insightful, helpful, and beautiful, I am content.

Dominic began his own preaching several years before he became the founder of the Order of Preachers. He was at that time part of a papal preaching band called the Preaching of Jesus Christ or simply The Holy Preaching. The image of the Lamb of God was its official seal.



"To contemplate and to give to others the fruit of that contemplation. . . ."

Poetry Corner

Clem Nagel wrote these three cinquains on the shores of Lake Michigan during **Gathering 2004**.
(A cinquain is a five-verse lyric poem with lines following a syllabic pattern of 2,4,6,8,2.)

Lake Michigan Mornings

Lake wind,
Barely masking
Morning song of sparrow,
Silent nodding of Queen Anne's lace
Greet day.

Waves wash
Breakwater rocks,
Race onto sandy beach.
Hidden birds sing from sumac bush.
Gulls soar.

Shades of
Blue abruptly
Turn lead-gray. Wind rises.
Fresh leaves blow landward; birds'
songs stop:
Lake storm?

Behind This Door

When I ended up in prison filled with bitterness
and hate,
I blamed it all on God, the Master of my fate.

But then I came to know Him in a truly different
way,
And now I live for Jesus each and every single
day.

He fills my heart with love I've never known
before.
I've found great peace and happiness behind
this prison door.

--Robert A. Munroe
Norwich Laity

DIA Elects Board

Making good use of the forms provided by Ann Mrugala, OP, Chairperson of the Nominating Committee, **DIA** members had no difficulty finding generous, qualified men and women to fill positions open for the Board. Those who accepted nominations gave a one-minute presentation, which was followed by a brief discussion period; then voting ensued.

Balloting resulted in the following choices:

Jean Ackerman, OP (Racine), **Jude Bloch, OP** (Grand Rapids), **Pat Daly, OPA** (Kentucky), **Irene Mary Diones, OP** (Mission San Jose), **Colleen Gallagher, OP** (Columbus), **Rudolf Loewenstein, OP** (England), and **Jeanne Stickling, OP** (Adrian).

With gratitude to God for the past, with confidence in Divine Providence for the future, we invoke God's blessing on all those who serve.



Newly elected Board members include Colleen Gallagher, Pat Daly (Vice President), Irene Mary Diones (Secretary), Rudolf Loewenstein, Jude Bloch, Jean Ackerman (President), and Jeanne Stickling (Treasurer).
(Photo supplied by Jeanne Stickling)

DEADLINE for sending in items for next issue: **January 6, 2005**

Que Pasa? What's Happening?

Federation of Dominican Women USA Convocation
April 21-24, 2005 Radisson Hotel O'Hare, Chicago

Celebrate Oneness: One Planet, One People, One Preaching

- ❖ Be there at the **POETS' CORNER**: submit your own poetry for exhibition on large bulletin board for public viewing.*
- ❖ Be there at the **ARTISTS' MARKET PLACE**: exhibit and sell your art work at a "reserved space" (Sales & Security your responsibility). Bring favorite table covering if possible.*
- ❖ Be there with your transportable **VISUAL ART** reflecting theme of Convocation for exhibit/display. (Security your responsibility.)
- ❖ Be there with a few small sanitized stones or shells from your corner of the earth to symbolize our One Planet.
- ❖ Be there to experience, explore, celebrate
Our Oneness, Dominican Women of the USA!

*Submission of poetry in 16- or 18-font size, **BOLD**, with your name and congregation; and reservations for Market Place—all due before January 1, 2005. Mail before Christmas to: Ann Mrugala, OP, #2SW 10335 McVicker Ave., Chicago Ridge, IL 60415

See You There!

Nurture the Contemplative:

A Dominican Artist's Retreat

- ❖ Are you a **serious artist** who wants to enhance your spirit of **prayer and contemplation**?
- ❖ Do you need **time and space** in a **peaceful** setting?
- ❖ Have you a desire to **pursue your own art and share with others**?

Then you would really enjoy
the Mariandale Retreat Center
on the Hudson River
from June 11 – June 17, 2005!
Reduced cost for Dominicans and
Associates: only \$225!

Contact Lorraine Ferguson, OP
Email: ferguson@ophope.org

www.diaonline.org

Visit our Website at

Return Service Requested

5635 Erie Street
Racine, WI 53402-1934

