

Top, left to right: Irene Mary Diones, Francetta McCann, Mary Kenneth Kreuser, Adele Rowland, Lisa Lopez Williams, Chris Renz.

Presence of the Spirit—a Preaching Event:

Dominican Institute for the Arts is Born

"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 post-card 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.

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

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A Gathering of Dominican Artists

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's 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, sculptor, 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 for time wasted, little income, not good enough—just to mention a few. As no rock is perfect, we discovered that our fears, like black veins penetrating a piece of marble, were universal and diverse.

During the second session we shared our thoughts by expressing how we encountered God in our art and 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, and 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 poet showed a poem-video, and 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 costs of materials, postage and similar expenses.

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

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Charter Members: (third row left to right) Adele Rowland, Stephana Toomey, Mary Kenneth Kreuser, Lisa Lopez Williams, Deborah Marie Butcher, Rose Tannlund, Phyllis Mrozinski, Stephanie Stauder, Fred Juul; (second row) Reid Perkins-Buzo, Francetta McCann, Delmira Aguilar; (first row) Armando Ibañez, Chris Renz, Angel Mendez, and Irene Mary Diones.

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. And the Spirit is still with us—preacher-artists.



Foreground, right to left:
Lisa Lopez Williams as she
performs a liturgical dance,
Stephanie Toomey, Phyllis
Mrozinski.

"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, graphic artist 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 (photo-montage), San Rafael; and **Stephana Toomey**, liturgical consultant / designer, Elkins Park.

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 Hennessy, 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.

—by Armando P. Ibáñez, OP
P O Box 1138
Los Angeles, CA 90078



Divine / Human—Dominican Artists and their World

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:

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A Celebration!



Left to right: Adele Rowland, OP shares her gifts.

Angel F. Mendez, OP celebrates his gift of dance.



Delmira Aguilar, OPL browses the artwork displayed.

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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. Telephone: (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.

—by Phyllis Mrozinski, OP
2023 East Fulton, Apt. 405
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Saint Dominic

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 torreón
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 refresh-
ment,
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 creativ-
ity,
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 hor-
rors,
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.

—by Fred Juul, OPL
43 George Lane
Sausalito, CA 94965-1815

Humility and Art—

God Master Artist, Master Poet

There is a powerful relationship between humility and art.

I strongly believe in St. Teresa of Avila's definition of humility. Humility is not self-deprecation or putting oneself down. True humility is recognizing God as the author of all creation and, at the same time, acknowledging one's place in the quilt of the created.

Then, one can see one's place in a vast universe which is infinite in size, both huge and small. The world of the microbe or the invisible is as mesmerizing as is the huge expanse of stars and galaxies.

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Holy Ground



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.

—by C gentlemen Renz, OP
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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 narra-

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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)

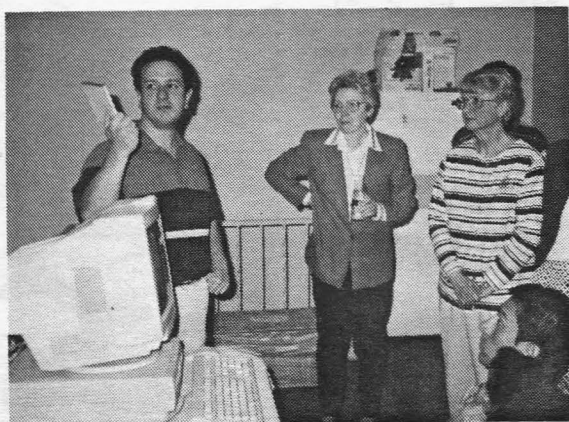
Like John, I had seen in our gathering the transformative, creative act of God in our works. Transformative and creative, they bore witness to our own unity with God's creative love. Symbols of that sacred reality, they communicate the experience of the word of life present in our fellowship with God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

tives. In our fears, failures and defeats lives the dual nature of the Jesus' cross: a human fiasco, but also the definitive defeat of evil by the power of divine love.

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.

—by Reid Perkins-Buzo OP
St. Pius V Priory
1909 Ashland Avenue
Chicago, IL 60608



Computer demo by Reid Perkins-Buzo, OP as members look on.

National Gathering of Dominican Artists Set Aug. 13-19

The second annual national gathering of Dominican artists and appreciators of the arts is scheduled to be held Aug. 13-19, 1998 at Mission San Jose, California..

"The gathering had a very profound impact on me," said Deborah Marie Butcher of the first Gathering held June 20-22 in Oakland. Twenty two Dominicans, representing three of the friars provinces, five women's congregations, and three lay chapters, attended the gathering, which included a celebration of Dominicans in the arts, consisting of a poetry reading, dance and showing of art works.

Another Dominican, Stephana Toomey said: "The Gathering of Dominican Artists was inspiring and offers much hope for the future."

An important result of the Gathering was the creation of the *Dominican Institute for the Arts*, which is dedicated to support Dominicans in the arts and to promote and cultivate art works by Dominicans. Membership is open to Dominican artists and Dominicans who appreciate the arts. Dues are \$25 per person. Members will be included in a directory, which is scheduled to be published in early 1998.

For membership and registration for the *Gathering* in August, please contact: Lisa Lopez Williams, O.P., 6423 California Avenue, Chicago, IL 60629-2394, email: GOTOBUTTON BM 1 lislopwil@aol.com, phone (608) 748-4411.

Registration fee for members is \$15, and \$75 for non-members. Room and board is available at Mission San Jose for a total of \$175.

The steering committee is scheduled to hold a planning meeting in Chicago in January 1998. Dominican artists and interested Dominicans in the Chicago area are invited to attend this meeting.

Interested Dominicans are invited to contact any steering committee member for more information. They are: Lisa, whose phone number is listed above; Chris Renz, O.P., (541) 343-0065; Delmira Aguilar, (510) 596-1800; Armando P. Ibanez, (213) 463-6488; Reid Perkins-Buzo, (312) 226-0075; Rose Marie Hennessy, (510) 657-1612; and Phyllis Mrozinski, (616) 458-9799.

—by Armando P. Ibáñez, OP
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God, is the ultimate creator—the Master Artist, Master Poet. As Genesis, poetically tells us, when God spoke there was life. *God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light* (1:4). This is sheer poetry. God proclaims his or her poem, and there is creation.

As an artis—a poet, writer and filmmaker—I have come to the realization that creativity is a gift from God, and, my responsibility is to accept this marvelous gift by creating works of art to share with those around me. And I emphasize the word *responsibility* because it is a responsibility.

Yet, it goes well beyond responsibility.

Can you imagine if someone you love dearly gave you a pair of beautiful, hand-made dancing shoes. The dancing shoes are a labor of love, and, most importantly, are given to *you* so that you can go out dancing.

Yet, you kept the dancing shoes in

your closet for fear of ruining them, or because you felt that you didn't dance well, or, because you weren't good enough. You get my point. The giver of the shoes would be hurt, not only because you hid the shoes in a closet, but, most importantly, because you didn't go out dancing with him or her.

That's the point: to go out dancing with the giver of the shoes.

That's how I see myself as an artist. I go out dancing with the giver of the shoes, God.

We dance, and dance, and dance. Sometimes I dance well; sometimes I get tired; sometimes I stub my toes, but I keep dancing.

Why?

Ah, because when we dance well, what a dance!

Truly, I can say that whether it is poetry, a short story or a film, the work was created as a joint venture with God. As an artist, I recognize

that God is the author of all of the created, including my work. The difference is that, in my work, I share in the creation of it. In other words, I danced with God.

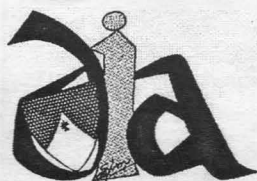
And that is a humbling experience.

—by Armando P. Ibáñez, OP

Membership Information

Membership in the Dominican Institute for the Arts is \$25 per year and includes admission to meetings, access to information and other artists in the field and a subscription to the newsletter. For more information about DIA contact:

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dominican institute for the arts