



Dominican Month for Peace

Rome, 27 July 2020

To all the members of the Dominican Family

Dominican Month for Peace 2020

Prot. 50/20/360 Promoter of J&P

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Warm greetings from Rome!

After three years of demonstrating global Dominican solidarity with our brothers and sisters who are trying to bring hope in situations of violence and war, the Dominican Month for Peace has now become a regular part of the annual programme of our Dominican Family. We started with a Latin American focus on Colombia in 2017. We then moved to an African focus on the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2018. And finally, in 2019, we moved to an Asian focus on India. We now have the pleasure to announce that, for 2020, we will move to Europe where the focus of our annual Dominican Month for Peace will be on **Ukraine**.

As before, the period of this focus will be Advent, when we are all waiting for the celebration of the mystery of the coming among us of the Prince of Peace. Our focus on peace in Ukraine will therefore start on the First Sunday of Advent (29 November), run for the whole of December, and culminate on the Church's World Day of Peace on 1 January.

Each year, we have noticed a progressively marked increase in the number of solidarity activities organised by Dominican communities in all parts of the world. Masses have been celebrated, creative prayers have been offered, awareness of the focus country has been raised, art forms have been produced, embassies of the focus country have been contacted, and money has been raised for the selected projects. All of these expressions of solidarity have been deeply felt and appreciated by our Dominican Family in these countries. They have been encouraged and strengthened to continue their difficult mission, even in the midst of continuing violence and injustice!

Our focus on **India** in December, 2019 is still fresh in our minds. In the wake of the Synod on Youth that took place in October, 2018, we tried to reinforce this priority of the Church by including a particular focus on peace as it applies to youth. With this priority in mind, and while forms of violence are prevalent at so many levels of the huge and complex Indian society, our focus was on countering violence, in the form of deprivation and abuse, against children, women and "tribals" (indigenous people), struggles in which many Dominicans are present. Attached please find a report of the impact of the Month for Peace on the projects supported: *Project Bloom* for street children in the Dominicans' Indian Centre for Integrated Development (ICID) in Nagpur; and the Dominican Family *Safe Childhood Project* to train trainers to address child sexual abuse. Contributions from 28 communities of Dominicans worldwide amounted to US\$66032.

Attached you will also find an update from the Dominicans in the **Democratic Republic of Congo** on how the contributions of 21 communities of the worldwide Dominican Family for the 2018 Month for Peace have been spent - in developing a Peace Education Centre.





Dominican Month for Peace

So now, in 2020, we will focus on **Ukraine**. Even in the midst of the escalation of the COVID-19 pandemic, the war with Russia and separatists still rages in the eastern Donbass region since April, 2014. Yet people throughout the country feel the impacts of the war. Dominicans are very involved in several processes and projects that promote peace and accompaniment of victims of the conflict. As we did last year, there will be a particular focus on peace as it applies to youth, which is a major concern of the Dominicans there. Thus, while several projects will be highlighted in which the Dominicans in Ukraine are contributing to the search for peace in the country, one project in particular will be the focus of our attention to provide spiritual and financial support. This is the St. Martin de Porres Center in Fastiv, which, for many years, has been caring for socially disadvantaged children: orphans, street children, sick children and children from disadvantaged families. Since the start of hostilities in Eastern Ukraine, the Center has opened its doors to children whose childhood has been poisoned by war. It has adopted more than 220 children from the combat zone, and offered them psychological and spiritual support and the opportunity to recover in a safe environment.

Closer to the Month for Peace, in September or October, you will be sent more information and materials on Ukraine and on the Dominicans there to assist you with content for the prayers, preaching, awareness-raising and other activities that you will organise. Meanwhile, as a next step, we urge you:

1. to appoint a coordinator for the Month for Peace for your entity,
2. to inform our promoters of Justice and Peace, fr Mike Deeb un@curia.op.org and Sr Cecilia Espenilla jp.dsi@curia.op.org of the name of the coordinator appointed for your entity,
3. to allocate time for possible events in your regular programme for that month,
4. to maintain the spirit of communion and shared action with the entire Dominican Family in the world by ensuring that this Month for Peace focuses on Ukraine and not on another country or even the needs of one's own country. Solidarity with other places and challenges can be carried out in a complementary way, according to the capacities of each entity or congregation.
5. If you or anyone else in your community has ideas on useful and creative ways to highlight this focus, if you have discovered useful materials, videos, etc about Ukraine, or if you, yourself, have been able to produce materials, songs or works of art, please feel free to share them with us as soon as possible by sending them to both fr Mike and Sr Cecilia. We will then do our best to incorporate your suggestions and diffuse them widely. If we can all collaborate more in the preparation of this event, it will certainly have a much greater impact. [Sr Cecilia will finish her mandate in September and fr Mike will finish in October, but their successors will then take over.]

Thank you very much for your cooperation! We pray that, through this small action, solidarity amongst us all can continue to grow and, in turn, enable our preaching mission to have a greater impact in bringing Good News to our world.

In St Dominic,


fr Gerard Timoner
Master of the Order


Sr Cecilia Espenilla

DSI International Promoter for JPIC


fr Mike Deeb

General Promoter for Justice and Peace

