



Season of Harvest

Dear Friend of Las Casas,

The Las Casas Board welcomed new board member LeAnn Probst, OP (Peace) at the April meeting. LeAnn currently ministers with the Northern Cheyenne in Lame Deer, Montana. Nathalie Meyer, OP (Grand Rapids) was elected vice-president and Mary Therese Johnson, OP (Sinsinawa) was elected to continue her service as secretary. I am grateful for the willingness of these women to respond to the call of leadership and service on the board. I also want to thank Barb Bogenschutz, OP (Springfield) for her many years of service on the board (see newsletter for more info). JoAnn Fleischaker, OP (Adrian) recently left Canton, Oklahoma after 21 years with the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes. She served with Mary Ann Cirillo, OP (Hope). Mary Ann has served 25 years and continues her presence in Canton. JoAnn and Mary Ann helped with the transition of Las Casas to serve and support all Dominicans in Native American ministry and I am grateful for the dedication and inspiration they have been to us and so many over the years.

Among the most important work of the board is the ability to respond to grant and scholarship requests by Dominicans who serve in ministry with Native Americans / Indigenous Peoples. We were able to respond to all grant requests made this year.



Dominicans continue a long tradition of ministry

Las Casas is able to provide grants and scholarships because of the generosity of those who respond to the annual appeal. I invite you to join in this effort. If you haven't donated in the past, please consider a donation this year. A gift may be given in honor (birthday, jubilee, anniversary, etc.) or memory of someone. All contributions are appreciated and support the growing needs of our Dominican sisters and brothers in their ministries. Thanks in advance for your generous response and prayers.

Count your blessings this season of harvest and thanks for considering sharing them with others in need.

St. Kateri, pray for us!

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



Box Elder and Rocky Boy Indian Reservation

Our Las Casas grant came at an auspicious time, since 2014 was the 60th anniversary of Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, founded in Rome by Maria Montessori and Sofia Cavaletti. CGS religious formation is now in 37 countries throughout the world. Six hundred catechists from twenty-four countries attended a gathering in October in Phoenix, Arizona. The USA National Association of the CGS, as host of this international gathering, invited two of our Native American Catechists to participate in this historic event.



Rose Bacon and LaVerne Parker from Rocky Boy's Indian Reservation were interviewed and video-taped by Ann Garrido, a faculty member of Aquinas Institute, and the video was shown frequently during the four-day gathering in Phoenix. Rose and LaVerne were asked to present a session during the conference describing the impact of CGS on the spiritual formation of the youth in Box Elder and Rocky Boy as well as on their own faith. This gathering also provided an opportunity for our Native American catechists to meet CGS catechists from other countries and share experiences.

LaVerne commented that she was impressed with the conference activities, especially the enthusiasm of the catechists, meeting catechists from other nations and hearing about the work being accomplished. Rose Bacon said the Liturgies were inspiring. Some of the Masses were in Spanish, or other languages, and the music was very beautiful.

Level 3 training sessions are intense. This Level has been compared to a graduate program in Scripture.

Catechists have more questions after they have had an

Sympathy

The Las Casas Board
extends sympathy to

The Family and Friends of
Paul Johnson
Brother of Las Casas Board Member
Mary Therese Johnson, OP
and
Thomas Meyer
Nephew of Las Casas Board Member
Nathalie Meyer, OP
and
Ada Littleman & Emma Red Hat
Long-time friends of Las Casas

*May they rest in peace as they are
welcomed home by the Great Spirit!*



opportunity to present these sessions to the children (ages 9-12) for the first time. Ann Garrido came out to Rocky Boy and Box Elder, Montana in

early September to meet with the catechists one-on-one or in small groups. Ann was able to answer questions and clarify aspects of some presentations. All were invited to meet as a group on the last day of the individual sessions.

Las Casas helped pay for Ann's airfare and training as well as materials for catechists. We are grateful to Las Casas for their support and proud of our Catechists.

Kathleen Kane, OP (Sparkill)



Educational Opportunities for Children on Hayes Montana Reservation

I often wonder if any of us take for granted the opportunities we had “along the way” which helped shape our future? Living on a reservation in a very rural area, where there is a great deal of poverty, definitely limits the intellectual and social experiences available to a young person. Most of the students at Mission Grade School in Hays, Montana experience this reality. As a result, the staff at Mission School has annually scheduled a three-day field trip to Bozeman, Montana for the fifth and sixth grade students.



Our deepest thanks to Las Casas. As a result of a grant, we were able to continue the practice this past May. While in Bozeman, the students visited the Museum of the Rockies and attended a science demonstration at Montana State University. Fun things were also planned during the days away – bowling, shopping at a nearby mall, and swimming.

The exposure that this trip offers affords the students the opportunity to see first-hand what COULD BE! Education is so important for the future of the youth who attend Mission Grade School. Experiences, like this trip, enrich our students in more ways than one can ever imagine!

Once again, thank you Las Casas for giving us this opportunity.

Christine Ferrar, OP (Sparkill)

The Las Casas Board met in spring and gathered in prayer to thank Barbara Bogenschutz, OP [Springfield] for her many faithful years of service on the board. Barb served as vice-president and chaired the grant committee.

She generously served during numerous board transitions. We wish her well as she continues to serve with Native Americans in Pine Ridge, South Dakota.



L- R:
Marilyn Winter, OP, Mary Therese Johnson, OP
Barb Bogenschutz, OP



“I can’t help but feel that this place and it’s people still have endless lessons to teach me.”

~ Alexis



A Fabulous Experience • Thanks LAS CASAS

To attend the 2014 Tekakwitha Conference in Fargo, all gathered at St. Ignatius early Tuesday morning. Together in a rented van, we traveled Tuesday and Wednesday to reach our destination. Here we met, for the first time, other persons from our region with whom we had communicated in preparation for the conference.

All participants found the keynote presentations to be informative. For the small group sessions, we divided up so we could learn as much as possible and share the insights with our group and with our parishioners and community back home. All found the exhibits to be very interesting and conversation with the exhibitors extremely enlightening. The prayer time, the liturgies, and the opportunity of reconciliation touched our hearts, minds and souls.

We were particularly struck by the variety of ages, as well as the differences in the social and financial status of the participants. Oftentimes at such conferences the majority of participants are senior citizens. So many participants noted that they could not have attended without financial assistance.

The opportunity to eat meals with the group, since we had the meal ticket from the Las Casas grant, was such a gift. It afforded the opportunity for valuable sharing following the events of the day.

“... it's always fantastic to broaden our horizons and see a bigger picture...”

Tekakwitha Annual Conference

July 20 – 24, 2016
San Mateo, California

The Tekakwitha Conference National Office
2225 North Bolton Ave. • Alexandria, LA 71303
email: tekconf@gmail.com
www.tekconf.org • 1.844.483.3900

Basic Directions in Native American
Ministry Institute
June 6-13, 2016
Sioux Spiritual Center
20100 Center Road • Howes, South Dakota 57748-7703
605.985.5906



Artist@Tisket. Used with permission.

Reflections from St. Ignatius Attendees:

Ernie says: “I am so grateful for the opportunity to attend the annual Kateri Tekakwitha conference in Fargo, North Dakota, last summer. I will be 75 years old in April, so I grew up on the rez before Vatican II. My grandmother was a devout Catholic, yet I know in her heart that she hadn't truly given up her Native beliefs that she had been taught were ‘pagan’. Oh, how I wish she could have heard the drumming and could have bared her soul to the Native spiritual leaders the way I did. So while attending the conference, I was able to reflect on the past policies of the Church and how they affected my people while hoping for the Church to become more enlightened in the future. The classes were so interesting. I wish I had had time to attend them all. All the people we met were very friendly. I think our whole group thought so. Again, thanks for the wonderful experience.”

Tammie wrote: This conference was awesome. I met new friends and visited old ones. I enjoyed the set-up of the conference in the hotel. I also enjoyed the prayer and workshops and the food was great. All in all, it was great.



L-R: Ernestine Ducheneaux, Sr. Margaret Hillary, Sr. Mary Louis Stauder, Linnea Gariepy and Tammy Antoinette Miller

Linnea expressed her gratitude: Thank you so much for giving us the opportunity to go to the conference. A lot of our people could not have attended without your help. It is always fantastic to broaden our horizons and see a bigger picture. I have lived on the Flathead Reservation for 45 years. I love to help others. I have Native grandchildren and want to inspire them and teach them more about Kateri and Native culture rather than see them experimenting with drugs and alcohol. The conference gave me some new insights into how to nurture my grandchildren in the faith of Kateri and their Native culture.

Thanks for helping and praying for us. We need everyone's help. It takes a nation to help all – a happy and spiritual nation rather than a dying and depressed nation. The conference plays a major role in assisting people to be a happy and spiritual people.

In the spirit of Kateri thanks again and God bless all.

Margaret Hillary, OP (Grand Rapids)
Mary Stauder, OP (Grand Rapids)



Lame Deer Conference Experience

On July 23, 2014, twelve members of Blessed Sacrament Parish in Lame Deer, Montana, set out by car for Fargo, North Dakota. Grants and fund raisers made possible their trip to the National Tekakwitha Conference. Upon their return home, the participants stated that they had a new friend, Kateri Tekakwitha. The healing service held during the conference touched many. Seeing Native priests and deacons was a new experience for most. There were many opportunities to meet other Native people from across the country and to learn different cultural ways. One example was the prayerful performance by the Navajo eagle dancer.

Two mothers and their adult daughters were among those from Lame Deer attending the Tekakwitha Conference in Fargo. One pair said that the most impressive thing was seeing all the Catholic Native Americans praying during the services. The other pair had lost a family member in an accident during the



past year. The mother said that she was angry, bitter, hated God, and stopped attending Sunday Mass for a while. She experienced

healing during the reconciliation/healing service as others prayed with her. Her daughter also received some release of her grief and was able to start college in August.

The enthusiasm among the group continued as they began making plans in August to attend the 2015 conference in Alexandria, Louisiana. Thanks to Las Casas for their help in rekindling the fire within.

LeAnn Probst, OP (Peace)

ANNUAL CELEBRATIONS

SAINT KATERI TEKAKWITHA FEAST DAY – JULY 14
NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH – NOVEMBER

Scholarship Program



Dominicans in ministry with Native Americans / Indigenous Peoples, or preparing for this ministry, may apply for a scholarship (up to \$500) to be used for:

Basic Directions for Ministry with Native Americans Institute

Annual Tekakwitha Conference

Completed applications are accepted annually and must be received by March 15th.

Applications are available on the website: www.domlife.org/lascasas



Saint Kateri Tekakwitha
October 21, 2012

"Lily of the Mohawks"
Algonquin/Mohawk

Born: 1656, Ossernenon, NY
Died: April 17, 1680
Venerable: January 3, 1943
Beatified: June 22, 1980

Feast Day: July 14

Patron of the environment and ecology



Artwork ©Tisket. Used with permission Tekakwitha Conference ~ www.tekconf.org

Saint Kateri Tekakwitha
Pray for us!

www.domlife.org/lascasas



JoAnn Fleischaker, OP (Adrian) is now calling Chicago home after ministering with the Native American communities in Northwestern Oklahoma for the past twenty-one years. During those years she called Canton, Oklahoma home where she lived and shared community with another Dominican woman, Mary Ann Cirillo, OP (Newburgh/now Dominican Sisters of Hope).

In the early years they went “house to house” inquiring of the needs of the people in seven local towns. They wrote grants to help underwrite those needs. One of the grants funded by Adrian and Racine, focused on healthy pregnancies and was named NOFAS (No Fetal Alcohol Syndrome). Another early grant funded by the Dominican Sisters of Hope allowed native people to teach and pass on their Native arts and culture to the younger generation. The Sisters joined the Oklahoma Food bank and began with food that filled a closet at the center. As time went on more and more food was ordered and more and more families were assisted with the supplemental food made available. In addition, computer assistance, senior lunches, Mom’s Days, summer programs for the children and many other endeavors grew over the years.

In 2005 the two sisters entered a simpler and less formal time of ministry. They were still answering the door often, greeting the children, conversing with the parents and providing some assistance for immediate need. They enjoyed the family atmosphere of life among their friends and acquaintances of so many years, but opened up to other opportunities such as their work with reflexology.

JoAnn is now enjoying time in her city of birth and getting to spend more time with family and members of the congregation. **THANK YOU, JOANN**, for your many years of faithful ministry.



Las Casas Board Member Recognized by Catholic Charities USA

Kateri Mitchell, SSA received the “Keep the Dream Alive” award on January 9, 2015 in Washington, D.C. The annual awards are distributed to honorees that have lived out a passionate commitment to making the dream of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., a reality, and creating a society in which every individual is not “judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.”

Kateri is the first Native American woman to hold the position of Executive Director of the Tekakwitha Conference, belongs to the Turtle Clan of the Mohawk Nation, which is one of the six nations in the Iroquois Confederacy, and is a Sister of St. Anne. She has

been in full-time ministry work for the past 31 years, leading the Tekakwitha Conference, a religious non-profit organization for evangelization among Indigenous Catholics, since 1998, and was appointed in 2008 to the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue by Pope Benedict XVI.



Las Casas is grateful
for the generosity of our
Financial and In-Kind Donors

July 1, 2014 through June 2015
We regret any errors or omissions.
Please report discrepancies to:
lascasasop@gmail.com

Dominican Sisters of Adrian
Dominican Sisters of Amityville
Dominican Sisters of Caldwell
Dominican Sisters of Grand Rapids
Dominican Sisters of Hope
Dominican Sisters of Houston
Dominican Sisters of Peace
Dominican Sisters of Racine
Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa
Dominican Sisters of Springfield
Dominican Sisters of Tacoma
Dorothy Ann Greiber, OP [Racine]
Aneesah McNamee, OP [Adrian]
LaVerne Poplawski
Joyce Roach, OP [Tacoma]
Sisters of St. Anne

In Honor of:

Adrian Dominican Jubilarians 2015
Marilyn Winter, OP
Dominican Friars, Western Province
John Morris, OP
Grand Rapids Dominican Jubilarians 2015
Nathalie Meyer, OP
Racine Dominican Jubilarians 2015
Diane Poplawski, OP
Sinsinawa Dominican Jubilarians 2015
Mary Therese Johnson, OP

In Memory of:

Paul Johnson
Ada Littleman
Thomas Meyer
Emma Red Hat
Las Casas Board
Thomas Meyer
Nathalie Meyer, OP

In Memory and In Honor of:

Oscar Romerao & the People of El Salvador
Dominican Sisters of St. Catherine of Siena

Contributions to support
Las Casas and Dominicans
who serve in Native American Ministry

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

My contribution is made [please print]

In Honor of _____
 In Memory of _____

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City State, Zip _____

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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
5635 Erie St.
Racine, WI 53402-1900



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

Las Casas Board

L-R:

Marilyn Winter, OP [Adrian]
Nathalie Meyer, OP [Grand Rapids]
Diane Poplawski, OP [Racine]
Mary Therese Johnson, OP [Sinsinawa]
Kateri Mitchell, SSA [Sister of St. Anne]
Gloria Glynn, OP [Sinsinawa]
LeAnn Probst, OP [Peace]

