



Searching for truth and beauty, preaching through the transforming power of the arts

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***** Gathering 2018 *****

The Arts: Yearning for Unity by Joella Miller

A year ago, the 2017 Planning Commission challenged DIA artists with the words of novelist Toni Morrison: “This is precisely the time when Artists go to work. There is no time for despair, no place for self pity, no need for silence, no need for fear. We speak, we write, we do language; that is how civilizations heal.” In 2018, The Planning Committee agreed that our world is even more in need of healing now. From our discussion emerged our RESPONSE, this year’s theme:

The Arts: Yearning for Unity.



Our first task was to find a Keynote speaker who could flesh this theme out for us. After going through several suggestions, we selected Dr. Frances Belmonte. We feel that with her knowledge of both Dominican spirituality and the DIA she will be able to

give us fresh ideas and great direction. (See article opposite.) Those on the Commission who have seen Isabel Rafferty’s beautiful presentation of St. John’s Bible were eager for DIA artists to have the opportunity to see it. Isabel has agreed to give her presentation on Friday, July 27th. In two sessions on July 26th varied Studios and Workshops should offer something for everyone. Some of the choices will be: playing the Ukulele, the Dance of Universal Peace, Art and Prayer, Mindfulness, Art of Gourds, Digital Records, and Arts of the Rebellion. On one evening we will have the film *Rivers and Tides – the Art of Andy Goldworthy*. ARTS, cont. on p. 2

Fran Belmonte back by popular demand

It is four years since Theology professor Fran Belmonte addressed the Dominican artists at Adrian. But that was not the last Gathering she attended, nor has the DIA ever forgotten her impact. Although Dr. Belmonte cannot hope to match the crowd appeal of the reconciliation event to which she once attracted a crowd of 20,000, her professional credentials and personal relationships promise a keynote address rich with fresh insights. Fran’s resume—including thirty years with the Kentucky Dominicans and the distinction of serving as resident theologian to a bishop—is impressive. But her profound content and provocative style are more so. Poets and literature lovers among us will recall her sharp wit, her delightfully enlightening tours through linguistics and word origins, and her soul-satisfying axioms. It is not surprising then that the Planning Commission decided to invite Fran Belmonte back to Adrian to keynote Gathering 2018 under the title: *The Arts as Wholistic Preaching*. Like John Paul II, Fran embraces art as a valid source of theology. Those who attended the 2014 Gathering will remember the warm sense of *affirmation* they felt in their “Deep Down Smart Place” when Fran demonstrated how the artist’s vision contributes to that form of revelation known as “the sense of the faithful.” BELMONTE, cont. on p. 2





Letter from the President

No matter where on this planet we turn, utter chaos and turmoil confront us. In a world in which violence has become the norm, we are yearning for unity and starving for peace. This issue of **OPalette** clearly demonstrates that the theme of last year's Gathering continues to resonate within us. "Response. This is precisely the time for artists to go to work." The many and varied avenues in which we preach through our art are featured throughout this issue. We asked you: "What's Happening?" and you certainly have shared it with us. Many thanks.

2018 Membership Forms were sent out in January and 41 folks have already returned them with their membership dues. Mary Pat Reid is being kept busy acknowledging each receipt. Please remember that the Membership Forms can also be found on the DIA Website (www.diartsop.org). The fact that the day after Leadership received our Membership Forms and Winter **OPalette**, this information was published in some Congregation's daily news to their members is so encouraging and much appreciated. As we all know, there is nothing like a personal invitation. If you are aware of someone who you think might enjoy and benefit by joining us on our Dominican artistic journey, invite him/her. It is up to each of us to spread the good news about DIA.

During our 2017 Gathering, the Legacy Commission presented guidelines relevant to your artwork and its future with the reminder that artists are responsible for their own legacy. How have you acted on these guidelines? Please advise Elizabeth Michael at emichael@caldwell.edu. It can then be shared with others in the next newsletter. Thanks in advance.

The Planning Commission for our 2018 Gathering is putting a lot of effort into ensuring that our time together in Adrian will be thought-provoking, inspiring and beneficial for all. Many thanks to each of them. The Gathering logo, designed by Irene Mary Diones, beautifully reflects the Theme of this year's Gathering: **The Arts: Yearning for Unity**. Our Keynote Speaker, Dr. Frances Belmonte Ph.D., Professor Emerita of Pastoral Studies, Loyola University, Chicago, left us with a challenging message at the 2014 Gathering and many have expressed the desire for her return. I am confident she will equally challenge us this year. I'm looking forward to being with you in Adrian.

May the rest of Lent be good for you. Have a joyful Easter and may we, as Mary Magdalen did, spread the good news of His Resurrection.

PEACE, *Pat*

Gathering July 24-27, 2019: Pallotine Renewal Center, near St. Louis, Missouri

Gathering August 3-6, 2020: Siena Retreat Center, Racine, Wisconsin

ARTS, cont. from p. 1 The final evening will showcase the talents of "noted" individuals: Elaine Taylor, Magdalena Ezoe, Irene Mary Diones and Company, Rudolf Loewenstein, Joanne Timmerman and others. Works by Adrian artists are exhibited throughout Weber Center, and the Campus of the Dominican Sisters of Adrian is rich with other experiences: The Labyrinth, Cosmic Walk, Permaculture Gardens and our new gallery in INAI. As always, the Gathering will also provide the Market Place and a time to share your latest works and projects. The 2018 Planning Commission looks forward to sharing all this with you in Adrian, from July 25-27.

BELMONTE, cont. from p.1 Fran herself recognizes that a good speaker is first a good listener. So, as soon as she accepted the Planning Commission's invitation, Fran began to peruse the evaluations from her last keynote address to refresh her sense of the audience. We should not be surprised if this keynote speaker sounds as if she knows us almost as well as we know ourselves.



Transforming Mania into Ministry

Joeann Daley's style was once "diagnosed" as symptomatic of a disease known to psychologists as "vacuum horror," a compulsive aversion to empty space. (Seriously) A kinder, gentler definition of its synonym, "kenophobia," is "an art form which fills an entire surface with detail." In the last few years, Joeann has celebrated this compulsion, notably by rescuing styrofoam cups and plates from landfill and covering them with unique and colorful designs. This winter, her styroart was featured in two group shows, at The Portrait Society Gallery in Milwaukee and the Cedarburg Cultural Center, where she was amazed to hear visitors reacting to the artifacts as pottery.

Joeann states, "Recently, I discovered another surface to cover—envelopes," She reports to OPalette. "As I was addressing and sealing envelopes, I saw all that empty space on them and I filled it with designs. Later I learned that the recipients of these envelopes view them as unexpected gifts. Therefore, they never throw them away." Like STYRO ART with which Joeann reduced the volume of un-recyclable trash, ENVELOPART has become Joeann's whimsical way of making her art minister to planet earth.



Adrian artists exhibit "SISTERHOOD"

From January 12 through February 13, the artworks of Rita Schiltz, OP and Sarajane Seaver, OP were featured in an exhibit entitled "Sisterhood" at the Lewanee Council for the Visual Arts Gallery in the Adrian Center for the Arts. DIA members are all familiar with Rita's forty-year career as a designer of sacred space at INAI Studio, but this exhibit showcased metalwork and jewelry rarely displayed before. Sarajane Seaver, who is known among DIA artists as a master weaver, has combined weaving, quilting, and basketry with retreat work at the Weber Center inviting participants to experience art as contemplation.

desire for peace, because of Sadako Sasaki, a Japanese schoolgirl exposed to radiation by the Hiroshima bomb. When she developed leukemia at age twelve (an effect of her exposure to the radiation), she learned about the old tradition, and began to fold paper cranes as an effort to regain her health. Sadako did not live long enough to complete a thousand cranes; her classmates, in honor of her life and efforts, completed the project and she was buried with a thousand cranes. In the Peace Park in Hiroshima a monument to Sadako reads: "This is our cry, this is our prayer, peace in the world." I painted the final crane in September 2017. All thousand cranes were exhibited at Siena Heights University in October-November 2017, with "adopted" cranes displayed as scanned images bearing the name of the donor.

Barbara Cervenka creates 1000 Cranes for Iraq

In August of 2014, fighters of ISIS invaded Mosul and the towns of the Nineveh Plain in Northern Iraq. Residents who were not Sunni Muslims – Christians, Yazidis, Turkmen, Kurds, and even Shia Muslims - were faced with a stark choice: convert to Islam, leave your homes taking nothing with you, or remain and be killed. Tens of thousands fled to neighboring Kurdish areas where they were forced to live for years in makeshift dwellings, tents, shipping containers, and unfinished buildings. Since the defeat of ISIS, they have returned to find their homes and villages completely destroyed.

In January 2015 I began a series of paintings to help support the Iraqi refugees, resolving to paint an origami crane every day and offering a painting to anyone willing to donate \$100.00 for the support



of the displaced Iraqi refugees. The paintings are small, 6"x6" and painted in oil on composition board. Completed paintings are posted on a website which also lists the names of donors. www.1000cranesforiraq.org

This series of paintings was inspired by the Japanese tradition of *shenbazuru*, which held that folding a thousand origami cranes would bring an answer to prayer or the fulfillment of a desire. In recent years the custom has been associated with a hope and

WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO LATELY?

The short notices listed below were culled from the DIA Membership Form which concludes with the question: "Is there any special project or work you have done in the past year which you wish to share?"



In January, **Sharon Foley Block** was informed that her painting was juried into the Palm Springs Annual Juried Art Show.



By the time you read this, **Magdalena Ezoe** will have completed her March Irish concerts and helped her retired sisters to welcome a new season with Grieg's "To the Spring," Mendelsohn's "Spring Joy," J. Strauss' "Voices of Spring," and Vivaldi's "Spring."

Elaine Taylor found the dramatic arts a perfect vehicle for moving through Lent as she sang and danced in the Ensemble of the St. Petersburg City Theatre's production of *Jesus Christ Superstar*. Elaine was highlighted as a solo Leper and as one of the women who accuses Peter of being with Jesus in Gethsemane Garden. Now she is preparing for a vocal recital at St. Mary, Our Lady of Grace Church in August.



Nancy Murray spent her Golden Jubilee year performing as Saint Catherine of Siena and/or Dorothy Stang in schools, colleges, retreat centers, and parishes throughout Michigan and in Colorado, Idaho, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Vermont, Virginia, Louisiana, and Wisconsin.



Ann Eigenbauer is preparing to mount an exhibit by Sparkill Dominican artists in April.

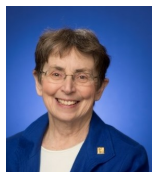


Vicki Perfect has published *Perfect Insights*, a leaflet inviting readers to "Contemplative Moments." Feedback from her recipients in the next **Opalette**.

Joseph Kilikevice, Central Province, has been perfecting the art of listening in a program called "A Dialogue of Hearts, the Art of Silence and of Listening." This is a gathering of the Abrahamic family of faiths—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—where the act of sharing their sacred texts invites participants into the sacred space where the heart listens deeply. "Realizing that one is not required to relinquish one's own faith tradition to be inspired and blessed by the cherished texts of others, respectful listening becomes a vehicle for carrying peace into a world suffering from hostility and violence."



Mary Navarre has been continuing to lead a collaborative effort to establish a national archive of Dominican artists "whose art work needs to be collected, organized, preserved, and made available for future generations."



Elaine DesRosiers has self-published her life story entitled **ONE GREAT BIG ACT OF GRATITUDE: the story of the life and ministry of a Dominican Sister**. She'll display a copy at the Gathering.

UPCOMING INAI GALLERY EXHIBITS

March 23—July 8 Earth is Our Home with nature photography by Janice Holkup

July 14—October 27 Aneesah McNamee and Alice VanAcker

Newsletter Marks Twentieth Anniversary

Page one of DIA's first **Newsletter**, dated January 1998, leads with the headline: DOMINICAN INSTITUTE FOR THE ARTS IS BORN. The article describes the organizational meeting convened by Armando Ibanez OP seven months before on May 17, 1997 at St. Albert's Priory, Oakland, California. The first DIA Gathering on the following weekend June 20-22, 1997, became recognized as the birth date of the DIA. The **Newsletter** listed every one of the twenty-two artists in attendance at Oakland with his/her artistic medium: painting, photography, poetry, dance, music, film, video, sacred space, web design. Chris Renz, OP, Western Province, Lisa Lopez Williams, Sinsinawa, and Rosemarie Hennessey, Mission San Jose, comprised the first Planning Commission. They designed a program whose essential components of inspiration, demonstration, dialogue, and entertainment have continued to guide subsequent planners. The enthusiasm of those who attended the Oakland Gathering attracted sixty-three artists to the 1998 event at Mission San Jose. A year later, eighty artists assembled at Sinsinawa. Eventually DIA membership peaked at 170.

It would be nice to record that the DIA published an issue of its newsletter regularly for the next twenty years, but that is not the fact. Most years it came out three times; two years twice; one year only once, and in 2000, none. In 2009, a new masthead appeared changing the publication's title to **OPalette**. Thanks to Barbara Schwarz' dedication and hard work, the complete Newsletter Archives are available to everyone who visits the DIA website, www.diartsop.org

Presence:

An Inspiring New Publication

Early in 2017, the Chair of the English Department at Caldwell University announced the creation of a new publication entitled *Presence: A Journal of Catholic Poetry*. Dedicated to publishing "poems informed by the Catholic faith," the new annual's mission statement explains the subtle inclusiveness of its title: "The poems in this journal convey God's presence . . . by exploring the intersection of matter and spirit, by depicting the struggle between belief and doubt, by questioning the faith, being surprised by it, taking joy in it, even finding humor in it."

Presence hopes "to create a community of writers who recognize Catholicism as fertile ground for the flourishing of contemporary poetry." Citing Thomas Aquinas, founding editor Mary Ann Miller stated: "Art is a good in and of itself, so a good poem will reflect God solely by being a good work of art." A DIA paraphrase might read: "A good work of art preaches simply by being a good work of art."

The first issue, released April 2017, displayed a cornucopia of poems, reviews, and interviews featuring the experience of divine Presence in poets of many faiths from all over the United States and several foreign countries.

Poets are invited to obtain submission guidelines and individuals and libraries may obtain subscriptions at www.catholicpoetryjournal.com

Wingin' It Beyond the Veil:

Selected Stories and Poetry

Joan Breit, a new member of DIA, recently published her memoir in the form of a literary bricolage, a combination of over 250 short pieces of prose and poetry, her own and others', and an anthology of citations from popular mystics. On one level Joan's personal story can be experienced with nostalgia as the autobiography of the Catholic family of the "olden days" which nourished so many vocations to consecrated life. Joan's poems reflect a contemporary sensibility.

Feisty and Tenacious

Who was this upstart rabbi
from Nazareth whose story of an
unjust judge and unnamed
widow had all the male leadership mumbling
and grumbling how dare he tell a story
of a feisty female getting the better
of a judge rather than telling the wearisome
woman to 'Sit down and shut up!'

Through the centuries a multitude of
brave women have stood up in legislatures
courts board and meeting rooms churches
colleges universities religious institutions
homes families refusing to be silent
determined over years and eons of injustice
to bring about respect and compassion
in every corner of the globe recognizing
the equality of women children
and men in all this glorious creation.

Blessed be the feisty ones
Who surround us.

Joan Breit, OPA

THE ARTIST AS PREACHER: FRA ANGELICO'S **NOLI ME TANGERE**

by Honora Werner, OP

We have no preaching words from Fra Angelico – only the one sentence carved on his tombstone: “Let me not be praised because I seemed another great painter . . . but because I gave all my riches, O Christ, to Thee.” Some historians call his paintings his homilies.

In this Paschal Season we turn to his painting named “Noli me tangere.” Do not touch me. Do not cling to me. The time is Easter morning. Mary Magdalen, Jesus’ dear friend and faithful disciple, has come to his tomb there in the garden to pay her respects. She is shocked at finding the tomb empty. Despite the message the angels give her, “He is risen. He is not here,” Mary doesn’t hear that. All she knows is that her dear friend’s body is gone. What a travesty! The ultimate insult! She weeps inconsolably. Someone approaches. She thinks he is the gardener. He asks her why she is weeping and whom she is seeking. She begs him, “If you know where they have taken his body, please tell me so I can go get it!” He says simply, “Mary!” At the sound of her name in that familiar tone of voice, she realizes who he is! Rabboni! Teacher! As she reaches out to grasp his feet, he restrains her: *“Do not cling to me. Things are not the way they used to be. It is different now. Instead, go, tell my brothers that I will see them in Galilee. I am going to my Father and to your Father, to my God and your God.”*

All this is in the Gospel of John, Chapter 20. The painting is on the wall of one of the friars’ cells in San Marco. Each cell had one such painting based on the life of Jesus. So what would this painting have meant to a young friar in the 15th century? What might Angelico be saying to him – and to you and me? It is not meant to be a realistic picture of 1st century Palestine. The foliage, the tomb, even Mary’s dress tell us that it is Florence in the 15th Century. Jesus – well his style is timeless! Notice though that he carries a hoe/a scythe over his shoulder! A garden tool! The gardener – But Jesus was a carpenter, wasn’t he? Remember the Garden of Eden? How we lost it, as the story goes? Well, he has won it back for us! He IS the gardener! He holds his hand out to Mary. He might be saying, “No, don’t touch me. Do not cling to the old way we were as friends. All has changed. Life will not be the same – ever! This resurrection changes everything!”

This is a very traditional way of hearing the Gospel proclaimed in this painting. But taking another look at the painting one might wonder. Could Jesus be saying, “Come, dance with me?” I know, John doesn’t mention dancing, but we all know that song, “I danced in the morning when the earth was born, I danced in the moon and the stars and in the sun. . . .” The song is, of course, “The Lord of the Dance.” Who is the Lord of the Dance anyway? Jesus, the Risen Lord! Look again at Mary’s hand. Maybe she is reaching out to grasp his hand. Look at his feet. Crossed as in the *hora* – that traditional Israeli folk dance! Maybe he is saying, “Mary, come dance with me!” The dance is proclaiming the Gospel! “C’mon, Mary, join me in this dance! First go tell my brothers.” (Yes, he sent a woman to preach to the men! That IS in John’s Gospel!) OK. Now you and that young friar in 15th Century Florence see the Gardener Jesus, the Lord of the Dance. The friar may be wearing his Dominican habit. You may be in jeans or sweats, a suit or a skirt. The Lord of the Dance says, “Come on! Dance with me! Be good news in your world. Proclaim the Gospel with your life!” Dare we refuse that invitation? Let’s accept it! The preaching of Fra Angelico reaches our hearts today.



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Amityville Artist Celebrates Catholic Sisters Week

By Lena Pennino-Smith

During National Catholic Sisters Week, I sat down with Dominican artist, Barbara Schwarz, in Aquin Hall, an artistic space in the Amityville Motherhouse with beautiful wood floors, tall windows and natural light. Barbara talked about the subjects in her art work as you might speak about the angel Gabriel. Like him, they “show up” and they have something to say. Barbara pointed to one of her recent creations, a portrait of Saint Dominic. He surprised her one day by “showing up” as she dabbled with colors. This red-haired preacher is pictured anxiously looking ahead, while behind him (unbeknownst to him) are his newest collaborators and partners in mission, the women of Fanjeaux, France. What was his purpose in showing up that day? . . . to preach! “My art is preaching,” said Barbara, who has been following the twists and turns of her artistic ministry for almost twenty years. “The art preaches to me as I am doing it, and then later it challenges others to see God in their lives in another way.”



Barbara's collection of artistic works is impressive. Some are displayed in Aquin Hall while many others climb and fill walls of other offices, are rolled into closets or can be seen



popping out of portfolios. Where will her art preach to you? In the bright colors of God's big bang that ignite an ever-expanding world at the speed of stars? In the swirls—as perfect as a conch shell—that take you deeper into yourself or reaching toward a divine light? Abstract or literal, her artwork promises to magnify challenging prob-

lems—personal or worldly—and ask each person: What will you do? Barbara uses her art—whether paint, clay, wood, graphics, poetry or other media—to speak to people young and old at retreats and workshops. She has served in many capacities: teacher, Director of Religious Education, PFI instructor, communications director, and, through all, contemplative artist. Her photography is frequently published in Global Sisters Reports. She offers reflections for Dominican preachers monthly through a podcast on word.op.org. For the past four years she served as President of the Dominican Institute for the Arts (DIA), an international organization that gathers and nurtures Dominican artists, musicians, poets, and film makers to use their gifts to bring God's kingdom to light. (To see Barbara's art, visit her website: <http://artafire.homestead.com>).