



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

A Message from Pat Farrell, OP



We've all been reeling with the news from the White House these days. And at the same time we are encouraged by the numbers of people who have been participating in actions, such as the 3 million who were at the Women's March last weekend, and those who are busy calling their representatives about the many issues that we carry in our hearts.

In the same way that the Apostolic Visitation and the LCWR Doctrinal Assessment unified religious women in the U.S., and brought supporters our way, may the gauntlet that is being thrown down galvanize us and give us perseverance over these four years to speak truth to power – especially when that power is using “alternative facts.” As the title from a recent article from NCR's Global Sisters' Report says, ["We need to organize, not agonize."](#)

And since we all need some hope, [here is a link](#) to my photo blog with a poem from Wendell Berry on hope.

Gratefully,

Pipelines, Immigrants and Public Statements

Pipelines

On September 20, 2016, the DSC issued a public statement opposing the Dakota Access Pipeline. In early November, a number of Dominican Sisters walked, stood, and prayed at the Standing Rock Reservation in North Dakota. And just two days ago the President signed an executive order to go forward with the construction of both the Dakota Access and the Keystone XL pipelines.

The Dominican Sisters of Adrian prepared a statement on that executive order, and rather than drafting one more public statement, the DSC shared that statement with all of you (with permission from the Adrian Dominicans) through the list serve, so that you can make use of it in your communications. We have also placed it on our website. [Here is the link.](#)



Photo by Elise Garcia, OP,
at Detroit Airport

Immigrants

We are all painfully aware of the ban on immigrants from seven countries, because the residents of those countries are Muslim. LCWR has already issued a public statement, as have the Dominican Sisters of Peace and Adrian. The DSC, too, has provided a public statement that any of our members may feel free to use. Just go to [our website](#). We will provide links there to other statements as we become aware of them.

The Salamanca Process



From left to right: Dusty Farnan, OP - Kelly Litt -
Margaret Mayce, OP - Marcelline Koch, OP -
Pat Siemen, OP - Bernadine Karge, OP

In September a number of our sisters attended the International Congress – *Dominicans in the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights: Past, Present, Future in Salamanca*. Margaret Mayce will be sharing her experience with the DSC Executive Committee next week when they gather for their board meeting in River Forest, Illinois. Recently, two others, Bernadine Karge, OP, and Brendan Curran, OP, who had attended the congress, made a presentation to a gathering of Sinsinawa Dominican Sisters and Associates about their experience.



Bernadine Karge, OP (left), and Brendan Curran, OP

Bernadine pointed out a connection that Ann Willits, OP, had made during her talk at the Diane Kennedy Lecture recently. Ann said that as we begin again – this next 800 years – we must go forward, knowing that (in the words of Bruno Cadore, OP, Master of the Order) preaching by doing justice is equal to preaching in the pulpit. Bernadine and Brendan suggest that we adopt the framework from the final statement of the Congress. Its four categories are People and Creation, Justice and Peace, Multiple Dimensions of Rights and Responsibilities of Each Person, and Intellectual Life and Experience. Those and the ten action actions [found here](#), can give us a blueprint for the future.



Ann Willits, OP

McGreal Center Board Meeting

This month the 16 members of the Mary Nona McGreal Advisory Board met at Dominican University. You know how it is at any discussion of archives - we had a very energizing and exciting meeting!

The first piece of exciting news is that the McGreal Center will soon be publishing a book, consisting of 12 essays about Dominicans preaching in many kinds of pulpits. For example, one essay is about Dominicans and the Labor Movement and another is the story of Dominican sisters of San Rafael and the sanctuary Movement in the 1980s. The book's editors gave us an update on the progress of the project. We have two stellar editors, Maggie McGuinness, a religious studies professor at LaSalle University, Philadelphia and the author of *Called to Serve: The History of Nuns in America*, and Jeff Burns, the director of the Francis G. Harpst Center for Catholic Thought and Culture, USD, and director of the Academy of American Franciscan History. So look forward to further information about this book.

Aaron Reisberg gave us wonderful news about the award of a National Endowment of the Humanities Grant (NEH). The Center continues to welcome the archives of congregations and organizations. The Union City, NJ Dominican Monastery and the archives of the Dominican Institute of the Arts will arrive soon. And Cecilia Salvatore, an archives professor and member of the McGreal Board, received a faculty grant to assist the Dominican Sisters of Tacoma in organizing their archives as they approach the end of their historical journey.

DSC Futuring

The DSC has been busy at strategic planning (“Futuring”) since the end of 2016. We have three Futuring Committees that are focused on three specific areas: structure, financial viability, and Heritage/Pilgrimage. The DSC is also convening conversations with Dominican archivists about the possibility of one or more sites for holding the archives of Dominican congregations. Cassie Vazquez, my assistant and Editor of DomLife, is the perfect person to chair the RFP committee attached to that task force, as she is a trained archivist, with her masters in library science from Dominican University.

In addition, the DSC is working on ways to strengthen our communications, so that we can truly speak together “with a clear voice.” Public statements are one way we do that, and the question always is, how to share those statements – how to share our voice with our public in the most effective way possible. To that end, we have created a DSC Communications Task Force in the hope of finding avenues of preaching truth in the face of “alternative facts.”

Coming Survey

So that our futuring committees can collect and assess data essential to their planning, the DSC is emailing you a survey today. [Here is the link](#). We ask that you complete this survey by Friday, February 24th. Thank you in advance for your time. This project is very important to us! We count on your participation.

May the preaching continue through our members!
