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## VOCATION NEWS FROM THE DOMINICAN SISTERS OF PEACE

April 2020

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Dominican  
Sisters of Peace  
Sisters and Associates  
in Mission

Vocations Office  
2320 Airport Drive  
Columbus, OH 43219

Dear Mary Ellen,

Wondering how a candidate or Sister experience community and ministry in the midst of this pandemic? Then, read on. We've answered this and other questions in this month's newsletter.

Let us continue to lift up in prayer all those in the service professions who are responding to our various needs during this struggle with the coronavirus pandemic. May we all seek strength and courage to be people of faith and hope, bringing the light of God to our broken world.



Also, the Dominican Sisters of Peace continue to minister to many during this time of uncertainty. You can [read](#) about these ministries or you might enjoy watching a [video](#) that shows how our Sisters are caring for their neighbors during this crisis.

May you find time in solitude for prayer and reflection to deepen your relationship with God.

Peace and Blessings,

*Sr. June Fitzgerald, OP; Sr. Mai-Dung Nguyen, OP; Sr. Bea Tiboldi, OP;  
Mary Ellen George, OPA*



## World Day of Prayer for Vocations

We are praying for you!

Sunday, May 3 is the World Day of Prayer for Vocations. With the whole church, we pray for God's enlightenment and guidance as you continue to discern your call.

Pope Francis shares in his [message](#) for this day:

*"Dear friends, on this day in particular, but also in the ordinary pastoral life of our communities, I ask the Church to continue to promote vocations. May she touch the hearts of the faithful and enable each of them to discover with gratitude God's call in their lives, to find courage to say "yes" to God, to overcome all weariness through faith in Christ, and to make of their lives a song of praise for God, for their brothers and sisters, and for the whole world. May the Virgin Mary accompany us and intercede for us."*

**THE DOMINICAN SISTERS OF PEACE INVITE  
CATHOLIC, SINGLE WOMEN, AGES 18-45**

to a free

*virtual and  
interactive  
Mini-Retreat*

PRAYING WITH THE BLESSED MOTHER

**SUNDAY, MAY 17, 2020**

**2-5pm ET / 1-4 pm CT**

For more information and to register,  
contact Sister Bea Tiboldi OP  
614-400-1255 or [btiboldi@oppeace.org](mailto:btiboldi@oppeace.org)





## First Virtual Retreat

by Sr. June Fitzgerald, Vocation Director

Since Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem 2000 years ago, Christians have prayed with the Passion of our Lord on Palm Sunday. This year, our Vocation team put a different twist on this moving prayer ritual by praying it via Zoom as part of our Virtual Palm Sunday Retreat. Ten women in discernment, along with our Vocation Ministry Team, joined sixteen other Dominican Sisters of Peace for an afternoon retreat on

Sunday, April 5<sup>th</sup>.

This program harnessed the talents of many of our sisters, an associate and discerners. Sr. Sue Zengulis, OP of the Dominican Retreat and Conference Center in Niskayuna, NY grounded us with a presentation on *Entering into Holy Week*. She focused on the spiritual discipleship journey of Nicodemus--a man who first came to Jesus at night, who was touched by his encounter with Jesus and then became a disciple, who ultimately stepped into the light to act on behalf of Jesus who needed a place to be buried. After the presentation, Sr. Sue invited us to reflect on our own journey of coming to know, love, and serve Jesus.

After some time for private prayer and reflection, we regathered for guided sharing on the readings. The retreat was capped off with a shared reading of the Passion narrative. Sixteen voices joined together from twelve locations in eleven states, including Missouri, Texas, New Jersey, Indiana, New York, Ohio, Connecticut, Wisconsin, Colorado, Kansas and Oklahoma. It was a beautiful melding of tones and accents woven together in a unique experience of shared prayer. The afternoon concluded with the sung Dominican Blessing.

One of our discerners shared, "I was wondering how I was going to be able to really celebrate Palm Sunday without the traditional reading of the Passion. I should not have worried. You all pulled it off. This was a moving and uplifting experience of shared prayer during a time of physical distancing."

## Candidacy During Coronavirus

by Candidate Annie Killian

Before the stay-at-home order went into place, I had plans for nearly every spring weekend: congregational gatherings, formation events, a close friend's wedding, graduation at the university where I teach. Then the shut-down. At first, I panicked about transitioning classes online, but after sorting that out in the first week, I suddenly



faced two to three months - who could say how long? - of blank space on the calendar. All the plans I had looked forward to - things to prepare for and work toward - now cancelled.

During the previous seven months of my candidacy, I learned about tools for human development. Deepening one's self-knowledge is an essential part of spiritual discernment. I reflected on my penchant to stay busy, my compulsion to keep a full and varied schedule. Planning and prepping give me a sense of purpose. The global pandemic, however, has clarified the dangers of this dependence on *doing*. Without "productive" things to do, I feel disappointed and unmotivated. The fact that I have the privilege of working remotely and still receiving a paycheck induces guilt. I wish I were coping with greater equanimity.

In need of routine, I begin to structure the days as if I am on retreat - spending more time in prayer, journaling, taking long walks, reading, practicing yoga. These meditative activities remind me that religious life, in its deep wisdom, grounds us, not in *doing*, but in *being*: being in relationship with God, being grateful for the beauty of Creation, being mindful of others' needs and gifts. Women religious practice being alive to the present moment because the future belongs to God, not to us. I can only choose, here and now, to cultivate peace in my heart and extend it to the world.

Some days during this pandemic, I delight in *being* a woman of peace (or at least trying to become one). Other days, I morph into a grouch. It is unpleasant to be around me, yet the poor Sisters with whom I live have no choice. These Lent and Easter seasons have become an intense experience of communal living. Paul's admonition to "bear with one another patiently" sounds in my ear. I freshly appreciate the way religious life witnesses to this Gospel truth: Jesus calls each of us, in our utter uniqueness, to follow him. Like the disciples, we may be a motley crew, but Love Incarnate draws us together and leads us on. In the "crucible of community," Sisters share life in a mutual exchange that catalyzes transformation. Community is a container for the creation of something new. Together we enter into Jesus' new family, made up of sisters and brothers "who hear the word of God and do it."

Community living during this pandemic prompts me to reflect: Do I really trust that God rejoices over me, just as I am, mood swings and all? Can I lovingly accept my all-too-human emotions without passing judgment? Am I open enough to acknowledge my vulnerability, allowing my community to lift me up? I pray for the grace to accept each Sister in turn, enjoying the gift that she is and caring tenderly for her needs. Daily we renew our commitment to contemplative presence, dialogue, and mutuality. It helps to remember what a gift it is, in these times of social distancing, to gather in the same room, to celebrate our simple Triduum liturgies, to worship and break bread together.

What does it mean "to hear the Word of God and do it" in the face of Coronavirus? Our community grapples with this question continually, in morning and evening prayer, over meals, and while watching the news. Here is what I have gleaned from the Sisters' insight and example. As Dominicans, it is our mission to Praise, to Bless, and to Preach Christ's Resurrection. We praise our Creator each new day for God's steadfast love in the

morning and faithfulness in the night. We praise our Redeemer for nourishing our bodies and sustaining our spirits. We praise the Spirit of Life who renews all Creation in the blossoming of spring.

We bless those who mourn the loss of loved ones, the loss of employment, the loss of cherished dreams. They shall be comforted. We bless the healthcare workers, first responders, public leaders, and ordinary citizens who pour out their lives for others. They shall see God in the people they serve. We bless the essential workers who cannot afford to stay home, those who suffer food insecurity, and those detained in unsafe conditions. Theirs is the Kingdom of God.

We preach the Good News that Jesus lives among us even now, promising fullness of life to all, especially the poor. We preach by sewing masks, delivering meals to the homebound, donating to the local food pantry, writing blogs, and praying for the world. We name the graces we receive: of friendship, healing, connection, wisdom, peace at heart. And we speak prophetically of God's will for all to live in dignity. The pandemic has made visible the glaring racial inequities, wealth disparities, and exploitative labor practices that too many of us choose not to notice. Calling out injustice when we see it, we ask the hard questions: Can our post-pandemic society embrace God's plans to give all people a future full of hope?

Women religious are formed for the task of envisioning and co-creating a more just and equitable world. I move forward in my formation with renewed conviction: the world urgently needs us to speak a word of peace, to bring God's healing touch. As Teresa of Avila reminds us, "Yours are the eyes with which Christ looks compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands with which he blesses all the world."



## Living Community Quarantined

by Sr. Margie Davis, O.P.

*Sr. Margie Davis writes about her experience of community life while she was in isolation.*

Our local Community, which consists of five of us, has been home, sheltering in place with occasional walks and/or runs outside ever since the pandemic first began. When I returned from a mission trip in the middle of March, I found myself in isolation - which literally meant staying in my bedroom for 14 days! I must admit that there were times that I did come out of my "hole" but for the most part I stayed more than 6 feet away!

But then, three days into my 'freedom,' I began to experience a few suspicious symptoms, such as coughing and chills, and per my doctor's order, I was back in my bedroom--this time in real isolation for another 14 days, including Holy Week, the Triduum and Easter. However, I can honestly say that there were very few times that I

felt abandoned and/or isolated from my community! You may be saying, 'How can this be?'

Well, every morning, I would be greeted with a very welcoming, "Good Morning, ready for your coffee and banana?" Throughout the day, I would not only be given all my meals and snacks in between, but also words of encouragement, text messages, and talking through the door.

Through FaceTime, I was still able to join in Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer in our beautiful chapel, join in watching the nightly news, and I even joined them at the dinner table (virtually)!

The Easter Triduum will be one that I will always cherish. We all took part in planning for Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Vigil and Easter Morning, including preparing our Passover Seder Service, Holy Thursday Services with washing of our feet, Good Friday with the Stations of the Cross and veneration of the Cross, Easter Vigil, using the beautiful virtual service at St. Thomas More in New Haven, Connecticut, and then our wonderful Easter Mass and Feast on Easter Sunday! With the gift of FaceTime, I was fully present and what a gift it was!

Then Tuesday, May 14<sup>th</sup>, was the Day that I was "resurrected" from my room. I will admit that I was happy to be back, especially after hearing all the conversations and laughter that was going on in the living room while I was in the back bedroom. Now, I could fully participate in sharing the stories, laughing and just being in the presence of my blessed community.



*Sr. Margie FaceTimes with three members of her local community--  
Sr. Bea Tiboldi, Sr. Robin Richard, and Candidate Annie Killian*

## Faith-Oriented Resources

Looking for other faith-oriented resources during the coronavirus pandemic? Here are two film resources with links to consider:

- [Faith and Film](#) -- Fr. Tom Condon, OP provides movie reviews of films that he finds offer "theological insights or pastoral implications" about "the human condition."
- [The 10 Greatest Catholic School Movies of All Time](#) -- This website lists 10 recommended movies that "capture the Catholic school experience and convey universal truths about our faith and the world around us. Some are serious and some are silly—some theologically sound and others, well, not so much."



Or, if you want to read a new book, check out the "[Book Reviews](#)" section on this Preacher Exchange website.

### PRAYER REQUESTS

Prayer is one of the foundations of our life and we invite you to share your prayer requests with us. Please send them to [vocations@oppeace.org](mailto:vocations@oppeace.org). Please also keep us, our congregation, and your fellow discerners in prayer.



### The Vatican's Pope Video

We join the universal Church and Pope Francis as we pray that those suffering from addiction may be properly helped and accompanied. You can listen to and watch this month's message [here](#).

Learn more about us via our website at [www.oppeace.org](http://www.oppeace.org) or check us out on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [Facebook](#).



You can also contact our Vocation Ministers:

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Bea Tiboldi, OP -- [btiboldi@oppeace.org](mailto:btiboldi@oppeace.org)

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