2017 YEAR IN REVIEW

WITH GOD'S CALL IN THEIR HEARTS

Almost 100 students attend the Dominican High Schools Preaching Conference!

ALSO INSIDE...

DYMUSA attends Dominican Conference in Rome

Connecting Tomorrow’s Dominicans, Today

DYMUSA adds a new program!

Sr. Jennifer Schaff, DYMUSA alumni professes Final Vows
Partners in Mission
A donation program for those who believe the Future of our Church begins with an Investment.

St. Dominic Level
$50.00/month
A donation such as this will provide a scholarship for two students to attend our programs.

St. Catherine Level
$25.00/month
A donation such as this will provide a scholarship for one student to attend our programs.

St. Martin de Porres Level
$15.00/month
A donation such as this will provide transportation for one student to attend one of our programs.

St. Rose of Lima Level
$10.00/month
A donation such as this will provide transportation for one student to attend one of our programs.

Veritas Level
$10.00/month
A donation such as this will assist with registration fees for one student to attend one of our programs.

We invite you to join our Partners in Mission program and change a life today!

DYMUSA obtains its funding from several areas: grants, private foundations, individual donations, and fundraising activities. This however does not cover all our program expenses.

Partners in Mission are benefactors who pledge monthly contributions to help fund the programs of the Dominican Youth Movement USA. Current Partners in Mission have found this program more convenient than traditional giving – with no repetitive checks to write or mailing involved. The Dominican Youth Movement USA will receive all the money you designate for its use and be able to count on your monthly contribution and as a result are able to budget more effectively. All the monies raised through the Partners in Mission program are distributed to help fund the financial needs of the programs.

We invite you to partner with us and assist in continuing to make these programs “life-changing” experiences for our young people who in turn will “change the world.”

We also will gladly accept one-time donations!

For more information or to sign up visit www.dymusa.org/donate or contact us at donate@dymusa.org.

CATCH THE FIRE
MANAGING EDITOR
S. Gina Fleming, OP

WRITERS & CONTRIBUTORS
Andrew Abberton
Katie Blackman
S. Diane Capuano, OP
S. Gina Fleming, OP
Sean Puzzo
S. Mary Soher, OP
S. Pat Stringer, OP

PHOTOGRAPHY
Sean Puzzo
S. Barbara Schwarz, OP
S. Gina Fleming, OP
S. Diane Capuano, OP
Sisters of Saint Dominic – Blauvelt

DESIGN
Sean Puzzo

Address comments and questions to: magazine@dymusa.org

Dominican Youth Movement USA
555 Albany Avenue
Amityville, NY 11701

General Information
www.dymusa.org
info@dymusa.org
(631) 842-6000 ext. 308

Contents
2017 Year in Review

8 Collaboration and the Language of Love
9 Caldwell DYA
Stamp Out Despair
10 DYAUSA Welcomes New Members
14 A New Class of Preachers
16 Connecting Tomorrow’s Dominicans Today
17 Youth Preaching Workshops To-Go
Dear Friends,

Certainly, Christmas is a time for rejoicing in the many blessings that we have already received and for those yet to come. We here at the DYMUSA have much to rejoice about!

This is the DYMUSA’s third year as an organization, and we are experiencing an exciting time of growth. One needs only to look at the page opposite this letter to see what has happened over this past year! My heartfelt thanks goes out to Sean Puzo, our Dominican Volunteer, Jessica Abejar, our new program assistant, our Board members, our Partners in Mission and donors, our most recent corporate sponsors, our college/university campus ministers, our high school campus ministers, the many congregations that support us and of course the many young people who participate in our programs. Yes, indeed God has been with us in each and every one of you.

I thank each and every one of you for your support, encouragement, and good wishes this past year. As we continue to prepare ourselves to once again welcome the Savior into our midst, may you know the peace and joy that he brings.

Have a joyous Christmas season, and may the New Year bring you all that you need!

With sincere appreciation,

Gina Fleming, OP
Executive Director
DYMUSA

Merry Christmas
Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) held a rally and demonstration outside the itk Office. The demonstrators were protesting the Israeli government’s ongoing military occupation of the Palestinian territories, which they consider illegal under international law.

After the demonstration, the SJP members spoke to the crowd about their experiences with Israeli occupation and how it has affected their daily lives.

In response, the crowd chanted slogans supporting Palestinian rights and calling for an end to the occupation.

The rally ended with a powerful show of solidarity from the SJP members and their supporters. Despite the challenges faced by Palestinians, the SJP members were determined to continue their fight for justice and equality.

Throughout the event, the SJP members emphasized the importance of education and awareness in the fight for Palestinian rights. They called on everyone to learn more about the conflict and to support the Palestinian cause through activism, advocacy, and solidarity.

The SJP members also shared stories of their personal experiences with the Israeli occupation, highlighting the human cost of the conflict.

Despite the challenges, the SJP members were hopeful for a positive future and encouraged everyone to keep fighting for justice and equality for all.

The SJP rally and demonstration were a powerful display of the resilience and determination of the Palestinian people. The message of solidarity and awareness resonated with everyone who attended, and the event left a lasting impact on all who were there.
Collaboration and the Language of Love

Dominican Young Adults USA member puts the Four Pillars into practice in El Salvador over Winter Break.

For the past 4 years, employees and students from Dominican College in Blauvelt, NY and Molloy College in Rockville Centre, NY have traveled to El Salvador to assist Dominican Sister of Amityville, Flor de Maria Buruca, in running a faith-based camp for the children in the small village of Sol Naciente. From January 2nd through January 11th, of this year, nine students and four employees once again had the privilege of participating in this life-changing experience!

Elizabeth Meittinis, a senior at Molloy College, member of the Molloy Chapter of Dominican Young Adults USA and the former Coordinator for Mission for Dominican Young Adults USA was one of the students on the trip. Forty-five children, ages 3 to 12, attended this camp. Some teenagers and adults from the community also participated as camp counselors and were a big help to all of us from the United States.

This faith-based camp is deeply rooted in Dominican Life and Spirituality. The theme for the camp was Catherine of Siena’s famous quote, “Be who you are meant to be and you will set the world on fire!” Each morning the children took time in song and prayer before being greeted by St. Catherine of Siena (portrayed by a student from Molloy College) for the “religion lesson” for the day. Each day focused on a different aspect of Catherine’s life. The children were given homework assignments that corresponded with the focus for the day. This short session always ended with the singing of “This Little Light of Mine” in English and in Spanish and a bilingual recitation of a phrase taught by Dominican Sister of Blauvelt, Barbara McEnery: “Raise the praise! Minimize the criticize! Increase the peace! Silence the violence!”

After the opening session, the children were divided into three groups and rotated between music, arts and crafts, and sports. Each group had a student that was fluent in Spanish to act as a translator for the other students. After lunch, all of the children participated in a community service project. This year the children helped to beautify the garden outside the chapel where the camp took place. They gathered materials from around the neighborhood like plastic bottles and rocks and used these to create fences and enclosures for the plants. What an example for those of us from the United States who tend to waste materials that can be used for other purposes!

The camp ended with a beautiful closing mass in which four students and mentors from the colleges received a Dominican Cross and a beautiful plate with St. Catherine painted on it. The tears flowed from all as they said goodbye to the children and the beautiful people of Sol Naciente.

Besides the camp, each day they journeyed to different places in El Salvador and visited the people. The highlights for all of us was the celebration of “Los Reyes,” or the Three Kings. The children from the small town of La Union led a procession through the streets to a house where Mass was celebrated and then bags of food were distributed to the people. The students helped in preparing these food bags the night before and in the distribution. A great time was had celebrating with the people dancing, singing, and watching the children enjoy a piñata! They also visited some of the historic places in El Salvador. Visiting where Blessed Oscar Romero lived and was murdered, the Jesuit University where the Jesuits, their cook, and his daughter were murdered, the wall in San Salvador that lists the names of all that were murdered, and where the Maryknoll sisters are buried, deeply touched our hearts and souls and made us acutely aware of the terrible injustice this country faced and continues to face in so many ways! In San Salvador, they felt right at home in the church of El Rosario, which is a parish run by Dominican Friars.

The time went by very quickly and the group left El Salvador with a greater appreciation of the culture and the people! Our fears of not speaking the language quickly disappeared as they realized that the language of love breaks through all fears and obstacles!

For Elizabeth Meittinis, our Dominican Young Adult member, this trip and being with Flor certainly deepened her commitment to our Dominican Life and Charism. It was evident this experience of collaboration deepened everyone’s understanding of Dominican Life and Spirituality. It was a time of living out the 4 pillars of Dominican Life in a very tangible way. ■

-DC, or

Caldwell DYA Stamp Out Despair

On Saturday, December 9, 2017, community members from the Caldwell Chapter of Dominican Young Adults USA (Caldwell, NJ), Mount St. Dominic Academy (Caldwell, NJ), and Lacobour Academy (Mount Clare, NJ) joined the Sisters of St. Dominic of Caldwell for the Stamp Out Despair packing party at the St. Catherine’s Healthcare and Convalescent located on the grounds of their motherhouse.

The community came in support of First Friends of NJ and NY, an organization that upholds the inherent dignity and humanity of detained immigrants and asylum seekers. They provide compassion and hope through volunteer visitation, reintegration assistance, advocacy, and the semi-annual Stamp Out Despair drives.

Together they assembled 300 folders for the men and women detained in the Elizabeth (NJ) Detention Center. Each folder contained cards, paper, stamped envelopes, a message of encouragement, and information on First Friends. Dominican Young Adults Lindsay and Lauren worked with Sisters De Montfort and Mary Agnes to organize the material beforehand, allowing for a smooth assembly line process. Thanks to their help the group was able to finish the work in rapid speed and with a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction for a job well done. Participants left with a renewed sense of what Christmas is all about. ■

-PS, or
DYA Welcomes New Members!

Thirteen young adults recommitted themselves to the Mystic Chain of Dominican Young Adults USA in addition to two new members.

The tradition began in 2016 as part of the celebration of the 10th Anniversary of the Dominican Order. As the entrance antiphon began and the presider and preacher processed into St. Albert the Great Chapel, one could feel the great excitement that filled the room.

The Gospel of the day was Jesus’ Parable of the Talents, in which he heeds us to use our God-given talents, lest we go to waste. Rest assured, they did not!

The parable re-committed our young adults to their promise to commit and for returning members to re-commit to “living out the Four Pillars of Dominican Life: Prayer, Study, Community, and Mission.”

The tradition continues! For the third year in a row, vespers for the month of November at the Dominican Y oung Adults USA Chapter of Dominican Y oung Adults USA were celebrated and led by the Molloy Chapter of Dominican Y oung Adults USA.

In 2018, we were also overjoyed to have members of this year’s cohort of Dominican Volunteers from New York in attendance.

“…to shrink time between disaster and full recovery by ensuring that communities are resilient prior to a disaster and that disaster-impacted citizens and communities recover in a prompt, efficient and predictable manner.”

Dominican Sister Mary Keefe, a Dominican Volunteer in the United States, inspired many with her real-life experiences that helped her in understanding the Gospel. “I don’t think we are the third servant, but instead the first two did to multiply that talent, invest it in enriching the lives of others so that we may better understand the image in which God has made us.”

After hearing about Woman’s Build—a project to encourage women to volunteer to rebuild homes and to raise money for families that could not afford the necessary materials—a new, similar project to SBP, Nuns’ Build! The first Nuns’ Build was scheduled for early October 2009 and drew nearly 100 volunteers for all or part of the five-day work week.

Even 10 years after Katrina, thousands of homeowners still have not been able to return or afford to rebuild their homes after the storm. The DYMUSA crew began their week working on the finishing touches of a home that had been damaged by Katrina.

This was a beautiful and prayerful event for all in attendance”, one sister said. Reflecting on the words of Katt’s reflection one sister said, “She spoke of gifts, and certainly she gifted us with her powerful words.” It was very clear from all in attendance that the “Dominican Spirit and Charism were infused in all of them,” said another sister.

After Katt’s reflection came a special part of the November Vespers. The Molloy Chain of Dominican Young Adults USA takes this time for young adults to commit and for returning members to re-commit to “living out the Four Pillars of Dominican Life: Prayer, Study, Community, and Mission.”

They proudly welcomed Mary Albrecht and Sean Pizzino (a Dominican Volunteer with the Dominican Young Movement USA) as new members and Andrew Albrecht, Kristine Abberton, Jessica Abberton, Liz Alarcon, Family Brierly, Joe Castella, Dan Emerson, Michelle Latshaw, Katt Malone, Elizabeth Merittins, and Charlotte Roman to recommit themselves. At the conclusion of the commitment ceremony, the entire congregation responded by resoundingly accepting their commitment and encouraged them to “stay the course.”

Pleasantly alone…we must fully immerse ourselves in her understanding of the Gospel, “I don’t think we are the third servant, but instead the first two did to multiply that talent, invest it in enriching the lives of others so that we may better understand the image in which God has made us.”

“…to shrink time between disaster and full recovery by ensuring that communities are resilient prior to a disaster and that disaster-impacted citizens and communities recover in a prompt, efficient and predictable manner.”

Dominican Sister Mary Keefe, developed Nuns’ Build in response to the needs of the people of New Orleans who had been affected by Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

She moved to New Orleans in November 2007 to begin a ministry of home visiting with the Nuns’ Build project! Families in New Orleans were counseled to return to their burned homes to be able to live there and begin the process of rebuilding.

For the third year in a row, vespers for the month of November at the Dominican Young Adults USA Chapter of Dominican Young Adults USA were celebrated and led by the Molloy Chapter of Dominican Young Adults USA.

In 2018, we were also overjoyed to have members of this year’s cohort of Dominican Volunteers from New York in attendance.

“As an organization committed to rebuilding homes and raising money for families that could not afford the necessary materials—Sister Mary suggested a new, similar project to SBP, Nuns’ Build! The first Nuns’ Build was scheduled for early October 2009 and drew nearly 100 volunteers for all or part of the five-day work week.

Even 10 years after Katrina, thousands of homeowners still have not been able to return or afford to rebuild their homes after the storm. The DYMUSA crew began their week working on the finishing touches of a home that had been damaged by Katrina.

Upon completion, the family would be returning to their home by early January!

On the last day of the week, participants of Nuns’ Build 2017 were able to attend a “Welcome Home” party which marked the official return of a homeowner to their property. It was an emotional event which celebrated the hard work and dedication of all those involved and the resilience of the people of New Orleans.

SBP continues to serve the needs of these families in New Orleans—as well as the families in New York and New Jersey suffering from Hurricane Sandy. Most recently, SBP mobilized to Houston, Florida, and Puerto Rico to assist in recovery from the Hurricanes that left these areas damaged.
So Call Me Maybe?

Thirty-five students from Dominican College and Universities across the United States gathered at Molloy College in Rockville Centre, NY, for the 15th National College “Preaching in Action” Conference the week of May 23rd.

G od has once again called on a new set of college students to an- swer the call to become preach- ers of the Good News. These students: gathered to learn about the Dominican Order and its Charism of preaching as well as how that unique Charism can be integrated into their own lives and how they could take what they had learned back to their campuses.

The following morning, Domin- icans throughout the ages (Mary of Magdala, as portrayed by S. Par Hanvey, OP (Amityville); St. Dominic, as portrayed by Patrick Spedale; and Catherine of Siena, as portrayed by Lena Pennino Smith) were brought to life for participants who learned about their lives, and their own call to preach. Students later learned that they too could be preachers of the Good News to all those they had met knowing about the Dominicans and their mission, others came without this knowl- edge and were ready to learn and take in all Dominican Life has to offer. There was certainly a Dominican Spirit in the air.

The “Signs of the Times” was the focus of the second day of the conference. Dominicans have often headed the phrase, “Preach with the Bi- ble in one hand and the newspaper in the other.” A focus of the conference is awareness of the signs of the times. It is a hope that this will encourage these students to fulfill their own Christian mission of preaching the Good News. S. Margaret Gallardi, OP (Amityville) spoke to the young people about “God and Mother Earth” while Kurt Maloney, Isabella Bogin, and Josie Umehouza, all current Domini- can Volunteers, introduced our young preachers to their ministries and the par- ticular issues that are addressed in these ministries. Karr ministers at the United Nations, Isabella ministers at Siena House (a women’s shelter for those with children under the age of three), and Josie ministers at the Opening Wood (a literacy program for immigrant women who de- sire to learn English). After each of these presentations, students were encouraged to take time to contemplate on what they had heard and how they could take what they had learned back to their campuses.

Having recently “caught the fire,” the students took the next day putting their preaching into action – the key to our conference! They spent the day in immersion sites min- istering to the poor at the Inn (a soup kitchen), to the earth at the Homecoming Farm on the grounds of the Amityville Motherhouse, to the elderly again in the Amityville Motherhouse, to women who are working to learn English so they can become productive members of our society, and engaging preschoolers at Shepherd’s Gate, who are the children of immigrant parents here on Long Island. Students returned from their sites energ- ized by the Holy Spirit, having spread the Good News to all those they had met that day. Of special note was the inter- actions between the students and retired sisters at the Amityville Motherhouse. Connecting today’s Dominicans with tomorrow’s is a vital part of the mission of the Dominican Youth Movement USA, the larger organization which the confer- ence is held under. At the end of the time with the sisters, the students extended their hands upon the sisters and together, joyously sang the Dominican Blessing, which they learned the first night.

After its success last year, time for “Theological Reflection” was taken before and after service. This led to wonderful sharing of stories, experiences, reactions, fears, attitudes, and underlying issues. As is the hope of the conference, many of the students were so moved by their experi- ences that they made commitments to get more involved with their own communi- ties upon return.

That evening a Dominican “Open House” was held with members of DYMUSA, Dominican Volunteers, Associate mem- bership, Leaders of the DYMU S A as well as religious sisters and friars. This is a unique opportunity for students to learn more about the members of the Domini- can Family, ask questions, and collect valuable information. The day concluded with a DJ and some late night dancing.

“I have been to Disney many many times and it is surely magical, but it doesn’t compare to the magic I felt this past week.”

S. Barbara Schwartz, OP (Amityville) concluded the weekly presentations by awakening the participants to “Preach- ing through the Arts.” Her interactive hands-on presentation at morning prayer was a great intro to the “Preaching through the Arts” day. In addition to St. Barbara, S. Vicki Toole, OP. S. Ancilla Kleinberg, OP. S. Marriana Euring, OP, (Amityville Dominicans) Leone Mathon OPA, (Amityville Associate) and Jessica Abejar (a former youth preacher) presented additional breakout sessions for the students to use their creative energies. The closing liturgy was a culmination of a week of prayer, reflection, service, and newfound preaching skills. Students lent their talents as singers, lectors, Eucharis- tic Ministers, Liturgical dancers, the list goes on! At the closing liturgy, which was attended by many of the Molloy College community as well as the Sisters of Saint Dominic of Amityville, each college group presented their action plan. Students are challenged with the creation of an action plan for the upcoming school year. This plan is the vehicle for sharing what they have learned at the conference to their college campuses. In addition, each student presented an individual action plan.

With the Dominican Charism firmly planted in mind, body, and spirit – the “Holy Preaching” con- tinues! Once again, it was truly moving to witness. Especially exciting for the parent organization DYMU S A was that out of the thirteen attending schools, seven have committed themselves to beginning Dominican Young Adult chapters on their campuses in the coming year. In that way, they will continue their connection to the Dominican Order.

Each then received the Dominican Cross and were commissioned to go forth and preach the “Good News” to their fellow students. Upon leaving, these students truly feel like they are part of our Domin- ican Family and will forever be connected.

At the end of the liturgy Margo Gomez, a student from Barry University shared, “I have been to Disney many many times and it is surely magical, but it doesn’t compare to the magic I felt this past week.”

Wherever they go, they will be preachers of God’s love, God’s peace, and God’s justice for all. They were encouraged by conference director S. Gina Fleming to, “Preach with your lives. It’s the only pulpit you need.”

-PJ, OP & SP
A New Class of Preachers

Some 92 students from 24 Dominican high schools spent June 23-28 exploring their Dominican heritage and learning that the call of the Order of Preachers is to preach through their lives.

Collaboration of congregations of Dominican Sisters as well as the Dominican Friars, the 19th Annual Dominican High Schools Preaching Conference was hosted at Siena Heights University and the Motherhouse of the Dominican Sisters of Adrian. Students and their adult mentors came from California, Louisiana, New York, New Jersey, Ohio, Texas, Illinois, Wisconsin, Tennessee, Puerto Rico, and, for the first time, Australia to gather with their peers and form a community of young Dominican preachers.

From the welcoming addresses and opening ritual through the closing Liturgy, the students were kept engaged with opportunities to learn, share, and bond with one another. Each day of the preaching conference focused on a different aspect of preaching.

The focus for June 24 was on Preaching in the Dominican Tradition. Students were introduced to the Dominican history and to the Order’s saints through dramatic presentations. Patrick Spedale, Director of the Office for Campus Ministry at St. Pius High School in Houston, Texas, sponsored by the Dominican Sisters of Houston, portrayed St. Dominic. Other portrayals of Dominican saints were Brother Herman Johnson, OP (St. Martin de Porres Province) as St. Martin de Porres, and St. Rose of Lima by Sister Xiomara Méndez-Hernández, OP (Adrian).

Michael Petro, of Cardinal Stritch High School and St. Kateri Academy in Eugene, Oregon, spoke to the students about the Four Pillars of Dominican Life: Prayer; Study, Community, and Preaching. Brother Joe Kilikevice, OP (St. Albert the Great Province), gave a presentation on the interfaith collaboration of congregations—ministers of Adrian, learning to work with rather than against nature in agriculture.

The students also spent their first full day being introduced to the various components of the Dominican family. Brother Herman Johnson, OP (St. Martin de Porres Province), Brother Joe Kilikevice, OP, and Father Dennis Woerter, OP (St. Albert the Great Province), introduced the students to the Friars. Speaking about the sisters were four Dominican Sisters of Adrian: Sisters Xiomara; Luchy Sori, OP; Marilín Llanes, OP; and Sister Katharine Frazer, a novice. Katie Lowe and Marge Coneset, Associates of Adrian, spoke about Dominican Associates.

Also represented were the Dominican Lainty, Kathy Niemiec and Gwendolin Weinberger; Dominican Young Adults USA, Keegan Futah and Kristen Dyachuk of the Siena Heights University chapter; colleges and universities, Lucas Hidalgo of Siena Heights University; and Dominican Volunteers USA, current volunteers Emily Dobar, Kayla Grodzicki, Katt Maloney, and Holly Sansom. While none of the Dominican nuns were available to speak about their branch of the family, students were referred to their page on the Dominican Life website.

On June 25, the students learned about various social justice issues present in the world today such as teen dating violence, the work of the United Nations, racism, and art therapy and social justice.

They took action the next day, spending hours serving the local community ranging from senior citizens and women and children suffering from domestic violence and sexual assault to adults with disabilities. In addition, students helped work on homes for Habitat for Humanity and worked on the Permaculture site of the Dominican Sisters of Adrian, learning to work with rather than against nature in agriculture.

That evening, the students had the opportunity to share their experiences of the past days with their prayer partners, Dominican Sisters of Adrian who had been paired with the students to pray for them. The students and their prayer partners sat together to share conversations, shared breakfasts and ice cream.

Students learned the option of preaching through the arts during special sessions on June 27. They had the opportunity to experience preaching through drama, art, dance, music, and more! The conference closed with a vibrant liturgy that included music, liturgical dance, and encouragement for the students to bring what they had learned to their home schools, families, and local communities.

That evening, the students were introduced to the Dominican Friars and Dominican Sisters as well as the Dominican Young Adults USA, Keegan Futah and Kristen Dyachuk of the Siena Heights University chapter. They were introduced to the Dominican Friars, the Dominican Order of Preachers is to preach through their lives.

Some 92 students from 24 Dominican high schools spent June 23-28 exploring their Dominican heritage and learning that the call of the Order of Preachers is to preach through their lives.

Every year, I am amazed and humbled by all who come to the conference and all who support the conference,” Sister Mary Soher, OP (Adrian), said in her reflection. Sister Mary has directed the conference for the past nine years.

Sister Mary noted the special community that the students formed at this year’s conference. “You reached out to each other and you transformed yourselves into a very special community of young preachers,” she said. “There is a kindness among you for each other that has allowed you to trust each other with God’s call in your hearts.”

The students gave concrete examples of how they plan to share their sense of the Dominican call as they came forward, school by school, to present their action plan for the coming year. School action plans ranged from forming a network of Dominican preachers in the Chicago area to teaching fellow students about the Dominican pillars and saints, improving sustainability in their schools, and helping the school to become more involved in service activities.

“What a journey it has been for all of us,” said Sister Patricia Harvat, OP, General Councilor of the Dominican Sisters of Adrian, at the beginning of the closing Mass June 28. She thanked the students and their mentors “a million times over” for their presence at the Motherhouse in Adrian and for the blessings they brought to the Sisters.
Connecting Tomorrow’s Dominicans, Today
Sponsored by the Sisters of Saint Dominic of Amityville, NY, the October 2017 Youth Preaching Weekend welcomed eleven new “Youth Preachers” to the Dominican Family.

Students from St. Agnes Academic HS, College Point, NY, and Albertus Magnus HS in Rockland County, NY, excitedly arrived St. John the Baptist High School Retreat on a Friday evening to begin a weekend of prayer, study, community and mission.

These students were the latest group who attended one of our Youth Preaching Workshops. Since the workshops began in 2001, they have served over 1,000 students, ages 13-18, in 60+ workshops. The workshop encourages students to fulfill their own baptismal call to “Preach the Word of God, in all things they do” by using the gifts and talents that have been given to them by our loving God.*

The weekend began with an introduction to the Dominican Pillar of Community as the students shared a meal and began to get to know each other.

The students then participated in a “Dominican Life 101” presentation where they learned about and discuss St. Dominic and the Dominican Order.

Another Dominican Pillar, Prayer, was experienced in a unique and exciting opening prayer service in which participants and facilitators were asked to bring water from their homes and schools. The water was poured into a single bowl, illustrating our coming together with one another. This water was then blessed and used in turn to bless one another. So began the journey of young Dominican preachers.

Merriam Webster defines the word “preach” as “deliver a sermon or religious address to an assembled group of people, typically in church.” One of the most important takeaways from the workshop for the participants was that there are so many ways to preach the Good News beyond the pulpit.

Throughout the second day students attended breakout sessions on preaching through drama, art, music, and dance. The highlight of the day was the chance to meet some of the retired sisters for an ice cream social. This was an opportunity to converse with the sisters and learn from the many ways the sisters have preached so beautifully with their lives.

Listening to the students reflect on the workshops, one can hear the hunger and desire in their hearts for a relationship and opportunity to come closer to God. The Dominican Youth Movement USA is blessed to be able to provide a venue to foster and ignite that relationship.

Each of these workshops concludes with Sunday liturgy at the Sisters of Saint Dominic of Amityville’s Motherhouse in which the students plan and participate in the various parts of the liturgy. However, this Sunday mass was a tad different and exciting. This particular Sunday, these young adults were given a special opportunity to witness a Jubilarian recommit herself to her vowed life as a Dominican of 50 years.

Year after year participants continue to find the weekends spiritual and prayerful, and most excitingly, many of these new Youth Preachers stay connected to the Dominican Youth Movement USA after experiencing these weekends. Some even return to future workshops as mentors and have the opportunity to lead a new group of youth preachers. Many of these youth preachers will attend the Dominican High Schools Preaching Conference in Michigan, which continues to empower students to discover and deepen the preacher within through prayer, study, community, and the Dominican Family.

The Dominican Family is grateful for their presence among us and the ways in which they stay connected.

Youth Preaching Workshops To-Go

The Youth Preaching Workshops To-Go is a unique program that takes the core components of the Youth Preaching Workshop held at the Motherhouse of the Sisters of St. Dominic of Amityville and brings them to young people across the nation. The Dominican Youth Movement USA offers customizable workshops to introduce communities to the Dominican Charism and its foundation in the Four Pillars as well as the many ways of preaching, including preaching through the arts and through community service.

If you or someone you know would be interested in having a Youth Preaching Workshop To-Go, learn more today at www.dymusa.org/ypw

---

* S. Placia, op. cit.
A native of Washington State, Sr. Jennifer is the daughter of Norm and Helen Schaaf of Port Angeles, WA. She holds a B.M.E. and a M.A. in Pastoral Ministry from the University of Portland. Prior to moving to New York to begin a discernment process with the sisters, Sr. Jennifer taught music in Portland, Oregon and later served on the campus ministry team at Ohio Dominican University.

Sr. Jennifer has been an active participant in the Dominican Youth Movement USA, serving on the advisory board for the advisory board for the National College “Preaching in Action” Conference, and is a founding member of Dominican Young Adults USA. Presently she is Assistant Chaplain at St. Thomas More Catholic Chapel and Center at Yale University, New Haven, CT.

Sr. Jennifer Schaaf professed final vows as a Sister of Saint Dominic of Blauvelt, NY on December 2nd during a liturgy in Holy Rosary Chapel at St. Dominic Convent in Blauvelt, NY. ■

-SB

Congratulations, Sister Jenn!

Joining the DYMUSA team this year is Dominican Volunteer Sean Puzzo. Sean is serving as the assistant to the Executive Director through July 2018. Sean graduated from Caldwell University (Caldwell, NJ) in May 2017 with a B.F.A. in Graphic Design. Having attended the National College “Preaching in Action” Conference as both a student and a mentor, Sean is an asset to the DYMUSA team. Sean helped establish a chapter of Dominican Young Adults USA at his alma mater and now serves as on the DYAUSA National Board as the Coordinator for Charism through 2018. Sean credits the “Preaching in Action” conference with helping him realize he could use his artistic talents to preach the Good News. At the beginning of his year of service, Sean redesigned the DYMUSA website to better serve both the organization and the people interested in learning more. He has a long term goal of owning a business which affords non-profit organizations like ours with affordable graphic design and print solutions, combining his skills and passions.

Sr. Jennifer Schaaf professed final vows as a Sister of Saint Dominic of Blauvelt, NY on December 2nd during a liturgy in Holy Rosary Chapel at St. Dominic Convent in Blauvelt, NY.

Also joining the DYMUSA team this year is Jessica Abejar as our Program Specialist, overseeing our Youth Preaching Workshops in Amityville and assisting with planning and organizing the National College Preaching in Action Conference and the Dominican High Schools Preaching Conference. You may recognize Jessica as a sacred and liturgical dancer, teaching and leading our student participants in dance at the College Conference and Youth Preaching Workshops since 2014 as well as dancing at Youth Vespers and other events at the Amityville Motherhouse. As a Youth Preaching Workshop alumni and current presenter for the DYMUSA, she is excited to take on this new role, hoping to encourage and empower young people to discover their talents, follow their passions, and ultimately, share God’s love with others. In addition to working with DYMUSA, Jessica also is the Founder and Director of The Moving Prayer, a dance company that nurtures and uplifts the mind, body, and spirit; a youth columnist for The Filipino Catholic; and a POP Pilates instructor.

Kevin Sullivan and his wife Leslie celebrated the birth of their son, Finnian, on November 7! Kevin has been involved in DYA since its inception and has represented DYA at the IDYM in Fatima (2009), Bogota (2013), and Toulouse (2016). Leslie, a Franciscan at heart, participated in the IDYM meeting in Toulouse. Since their time in France, Kevin and Leslie have decided to bring Finn to Carcassonne someday!

Are you a DYMUSA alumni with exciting news to share? New job? Engaged? Marriage? New baby? We want to hear from you! Contact us at alumni@dymusa.org and let us know what you’ve been up to!

Visit www.dymusa.org/alumni to update your contact information to stay up to date on all things DYMUSA!
UPCOMING EVENTS...

March 2018
Youth Preaching Workshop
March 16-18, 2018

16th Annual National College
"Preaching in Action" Conference
May 22-17, 2018 at
Caldwell University

20th Annual Dominican High
Schools Preaching Conference
June 25-30, 2018 at
Siena Heights University

We invite you to
LEARN MORE

Visit us on the web and follow us on our social media platforms.