

Dominican Month for Peace

Rome, 24 September 2018

To all the members of the Dominican Family

Dominican Month for Peace 2018

Prot. 50/18/506 Promoter of J&P

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Warm greetings again from Rome!

You may remember the letter we sent last year in which we proposed that every December be a Dominican Month for Peace in order to promote a global Dominican solidarity with our brothers and sisters who are trying to bring hope in situations of violence and war. We are now writing to you to inform you that the focus of our Dominican Month for Peace for 2018 will be on the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Our focus last year on Colombia inspired Dominican communities in all parts of the world to demonstrate solidarity with the suffering of the Colombian people and with the efforts of Dominicans there to be advocates of peace. We received many reports of Masses celebrated, prayers offered, awareness of Colombia raised, Colombian embassies contacted and a number of financial contributions made for the training of peacemakers in the Diocese of Tibú, Catatumbo. Some of these activities were reported on our websites. We thank all those communities who made such a commendable effort, and we are especially grateful to those who sent us reports and photos of their initiatives. We will be very grateful still to receive such information from others who took initiatives, but who have not yet informed us of their solidarity efforts!

This positive global response has encouraged us to arrange this second Dominican Month for Peace in 2018. After considering several suggestions, we have decided that the focus this year will be on the **Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)**. The people of this country have been living through decades of devastating wars with ongoing massacres and human rights violations perpetrated by government forces and scores of opposing armed groups who, along with many foreign powers and companies, are scrambling to extract the rich natural resources of the country.

In this seemingly hopeless context where millions of people are rendered extremely vulnerable, our Dominican brothers and sisters are trying to bring hope by strengthening the capacity of the people to become agents of sustainable development and peace. In this 2018 Month for Peace, therefore, we hope that the whole Order will find ways to encourage and support them in these valuable efforts.

As in 2017, the period of this focus will be Advent, when we are all waiting for the celebration of the mystery of the incarnation of the Prince of Peace. Our focus on peace in the DRC will therefore start on the First Sunday of Advent (2 December), run for the whole of December, and culminate on the Church's World Day of Peace on 1 January.

As we did in 2017, we encourage you to consider any or all of the following suggestions of ways to express your solidarity with our Dominican brothers and sisters in the DRC:





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1. Prayer:

- Each entity is asked to organise at least one Prayer Vigil and Solemn Eucharist for Peace, Reconciliation and Development in the DR Congo.
- This can be done creatively to raise awareness about the situation of violence in the DRC and how it relates to your local reality.
- One idea given is to create a space for a labyrinth in your church or chapel or convent which can be identified with the search for peace in the DR Congo. We include details of this suggestion in the attached materials.
- Our monasteries of nuns are especially requested to strengthen the project through their prayers throughout the month.

2. Preaching:

- We are all asked to incorporate this focus on peace in the DRC into our ordinary Advent preaching and to diffuse this as far as possible through the media of your entity. Wherever possible, it would be useful to invite a member of the Order in the DRC who is present in your entity to speak.

3. Collection of Works of Art:

- All artists within the Order (painters, photographers, poets, musicians, ...) are invited to contribute towards the process of peace and reconciliation by producing a work of art that can either be
 - published in the Order's media, or
 - offered to our sisters and brothers in the DRC, or
 - sent to Santa Sabina, or
 - placed in local symbolic spaces in your home country to raise local and global awareness of the need for peace and reconciliation.
- In 2017, hardly any works of art were produced. However, one that was received a bit late was a beautiful photograph taken for the occasion by our brother, Adam Rokosz, from the Province of South Germany and Austria. We have decided to use this photograph as the logo for this year's Month for Peace. You can see a reflection on the photo attached. We hope that it will also encourage other artists in the Order to share their talents for this good cause!

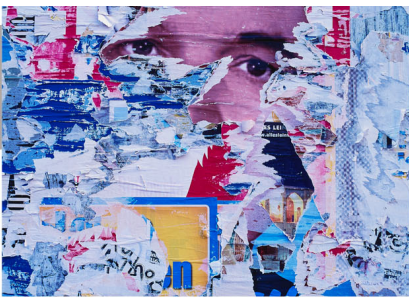
4. A Collection or Financial Contribution:

- In the University of Uélé, which is a Dominican initiative in Isiro, in the Haut- Uélé Province, a Civic Education Program "Le Programme d'éducation civique (PEDUC)", has been established. The university and this project are largely run by members of the Dominican Family. The project aims to help the people of the Uélé region to know, promote and defend their rights and fundamental freedoms long ignored and flouted after decades of dictatorship followed by abusive "wars of liberation" in the country. We are asked to make financial contributions that will be used to support and strengthen this vital project for a better civic and electoral education of the Congolese people through:
 - Awareness-raising campaigns (including the setting up of a radio/television station) and training sessions on the human rights and duties of citizens, on the nature of democracy and on a culture of tolerance; and
 - Offering conflict resolution services to ensure the prevention and management of tribal or interethnic conflicts in these processes.

5. Contact with the local DR Congo Embassy:

- Ensure that the local embassy of DR Congo is informed about the Order's focus on solidarity with the struggle for sustainable development and peace in the DRC.
- Invite the ambassador and other embassy officials to participate in any activities organised.
- The embassy is encouraged to address the concerns raised by Dominicans in the DRC.





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If you have other suggestions on ways to express solidarity with our brothers and sisters in the DRC, please do share them with us.

How to send contributions?

Financial Donations:

Name of Bank: **BCDC (Code Swift : BCDCCDKI)**
Intermediary Bank: **Citi Bank New York (Swift : CITIUS33)**
Address of Bank: **Agence d'Isiro (Province Haut-Uélé)**
Account Holder: **Université de l'Uélé**
Name of Account: **UNIUELE/PROJETS**
Account Number: **00154-00001331825-61 USD**

Works of Art: Write to the General Curia: Promoter for Justice and Peace un@curia.op.org

General Information: fr Roger GAISE, gaiseroger@yahoo.fr; Tél: +243 81 81 40 679

Attached please find a flyer with information about the reality in the DRC, including some testimonies of local people, to assist you in your planning of local events for the Month of Peace this year. So, as a next step, we urge you:

1. **to appoint a coordinator for the Month for Peace for your entity,**
2. **to inform our promoters of Justice and Peace, fr Mike Deeb un@curia.op.org and Sr Cecilia Espenilla jp.dsi@curia.op.org of the name of the coordinator appointed for your entity, and**
3. **to allocate time for possible events in your regular programme for that month.**

Thank you very much for your cooperation! We pray that, through this small action, solidarity amongst us all can continue to grow and, in turn, enable our preaching mission to have a greater impact in bringing Good News to our world.

Finally, we urge you to reflect on the efforts for peace of your own entity that would benefit from a global Dominican solidarity. We then invite you to develop a concrete project and to make a request to be the focus of our Dominican Month for Peace in the years to come. This request can be made through the Order's General Promoter for Justice and Peace or the DSI International Promoter for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation.

In St Dominic,

br Bruno Cadore
Master of the Order

sr Cecilia Espenilla
DSI International Promoter for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation

br Mike Deeb
General Promoter for Justice and Peace

