



In search for truth

Congregation of Dominican Sisters, Cabra

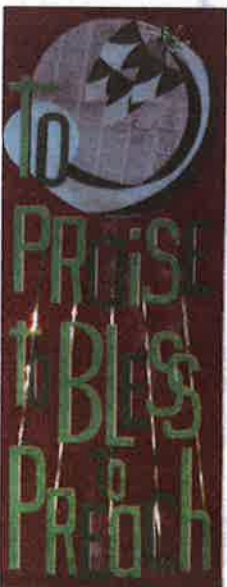
“The Church must be attractive. Wake up the world! Be witnesses of a different way of acting, of living! It is possible to live differently in this world... It is this witness I expect from you!” - Pope Francis

Our mission as Dominican women is to study, share, proclaim and witness to the liberating Word of God in order that right relationships be restored between God, people and the earth where these are broken due to lack of knowledge and distortion of the truth.

We, the Congregation of Dominican Sisters, Cabra, are followers of St Dominic in search for truth. The four elements of study, community, mission and prayer form the pillars of our lives as we live out our lives as consecrated women in the Church.

We live in communion, sharing all we are and have with each other, supporting each other in life and mission. We are contemplatives, called by God, responding to God in the depths of our hearts, reflecting on life's experience, praying together in community each day.

As members of the Order of Preachers we are called to preach and so are part of the mission of the order where we strive to spread the liberating word of God. This we do using various means which include art, music, the written and spoken word and the



Poster designed by Sr Dorothy Callanan O.P.

use of social media. The Dominican Sisters, Cabra are involved with many ministries in Ireland and across the world. We have always aimed at responding to the call of society and our ministries are based on where there are the greatest needs in the world today.

“Many of our sisters carry out individual ministries in the communities where they live and work.”

At a recent profession ceremony on February 15, 2015 Sr Helen Mary Harmey O.P., Congregation Prioress explained briefly our vow of obedience.

“You will notice that Eileen will only vow obedience, according to our Dominican tradition,” explained Sr Helen Mary. “This is because for us obedience refers not just to one of the vows, and not even to all three vows at once. It refers to the call of being a Dominican, inclusive of all elements of our life: community, prayer, study and preaching. This is our obedience and it is marked by the value of freedom, freedom to listen to God, self and community. Our freedom is not license but has within it the demands and choice of personal and communal responsibility.”

Ireland

The Dominican Sisters Cabra in Ireland are based in Dublin, Galway, Wicklow and in Belfast. We work in the area of adult education, providing adult education programmes in Sion Hill. We also educate adults and children about the importance of sustaining the Earth at An Tairseach, our Ecology Centre based in Wicklow.

We are trustees of a number of primary schools and special schools for children



with learning disabilities and have placed the leadership and management of the majority of our secondary schools in the Le Chéile Schools Trust, while retaining the trusteeship of the post primary schools in the North.

Our ethos is concerned with the education of the whole person where the focus is on the search for truth about God, the world, ourselves and our eternal destiny. The schools, which are based on a sense of trust, work in partnership with parents to instruct and educate the young people, encouraging respect, responsibility, initiative, personal growth and leadership.

We support ecumenism which promotes unity and cooperation across Christian religions. Ecumenism became a priority of the Cabra Dominican Sisters over the many decades of extreme conflict in Northern Ireland.

Other ministries in Ireland in which our sisters work include involvement in local areas as parish sisters, working with the homeless, visiting elderly in local parishes, full time teaching in Ballyfermot, administration, adult literacy for immigrants, SPRED (Special Religious Education), retreat work, scripture study, chaplaincy in the Royal Victoria hospital in Belfast, and as chaplain in a secondary school in Dublin, the area of family therapy has also involved some of our sisters. The issue of the lack of dignity for the human person in relation to the trafficking of women and children has involved many of our sisters in highlighting the injustice of this concern.

For a number of years, a group of Dominican Sisters in Cabra, organise an event called the Dominican Youth Forum (DYF). This year, the theme Inspiring Voices featured contemporary inspirational individuals including Malala Yousafzai, the Pakistani activist who has campaigned for education for all, Fr Peter McVerry, who has worked tirelessly with Dublin's homeless and Joan Freeman who set up the first Pieta House in Ireland.

Also in Cabra, an Alzheimer Cafe was set up by the Dominican Sisters again to help to educate around the area of dementia so as to assist those suffering from the illness to live healthy lives within the local community.

New Orleans

In New Orleans in Louisiana a sister is based in Hope House which aims to provide assistance through education programmes for the more vulnerable in society. Two other sisters are involved in teaching in a school in the local parish and preach through our sacred space on our website.

South Africa

The sisters are also involved in work at third level, in the University of South Africa (UNISA), in retreat work, spiritual direction, Scripture groups, ecology, parish work and catechesis. We also became involved in setting up and building awareness around HIV and AIDS, which began in the early 1990s and continues to this day.

In South Africa, the Dominican Sisters Cabra remain faithful to St Domi-



nic and his dream which has a strong focus on working together on the healing of the human community so as to turn hostility into friendship and break the spiral of violence that surrounds us today. There is a need to create communities of viable life in this kind of mission which inspires hope.

“Over the years, the sisters have been dedicated to helping the vulnerable in society.”

The biggest division now in South Africa is the divide between rich and poor, whether black or white. After 1994, people began to migrate into urban areas but they didn't have the means to build houses. The housing situation remains dire. There is a continued lack of suitable housing due to worsening unemployment. In some of the remaining Dominican schools now, teachers and older children are involved in Habitat for Humanity, an organisation which supports volunteers to build homes for the very poor. This initiative also builds awareness amongst children.

Sr Martine explains that with the ending of Apartheid, new injustices have emerged. Poor black people have now been joined by a growing number of impoverished white people. “These are the group who are now forgotten within South African society,” she says.

Latin America

In Argentina, the sisters are based in the regions of Buenos Aires, Santa Fe and Entre Rios. In Entre Rios, our sisters teach in state schools in the town and are also engaged



in pastoral work in the outskirts of Victoria. The sisters there are involved in peace education, in educating on AIDS prevention and also run a Bible group.

We have had a presence in Bolivia since 1998. Here the sisters are engaged in a number of programmes including a Peace Education Programme that train teachers and community leaders in conflict resolution and prevention of violent behaviours, and a Pastoral Programme for Human Mobility. A recent initiative has meant that a night shelter can be staffed in Tarija, on diocesan premises in the centre of the city, and can provide accommodation for up to 12 people.

The service is directed to migrants, or people escaping from human traffickers, and who have nowhere to stay. The sisters also assist with school going children who may be at risk, whether from family violence, poverty, alcoholism, and the team of *guías* offers playtime, remedial teaching, cultural activities such as dance and music.