



Campus Ministry Notes

"Building the Dominican Spirit"

*Dominican University of California, San Rafael, CA 94901
July, 2006*

Community

"Followers of St. Dominic are called to practice the skills of community building, to show their love of God by loving others, offering companionship and support to those of all or no faith traditions. All are welcomed with respect, building community in the tradition of Dominic, one person, one gesture, one word, one action, one prayer at a time. Freedom and responsibility are key ingredients in building community, they provide a context for shared experience. As relationships deepen trust grows and confidence develops." (Ruth Poochigian, OP)

At Dominican University, the programs sponsored by Campus Ministry continue this tradition. In the context of community, students are invited to:

- deepen their knowledge and understanding of their particular faith tradition,
- expand their life experiences through service to those on the margins of society,
- explore how academic learning relates to values and insights that are formative for personal morality.

The relationships with peers, friends, professors, and mentors, developed over time, allow students to learn about other paths of spirituality and to appreciate their own at the same time. In seeking *Truth*, students learn that there are many doors to wisdom.

This edition of our Newsletter gives a glimpse of some ways community becomes the lens for praying, learning, and serving others on Dominican's campus and the greater community.



Campus Ministry students helping with a party for the retired Dominican Sisters at Lourdes Convent.



The annual Marin Hunger Walk helps to support the Food Banks of Marin County. This is the third year students have participated in the walk.



Dominican student Chris Souza and his new friend from Homeward Bound during the Easter Egg Hunt sponsored by Campus Ministry.



Enjoying the games and activities after the Easter Egg Hunt for children from Homeward Bound.



Bro. Joseph Kiloekvek, OP, from Chicago, spent several days on the Dominican campus teaching students about the use of music, song and dance in bringing about universal understanding and world peace.



"Outreach" students help residents of Cedars of Marin, a residence facility for handicapped adults, with an art project.

RIKKI LARSON: THE DOMINICAN FACE AT ST. VINCENT DE PAUL DINING ROOM

Rikki Larson, a member of the Campus Ministry "Outreach Team," has been the coordinator for student volunteers at St. Vincent dePaul's Dining Room in downtown San Rafael for the past year. Below are her reflections on the experience.

Since August I have been working as a volunteer at St. Vincent dePaul's Dining Room. It has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. Not only have I been able



to help others, but I have learned so much about social work, which is the field in Psychology I plan to enter once I graduate from Do-

minican University. I have learned about the struggles of being homeless and the causes of homelessness. These are not just people to me anymore, they are my friends as well as an inspiration to me. I know their stories and their struggles; I have been an ear for them to share as well as a shoulder for them to lean on.

I do not know what I would do in their situation, or how I would survive, but their determination to pull themselves out of their situation inspires me every day.

I used to be one of those people who would not even look a homeless person in the eye. I had the mentality that if I did give a homeless person some money, they would just use it to buy beer. I thought that they were in that predicament because of their own actions and had no one to blame but themselves. Through the experience of St. Vincent's, my view of the homeless has completely changed. Now that I have listened to their stories, when I think about the homeless, I think about my friends and family who could be in same position at any time.

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Homelessness could happen to anyone, at any point in his or her life. When you look into the face of a homeless person, you are not just seeing their face, but the face of hu-

man beings everywhere who are in the same situation: mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, sons, people you know. Think about that the next time you see a homeless person on the street and start walking the other way or ignore them.

The following comments are from Cris Jones, the Volunteer Director for the St. Vincent dePaul Society:

Rikki worked as an ambassador for Dominican University recruiting college volunteers, driving them to and from volunteer orientation plus helping them get settled in their new volunteer jobs. I estimate that Rikki has brought about 30 college students to our program.

I am very excited to say that Rikki will be working as an intern for St. Vincent dePaul working with our 11 conferences, going out on home visits throughout Marin County to aid our low income neighbors. Our goal of this project is to cultivate college students to become a part of our home visit family so that our work with the poor lives on. I believe that Rikki's ability to communicate effectively will be essential to this challenging task to help our senior volunteers and University students working together as mentors.

THANK YOU, SISTER AQUINAS NIMITZ!

Sr. Aquinas Nimitz, OP, academic leader, scientist, teacher, and friend of Campus Ministry, died on Monday, February 27th after a valiant fight against cancer.

After her "retirement," Sr. Aquinas became more involved in the Campus Ministry program. She took over the duties of arranging the scheduling of our "Busy Person's Page 2 Retreat," making sure

that all who had signed up were scheduled to meet with a Dominican sister each day during the week of retreat. Her ability to or-



ganize was a genuine gift which she shared each semester.

Sister also attended the Sunday night liturgies in Pennafort Chapel. She had a special chair in the Chapel--everyone knew that this was for Sr. Aquinas. The day of her death, a vase of flowers was found on the chair, which remained for the remainder of the semester. She touched the hearts of many!

MEL ATKINS: COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER

The following excerpt is from the Commencement address given by Senior Speaker Mel Atkins at this year's ceremony. Mel participated in an immersion program sponsored by Campus Ministry in the summer of 2005.

“Some of my best experiences here at Dominican were times I shared with my fellow Dominicans outside the classroom. I will never forget Spring Break of 2005. It was my junior year, and some of my fellow students and I decided we wanted to spend the break with those less fortunate who don't ever seem to get a break in life. A group of eight of us, from a variety of class levels and majors, headed down to the St. Mary's Shelter in Stockton which serves the homeless and the working poor. Now, my intentions were good, but deep down I expected the experience to be emotionally draining. Nothing could be further from the truth. We all came back from Stockton not only educated about social and economic issues that affect the homeless, but also determined to make a change and with an attitude that it was possible to make a change.

Eighty years ago, Mahatma Gandhi challenged all those who were dissatisfied with the status quo to “be the change you want to see.” Mother Theresa embodied that change by daring to be the power of one by caring for the lepers and outcasts on the streets of Calcutta. Now, my fellow students and I who went on that trip may never be called to lead a nation to freedom like Gandhi, or to show the world what compassion is like Mother Theresa, but we realized then and there in Stockton the power of one. The power of one



Dominican Students who participated in the Stockton Immersion Trip, Spring Break, 2005



to believe in change, live the change and see the change. We all made a difference. Yes, we made a difference in the lives of 200 or so homeless people we worked with those three days, but, more importantly, we made a difference in our own lives by making a solemn commitment that no matter what we majored in, or no matter where life takes us, we will always remember the Spring Break of 2005, and work towards always making a difference, no matter how small.”

SUMMER LEADERSHIP CONFERENCES

Fr. Bob and Sr. Carla with students attending the “Preaching in Action Conference” at Calwell, N.J. (left) and the “Campus Ministry Leadership Institute” at Notre Dame, IN.



Leaders at an end-of-the-year dinner

FORMING COMMUNITY ON CAMPUS: “RIPPLE EFFECT”

In order to encourage students to become involved in the local community, they must first experience community “at home.” During the summer of 2005, four Dominican students accompanied Fr. Bob Haberman and Sr. Carla Kovack, OP, to the Campus Ministry Leadership Institute held on the campus of the University of Notre Dame. The result of that week was the development of a new program, “Ripple Effect,” that would bring together small groups of students to share the upcoming Sunday Gospel, reflect on it, and share its possible meaning in their personal lives.

The program began in the Fall, 2005, with 5 groups. Using the “Campus Renew” program, the groups met in students' rooms, lounges, or the chapel once a week for reflection and prayer. The core team, who participated in the Notre Dame Conference, also met as a group at 8 A.M. every Thursday.

With the beginning of Spring semester, 2006, 5 additional groups were formed.

Participants in the “Ripple Effect” program report it gives them a new awareness of community and support for their daily lives at Dominican.



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See us at:
<http://www.dominican.edu/about/current/campusministryinfo.html>



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RETREAT: "COMMUNITY; CIRCLES OF CONNECTION"

Each semester Campus Ministry sponsors an off-campus retreat weekend for students. To help enhance the theme, Liani Castro, '05, who is currently employed as a full time music minister at Holy Rosary Parish, Antioch, came back to campus to help lead the retreat team, composed of students and Sr. Carla Kovack, OP.

As the retreat unfolded, those attending were asked to reflect on how community affects their lives. They began by examining the personal level, and by the end of the retreat, they challenged themselves to become part of the greater global community.

During the retreat, each participant made a quilt piece. The quilt

pieces will be sewn together as a sign of the unity the students share with one another. Plans are to raffle the quilt in the fall, with the proceeds being sent to Catholic Relief Services.



Liani Castro, '05, works on the "Solidarity Quilt" during the Spring Retreat held at Bolinas.

New Chapel Update



As of the date of this newsletter, the Board of Trustees has appointed a special committee to evaluate the Chapel project in light of our new Strategic Planning Process. A new Student Union is an ever growing need on campus, and the committee is studying the possible inclusion of a Student Union within the Chapel/Campus Ministry complex. The committee will report to the Board at its next meeting.

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