



Cluster: a Dominican journey in faith

FALL 2003

NEWSLETTER OF THE DOMINICAN CLUSTER

VOLUME I • NUMBER 1

Fall Cluster Meetings

In September and October, 2003, congregational meetings were held as part of the first cycle of the Cluster discernment process. The first meeting was held in Akron. The Columbus congregation held two meetings, one in Columbus and one in New Haven, Connecticut, to accommodate their East Coast Sisters. The two New Orleans Congregations combined in one meeting hosted by St. Mary's New Orleans.

The meetings all had similar schedules and included the same address by Sr. Margaret Ormond and a PowerPoint presentation detailing Cluster history and the planned discernment process. The same prayer and ritual were used at all the meetings. Lovely Cluster prayer cards were distributed and members were encouraged to use them. The meetings informed members about the Cluster process, inspired all to begin exploring their hopes and dreams, and asked each Sister to make a personal commitment to the discernment process.

Srs. Francis Gabriel Mahoney and Catherine Malya Chen (Columbus)



Srs. Celeste Derr and Elizabeth Noel (Akron)



Srs. Mary Elizabeth Donoghue and Charles Marie Brantl (Columbus)



Srs. Janice Bachman and Susan Leslie (Columbus)

Srs. Judene Lillie (New Orleans SM), Jeanne Moore (EMD), Rose Bowen (SM), and (front) Cathy Galaskiewicz (Kentucky)



Sr. Juliana Savoy (New Orleans EMD)



Sr. Alicia Alvarado (Akron)



Srs. Mary C. Daniel and Hilary Simpson (New Orleans St. Mary)



Sr. Martha Fox (Akron) collects commitment papers



Srs. Luisa Derouen (New Orleans EMD) and Rose Clement Stalter (Columbus)

My Dear Sisters in Akron, Columbus and New Orleans,

Wearing her Iraqi dress as a symbol of our globalized world that requires an expanded vision of mission, Sr.

Margaret Ormond, Coordinator of Dominican Sisters International, spoke to each of the Cluster congregations at the fall meetings. As a member of one of the Cluster congregations (Columbus) contemplating her own discernment, but bringing with her the richness of her global Dominican perspective, Margaret shared her thoughts from the heart.

Her talk was comprised of four letters, which she wrote during the months preceding the meetings.

Her first letter, written in Palestine, reminded all of our common call to

care for our world, especially the poor of our world. She challenged everyone to expand their concepts of neighbor to reflect the realities of the contemporary globalized world, and asked how the Cluster might help all members to better fulfill this mission of "care." She suggested that per-

CCC Members with Margaret Ormond: Srs. Waldia Warden (New Orleans SM), Margaret, Therese Leckert (New Orleans SM), Bernie Baltrinic (Akron) and Jeanne Moore (New Orleans EMD)



haps needing fewer sisters in leadership and administrative roles would allow more sisters to be involved in ministries of care for the world.

Her second letter, written in England, spoke of the importance of the contemplative component of the Dominican mission, and the need to rid our

lives of the violence of busyness. She posed the possibility that the Cluster might help to

reinforce our contemplative call and help us to find ways to simplify our

lives. Margaret urged us to see the Cluster as an opportunity for renewal in our congregations, and not just a measure for survival.

Sr. Margaret's third and fourth letters were both written from Rome.

She discussed in them "our family photos," which call us into deeper relationships with one

another and with our world, and impel us on to carry our mission to farther corners. She called on us all to be mission-focused and to vision how the Cluster might strengthen our

common Dominican mission. Sr. Margaret presented the Cluster process as a way to sort out what is really important. She also challenged the groups to evaluate the North

American lifestyle and expressed hope that the Cluster would help us all to address our commitment to simplicity.

Sr. Margaret shared an important reminder to all: "Do not fear! If this is not the dream of God and Dominic, it will not happen. It is really Dominic's job to worry about this Cluster thing after all. So into your hands, dear Dominic, we entrust this Cluster."

The full text of Sr. Margaret's talk will be distributed to all members, and will also be

made available online shortly at the new Cluster website, www.dominicancluster.org

Will this cluster enable us to streamline our internal operations so as to focus more of our attention outward and not on ourselves?

How is this Cluster going to give us a more globalized perspective of "care?"

...our world is waiting, really pleading, for such a contemplative witness.



Srs. Margaret Ormond and Mariellen Phelps (Akron) pause from their conversation to pose for a photograph.

Questions & Comments to Consider

from the fall congregational meetings

At the fall congregational meetings in Akron, New Haven, New Orleans and Columbus, members gathered in small groups to formulate questions and comments to share with the larger group and with the Cluster Coordinating Committee (CCC). At the November 1-2, 2003, meeting of the CCC, committee members reviewed and discussed this input. Following are some of the members' comments that we all should contemplate and consider. Other specific questions to the CCC will be answered on a page of the Cluster website (www.dominicancluster.org), which will be launched in the coming months.



Sr. Virginia Bruen (Columbus)

The Cluster is an opportunity for new life for the future and an opportunity to have a larger Dominican voice to share the Gospel.

With so many new congregations interested in the Cluster, what are the implications for the Alliance?

How will structures and the vision engage each other and come to *renewal*, instead of *survival*?

The Cluster can be an important witness to our fractured world – we can say we were once fractured, but now we are united.

We would like to be kept informed of the activities and progress of the CCC, the subcommittees, and the task force.

We need to find creative ways for all of us to really get to know one another, realizing that not all of us are able to be at all the gatherings.

Let us view the Cluster like a marriage – we do not lose our identity, we bring our identity with us and grow.

We need to aim for unity and mission, but still cherish the individuality of gifts and spirit that can enrich us all.

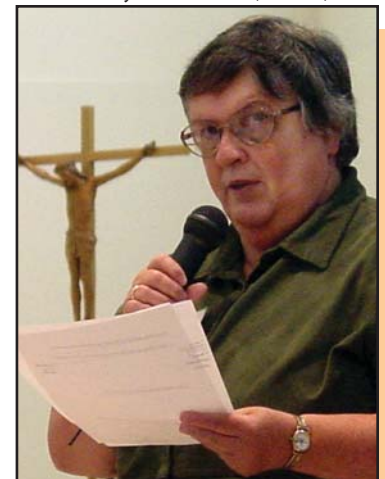
What personally and congregationally keeps us holding on and not committing ourselves to the process?

How will the Associates fit in to the Cluster process?

How will the Cluster process help us do our ministry better?

We need to look at the fears and concerns about the whole process and the Cluster, in addition to the positive aspects.

Sr. Dorothy Sarachene (Akron)



Kentucky & Oxford Join Cluster Process!

At the October 31, 2003, meeting of the Cluster Coordinating Committee (CCC) and the Cluster prioresses, the Kentucky Dominicans announced that after prayerful discernment, they had decided to join the Cluster process. Then, after an internal congregational meeting in November,

Oxford too announced that they had voted to enter the Cluster process. We are so blessed to have our Kentucky and Oxford Sisters on board, and welcome them as fellow travelers on the Cluster journey.



CCC Chair **Sr. Therese Leckert** (above photo, left; and right photo, right) welcomes both Kentucky (**Sr. Barbara Rapp**, above photo, left) and Oxford (**Sr. Ruth Hamel**, right photo, left) to the Cluster.



Cluster Calendar



2004

Please take note of these important dates! All congregation members are encouraged to attend one of the following Inter-Congregational Gatherings:

- ✓ Intercongregational Gathering in Columbus September 11-13, 2004
- ✓ Intercongregational Gathering in New Orleans September 24-26, 2004



THE DOMINICAN CLUSTER
c/o 2320 Airport Drive
Columbus, Ohio 43219