"True peace is not merely the absence of tension; it is the presence of justice."

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., written in the Birmingham jail, 1958.

In a homily entitled, "When Peace Becomes Obnoxious," Dr. King preached:

The tension we see in Montgomery today is the necessary tension that comes when the oppressed rise up and start to move forward to a permanent, positive peace.

Yes, it is true that if the Negro accepts his place, accepts his exploitation, there will be peace. But it would be a peace boiled down to a stagnant complacency, deadening passivity, and if peace means this, I don't want peace.

If peace means accepting second-class citizenship, I don't want it.

If peace means keeping my mouth shut in the midst of injustice and evil, I don't want it.

If peace means being complacently adjusted to a deadening status quo, I don't want peace.

If peace means a willingness to be exploited economically, dominated politically, humiliated and segregated, I don't want peace.

So in a passive, non-violent manner, we must revolt against this peace.

During January we celebrated the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., whose legacy is much discussed these days, as it is 50 years since the march to Selma. A current movie depicts the early events of the Civil Rights Movement. In the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Michigan, anyone can hop on the very bus where Rosa Parks dared to not give her seat to a white person. Sixty years ago, my parents honeymooned in New Orleans and were offended by the separateness in rest rooms, drinking fountains, and accommodations for white and African American people. It would seem that our country has come a long way since then, but recent events in Ferguson, Missouri, and in New York City make it apparent that much racism remains.

In the 16 years of my commitment to Associate Life, I have enjoyed many wonderful retreats and
prayer services, as well as the inspiration of our many Sisters and Associates. I am also challenged to study and contemplate social justice issues and to make changes in my life that reflect that contemplation. One of the benefits of partnering with the Adrian Dominican Sisters is the many emails, programs, and discussions on peace and justice. The Congregation's website offers many resources and opportunities for sharing.

As a group of Associates, we are a collection of individuals who take opportunities to transform ourselves and make a difference in the lives of those we minister to, our families, and our communities. Dr. King refers to "negative peace" as the situation when people do not participate in acts of violence, but are complacent and reticent on speaking up for the disadvantaged and those situations of injustice in our communities and families. It is tempting to "keep the peace" by not standing up to injustice. Dr. King's preaching challenges us to reconsider those areas in our lives where we "keep the peace" in spite of an underlying tension.

As Lent begins, we have a real opportunity to study, pray, fast, and atone for those complacent areas of our lives -- not waste this precious chance for transformation.

A Prayer for Valentine’s Day
from Out of the Ordinary by Joyce Rupp

Praise to the One whose love stirs the ancient embers
sparks the breath of prayer
Praise to the One whose love entices the wandering
beckons the confused
Praise to the One whose love grows wings on the weary
dreams hope in the discouraged
Praise to the One whose love soothes with the ointment of mercy
transforms with the touch of compassion
Praise to the One whose love threads the energy of friendship
stitches the strength of fidelity
Praise to the One whose love tickles the soul with laughter
urges the heart toward joy
Praise to the one whose love embraces the untamed
dances with the passionate
All praise to this Gracious One.
All gratitude to this Beloved.
All love to this Mentor of Friendship.
All devotion to this Shaper of Hearts.

Kudos

In the past several months, my niece, Gladys Hentschel Cruz (right), pieced seven quilts and gave them to our Sisters in early January. She wished to do something to honor her Grandma Meg Hentschel and thought of our Sisters. Gladys knew that her grandmother loved our Sisters and wanted to do something to thank the Sisters for all their prayers. Gladys lives in Grand Rapids, Michigan, with her husband John and her sons Anthony and Isaac.

Associates are welcome to donate items and send cards for the Sisters in the Dominican Life Center (DLC). Why not write some valentines and send them to the DLC?
From Our Associates

St. Dominic's Fourth Way of Prayer

During December, we studied and contemplated Dominic's Fourth Way of Prayer, which is contemplating the cross and genuflecting or bowing. Associates shared the following:

As I read over the fourth way St. Dominic prayed, bowing or genuflecting, I felt that this is truly a way I can give praise to God. Since I am unable to genuflect due to health reasons, I use the gesture of bowing. As I enter a church, I direct myself to the place where Jesus is present (the tabernacle) and I bow in reverence to show Him I know He is there and I am giving Him honor. I do this before entering the place where I will sit for the liturgy.

I look at the crucifix on the altar. It helps me to center myself on Jesus and place my trials and worries before Him, knowing He will take them and help me through any obstacles I will meet.

Associate Janet Huvaere, Harrison Township, Michigan

When I was thinking about this way of praying, I happened to be in church a little early and had a good opportunity to observe people. I noticed how really automatic our physical behaviors are in church. We cross ourselves, with or without holy water. We search for the "right seat." We genuflect, kneel for the appropriate amount of time, then seat ourselves more comfortably and look around the church until Mass begins. Some even read the bulletin or The Michigan Catholic very prematurely.

I noticed especially how quickly people genuflected. Some went a little way down, some a little more down and others seemed to do a deliberate kneel that appeared thoughtful and prayerful. I hope I can count myself in the last group! There is no stronger personal, physical action than moving the whole body towards the ground.

There is no other person living today whom we would adore in such a way, but our God and Lord is deserving of our lowering ourselves in respect, honor, and humility. The genuflection, along with the sign of the cross and the bow, places us in the depths of the presence of God and opens us up again for the most special of intimate encounters.

Associate Camille Klimecki, Warren, Michigan
"Oh my," I thought to myself as I read through the reference materials on Dominic's Nine Ways of Prayer, "if this is a 'requirement' for association, I am in big trouble!" As much as I hate to admit it, my knees are not the 2015 model -- nor even factory refurbished, so they just don't work the way they used to!

So I have to ask, "Since the knees don't operate well, how else can I kneel or genuflect?" And then it came to me -- such simple ways.

- When I am tempted to interrupt someone, pause and mentally genuflect, allowing them to finish their thoughts.
- When I hear an opinion that is contrary to my own, take a breath and kneel quietly in my mind to respect the other's thoughts, feelings, and ideas.
- When I am tempted to fire off a snarky remark (all too often the case), spiritually bend down on one knee and recall the gentleness with which Dominic treated others.
- When I am stubbornly determined to be right, intellectually kneel and ask for guidance from the Spirit of Love.

These simple steps -- perhaps more challenging than physically kneeling and genuflecting -- are how I'll model Dominic's Fourth Way of Prayer.

Prospective Associate Sharon Bock, Palm Springs, California

I never knew what a genuflection was until I became Catholic at the age of 22. It was quite a unique experience. I think of it now as going down on my knee to reverence God, and quickly rising to follow him. That, to me, is a very unique response to the greatness of God.

I like bowing, because of the many different types in our rites: the profound bow, from the waist, and the head nod bow, which is not as deep. I often use this when I am gesturing to other people as well. I see it as a way of recognizing the divine within them. I think I get that from the Hindus, who use the greeting of Namaste, which I was told means, "I salute the divinity within you." I see that little head bow greeting as doing this and I use it often, even when I see people I don't know and want to acknowledge them.

I find that genuflecting and bowing are both movements that show respect to God, Jesus, and others as well, that the divine is around and within us. We should be willing to accept that if the divine is in others, it is in us as well. So to all you out there, I bow my head and say, "Blessings from my divine to yours, and peace to all."

Associate Elizabeth Heard, Adrian, Michigan

When I was enjoying Mary Oliver's latest collection of poetry, this poem really spoke to me about the Fourth Way of Prayer:

Forgive Me
By Mary Oliver

Angels are wonderful, but they are so, well, aloof.  
It is what I sense in the mud and the roots of the trees, 
or the well, or the barn, or the rock with its citron map of 
lichen that halts my feet and makes my eyes flare, feeling 
the presence of spirit, some small god who abides there.
If I were a perfect person, I would be bowing continuously. I'm not, though I pause where I feel this holiness, which is why I'm so often late coming back from wherever I went. Forgive me.

Associate Mary Lach, Clinton Township, Michigan

Standing before the Altar: St. Dominic's Fifth Way of Prayer

St. Dominic would stand before an altar without leaning on anything and allow his body to respond to what he experienced in prayer. Sometimes he would raise his arms as if leading prayer at Mass, sometimes he would cry and sometimes he would place his hands in the posture of reading a book. Sometimes he would pray Scripture aloud. He would stand with great reverence. It was his way of meditating and listening to God. On a journey, he would take time to be away from the group and stand before God.

How do you speak and listen to God? Do you use any special postures or gestures during prayer? Do you use meditation as a prayer? Can you imagine yourself standing before God? Please send me your responses to the Fifth Way of Prayer by Sunday, February 15, 2015.

New Year's Resolutions

Well, another year is upon us and we have had a few weeks to look at the practicalities of our Resolutions. On January 1, a group of my husband's relatives came from Pontiac to celebrate the New Year with us.

At one point, one of my cousins made a "Jesus help me" comment. I suggested that that would make a great resolution for 2015: to make sure that each day we pray the name of Jesus. The more I reflect on that "tongue-in-cheek" comment, the more I thought it will be my one resolution for this year: to take time each day to speak the name of Jesus, to reflect on it, to allow it to enter into my being, to hold him in my heart and hold my friends and family up to him. This reflection caused me to remember the Jesus Prayer: "Lord Jesus, have mercy" -- a simple but powerful prayer.

How much I will invite Jesus into my life, my prayer, and my heart this year has yet to be seen, but it is my one resolution.

May he be with you all year.

Associate Sylvia Shorter, Lathrup Village, Michigan

Book Recommendations

Christ in Evolution by Ilia Delio, OSF, may already have been recommended. In this life-changing book, she helps her readers understand the cosmic Christ and our call to be change-makers in the
course of evolution. I would love an opportunity to read it again with others and reflect on her thoughts and ideas. What about an online study group?

Prospective Associate Sharon Bock, Palm Springs, California

I recommend two books that follow one another: The Art of Hearing Heartbeats and The Well-tempered Heart. I also recommend receiving Richard Rohr’s daily meditations email. His books and lectures are terrific.

Associate Tricia Layden, Seatac, Washington

I recommend the movie, “Calvary,” which is out on DVD now. Calvary’s Father James (Brendan Gleeson) is a good priest who is faced with sinister and troubling circumstances brought about by a mysterious member of his parish. Although he continues to comfort his own fragile daughter (Kelly Reilly) and reach out to help members of his church with their various scurrilous moral -- and often comic -- problems, he feels sinister and troubling forces closing in, and begins to wonder if he will have the courage to face his own personal Calvary. (c) Fox

Associate Mary Lach, Clinton Township, Michigan

Expressions of Thanks

In November, I had written to update you on my daughter’s health. Lauri is receiving chemotherapy, physical therapy, and occupational therapy. She is holding her own after discovering the breast cancer had metastasized. I received many wonderful and personal cards of support for Lauri and myself from Sisters and Associates, and I wanted to thank, from the bottom of my heart, each of the women who wrote!

Associate Karen Malmsten, East Lansing, Michigan

Thanks to Associate Pat O’Neill and Chapter Priorress Mary Ann Caulfield for making arrangements for my Florida visit.

Associate Mary Lach, Clinton Township, Michigan

Schedule

for Mary Lach, Director of Associate Life

In West Palm Beach, Florida, and Barry University, Miami Shores, Florida

Thursday to Wednesday, February 5-11, 2015

Meeting Associates and those interested in Associate Life
Working days: Monday to Wednesday

Working in Adrian:
Monday to Wednesday, February 16-18, 2015

Working from my home office
In Clinton Township, Michigan:
Tuesday to Thursday, February 24-26, 2015

Prayer Requests
Please remember in your prayers the repose of the souls of:


Associate Patty Seckel, of Clinton Township, Michigan who is seriously ill.

Associate Jacob Boor, of Clinton Township, Michigan: for his mother, Pamela Boor.

Associates Trish and Tom Layden, of Seatac, Washington: for their dear granddaughter, Theresa

Associate Mary Lach, of Clinton Township, Michigan: for her friend Father Ben Reese, of Kenosha, Wisconsin, and for Jim Hentschel, Mary's brother, who is caring for him.

Sisters Maribeth Howell and Dusty Farnan, Directors of Formation and Vocations respectively, transitioning to new ministries.

Upcoming Events

Book Club
Monday, February 16, 2015
Madden Hall Dining Room, Adrian

Ash Wednesday
February 18, 2015