



## Younger/Newer Sisters Plan Gathering

To help newer and younger members of the Cluster congregations get to know one another and discuss the Cluster and other issues of importance, a committee has been formed to organize a gathering. The event they have planned promises to be a fun and prayerful time of reflection, discussion, and support.

Cluster congregation members aged 55 years and younger, as well as those professed ten or fewer years, will meet over the weekend of February 16-18, 2007, in Columbus, Ohio. The gathering will revolve

around a presentation, entitled "The Passion of Jesus and the Passion of Women: A New Look at the Passion/Resurrection Narratives," to be given Saturday by Grand Rapids Dominican Sr. Barbara Reid. Planned sessions for the weekend include discussing the questions "What is speaking to your mind and heart about the Cluster?" and "What does the Passion/Resurrection speak to us during this time of religious life?" All newer and younger members of Cluster congregations are encouraged to attend!

## Cluster Associate Directors/Liaisons Meet

On October 13, the Cluster Associate directors and liaisons met formally for the first time in Columbus. It was an opportunity to get to know one another better, to review the Cluster process thus far, and to explore collaboration possibilities and ways to support the Sisters on their Cluster journey.

Cluster congregations all have different structures of, unique relationships with, and varying expectations for their Associate programs. Acknowledging these differences, the group concluded that the best way for Associates to support the Sisters – of their own and all Cluster congregations – was through prayer.

Several ideas for praying were surfaced and will be implemented to varying degrees in each congregation. One plan is for the common Chapter prayers to be adapted for the Associates to pray individually or when groups meet. Another idea is to gather Associates on the days of their congregation's Chapter to pray together for the Sisters' deliberations. A final project is the distribution of a list of Cluster Chapter dates with the request for Associates to pray for all Sisters during their Chapters.

In addition to prayer planning, the group decided on two collaborative efforts to promote relationship-building across congregations. First, they will share their Associate documentation (including, as applicable, handbooks, guidelines, policies, mission statements, and constitutions). Columbus Associate Jay Jackson will compile this information into a comparative matrix that will explore similarities and differences among the Associate programs. The group will also share their directories with one another. Great Bend Associate Anne Knight will compile this information into one common directory, organized by regions to facilitate cross-congregational gatherings of Associates according to geographical proximity.



**Cluster Associate Directors and Liaisons: Front row – Sr. Anne Keenan (Col), Anita Davidson (Ak/Col), Sr. Kathy Goetz (GB), Sr. Amy McFrederick (GB). Back row – Anne Knight (GB), Jay Jackson (Col), Betty Pate (KY), Sr. Connie Schoen (Ox)**

# And the conversations continue...

## New Orleans St. Mary • Fall Pre-Chapter Meeting • September 30, 2006

All but two Sisters were present at Our Lady of Wisdom Health Care Center for St. Mary's first pre-chapter meeting in preparation for the Extraordinary Chapter of April 2007.

A most inspiring presentation on *Dreaming Our Future: Storms and Rainbows* was given by Sr. Toni Harris (Sinsinawa). Accompanied by a Power-Point presentation with photos of rainbows and storm clouds, her talk



explored the "transitional" state of religious life in North America today. Sr. Toni highlighted what

**NOSM Srs. Denise Bourgeois, Marjorie Millet, and M. Sheila Burson**

Dominicans are experiencing concurrently with other American religious. The Sisters agreed with her analysis that we are at the place of changing over from a former way of religious life to a new, yet unknown way.

The Cluster Finance video was presented in the afternoon while Sisters followed along with their packets. **Srs. M. Judene Lillie** and **Denise Bourgeois** fielded questions for clarification. Sr. Janet Roesener, CSJ, facilitated a process for the Sisters to share at table and to synthesize overall responses. Sisters also had an opportunity to write down any further questions. These were answered by Srs. Judene and Denise when the group reassembled after the break.

The final topic of the day involved local congregational business. The assembly ended with a Vigil Mass and the commissioning of each Sister to her ministry. All agreed that it was a most fruitful day.

## Columbus • Regional Pre-Chapter Meetings • October 7, 21, 28, 2006

The month of October ushered in the Fall 2006 Pre-Chapter meetings for the Columbus Dominicans in both Columbus, Ohio, and New Haven, Connecticut. The agenda reflected the Chapter theme, "We Walk the Path Together." The tenor of the meeting was framed within the contemplative stance, beginning with a gathering prayer and introduction of the Chapter logo, which features figures of Dominican women being led by the light of a torch that guides their search for truth.

In this spirit of moving forward into the future together, participants listened, reflected, and shared on the question: "How will/could the mission of the congregation/Church be enhanced if we join the Union or remain an autonomous congregation?" Initial responses were shared by a panel of Sisters, who reflected on where they were in the process. Contemplative time followed each reflection. A sharing in triads, at table, and via open microphone concluded the morning session.

In the afternoon, participants explored their feelings related to each option. In this pair-share experience, each Sister reflected on her feelings related to how each option surfaced fears and unrest as well as excitement and hope.

Members of the Chapter Planning Committee and the Leadership Team gave updates on planning and other congregational and Dominican Family news. The gathering was closed with a contemplative prayer experience that included taking a confidential straw poll on where each Sister was in the discernment process, the results of which would be announced in the coming weeks. Sisters were asked to continue the dialogue through small Wisdom Groups, an email discussion board, and one-to-one conversation. Although each meeting held the same agenda, each had a unique unfolding of insights, challenges, and hopes as "We Walk the Path Together."



**Columbus Srs. Mary Riley and Mary Josetta Mayer**

# ...Congregational Pre-Chapter Meetings

## Kentucky • Regional Pre-Chapter Meetings • October 7 and 14, November 4 and 11, 2006

The Dominicans of St. Catharine, Kentucky, continued Chapter preparation at fall meetings held regionally in Nebraska, Massachusetts, Kentucky, Chicago, and Memphis. Both Sisters and Associates gathered to continue the discernment about our future as a congregation and as members of the Dominican Cluster. A uniform process was developed for prayer, presentation, conversation, and large group interaction in the meetings and was used in each region so that everyone could experience a similar gathering.

One example of regional gatherings, the congregation's Eastern Region meeting began, after prayer, with a Power-Point presentation and then a lengthy but thorough discussion of an "Alternate Model" for consideration in addition to the "Canonical Union" option of the Cluster.

*Kentucky Srs. Doris Lee Mingus  
and Laetitia Anne Campbell*



The Sisters felt this Alternate Model gives a choice between two good options and allows greater freedom to understand and choose what they really want. It was clear to all that whichever choice each made would involve a change of heart, and not just a few adjustments.

The conversation was animated and as the two options were explored, the inclination of those present was mixed.



*From their Eastern region,  
Kentucky Srs. Marie Cleary,  
Lorraine Ryan and Jean Delaney*

## Oxford • Cluster Finances Discussion • October 21, 2006

Twenty-three Sisters, including one Eucharistic Missionary Sister of St. Dominic, gathered to review the DVD of Cluster financial information on October 21, 2006. *Srs Gene Poore* (Prioress) and *Frances Mary Kernasovich* (Vicaress) distributed copies of the financial information. To respect the confidentiality of the information, all financial papers were collected at the conclusion of the morning. Time was spent at tables sharing the reflection questions. Sisters found the DVD very informative and helpful in grasping where congregations stand financially. Feelings of hope, confidence, peace, and working for the common good were expressed. Some expressed concern as to whether all seven Cluster congregations will vote to join the Union.

Sr. Frances Mary reviewed the Constitutions timeline with the group so that all would be clear about the process for reviewing the document. At the end of the discussion it was announced that the Pre-Chapter meet-

ing planned to discuss the constitutions was re-scheduled for February 24, 2007. It was also announced that the Chapter of Decision was moved from the first weekend in May 2007 to March 31, 2007.



*Oxford Srs. Mary Ann Fedor  
and Mary Martin*

# Reflections

*after recent Congregational Pre-Chapter Meetings*

## Where are you now in the Cluster Journey?



In the beginning, I was not convinced that the movement of the Cluster was the right way to go. But as we continue to study and review all the ramifications of the Cluster, it becomes evident that it will be a blessing to all concerned. Grateful thanks to all who have been working so diligently to compile the data and move the concept closer to reality. It is evident that the Holy Spirit is working in our midst.

**Mary Ann Fedor,  
Oxford**

When I went on the Lands of Dominic tour, I experienced the international Dominican life. I saw the Sisters of Prouille from all over the world living together. I think the Cluster will creatively enhance our Dominican charism with diverse cultures and languages.



Cuando fui a La Tierra de Domingo, yo aprendí sobre la vida Dominicana Internacional. Vi las Hermanas de Prouille de alrededor del mundo viviendo entre sí. Pienso que la unión mejorará creativamente nuestro carisma Dominicano con culturas y lenguajes diversos.

**Narcisa Barreto-Pérez,  
Kentucky**



I believe that we are at the end of one dominant image or form of religious life and in transition toward a new one. It is okay with me that we are only part of the transition and not the realization, but it is important that the same transitional steps seem to be all over. I feel a strong sense of responsibility for our part in this. If Dominic had not dispersed the brothers, there would be mendicants because it was the time, but not necessarily Dominican mendicants. If our founders had accepted the Cabra invitation to return (to Ireland) because of the Civil War, we would not be Dominican Sisters of St. Mary New Orleans. So I feel we are on the right path together with many others as Cluster moves toward something new. But I also have fears – one is that we as St. Mary's will not have enough votes to move toward the new entity and the congregation will split. At this point I feel I would need to leave behind my community and move forward with the Cluster to a new entity.

**June Engelbrecht, NOSM**



Words cannot express the joy I feel at this time of my journey in the Cluster process. I feel very peaceful about the Cluster. The DVD on finances was very informative and complete. I also enjoyed receiving the recent newsletter. Thanks to those who put it together.

**Miriam Hazy,  
Oxford**

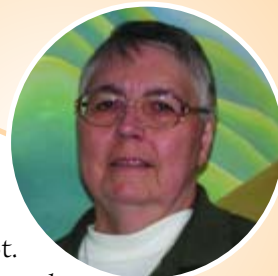


We have all benefited from our experiences in 2005 – our community’s evacuation and sharing common life with the Houston Dominicans and, for me, living with four other Dominican communities during my sabbatical. These inter-minglings have been foretastes of what our future can hold.

Diminishing numbers don’t mean we can’t continue to grow; we can adapt to new ministries. In my case, I am venturing out into the ministry of organic farming and eco-spirituality in Rosaryville. Perhaps a Sister in another community will see this as a chance for involvement in this ministry which her community does not offer. These ministry connections could start the ball rolling, uniting us as one family.

Also, I see this union as a blessing, inviting us to share our financial resources – as well as our humor – with others.

**Mary Joel Gubler, NOSM**



When I think of Union, I am reminded of the day I first entered St. Mary of the Springs. I entered with the spirit of doing whatever God asked. As for where I am now, I am thinking that Union could present more options for a creative response for our renewal as Dominican religious.

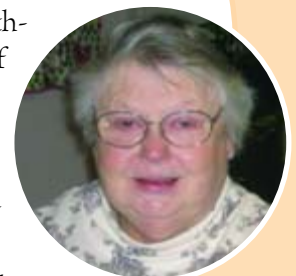
**de Chantal Lorenz,  
Columbus**



My recent experience in Prouilhe, where I met a group of Dominicans from various countries who have come together to form community, helped me realize this great opportunity and possibility of coming together and joining forces with other Dominicans. I witnessed the power of letting go and surrendering to the process. In Prouilhe, the members have overcome many obstacles of language and culture to form a vibrant Dominican community. This was a determining factor for my being in favor of the Union.

**Mary O’Hara, Columbus**

From St. Louis to Boston and places in between, there is much discussion and excitement concerning the Cluster journey. Sometimes, I feel pulled in many directions. I go one step in one direction, “it has to be this way,” and two steps in another direction, “I hadn’t thought of that.” I know the Holy Spirit is working. There is still a lot of discussion, work, searching to be done. The journey continues.



**Rita Imelda Sullivan,  
Kentucky**

# *Cluster Connections Cultivate Cohesion*

Many Sisters affirm that meeting and developing relationships with members of other Cluster congregations has been an important component in their Cluster discernment process. Inter-congregational gatherings and cross-community activities have facilitated this for many members, but others have entered into more formal relationships with

other Cluster congregations as well. Below are a sampling of such Cluster connections – many that more recently have been initiated, others that began years ago. All have helped strengthen the ties among Cluster Sisters and all promote bonds of interdependence that will certainly grow in the future, regardless of the Cluster outcome.



***Akron Sr. Joanne Lamert serves on the Columbus Economic Council.***

***Kentucky Sr. Marie Jeanne Surette was recently invited to serve on Oxford's Finance Committee.***



***Columbus Sr. Mary Faith Geelan serves on the Economic Council of the Kentucky Dominicans.***



***New Orleans Eucharistic Missionary Sr. Suzanne Brauer serves on the Board of Directors for Rosaryville Spirit Life Center, a retreat center of the New Orleans St. Mary congregation.***



***New Orleans Sr. Mary C. Daniel has preached retreats at the Kentucky, Oxford, Columbus, Great Bend, and Akron motherhouses.***

***Great Bend Sr. Rene Weeks has worked on special-occasion liturgy teams for both the Eucharistic Missionaries and Columbus.***



***Associate Anita Davidson is employed by both Akron and Columbus as the Coordinator of Associates for the two congregations.***



*Great Bend Sr. Amy McFrederick has served on liturgy teams for many Dominican congregations, including Akron and Columbus.*

*Columbus Sr. Bernadette Campbell serves on Oxford's St. Mary Retreat Board, which creates and evaluates programming and initiates fundraising events.*



*Kentucky Sr. Joan Scanlon serves on the Board of Directors of the Center for Dominican Studies at Ohio Dominican University, Columbus (founded by the Columbus Sisters).*



*Columbus Sr. Anne Kilbride serves on the Board of Directors for New Orleans St. Mary's Dominican High School.*



*Last year, New Orleans St. Mary Sr. Denise Bourgeois completed six years of service with the Economic Council of the Columbus congregation.*



## *Spotlight: Sr. Maria Emmanuel Martinez*

Eucharistic Missionary *Sr. Maria Emmanuel Martinez* who has lived in St. Catharine, KY, since Hurricane Katrina, is working very closely with her friends, the Kentucky Dominican Sisters. She serves as Dominican Assistant Coordinator for Sansbury Center, the infirmary on the grounds of St. Catharine. Her duties include pastoral care, advocacy, and resident care.

Recently, Sr. Maria Emmanuel was asked by the Kentucky Sisters to serve on the newly created Board of Directors for the Dominican Earth Center, which has operated on the grounds of St. Catharine for ten years and is moving towards autonomy. The Board will manage the ordinary affairs of the Center, such as setting and overseeing

policies and activities, securing funds, and managing the annual budget.



*Sr. Maria Emmanuel (left) shares her newspaper with Kentucky Sr. Mary Eva Kimbel at Sansbury Center.*

# Looking Ahead: Cluster Calendar

## 2006

- Nov 10-12** New Orleans EMD  
Pre-Chapter Meeting
- Dec 1** Membership input on constitutions due
- Dec 2** New Orleans St. Mary  
Pre-Chapter Meeting
- Dec 29-30** Great Bend Pre-Chapter Meeting

When you wonder about the mystery of yourself, look to Christ, who gives you the meaning of life. When you wonder what it means to be a mature person, look to Christ, who is the fullness of humanity. And when you wonder about your role in the future of the world, look to Christ.

– Pope John Paul II

## 2007

- Jan 15** Newly revised constitutions draft to full Cluster Leadership
- Jan 19** Meeting of Constitutions Committee, Leadership representatives, and canon lawyer
- Jan 20** Kentucky Regional Pre-Chapter Meeting (Boston, MA)
- Jan 27** Oxford Constitutions Discussion
- Jan 31** Leadership feedback to Constitutions Committee
- Feb 3** New Orleans St. Mary Pre-Chapter Meeting
- Feb 3** Kentucky Regional Pre-Chapter Meetings (Chicago, IL; Memphis, TN)
- Feb 15** Newly revised constitutions draft to members
- Feb 17** Kentucky Regional Pre-Chapter Meetings (St. Catharine, KY; Nebraska)
- Mar 3** Columbus Regional Pre-Chapter Meeting (Columbus, OH)
- Mar 10** Columbus Regional Pre-Chapter Meeting (New Haven, CT)
- Mar 24** Columbus Regional Pre-Chapter Meeting (Columbus, OH)
- March-April** Congregational Chapters

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