



*Searching for truth and beauty, preaching through the transforming power of the arts*

*Fall Newsletter 2014 Volume 16 Issue 2*



## Adrian Gathering Burnishes Both Sides of the Coin

Assembled for their 17th Annual National Gathering, DIA artists enjoyed ideal accommodations and hospitality in the Weber Center where they explored together "Art & Spirituality: Two Sides of the Same Coin." When introduced in the winter issue of *OPalette*, Keynoter Fran Belmonte had specified what she hoped to achieve: "It will not come from me. I hope only to lead the DIA artists into a deeper experience

"Transformation is more than reformation: reformation means fixing, whereas transformation means a leap into a whole new way of seeing."

of their own power through the arts." This objective was abundantly accomplished as Fran dropped inspirational "prompts" into the collective consciousness of her audience and then invited them to share their own experiences of the artistic process.

These conversations became a rhythmic affirmation of art as a valid source of theology. Under the impetus of this professional theologian, discussion gradually revealed how imagination, curiosity, and fantasy, combined with a dash of creative frustration, can contribute a unique dimension to revelation through the "sense of the faithful."

Fran generously sprinkled her input with Latin-based etymologies which restored words' original meanings, making them newly meaningful. To these insights she added assurances from science, like Einstein's famous dictum "Imagination is more important than knowledge." Participants could be seen scribbling notes when a particularly apt statement or quote rang true to their own experience.

Among Fran's one-liners were some memorable favorites: "Artistic intuition is unmediated vision." "Without art, theology suffers a lobotomy." Perhaps the strongest perceptible audience reaction was the murmur of deep resonance that filled the room when Fran cited Kandinsky: "When the artwork has been made, the artwork itself has a soul. The soul of the work meets the soul of the viewer." In the culminating activity of the Gathering, the best of everything expressed by the keynoter became manifest.

For two hours, each artist shared one of her works with a series of groups, explaining its inspiration and the process which brought it to fruition. Again and again, this exercise demonstrated the truth of Kandinsky's statement that the artifact itself has a "soul."





## Workshops and Site Visits Interpret the Theme

Through the Adrian congregation's artists and artifacts, the venue itself provided a rich exhibition of the Art & Spirituality theme. Either by plan or by serendipitous coincidence, those who chose to tour Rosary Chapel with Barbara Rund, visit Barbara Chenicek and Rita Schiltz in INAI studio, and accompany Carol Coston to Permaculture experienced a visual history of the evolution of post Vatican II theologies. Sue Schreiber and Xiomara Mendez-Hernandez' contributed to the theme in both their workshops and their liturgical prayer. Diane Weifenbach, surrounded by an amazing collection of unconventional materials, literally embodied her title "Joy in Multimedia Collages and Montage," and Barbara Schwarz generously shared a road map to cyberspace in "Creating a Digital Newsletter."



## Entertainment: Multimedia and Multicultural

An evening of entertainment with an international flavor led by Fra Angelico honorees began with pianist-composer Magdalena Ezoe and vocalist Dominic DeLay. Both performers combined professional excellence with a touch of humor in offerings that ranged from Mozart to Bernstein to a passionate tribute to the culinary temptress, Sara Lee. Xiomara Mendez-Hernandez from the Dominican Republic danced to a lively Latin composition by Jim Marchionda and engaged the entire audience in performing the lyrics in American Sign Language. Anita Smisek (Magdalena's publisher) rendered a charming medley of Czech folk music with such emotion that the words required no translation. Pat Daly's photographic meditation on creation (dedicated to Adele Rowland, O.P.) provided a fitting capstone to the program.



## Virtual Gallery a "Hit" Online

According to Barbara Schwarz, each time DIA or one of its members appears in Dom Life or any other media outlet, a noticeable surge hits the Virtual Gallery at [www.diartsop.org](http://www.diartsop.org). Those who had to miss the 2014 Gallery, dedicated to Jude Bloch, can (and should) now access the art of members online.



## Alyce Van Acker OP: 2014 Fra Angelico Recipient



Excitement mounted at the Gathering's concluding liturgy as President Barbara Schwarz, following a time-honored tradition, slowly revealed the organization's most closely guarded secret: the name of the 2014 Fra Angelico honoree, Adrian Dominican Alyce Van Acker.

Earlier this year, Alyce had mounted a forty-year retrospective of thirty-two paintings at the Fine Line Art Center in St. Charles, Illinois where she has been teaching classes in drawing and painting since 1980. Aptly entitled "Sharing Color," the exhibit gave Alyce the opportunity to share with the public her lifelong delight in pure beauty.

In her own words, "Each painting serves as a metaphor of inner and outer experience." Titles like Primarily and Cadamy combined with Spirit Descending and Transformation hinted at this body/spirit interplay. "Poured Painting," her most recent preference, represents a transformative experience in her evolution as an artist. In this process, the artist pours a solution of diluted acrylic in layers onto a canvas on the floor. The exhibit prompted invitations for Alyce to share her colorful vision at three other venues.



Cadamy Curve



Initially slated to be a science teacher, Alyce earned her undergraduate degree in math and science while pursuing art on her own on Saturdays. Eventually, art triumphed when she completed B. A. and M.A. degrees in art at DeKalb University.

For Alyce, as for most DIA artists, "Painting is a form of prayer" drawing inspiration from poetry and the psalms. Being an artist and teaching art to women who are discovering themselves as artists, Alyce is fulfilling in a unique way the ancient Dominican ideal of contemplation, preaching, and empowerment.

Six of Alyce's stunning color abstracts can be sampled at the DIA's website. For greater enjoyment, be sure to tap each selection for an enlargement.



All the Fra winners at the gathering celebrate with Alyce!

## Elizabeth Michael Boyle OP: 2014 Spirit Recognition

Elizabeth Michael Boyle OP, a Dominican Sister of Caldwell, is our selfless and shy editor of this publication. She omitted this recognition of herself from the articles for the newsletter because like "all things Michael" it is not about me. Well, it is about Elizabeth Michael! For years she has been on numerous planning commissions, editor of our newsletter, MC of the coffee house and a willing hand and poetic word given to any task for DIA. Her humor delights us.

And so this year we recognize Elizabeth Michael for her works on our behalf. Thank you!



## DIA Board Elections

At the 2014 Gathering, Rudolf Loewenstein OP was re-elected to the Board and Elizabeth Michael Boyle OP filled the vacancy on the board and is taking on the role of Secretary from Mary Pat Reid. Thank you to all those who accepted nominations and to the board members for all their work.



2014-5 Board: Rudolf Loewenstein OP and Mary Pat Reid OP -Members at Large; Elaine Taylor OP- Membership; Jean Stickling OP-Treasurer; Elizabeth Michael Boyle OP Secretary; Pat Daly- Vice President; Barbara Schwarz OP - President



# *What does DIA Mean to me?*



DIA is friends within the Dominican family. It is a wonderful time and place to become known, affirmed and a time to be able to share. That means a lot to artists to have their gifts accepted, understood and enjoyed. -Anita Smisek OP



*Searching for truth and beauty, preaching through the transforming power of the arts*

Well what I love about DIA is the connection I make with my sisters and brothers. The input and the prayer is wonderful but most important is renewing our friendships, renewing our creative vision, renewing our commitment to preach through the arts.  
- Nancyann Turner OP



Oh it is life-giving. It's a lifeline. I love being with fellow artists because there is something in our souls that other people do not understand. We touch each other on a level that nobody else can touch.

- Sarajane Seaver OP



DIA is a phenomenal group in the Dominican Order who work, play, are interested in making the arts come alive. We can preach by our arts- **AND WE DO!**

- Mary Ellen Paulson OP



What do I feel about DIA? I feel wonderful. I feel embraced. It is so great to be back with my sister artists because I haven't been here for the last couple of times. It is just great to have the support and be encouraged to create!

- Dominic Delay OP

***We are family in Dominic: friars, sisters, associates, and laity.***



I just love the connecting with the people here. Seeing old friends and meeting new friends and seeing the gorgeous work that people do. It just makes me able to go back and do what I do again.

- Ann Marie Santen OP



DIA means a time when I can reflect on how my art has been a source of healing and beauty not just for me but for those that I have shared it with. Also it gives me a fresh start or a time to renew my relationships within the Dominican Family.

- Suzanne Schrieber OP



***We are poets, painters, musicians, photographers, potters.***



***We are  
designers of  
sacred space,  
film makers,  
graphic artists***



***We are  
composers,  
dramatists,  
actors, dancers,  
and weavers.***

DIA for me is a soul outside my own soul. And I find very much comfort, peace and encouragement and thoughtfulness on the part of different members. It encourages me in my art process.  
- Elizabeth Slenker OP



I'm happy I am here because it seems a long time when we wait a whole year for the next meeting.  
- Alyce Van Acker OP



Coming here I meet women and men who do different types of art and I love being surrounded by artistic people. They just have a different way of looking at life and doing not only for others but for themselves. - Barbara Kukla OP



What DIA means for me is a great part of growing by exchanging with each other, meeting each other and being in a group of artists who appreciate art. I love it.  
- Mary Boyce MM

DIA gives me an opportunity to express myself as an artist and to fulfill my Dominican Spirituality of being joyful and to preach from my truth, from my inner truth and to give to others the fruit of my contemplation. Through them and just to be who I am.  
- - Xiomara Mendez-Hernandez OP



I think that is getting more and more important to connect with one another on many levels. With my recent understanding of Kandinsky and the spirituality of art the soulness of things is everywhere. And I think the soul of why we come together is that connecting.  
- Joann Daley OP



***We are  
any kind of  
artist you can  
imagine***



***We preach  
through our  
art!***

***We are preachers!***





## Results-Oriented Leadership

Even before participants at the 2014 Gathering perused the Board's written Annual Report, those assembled at the registration desk demonstrated one of its most welcome achievements. Squeals of delighted recognition greeted members who had not been seen in recent years.

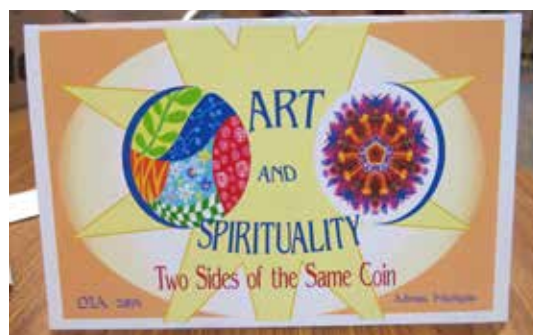
Pat Daley's oral report explained the year-long, e-mail, mail and one-on-one telephone campaign behind this phenomenon. A similar personal appeal by board members also accounted for a representation of almost 30 DIA artists in this year's Virtual Gallery.



The 2014 Report recorded that every one of the initiatives recommended at Columbus in 2013 had been vigorously addressed. (You can find the full report on the member pages of [www.diartsop.org](http://www.diartsop.org).)

As a result:

- Two grants of \$500 were made available for members to attend the Latin American Conference of Artists in Guatemala this fall. Kathy Rhody will represent the DIA at this event.
- The Board initiated Service Scholarships for Dominican Young Adults and Youth Preachers. They were unsuccessfully offered for the Adrian Gathering; work has begun on a juried web show of Dominican Youth on our website.
- With Barbara Schwarz's energetic use of email, Facebook, DomLife and other outlets, members almost felt themselves connected to a 24/7 news cycle. Yet, Barbara insists, this is not enough. Members are too shy, or too busy or feel it they are not newsworthy enough to notify OPalette editors of their activities. Hence, Barbara invited members to "snitch on each other." As a result, this issue of OPalette features a collection of short notices gleaned at the gathering that we hope will provoke others to share their good news.



## A Few Things to Crow About

In a unique collaboration in art therapy, Adrian Dominican Donna Markham OP is renovating the environment in ten mental health care units in Ohio and Kentucky. A series of framed photos by DIA artist **Suzanne Shreiber OP** entitled "Stations of Recovery" sets the thematic focus for the new décor.

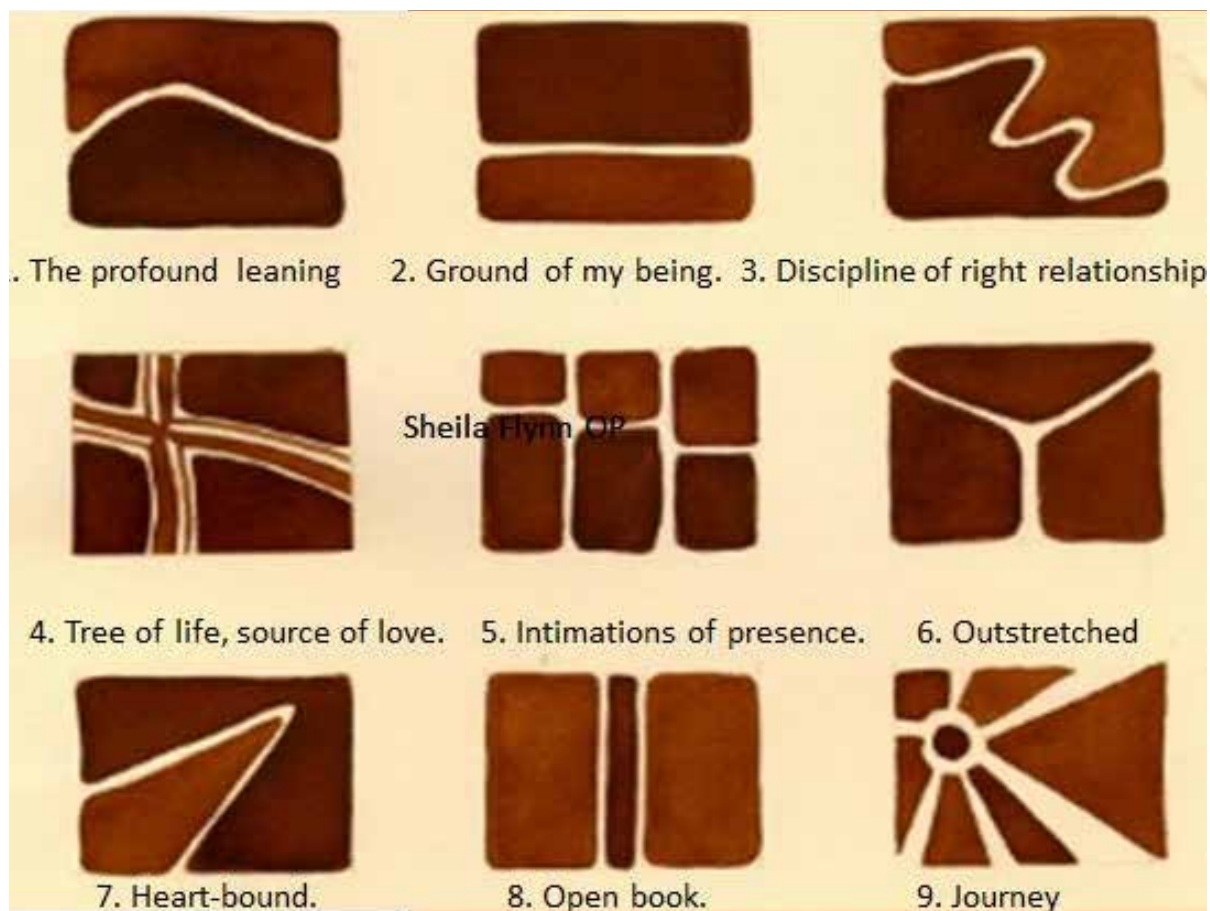
The city of Racine, Wisconsin recently honored outstanding volunteers among whom were three Racine Dominicans. DIA artist **Barbara Kukula OP** received the Arts and Culture Award in recognition for her volunteer work as an art therapist in the local shelter for abused women. Interviewed in the local press, Barbara pointed out that, as a volunteer, she has been not only a giver but also a receiver of spiritual energy. "My time at the Women's Resource Center gives me the opportunity to change and to grow. I too learn with the women."

Sinsinawa Dominican **Anita Smisek OP** has been appointed Civic Chorus Leader for the Tri-State Area, Sinsinawa Mound. Under Anita's direction a chorus of local seniors recently performed "Pioneer Priest," a musical by Cecil Sullivan, O.P. based on the life of founder Samuel Mazzocelli, O.P. Meantime, Anita continues her "day job" as executive administrator of Alliance Publications Inc. a music ministry she founded in collaboration with Dominican Associate Joel Blahnik in 1989. ( See related article)

At a gala on July 18, 2014, **Elaine Taylor OP** was made a Life Member of the Saint Petersburg City Theater. This year, five of Elaine's original plays were performed by students. The first of these, "Stranger in Paradise," was a musical with score by Rudolph Lowenstein and book by Elaine.

As a member of the San Gabriel Fine Arts Association, **Brigid Bray OP** won First Prize in their recent photography competition with a double exposure of Our Lady's statue and an image of the nativity superimposed.

The Global Sisters Report online has published three paintings including "Jesus and the Bent over Woman" and two photos of **Barbara Schwarz OP**.



Dominic's Nine Ways of Prayer by Sheila Flynn

## The Artist

## as Preacher

### Rediscovering Dominic's Prayer of the Body

At Barbara Schwarz recommendation, I browsed the DIA Gallery to find inspiration for my favorite OPalette feature, reflection on an artifact that preaches. Having selected Sheila Flynn's rendition of Dominic's Nine Ways of Prayer, I soon found myself on an unanticipated adventure on the internet which rewarded me with fresh insights on a familiar devotion.

We are all familiar with traditional representations of Dominic's Prayer of the Body and have participated in its ritualistic reenactment. Sheila Flynn's minimalist abstract renderings can be puzzling at first. But when we learn that this Dominican Sister from Eastern Australia and the Solomon Islands created these deceptively simple gestures as a reinterpretation of the tradition in relation to the lives of the African women she serves, the connection opens us up to contemporary soul-searching. Serving abused women in Africa since 1988 where she established a center for training women in life skills including income-producing arts like embroidery and paper making, Sheila has not only stripped down the figure of Dominic to images that compel us to ponder, she has also re-phrased their titles to emphasize both the self-direction and interdependence demanded by the struggle for justice in our time.

Dominic's bow becomes "Profound Leaning;" prostration is re-translated as "Ground of My Being;" the medieval practice of scourging with a discipline is replaced by the challenging "Discipline of Right Relationships;" arms outstretched cruciform compel the outreach of compassion; Dominic's sacred reading expands to offering oneself as an "Open Book;" the abstract symbol for walking invites us to roads radiating from the sun.

With these provocative images, Sheila Flynn invites us to join her and her women—however we can—in offering the Prayer of the Body of Christ in our world..



## Reflections from the President

We were all so happy to see so many people from the past at the Gathering in Adrian and to see the works of those who could not come in the Virtual Gallery! DIA is certainly alive and well. To catch the spirit all you have to do is look at the videos on the website.

Next year we gather at Great Bend, Kansas from July 22-July 25, 2015. We know it is further west than most of us usually travel but we are sure it will be worth it. The planning commission is already at work with a Native American Theme. We are grateful that Elizabeth Slenker OP, Ann Marie Santen OP and Rebecca Otter OP are working with Pat Daly OPA the Board Liason. We hope to see you there!

Preaching through the Arts is at the heart and soul of who we are as Dominican Artists. Fran Belmonte spoke of how privileged she felt to be with some of the most creative people she has ever met. While we can be proud of our work there is much more to be done. How do we speak to the world in turmoil? How can we preach?

In January we will again have a membership renewal. You saw what can happen. Encourage members of your congregation or province to join or to renew their membership. Your invitation makes a difference.

At the board meeting during the gathering we further explained and reminded you of the Collaborative Grant initiative we began. It is only limited by your imagination. Consider how you might further the holy preaching with others in this way or in your own locale.

Don't be shy. Show your work on the web, proclaim to all of us with joy the projects and shows of which you have been a part. We are all richer by your sharing. We saw that in the sharing session at the gathering. In order to get the support we need we must share our work. Just send the digital images to me at diartsop@gmail.com.

Future Gatherings just don't happen. We are grateful to Pat Daly OPA and Mary Pat Reid OP for their work in securing places for our gatherings and board meetings. Our next board meeting will take place in Caldwell, NJ from October 31- November 2.

Let us pray, play and may the preaching continue!



## COLLABORATIVE GRANT REMINDER

Since Dominican Collaboration is important, we thought there should be a grant to foster the process of collaboration through the arts. As we explained at the gathering we are again posting the possibility of a grant to do just that.

As a board we were looking to see how we could encourage and create new ways to grow as a Dominican Entity. This grant is one of the ways.

### PURPOSE

To further our Dominican Life and Mission, and our goals of Preaching through the Arts, the DIA Board will award 1 Grant of \$1,000.00 to a Project which qualifies.

### GRANT REGULATIONS

- 1) The project demonstrates Preaching through the Arts
- 2) The project involves 2 or more members of DIA.
- 3) The project is new, not part of an existing project.
- 4) The project may be multi-disciplined.
- 5) The project should be completed in 1 year.
- 6) On completion, the recipient(s) will give a short presentation on-line or at the next Gathering.
- 7) The application for the Grant must be in by December 1, 2014 by SNAIL MAIL ONLY.
- 8) Send the application to Sr. Mary Pat Reid, OP, 1 Ryerson Avenue, Caldwell N.J. 07006

To get an application, contact Mary Pat Reid OP or go to the member pages of [www.diartsop.org](http://www.diartsop.org) and download a copy.







## Alliance Publications, Inc.: An International Music Ministry

By now DIA regulars are familiar with Anita Smisek's delightful revival of Czech folk music and a few of us—like Magdalena Ezoë and Rudolf Lowenstein—count on her to publish their compositions. But most of us would be surprised to learn of the range of her services as co-founder and executive director of Alliance Publications, Inc.

Still fewer of us remember that it was through Anita's work with API that Rudolf Lowenstein was introduced to DIA. Now in its 25th year, API publishes music for organ, band, orchestra, and solo instruments as well as for voice and chorus. API's catalog lists 2800 titles by 321 composers, 200 from America and 121 from 15 other countries. Since 1992, the company has made its home at the Sinsinawa motherhouse.

Magdalena Ezoë, OP recently prepared her editions of Chopin Medleys I, II, and III for publication by Alliance Publications.



**Visit our website!**  
**Let your communicators**  
**know you about your**  
**webpage at [www.diartsop.org](http://www.diartsop.org)**

**Dominican Institute for the Arts** [www.diartsop.org](http://www.diartsop.org)

Searching for Truth and Beauty: Preaching through the Transforming Power of the Arts

Home About Us Our Art Gallery Frs Angello Award Newsletters Gathering News Membership Photos Member Page

Anita Smisek 2014

The Dominican Institute for the Arts is a grassroots collaboration of sisters, friars, laity and associates of the Order of Preachers. We are committed to preaching through the Arts.

We are painters, musicians, dancers, sculptors, film makers, potters, poets, actors, composers, writers, designers of sacred space, dramatists, any other art form you can imagine, and those who appreciate and support the arts.

Explore our site,  
See [our galleries](#),  
Hear our [Stories!](#)

Board and Contact Information is on [About Us Page](#)

Website Designed by Dominican Sisters of the Arts. Arts diartsop@gmail.com © 2014 at HolyMass™ Create a Website and Get Your Business

**Our gallery needs you to**  
**update your work!**  
**[diartsop@gmail.com](mailto:diartsop@gmail.com)**



## Gathering News:

The **2015 DIA Gathering** will take place at **Heartland Spirituality Center in Great Bend, Kansas**. It is a ministry of the Dominican Sisters of Peace and is located on the grounds of the Great Bend Motherhouse. The gathering will take place **July 22-25, 2015**.

The **2016 DIA Gathering** will take place at the new retreat center at **Racine, WI** from **July 27 to July 30, 2016**

The **2017 Gathering** will again take place at **Weber Center, Adrian, MI**, **July 26 - July 29, 2017**.

## **DIA Board 2014 -15**

**President:** Barbara Schwarz OP  
41 Union Ave, Amityville, NY 11701  
[artafire@hotmail.com](mailto:artafire@hotmail.com)

**Vice President:** Pat Daly OPA  
480 Liberty Street, Braintree, MA 02184  
[pmdaly@beld.net](mailto:pmdaly@beld.net)

**Secretary:** Elizabeth Michael Boyle OP  
1 Ryerson Ave., Caldwell, NJ 07006  
[emichael@caldwell.edu](mailto:emichael@caldwell.edu)

**Treasurer:** Jeanne Stickling OP  
51 So Spring St #112, Elgin, IL 60120-6427  
[sjsclay@comcast.com](mailto:sjsclay@comcast.com)

**Membership:** Elaine Taylor OP  
5608 D Lynn Lake Dr. S.,  
St. Petersburg, FL 33712  
[etaylorop@verizon.net](mailto:etaylorop@verizon.net)

### **At Large:**

Rudolf Loewenstein OP  
St. Dominic's Priory  
Southampton Rd  
London, England NW5 4LB  
[rudolf.loewenstein@english.op.org](mailto:rudolf.loewenstein@english.op.org)  
Mary Pat Reid OP  
1 Ryerson Ave., Caldwell, NJ 07006  
[marypreid@gmail.com](mailto:marypreid@gmail.com)

***www.diartsop.org***  
***diarts@gmail.com***



*Dominican Institute for the Arts*