

THE DOMINICANS

Summer 2017

The Magazine of the Dominican Friars in England & Scotland



- **Holy Days and Holidays** The importance of leisure
- **Fresh Insights on Scripture** How to read the Bible
- **WWI Dominican Chaplains** Their ministry in the 'Great War'
- **Latest news** and much more...



Welcome to our Summer issue

These next months hold for many the promise of ‘time off’, a chance to unwind or re-charge. So, we’ve asked Fr Terry Tastard to reflect on why holidays are a Jewish and Christian gift to the world, while several friars suggest how we might spend some of that time – in refreshing our faith through a new understanding of Scripture. Summer is also when brethren move to new tasks and missions. As three leave for Rome, Fr Benjamin Earl, who moved there last summer, explains his work as Procurator General. Finally, as people remember the horrors of the Great War, I reflect on the ministry of friars who served as military chaplains.

– Fr Richard Finn OP, Editor

You can send any comments or feedback to me via magazine@english.op.org

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Salve, Sancta Parens!



Our cover image for this issue of *The Dominicans* is a richly illustrated initial ‘S’ which depicts the Blessed Virgin sheltering the friars under her cloak. It comes from a 15th-century manuscript in the library of San Marco, the Observant Dominican priory at Florence, and begins the introit ‘Salve sancta parens’ often used in Masses of the Blessed Virgin.

Such images of Our Lady sheltering the faithful had become popular over the preceding centuries; one of the earliest known (by Duccio in ca. 1280) shows three kneeling Franciscan friars beneath the Virgin’s mantle as she sits enthroned holding the Christ child. For Dominicans the image was easily adapted and associated with a story told in the Lives of the Brethren of a northern-Italian anchoress who had been reproved by the Blessed Virgin for doubting the virtue of these new preachers:

‘“Do you not think, not believe, that I am strong enough to protect my servants, young though they are and running about the world for the salvation of souls? But so that you may know that I have taken them into my special protection, look, see those men whom you despised yesterday.” And lifting up her cloak, she showed the woman a great crowd of the brethren.’

A medieval fresco at San Domenico, the Dominican priory in Bologna (below), shows Virgin and child with the kneeling friars now flanked by a bishop and three of the Order’s saints.

As we develop the Rosary Shrine at St Dominic’s in London, and seek to advance our mission across the Province, these images encourage us to renew our trust in Mary’s powerful intercession.



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Requiescant in Pace

We remember with affection and gratitude the recently departed who made bequests to the Friars. *May they and all the faithful departed rest in peace.*

- James Fleming (Holy Cross parish, Leicester)
- Josie Bermingham (The Rosary Shrine)

A leaflet on legacy giving is available from our priories or Development Office (see back page).





Holy Days and Holidays

Fr Terry Tastard reflects on the God-given importance of leisure within our lives.

When I think of holidays and leisure, I think of the Sabbath. Not the joyless Sabbath of Scotland of yore, not the British shopping-spree Sunday, but the Sabbath of Jewish tradition.

I have enjoyed many Shabbat meals at the home of Jewish friends. I saw a space in which they could breathe. After the traditional prayers and lighting of candles we would enjoy a long, leisurely meal in which conversation covered every possible ground. For their adult children still at home, Friday night did not mean pub or club, it meant the *Gemütlichkeit* of the family table. No one answered the phone. The TV remained silent. As Masorti Jews they used electricity on the Sabbath, but even so, the meal was largely prepared by sundown. The cook too wanted her leisure. The quality of listening and sharing was profound. There was laughter. Sometimes there was tension and tempers could rise. But always there was listening, and a deep sense of being present to one another.

Even in the ancient world the Jews stopped every week. The Torah said that no one was to work, not the servants, not even ox or donkey (Ex. 20:10, Dt. 5:14). Their pagan neighbours must have been astonished. Wasn't life too serious for such leisure? Didn't food production have to go on 24/7? But the message was clear. We are more than what we produce or consume. We are who we are because we belong in a network of relationships. Time for leisure nourishes those relationships – including our relationship with God. Our holidays and our leisure time are

an extended Sabbath where we can discover ourselves and each other anew.

I am old enough to remember how, in the 1960s, we began to hear that we were entering the age of leisure. Machines would relieve us of dull routine labour. With the increase in productivity, profits would grow and workers have more free time. A bright future beckoned. Yet the popular press today is full of articles bemoaning work-related stress. There is talk of delayed retirement because of inadequate pensions. People seem to work longer hours, fearful that someone else may take their job. Paradoxically we have longer holidays than ever, holidays enshrined in law (the exception being the United States, where febrile workaholism reigns).

Two things seem to have gone wrong. The first is that leisure is seen as recovery. Intense, even relentless work is counter-balanced by a long holiday and renewal. The second is that we have moved from accumulation of material goods to accumulation of experiences, making leisure another source of exhaustion as we determinedly search out that elusive new experience.

In such a situation, it is too easy for people not to listen. Not to listen to each other. Not to listen to the marginalised voices. Not to listen to God. Leisure becomes distraction, with people not wholly present to each other. No one listens properly, because their leisure has become an extension of a pressured life. The social theorists of the Frankfurt School were disdainful of mass entertainment, which, as neo-Marxists, they saw as creating false consciousness. They have been criticised for their dourness. But perhaps they were on to something.

The older I get, the simpler the

Christian message seems to become. God comes to us in Christ. Christ comes to us in the eucharist. The sacraments draw us back to God. Divine life touches our life. God listens to us. Everything seems to flow from this affirmation, that God knows us and listens to us. People who listen to God are more likely to be listening to one another. Perhaps the truth runs the other way also, namely that a people who listen to one another can also more readily listen to God. In listening we touch the depths of mystery in each person. Listening, we watch the face more closely. Emmanuel Levinas said the human face is a sign of the infinite as it reveals the transcendent life in each person. Leisure which leads to listening is neither purposeful nor purposeless, but a space for recreation in the relationships, both human and divine, which nourish us and make us who we are.

I used to think that the most frustrating verse in the Bible was Luke 10.42, where Jesus tells Martha that only one thing is necessary, and that Mary her sister has already chosen it. Yes, Lord, I used to think, but could you not have gone a little further and told us more about this one thing? I know now that Mary is shown as a disciple, a woman taking her place as an equal in a man's world. She is present to the Messiah, sharing that moment. She makes time for the leisure of listening, and in doing so she finds the Messiah. Jesus says it is not to be taken away from her.

Fr Terry is a member of the Priestly Fraternity of Our Lady of the Rosary, diocesan priests who incorporate a pattern of Dominican living into their daily ministry.

Around the Province

Movers & Shakers

Recent success in fundraising for the Training Fund allows us to support both the initial and the ongoing further studies of our brethren. Here is a brief list of those who have just completed or are about to embark on a course of studies. Please remember them in your prayers.

- Ordained as priests last year, Frs **Oliver Keenan** and **Matthew Jarvis** have completed their studies in Oxford and move to our priories in London and Leicester respectively.
- Brs **Samuel Burke** and **Toby Lees** leave Oxford for a time to continue their ministerial studies in Rome.
- Br **Rafael Jiminez** (of the Rosary Province) has completed a year at Blackfriars Oxford and moves to Rome for further study; Fr **Gregory Schnakenberg** also leaves Oxford for the USA where he will finish his Oxford doctorate, on Humbert of Romans.
- Fr **Lawrence Lew** has now completed his studies in Washington D.C. and has been assigned to our London priory, while Fr **Gregory Pearson** heads for Rome to study Canon Law.
- And finally, our current novices will take their simple vows in September and move from Cambridge to Oxford to begin their ministerial studies, being replaced, we hope, by four new novices for the English Province!

All donations you make to the Training Fund support the friars of our Province in the lifelong studies which are the mainstay of Dominican life and ministry.



The admittance and first profession of Lay Dominicans in Bristol, with Fr Richard Conrad OP, and Fr Rupert Allen, Catholic chaplain to Bristol University



Madrigals in the garden: Benefactors' Day at Oxford priory.



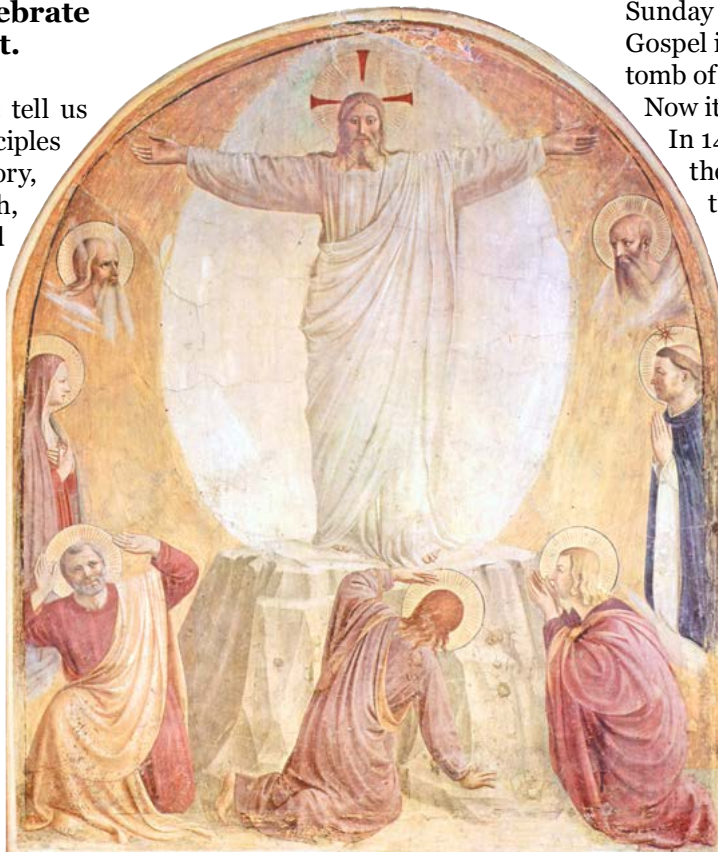
The beauty and power of the Baroque: Monteverdi's 1610 Vespers was performed at the Rosary Shrine to great acclaim by Camerata of Curiosities and His Majesty's Sagbutts and Cornetts.

Jesus' Transfiguration and Ours

**Fr Richard Conrad OP,
Director of the Aquinas
Institute at Blackfriars Hall,
Oxford, offers us an insight
into the mystery we celebrate
each year on 6th August.**

Matthew, Mark and Luke tell us that Jesus' closest disciples saw him transfigured in glory, between Moses and Elijah, with his face shining and his garments gleaming. This took place soon after Jesus had first predicted his Passion. Hence the widespread recognition that the Transfiguration was intended to strengthen these disciples for the 'scandal' of the Cross. Yet, there is more: Mark places the Transfiguration at a turning-point in his Gospel. At the beginning he tells us of Jesus' Baptism, when the Father said to Jesus, 'You are my beloved Son'. At the Transfiguration, Mark tells us that Peter, afraid and uncomprehending, wanted to build three tabernacles – perhaps to keep Jesus, Moses and Elijah on the mountain and prolong the vision. But the disciples hear, 'This is my beloved Son: listen to him', and the vision fades. They have to follow Jesus down the mountain and accept his difficult message concerning the Way of the Cross. This Way takes Jesus to Calvary, where at last it can be said on the public stage, 'Truly this man was the Son of God'. For, in his Sacrifice Jesus was most recognisable for who he is. Mark teaches that in our Baptism we enter the water with Jesus, and the Father says to us, 'You are my beloved child'. We begin to walk with Jesus. On the way we are graced with moments of transfiguration, experience glimpses of glory. Thus, in the Liturgy we hear the Law and the Prophets bear renewed witness to Jesus. Such moments strengthen our faith and hope. They re-empower us to take Jesus' Way to heart, and share his Sacrifice, so that we can be recognised as sharing his Sonship. Different disciples share his

Sacrifice in different ways, some by martyrdom, some by other trials, some by compassion born of love. Transfiguration points forward to Sacrifice.



Luke imparts the same message by telling us that Moses and Elijah spoke with Jesus about the Exodus he was to accomplish in Jerusalem. Fra Angelico imparted the same message to each friar who moved into Cell 6 at San Marco in Florence – and now, thanks to the Internet, to anyone with a computer (see illustration). He showed Jesus standing on a small, flat-topped hill, with his arms outstretched. These friars would have seen Crucifixion scenes in the cells of the novitiate, and so would recognise the same hill, the same gesture.

The dynamic of Angelico's fresco, in which the light emanates from around Jesus' knees, forces us to lower our gaze. We would like to gaze on Jesus' face, but cannot bear to do so. The same dynamic is there in the crucifixion scenes Angelico painted or directed – for the face of Jesus on the Cross is too glorious to bear. That was when he appeared for who he is: I AM HE (see John 8:28).

We commemorate the Transfiguration twice a year. By the time of Leo the Great, the Gospel of the Transfiguration was read at the vigil before the Second Sunday of Lent; Leo preached on that Gospel in the Vatican Basilica, by the tomb of one of the event's witnesses.

Now it is read on the Sunday itself.

In 1457 Callixtus III extended to the Western Church the Feast of the Transfiguration kept by the Greeks on 6th August, with the Epistle (II Peter 1:16-19) in which Peter draws on the event he witnessed as a proof that the final, divinising resurrection is indeed going to take place. This invites us to gain a further insight: the glory Peter, James and John saw on the mountain pointed forward not only to the glory John saw at Calvary, but also to the glory of Jesus' Resurrection – and to our share in it. The Church Fathers interpreted Jesus' gleaming garments as hinting that his glory will overflow to those who belong to him. The Collect for 6th August takes the Transfiguration as an

advance sign of perfect adoption, and prays that our discipleship will obtain the glory due to Jesus' fellow-heirs. 'Moments of transfiguration' we are granted – above all, the Holy Eucharist – are likewise a 'pledge of future glory'.

By a blasphemous travesty, the light that appeared above Hiroshima on 6th August burned off the faces of those who turned towards it – a symbol of the cruelties that dehumanise people, especially the people who perpetrate them. But the glory of God that shines through the face of Christ – Christ transfigured, crucified, and risen – shines on people to humanise and divinise them. If by truth and compassion we can be Christ's face towards others, to humanise them, then we already enjoy one degree of divine glory (cf. II Cor. 3:18-4:18). The Transfiguration promises a yet fuller degree in which we shall at last be able to bear – to behold and to reflect – Jesus' radiant face.



Inspired by St Paul

Fr David Sanders OP, who teaches Scripture at Blackfriars, Oxford, and is Director of St Martin's Mission, which supports the preaching of Dominicans in the Caribbean, encourages us to take a new look at St Paul.

St Paul's letters make up a large part of the New Testament but many Christians don't read them because they think both his letters and his personality too difficult. So why is it worth making an effort to read Paul? One reason is that he can give our faith fresh life. We hear the Gospels each Sunday and they can become too familiar. In the Pauline letters we sense the excitement and energy with which he tells his congregation how Christ can transform their daily lives. He can make Jesus come alive for us too.

On the road to Damascus, God had transformed St Paul's life. He had been a zealous Pharisee who persecuted those blasphemers who claimed that a crucified criminal named Jesus was the risen Messiah. When he encountered the risen Christ he had to choose between Christ and the Law which had condemned him to death. Paul chose Christ, but how did he make sense of this shock to his Jewish faith?

In the letter to the Romans he tells us that Jesus is the end of the Law. By Law he means that story of all God's great acts of salvation. From Egypt, God had brought his enslaved people out into freedom; and despite all their failures

he had rescued them again from exile in the prison camp of Babylon. Now the same God had taken a further amazing step - he had died for his people on a cross. That was the climax of the story which revealed to Paul the extraordinary divine love which would be the driving power of his faith. For the rest of his life he would work out the implications of a faith in the crucified and risen Christ.

The resurrection of Jesus was an apocalyptic event, that is, the beginning of a new creation. Christ was the first fruits of this new creation and those who believed in him could be joined to him through baptism and become members of the Church, the Body of Christ. Paul awaited the return of Christ, but meanwhile God had given him an apostolic commission to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. Just as the resurrection had burst open the tomb, now the dividing wall between Jew and Gentile had been breached. In Galatians, Paul tells us that those profound ethnic divisions have been overcome in principle through our baptism into Christ: 'There can be neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor freeman, male nor female for you are all one in Christ.'

In the Acts of the Apostles we follow Paul's mission as he strove to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth. In 2 Corinthians he gives us a glimpse of the hardships he endured: 'often near death; five times I have received thirty-nine lashes from Jews, three times I have been beaten with rods; once I was stoned, three times I have been

shipwrecked'. Think of all the dangers involved in his founding churches, and his walking thousands of miles through Asia Minor and Greece. He was willing to suffer all this for his love of Christ and for his care for those churches.

St Paul's letters dealt with problems which had arisen in the churches after he left. Obviously knowing the context of the letters helps us to understand



them. But probably the best way to start to read Paul is to get a New Testament, open it at his letters, and listen to his answers to questions which may still bother us. Like these:

Q. Why is there no Christianity without the resurrection of the body? How do we share in it?

Some in Paul's community at Corinth doubted the resurrection and they wanted to know what happened to their bodies after death.

A. Read 1 Corinthians 15 and especially v.12ff and continue after he writes 'and if Christ has not been raised your faith is pointless...'

Q. How do we deal with a divided church congregation?

Paul's congregation at Corinth was made up of awkward and competitive people. How were they to overcome their rivalry especially when they met together for worship? People usually hear this passage about love at weddings but they rarely know the original context.

A. Read 1 Corinthians 12 and then see how chapter 13 is the answer Paul gives to the problem. 'Love is always patient and kind; love is never jealous; love is not boastful...'

Q. How do I find a true spirituality for my life. How can I pray?

In Romans, Paul explains that the Law can teach us what we are doing wrong but it can't stop us doing it. We need the gift of God's Holy Spirit to achieve this and then to transform our lives after the pattern of Jesus' death and resurrection. In chapter 8 of Romans, Paul shows how the Spirit can do this and help us to pray.

A. Read Romans 8 but especially v.26ff: 'The Spirit helps us in our weakness for we do not know how to pray as we ought but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words...'

If you want continue reading St Paul but need some help you can consult two fairly easy introductions. The first is by a Dominican scholar, Jerome Murphy O'Connor, *Paul His Story*, published by OUP; and then *An Introduction to the New Testament* by Raymond Brown, published by Yale.

A Journey through the Bible

Fr Richard Ounsworth OP recently spoke at a meeting of The Dominican Forum in the City of London (kindly hosted by CCLA). Lector in New Testament Studies at Blackfriars, Oxford, he offered a fresh way to re-engage with God's Word addressed to us in the Bible. This is an abridged version of his talk.

How should we read the Bible?

Should we simply open at page one and read from Genesis to Revelation? That's not a good idea! I know several people who have tried, and few of them got past Leviticus. That third book of the Old Testament is somewhat daunting, being all about sacrifice, food laws and leprosy. Best to leave it for later!

So, start with St Mark's Gospel. It is a great deal less daunting – it's only about half the length of the other Gospels, so you should be able to manage the whole thing in one sitting. This is the crucial thing – to read it in one go. Only by doing so can we get a sense of its shape, how the Cross overshadows the whole of Jesus's ministry, and its distinctive presentation of Christ's character and his mission. When I give tutorials

on the Gospels, this is often the first exercise I ask students to do: to read Mark, and make a note of all the things that seems surprising, distinctive or puzzling. Try it for yourselves – maybe compare notes with a friend.

Look next at an Old Testament book. Some will seem familiar – you'd be surprised how much of Isaiah you recognise, for example – but others not. Choose a less familiar one, something manageable like Jonah or Ruth, both just four chapters long, and ask yourself this question: *How does this book speak to me of Christ?*

If that seems an odd question, remember that the Bible is *our* story, the story of the Christian Church, the people of God. It is a strange, surprising story, not always a nice one; but it is our story, because it is the tale of God's outpouring of himself into creation, of his love for the humanity that repeatedly betrays him and reviles him, and his extraordinary mercy towards us despite those betrayals. In fact, it is *because* of those betrayals – the sin with which we have defaced our world and history – that it is sometimes so hard to see how the Bible is relevant to us, because it's difficult to follow the story properly.



13th-century Byzantine Gospel of Luke and John, Dumbarton Oaks collection in Washington DC. © Lawrence Lew OP, 2015.

Allow me to explain by means of an analogy: halve a potato and carve a design into the cut surface. You may have done this at school. Then dip the carved surface into paint and stamp your design repeatedly on a piece of paper. Fun! For this to work best you want your paper to be on a hard surface, and to be flat, clean, and in good condition. Suppose, instead, that your paper was dirty, torn, crinkled and tatty? You can stamp away merrily with your potato but it's going to be quite hard to make out the repeated pattern.

Well, our human history is that bit of paper. Because of sin, the paper of human history is distinctly untidy, far from ideal. Yet God has been stamping out his pattern, the *character* of his saving mercy, onto our human history from the beginning, especially in dealing with his people Israel. Hard to make out perhaps – but one thing that will help is if we have actually seen the potato. Once you've seen the potato, you can look again at the tatty bit of paper and make out much more clearly where it's been stamped. Here is the key point: *Jesus is that potato!* The Letter to the Hebrews tells us: Jesus is the '*character* of God's nature' (Heb 1:3) – he it is with which God has stamped his character into our history! So, once we have seen Christ, encountered him in the New Testament and in the sacraments of the Church, we are much more attuned to his presence in Scripture.

This is not meant to be flippant, and looking for the potato prints of Jesus in the Old Testament is more than just a fun exercise. It is vital to our Christian identity, because the stories we tell ourselves, and about ourselves, are absolutely central to our identity. Being Christian means not just knowing but consciously engaging with and living out the story of God's love that we find in the scriptures. Read them with this key! Whether a book at a time, a few verses each day of *lectio divina*, or by joining a study group... this is your story; this is who you are.

If we return to Leviticus, then its



Raising of Lazarus: early Christian ivory, Victoria & Albert Museum. © Lawrence Lew OP, 2008.

laws about leprosy, read alongside the raising of Lazarus, may help us to understand the resurrection of Jesus. According to Leviticus, there are three kinds of things that can get leprosy. Only one of them is people, for whom it is a skin disease (though what the Bible calls 'leprosy' is nothing to do with what we call leprosy or Hansen's disease); the other things that can be leprosy are clothes and houses. Why is this? I suggest it is because your skin, your clothes and your house are three layers surrounding you that define who

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you are. In ancient Israel your house marks the boundary of your family and your place in the world. Even more intimately, what you wear tells the story of who you are. But our skin is the crucial boundary: I am all the things this side of my skin, so to speak, and everything the other side of my skin is not. Leprosy, then, is a rupture in one of these defining layers, and so symbolically threatens our distinct identity. If the line between me and

everyone else becomes blurred, as it were, then my identity too becomes blurred.

We can now note that Lazarus – Jesus's friend whom he raised from the grave – lent his name to the only character in the parables who has a name. We hear how the dogs licked Lazarus's sores, so it's reasonable to conclude that he was leprosy. That's why he's stuck outside the gate. Did Jesus name this leper 'Lazarus' as a clue to how the raising of Lazarus differs from his own resurrection? Look at what happened: first Jesus called Lazarus out of the tomb – the dead man's house. Then Jesus tells people to 'unbind' or 'undress' Lazarus – free him from a dead man's clothes. These are the two outer layers in the laws about leprosy. That,

however, is where it stops – Lazarus is obviously not stripped of his skin when he's raised from the dead!

We may contrast that with Jesus's passion: taken out of the praetorium (Pilate's house) and then stripped of his garments, Jesus is afterwards flogged, symbolically removing his skin too. This points to a distinction between Lazarus's raising, when he is returned to normal physical life, and Jesus's resurrection. There is clearly something unusual about Jesus's risen body – recognisable and yet unrecognisable, still marked by the nails, still able to eat, yet passing through locked doors and appearing and disappearing at will. I suggested before that our skin makes us distinct – in our skins we are present in the world, but made present precisely by being limited: I am here in my cell writing this, so I cannot simultaneously be sunning myself on a Caribbean beach. With Jesus it is not so – he is truly and bodily present everywhere the Eucharist is celebrated, on every altar and in every tabernacle. His risen bodily presence is without limit, and this has been symbolised by his scourging, once we recognise the significance of that scourging in the light of the Levitical laws on leprosy. So, do read the Bible, because it tells you your story; and it's a revelation!

Preaching Justice starts at home

**Fr. Benjamin Earl OP,
Procurator General of the
Order, reflects on his role at
Santa Sabina in the light of
our wider mission.**

Dominican friars promise obedience to the Master of the Order in accordance with our Rule, the laws of the Order. That profession is intended to set us free for the proclamation of the gospel which is the mission of the Order and of the whole Church. Such freedom means that from time to time friars are asked to take up new challenges in unexpected places. Just occasionally this request comes directly from the Master of the Order himself and takes us to missions in distant lands.

When the Master asked me to see him in February 2016 he might have asked me to go to our mission with indigenous peoples in the Amazon; or to promote reconciliation in Colombia; or to engage with the Islamic world in the Middle East; or to labour for the gospel in what Pope Benedict XVI called the 'digital continent' of the internet. Instead, however, I was asked to come to Rome as Procurator General of the Order. The office of Procurator General is so unromantic that even many friars do not know of it, but in fact it is one of our most ancient offices; the first brother recorded as Procurator General was fr. Troianus de Regno in 1256, and I am the 123rd in that line!

From the thirteenth century to the twenty-first, a large international Order like ours has always needed to work closely with the Papal Curia. The Procurator General is the principal official for transacting canonical business with the Holy See. Requests for permissions, approvals and dispensations which exceed the authority of the Order's superiors are presented to the various departments of the Roman Curia. A lot of this has to do with dealing delicately, mercifully and justly with the cases of friars and nuns who have various problems in their vocations, but I'm also involved in the canonical side of new ventures and any restructuring the Order undertakes.

Alongside this work representing the Order to the Roman Curia, the Procurator General is also a member of the Order's General Council and adviser

to the Master and other members of our Curia on canonical and constitutional matters. I'm frequently consulted too by Provincials around the world who deal with tricky canonical situations.

The General Curia is based at Santa Sabina on Rome's Aventine hill. Pope Honorius III gave St Dominic himself the use of the site, and made a gift of the property in 1222. I have the privilege of living in a cloister which once was home to St Dominic, St Albert the Great, St Thomas Aquinas, and many other figures in the intervening centuries. From my office I can see the cupola of St Peter's, although when it comes to presenting business in person, the Vatican is a 40-minute walk – a pleasant stroll, except in the height of the Roman summer!

While the work of our Curia – and perhaps especially of the Procurator General – can sometimes be seen as a little remote from the Order's mission on the ground, this should never be the case. The Curia exists to serve, coordinate and support this mission. A community of thirty brothers drawn from all over the world faces its own special challenges, but like any other priory in the Order we live, pray and study together and strive to preach the good news whether in our own basilica or further afield, often across five continents simultaneously!

There is a constant thread in our theological tradition of proclaiming and defending justice. Fr Francisco de Vittoria and the Salamanca School established the theoretical foundation for human rights in the 16th century; fr. Bartolomé de Las Casas and fr. Antonio de Montesinos and others applied these notions to the oppressed indigenous peoples of the Americas. Dominicans speak up for justice because this is demanded both by the dignity God gives to human nature and by the gospel.

If our preaching is to be authentic it is vital that we too listen to the message we proclaim. We must practice justice within the Order if we are to be effective preachers of justice. The Procurator General has a key role to play in that work as cases are referred to the Master and the Roman Curia. I must see that due process is followed, calling attention to the rights

of the brothers, other members of the Dominican Family, and all God's people.

'This is what the Lord asks of you', says the prophet Micah: 'to act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with your God' (Micah 6:8). If this is our calling, then the work of justice is not merely a key bureaucratic function, but must be central to living out our Christian and Dominican vocation. Much that the Procurator General deals with is challenging, and occasionally it is distinctly unpleasant; but it is a joy not just to serve the mission of the Order in a technical role, but in this way to participate in the Order's mission everywhere in striving for justice, loving all people and walking the path trod by Christ and St Dominic.



Photo © Philippe Toxé OP, 2017

A Wartime Ministry

From the Archives

One hundred years ago this summer, shortly before the battle of Passchendaele was launched, Dominican friars at Woodchester erected a Wayside Cross close to their priory. Consecrated on Trinity Sunday, 3rd June 1917, it was one of the earliest memorials to men who lost their lives in the Great War. Re-dedicated this June by Bishop Declan Lang, the anniversary also recalls the role which English Dominicans played as military chaplains during the war. No fewer than seventeen friars served as chaplains at different periods; the largest number were attached to the British Expeditionary Force in France and Belgium, though some were sent to Gallipoli, or were stationed in Egypt, Palestine, and further East, while a few acted as naval chaplains. Priests of different characters and ages (the youngest was twenty-seven when he became a chaplain, the oldest sixty-five, though most were in their thirties), much of what they experienced is now lost, but what little we know reveals their dedication and no little suffering.

Some were dogged by ill-health and injury. Dysentery put Frs Theodore Bull and Ethelbert Rigby into adjacent beds at a Maltese hospital in 1915. From there they had gone to Gallipoli, where Fr Bull was later injured. No sooner had Fr Albert Knapp transferred to France in 1916 than he was seriously weakened by influenza, and he would



A Dominican army chaplain

later be debilitated by recurrent bouts of enteritis. Fr George Naylor crossed to France in mid-October that year, but a letter of 1st December from the Assistant to the Principal Chaplain related that 'The Rev. G Naylor... has already broken down and will I conclude be evacuated to England with Chest trouble very shortly.' His right lung had haemorrhaged in the trenches. Though he recovered sufficiently to be sent in 1917 to the Middle East, he was struck down at Baghdad by tuberculosis in June 1918 and invalided out of the army.

A few flourished in their new role. Fr Sebastian Gates was dispatched to Gibraltar at the end of 1915 and remained in the navy until forced to retire in 1921 at the age of seventy. A fearless and candid man, who identified closely with the sailors whom he served, these were said to be the happiest years of his life. A confidential report shows that Fr Felix Couturier, assistant to the Principal Chaplain in Egypt from December 1915, soon proved himself 'a chaplain of outstanding ability, strong character, an excellent administrator, and organizer: hard working and tireless'. Awarded the MC, he so impressed the Foreign Office that it advanced his appointment as Apostolic Visitor to Egypt in 1919.

For many friars, their service as army chaplains brought first-hand experience of the harsh conditions and

terrible suffering involved in modern warfare. Fr Dunstan Sargent was on his way to England from Grenada, in order to serve as a chaplain, when his ship was torpedoed. He spent the night in a water-logged boat on a rough sea. Fr Gilbert Tigar wrote from the No. 7 Casualty Clearing Station in 1916 to ask readers of the Dominican magazine *The Rosary* for rosaries ('about a gross a month') which he gave out to the wounded. He had a room at the top of the hospital, a former school, where his table was 'two bacon boxes' and his chair another box 'Brooke Bond's tea pattern'. When the hospital moved to a former convent, he found the chapel turned into a ward for the most gravely injured to whom he gave the last rites. Fr Bernard Delaney kept for many years after the war the detailed instructions to chaplains on the burial of the dead and the recording of their graves.

Fr Raymund Devas had two brothers, a Jesuit and a Franciscan, who also served as army chaplains in France, and their occasional meetings were a source of strength, but another brother, a regular officer, was killed on 13th November 1916 not long after serving Fr Raymund's Mass.

Fr Raymund himself was awarded the MC in 1918 for 'conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty in visiting front-line trenches during heavy fighting, where his coolness and courage greatly assisted in maintaining the confidence



1936: Procession at the Wayside Cross at Woodchester

and morale of the men'. The previous 30th November, Fr Bertrand Pike had been in the 'Gloster Rd', a sunken road about eleven miles south of Cambrai, where he was helping the Battalion Medical Orderly with the wounded, when German soldiers suddenly took them prisoner. He would spend the next three and a half months as a Prisoner of War. On his release, he returned to the trenches, from where he appealed to readers of *The Rosary* magazine for copies of 'the Storyteller, Premier, Nash, and the Royal, etc.,' so that the troops could read 'when out of the trenches for a few days' and so 'forget for a short while the horrors of the line'.

One of the hardest tasks faced by the chaplains was to accompany in their final hours soldiers who were to be shot for 'desertion'. Late one night Fr Paul Weeks learnt that a soldier of his had been condemned to death. According to a later account by Fr Edwin Essex, the man was not a Catholic, 'but, being regarded as a "bad lot" by his own chaplain, had been left to face death as best he could. Fr Paul thought otherwise. All that night he spent in a fruitless effort to obtain for the man an eleventh-hour reprieve; having failed, he returned to the doomed soldier, talked to him of the life to come, received him into the Church, and, the next morning, stood by him as he bravely faced the firing squad.' Fr Delaney was instrumental in getting one young deserter released after his papers were providentially lost. He also remembered the courage with which another deserter faced death after refusing to return to the line: 'He died bravely and without flinching. He made his confession and received Holy Communion and came out to meet death walking erect, smart and polished to the last button.'

At the end of the war, most of these chaplains returned to the Province. It is impossible to gauge how deeply they were changed by their experiences. Not a few would serve on the missions. Frs Pike and Naylor would be sent to South Africa; Fr Gates and Fr Devas would spend many years on Grenada. Fr Rigby left the Order. Fr Bernard Delaney would become Provincial. Fr Felix Couturier became Bishop of Alexandria, Ontario, in 1921. We should not forget their ministry to so many hundreds if not thousands of soldiers.

– **Fr Richard Finn OP**

Dates for your Diary

Las Casas Institute

Usually held at Blackfriars, Oxford, or nearby. Enquiries and bookings via lascasas@bfriars.ox.ac.uk

18 Oct – 15 Nov

Edward Hadas, seminars on Finance, Reality and Morality. Wednesdays, 8pm for 5 weeks. *Prior Registration Essential.*

19 Oct Frank Field, MP, on Poverty in Britain. Co-sponsored by the Centre for Enterprise, Markets and Ethics. 5pm. Oxford, *venue TBC.*

9 Nov Aidan O'Neill, QC, on Religious Liberty and the Law. The Las Casas Annual Lecture. 5pm. Oxford, *venue TBC.*

30 Nov Las Casas Special Lecture by Fr Gustavo Gutierrez OP in conjunction with the Romero Trust. 5pm.



The Rosary Shrine

St Dominic's, London NW5 4LB. More info at www.rosaryshrine.co.uk

16 Mar 2018

RESCHEDULED: Inaugural Rosary Shrine Lecture: Dr Scott Hahn. 7.30pm. £5. Book online via www.eventbrite.co.uk.

The Dominican Forum

Book early for season 3 of our popular series of lunchtime meetings in the City for busy professionals. Expected to start again in October, *venue TBC.*

Email forum@english.op.org to join our email list for notifications.

Info: www.english.op.org/forum

Other Events

16 Sept Annual Alumni Dinner, Blackfriars Oxford. All alumni and their guests are welcome. 7.30 for 8pm. www.english.op.org/alumni2017 Contact: richard.brown@bfriars.ox.ac.uk



Development News

Generous support boosts the campaign for the Rosary Shrine

In April, St Dominic's parishioner Wendy Searle (pictured) braved a sponsored parachute jump, raising over £1,600. A generous legacy from Josie Bermingham brought us over the £400,000 mark in June, 60% of the way to our target! This lets us move on to the next stage of works: replacing the sound and heating systems, and completing the Lady Chapel restoration, so ensuring the best experience for parishioners and pilgrims alike.

The Rosary Shrine already welcomes many groups, so just get in touch via its website if you would like to organise a visit for your church or other group.

Target: £667,000

£400,000 ✓

£267,000 left



Please support the shrine's important mission of promoting the Rosary and praying for the many needs of the world.
www.rosaryshrine.co.uk

Give now online via our website: www.english.op.org/donate

Support the work of the Dominican Friars

Donation Form

Title..... First Name..... Last Name

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Telephone..... Send me this newsletter via ☐ email ☐ mail.

Do you have a connection with a Dominican house or church? If so, please tell us which:



My Donation

I enclose a gift of £

[cheques payable to 'The Dominican Council']

My gift is for

- ☐ General work of the Dominican Friars
- ☐ Las Casas Institute for Social Justice
- ☐ Dominican Friars' Training Fund
- ☐ The Rosary Shrine
- ☐ The Dominicans in
- ☐ I do not require an acknowledgement

Please send information on

- ☐ Making a legacy gift in my Will
- ☐ Setting up regular giving to the Friars.

RETURN YOUR COMPLETED FORM with your payment to: Dominicans' Development Office, 17 Beaumont Street, Oxford. OX1 2NA.

If you would like to discuss your giving, call Richard Brown at our Development Office on 01865 610208 or email development@english.op.org

Gift Aid Declaration

UK Taxpayer? Tick the box and add today's date to boost your donation by 25% via Gift Aid. Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Tick here: ☐ I want the charity The English Province of the Order of Preachers to treat all donations I have made for this tax year [and the four years prior to the year of this declaration]*, [and all donations I make from the date of this declaration until I notify the charity otherwise]*, as Gift Aid.

*Delete as applicable.

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less income tax and/or Capital Gains tax in a tax year than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all of my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Gift Aid is reclaimed by the charity from the tax you pay for the current tax year. Your home address is needed to identify you as a current UK taxpayer. Please notify us if your situation changes. The English Province of the Order of Preachers (the Dominicans) is a charity registered in England and Wales (231192) and in Scotland (SC039062).

Data Protection

In the light of recent regulatory changes, we are currently reviewing our practice in this area. Further communications will be made in due course. The following statement briefly summarises our current practices.

Our charity securely stores and carefully processes personal data in accordance with the UK's Data Protection Act (1998). Personal data are retained and used to support the important works of communications and fundraising, which advance our mission, as well as to meet our legal obligations in certain areas. We do not share personal data with other organisations. In some cases we use public-domain sources to enhance our understanding of individuals, including 'wealth screening' using a secure and legally compliant third-party service provider; we do this so that we can ensure that any fundraising communications we make to people are appropriate to them as individuals, and so that we can, with our limited staff resources, fundraise efficiently and successfully in support of our mission.

Our full Data Protection Statement can be read at www.english.op.org/dps, or contact our Development Office (see left) for a copy or to discuss any concerns.