

preachers' exchange

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Summer, 1997

Dear Preachers:

I write this before the beginning of our provincial Chapter. The entire province will be gathering for three days immediately preceding the Chapter for our Assembly. These are wonderful times of reunion for us and a chance to refresh the vision that started our province seventeen years ago. (Are we still the youngest province in the world?) I have been doing a lot of reading of our Order's and Province's documents. It feels like a retreat to hear again our vision as an Order-- the descriptions of who we are, where we came from, and where we hope to be going.

I thought I would share a couple of these "rediscoveries". First of all the bold announcement of our priorities. They ground us in our vision and help us know where to go for our future. I was also struck by Timothy Radcliffe's "state of the Order" address he gave in preparation for the General Chapter of Caleruega. In this edition we have quoted the part he calls "Preaching the Good News." As always, he is honest and calls it as he sees it.

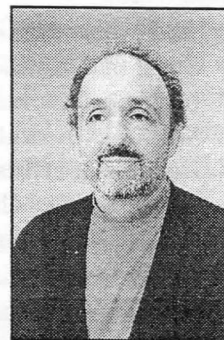
I also congratulate our Dominican artist-preach-

ers for their founding of the Dominican Institute for the Arts. It is an exciting development, which offers much promise. We look forward to seeing DIA grow.

We are looking for book reviews for Preachers' Exchange. If you have read something that helps your preaching, even if it's not explicitly about preaching, how about writing it up for us? If you do, we can send you another book in appreciation. Or, if you like, contact us for a free preaching book that you can review for us this fall. Readers of PE say they appreciate what others find helpful for preaching. Isn't that what it's all about anyway, collaboration among preachers?

I hope the summer is going well for you.

*Blessings on your preachings,
The Editor*



Presence of the Spirit – Preaching Event:

Dominican Institute for the Arts is Born

By Armando P. Ibáñez, O.P.

"The Spirit is here," a Dominican told me as we gathered outside of St. Albert's Priory in Oakland.

The afternoon was typical for June in the Bay area – bright and cool, a postcard kind of day.

The Spirit, indeed, was there for the gathering of twenty-two Dominican artists and appreciators of the arts – 22 preachers. In short, it was a preaching event. It was a preaching event because the Spirit was there, and the artists testified to her presence in their works of art, in their lives.

An important result of the Gathering of Dominican Artists, June 20-22, was the creation of the Dominican

Institute for the Arts.

"I feel the Spirit," Joe Rogus of San Mateo, a member of the Dominican laity, told me as we prepared to hold a group session.

At that moment, I recalled the same sense of the presence of the Spirit coming from our first meeting of organizers, which we held at St. Albert's Priory May 17, to plan the gathering. Of course, prior to that meeting, we had made phone calls, and sent both snail and e-mails to each other. But the night of May 17th was special. We knew the Spirit was there; we knew that that the Gathering (June 20-22) was of God. The

members of the organizational committee -- Chris Renz, Lisa Lopez Williams, Rose Marie Hennessey and myself -- went away that night knowing that the Spirit was at work.

"I feel the Spirit," said Joe Rogus

And when the Gathering took place June 20-22, the Spirit manifested Herself in many ways. The presence of the Spirit permeated our meetings. The presence of the Spirit was evident in our celebration of the arts, in which Dominican artists shared their works one night during our gathering. The Spirit proclaimed poetry, the Spirit danced; the Spirit sculpted, the Spirit created multi-media programs, the Spirit painted, the Spirit photographed, the Spirit played music, and the Spirit created sacred space.

Of course, the Spirit had her partners -- the Dominican artist-preachers themselves who cooperated with her in creating their works.

"The celebration was outstanding and incredible," said Deborah Marie Butcher, Mission San Jose Dominican. "It stimulated extreme enthusiasm.

"The gathering had a very profound impact on me. It was wonderful to see and hear of each person's inspiration, story and the variety of gifts and how the Lord has worked in the lives of each one."

There is no question in my mind: the Spirit was there.

Preachers' Exchange

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book reviews: one page only;
articles: no more than two pages;**

Jude Siciliano, O.P., Senior Editor
Armando P. Ibáñez, O.P., Editor

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And the Spirit is still with us -- preacher-artists. "The Gathering of Dominican Artists was inspiring and offers much hope for the future," said Stephana Toomey.

Dominicans attending the Gathering were: Delmira Aguilar, poet and writer, Fred Juul, poet, Anne Regan, and Steffen Richards, poet, all lay Dominicans of the St. Albert's Chapter; Deborah Marie Butcher, calligrapher and photographer, Irene Mary Diones, illustrator and musician, Andre Marie Fujier, musician, all Mission San Jose sisters; Armando P. Ibáñez, poet, writer and filmmaker, and Angel F. Mendez, dancer, both of the Southern Dominican Province;

Mary Kenneth Kreuser, photographer, Stephanie Stauder, watercolorist, and Lisa Lopez Williams, dancer, all Sinsinawa; Francetta McCann, photographer, and Phyllis Mrozinski, sculpturer, both Grand Rapids; Reid Perkins-Buzo, multi-media designer, Central Dominican Province; Chris Renz, poet, writer and musician, and Jordan Vajda, graphics and web designer, both of the Western Dominican Province; Claire and Joe Rogus, painter and poet, respectively, and Rose Tannlund, painter, all lay Dominicans of the Corpus Christi Chapter (Menlo Park); Adele Rowland, photographer (photomontage), San Rafael; and Stephana Toomey, liturgical consultant / designer, Elkins Park.

... the Spirit had her partners -- the Dominican artist-preachers themselves ...

A steering committee was named to help organize the newly created Dominican Institute for the Arts, and to plan for next year's Gathering. Members of the steering committee are: Chris Renz, Lisa Lopez Williams, Delmira Aguilar, Armando P. Ibáñez, Phyllis Mrozinski, Rose Marie Hennessey, and Reid Perkins.

DIA will be publishing a newsletter on the first Gathering in the near future, and a directory of Dominican artists. To be placed in the mailing list and for membership information, contact Lisa Lopez Williams, 6423 California Ave., Chicago, IL 60629-2394. Email: lislopwil@aol.com.

Preachers' Exchange
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Quotable

To date, Catholics have not made many significant contributions to a theology of preaching, but the sacramental heritage can offer a number of rich resources and alternative perspectives in the contemporary ecumenical search for a more vital preaching of the gospel.

Some of the more central theological convictions within the sacramental imagination that have distinct implications for the preaching ministry include: the goodness and redemption of creation, an incarnational christology, the presence and actions of the Holy Spirit in the community of the church, the transformation of humanity by grace, the role of human cooperation in the process of salvation, and the relationship between word and sacrament.

---Catherine Hilker, O.P.

Naming Grace: Preaching and the Sacramental Imagination, (p. 17)

Mi Bailarino

por Armando P. Ibáñez, O.P.

Si ven mis debilidades,
ya no las escondo.
Si reconozco que no soy perfecto,
ya no trato de ser «perfecto.»
Si se dan cuenta que soy pecador,
ya no me enojo.
Lo soy.

Y me alegro.

Me alegro porque cuando
Vean mis gracias y
Mis dones
Como mi poesía y mis cuentos
Van a saber que el
Poeta Divino
El Autor del Cuento
Baila conmigo.

An Excerpt -- Lectionary

(*How Not To Say Mass: A Guidebook For All Concerned About Authentic Worship*, by Dennis C. Smolarski, S. J. New York: Paulist Press 1986.)

Never handle the lectionary as if it were a novel.

Especially in smaller liturgies, there is a temptation to "conveniently" put the Book of Readings somewhere where it is "out of the way," which often means on the floor or under a chair. Once again, the equivalent action would be to put a ciborium still filled with consecrated hosts under a chair or on the floor. We would shudder at the latter, but we frequently see nothing wrong with the former. The Byzantine tradition is the *Book of the Gospels* always remains on the altar until it is used for the actual proclamation. Many lecterns are being constructed with a "throne" for the Lectionary, so that immediately after use, it may be placed where it can be revered for what it contains—God's Holy Word. Yet, how often does one see a homilist put his notes on top of God's Word—or take the Holy Words and put them in an insignificant place, so that his human words can take their place? This might be considered by some as being tantamount to arrogance, if we look at it on the symbolic level. This seemingly minor action should not be overlooked either, since it deals with a basic symbol of the liturgy—God's presence in scripture and how we physically handle the visible scriptures. Liturgy is basically about helping each other find God's presence in the symbols which surround us, a long and often times tedious process! Thus, we should not downplay one of the more obvious liturgical symbols of the divine presence.

Never hide the book of God's Written Word.

The Lectionary is the "chalice" of God's Written Word, and should be handled as such. Just as the chalice and paten are held high at the end of the Eucharist prayer, so the Lectionary and Gospel Book should be held so that the congregation sees them and accepts them as the symbols of what they contain—God's nourishment for a Holy People. In particular, it is better to hold the Lectionary or Gospel Book when reading from it at the lectern so that it may be seen by the assembly, rather than leaving it semi-hidden on the lectern. It may rest on the lectern when not actively being used, but when it is used for the proclamation, it should be visible as the Sacrament of God's Presence. And, as a fitting conclusion to the reading, it should be held high in reverence, while the reader proclaims (after a momentary pause): "This is the Gospel [Word] of the Lord!" (Pages 48-49)

Book Review --

The World, The Church and Preaching: The Best of Good News Commentary

by Rev. Joseph T. Nolan

New Berlin, Wisconsin: Liturgical Publications Inc.,

1996. (138 pages, \$19.95)

Reviewed by Jude Siciliano, O.P., Editor

For twenty-five years Rev. Joseph T. Nolan has provided a homily service that includes a commentary on preaching, worship, justice, theology and parish life. These additional pastoral reflections have come to be called the "green sheets". The author has vast pastoral experience and is now teaching Theology at Boston College. He has also preached for Protestant and Jewish congregations. The largest section of these writings deals with preaching in a liturgical setting. His purpose for writing, he says, is to contribute to the dialogue about what we do. He thinks we do not talk to each other as professional people do. This is his attempt to further the conversation.

I like this book. I realized I was reading essays written during an important period of liturgical and preaching renewal at a time when the Lectionary was making a home for itself in our liturgical gatherings. A few sections are a bit dated, but for the most part, what was an issue is still an issue. What concerned him early in these writings continues to concern him and us--preaching that speaks to our time and is integrated into well-prepared liturgical celebrations.

This is a practical book written for those immersed in ministry; he is realistic in his expectations of the busy pastoral person. But he is also insistent that we have a sense of priorities that help focus what truly nourishes and tends to people's needs. So, for example, when discussing funerals, he suggests ways to both include the family in the planning process as well as having materials planned before hand. He says, "I can think of no other part of ministry that needs more advance preparations than a funeral. We get ready for Sunday but we know Sunday is coming. Death simply drops in and wrecks that best-planned week." Whether it is a discussion of funerals, weddings, preaching or issues in Church practice, Nolan includes the comments of other pastors in his dialogue. Thus, we get the fruit of experienced pastoral people from many denominational backgrounds and settings.

The substantial part of this collection deals with

preaching. He is insistent on the importance of preaching and just as insistent that preachers have to work hard and early in their preparation. He emphasizes the importance of both remote and proximate preaching preparation. The first step in the preparation process is that preachers be out among the people listening to their stories. But Nolan sees remote preparation as a still broader listening to the Word through the preacher's disciplined life of listening to "biographies as well as plays, films and newspapers, to art and whatever reveals the human condition." (p. 113)

He calls this kind of preaching "incarnational", a way of being a preacher that "pushes you out among people". "I know that preachers are effective when they give personal witness and share their own life story. But I urge the point that this witness and the listeners' spiritual growth can be enlarged by sharing the life-story of others.... I would exclude nothing, no place or person where the Spirit has touched the earth." (p. 113) This kind of "incarnational preacher" speaks to the "human condition". What are the contents of this kind of preaching? He gives some examples: "everyone needs to be told (and much more, to believe) that he or she is important; belongs to others and is needed; is loved and esteemed for his or her own sake; is forgiven, can always 'come home'; and has reason to go through life with hope." (p. 110)

He expects preachers to live disciplined lives of reading and writing. He wants preachers to hone their verbal skills, to read and learn from great writers; to study the spoken and printed preaching of notable preachers and in particular, to study both in prayer and through commentaries, the biblical word. He advises that an "enlightened" preacher listening to the faithful will discover as much fundamentalism in the Catholic Church as in the fundamentalist churches. He challenges both Protestant and Catholic preachers to have within their grasp a sound biblical scholarship and to use this discipline to underpin their preaching. Preaching requires a pattern of life that supports the preacher's task of listening to and proclaiming the Word. His comments on remote preparation challenge me to a more deliberate hearing of the Word in its infinite manifestations.

When it comes to the immediate preparation for a particular preaching, Nolan has more sound advice. He does not mince words in what is wrong with preaching and what we should do about it. Deliberate and thorough preparation is the key to good preaching. He insists, as do all homileticsians, that preparation for weekend preaching must begin early in the week, despite the other preaching the preacher may do during the week. He finds it hard to understand why the scriptures we are

to preach from are not "the scriptures we meditate, memorize, pray over and wrestle with all week long, replacing, if necessary, other forms of so-called spiritual reading." (p. 90) He expects the preacher to write out the preaching; whether a full manuscript will be used in the actual preaching is not the point. Writing, he insists, will discipline us and teach us to be careful over words, helping us be more precise in putting our thoughts into words. "...the ability to write clear, compelling prose in the service of the word is the greatest help to good preaching." (p. 124) He makes many specific recommendations for the preacher during the immediate preparation process concerning: oral communication skills, using or not using manuscripts, designing the outline, sources and uses of illustrations, getting feedback, etc.

I found his reactions at the time of the publication of the N.C.C.B. document, *Fulfilled in Your Hearing*, particularly interesting. This short 47-page booklet was published in 1982, and Nolan's summary and emphasis on its key points is a valuable overview and a reminder of its high quality. His enthusiasm for it might encourage us who have not read it, to do so.

He stresses the importance of preaching the Word in our liturgical celebrations and adamantly insists that we should never substitute preaching with some "talk", no matter how much we think people need to be taught. Sound doctrine is always present in any good preaching, and appropriate applications to sacramental life and moral behavior are bound to be part of our preaching. But he agrees with such liturgists as Gerard Sloyan, when he insists, we not give in to replacing preaching at our liturgical celebrations with a "schema of doctrine", some imposed preaching plan or list of topics-to-be-covered." The homily, he says, is "primarily for edification [i.e. building up the Church] and only secondarily and derivatively didactic." (p. 74) He sums it up--we should preach and not lecture; give homilies, not talks.

It's dismaying that the homily still appears to some as a disposable, item. Those who wish to bring in a lecture series don't propose replacing the Eucharistic Prayer or the Communion. Somehow the Service of the Word is not a sufficient "presence" to them. (P. 75)

Most of the subscribers to *The Good News Commentary* seem to have been ordained clergy, mostly Roman Catholic priests. And so, Nolan has been almost exclusively addressing this readership over these years.

The lay preacher needs to be aware of this primary audience, but his original focus group need not get in the way of the reader's hearing some excellent and practical preaching advice. He certainly is aware of an emerging (emerged?) lay preaching and in the 80's called it "an idea whose time has come". (p. 120) He frequently invites his readers to comment on various pastoral issues. I would have liked some firmer statements expressing the reasons for, what seems to be, his positive position on lay preaching. Perhaps he expresses these in the other "green pages" not included in this collection. If so, too bad--we needed more of this intelligent pastor's reflections on the subject.

This collection shows the author's love of liturgy and his concern that God's people get to hear preaching that is thoughtful, well prepared and preached with passion and love for our listeners. He ends with a tale of a Protestant minister visiting a village in Luxemburg and hearing a Catholic priest's powerful preaching. The minister gives his impressions; "He is a powerful preacher and is loved by his congregation. I visit his church for his sermon and the great music from the organ. I find God here in an overflowing way." That is what Nolan wishes could be said about our liturgical preaching, that a visitor would find, "Not just great music, or an organ recital, or a good sermon, but making it possible to 'find God here in an overflowing way'". (p. 138.)

Preachers' Exchange on E-Mail

For the past two years weekly reflections for the upcoming Sunday Liturgical Readings have been submitted to the Southern Province's E-mail. Those members of our province who have our e-mail program "Office Logic" may receive these notes and may add any reflections they would like to share with preachers from our province.

To receive these reflections, send your e-mail address to John Boll, O.P., at jboll@mailhost.tcs.tulane.edu

Quotable

"Show me a preacher's library and I will tell you when that preacher died."

I am Disciple
by Janet Schlichting, O.P.

I serve the community's prayer
I gather it and give it voice.
I am leader, and I am listener,
I am seeker of stories.
What is your grief and what is your delight?
(Woman, why are you crying?)
What saps your strength and renews your
youth?
(What matters are you discussing as you walk
along?)
What concerns you from day to day?
(Have you caught anything, friends?)
What are your memories and what are your
dreams?
I sit at the feet of a hundred story tellers.
I hear Good News:
God has taken flesh
at breakfast tables and on assembly lines,
in classrooms and in hospitals,
I hear the Gospel proclaimed
from the lips of a hundred preachers.
I the faith-bearer
am challenged by a hundred questions,
and dunked a hundred times a day
in reality.
I dare not offer platitudes
to these struggling Christians,
my teachers.
I put on the Lord Jesus Christ
who walked our roads and knew our hearts,
who listened with love.
Am I to be head
of the body-at-worship?
Then I must be its ears,
first a hearer.

**Dominican Gathering of Artists –
Holy Ground**

By C.J. Renz, O.P.

As a resident of the facility for our first Gathering of Dominican Artists I was very much preoccupied with the details of hospitality. But as the weekend proceeded I was drawn into the deeper reality that I was in God's house and, like Moses, I needed to remove my shoes "for this is holy ground" (and some of you who were at the Gathering may have noticed that I actually did have my shoes off for Sunday's eucharist!).

I believe that for the first time in my short life as a Dominican I have experienced something of the richness of the Order of Preachers. Certainly I have known many wonderful and powerful women and men of the Order, but never have I seen such a focused collection. The simple joy of being in the presence of these artists and their artwork made the weekend a "success" for me. To this end I am reminded of Tolkien's reflections on the nature of true Fantasy: "The peculiar quality of the 'joy' in successful Fantasy can thus be explained as a sudden glimpse of the underlying reality or truth." As I broke into unrestrained smiles during the weekend I kept thinking of the 'underlying truth' that our God has expressed a Creative Power in so many simple and beautiful ways. In Tolkien's words, our Gathering of Dominican Artists was truly a successful Fantasy!

I am convinced that there is only one theological heresy. It has evolved and recurred throughout history. It was the one which stirred Dominic into action and it is the one which fascinates so many of the so-called New Age movements: the tendency of human beings to split the body and the soul. Having articulated for ourselves, or at least I for myself, that part of the nature of being a Dominican artist is to 'incarnational,' I am grateful for the groundedness of all the artists who were present. We are the vehicles for the Word only to the extent that our minds remained attached to our bodies. The artwork I saw this weekend proved that fact!

Finally, I am excited for our new group, the Dominican Institute for the Arts (DIA)! I have confidence for its life because the people who attended this weekend are of the caliber and energy to nurture and sustain such a young and tender creation. I am happy to be part of the steering committee which will give form to the desires of the Holy Spirit. I pray that his new day, this DIA, will always find its home in the womb of our creative efforts.

Preaching the Good News

by Timothy Radcliffe, O.P., Master of the Order

[quoted from "Relatio de Statu Ordinis" in *IDI*, September, 1995 – the editor]

As the Order of Preachers, the state of the Order must first be judged by asking about the preaching of the gospel. Are we preachers? Paul VI once said, "It is said that Dominicans are preachers. Nevertheless, it is not often that one hears of a Dominican preaching." Every time I land in one of the great cities and see the endless spread of houses, and often poor barrios, then I ask myself how we can share the good news of Christ's death and resurrections with these brothers and sisters of ours. This is perhaps the major question that we face as an Order, and it is my hope that it will be a central topic of debate at this Chapter. All the other questions that we must face, of formation, studies, common life, government, are to prepare us to be preachers and to sustain us in this mission

In many parts of the Order we can see a renewed commitment to this, our fundamental charism. The report of the socius for the United States shows the growth of preaching teams, often with the collaboration of brothers and sisters. In many parts of the world I have seen the importance of the preaching done by lay Dominicans, for example in Mexico and Brazil. Too often, though, the brethren are hindered from being preachers by other commitments, especially by parochial responsibilities. The parish can be a fine base for Dominican work, and it will remain an important part of the work of the Order in many provinces, but often we need to regain our freedom to try other ways of preaching the gospel, especially to those who shun our churches or who have never heard of Jesus Christ.

Paul VI once said, 'It is said that Dominicans are preachers. Nevertheless, it is not often that one hears of a Dominican preaching . . .

One of the characteristics of Dominic's Order, which sets us free to be preachers, was that the

brothers took to the roads; we were liberated to become wandering preachers. This is a mobility that we need to recover. It is a freedom of the imagination, to give up what we have been doing and try new ways of sharing the gospel, a mobility of heart and mind. It is also a mobility that sets us free to move to new communities, and even a mobility that makes us free to work outside our own provinces, for the preaching of the gospel. This requires of the brethren a freedom to respond to unexpected demands, but also the courage on the part of superiors to imagine new projects and to ask the brethren to give their lives to them. Too often we are too timid and underestimate what the brothers have to give and what we can ask of each other.

It is a freedom of the imagination, to give up what we have been doing and try new ways of sharing the gospel, a mobility of heart and mind.

How are we to touch the imagination of those who do not know Christ, and give them a glimpse of the beauty of the gospel and the liberty of the children of God? One area, which we need to develop, is that of the most neglected priority of the Order, the mass media. Latin America is, I think, the only region to have a regional promoter of the media. It was the experience of the General Council that the recommendation of Mexico City [nos. 70, 71, 71], that this be the responsibility of the socius for the Apostolic Life, was not practicable. Therefore I have asked fr. Oscar Mayorga, the director of *IDI*, to accept the position of promoter of the mass media, and to be responsible for the relationship between the General Council and the press [cf Mexico no. 187]. His intention is to meet brothers working in different regions of the world in this area, and to try to learn whether anything can be

done to support an increased presence of the Order in this important new world of communication.

I have appointed a Commission to consider how we can develop a presence as preachers in Internet, the network of computer communication that already links more than fifty million people. The challenge is not just to use Internet for communication within the Order but as a new place of preaching. I have asked this Commission, which is communicating via Internet, to report to me in time for the November Plenary General Council.

This requires of the brethren a freedom to respond to unexpected demands, but also the courage on the part of superiors to imagine new projects . . .

New places of preaching will sometimes require cooperation between provinces. The dialogue with Islam; the community of Espaces in Brussels, as a place of dialogue with the challenges of the European community; Instituto Pedro de Cordoba, as a center of dialogue between theology and the social sciences, our centers of study, these are all examples of new challenges which can only be met by cooperation among provinces, and in these last three years I have seen just how hard it is to build teams which depend upon interprovincial cooperation. We must be prepared to give our best brothers and not those whom we can "spare".

Veritas

TELL THE STORY, a full length CD and cassette tape recorded by VERITAS is available. The CD is \$15.00; the cassette tape is \$10.00. Please send your name, address and check or money order to: VERITAS, St. Dominic Priory, 3601 Lindell Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63108. Add \$2.00 for shipping/handling.

Wrestling with the Angel – a Collection of Poetry

By Armando P. Ibáñez

Pluma Productions, P.O. Box 1138, Los Angeles, CA
90078-1138. \$11.95

Reviewed by Clifton Snider

(The following is an excerpt of review published by *Small Press Review* in its April issue.)

From the earliest times poets have been spiritual messengers, a role too often neglected by modern poets. Armando Ibáñez does not neglect this role. A Dominican priest, his poetry, as Miguel Lopez writes in an introductory note, "is a good example of a new movement in poetry, in Chicano poetry, that tends to the spiritual," as opposed to the "more political and more social" characteristic of earlier Chicano poetry. Reflecting the reality of current Chicano practice, Ibáñez writes in what he calls "Tex-Mex or Spanglish." Despite a limited knowledge of Spanish, I was at first annoyed by this practice, even though most of the work is in English. However, all the Spanish is translated in parenthesis (and two poems written entirely in Spanish are translated fully immediately after the Spanish versions), so that I soon accepted the device.

Taking its title from Jacob's struggle with the angel, *Wrestling with the Angel* is beautifully produced, with a full color reproduction of an angel by Fra Angelico Giovanni (1387-1455) and other black and white reproductions at the beginning of each appropriately titled section: "The Search," "The First Encounter," "The Struggle—Life, Death," and "The Blessing." I like the fact that Ibáñez honors the role of the feminine in creation ("Ruah") and that his sympathies extend to a gang-raped woman and a person suffering from AIDS. The poet's central occupation, though, is the search for God. In wars that echo Rumi and the Song of Solomon, he uses the imagery of love to portray this search:

I ate your words,
Slices of your breath. In my
Dreams of you,
I laughed,
I sang,
I fell in love with you.
("Waiting")

Modern poetry could use more of this kind of effort.

Divine / Human --

Dominican Artists and Their World

by Reid Perkins-Buzo O.P.

The deeper vision. The sonant word. The celebratory song. The alternate vision of reality. The dance of grace. Imagination revealing the presence of God. Prophetic imagination, analogical imagination, sacramental imagination, where Christian symbol wrights the real and Incarnation means our flesh, our participation. This experience of our weekend, 18th - 20th of June at St. Albert's Priory, Oakland, has moved us to form the *Dominican Institute for the Arts*.

After leaving Oakland, I had the leisure to travel by train back first to Denver, then to Chicago. In that interim I was struck with the passage from 1 John 1,1-4:

We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, that we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life -- this life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us -- we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete. (NRSV)

Like John, I had seen in our gathering the transformative, creative act of God in our works. Transformative and creative, they bore witness to our own unity with God's creative love. Symbols of that sacred reality, they communicate the experience of the word of life present in our fellowship with God to our friends, neighbours, enemies and the natural world. This desire to come to symbol draws us into the dance of our relational, triune God.

Cathy Hilkert O.P., in her book *Naming Grace, Preaching and the Sacramental Imagination*, writes that,

Formed by the vision of the scriptures and the rituals of Christian liturgy, the sacramental imagination sees the world through the prism of God's promise: the world and its creatures are God's beloved creation; the human is rooted in and open to the divine; evil will not have the final word; there is a future, even for the dead. At the heart of this vision are the central Christian beliefs of incarnation and redemption and resurrection: the mystery of God, who in Jesus has taken on human flesh and human history and defeated the powers of sin, death and evil, remains with us in and through the power of the Spirit. In the face of all the

evidence to the contrary, the prophetic word proclaims 'Grace is everywhere.' (p.189)

Dominican artists create in the midst of this vision. We too communicate God's grace to others. Confronted by the horrors of genocide, ecological devastation, sexism, racism and economic injustice, we work to respond with an incarnational presence which witnesses to the core compassion at the heart of all reality.

Without a doubt, we have fears. We have failures and defeats. They stand before us, in opposition to our work. But as we shared them in the gathering, as sisters and brothers, we could feel God's affirmation in Jesus (2Cor 1,19) carry us forward, through and past them. The pain of fear and our own failure and defeats lets us create without forgetting that the wisdom of God reveals itself most clearly in the folly of our own crosses. So we preach God living and acting through our art, but not in neat, saccharine patterns or unbroken, untroubled narratives. In our fears, failures and defeats lives the dual nature of Jesus' cross: a human fiasco, but also the definitive defeat of evil by the power of divine love.

Without a doubt, we have fears. . . But as we shared them in the gathering, as sisters and brothers, we could feel God's affirmation in Jesus . . .

We have been blessed in our Dominican spirituality that explicitly calls us together. Coming together for celebration and collaboration, for mentoring and learning is a great strength. We could say, as St. Catherine of Siena does in God's voice, that, I have distributed them [divine gifts and graces, virtue and other spiritual gifts] all in such a way that no one has all of them. Thus have I given you reason -- necessity, in fact -- to practice mutual charity. For I could well have supplied each of you with all your needs, both spiritual and material. But I wanted to make you dependent on one another so that each of you could be my minister, dispensing the graces and gifts you have received from me. (Dialogue 7; Noffke trans.)

The Dominican Institute for the Arts flows naturally from this impulse to share our gifts and talents with one another. As we come together in the future, we can only grow into a better community of artists working from within a shared vision of God's compassion. I look forward to many years growing together with all of you.

Efharisto Studio, Inc.
5130 N. Franklinton Rd., Suite A
Baltimore, MD 21207-6509
(410) 448-1711 / Fax (410) 448-3259

Mission Statement

***There are many forms of Communication –
language being one***

Efharisto Studio, Inc., founded by Sr. Stephena Toomey, O.P., is located in Franklinton, an historic area of Baltimore, Maryland. The ministry at Efharisto Studio as developed from the constitution of the Dominican Sisters, Congregation of St. Catherine di'Ricci, Elkins Park, Pennsylvania, is as follows:

"Thus in this contemplative way, we are concerned with the truth and its communication – the preaching of God's Word." (Section "The Call", pp. 3-4)

There are many forms of communication -- language being one. Another form of communication, and one that predates language, is visual communication which requires no interpreter. For example, consider the cave paintings and the excavations which have provided rich tells for Scripture scholars, and the international symbols of today with which we are all familiar. Thus, communicating through visual forms is both an ancient as well as a contemporary form of preaching, and the Dominicans are the Order of Preachers.

The motto of the local ministry is "part of prayer is experiencing the setting." Toward this end, in liturgical consultation, a conscious effort is made by Efharisto Studio to be current in theology, liturgy and scripture study while developing liturgical space which enables the flow of liturgy and the building of community by the assembly. While designing appropriate and vibrant worship space, liturgical appointments and artforms, the focus is to communicate the essence of the space for years to come. Long after the concepts of the liturgical consultant / designer are developed in worship space, art glass, fabric wood or iron, the people are still interacting with the visual meditations.

"... from the Blessed Sacrament we draw all life, all light, and all love ..."

It is no accident that the Greek word for "thank you" is the name of the local ministry, for when Efharisto is transliterated from the Greek into Latin, it becomes "Eucharist" which means "thanksgiving".

The seed of God is in us
Now the seed
of a pear tree
grows into a pear tree
and a hazel seed
grows into a hazel tree
a seed of God
grows into God.

-- Meister Eckhart

"First Impressions"

**(If you are on the Internet and have your own
E Mail address read on!)**

Each week Jude Siciliano, O.P. of the Southern Province, offers reflections on the following Sunday's Lectionary readings for preachers (and anyone else interested in some reflection on the upcoming Sunday's liturgical celebration).

"First Impressions" is a collection of reflections preachers will find useful in their early stages of preaching preparation. These are thoughts, ideas from exegesis, images, newspaper items, etc. that may prove helpful in sparking an idea for your preaching.

If you are interested in receiving this input, send your email address to John Boll, O.P. (Jboll@mailhost.tcs.tulane.edu) and ask him to include your name on our receivers' list. You may also get this material on the Raleigh diocese's web page (<http://www.raldioc.org>)

**Sing to God, sing God's praise,
proclaim all God's wondrous deeds**

Psalm 115(v2)

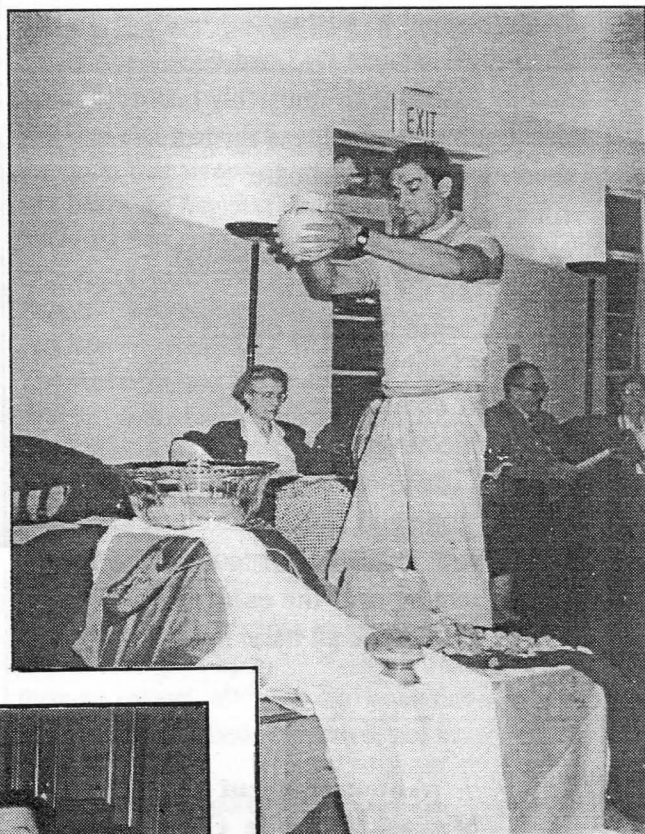
Gathering of Dominican Artists June 20 - 22 --

Dominican Institute for the Arts



Sr. Adele Rowland, O.P., shows one of her works.

Angel Mendez, O.P., dances a blessing with incense.



Reid Perkins, O.P., (left)
demonstrates a multimedia project.

Evening

By Sr. Mary Augustine Murphy, O.P.

Still coolness,
Breezes pathing through the air.
Sunlit sky, soft, vibrant
As is tones at the edge.
Brilliancy,
Colors of apple ripe, vermilion true,
Moves the soul to ecstasy
Lifts it high to meet its Lord,
Amid its splendor of unearthly beauty.
Stark against its vividness thrusts
a shadow bold, yet delicate.
Profile, commonplace,
now set before this awesomeness.
Thought provoking.
Stars that tease last rays of sun,
Yet full of light within.
To simmer, catch the eye
with their fleetingness.

Moments gone and sunset too.
Though drops of color left to stain the sky.
Heavens bent so near the earth,
to touch and soothe all harshness.

Announcement

Michael M. Burke, O.P.

Michael Burke has been engaged in full time preaching ministry since the fall of 1994. His ministry includes parish renewals, retreats for religious and lay and spiritual direction. Michael is a musician and integrates piano meditation music with his preaching. His doctorate in Ministry concentrated in psychology and pastoral counseling which also provides a further dimension to his message. In Raleigh he hosts a TV program: "Catholic Religion and Spirituality," 20 minutes of speaking and 10 minutes of meditation music with scenery behind it. In the fall, Michael will be studying at Notre Dame in the Sabbatical program and will be available for renewals and retreats after January of 1998. For more information contact him at de Porres House, P.O. Box 12927, Raleigh, NC 27605.

FREE PREACHING BOOK

If you would like to write a review of a book you think would be of interest to preachers, please contact us. We will either send you a free book for review, or reimburse you for one you have already purchased. Phone or write:

Jude Siciliano, O.P.
P.O. Box 12927 Raleigh,
N.C. 27605
Phone 919-833-1893)

Quotable

We don't preach on doctrine; we explore an event. Even when it is a Sunday called Christ the King, or Holy Family, or Corpus Christi, the understanding (and the preaching) still rests on the key event of the paschal mystery. In the deepest sense, all our preaching is paschal, a passing over to fuller life that depends on the Spirit and the original event.

Joseph T. Nolan,
The World, The Church and Preaching:
The Best of GOOD NEWS Commentary. (Page
106)

St. Jude Shrine

The Dominican Shrine of St. Jude Thaddeus in Chicago has begun to offer daily RealAudio cyberhomilies on the internet at:

<http://www.op.org/domcentral/places/stjude/>

These homilies are offered in the Real Audio format and require that the Real Audio Player be installed on one's computer. RealAudio Player 2.0, if not already installed, can be downloaded free (from <http://www.realaudio.com/>) or by clicking the link on the Shrine of St. Jude Page. This should be done before the "Recent Homily" link is pressed.

Go Into My Vineyard

By Sr. Mary Vincent, O.P.
(Farmington Hills, MI)

(Homily given by a cloistered Dominican nun at vespers of the 27th Sunday of Ordinary Time, Cycle A. – the editor.)

Today's liturgy presents us with the intriguing imagery of the "vineyard."¹

What is the vineyard?

It is life – it is God² – it is prayer.

All are vineyards.

Vineyards must have cultivation, attention, work.

Before one really tastes of them to the full.

Nowadays we speak easily of work as prayer. And it can be.

So to the oft-repeated and sometimes scoff-scented question,

"What do you do?"

we have to answer: "We pray."

Prayer is our work.

It is our chosen vineyard:

Prayer -- not to glory in, but to sweat at.

To be faithful to prayer is to be made uneasy, weary, bored,

picked to pieces during it –

emptied, filled, turned upside down –

tempted, tempted to give it up.

It can be hard work – the hardest.

We are born contemplative beings.

We open our eyes and look out – needing and desiring something more.

We have this tremendous potential for contemplation of God

and communion with God –
with spiritual.

We have given up a lot of human reality for this spiritual reality.

Unlimited opportunity is set before us.

Enormous possibilities.

God himself coaxed: "ask, seek, knock.

God has to coax because he knows how thin are our spiritual desires,
how hesitating, how fearful.

Yet God is here drawing us.

We are God's handiwork – his beloved vineyard.

God's action is constant,

God's wanting us is an immeasurable desire.

We find that desiring God – God Desiring – is prayer.

He creates us. He creates himself in us.

Only then do we have the creative power to help others.

Until God and grace have touched us we do not know what God is:

and unless God supports us, we cannot go on knowing what God is . . .

Attention to God, adoration of God,

is the first and governing term of the life of prayer;

the unique source of all possibilities.

(Evelyn Underhill, *Modern Guide to the Ancient Quest for the Holy*, p. 147.)

What is prayer? It is a link to the Eternal –

hands that grasp the Divine and allow the Divine to grasp me –

feet that stand on rock amid crushing waves –

the brain that wraps around the question

and bears the nagging doubt for years –

the heart that enfolds the world in passionate concern.

Prayer connects with God, with saints and sinners.

Prayer – communion, union, passing into the mystery and Source of being.

The fear of it and the joy of it!

Prayer – it can reach every nook and cranny of our world.

Our life is geared to know the power of attentive and adoring prayer

To bring the soul into a deeper and more concrete consciousness of God.

There comes an immense and unguessed transformation of what we gaze upon

through patient, attentive and unselfish regard –

through an absorbed, unhurried, and largely unreflective gaze

in which effort and docility combine.

Theocentric prayer can lift those doctrines, symbols and practices

from the level of dreary unreality;

can inform a simple hymn or a solemn service with vitality.

Simple and adoring contemplation,

which some have condemned as pride and illusion,

is the best and gentlest teacher of humility,

of love of God and love of ordinary ways.

Isn't it so?

Haven't you found that prayer is patient, is kind;

believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Prayer never fails!

There will always be work to do. Prayer is the work.

Cultivate that vineyard. Keep the ground clear.

If we wait, God is waiting even more –

with intense, immeasurable desire.

St. Dominic
By Fred Juul, O.P.L.

I.

Dog spewing fire
Over the face of the earth . . .
Holy mother dreaming
among hard hills.

Cactus spines parsing the sun,
Light jabbing long spires
In all directions over upland desert.

In Caleruega he was born
Near the high torreon
Where the great stone walls
Having guarded this house
For their thousand years
Against sun, storm, howling
Raiders and long shepherd's peace,
Stand now a powerful symbol and shrine
For a man destined by God
As Knight of the Cross –
Old robe, bare feet, staff,
Book of the Gospel, passion for truth,
Prayer and grace and eloquent preaching
His only weapons; stone altar
His high fortress tower.

And the love above all loves
For his daily bread, wine of Christ
And compassion his only refreshment,
Hip-chain cutting flesh a
Constant companion; austerities
Beyond measure. Prayer vigils
To replace dreams.

II.

First: monastic peace; then
Wandering with his holy bishop
And the Cistercians in the old quest
For truth and how to share it –
Then how to wield it as
Weapon to stifle the philosophical and theological
Error poisoning a whole people in the
Long fight against the Pure Ones.

The great preaching a form of teaching,
And teaching was to clear the path
For the orderly and undistracted

Search for truth, and the sharing
Of the salvific Truth: the
Hieratic order of the universe,
Of man's role, of the love
That "drives the sun and all
The stars," and man's freedom
To be able to bend the proud
Neck in order to praise
The heart of live, and to love
In Charity the Source of Light,
The Word, the Sun of grace,
The power of peace and creativity,
The profound oneness of the Good.
And, above all, of the coming of Christ
To lead us into the final Way
Of the Truth, to bring us unto Himself
And to the Father of all.
And the story of the world, contra Albigenses,
Shot through the glorious with grace.

III.

Then all swept up in the roar of war,
And the screams of massacre, of
Horror piled upon countless horrors,
As de Monfort rode for his own bloody truth.
What must Dominic have thought,
His own hands clean,
As in the wake of the preaching
Came the relentless politics of the sword
To literally clean the land
With death's cold hand
For Christ and loot?

IV.

Then on, with Francis, for the soul
Of Europe. No accident Aquinas
Was a Dominican; nor Eckhart,
Nor Catherine;
Nor Beato Angelico; nor
Rose of Lima, nor Martin de Porres,
De las Casas,
Nor the countless others
Working in pious obscurity
Or in bitter martyrdom for the
Wholeness of the world
And the glory of God.

A Gathering of Dominican Artists

by Phyllis Mrozinski, O.P., Sculptor, Grand Rapids, MI

Like so many rocks and boulders of various shapes, sizes and color lying on a quarry floor, Dominican artists, both religious and lay, gathered at St. Albert Priory in Oakland, California for the weekend of June 20-22, 1997. It was a diverse group: poets, watercolorists, writers, graphic designers and illustrators, dancers, photographers, sculptors, calligraphers, painters, musicians, composers, multi-media and liturgical designers. They came from all across the United States.

During the Friday evening session we claimed ownership of our gifts, and recognized that we had definite fears in our giftedness. These fears were listed according to each one's discipline: rejection, guilt of time wasted, little income, not good enough - just to name a few. As no rock is perfect, we discovered that our fears, like black veins penetrating a piece of marble, were universal and diverse.

---expressing how we encountered God in our art and how we preached God through it.

During the second session we shared our thoughts by expressing how we encountered God in our art and how we preached God through it. Because many of the artists were employed in both the public and religious sector, responses to the questions were rich, colorful and varied. One lay person was a deputy sheriff. A woman religious was involved in a shelter for prostitutes. Others were instructors, secretaries, homemakers. Still others were retired and blessed with leisure time or full time to further enhance their artistic talents. As individuals within the group it became apparent that we were forming one body and one spirit.

The third session focused on Dominican artists and what makes us different from artists of other religious congregations. We struggled through this concept and left it open-ended. Mention was made of Dominican artists, living and deceased, who have influenced us or supported us as we strove to reach the core of experience from within.

The evening of the second day was one of celebration when we shared our personal gifts and told our stories through our art. Dancers danced. Musicians played instruments and sang songs. Poets read their poetry. Graphic illustrators presented portfolios. Writers read

their prose. Photographers and painters showed their photos and paintings with slides. A sculptor spoke of three small sculptures on display with a photo album of larger pieces. The liturgical artist showed slides of worship space, and multi-media artists had a computer in place for viewing. A VCR was available for film productions. Through this sharing of gifts we felt a bonding being formed as Dominican artists. We were creating a rough boulder now toppling on end with potential for a free-standing monument.

In the fourth and final session we expressed our needs from a personal and communal standpoint, not only to support each other as Dominican artists, but also to call forth support from our communities, respective provinces and from the Order.

One of our major needs is to establish ourselves as a single unit with a corporate identity, and to continue meeting as a gathering of Dominican artists. The participants agreed to identify themselves and future members as the Dominican Institute for the Arts. A steering committee was formed to investigate procedures for forming the institute and to plan the next gathering. Thus chiseling and filing on our monument was begun.

Until the institute is formally acknowledged, membership is expanded and dues are in place, one primary need is financial support from artists and their friends, congregations and provinces to defray the cost of materials, postage and similar expenses.

Contributions can be made to **Pluma Productions and sent to Armando P. Ibáñez, O.P., P.O. Box 1138, Los Angeles, CA 90078.**

Dominican artists, watch for information publicizing future gatherings, and spread the news to your Dominican colleagues and friends. Your gift is valuable to other artists and to the church. Let us stand in solidarity as Dominicans and artists as we preach the Word.

If you wish to be placed on the mailing list, please contact **Chris Renz, O.P., St. Thomas More Community, 1386 18th Ave., Eugene OR 97403, Tel. 541-343-0065.**

Let us acknowledge this short weekend gathering as a powerful tool of the Holy Spirit in strong support of Dominican artists. We await the monument that is carefully being carved through the work of our hands.

We claimed ownership of our gifts.

Preachers' Exchange
c/o MONASTERY OF THE ANGELS
1977 Carmen Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90068

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