



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

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Border Walls: A Unique Celebration of DIA Art



“women’s empowerment project” shipped a beautiful banner on which the women embroidered their names. From Racine, Wisconsin, **Sr. Barbara Kukla** sent many brightly-colored water colors which could not fail to deliver warmth and cheerfulness to a bleak prison. From her studio in Amityville, **Sr. Barbara Schwarz** sent a selection of her favorite paintings and from Grand Rapids, Michigan, **Sr. Catherine Anderson** shipped ten of her own prints and paintings. In short, DIA’s response to hunger and thirst at the border produced the greatest Dominican art exhibit in its history. Now perhaps, we can look forward to the day Casa Alitas itself curates an exhibit of art produced on the border with the art supplies the Board sent to its children. cont. on p. 8

Since the beginning of the human drama popularly known as “our border crisis,” individuals, parishes, organizations and congregations from all over the nation have journeyed to Texas, Arizona and other border states to serve families seeking asylum and to bring them the necessities of life. In its Spring 2019 issue, **OPALETTE** highlighted the work of some DIA volunteers serving in the kitchen, laundry, and assembly spaces of a facility in Tuscon known as *Casa Alitas*. During the DIA Gathering in July 2019, **Sr. Thoma Swanson** shared her experience of this shelter and detention center. Looking at the stark, bare walls of the inhospitable accommodations Thoma thought: “Wouldn’t it be wonderful if these walls were covered with DIA art work?” **Pat Daly**, DIA Pres. immediately invited the membership to join Thoma in supplying a different “basic necessity of life” for the border guests.

Pat promptly set the example by matting a whole exhibit of prints from her collection of nature photography and shipping it to the border. From all parts of the country, DIA members responded eagerly, generously, and with thoughtful attention to their intended recipients. Thoma herself shipped multiple cloth banners from Ohio. Having served many years in Latin America, she made figures that looked like the people to whom the artifacts were sent. In Kentucky, **Sr. Elaine DesRosiers** painted her angels with dark hair and dressed them in authentic Guatemalan cloth. **Sr. Joel Gubler** sent paintings appropriate for a children’s nursery or playroom. **Sr. Jo-Ann Ianotti**, a Hope sister in Connecticut, “re-gifted” two paintings given to her by Judge Charles Gill, who has been a children’s advocate for many years. From South Africa, Australian **Sr. Sheila Flynn’s**



Message from the President



2020 Membership Forms were sent out in January. As of this writing, 53 folks have renewed their memberships and 8 new members have been welcomed to DIA. If you have yet to renew your membership, why not do it today? Mary Pat Reid is looking forward to hearing from you.

This year's Gathering in Racine promises to be an exciting one. Planning for this Gathering was based on members' suggestions and ideas voiced at the Business Meeting at our last Gathering. Looking forward to being with you in August.

As I write this message, I'm sitting at the kitchen table next to the bay window facing the back yard. The grass is brown; the rock garden is barren and the trees with their leafless limbs sway in the wind. Towering pines provide the only green. However, within a month or so, the bare trees will be green and the rock garden will burst to life. Crocuses, tulips, jonquils, hyacinths and forsythia will grace the yard with their colorful dance. Currently here in the Northeast, the earth is resting—preparing itself for rebirth.

For those living in a warmer climate, the land is in continuous bloom and color.

It struck me that these two different climates could define our own artistic journeys. At times, it seems that our creative juices just explode and we can't get brush to canvas, musical notes to staff or words to paper quickly enough. At other times the creative juices are resting and preparing to midwife new paintings, musical compositions or poems.

In whichever "creative climate" we find ourselves, we know that our artistic talents are innate gifts from God. As Dominican artists, let us continue to preach God's Word through our art.

During this time of global health crisis, let us hold each other in prayer. Most of us are "sheltered in place". Why not take this opportunity to reach out to each other? A telephone call or email to "check in" with other members would be most welcome.

Be well, stay safe and have a blessed and color filled Spring.

Peace *Pat Daly*

Call for Fra Angelico Nominations

*With its annual Fra Angelico Award the DIA Board gives special recognition to members who have distinguished themselves in a chosen area of the arts. The Board looks for nominees who have earned recognition from their peers for outstanding work in their chosen discipline. Please take this opportunity to nominate some DIA member who qualifies for this honor and state the reasons for your choice. Submit your nomination by **April 15, 2020***

To Pat Daly, OPA 480 Liberty Street Braintree, MA 02184.



Key Note Speaker

SR. ANN WILLETS IS A
PREACHER, A POET, AN
AUTHOR AND A STORY TELLER.
AND...
SHE'LL TELL A STORY!



Sister Ann Willets has been a Dominican of Sinsinawa, WI for more than 60 years. She was a high school teacher and administrator, served as a member of the General Council of her Congregation and, for 21 years, was Director of PARABLE, a national Conference for Dominican Life and Mission. It was during that time that Ann became an itinerant preacher.

Ann has shared her itinerant, mendicant ministry with many of the brothers of the Central Province of St. Albert the Great, collaborating with the friars in preaching retreats, offering parish missions, giving conferences and working on research projects. Over the years she has discovered that her affection for her brothers in the Order is as profound and deep as her love and respect for her Dominican Sisters, Laity, Nuns and Associates. The Dominican Family is a model of church which was in the heart of Dominic and will be a source of renewal for all who are drawn to the Dominican charism.

In addition to writing and publishing poetry and articles, Ann has recorded three retreats for Now You Know Media: "WRITING HOME," "LANDS OF DOMINIC" and "ORDINARY MYSTERIES."

For the past 36 years Sister Ann has been an itinerant minister of the Word, traveling to many parts of the United States, and also Canada, Trinidad, South America, New Zealand, Australia, Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Spain, France and Italy.

Sister Ann received her BA from Rosary College/ Dominican University, her MA from St. Thomas University and did post graduate study at Marquette University.



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Be sure to
register for this
2020 DIA
Gathering

Siena Retreat
Center
Racine,
Wisconsin
August 3-6

Inspiration

Learning

Ideas

Creativity

Prayer

Fantasy

and more...

Nancyann Turner: What Art Can Do for People

Buried in **OPalette's** Gathering issue (Summer 2019) you'll find a three-line item announcing **Sr. Nancyann Turner's** retirement from her twenty-year leadership of the Rosa Parks Program at the Capuchin Soup Kitchen in Detroit. This inner-city ministry is the capstone of Nancy's extraordinary career dedicated to using art to feed human hungers no kitchen can satisfy.

Nancyann grew up in Lansing, Michigan and entered the Adrian Dominican community immediately after high school. Her fascination with the role of creativity in religious life first surfaced doing research for her MFA thesis; it continued to motivate many choices for the rest of her life. Like most of her talented peers, Nancyann spent her first twenty Adrian years as a high school art teacher. Six of those years were among the poor in Appalachia where the hunger for beauty seemed as acute as the hunger for food. Through the years, Nancyann explored a variety of media — weaving, tapestry, design, print-making— until she could confidently identify herself as a “master weaver and designer.” “Early on I thought art was more for enjoyment and appreciation, Gradually, I learned how much more it could do for people,” Nancyann explains. “I have always believed one of our primary calls as religious women was to be about healing.” Three terms in congregational leadership could not derail Nancyann's progress as an artist; community service only strengthened her interest in the therapeutic value of art. This new focus culminated in a six-year ministry at an acute -care psychiatric ward at Walter Reed Hospital in Washington D.C. When national headlines exposed the violent environment of Detroit's poorest neighborhoods, urban leaders crowded into think tanks to analyze the problems and explore solutions for them in research by sociologists,



economists, and urban planners. Nancyann found inspiration in the words of Walter Bruggeman: “So much violence is lack of imagination.” Her own imagination began designing a garden where the imagination could grow peaceful alternatives to violence. The result was the Rosa Parks Program, a ministry to children and families who have been greatly harmed by poverty and racism. Her Rosa Parks child care center provided an art studio, art supplies, a staff trained in art therapy, and the limitless resourcefulness required to keep a roomful of creative children “engaged.” In the midst of one of Detroit's poorest and most violent neighborhoods, daily art therapy brings out feelings and handles stress. Splashing color and pounding clay invited them to release pent-up emotions in safety. Group activities trained them to be helpful and aware of the needs of others.

What Have You Been Up To Lately?

Sr. Sue Schreiber, Co-ordinator of events at INAI Gallery, is kept busy all year. Two summer exhibits featuring the work of Adrian Dominicans "Embracing the Future" and "Siena Heights Centennial Alumnae Exhibit" were succeeded by two current exhibits (through June 21): "Quiet Places & Sacred Spaces: A Sue Schreiber Photography Retrospective" and "Glimpses of Grace: Photos and Poetry by **Rev. Cathy Johnson**, OPA.



Associate **Sharon Foley Bock's** photograph went on from its summer exhibit to become the 2020 Christmas card from the Adrian Development Office and then to permanent residence in Dominican Life Center.



Sr. Joel Gubler, **Sr. Charlene Vogel**, and **Sr. Elaine DesRosiers** were invited to exhibit their art in the gallery of the Opera House in Springfield, Kentucky. The show, entitled **Sisters in Art**, attracted visitors during the month of November 2019.



Sr. Donna Brunell's masterfully designed and fabricated quilts frequently serve as reliable fundraisers and treasured rewards for the HOPE development office.



Sr. Miriam Brown, integrated music, photography, and poetry into a day-long retreat entitled "Prayer: the Only Language We Know."



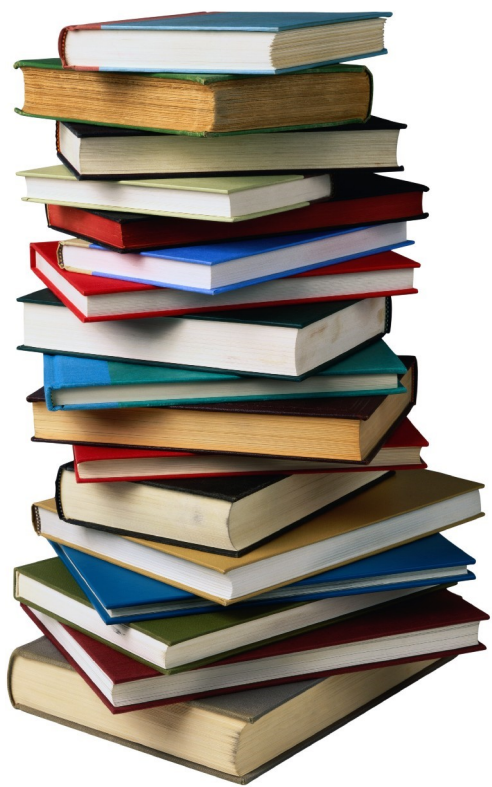
The 2020 annual concert sponsored by **Br. Joe Kilikevics's** ecumenical ministry center, SHEM, is devoted to the music of Hildegard of Bingen (April 26).



A solo exhibit of **Sr. Mary Anna Euring's** Asian Brush Paintings attracted viewers at the Barnes Gallery in Garden City, NY from March 6th to 28th. All proceeds will be donated to the Sisters of St. Dominic "Ministry to the Poor".



Sr. Brigid Bray who, along with a friend, was on the cruise ship that, due to the coronavirus was recently held from docking in California. Eventually, she and all passengers were transported to Miramar Airbase in San Diego. They will be in quarantine for 3 - 4 weeks.



AUTHOR! AUTHOR!

Sr. Elizabeth Slenker's picture book, *Beautiful Baby Boston Belle*, introduced us to an amusing pet named Boo. Since then, Boo has introduced Elizabeth to a rewarding new ministry with therapy dogs. Pet therapy is an intriguing reciprocal ministry: a dog can be an advocate for an abused child; the child will thank the dog by reading her a story. Boo has now received her 100-Visit Certificate from The American Kennel Club which entitles her to work with adults and children in schools, hospitals, and libraries. Elizabeth, who has been an enthusiastic painter of animals, thanks this animal for enriching her life even further: As the Sparkill publication *Weavings* put it: "God's Grace Arrived on Four Legs."

Two *new* DIA members are currently working on books:

Sr. Patricia Connick's volume about science and theology has the working title: *Trinity and Community: A Guide to Everyday Mysticism*.

Pat who has a PhD in Chemistry is a science teacher at Dominican Academy in New York City.

Brian A. Plachta, is working on his third book:

*Finding Flow—Doable Spiritual Practices to Reclaim
Inner Peace, Balance, and Wholeness.*

Brian, a new member of DIA, is an attorney and an inspirational speaker popular at the Dominican Spirituality Center, Grand Rapids. While you're waiting for the release of Brian's third volume, you might like to read the first two: *Life's Toolbox: Blueprints Included*

Pillars of Steel: How Real Men Draw Strength from Each Other.

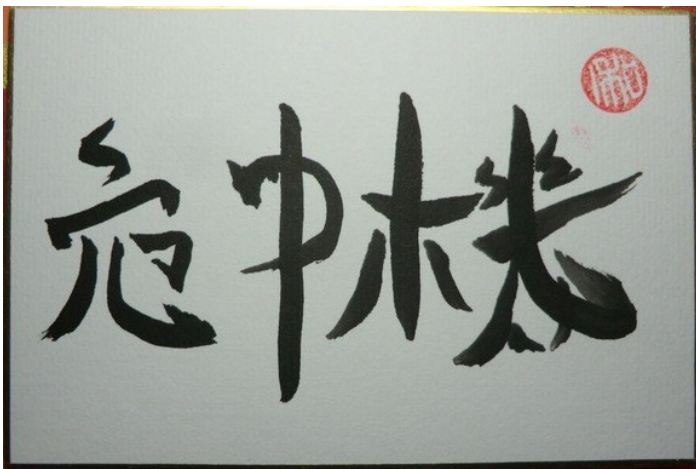




Artists reflect on how the coronavirus has effected them

Mary Ellen Robertson, writer/editor of *The Spiritual Connection*, a spirituality reflection letter, writes that she was experiencing writer's block until "I realized that the theme of Silence and Stillness was very fitting during this time of helplessness and fear. . . Instead of continuing to create *The Spiritual Connection*, I sat down and wrote notes to friends like one who had lately lost a spouse, another who had just celebrated her 50 th Jubilee, and my brother's girlfriend whom I had recently met. For them I assembled materials for creating a card showing a relaxing beach scene. A photo I had taken of the Muskegon Lighthouse became 3-dimensional with variegated edges for water. To this I added "tiny shells, sand and clear beads for beach glass." Creating this little artifact "lifted my energy to start again my present issue of *The Spiritual Connection* and inspired me to be in Centering Prayer for all of the Earth's community."

Mary Anna Euring reflects that Corvid-10 has definitely influenced my art! Now that we're on "Lockdown" at our Motherhouse in Amityville, I moved some of my art supplies from the Studio (in another building) to my room, and I've been painting, painting, painting! Asian Brush Painting is very spiritual and encourages a centered, peaceful mind, so it's been very helpful during this time of uncertainty and confusion. Many have been saying that this crisis is bringing out the best in people, as we have become aware that we are a global community and need to support each other. This reminds me of the Chinese character for both crisis and opportunity. If we allow ourselves to enter into the fear and loneliness, we will also touch into the opportunity for growth and kindness that this virus presents. I've been painting this character (see attached) for the Sisters as a reminder to experience hope in the midst of crisis. As Dostoevsky once said: The world will be saved by BEAUTY", and we artists have the responsibility to spread it around the globe in whatever way we can.



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cont. from p.1 Sister Esther Calderon, O.P. who ministers in Tuscon and has been in regular contact with Pat Daly, also asked for something else. Once the asylum seekers learn that Casa Alitas is under the direction of the Church, not the government, she explained, they express a desire for books and religious articles which give them spiritual comfort: Bibles in Spanish, rosaries and holy cards. When Pat disseminated this information, Motherhouses in Michigan,

Recently Sr. Rita Birzer from Oxford, Michigan sent a second shipment of about 75 Rosaries plus a few hundred holy cards from their Gift Shop at St. Mary's Retreat House. Ramona Bartley packed each Rosary in a small plastic bag in preparation for sending to Tucson for the immigrants.

Wisconsin, Ohio, and Kentucky were soon overwhelmed by the task of processing the multiple boxes of rosaries and bilingual holy cards pouring in from groups and individuals like Br. Joe Kilikevics, Sr. Mary Ellen Robertson, and Sr. Paulina

