



Monthly Connections
Pat Farrell, OP :: Executive Director
Dominican Sisters Conference

A Message from Pat Farrell, OP

This summer has been very full! No doubt the same is true for all of you. One of the wonderful things about summer is the occasion to travel. And while traveling, I especially enjoy visiting other Dominicans across the country and witness how they live our Dominican charism.

It was great to have both time and opportunity to attend the Dominican Institute of the Arts (DIA) gathering in Racine, Wisconsin, this year. First of all, being in Racine was, itself, special. This was my first chance to see the new retreat center and all of the new buildings. Simply beautiful!! And, I had never before visited the Eco-Justice Center, so I was glad to take advantage of the “outing” to tour it. I continue to be impressed by how our DSC sisters are modeling sustainable land practices. But more about that later!!

DIA is committed to preaching through the arts. While we all share the charism of preaching, this aspect of preaching through the arts is one that needs special tending. Certainly this annual gathering is an opportunity for our artists to share their experience of their holy preaching with one another, to build relationships, and to provide support that our artists need. These arts are not limited to what we so often think of as paintings, sculptures, or drawings. Artists that have gathered at these summer events are also poets, photographers, dancers, musicians, dramatists, and more. I encourage others to participate so that DIA may continue to support and inspire other artists as they continue to join our Dominican way of life.



Barbara Cervenka with slide
of Fra Angelico's "Annunciation"



Barbara Cervenka, OP, our keynote speaker, inspired us with her presentation, “Reflections on a Dominican Artist: Fra Angelico.” Even gleaning a bare understanding of the process that Fra Angelico used for the many frescos we see in Convento San Marco in Florence opens the heart and mind to the wonder of creativity, and an admiration for the preacher’s faithfulness to mastering technique.

So I wonder, in what ways today do we capture the wonder of the Divine through our creativity? And how are we honing our skills so that our hearers' and viewers' hearts and minds may open?

Gratefully,

Welcome to the DSC Executive Committee

I am delighted to announce that we have two sisters who will be joining the Executive Committee of the DSC in October, following the Elected Leaders' Meeting in St. Louis. They are Kathleen Donnelly, OP, and Susan Allbritton, OP. Their pictures and resumes are below. We thank them for their generous “yes” and look forward to their service over the next three years.

At the same time we wish to express our gratitude to Reg McKillip, OP, and Sandra Delgado, OP, for their service over the past three years. We know you both will remain committed to Dominican collaboration!



Sue Allbritton, OP

I am a member of the Dominican Sisters of San Rafael, having entered this congregation in 1974. My ministry has chiefly been in education as a teacher and administrator for over 35 years. I was elected to leadership in 2009 serving my congregation first as a part time councilor for 5 years then elected to full time leadership in 2014. Prior to those years, I have served on several of our congregational committees; Finance Committee, Budget Committee, Chapter Coordinating Committee (x3) and our Vitality and Viability Study Committee. I am also a member of the Board of Directors at San Domenico School, our sponsored K-12 school. I serve on the Executive Committee of that Board as well as Chair of the Mission Enhancement Committee. One of the most enriching memberships I have been a part of is that as a member of the OP West group of our Dominican Family here on the west coast.

As a member of OP West, I have learned the importance of collaboration by working together with other local Dominican congregations. We have worked together to provide gatherings such as retreats, presentations on social justice issues, climate change and Human Trafficking. I would like to see that collaborative effort brought to the larger Dominican Family through the Dominican Sisters Conference where we can deepen our networking; work together to share our gifts and talents in the service of God's people, especially those most vulnerable in our midst and more importantly where we "stand as a clear voice for truth, justice and peace".



Kathleen Donnelly, OP

My professional background is in education. I taught in the New York Archdiocese. I was an elementary administrator in two St. Louis parish schools and more recently was an administrator in a Chicago parish school from 1998-2015. This past year I spent time unwinding by hiking, praying, attending various conferences, and visiting friends and family. The time in between I served on school, parish and congregational committees. I was on the planning committees for the past three DSC Convocations. I was also part of the Dominican Federation—the first collaborative entity which led to the DSC.

We all know the thrill of being part of the growth of awareness of the Dominican Family not only here in the States, but globally as well. We've come to know each other through our call to contemplate, to serve others, and to study and to preach.

The DSC has become a place where Sisters gather to explore, learn, support, and encourage each other. We have the wisdom of many women and the energy and idealism of our newer Dominicans. The vision for the future continues to unfold. It's an exciting time. I'm reminded of the kids at school when we had them working in a computer lab side by side and it was good. However it got better when we transformed the environment to a collaborative learning center where kids and teachers from a variety of grades were there helping and challenging one other to learn and create new approaches. The energy was amazing. It added new dimensions to learning and teaching.

The DSC keeps us woven together as we build a stronger voice for those in need, for the earth and for the next generation of Dominicans. As a member on the Executive Team I would bring a capacity to listen, team building and problem solving skills, as well as a good dose of optimism.

The future is calling all of us to think differently, to embrace new possibilities, to look locally and think globally.

Dominican Sisters Modeling Sustainability

Last year I had the privilege of visiting Genesis Farm and Jubilee Farm. And this year my education in Dominicans living and modeling sustainability and ecospirituality has been extended to The [Eco-Justice Center](#) in Racine and [Homecoming Farm](#) in Amityville. What

has become clear to me this year is the potential for spiritual transformation that these centers and farms offer.

In May of this year, Christin Tomy, OP, shared her experience of how farming at the Eco-Justice Center informed her spirituality and helped her discernment towards first vows with the Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa in [Global Sisters Report](#). My visit to this center in Racine reminded me of Christin's experience, as I learned of yet one more instance of Dominican preaching of Earth as "The Body of God" (Sally McFague).



Christin Tomy, OP at Eco-Justice Center



Alpacas at Eco-Justice Center



Labyrinth at Eco-Justice Center

Just two weeks ago on an evening visit to the young adult community of Benincasa in Manhattan, I learned of the spiritual transformation that occurred among this fledgling lay Dominican community because of conversations at their table last June when a number of Dominican sisters were discussing the gathering they would be attending in Blauvelt. They had never heard about understanding spirituality in the light of the new cosmology before. This "chance" conversation has taken their study, reflection and prayer to places they had never dreamed. Nor would any of us sisters who had gathered at that table a year ago have dreamed that our conversation would yield such fruit! How appropriate that some of our dinner that evening was from [Harmony Farm](#) which has its "roots" with the Dominican Sisters of Blauvelt!

**Benincasa Community at
Harmony Farm, Waddington, NY**



**Sean of Benincasa unloading
produce from the CSA**



The day before I flew back home to River Forest, it was my pleasure to visit Homecoming Farm in Amityville and bring back to the community in Hicksville some beautiful produce from the CSA. That evening at a gathering, I learned again the spiritual impact that centers like Homecoming Farm have. Sister John Lee, a second-year novice from a South Korea congregation, Little Servants of the Holy Family, has been interning there. She shared with us gathered a very moving presentation of how the Divine speaks to her through Earth, specifically through farming.



Aerial view of Homecoming Farm

Sr. John at Homecoming Farm



Sr. John doing her presentation at Hope Community in Hicksville, NY



Website Announcement

We announce our new updated/upgraded website for the DSC. Some of you may have already seen it, and I hope you are finding it user-friendly and interactive. We no longer have the link to our private pages on the home page. If you click on the word “resources” in the drop-down menu, you will see “private pages.” Our password is the same as it has been, sistersdominican.

On the homepage we have a lovely and colorful picture of Dominican Sisters of Sparkill. We will regularly change this image as we find wonderful images of the sisters in ministry, doing justice, praying, studying . . . You know! Doing all the wonderful things that sisters do! So please keep sending great articles and pictures for DomLife to Cassie at editor@domlife.org.

Prayer Requests

- Certainly this has been the year for Chapters! We have one more for your prayers. The Dominican Sisters of Oakford begin their Chapter on Tuesday, September 13th. Please keep them in your prayers!
- The Elected Leaders of the member congregations of DSC will be gathering from October 5 through October 8 in St. Louis, MO. This annual gathering provides the opportunity for us to deepen our collaboration, to continue conversations about Paris 2015 and Beyond and to hear opportunities for Investment in Climate Solutions from Convocation 2015. Our keynote speaker will be Jamie Manson, whom many of you remember from her articles in NCR. Please keep this gathering in your prayers.
- And let us not forget our Dominican Family in Iraq!

May the preaching continue through our members!