

Las Casas Newsletter

Las Casas: Dominicans in Ministry with Native Americans, Inc.
c/o 10730 W. Cermak Rd., 1E
Westchester, IL 60154-5234

Number 43

Fall 2011



Letter from *Las Casas Board President*

Season of the Harvest Moon

Dear Friend of Las Casas,

Greetings to you during this 500th anniversary year of Dominican preaching in the Americas. The preaching continues today and the Las Casas Board is grateful for the opportunity to support those who minister with Native Americans.

The Las Casas Board met in May and we were able to respond to all grant requests. The board also designated some educational scholarship funds for Dominicans who minister with Native Americans or are preparing for ministry with Native Americans in the United States. Tekakwitha Conference membership fees were also provided for Dominicans who are not currently members of the Conference.

Storytelling has a long tradition among Native Americans. The newsletter contains some of the stories of the 2010 grant recipients as well as other helpful information. Enjoy reading it and pass it on! It will also be posted on our website (www.domlife.org/lascasas).

Our Dominican sisters and brothers in Native American ministry continue to preach as they minister and face challenging economic times. Las Casas is able to provide financial assistance to them because of the generosity of those who respond to the annual appeal. If you haven't donated in the past, please consider a donation this year. Consider a gift in honor (birthday, jubilee, anniversary, etc.) or memory of someone you know ~ it is a gift that keeps on giving! Thanks for your support, generous response and prayers.

Enjoy the harvest of the Fall season. Count your blessings!

Diane Poplawski, OP (Racine)
President for the *Las Casas Board*

Students' Wish Granted

Thanks to Las Casas for a grant for the year 2010, the high school youth of Sacred Heart Mission in Arlee and Saint John Berchman/Jocko, Montana were granted their wish. When the youth were asked what they would like in their catechetical sessions, a number of them responded that they wanted to study from religious education resources that were developed from their own culture. The Las Casas grant made possible the purchase of 20 books (each of a series of 8 books) published by the Tekakwitha Conference.



The high school youth of Sacred Heart Arlee and St. John Berchman/Jocko are enjoying their new acculturated religion books.

These books are chapters of *Finding a Way Home*, a book written in consultation with

members of the Plateau Tribes. The youth were very impressed to learn that they know personally four of the consultants, residents of their own Flathead Reservation. In fact one person was their Salish teacher. It is a joy to see how reverently our youth treat these books and attentively read and listen to the poetry.

The youth appreciate Las Casas donors who made it possible for them to find meaning in the Catholic way of living; for through these books they are led to reflect on their heritage and the ways of their ancestors. Then they learn how their own traditions relate to the teachings and practices of the Catholic Church.



Resources provided by the Las Casas grant - Children's Liturgy of the Word K-6 and a set of high school religion resources.

The grant also provided resources for our younger children as they gather for Children's Liturgy of the Word. Their adult leaders thank Las Casas for the new user-friendly resources.

All of us are grateful to those who support Las Casas and its mission to affirm and promote Native American self-determination and the freedom of Native Americans to express their culture, language and religion.

Margaret Hillary, OP (Grand Rapids)

The Flathead Indian Reservation is now the residence of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. Three tribes have formed one united government which works to improve the lives of the people living on the reservation. Through their spirit of collaboration, consultation, and community the tribal leaders work together to bring about the goods and resources needed by their people. They are an inspiration to me and teach me how to live the values contained in the rich social teachings of the Catholic Church.

Multi-Cultural Celebration

We were so delighted to receive a Las Casas grant for a special project of a Multi-Cultural week at St. Francis School in Gallup, New Mexico. In May of 2008 our student body consisted of 33 children from Pre-K through grade 5. Currently, we have 130 children in Pre-K through grade 6.



Our intention for the grant was to have a Multi-Cultural week celebrating who we are and who we would like to become in the years ahead. Due to timelines we are in process of planning and implementing a very exciting week for all ages, but will not be able to effect its completion until April 6th through April 13th. We are currently in stages of dialogue and preparation for a Grand Finale of cultural activities for this fiscal year of July 1, 2010-2011.

The teachers, board, Marketing/Development Committee, and our Strategic Planning Committee are in process of planning with the children some classroom activities, games, performances, dances, music, art, food, traditional dress, etc. These will encompass all the different cultures of our student body.

A prelude to our Multi-Cultural week was a cultural day during Catholic Schools week at which time we had Mass with Bishop Wall, priests, parents, and students from the Gallup Catholic School and the Catholic School in Zuni Pueblo. Awards were presented to students and teachers for outstanding achieve-



ments. Lunch and a variety of activities in the classrooms followed the Mass. It proved to be exciting for all.

Margaret Bohn, OP (Racine)



Rocky Boy Reservation

It was great to watch the children's faces when they first saw the large flat screen TV and DVD player. We watched our first DVD before Christmas and also enjoyed the accompaniment on the keyboard for our Christmas Pageant. It was such a blessing to have this material and the children at Rocky Boy really appreciate your help with the grant.

The hunter safety classes and their teacher were able to use the TV and DVD player with their week of instruction at the church. We also have sacramental preparation meetings and these materials are a great help. In the past we had to borrow a DVD player and our old TV was too small and not in great shape.

The children from the reservation attend two different schools 15 miles apart and we provide religion classes after school at both places. There is a church in Box Elder and another at Rocky Boy where they receive instruction and it is a great help to have a DVD player in each place. We have our Christmas Pageant together and we had a very prayerful fun-filled evening with parents, gifts, food and the great performance of song and dance. They



are still talking about it and what they want to be next year, -- an angel, camel, sheep, do the peace dance or sing the angel song. This year the older children wanted to be Mary and Joseph. They said, "We can be more responsible because those little ones get too sleepy or look around." It was fun for me to listen and get them ready. I don't know who enjoyed it more, the children or the helpers. Marilee who played the keyboard said it was great fun. It was nice not to have to borrow a keyboard again.

We certainly appreciate all your help and we hope other people are able to get wonderful grants from Las Casas. Thanks again for everything.

Margaret Mary O'Doherty, OP (Sparkill)



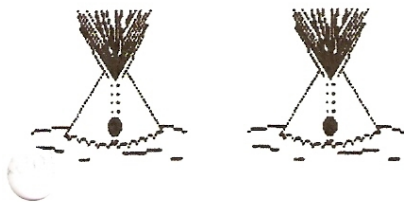
Casa San Jose

Casa San Jose is a residential program for pregnant and parenting teens. Half of our target population is Native Americans from around the State of New Mexico. We have had just this year -- Zuni, Navajo, Mescalero Apache, and Acoma Native American teens and their children. Most of the teens are referred by Juvenile Probation Officers or Social Workers because the teen is unable to care for their child due to separation from families, substance abuse or homelessness. It is our belief that behaviors can be changed in order to have a good life.

All the residents go to the local high school, GED, or the first semester in New Mexico State University for college. Just Tuesday, Laura, a 17-year old with two children, came running for a hug and to tell us that she had passed two of her GED tests with high scores. She said, "I'll be off to college soon." All the residents participate in the teen evidence-based programs Las Casas provided for us, as well as in the rewards and incentives to stay substance-free. Not all teens finish the program prior to leaving but all are given the opportunity to begin and continue the programs for as long as they like and we can help them.

Casa San Jose lost \$120,000 in state teen parent funding this year and we are working hard to get other funding in order to continue to provide this service to teens in our State. Thank you for all the help you have given to us.

Rosalinda Soria, OP (Sinsinawa)
Francine Schuster, ASC



Native American Tribes in Ministry with Dominicans

Gros Ventre
Assiniboine
Spirit Lake Dakotah
Salish
Kootenai
Pend d'Oreilles
Assiniboine Sioux
Chippewa
Cree
Navajo
Mescalero Apache
Zuni
Cheyenne
Arapaho
Hopi
Apache
Oglala Sioux
Confederation Salish
Coeur d'Alene
Northern Cheyenne
Acoma



Tekakwitha Conference Events

MARK YOUR CALENDARS! Future Annual Conferences

2012 Blessed Kateri Country, July 18-22
Albany, New York

2013 July 17-21, El Paso, Texas

2014 75th Anniversary, July 23-27
Fargo, North Dakota

**Las Casas is grateful
For the generosity of our Donors**

July 1, 2010 through June 2011
We regret any errors or omissions.
Please report discrepancies to
lascasasop@gmail.com

Dominican Sisters of Adrian
Dominican Sisters of Amityville
Dominican Sisters of Blauvelt
Dominican Sisters of Caldwell
Dominican Sisters of Grand Rapids
Dominican Sisters of Hope
Dominican Sisters of Houston
Dominican Sisters of Racine
Dominican Sisters of the Roman Congregation
Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa *in honor of 500th
Anniversary presence of Dominicans in the
Americas*
Dominican Sisters of Sparkill
Dominican Sisters of Springfield
St. Martin De Porres Province
Sisters of St. Ann
Claire Bogenschutz *in memory of Art
Bogenschutz and in honor of Barb Bogenschutz, OP
(Springfield)*
Frye-Williamson Press
Janet Michael Hudspeth, OP (Adrian) *in honor
of Charlotte Rebbe, OP (Springfield), Jubilee*
Dave and Jacqueline Hudspeth and Janet
Hudspeth *in honor of Charlotte Rebbe, OP
(Springfield), Jubilee*
Barbara McCarthy, OP (Hope) *in honor of
Dominican Sisters of Hope 2011 Jubilarians*
Diane Poplawski, OP (Racine) *in honor of
Dominican Sisters of Racine 2011 Jubilarians*



**Dominicans Preaching and
Ministering with Native Americans
500 Years Later**

Margaret Bohn, OP (Racine)
Barbara Bogenschutz, OP (Springfield)
Barbara Brown, OP (Sinsinawa)
Mary Ann Cirillo, OP (Hope)
Monica Dubois, OP (Dominican Sisters of the
Roman Congregation)
Helen Durso, OP (Sparkill)
Christine Ferrar, OP (Sparkill)
Jo Ann Fleischaker, OP (Adrian)
Laura Fucito, OP (Sparkill)
Jean Glach, OP (Great Bend)
Margaret Hillary, OP (Grand Rapids)
Mary Hourigan, OP (Sparkill)
Kathleen Kane, OP (Sparkill)
Charles Leute, OP
(St. Albert the Great Province)
Nora McCarthy, OP (Sparkill)
Margaret Mary O’Doherty, OP (Sparkill)
LeAnn Probst, OP (Peace)
Mary Joyce Rybarczyk, OP (Adrian)
Rosalinda Soria, OP (Sinsinawa)
Mary Louise Stauder, OP (Grand Rapids)
Michael Claire Wilson, OP (Adrian)

*Prayer for the Canonization of
Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha*

O God, who, among the many marvels of Your Grace in the New World, did cause to blossom on the banks of the Mohawk and of the St. Lawrence, the pure and tender Lily, Kateri Tekakwitha, grant we beseech You, the favor we beg through her intercession; that this Young Lover of Jesus and of His Cross may soon be counted among the Saints by Holy Mother Church, and that our hearts may be enkindled with a stronger desire to imitate her innocence and faith, through the same Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Sister Parishes

Members are born into our families and some are added to the family in a different way. "Sister Parishes" fit the latter description.

I live and minister with Native Americans on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. 1,500 miles east is Lancaster, PA, home to St. Mary's Parish, our "sister parish." We at Sacred Heart Church can count on their support throughout the year, support given financially and in so many other ways.

This past June, 22 youth and adults traveled west for a visit. In the planning we wanted the experience to be one of "Martha and Mary." Yes, they did indeed use painting arms, turned screwdrivers, moved boxes, and washed walls, kitchen cabinets, and drawers on a VERY hot day. These 22 "Marthas" did a lot of work. Yet the real experience was their "Mary." Driving around the reservation, they encountered the Badlands, Red Cloud Indian School, Wounded Knee and reservation communities. Traveling to the Black Hills, they experienced the exquisite splendor of these legendary mountains, the Crazy Horse Memorial, and Mt. Rushmore. All of this has given them a flavor of who we are at Sacred Heart Church.



Relationships grew as the youth played in the game room and shared time just being around. Meals provided getting-to-know-you time with a wider part of our parish.

As "sisters" sometimes do, they returned to their homes. We are looking forward to the next visit.

Barb Bogenschutz, OP (Springfield)

Contribution to support Las Casas and Dominicans who serve in Native American Ministry across the United States are welcome.

- \$100 \$200 \$300 \$500
 Other \$_____ Anonymous

My contribution is made (please print):

In Honor of _____

In Memory of _____

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Thank you!

Check payable to: Las Casas
Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent
allowed by law.

Mail donations to:

Las Casas
c/o Diane Poplawski, OP
10730 W. Cermak Rd., 1E
Westchester, IL 60154-5234

Sympathy

The Las Casas Board extends sympathy to board member Marilyn Winter, OP (Adrian) and her family at the death of their father, Virgel "Bud" Winter on August 17, 2011 at the age of 102. May he rest in peace.



President Obama and Kateri in the White House

Being Executive Director of the National Tekakwitha Conference and Native American Catholics can have some exciting moments. In the spring of 2011, I received not just one, but two invitations from the President of the United States to join him at the White House!

On March 17th I found myself in the East Wing of the White House along with many faith-based representatives of National Organizations: Catholics, Protestants, Jewish, Hindu, Muslim. Like Zaccheus, I inched my way to the best view possible and ended up in the front row. Along came President Obama and the First Lady. The President shook my hand and said, “So happy you came, Sister, and thank you for being here.” The First Lady also greeted me. Both were so gentle, gracious and personable.

One month later, I again found myself in the East Wing attending the President’s Easter Prayer Breakfast. Not only was I present, I was invited to do a reading from the Old Testament. Following the suggestion of Sister friends, I wore one of my Native outfits and brought my Eagle Feather. Each guest was assigned a specific table number. As I sat down at table 7,

one place was empty. Who was missing? The extra name tag read: President Obama! I was at the head table with six well known preachers, one a Woman Bishop of the United Methodist Churches in the south. Again, the President welcomed each one of us. Each of us would have a role in the Prayer Service after the buffet breakfast.

As I approached the podium with the President’s Seal, I realized my face was hidden behind the microphones. But not my Eagle Feather! It was quite visible in my left hand. In the still and peaceful atmosphere of the room, I read the words from Isaiah: 25:6-8. It was a moving experience.

Upon my return to Great Falls, on Good Friday an article appeared in the Great Falls Tribune. The headline was “Great Falls Nun Dines with Obama”. To this day that headline makes me chuckle. These two days will always be vivid and memorable experiences of my time as Executive Director of the National Tekakwitha Conference and Native American Catholics.

Kateri Michell, SSA

Las Casas Board

Back l to r:

Marilyn Winter, OP (*Adrian*)

Diane Poplawski, OP (*Racine*)

Kateri Mitchell, SSA (*Sister of St. Ann*)
Executive Director, Tekakwitha Conference

Front l to r:

Mary Therese Johnson, OP (*Sinsinawa*)

Charlotte Rebbe, OP (*Springfield*)

Barbara Bogenschutz, OP (*Springfield*)



WEBSITE

www.domlife.org/lascasas

Las Casas Newsletter
c/o 10730 W. Cermak Rd., 1E
Westchester, IL 60154-5234