



ST. DOMINIC'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

REFLECTION: FR. STEPHEN MARIA LOPEZ, O.P.



Memories from St. Dominic's, clockwise from above: with the Hispanic Ministry, at the fiesta of Santo Niño de Cebu, with YAG leadership past and present, at the Bartlett nuptials, and at the parish-organized farewell bash.



I peer outside my window to discover that it is raining...again! After a couple of days of being deterred by the weather, I say to myself, "You must go out!" Donning my rain jacket and beanie, I leave my umbrella behind; after all, locals do not use them. I get into the car and leave the parking lot, amused that I am driving a Toyota Prius. Then, I turn on the radio and let out a hearty laugh as I hear the voice of country singer Justin Moore bellow a catchy tune. For me, it is a moment of realization. I am home. Oregon *is* my new home!

After only two and half years at St. Dominic's in San Francisco, I did not anticipate this move, much less becoming Prior of one of the five major communities of the Western Dominican Province. After all, things had been going well for me. As a newly ordained priest, I was enjoying a lively and fruitful ministry. At St. Dominic's, the three parish priests maintain a very demanding schedule of celebrating Masses; preaching and teaching; hearing confessions; preparing engaged couples for marriage; and officiating many baptisms, weddings, and funerals. We provide for the sacramental needs of the students at Mission Dolores Academy, as well as the Catholic patients at three hospitals and various nursing homes within our parish boundaries. We divide our time between the many wonderful programs and events offered at St. Dominic's. Specifically, I was the primary priest supporting the parish's Hispanic community, the Young Adults Group, the annual Contemplative Retreat, Book Club, and Santo Niño de Cebu devotees, not to mention being confessor and spiritual director to a number of parishioners. Within the Dominican community, I was serving as both subprior and treasurer. Needless to say, I was doing a lot, but I was really loving my priestly ministry and learning so much in the process. Looking back on my time at St. Dominic's, I feel so richly blessed. Being a part of such a remarkable community has been an amazing gift.

As a priest, I have immediate access to the most intimate parts of people's lives. It is an awesome privilege to walk with people in their times of crisis and celebration. Naturally, deep bonds of affection develop between the priest and the people whom he serves. This has been my experience with you—the parishioners of St. Dominic's. I have not only enjoyed a (cont'd)

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wonderful pastoral relationship with you, but many of you have also become my friends. We have shared profound moments of prayer; laughter and tears; joys and sorrows, not to mention some pretty fantastic meals! For all these things, I give thanks to God and to all of you!

Since the announcement of my departure, I have reflected on the reaction to the news. Like myself, most people saw my move as bittersweet. However, many were deeply saddened and even angered by the decision. Among the comments I heard were: “Why?!?”; “How could they do this to us?”; and “Father, you could have said no!” It is true; I could have said, “No.” But that would go against the core of who I am and what I believe. While I have cherished my ministry at St. Dominic’s, I know that I must follow the Spirit’s lead. First of all, the community of friars in Portland elected me; in other words, they voted for me to be their superior. Then, the Provincial and his Provincial Council approved my election. In addition to my own prayerful consideration of the decision, I relied on the advice of friars who are not only my friends but who also have the interest of both St. Dominic’s and the Western Dominican Province at heart. All this to say that I trust that the Spirit is truly at work in my leaving St. Dominic’s to serve in a new capacity at Holy Rosary Priory and Church in Portland. In my 10+ years in the Dominican Order, I have learned that God’s plan beautifully unfolds when I allow myself to be led by the Holy Spirit in a different direction—on a path that departs markedly from my own original plan!

When the disciples were afraid of Jesus leaving, he told them, “*But I tell you the truth, it is better for you that I go. For if I do not go, the Advocate will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.*” (John 16:7) For me, this illustrates my firm belief that the departure of a priest (and the eventual arrival of a new one) represents the working of the Holy Spirit in the life of the community. I am also encouraged by the example of the Lord himself who—despite many pressing needs—left Capernaum because of his mission to bring the Good News to all peoples. “*Let us go on to the next towns that I may preach there also. For this purpose have I come.*” (Mark 1:38) As I continue to seek to follow Christ in the footsteps of St. Dominic in a new place with a new community, I ask for your prayers. Be assured of mine for all of you!

While driving the car that day, I was actually thinking about St. Dominic’s, gratefully remembering my time with all of you. Part of the reason I laughed aloud was because the refrain of the song echoed—in a corny but very real way—my own deepest sentiments about the good people of St. Dominic’s: “Til my last day, I’ll be loving you!” Thank you for an amazing two and a half years. May God bless you! †

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MINISTRY: FIRST FRIDAY ALL-NIGHT ADORATION

“...We must sometimes remain by His side with our minds hushed in silence. If we can, we should occupy ourselves in looking upon Him Who is looking at us; keep Him company; talk with Him; pray to Him; humble ourselves before Him; have our delight in Him; and remember that He never deserved to be there [on the cross]. Anyone who can do this, though he may be but a beginner in prayer, will derive great benefit from it, for this kind of prayer brings many benefits; at least, so my soul has found.”

—St. Teresa of Avila



Night falls. It is 9 pm on a first Friday of the month. All doors into St. Dominic’s are now closed to the public. The general lights flick off. The nave of the church is darkness, illuminated only by pillar lamps. But the Lady Chapel is where it is the brightest, with altar and ceiling alights all aglow. The Eucharist is processioned from the Tabernacle on the main altar and placed in a bejeweled monstrance. Fragrance and smoke from the incense spread slowly. The silence is broken with the first chants (cont’d)

MINISTRY: FIRST FRIDAY ALL-NIGHT ADORATION (CONT'D)



The monstrance used at the All-Night Adoration.

of prayers. The All-Night Adoration is begun.

Only a handful of Bay Area churches have the Eucharist exposed. At St. Dominic's, Adoration occurs for about an hour each Monday and Wednesday after 5:30 pm mass. But All-Night Adoration takes place only on the first Friday of each month.

The All-Night Adoration uses a jewel-embedded monstrance, and its selection is a fitting one. For just as it was the parishioners (women) of St. Dominic's who funded the stones back in 1928, it is also the the parishioners of this church who founded and who sustain this ministry (a priest starts and ends the Adoration, and Fr. Emmanuel is currently in this role). "Penelope Boldrick began All-Night Adoration 7 years ago and moved away some 6 months later," explained Jim Burke who took over the leadership from Penelope. Jim heads a service team of 10, which sets up drinks and snacks in the Flower Room (yes, you can have refreshments during Adoration and they help you keep awake), conducts several security checks of the interior and the entryways of the church, and even provides accompaniment to the parking lot upon request. At least 2 team members are present at any timepoint during Adoration hours. On a spiritual level, team members lead the various prayers throughout the night and pray for the petitions that are submitted each month either through the Prayer Petition Box located in the front of the Holy Name Altar or via email.

Structure of the All-Night Adoration

9:00 pm	Midnight	3:00 am	6:00 am	7:15 am
Exposition & Night Prayer to Open	Psalm Reading	Office of the Readings	Mixed Prayers	Benediction to Close

"All-Night Adoration has been set up to be a mix of public and private prayer," said Jim. "The principal idea is to be quiet, and the prayers every 3 hours are intended to reinvigorate. Private prayer can be reading, journaling, contemplation, or reciting the rosary." "The energy in the Lady Chapel changes through the night. It is the busiest from 9 pm to midnight. It is the quietest from 12:30 am to 2:30 am. It starts picking up again around 3:00 am. Sometimes, we can have up to 100 people over the course of the entire night."

The attendees of the All-Night Adoration are of various ages and are at different points in their prayer lives. Said Ken Eisen who started coming in 2011, "Adoration is talking to God. But I first have to stop the chatter in the mind. This doesn't come naturally; it takes practice, discipline, willpower." Others have always been drawn to prayer and to Adoration. In fact, several of the regulars have the charism of intercessory prayer. All attendees, however, have the same impetus. For Clarice Mandala and Kelly Connelly, the attraction of Adoration is, as Kelly put it, "The 1:1 time I have with the Lord. It's just me and Him." For Deborah Dacumos, Adoration is when the Lord's presence can truly be felt. And for Barbara Amberg, Adoration brings to her great comfort and remarkable peace.

One can come at any time and stay for any length of time at the All-Night Adoration (most linger for an hour or two). Angela Testani was at her first session three Fridays ago, "I will be staying here all night. Consolation and enlightenment take time. I am on my second cup of coffee though (-midnight)." Michelle Cardenas, a regular, shared, "You just know when you are to leave. The longest I've stayed was 6 to 7 hours. And the time just flew by."

Benediction begins. The Eucharist is returned to the Tabernacle. The doors of St. Dominic's are opened to the public once more. It is 7:30 am on Saturday. Morning has broken. †



Instructions for entering the church for All-Night Adoration can be obtained from Jim Burke at Jim@allnightadoration.org. Prayer requests can be sent to PrayerRequest@allnightadoration.org.



*Holy Land,
November 2013*

A Journey Into Time

St. Jerome calls the Holy Land the Fifth Gospel. So much of scripture comes alive standing on the shores of the Galilee, seeing the River Jordan, going up to Jerusalem, and so much more. The feel of the land gives you a feel for the Bible!

During the trip to the Holy Land this past November, I was put in mind of another journey, the Word's journey begun in the announcement at Nazareth, born in Jerusalem, celebrating in Cana, and more. The Word took on humanity, a very broken and pained humanity. The Holy Land then and now is not a tame land. The actors then are different now, but the pain of humanity is still lived out there in painful detail.

Then as now, God is calling broken humanity to himself to heal the fissures of our hearts. God in Jesus was embracing all that we are, offering all that He is. It is not enough to merely visit the Christian holy sites. One should see all the continuing points of anger and division, hurt and revenge. To go to the Holy Land and forget the divine journey into broken humanity would be incredibly sad. I would rather feel people's pain than have some warm fuzzy religious feeling. I would join Jesus's journey into humanity's anguish, an anguish that still plagues the Holy Land.

How sad it is to see the dual-class citizenships of Jewish Israelis and Palestinian Israelis, to experience the division among the sons of Abraham, to notice the absent

Palestinian Christian. One stands atop the Golan and sees the threat to Israel; one goes into Bethlehem surrounded by high walls and feels in prison; one mourns for the Jewish youth always on patrol, always waiting for another attack; one cries for the Palestinian youths, both Muslim and Christian, so bright and so lacking in hope and future; one visits Yad Vashem and sees what Christians have done throughout the centuries to Jews. I have no solution, but I know I must feel the pain and futility. God wept then, He weeps now. It was into that world that Jesus pitched His tent and pitches it still in every human heart. It would be a failed pilgrimage to the Holy Land if one didn't return with the nagging feeling that every day, and in every way, we should ourselves live the Beatitudes more intently: Blessed are those who mourn...Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice... Blessed are the peacemakers.

At the end of the trip, I knew I had been on holy ground, but more importantly, I experienced something of the greater journey that the Word made flesh took into broken humanity: I glimpsed God's love for humanity. †

Group picture with Jerusalem in the background (main); Communion in the Tomb at the Holy Sepulchre Church (top right); Stations of the Cross at 4 am and in rain (bottom right).

Holy Land 2013 trip for Young Adults Group and 3040s: please contact Shelley Goodale at 415.674.0464.

The Administration Commission thanks Frs. Stephen Maria and Xavier for their reflection pieces and photographs. Thanks also to Jim Burke and the warm welcome from the All-Night Adoration team. The Administration Commission welcomes feedback on the newsletter. Please write to st.d.comm.committee@gmail.com.