



Cluster: a Dominican journey in faith

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Uniting with New Fire

“Preaching with a new fire, living with a new spirit, calling one another to praise (God’s) name!” This mantra, created by Sinsinawa Dominican liturgists Srs. Carol Artery and Priscilla Wood, inspired us during our Pre-Chapter Assembly October 31 - November 2 and re-echoes as we live into the fullness of that hymn.

More than 300 members who will be at our Chapter assembled in St. Louis the last weekend of October, a time of amazing convergence. We felt the Feast of All Saints, the brilliant results of the autumnal equinox, and the eve of a

momentous presidential election readying our hearts for the mystery yet to be revealed during the Easter season.

We caught fire – from a large banner displaying the Chapter logo, from spirited conversations at discussion and meal tables, from Sr. Carol Zinn’s challenging keynote address, from heartfelt

prayer times and Eucharist, and from amazing agreement on three important matters.

The title of the Friday morning keynote address confirmed and stretched our deepest desire: “Reconfiguration for the Life of the World – Preaching with a New Fire.” Sr. Carol Zinn, SSJ (NGO representative at the United Nations for the Sisters of St. Joseph and longtime collaborator with former Dominican representative Eileen Gannon), called us to a more profound consciousness of the interconnectedness of all life and a willingness to partner with others in radically new ways.

Sr. Carol expanded upon a schema similar to Spiral Dynamics, Fr. Don Goergen’s gift to us at our Cluster Assembly in St. Louis in November 2005. Prophetic people are standing on the brink of a leap beyond

humanity’s basic concerns for safety, belonging, power, order, progress and even community. Entering into a world view where *everything* is connected and interconnected transforms persons and structures.

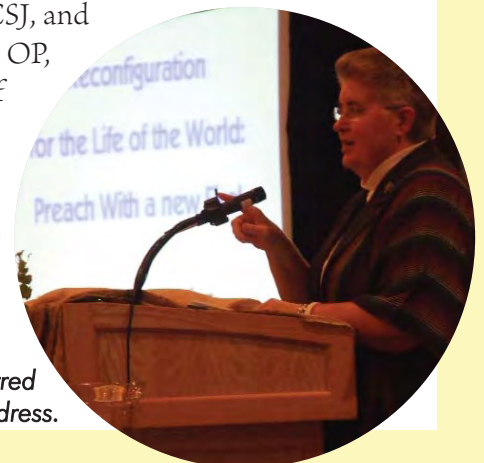
Dare we ignore the urgent realities of our times? Divisions, autonomy, oppression, brokenness, arrogance, materialism, and ignorance beg for Dominicans to address these challenges, as Catherine of Siena did, out of the fullness of our tradition. As the world hungers for unity, Dominicans bring the gift of prayer; to the thirst for wisdom, Dominicans share their commitment to study; to humanity’s need for connectedness, Dominicans witness to the blessing of community; to the longing for a sense of the sacred, Dominicans offer the Truth of the Gospel.

Sr. Carol reminded us that structural reconfiguration must move us beyond concerns of governance and personal needs to a renewed sense of mission that addresses the needs of this time. We did attend to three dimensions of our communal life as Dominican Sisters of Peace. Through prayer and honest dialogue, we affirmed the Provisional Constitutions, Directives, and basic Governance Structure. We also took the first steps as assembled delegates toward the election of our first Leadership Team.

Sr. Gene Poore, designated prioress for Pre-Chapter and Chapter, concluded our assembly with a litany of thanks for all the committee work evident throughout the weekend, for our facilitators Srs. Carol Crepeau, CSJ, and Mary Ellen O’Grady, OP, and for the prayers of our Sisters who were viewing live Pre-Chapter proceedings on televisions at six motherhouses and online.



Srs. Helen McCarthy and Mary Costello



Sr. Carol Zinn, SSJ, stirred our hearts with her address.

Reflections

“During the Pre Chapter, I felt my heart being enkindled for Preaching with a New Fire . . .”

Sr. Rose Bowen,
NOSM



...when the Constitutions were affirmed. As a matter of fact, I felt a few teardrops of joy, knowing that these words along with those in the government structure were basic to our life style as we plan to bring “the Word” with new companions to live out this vision. The companions at my table, all working through our tasks with such good humor, left me with a sense of readiness to begin our journey as Dominican Sisters of Peace.

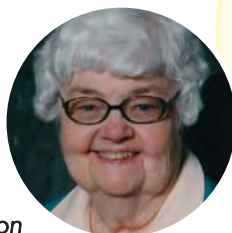
...as I reflected on Carol Zinn’s powerful presentation that began our weekend. Much of what she said resonated with me, but probably most significant was her description of the levels of consciousness and the place at which the Leap of Transformation occurs. There are many arenas of life in which we move from “I” to “we,” but in the evolution of our own new reality, we are definitely becoming a “we.” It is a leap, and I believe that many of us are tasting a bit already the beginnings of transformation. It was a wonderful Spirit-filled weekend!

Sr. Luisa Derouen,
NOEMD



...by having the greatest group of Sisters at my table. I felt blessed with so many prayerful, thinking women which really caught my attention. The sea of green cards raised in affirmation of the Provisional Constitutions and the Government Structures were defining moments. They were strong indications of who we are as Dominican women, how far we have come, and that we go forward as the journey continues, into the unknown future together, preaching with a new fire.

Sr. Lin Howley,
Akron



..meeting so many Sisters I had never seen who are now in the same community – it was thrilling! The Holy Spirit was clearly in evidence throughout our days. True Dominican Joy was spilling over during our meetings, meals and break times. The atmosphere was very positive. We are on our way to a wonderful adventure of sharing our lives and our ministries.



*Sr. Mary Jo Knittel,
Columbus*

...as we united our hearts and minds to pray, vision, plan, reflect, and continue our journey to “Jerusalem” in order to birth and fulfill the dream and the inspirations of the Holy Spirit that have led us to this time in our history. May we continue to be open and led by the Holy Spirit.



*Sr. Teresita Lipar,
Oxford*

*Sr. Patricia Rae McNamara,
Kentucky*



...during the beautiful prayer services, Sr. Carol Zinn’s call to “preaching wholeness in God to people out there,” and the inspiring table discussions. I especially appreciated Zinn’s references to St. Catharine of Siena as a model of itinerancy. Overall, I experienced an increased spirit of trust, openness, and unity in diversity as we shared both our struggles and our particular gifts/sparks at the tables. The sharing further enkindled my desire to help spread the future mission of our Dominican Sisters of Peace.

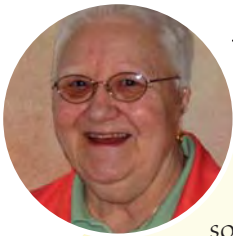
...and calling me to this new adventure. “Preaching with a new fire, living with a new spirit, calling one another to praise God’s name!” as the new song we grew to love said, will renew our Dominican charism and can only be transformative with its challenges and new growth, both personally and communally. When we were studying the Constitutions, our table group thought that the document had more than all of us had already lived than it had new things. This is such a good feeling – that we are more alike than different.



*Sr. Imelda Schmidt,
Great Bend*

Reflections

How was the experience of observing the Pre-Chapter Assembly remotely?



*Sr. Catherine Allen,
Columbus*

At first there were some technical problems, but once the glitches were worked out – just in time to see Carol Zinn’s talk – it was amazing! The sound was very clear, the images were wonderful, and we really felt a part of the assembly from afar. While I so wish I could have been present in St. Louis, I am just in awe of the technology that connected us across the miles. I look forward to our next broadcasts, and hope that perhaps more of an on-site process for discussion could be developed for those of us viewing proceedings remotely.

Thank you for the efforts to include us remote ones in the Pre-Chapter Assembly. I found the prayer services, Carol Zinn’s keynote address reminding us what Dominicans have to offer the world, and the display of green cards denoting acceptance of the Provisional Constitutions all very moving. The cameras helped us “be there.” Those same cameras could not do much to help us tune in the working sessions. That part of the transmission was not very useful or helpful.



*Sr. Marie Hohman,
Akron*

Everyone was eagerly waiting to take part in the sessions from the motherhouse. At first the speech and music were choppy and there was no action on the screen. It was distracting and some left the session. Many of the Sisters then went to the various offices and watched on the computers where it was very clear and interesting. The speech by Sr. Carol Zinn was very good, informative, and challenging – especially the part about the culture of religious life. I was so happy to have been able to see the proceedings – we didn’t feel left out.



*Sr. Alvina Millar,
Great Bend*

I watched, waited, and listened with deep gratitude to God for modern technology that brought all of you alive on the spot! Seeing fellow EMD Sisters just thrilled me. I left the weekend with new energy to journey the rest of my life with all of you. The bonding I felt was the oneness I dreamed of. My willingness to walk with all of you gives me joy and hope and energy to share myself with everyone. *I belong!* I am a part of the great family of Dominican Sisters of Peace.



*Sr. Mary Elizabeth Myers,
NOEMD living in Oxford*

Being able to view the Pre-Chapter at St. Catharine made me feel as though I was part of the activities. Seeing our Sisters with Sisters from other communities had a great impact – we are one and this is *my* community. I enjoyed being able to hear other Sisters' interactions as well as their questions and comments.



*Sr. Teresa Wolfe,
Kentucky*



*Sr. Audrey Rash,
Oxford*

It was an exciting moment to witness our Pre-Chapter Assembly from Oxford, and to realize that we are well on our way toward unification as we identified so many of our "new Sisters." With further development and use of this technology, our ability to collaborate and "preach with a new fire" will take a giant step forward.

We enjoyed the web-cast to our motherhouse and we were excited to see some of our own Sisters in the audience. When everyone waved at us, we waved back. We did have a problem during Sr. Carol Zinn's talk, but we finally got the full picture after awhile. Doing the webcasting helped us stay in touch with what is going on. Thanks for including those of us who cannot go to St. Louis.



*Sr. M. Carmelite Zibilich,
NOSM*

Images

From the Pre-Chapter Assembly



Srs. Robin Richard, Lisa Zuccarelli, Susan Leslie, Barbara Kane (partially visible), & Cathy Arnold slide electrically.



Srs. Marilyn Ambrosic & Yvonne Clark



Srs. Gemma Doll, Edith Roahrig, & Rose Clement Stalter



Srs. Trudy Tanner & Mariellen Phelps



Srs. Michelle Sherliza, Bernadette Campbell, Laetitia Anne Campbell, & Luisa Derouen



*Srs. Lois McGovern
& Therese Leckert*



*Srs. Mary Ann Fedor
& Mary Martin*



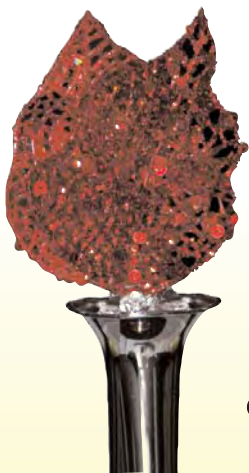
*Srs. Thoma Swanson & Amy McFrederick set out
logo ideas for Sisters to review during breaks.*



*Srs. Celeste Albers
& Barbara Jean Pelak*



*Catching the Notre Dame-Pittsburgh score
was an additional order of business for many!*



*Table decor furthered
the casting of fire.*

Fun Facts

Avoiding Confusion

As we continue to get to know one another better, keep in mind these few tips to sidestep embarrassing mix-ups



While the surnames of Kentucky Sr. Rosemary Cina (left) and NOEMD Sr. Rachel Sena might seem the same, they are in fact pronounced differently.



Contrary to popular belief, Great Bend Sr. Teri Wall (left) is not Columbus Sr. Margaret Mary Kennedy (right). Bonus tip: When you see them standing, Margaret Mary is the short one!



Both Kentucky Dominicans, Sr. Theresa Fox (left) should not be confused with Sr. Teresa Wolfe.



Akron Sr. Joan Franklin (left) ministers in Ohio while Columbus Sr. Joan Franks serves in New York.



Other Potential Pitfalls...

Mary Angela Deane (OX) is *not* Mary Bernadette Deeney (KY)
Cornelia Coughlin (COL) is *not* Christine Loughlin (KY)
Diane Hooley (NOEMD) is *not* Lin Howley (AK)
Clair Mahan (KY) is *not* Clara Mohan (COL)
Marietta Miller (COL) is *not* Marjorie Millet (NOSM)
Jeanne Moore (NOEMD) is *not* Gene Poore (OX)
Loretta Petit (AK) is *not* Louella Petry (NOEMD)
Mariellen Phelps (AK) is *not*
Mary Colette Philips (NOSM)

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