
**VOCATION NEWS
FROM THE DOMINICAN SISTERS OF PEACE**

November 2020



**Dominican
Sisters of Peace**
Sisters and Associates
in Mission

**Vocations Office
2320 Airport Drive
Columbus, OH 43219**

As we begin this Advent season, we hope that your time of waiting for the celebration of the Christ Child on Christmas Day is a prayer-filled one. Be sure to set aside time to be in the presence of the Holy One and to listen to how God speaks to you.

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





Welcome Tram!

Our newest Candidate, Tram Bui, arrived at the Columbus House of Welcome in the morning on November 22. Sisters greeted her with air hugs and enjoyed a tele-breakfast via FaceTime. Tram's first two weeks are being spent in quarantine. Her official Welcome Ceremony as a Candidate will be on Monday, December 7, 2020.

Candidacy is the first stage of incorporation into the congregation. During this year, Tram will be studying what it means to be a Dominican Sister of Peace, living in community, growing in prayer, and ministering as a Physical Therapist. Stay tuned next month to hear about and watch excerpts from her entrance ceremony.



News from the Collaborative Dominican Novitiate

Novice Annie Killian writes about how trees speak to her of who she is in relationship with God and remind her "to be still and know that I am loved by God, just as I am." She notes that "trees also spoke to Catherine of Siena about who we humans are in relationship with God." You can read her November blog, The Trees Call Out, by clicking [here](#).

You can read the blogs of other CDN novices [here](#) for a rich flavor of their life and experiences.

The CDN is where novices from Dominican congregations live together in community to study Dominican life and to develop a richer prayer life. The canonical year is intended to give novices time to delve more deeply into religious life and the community's charism, to understand the meaning of the vows, and to explore prayer forms more intimately.

Welcoming Sr. Ellen Coates home from the CDN

CDN stands for Collaborative Dominican Novitiate, where our novices have the opportunity to live, pray and study together with novices from other Dominican communities. Sr. Ellen Coates spent her canonical year at the CDN. "The Canonical Novitiate year is primarily a year of prayer and reflection with a contemplative focus that necessarily implies a slowing down of activity and a quieting of the spirit. The Canonical year is ordinarily the first year of the Novitiate." (Formation Handbook)

Our House of Welcome in Columbus, OH, celebrated Sr. Ellen's transition from the CDN to our Dominican Sisters of Peace community within the context of a prayer service, during which Sr. Ellen shared a reflection of her canonical year. As she recalled meaningful prayer experiences or the various opportunities she undertook, she shared that there were a lot of blessings during the pandemic, which enhanced her prayer and reflection experience of the canonical year. Sr. Ellen preached on St. Paul's Letter to the Philippians, Chapter 4, verses: 10-20. As Sr. Ellen said, "St. Paul talks about living with scarcity and abundance, going hungry and being well-fed, and on relying on God and on others when in need," similar to experiences at the CDN. Although, she never went hungry physically, during the pandemic, she felt a different hunger - a hunger for praying in community and a hunger for private prayer.



The canonical year was a concentrated time for discernment and also for prayer, study, community and ministry. As Sr. Ellen shared, it was "a unique mix of significant time for quiet reflection and a very busy schedule." In the first few months, she had the opportunity to travel to explore "Sisters at work and at prayer, learning how they had turned passion into action, and how their lives are a preaching." While living at the CDN, she also lived with another novice and her mentor, which helped her "awareness and understanding of God's providence (...) in the face of challenges, perhaps not unlike St. Paul's own reliance on God's providence to supply his needs." As the pandemic spread, Sr. Ellen recalled, "we weren't in prison, like St. Paul was when he wrote his letter to the Philippians, but life was focused in many ways. Yet, the experience also offered so many gifts. Praying together morning and evening and relaxing together as community, for at least part of every evening, also took on a new importance. I suspect St. Paul and the early Christians had similar experiences in their uncertain times."

The CDN experience helped Sr. Ellen grow spiritually and helped her in her understanding and integration of the charism and pillars of Dominican Life. As she looked at the current realities: a hunger for peace and justice, the hope for an end to racism as the country grapples with divisions and disparities, and as she looked at her vocation, at the end of her preaching, she reflected: "probably St. Paul would be reminding me to

lean on God's providence to show me the way, in good times and in hard times, and to trust in God to fully supply whatever I need in accordance with the glorious riches in Christ Jesus."

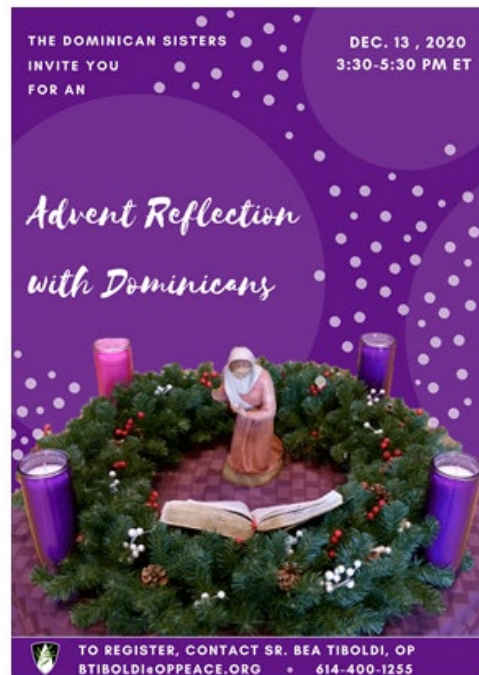
Sr. Ellen is now well into her apostolic novitiate year, during which she is now integrating the learnings from her canonical year. She now lives at the House of Welcome with four other Sisters and a Candidate. Having worked in Public Health for many years, Sr. Ellen now uses her skills to help track and trace the spread COVID at Ohio State University. (Click [here](#) for a link to an article published about her ministry.) May we hold her in our prayers as she continues her discernment to vowed religious life.

Advent Reflection with Dominicans

We invite you to pray with us and with other women who are discerning their vocation to religious life with our congregation and with other congregations of Dominican Sisters based in the U.S. This free event will be held online on December 13th between 3:30 and 5:30 Eastern Time. It will include prayer and preaching by Dominican Sisters about ways in which we are called to live from the second reading for Week 2 of Advent (1 Thessalonians 5:16-24).

Special emphasis will be given to the exhortation, "do not quench the Spirit." The passage is an excellent excerpt; it encourages us to "rejoice always (...), pray without ceasing (...), test everything, (... and to) retain what is good." During a prayerful reflection, you will have time for personal prayer and an hands-on activity to help you continue reflecting during the Advent season. To register, please contact Sr. Bea at 614-400-1255, or via email: btiboldi@oppeace.org.

Hope to see you there.





Advent Retreat 2020

This past Sunday, which marked the beginning of the first week of Advent, we were happy to welcome 13 discerners and six women, who are in initial formation with our congregation, along with several Sisters to a virtual Advent retreat. It was such a blessing for us to have participants zooming in from 14 states across the country for this retreat.

After a brief icebreaker activity and introductions, we began the retreat with an opening prayer led by Sr. Bea Tiboldi, focusing on waiting and hope. Following this prayer, Sr. Anne Kilbride led us in reflecting on the theme of the retreat, that of "waiting," "hope," and "joy." She shared quotes from the works of Meister Eckhart, who was a Dominican theologian, spiritual writer, philosopher, and mystic.

About waiting, Eckert's words reminded us who and where God is. Sometimes we think we are waiting for God, but truly, "*God is at home*," within us so what we need is just to be in God's presence and make space for God in us, especially during our busy days.

About hope, Sr. Anne referred to Meister Eckhart's words, "*What we plant in the soil of contemplation, we reap in the harvest of action*" to emphasize that through contemplation, we cultivate hope, which in turn, sprouts acts of loving compassion. In this fertile soil of contemplation, we find God throughout our stages of growth.

About joy, we will know this feeling when we have a deep relationship with God, which is the fruit of our "being" and our hope. Sr. Ann concluded with Eckert's quote; "*There is a path that God has given you. Consider that you needn't leave it behind for another one when other good things present themselves. Bring them along.*" She encouraged us to remember that "*the God of waiting, hope, and joy accompanies us.*"

Retreatants also had time for personal reflection and for sharing in small and large group settings. We concluded the retreat with a closing prayer led by Sr. June Fitzgerald, focusing on two questions; "How does God bring you joy?" and "What graces has God given you?"

This retreat offered participants a special spiritual gift to begin engaging in the Advent season. We are thankful for this opportunity to be together for spiritual nourishment and are grateful to all the participants who made this retreat a profoundly vibrant one.

For more retreats, contact our vocation team.



Saintly Focus

Juan Diego: Patron Saint of Indigenous People

"Cuix amo nican nica nimonantzin?" (¿Acaso *no estoy yo aquí*, yo que *soy tu madre*?)



On the morning of December 12, 1531 Juan Diego was tired and ready to give up. After the arrival of the bearded white men ten years earlier, things were a constant struggle. To make matters worse, death was rampant in the wake of an unknown epidemic. When Juan Diego saw the telltale red rashes on his feverish uncle, he knew that it was a matter of time before death claimed his only living relative.

A man of faith, Juan Diego dropped everything to save the soul of his uncle. The man responsible for Juan Diego as a child needed the sacrament of the last rites so that he could go to heaven. This was not a time for distractions, yet there SHE was again.

She had appeared to Juan Diego daily for the last three days. Dressed in stars and lit by the sun, she told Juan Diego that she was the mother of the True God and he was to be her messenger. Juan Diego struggled, feeling intimidated and unqualified for the task. The last time she appeared, she gave him detailed instructions and a message to deliver to the bishop. Juan Diego explained to the Lady that the bishop was going to ignore him again, and at this time, his beloved uncle was dying.

"Do not be afraid of this sickness, or affliction." She said, "cuix amo nican nica nimonantzin? - Am I not here, I the one who is your mother?" She informed Juan Diego that his uncle was healed and to focus on his call to be her messenger. She instructed him to pick roses and take them to the bishop. Juan Diego was obedient to her and the world has never been the same.

Through Juan Diego, many encountered the powerful message of God's love, shared by our Lady of Guadalupe. She is credited for the miraculous healing of many, including Juan Diego's uncle, during the 1531 epidemic. Today, in confidence, we pray through the intercession of our Lady of Guadalupe for the end of the COVID-19 pandemic that rages around us.

Juan Diego's faith and his willingness to be the messenger of God through our Lady of Guadalupe is a reminder to each of us today. We too are called to stop making excuses and to listen and respond to our personal invitation to carry the Word of God to others. Like Juan Diego, we have a responsibility to answer our call, even if we feel unequipped. For it is said, "God doesn't call the equipped, he equips the called."

Click [here](#) for a reference to the source for this story.

Ask a Sister

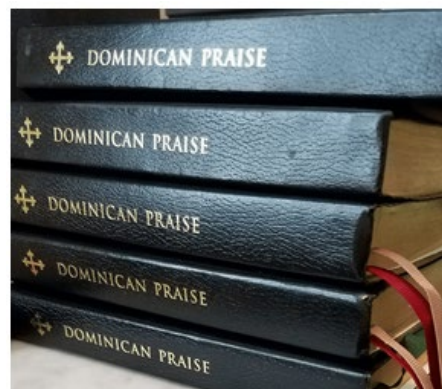
What is your daily life like?

Our days are rooted in the four pillars of Dominican life—prayer, community, ministry, and study. We start our day with prayer, both alone and with our community. We pray from Dominican Praise, a contemporary translation of the Liturgy of the Hours, also known as the Divine Office.

We are a community that values study, and particularly studies of theology, Scripture, and the needs of the times. As members of a contemplative order, we study upon these topics and share, with each other and the world, how we can respond to these needs. The fruits of our daily prayer, community life and study are brought to the world through our ministries.

Our daily schedule depends on our local community and its individual members. Some Sisters are involved in full-time ministry, while other Sisters who are retired or are engaged in study have a more flexible schedule. Regardless of where our Sisters live and minister, our day concludes with evening prayer and time with our community.

Our Constitution states that "consecrated life in community is a witness to the Trinitarian life of love and a gift to the world in which we live." (Constitution 16, Dominican Sisters of Peace).



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. 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 by the virtue of baptism, the laity, especially women, may participate more in areas of responsibility in the Church, without falling into forms of clericalism that diminish the lay charism. You can listen to and watch this month's message [here](#).

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

You can also contact our Vocation Ministers:

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