

Day 3 May 14

Dominican Sisters International (DSI) Ninth General Assembly, 12-17 May, 2019

DSI DAY 3: DOMINICAN SISTERS AROUND THE WORLD PURSUE PEACE AND JUSTICE

[View images here.](#)

Anne Lythgoe, OP

ROME- May 14, 2019. The deliberations of the third day of the 2019 DSI Assembly began with morning prayer and Eucharist. Within the context of its theme: *Quilting Threads of Collaboration*, the focus of the morning was to continue hearing from the DSI Coordinators about their regions.

ASIA PACIFIC

Bernadette Kiley, OP, DSI Coordinator for Asia-Pacific Region described The Asia-Pacific region, its complexity and diversity. She particularly noted the recent terrorism attack in New Zealand and noted that there were sisters present at the recent unspeakable terrorism attack in Sri Lanka. Terrorism has directly touched Dominicans in this region.

Bernadette said, “In many places peace is elusive and where terrorism has, at times, made them wonder if there will be a future for them in the country they love. Others, such as our sisters in Vietnam, minister where governments curtail their work and where corruption shapes their lives in unwelcome ways.”

She described the impact of climate change on the region, rising sea levels, hurricanes in Philippines, floods in Pakistan. “I can communicate with Prioress in the region, but if we were smaller, we could be more on the ground in sharing and being there for each other, especially in times of crisis. It could be so much better.”

Much of Bernadette’s report focused on a proposal to restructure the Asia-Pacific region because of its vastness and complexity of language and distance. As of now, the region extends from Israel in the west to the Solomon Islands in the east as far south as New Zealand. It is not possible for a region that comprises almost half the world to function effectively. Essentially, the proposal is to move the Middle-East congregations to the European zone. Extensive The DSI Coordinating Council has submitted a petition to the General Assembly. Discussion of this proposal will be held later in the day and the Assembly expressed their deep appreciation for Bernadette’s report and proposal. Members expressed their appreciation for her concern for the Sisters around the region, Vietnam, Sri Lanka and New Zealand in particular.

EUROPE

Sr. Else-Britt Nilsen, OP, DSI Coordinator for Europe (DSE) made her report with the assistance of Sr. Fraziska Madl, OP. Else-Britt described the current demographics of Europe, where more than half of the

member congregations of DSI have generalates. “Thus, a great responsibility rests on the Europe-based congregations for the future of our worldwide mission.”

Europe is also a very complex region with six language zones. The lack of common language in Europe is a challenge in itself and a challenge to collaboration. All the DSE council members need to speak English, which limits leadership possibilities. Sisters in Europe are concerned about how to ensure proper care for elderly sisters as well as how to assure formation among younger members. Often institutions are seen as a burden rather than an opportunity. At the same time, the formation of younger members is a central focus.

A number of programs and opportunities have helped to bridge distance of geography and language. Visits and meetings on such topics as formation, liturgy, English language, a Dominican pilgrimage in Paris have been effective. Annual meetings for younger members have been developing and are known as YSOP (Young Dominican Sisters). A Spanish language meeting has also been organized for younger members in the southern part of Europe. Formators meetings, a spirituality workshop, and a small congregations gathering also build the bridges to collaboration.

PROMOTER OF JUSTICE AND PEACE

In the afternoon, Sr. Cecilia Espenilla, OP, the International Promoter for Justice, Peace and Care of Creation gave her report. Cecilia’s work involves efforts to deepen and strengthen how sisters understand apostolic life in relation to the justice and peace priorities of the Justice and Peace International Commission. (JPIC) Her report summarized the activities of the office over the last three years.

She attended many continental assemblies that made the connection between what is happening in countries around the world and the justice priorities of the JPIC. A visit to the USA Justice Promoters meeting also included participation in a national protest day against immigration policy of separating families. This protest occurred in every state.

She travelled to Hungary to speak at a Spirituality Workshop for Younger Dominicans. The role of the laity in the Order’s mission for justice and peace was one focus of the International Congress of the Dominican Laity in Fatima, Portugal. Cecilia also travelled to Argentina to participate in a gathering of Dominicans of Latin America and the Caribbean. (CODALC). At the Conference of Dominican Family Leaders in Goa, India, Cecilia spoke about the impact of human trafficking in the Asia-Pacific region, which has the “highest recorded number of trafficked victims worldwide.”

Fr. Mike Deeb, OP, International Promoter of Justice and Peace, also joined Cecilia at the podium and offered remarks about his work and engaged in some discussion with the group.

Younger Members Conversation

DSI arranged to hold a zoom conversation with younger members around the world to hear about their dreams and hopes for the future. It was an encouraging and energizing event. [A video recording of the conversation is available here.](#)

The very full day ended with supper. Optional concurrent conversations on Iraq, Lay Associates, Archives, and Dominican Schools were offered in the evening.

Dominican Sisters International is an International Movement of Dominican Sisters of Apostolic Life founded in Rome in May 1995 primarily to unite Congregations of Dominican Sisters of Apostolic Life worldwide in their preaching mission. For more information visit the website: www.dsiop.org.