

Las Casas Newsletter

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

Number 40

Spring 2008



Letter from Las Casas Board President

Dear Friend of Las Casas,

Greetings to you in this month of May ~
cnwapto wi ~ moon of green leaves! On behalf
of the Board, I am pleased to share the annual
Las Casas newsletter with you.

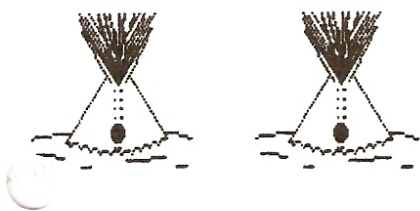
You may recall that in 2005 the Las Casas
Board chose to focus on supporting Dominicans
ministering with Native Americans. We
awarded our first grants (\$7,500) in 2007. Your
generosity made this possible ~ miggwech ~
thank you!

Native Americans have a long tradition of
storytelling and we are delighted to share with
you several stories well worth the telling! They
are some of the stories of our Dominican
sisters and brothers who were awarded grants
and who work in ministry with Native
Americans throughout the U. S.

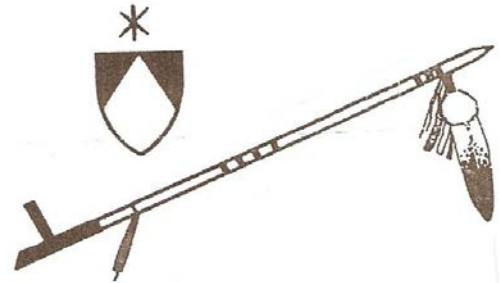
The newsletter is also full of helpful
information. Enjoy reading it and pass it on!
We have also launched our new website with
the expertise of Anne Lythgoe, OP (Catherine
de'Ricci) of the Dominican Leadership Con-
ference. Be sure to visit us at
www.domlife.org/lascasas.

Thanks for your interest and support of the
work of Las Casas. Celebrate and enjoy the
blessings and beauty of springtime.

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



“Hecel lena oyate kin nipi kte”



(That These People May Live)

St. Paul did not have or use electronics, but
still his words are electrifying, stirring us to
more faithful service. In addressing the
community of believers in Rome, where he had
not yet visited, St. Paul reminds them “that the
footsteps of those who bring good news is a
welcome sound, ...so faith comes from what is
preached (Romans 10:15, 17). But if the
electronic system wears out, or continually
malfunctions, what can be done? Thankfully,
with the help of the grant from the Las Casas
Board, we were able to enrich our hearing, and
have added options so the celebrant at Mass
could be heard also, at the altar, or with a hand
microphone apart from the pulpit. The grant
was a wonderful help in completing the
purchase of a new sound system for Seven
Dolors Church, in Fort Totten, and for a
portable system at one of our missions, Christ
the King, Tokio, all on the Spirit Lake Dakota
Reservation, east central North Dakota, in the
Fargo Diocese.

Over the course of the last twenty years, the
previous system served, and at times faltered.
Due to its design and construction, replacement
parts were no longer available, since
developments have moved to digital and other
forms of remote and distance connections. No

accurate records are available as to when the previous system was installed. But when taking the console to electronic shops in hopes of repairs, the look of amazement was continuing evidence that accompanied the words: “they don’t make that stuff anymore.” So we are most grateful to have been able to replace our audio system, and let what is preached be heard clearly. There are still members of our parish family that do not read. One such person comes from a considerable distance, just off the Reservation, “because I can hear, even from the fourth pew.” So it is a great joy to know that benefits of a good sound system, make possible the growth in faith and service that St. Paul commends, in times when we take for granted that everyone can read, write, and communicate without any difficulty.

To each of you who have been so generous and supportive of Las Casas and its ministries over the years, we express our sincere thanks, and appreciation for your help in allowing us to improve our sound system, provide a new one for one of our missions, and allow for the enrichment of lives, each day, each week, through the ministry of the Word—written, spoken, and enfolded in Jesus Christ, whose love and instruction for right living is shared.

--Charles Leute, OP (*St. Albert the Great*)

Project Learning

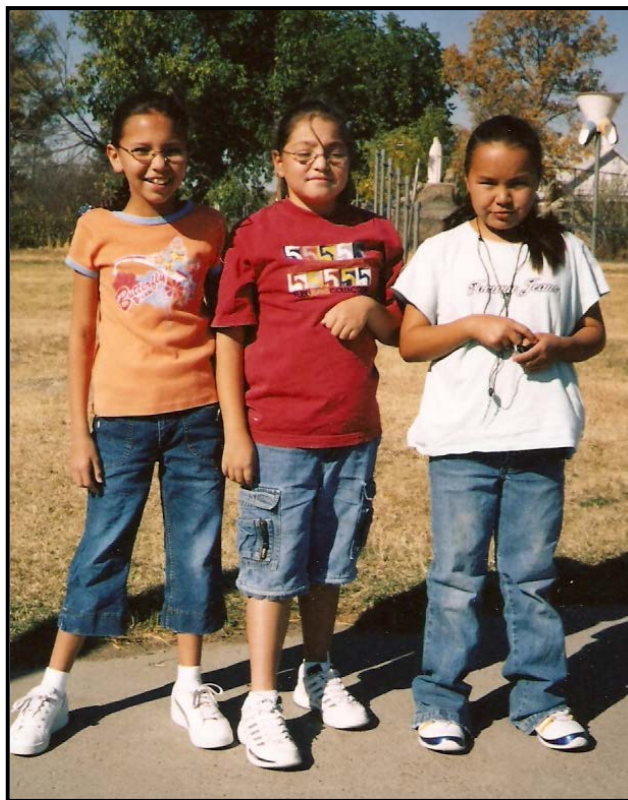
Fort Belknap is a relatively small Indian reservation located in north central Montana and is home to the Gros Ventre and Assiniboine Tribes. Located in the southern corner of Fort Belknap is Mission Grade School in the small town of Hays. Systemic change is a long-term project that requires, first and foremost, a good education. If children can be exposed to a positive educational environment – one that touches mind, body, and soul – then we believe that doors can be opened and new paths made available. The entire staff at Mission Grade School is deeply committed to this ideal and we strive each day to give our children the opportunities they

deserve. We see the importance of educating the whole child – mind, body, and cultural spirit. We challenge young minds, we celebrate our Catholic faith, and we embrace the Native American culture.

Last year, with the help of Las Casas, we initiated Project Learning. We saw the need to expose our students to some of the numerous opportunities that exist beyond the boundaries of Fort Belknap Reservation. Part of our project included a three day field trip to Bozeman, Montana with our fifth and sixth grade students. The children visited the Museum of the Rockies, attended a program at the Taylor Planetarium, and experimented with “dry ice” and “simple machines” at the Children’s Museum. It was a wonderful experience for all. I believe our students were convinced that learning can be exciting.

We want our children to be able to break many of the negative cycles that often develop on our reservations. Hopefully, in the future, they will have the freedom, knowledge, values and skills to make good choices and to grow to their fullest potential.

--Christine Ferrar, OP (*Sparkill*)



National Coalition for Church Vocations (NCCV)

Native American Outreach Project

Native Americans are often forgotten in Catholic Church vocation resource development. The Las Casas grant allowed NCCV to develop a Native American vocation prayer card in collaboration with Native Americans. The new resource honors the Catholic tradition of Native Americans. It is based on Psalm 139:24 ~ “Lead me in the ancient paths.” Sister Deborah Bomyea, OP (Sinsinawa / Mohawk) authored the prayer and Gus Antone (Tohonno O’odham) is the artist. This prayer card is 2-color and is available in packages of 100 from NCCV. (New Items) (www.nccv-vocations.org) / 773.955.5453). The complete text is posted on the website.

--Diane Poplawski, OP (Racine)

*“O Great Spirit, you know my heart.
Guide me as I walk life’s journey
Help me to know the path I am to
walk.”*

Grant Distribution

Sixteen letters and applications were mailed to the following Dominican sisters and brothers working with Native Americans:

Adrian: Michael Claire Wilson, OP, Mary Lequier, OP, Carol Dulka, OP, Jo Ann Fleischaker, OP

Central Province: Charles J. Leute, OP

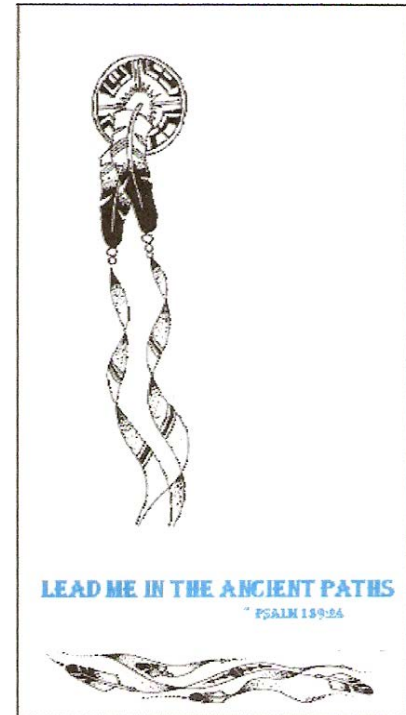
Great Bend: Jean Glach, OP

Hope: Mary Ann Cirillo, OP

Racine: Margaret Bohn, OP, Diane Poplawski, OP

Sinsinawa: Margaret Majewski, OP Rosalinda Soria, OP

Sparkill: Laura Fucito, OP Mary Hourigan, OP, Kathleen Kane, OP, Helen Regina Durso, OP, Margaret Mary O’Doherty, OP, Christine



Ferrar, OP, Nora McCarthy, OP, Joan Martin, OP, Dolores Shortal, OP

Springfield: Barbara Ann Bogenschutz, OP

From the applications mailed, six were returned requesting funds. Applications for the year 2007 approved for funding by the Las Casas board were: Barbara Bogenschutz, OP – funds for a fundraising T-shirt sale, Margaret Bohn, OP – funds for a Youth Retreat, Christine Ferrar, OP, - funds for Project learning, Chuck Leute, OP – funds for a speaker system, Diane Poplawski, OP, - funds for Native American Outreach; Rosalinda Sora, OP – funds for a storage shed.

Those who were approved for grants send in accountability forms before requesting funds for 2008. Some of these stories come alive for you in this newsletter.

Navajo Mission and Ministry in Chinle, AZ

Due to the remoteness of Chinle and its surrounding areas, other than school and sports, there is not much opportunity for the majority of our children to go beyond the border towns for wider experiences. Our volunteers and I try to provide Church experiences for the children outside their cultural/traditional ceremonies and integrate them into their life experiences. RCIA and Religious Education classes do this to some extent, but our teens are left somewhat in a vacuum. So we started a Youth Group for inter-faith teens...5th grade through high school...basically “Circle Sharing, Food, and Fun.” The high school students wear two hats...group and team since they do not wish to leave the group after 8th grade.



This past spring we wanted to take our teens out of their home environment and provide a retreat atmosphere for three days at the Sacred Heart Retreat Center outside of Gallup in a beautiful Mesa-Desert area. We had difficulty raising the money to do so since we do not have cash flow for such projects. We were also pleased with the Las Casas Grant response. It helped us tremendously to meet our dream.

After much planning and teaming, 16 youth and a team of 7 took off for Sacred Heart Retreat Center southeast of Gallup. Excitement

was high. We took our own food and served one another with meals, chores, preparations, and clean-up. This not only cut costs drastically, but helped form community in the process. Ringing of the large out-door bell for gathering was one of the exciting points of interest and novelty for our youth.



The focus of the Retreat was “You are called, You are Chosen...Our Future Navajo Nation.” Each team gave presentations according to their own charism and life experiences. Each morning was a walk to the East to welcome Creator God and blessings for a new day and at night a walk to the West in total gratitude for the blessings of the day and restful sleep. Interspersed throughout the retreat was laughter, games, sharing, food, fun and dialogue individually with team members. Overall we had a great weekend. Many expressed the time went by way too quickly and would like to go again for more days in the future.

We’d like to express our gratitude for responding over and above our expectations in regards to the support and monies you have given to us. We want you to know it helped us to fulfill our expectations

--Margaret Bohn, OP (Racine)



Casa's New Look

Through the generosity of Las Casas, a Sinsinawa Dominican ministry with Native Americans, Casa San Jose received \$1500 to purchase a storage shed. This new look has allowed the teen mothers to assist with storing many items that are donated for the spring and fall yard sales. These sales are the primary income for recreation and social events for the teen moms and their children.

The majority of the residents for Casa San Jose in New Mexico are Native Americans from across New Mexico and Northern Arizona. In the last year, Casa has had Native Americans from the Zuni, Acoma, Apache, and Navajo Tribes. Casa San Jose is an agency of Catholic Charities of Gallup and has been in existence for 33 years. It is a group home for pregnant and parenting teens, as well as transitional living apartments for the older teens who will be living independently upon discharge.

--Rosalinda Soria, OP (Sinsinawa)

Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa

Far up in the woods in the northwest corner of Wisconsin is the Red Cliff Indian Reservation. We are the northern point of the Bayfield Peninsula reaching out into Lake Superior. It truly is one of the places that can be called "God's Country." The beauty of the people and the surroundings resound God's presence in every child's laugh, ripple of water, and seedling reaching to grow.

St. Francis Catholic Church in Red Cliff, like many reservation churches, struggles to keep their church going. Without the grants, donations, fund raisers and the endless hours of volunteers who help out in so many different ways, St. Francis would struggle even more.

Our Church Hall (the basement below our Church) has its walls and ceiling filled with 15 murals and many more paintings. Rita Vander

Venter, a Chippewa artist, painted these murals in the off seasons during the winters of 2002 and 2003. Two of the images: a painting of a stained glass window of the Holy Spirit and the Ascension of Jesus were the two images that were chosen to be placed on t-shirts. The t-shirts are now being sold as a fund raiser.



We are grateful for the Las Casas grant that was the seed money to "double" the profits for the church. Light blue, light yellow and ash t-shirts help the images stand out in their beauty, in their proclamation of Catholic images, and as a part of St. Francis Church.

Barb has been the Pastoral Minister for the St. Francis Church and four other parishes in the Bayfield Cluster for the past three years.

--Barb Bogenschutz, OP (Springfield)



Tekakwitha Conference

The 69th Annual Tekakwitha Conference will be held July 2-6, 2008 in Edmonton, Alberta, CANADA. www.tekconf.org.

Other upcoming events sponsored by the Tekakwitha Conference National Center are:

--2008 **Mini-Tekakwitha Conference in South Dakota** will be held at St. Joseph's Indian School in Chamberlain, SD from July 11-13th.

--2008 **Mini-Tekakwitha Conference** retreat held at New Melleray Abbey, Iowa, from October 21-28, 2008. Contact person: Fr. Kenneth Tietjen, OCSO, New Melleray Abbey, 6632 Melleray Circle, Peosta, IA 52068.



Congratulations!

The Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, has appointed Kateri Mitchell, SSA, Executive Director, Tekakwitha Conference, as the first Catholic Native American consultant with the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. This appointment, being a first, recognizes and includes Native American Catholics as members of our Universal Church.

Sister Kateri asks prayers that she will be open to the Spirit of God and the inspiration of Blessed Kateri for the First Peoples here in this country.

Kateri serves on the Las Casas Board.

Donations to Las Casas

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

July 2007 through April 2008
We regret any errors or omissions.
Please report discrepancies to
lascasop@gmail.com

Dominican Fathers, Province of St. Joseph
Sisters of St. Dominic, Akron
(In honor of Sr. Nancy Cross, OP)
Dominican Sisters of San Rafael
Dominican Sisters of Springfield, Illinois
Dominican Sisters, Great Bend, Kansas
(In memory of Sr. Betty Jean Goebel, OP)
Dominicans of St. Catharine, Kentucky
Dominican Sisters, New Orleans
Eucharistic Missionaries of St. Dominic
Dominican Sisters, Congregation of St. Mary
Adrian Dominicans Sisters
Grand Rapids Dominicans
Dominican Sisters of St. Catherine of Siena,
Taos, New Mexico *(In memory of Sr. Patrick
McCarthy, OP and Sr. Patricia Callan, OP)*
Sisters of St. Dominic of Caldwell
Amityville Dominicans
St. Mary of the Springs Dominican Sisters
Dominican Congregation of St. Catherine de'
Ricci
Houston Dominicans
Sisters of St. Dominic, Tacoma
Racine Dominicans
Sinsinawa Dominicans
Patricia St. Jules
Francis J. Kelley

In-Kind Donations

Adrian Dominicans
Akron Dominicans

Columbus Dominicans
 Diocese of Great Falls-Billings
 Tekakwitha Conference
 Hope Dominicans
 National Coalition for Church Vocations
 Racine Dominicans
 Sinsinawa Dominicans
 Springfield Dominicans
 Sisters of St. Ann
 St. Albert the Great Province
 St. Joseph Province
 Rick Bozarth
 PS Design Works
 Frye-Williamson Press



Miggwech! And Thanks!

Thanks to Gabriel Dault, OP (St. Albert the Great) and Peggy Frank (Associate-Akron/Columbus) who recently completed their service on the *Las Casas Board*. Gabe (1999-2007) was involved with the Board in a variety of capacities which included service as a board member, board president as well as committee work (newsletter, website, personnel). Peggy's service (2006-2007) as a board member involved committee work in the areas of communications and the newsletter. We are grateful for their dedicated commitment to Las Casas over the years and their willingness to share their leadership, time and talent.

Welcome!

The Las Casas Board welcomes Mary Therese Johnson, OP (Sinsinawa) as a new member. She began her service as a board member in April. Mary Therese's background experiences include: retreat director, spiritual companion, small group facilitator, resource coordinator, liturgist, and educator. We look forward to the wealth of experience and leadership she brings to the board. *Welcome Mary Therese!*

**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

NEW WEBSITE
www.domlife.org/lascasas

Las Casas Board Members

Barbara Bogenschutz, OP (*Springfield*)
Vice President

Eugene Cahouet, OP (*St. Joseph*)

Mary Therese Johnson, OP (*Sinsinawa*)

Kateri Mitchell, SSA (*Sister of St. Ann*)

Diane Poplawski, OP (*Racine*)

President

Charlotte Rebbe, OP (*Springfield*)

Secretary

Marilyn Winter, OP (*Adrian*)

Treasurer



L to R--Barb, Charlotte, Marilyn, Mary Therese, Diane, Eugene, Kateri

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