



Searching for truth and beauty, preaching through the transforming power of the arts  
 Spring 2012 E-Newsletter Volume XIV No. 2  
[www.DIArts.org](http://www.DIArts.org)

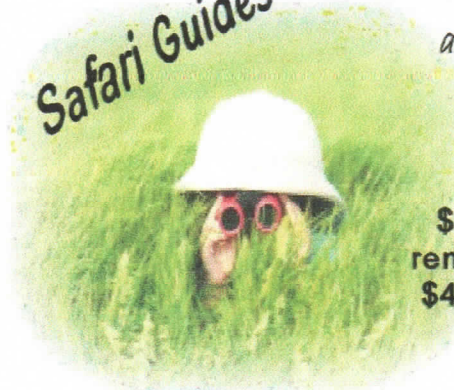
## DIA's 16<sup>th</sup> Gathering 2012 on the move!

**Safari Guides**

**ON THE LOOK-OUT...**

**July 25-28, 2012**

*and here are some discoveries to share  
 for your growing enthusiasm in  
 joining the adventure...*



**\$350 Registration fee  
 remains as is...forget the  
 \$400 "postmarked after  
 May 15..."**



**Mask-making is  
 available...**



**Safari camp outs  
 in villages are  
 pitched...**

**Virtual Gallery -  
 Remember to send your  
 best art to Carol  
 by June 1 ...**



**The "Shaman" is  
 making his rounds in  
 villages...**



**The drummers are  
 on the beat...**

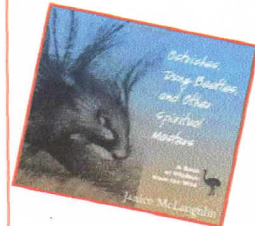


**The dancers  
 are swinging  
 and leaping...**

**Rafiki is all geared up with her  
 "Wisdom from the Wild".**



**How about YOU?  
 Where are you now in this gathering?**



**More volunteers  
 are offering  
 their time and  
 talents!**

## A letter to Membership from Board President, Mary Fran Gorman OP



*When was the last time you experienced art that brought you to a stand still?*

*What was the last piece of art that brought intense joy to your heart, mind and/or spirit?*

I was blest to take a tour of the Vatican Museum nearly twenty years ago. I was with my seventeen year old niece and a friend who was studying in Rome. The power of the art at the museum was overwhelming.

I was taken by the art created centuries before I was born. I was lost when I stopped before a marble statue about eight feet tall of a man. I couldn't take my eyes off of it. The art caused time to stop for me and the impact of the statue on my heart and mind was so great that my friend and niece had to come back to find me. The perfection of the sculpture was a conduit to the Creator for me. Though I do not remember the name of the piece nor the sculptor, I will never forget that marble statue.

After roaming the halls of the Vatican Museum for an hour, I think a part of me shut down. The impact of the art and the ages it came from was numbing. I admired it, took joy from it, but unless I see some pictures of it I don't remember much of it.

As artists we create a great deal of art. As Dominican artists we try to imbue our art with TRUTH. We need to ask, "Does our art help create bridges to the Divine?"

Over the last twenty years I have made a great deal of things out of clay. Lately, I have been asking myself, "What is the Truth my art reveals?" I don't always have an answer. Yet, I am astounded when a piece that I am tired of seeing, one destined for the hammer, is suddenly claimed. Someone brings it to me. They smile and say. "This is

just what I have been looking for, just what I needed." I think that we often are too subjective, perhaps too critical when it comes to our own art. What may not be your favorite piece, may be a blessing to another person. If we create with faith and prayer, the Truth is there for the person who needs it.

The marble statue, centuries old, revealed to me a Truth I didn't know I was looking for at the time. The majesty and power of God became clear to me in that moment. That statue awed me as I realized that creation of humankind is past, present and ongoing. Our art can give the same message.

A viable example might be music. Musicians play, compose, perform many styles of music. Some music they like better than others. Yet, when they play a piece they may not be overly fond of, it can forge that bridge to the Divine for someone else who may not even be seeking it. Because we each see and hear things differently, art calls each of us to offer our unique understanding and revelation of the Truth.

Throughout the centuries the Church has used art as a bridge to the Trinity and the Kingdom. There have been, are now, and will be musicians, sculptors, writers, poets, painters, performers and more. Each one is a liaison for opening a path to the Holy. We are part of a prestigious group. But please,

do not say: "I am not a "real" artist." "I cannot create important things." "I'm not good enough to make any difference."

Most of us are not Michelangelo. That is a good thing. But our art is simple, personal and from the heart. Unlike Fra Angelico and other greats, our art is there for those around us. While the sculpture at the Vatican drew me into a moment of awe, I have that same fire rekindled when I view your work at the Gala, the Market Place and on line. The size, cost, or time needed to create have no bearing on how or when those who see our work encounter the Kingdom of God.

Between now and July, please consider sharing with all of us a time when your art bridged the gap for someone else or for yourself. Share with us how your art moves you closer in your relationship with God. Your sharing need not be long. Even a few sentences or a brief story will help each one of us in our work and in our lives. Just send or E-mail your offering to our newsletter editors, Elizabeth Michael Boyle OP or Jude Bloch OP. Please don't pass this over. Help us reach a better understanding of how our art preaches and graces those we serve.

Blessings of Pentecost be abundantly yours,  
*Mary Fran*

### **Marchionda Conducts Concert Tour for Peace**



Performing at the Basilica of San Juan de Dios, Granada, Spain.

Through May 2012, Jim Marchionda, OP, has been conducting the Dominican Festival Choir in his fifth "Concert Tour for Peace." The Choir draws its sixty voices from church choirs throughout the United States where Jim and Ann Willits OP have preached parish missions for the past nineteen years. This ecumenical choir includes, besides Catholics, singers from Lutheran and Methodist denominations to whom Jim has preached in Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

In the past, the Dominican Festival Choir has performed in Italy, the Czech Republic, Austria, Hungary, Spain, Ireland, and Northern Ireland. They are currently scheduled to return to Italy to perform their musical prayer for peace at Saint Dominic's tomb in Bologna; San Marco, Venice; Santa Sabina and Santa Maria in Trastevere, Rome; Saint Francis tomb in Assisi; San Lorenzo Cathedral in Perugia; and San Agnes Church in the Piazza Navonna.

## “AZA”

Phyllis Mrozinski OP, Dominican Sisters – Grand Rapids



A greyhound breeder provided 60 photos of dogs in various positions with close-ups of details such as ears, teeth, eyes, paws, etc. She quoted measurements of the largest greyhound that was available.

After my Dominic sculpture was dedicated in 2009 the Sisters at our motherhouse repeatedly asked, “Where is his dog? Dominic needs his dog!” It was from this kind of inquiry and encouragement that I began to sculpt AZA, named after the city of Dominic’s mother, Jane of AZA.

Photos of Dominic with a dog were studied. I imagined the larger breeds to have the stamina needed to walk with him. Michigan winters with heavy snowfalls were also of practical concern, and I reasoned that a larger dog would remain visible under those conditions.

I have not studied animal anatomy and so it was out of necessity that dog breeder and trainer, Ann Westerman, was consulted. We envisioned a large dog with short hair with bone and muscle structure defined. The dog would have an inquisitive, friendly face and be bearing a torch. The dog that best fit the description was the mighty greyhound.



Detail of head and torch

Ann periodically examined the anatomy of the clay model and corrected errors. This was not an easy sculpture to construct. Friends encouraged me to stay with it.

After the clay model was completed. It remained in my Basement Studio for several months before it was sent to the foundry for bronze-casting.

In August 2010, AZA, with eyes focused on the Holy Preacher and with perked ears, was placed near the sculpture of Dominic on the Marywood property.

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**PS:** Only after the sculpture was completed and placed, did I find out that one of the largest of all Greyhound breeds is the Aza Hound – so this dog has been aptly named!

## FEATURE: The Artist as Preacher The Sagrada Familia Basilica in Barcelona

Jude Bloch OP



In December 2010 I was introduced to Antoni Gaudí's Basilica of the Sagrada Família. Gaudí was born in 1852 and died in 1926 and the Basilica continues to be built. The church, the article said, can hold 14,000 worshippers and my thought was, "Why would anyone want 14,000 worshippers in one place at the same time? Perhaps for the coming of the rapture?" It was mentioned that it will take at least two more decades to complete the Basilica. Already it has taken 129 years of work . . .

It was the pull-out section that really drew my attention, reeling me in with superb photographic vantage points, the stunning color and blueprint-like arrows and explanations.

Since God created nature, he (Gaudí) could do no better than to reflect God's nature. Gaudí employed two sticks and a cord to mimic natural shapes and arcs. Though the outside spires rise high and seem contrived and jabbingly stiff from a distance, a closer



look reveals shapes and arches found in nature that soften the overall effect. Especially on the inside do we find a mix of light and shadow, color and form that seem to flow from each other and into each other.

It may not be the rapture of the end times, but indeed there is a rapture in the natural bends and lines that resemble all life forms and could be just the thing that welcomes 14,000 worshippers 'home' to their more 'natural' selves.



Looking toward the church's central nave vaulting.

## DIA Board Members

Mary Fran Gorman OP  
Chair  
mfgop@yahoo.com

Mary Boyce MM  
Co-Chair  
mary@sistermaryboyce.com

Dominic DeLay OP  
Board Secretary  
dominic@mudpuddlefilms.com

Jill Poehlman OPA  
Treasurer  
jpoehlman@wowway.com

Mary Pat Reid OP  
Membership Liaison  
marypreid@gmail.com

Joeann Daley OP  
Member at Large  
jdaley40@aol.com

Elaine Taylor OP  
Member at Large  
etaylorop@verizon.net



## Other Contacts

Jeanne Stickling OP  
Archivist  
sjsclay@yahoo.com

Carol O'Connor OPA  
Web Editor  
coconnor@oppeace.org

Elizabeth Michael Boyle OP  
Newsletter Editor  
emichael@caldwell.edu

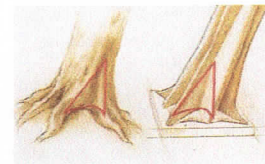
Jude Bloch OP  
Newsletter Editor  
jubloch@aol.com

**Structures:** Having observed their functional perfection in nature, Gaudi used twisted surfaces and curved planes as the organic bases of his buildings. His columns, arches and stairways all stem from the notion of natural design.

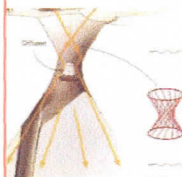


**Columns:** In his quest for a perfect column, Gaudi studied the helicoid growth of many plants – patterns that let leaves receive sunlight and lend structural strength.

**Column Bases:** Hyperbolic paraboloids abound in nature. Examples include tree roots connected to trunks and the webbing between the human thumb and index finger. Gaudi used tree roots to imagine the column base from the Passion façade.

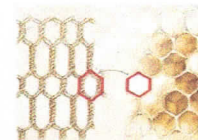


**Arches:** All of Gaudi's works feature catenary arches, which form naturally via gravity and are visible when a rope is hung.



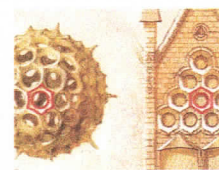
**Double Roof:** A unique feature of the church's roof, quadric surfaces called hyperboloids reflect and filter natural light.

**Honeycomb Gates:** The patterns of honeycombs and palm fronds are etched on gates, walls and floors.



**Vine Lines:** Gaudi often incorporated naturally spiraling helices. Passion fruit tendrils adorn the side walls of the nativity façade.

**Organic Windows:** Following the patterns found on natural objects, like those on a marine diatom, Gaudi designed windows to allow for greater passage of natural light.



**Gargoyles:** For his gargoyles, Gaudi chose to depict native wildlife species displaced by the church's construction.

Quotations and photos from National Geographic December 2010 –  
**The Big Idea – Biomimetic Architecture**  
**Gaudi's Masterpiece**