Sister Mary Pat Reid, OP, finds inspiration in the art of pottery.
Dear Friends,

This issue of the Flame highlights three of our Dominican women who have immersed themselves in preaching the Word of God through various media. Each has been recognized by the Dominican Institute of the Arts as creative preachers through their unique gifts. I think you will appreciate their distinct approaches to the ministry of preaching.

The cover photo depicts Sister Mary Pat Reid at the potter’s wheel, one of her favorite places to be. It reminds me of the words of Isaiah,

But now, O LORD, we are the clay, and you are the potter. We all are formed by your hands (64:8).

As I ponder these words and recall how God chose special care to create each of us, I think of you, our friends and benefactors, whom God has placed in our lives. I thank you for being with us on this Dominican journey. You have been a blessing in our lives as you accompany us in our ministries. Today the Spirit of God is at the potter’s wheel. Do we yield to the Potter’s hands or do we hesitate or resist the urgings of the Spirit of God that continue to shape us? Let us pray together that we may always be open and pliable in the hands of God.

We remember you in prayer each day and ask you also to keep us in prayer.

Gratefully,

Patrice Werner, OP
Prioress
THE SISTERS OF SAINT DOMINIC WISH TO THANK ALL OF YOU FOR Bailing us Out! (Literally)

Here are some of the before and after photos of the flood.

We’re back in Business!
AGAIN, MANY, MANY THANKS!
DOMINICAN PRACTITIONERS OF THE ARTS: 

Potter, Poet, Preacher!

During the past fifty years, like many other American congregations of religious sisters, the Caldwell Dominican community has exhibited an interesting mathematical phenomenon: while membership has steadily diminished, presence in the larger community has expanded. One of the factors contributing to this wider geographical exposure and mission effectiveness is our increased participation in collaborative associations – diocesan, national, and international. At present, Caldwell Dominicans maintain membership in at least twenty such relationships. The sheer number of meetings and extensive travel entailed compels each prioress to limit the number of events to attend personally and to send one or more representatives to the others. Ideally, interaction between and among these groups proves mutually supportive to each association’s goals and enriching to its individual members.

Caldwell’s experience with the Dominican Institute for the Arts offers one example of such a beneficial relationship.

Our involvement with this specialized group began in 1998 when the prioress, Sister Joan Doyle, responded to an invitation for American artists of the Order to attend the first national meeting of a new organization. The freshly-minted Dominican Institute for the Arts described itself as a grassroots organization of visual and performing artists (including poets and preachers) who commit themselves to promote two concepts: the artistic experience is a form of contemplation, and the artifact itself is a form of preaching. Sister Joan chose to send Sister Mary Pat Reid to represent the Caldwell community at the artists’ first national gathering in San Jose, California. Sister Mary Pat was awed by the quality and variety of the art work on display, but she felt immediately at home in a group that eventually included professional studio artists, art teachers, art therapists musicians, composers, communication specialists, and men and women who had postponed developing their creative gifts until retirement.

Above: Sister Mary Pat, OP, hone her skills on the potter’s wheel
Below: Hands that create mirror the hands of the Creator.
For the past two decades, Sister Mary Pat has attended and contributed to every DIA annual assembly save one. Her membership has been a continual service to the board of directors and the gathering planning commissions on which she has served – officially and unofficially – almost without interruption. And Sister’s devotion has been amply rewarded. Her voice is seldom heard at public gatherings. But in private conversation Sister Mary Pat becomes animated and eloquent as she expresses gratitude to the members of the DIA for “an exponential strengthening of my personal experience of the spirituality of art.” She associates this spirituality with the awakening of her call to religious life in high school. Learning to fire the kiln for Sister Victoria’s decorated porcelain as a teenager, she experienced the first sparks of her dual vocation. After an introduction to the potter’s wheel in a craft class with Sister Gerardine, she was assigned to Lacordaire Academy where she found a wheel and a whole clay room awaiting her. Hours spent sculpting clay enhanced her immediate affinity with this medium. “The clay says to me: ‘You think you know what I shall be, but I also have input to creation. After all, I am the ancestor of it all... from dust to dust.’”

Through the DIA, Sister Mary Pat enjoys meaningful conversation with artists from all over the United States while she brings to them the perceptions and skills accrued from a history of volunteer work experiences that one rarely assigns to an artist: service in New York City soup kitchens; summer camps in New York, Connecticut, and New Hampshire; farm labor, catering, pottery production; migrant ministry with Haitians and Mexicans in the Carolinas, and most recently, in Arizona. This year when Sisters Pat Stringer and Donna O’Brien gathered a group to bring relief to the refugees in camps on the USA southern border they were not surprised that Sister Mary Pat’s baggage included art supplies for the children. “Good idea to keep them entertained and busy,” they assumed. But Sister was hoping to give the children something more: she hoped to open the door for these impoverished children to experience at least for a moment that contact with interior spiritual beauty, which happens in the act of making art.
Not all DIA impact is so spectacular. Five years after Sister Mary Pat helped found the Dominican Institute for the Arts, Sister Arlene Antczak, prioress, urged Sister Elizabeth Michael to consider the benefit of interaction with other creative Dominicans. Sister Arlene’s invitation was timely. She had just given Sister Elizabeth Michael permission to work on a book in an abandoned studio at the top of the Administration building on the Cadwell campus. This room, in which Sister Mary Pat took high school art lessons, had been the last studio of Sister Julia Marie. The room remembers the creative aura of all that has happened there.

Sister Elizabeth Michael’s membership in the DIA proved beneficial almost immediately. An exhibit at the first DIA Gathering she attended was the inspiration for *Gift Exchange*, a chapbook of ekphrastic poetry. At DIA annual meetings members provided a receptive national audience for her first public readings. *The View from the Ruin: Images for a Dialogue of Faith with Doubt* earned the honored Fra Angelico Award. Such DIA encouragement benefited the Caldwell University Tower Poets, a group of local poets who have been meeting with “E. Michael” monthly for many years.

At a recent celebration of their twentieth anniversary, the Tower Poets mounted an impressive display of publications. Like Sister Mary Pat, elected to the DIA board for multiple terms, Sister Elizabeth Michael has enjoyed a much wider and deeper experience of the arts than she did on her own. She is now most useful behind the scenes as editor for the DIA newsletter, OPalette, a publication with international distribution.

Above: Sister Elizabeth Michael Boyle, OP, displays the Fra Angelico Award

Left: Sister Elizabeth Michael Boyle, OP, in her tower room office
Included in membership and strengthening its mission are many invisible members who applaud and exemplify its designation of preaching as a performing art. In this category, Caldwell Dominican Sister Honora Werner has earned the widest name recognition. It is difficult to name a Dominican motherhouse where Sister Honora has not given a retreat or keynote. During the long years when Roman Catholic feminists argued for a Dominican woman’s vocation to preach, Sister Honora had been not only a steady advocate for the right to preach, but more importantly, a teacher and exemplar of preaching as an art. For five years she was associate professor and chair of the homiletics department at Saint Mary’s Seminary and University in Baltimore. For another eight years at Aquinas Institute of Theology in St. Louis, Missouri, she helped to develop the D.Min. program in preaching and ultimately became director of the only Catholic doctoral program in homiletics in the world.

Like Sister Mary Pat, Sister Honora brings to her art the insights accrued in an unusual variety of experiences: musician, teacher, campus minister at Vanderbilt and Holy Cross, retreat director, itinerant preacher, congregational administration. Her appreciation for the spiritual power of the arts is especially evident in her homilies, retreat conferences, and frequent online scriptural reflections, like *The Word*.

In all of these sisters, one characteristic of Caldwell Dominicans seems evident: active participation, personal and communal, can transform the membership glass from half empty to half full.
SISTERS OF SAINT DOMINIC OF CALDWELL

2019 Jubilarians

Sister Margaret Virginia Blum, OP

Sister Margaret Virginia Blum, OP, graduated from Caldwell University and holds a master’s degree in American history from Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ. She devoted her work for God and the congregation in a variety of ways in New Jersey. Most recently at Mount Saint Dominic Academy, Caldwell, Sister served as grants director, treasurer, and maintenance director. At Caldwell University she served as director of corporate relations and special gifts, and as grants director; and at St. Dominic Academy, Jersey City, as development assistant. Sister Margaret Virginia loved history and was a tremendous teacher of social studies. She taught at two high schools: St. Mary, Rutherford, and Union Catholic, Scotch Plains, where she also served as chair of the history department. In addition she taught at the following grade schools: St. John the Apostle, Clark; St. Therese, Paterson; St. Aedan, Jersey City. During her many years of ministry, she also graciously served as local bursar in some of our convents.

Sister Mary Amelia Cetera, OP

Sister Mary Amelia Cetera, OP, graduated from Caldwell University. She earned a master’s degree from Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ, in curriculum and teaching with elementary education. She did additional years of study in teacher education at Columbia University, Teachers College, New York, NY. Today in her retirement, Sister Amelia exhibits a serenity of spirit. Wherever she has lived and ministered she has done so with dignity and grace. Sister is revered as professor emerita of education at Caldwell University, where she spent many years as professor and adjunct professor. She served as the education department chair, residence hall dean, coordinating supervisor of schools, continuing education department assistant, and was involved in placement services. Previously, Sister ministered in the following schools in New Jersey: as principal at Our Lady of Lourdes, Mountainside; as director of Mount Saint Dominic Grade School, Caldwell; and as teacher in St. John the Baptist, Jersey City. She also taught at Blessed Sacrament, Bridgeport, CT. Sister Amelia has lived her life devoted to Dominican traditions and leaves a beautiful legacy of love and service.

Sister Gerardine Mueller, OP

Sister Gerardine Mueller, OP, graduated from Caldwell University and holds two master’s degrees from the University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN, the first in art and the second in fine arts. Recently, she also received an honorary doctorate from Caldwell University. Today Sister Gerardine is studio artist in residence for the Sisters of St. Dominic where she still creates one of a kind works of art. She also served as director of postulants and affiliates for the congregation. She was professor of art and chaired the art department at Caldwell University for many years where she had great impact on the students and maintained close relationships with them. She holds the title of professor emerita and continues to be active at university affairs. For Sister Gerardine, art has always been a part of her life and her preaching. Her intensive career as an artist, especially her contemplative works have inspired people and brought them closer to God. She is dearly loved and has received great praise for her masterpieces in sculpture, stained glass windows, lettering and illumination. Previously Sister Gerardine taught at St. Dominic Academy, Jersey City; St. John the Baptist, Jersey City; and Lacordaire Academy, Upper Montclair, all in New Jersey.

Sister Elizabeth Francis Brisson, OP

Sister Elizabeth Francis Brisson, OP, received a bachelor’s degree in English with an education minor from Caldwell University. Today in retirement, she is a lector at St. Catherine of Siena Convent and Healthcare Center and is very helpful to those in need. Amazingly, she still moves and acts with the enthusiasm of youth. Previously, she cheerfully proclaimed the Word of God at Siena Village, a senior citizen housing project located in Wayne, NJ, where she served as social service director and was dearly loved by the residents. Her previous ministries were involved in teaching and administration in grade schools also located in New Jersey. At St. John the Baptist, Jersey City, Sister Elizabeth Francis both taught and served as vice principal. She was principal at St. Mary, Rutherford and Our Lady of Peace, New Providence. In addition she taught at the following schools: St. Elizabeth, Linden; Holy Spirit, Asbury Park; St. Paul, Irvington; St. Venantius, Orange; and St. Michael, Union.

Sister Bernadette Michael Makely, OP

Sister Bernadette Michael Makely, OP, earned her bachelor’s degree from Caldwell University, where she majored in social studies with a minor in education. She served her entire ministry in New Jersey with dedication and love. Sister was a successful grade school teacher at the following schools: St. Joseph, Toms River; St. Denis, Manasquan; Sts. Peter and Paul, Hoboken; Our Lady of Peace, New Providence; St. Aloysius, Caldwell; St. Joseph, Union City; St. Therese, Paterson; Sacred Heart, Dover, St. Elizabeth; St. Brigid, North Bergen. She continued to reach out and teach God’s people as librarian at two high schools: St. Mary, Rutherford and Union Catholic, Scotch Plains, and as principal at Our Lady of the Lake, Verona. Today Sister Bernadette Michael ministers to all through her gentleness of spirit and prayerful presence.

Sister Christine Coakley, OP

Sister Christine Coakley, OP, graduated from Caldwell University and received her master’s degree in administration and supervision from Villanova University, Villanova, PA. In her retirement she is eager and available to reach out to those in need, exemplified by her volunteer work with the Visiting Nurses Association, Manasquan, NJ. New Jersey has been blessed for all of Sister Christine’s ministries took place in State. Sister Christine first began teaching at St. Michael School, Union, and later at St. Cassian School, Montclair, and St. Thomas the Apostle School, Bloomfield. A wonderfully gifted grade school teacher, Sister Christine became a wonderfully gifted school principal. She served in that capacity at St. Denis, Manasquan, St. Catherine of Siena, Cedar Grove, and St. Theresa, Paterson. Always there for others, Sister served as guidance counselor at Immaculate Conception High School, Montclair, and for the Essex County Educational Services, she volunteered as an ESL home school teacher. Recognized for her excellent educational skills, she was also assistant superintendent in the Archdiocese of Newark School Office.

Sister Mary John Kearney, OP

Sister Mary John Kearney, OP, graduated from Caldwell University. She received her master’s degree in elementary education and guidance from Catholic University, Washington, D.C., and a second master’s in curriculum and instruction from Columbia University, Teachers College, New York, NY. Among the first to volunteer for new endeavors and projects, Sister Mary John serves as chair of the congregation’s Commission on Global Issues and is a driving force in the commission’s many studies and accomplishments. A gifted teacher and leader, Sister used those skills at Caldwell University, where she served in a variety of ways: as supervisor for the education division; chair of the education department; professor emerita, associate professor, director of field experience and certification officer. She also ministered in a number of New Jersey schools: as principal of Aquinas Academy Livingston; as principal and teacher at Lacordaire Academy, Upper Montclair; and as principal and teacher at St. Cassian, Montclair. Her teaching and education career started when she first taught at St. Mary, Rutherford.
Sister Bettyanne Schultz, OP, earned a bachelor’s degree from Caldwell University and a master’s in American history with a political science minor from Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI. Sister Bettyanne was a master teacher of history for many years and then became principal in the school she loved, Saint Dominic Academy, Jersey City, NJ. In addition, she taught at the following schools in New Jersey: Lacordaire Academy, Upper Montclair; St. John the Baptist, Jersey City; St. Philip the Apostle, Clifton; St. Mary, Wharton; St. Virgil, Morris Plains; and St. Mary, Rutherford. She served as principal at St. Brigid, North Bergen, NJ. While at St. Catherine, Mobile, AL, Sister Bettyanne graciously ministered as both principal and teacher. In her retirement, she remains a prayerful woman of God, interested, active, and involved in community matters and current events. Her generous spirit permeates everything she is involved in.

Sister deMontfort Kinchellagh, OP, graduated from Caldwell University and holds a master’s in administration and supervision from Seton Hall University. For many years Sister deMontfort has been very much involved in First Friends, which offers compassion and advocacy for those held in detention centers. Previously she served as chairperson and justice promoter of the congregation’s Commission of Global Issues. Elected to the congregational leadership team, Sister deMontfort served as councilor for ministry. Although a native of Utica, New York, her various ministries kept her in New Jersey. At Mount Saint Dominic Academy, she was director of alumnae and public relations. At the lower school of Lacordaire Academy, she both taught and was principal, while at the upper school she had a variety of roles: dean of students, recruitment, and alumnae relations. For the Archdiocese of Newark, Sister was assistant superintendent for Hudson County schools. She also served as principal of St. Philip the Apostle in Clifton and taught at the following schools: St. Mary, Rutherford; St. Brigid, North Bergen; and St. Mary, Rahway. In all ways she has lived a life of service and compassion combined with her quick Irish wit.

Sister Danielle McCarthy, OP, graduated from Caldwell University and received a master’s degree in American history from the University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN, and a second master’s in pastoral ministry from Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ. Always ready to answer a call, Sister Danielle, in her retired years, was graciously willing to serve in two areas: first, as coordinator for St. Catherine of Siena Convent for two years, and, second, to be the justice promoter for the Sisters of St. Dominic of Caldwell. Strongly committed to the ministry of Catholic education, Sister Danielle ministered at St. Dominic Academy, Jersey City, NJ. Here she brought her administrative expertise to the secondary level as registrar, teacher, and assistant development director. Sister served as principal at St. Francis de Sales School, Marsh Harbor, Abaco; and at three grade schools in New Jersey: St. Aedan, Jersey City; St. John the Baptist, Jersey City; and St. Raphael, Livingston. In addition, Sister taught at St. Catherine School, Mobile, AL; Blessed Sacrament School, Bridgeport, CT, and in four New Jersey grade schools: Holy Spirit, Asbury Park; Lacordaire Academy, Upper Montclair; St. Mary, Wharton; and Christ the King, Hillside.

Sister Mary McGuinness, OP, graduated from Caldwell University and earned a master’s degree in library science from Villanova University, Villanova, PA, and a second master’s in theology from St. John’s University, Collegeville, MN. Using her gift of love for the scriptures of the Bible and the scriptures of Earth, she spent many years ministering at RENEW International, Plainfield, NJ. There Sister Mary worked with the development of small Christian communities and served as presenter, editor, and coordinator of publications. In the Archdiocese of Newark, she was coordinator of the Department of Shared Responsibility and simultaneously served as staff member to the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council. Sister ministered as pastoral associate for adult education and ministry to those who were sick at St. Philomena Parish, Livingston, NJ. For the congregation she was involved in patient care at St. Catherine of Siena Healthcare Center and served as director of scholastics. She served at Mount Saint Dominic Academy as chairperson of the religious studies department and religious studies teacher and at Caldwell University was instructor in library science: At Lacordaire Academy, Upper Montclair, NJ, she ministered as teacher and librarian. Sister also taught at St. Margaret, Bayou La Batre, AL, and many other grade schools in New Jersey.

Sister Margaret Mary Meyer, OP, graduated from Caldwell University and received a master’s degree in religion education from Fordham University, Bronx, NY. She was administrative assistant for the congregation and served as bookkeeper for Caldwell University. For most of her life, Sister Margaret Mary was very much involved in the religious education of both children and adults, always creatively involving parents in the religious education of their children. At St. Margaret, Bayou La Batre, AL, Sister ministered as pastoral associate for catechetics. She was a consultant in catechetics for the Office of Religious Education in the Diocese of San Diego, San Diego, CA. Sister served as director of religious education at the following parishes: Our Lady of Nazareth Roanoke, VA; St. Barnabas, North Haven, CT; St. Jane Frances de Chantal, North Hollywood, CA. St. Joseph, East Rutherford, NJ and as religion coordinator assistant at St. Philomena Parish, Livingston, NJ. Her teaching experiences were at the following schools: St. Francis de Sales, Marsh Harbor, Abaco; St. Virgin, Morris Plains, NJ; and Sacred Heart School, Lyndhurst, NJ.

Sister Gerarda Panek, OP, graduated from Caldwell University and earned a master’s degree in art from the University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN. She currently serves as graphic artist for the Sisters of St. Dominic, Caldwell, NJ, for all community events and, in a particular way, for the Development Office. Steeped in the Dominican tradition, she clearly preaches through every aspect of her creative renditions and in her generosity to help others. Previously, Sister Gerarda ministered to the Sisters of St. Dominic as public relations and assistant communications director. Sister also served the Archdiocese of Newark, as graphic artist, working eleven years at Catholic Community Services. She was graphic designer for Caldwell University and Mount Saint Dominic Academy, both in Caldwell, NJ, and also taught at the Academy. In addition she also taught art at the following schools in New Jersey: St. Dominic Academy, Jersey City; Union Catholic High School, Scotch Plains; St. John the Apostle, Clark; and St. John the Baptist, Jersey City.

Sister Veritas Picardi, OP, graduated from Caldwell University and received her master’s degree from the University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN and her Ph.D. in administration and supervision from Fordham University, Bronx, NY. For the congregation, she graciously served as councilor for fiscal planning and stewardship and also kept careful watch over our community funds when she was treasurer. For a number of years she cheerfully ministered as resident manager at Marian Manor, Caldwell, NJ. Sister Veritas was an excellent philosophy instructor at both Caldwell University and Essex County College, Newark, NJ. She ministered as principal at Blessed Sacrament-St. Mary School, Bridgeport, CT, and at Our Lady of Sorrows School, Garfield, NJ and taught at the following New Jersey schools: St. Ann School, Newark; Link Community, Newark; Our Lady of Lourdes, Mountainside; Ascension, New Milford; and Our Lady of the Lake Verona. For a brief time Sister used her clerical skills at Genesis Farm, Blairstown, NJ.
Sister Patrice Werner, OP, graduated from Caldwell University and received her master’s degree in French from McGill University, Montreal, Canada, and her Ph.D. in French from New York University, New York, NY. Currently Sister Patrice serves as prioress for the Sisters of St. Dominic, Caldwell, leading the community with her expert leadership skills during a time of difficult decision making. She has also served on the congregation’s mission effectiveness committee and on the sponsorship committee. An experienced executive, Sister Patrice served as president of Caldwell University from 1994-2009. Previously, her administrative roles at Caldwell University included: academic dean; chair of the foreign languages department; French professor; and director of concurrent curriculum. In earlier years, she taught at Mount Saint Dominic Academy, Caldwell, NJ, St. Dominic Academy, Jersey City, NJ; St. Margaret School, Bayou La Batre, AL; St. Aloysius School, Caldwell, NJ; and St. John the Apostle School, Clark, NJ. She has a wonderful way with words, often preaching through story telling.

Sister Arlene Antczak, OP, graduated from Caldwell University and earned a master’s degree in counseling from the University of Dayton, Dayton, OH. Tender to human needs, today Sister preaches the Gospel in a variety of areas including spiritual direction, facilitation, spiritual and health care, and consultation. Sister Arlene ministered in many ways for the Sisters of St. Dominic as spiritual director, vocation director, councilor for personal development, and from 2005-2015 as prioress. Sister Arlene, who knows the wisdom of deep listening, served in various other capacities in New Jersey. She taught at St. Dominic Academy, Jersey City, and was also director of guidance. While there, she graciously left her guidance ministry, which she truly loved, to answer the call to serve as interim principal. Later she served in the position of student assistance and family counselor. In addition, she ministered as principal of Lacomardre Academy, Upper Montclair. Sister also taught at Mount St. Dominic Grade School; the lower school of Lacomardre Academy, Upper Montclair, and St. Joseph School, Union City.

Sister Anne Halpin, OP, graduated from Caldwell University and received a master’s degree in reading from Kean University, Union, NJ. With a generous heart and cheerful spirit, Sister currently works with the RCIA and the homeless and neighborhood ministry in the parish of St. Anastasia, St. Augustine, FL, and is coordinator for the Wildflower Clinic. Also in St. Augustine, she taught at the parish school of the Cathedral. All of her other ministries were in New Jersey. At Sacred Heart School, Dover, she was principal and at St. Virgil School, Morris Plains, she served as vice-principal. She also taught at the following schools: Our Lady of the Lake, Verona; Marylawn of the Oranges, South Orange; Lalomadre Academy, Upper Montclair; St. Michael, Union; St. Peter the Apostle, Parsippany; and Aquinas Academy, Livingston. Wherever she has ministered, Sister Anne has planted seeds for many good deeds in the community.

Sister Patricia Hogan, OP, graduated from Caldwell University and earned her master’s in elementary administration and supervision from Villanova University, Villanova, PA. Sister Patricia has used her gift of ministry in New Jersey, primarily at Our Lady Help of Christians, East Orange, where she has lovingly served as principal for the last 40 years. This unique Catholic school is home to multi-cultural, multi-lingual, multi-religious immigrants and refugees from Africa, Haiti, the islands, and lately from the Mid-East. Sister Pat’s dedicated ministry takes her far beyond the classroom and office into homes and neighborhoods, where her kindness is a light and support to others. Earlier in her ministry Sister Pat’s creative leadership was also widely recognized when she taught and served as principal of St. Ann School, Newark, and St. Aedan School, Jersey City.

Sister Michael Maurice Leahy, OP, graduated from Caldwell University and earned her master’s degree in special education from Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ. Currently, Sister serves the Sisters of St. Dominic as director of transportation. She is also a willing, faithful driver, especially in emergencies. Informally she preaches the beauty of God through her artistic creations at every community celebration or meeting. At Caldwell University, Sister ministered in various ways as senior academic advisor, assistant registrar, director of continuing education, dean of students, and education department instructor. Sister was principal and teacher in many schools in New Jersey. She served as principal of St. Catharine, Spring Lake; St. Aedan, Jersey City; Lacomardre Academy, Upper Montclair; St. Ann, Newark; and St. Boniface, Jersey City. Likewise, she taught at Aquinas Academy, Livingston; Our Lady of the Lake, Verona; and St. Elizabeth, Linden.

Sister Eleanor Uhl, OP, graduated from Caldwell University and earned her master’s in education and reading from Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ. With exuberance and a joyful spirit, Sister Eleanor radiates that energy wherever she ministers. Presently Sister is director of peace education at Our Lady Help of Christians School, East Orange, NJ, and also serves as pastoral care minister at St. Aloysius Parish, Caldwell, NJ. Previously she brought loving care to the residents as she ministered as a nurse’s aide at St. Catherine of Sionna Healthcare Center, Caldwell. In New Jersey, Sister Eleanor taught at St. Joseph School, Jersey City and St. Mary School, Rahway; served on the administrative team for Resurrection parish, Jersey City; was principal at St. Mary School, Jersey City; and taught and was principal at St. Ann School, Newark. Out of state, Sister Eleanor taught at St. Catherine, Mobile, AL, and ministered as both principal and teacher at St. Francis de Sales, Abaco, Bahamas. Her missionary spirit continues as she serves on the Dominican Haitian Mission Team and has ministered in Haiti during summer months.

Sister Patricia Stringer, OP, graduated from Caldwell University. She holds a master’s degree in mathematics and industrial education from Ball State University, Muncie, IN, and a master’s in telecommunications from Barry University, Miami Shores, FL. Always enthusiastic, she serves as promoter of Dominican life for the congregation. Previously Sister Patricia served on the congregational leadership team and as vocation director. For eleven years as principal of Fey Alegría Esquirlu Santo School, El Cruce de Arroyo Hondo, Dominican Republic, Sister Pat brought her creative skills and cheerful missionary spirit to that local community. She served in many capacities at Caldwell University: assistant dean of student life, mathematics instructor, and manager of the television studio. In the Diocese of Trenton she directed the Office of Hispanic Concerns and in the Diocese of Puyo, Puyo, Ecuador, Sister ministered as the director of communications. In addition she has taught at a number of schools in New Jersey, St. Francis de Sales, Abaco, Bahamas, and the Working Boys Center, Quito, Ecuador.
During the last week in June, a small group of enthusiastic students from Mount Saint Dominic Academy arrived at Siena Heights University in Adrian, Michigan, for the 21st Dominican High Schools Preaching Conference.

Day One centered around “Preaching in the Dominican Tradition” where we learned not to BEWARE of the four Dominican Pillars but rather to BE AWARE of Prayer, Study, Community, and Mission to discover Truth. Portrayals of several Dominican saints helped us to see how they found God and received God’s love. In an interactive presentation on Saint Catherine of Siena, we were reminded that, if we are truly ourselves, we can “set the world on fire!” We also learned how to go outside of our comfort zones through music, dancing and blessings from other faiths. Emma Hladik noted, Learning about the Dominican tradition and the relationship between people of all faiths reminded me that we truly are all connected.

On Day Two, seminars focused on “Preaching the Signs of the Times.” Two that had great impact on our students were “Justice Posture on the Dominican Campus” that highlighted environmental stewardship, and “The Wall, the Immigrants, the Church and Me,” which elucidated the struggles faced by immigrants while trying to find refuge. This whole day was extremely eye-opening and has given me many ideas to bring back to my school, commented Jacqueline MacStudy.

Day Three brought “Preaching in Action” to the forefront as students and mentors were sent to various locations in the greater Adrian area to help serve those in need. Sites run by Goodwill, Habitat for Humanity, and the Salvation Army, as well as local organizations provided participants with service experiences. We served lunches, cleared overgrowth from a playground, packed backpacks with school supplies, and played games with senior citizens and adults with disabilities. The opportunity to participate in authentic service was an invaluable part of this conference and certainly something that we will bring back to the Mount, remarked Emma Robson.

On Day Four, the theme was “Preaching Through the Creative Arts” and everyone participated in three activities, selected from options including making mandalas and rosaries, found prayer/found poetry, Tai Chi Chih, and walking the labyrinth. Sister Barbara Schwarz, OP, taught us to look deeper into the stories of God. Her keynote allowed us to take time out of our day to focus on the words of the Gospel. We carried these lessons with us throughout the day. The most important thing I learned by preaching through the arts, Kaitlyn Hladik observed, was that it is important to relax and maintain focus while letting God take control. I learned that preaching could be done in many different ways.

With full hearts, clear eyes, and open minds we formulated an Action Plan for our school community, which was presented to the entire conference and the Adrian Dominican Sisters during Sunday Mass and our closing ceremonies. We were thankful for the opportunity to attend the conference—ready to share what we learned and ready to preach the Dominican charism as future leaders—not only of Mount Saint Dominic Academy, but to all who are open to the message.

Rob DeCarlo, Jr (MSDA Faculty), Emma Hladik ‘20, Kaitlyn Hladik ‘21, Jacqueline MacStudy ‘20, Emma Robson ‘20
In February, Sisters Pat Stringer, Mary Pat Reid, and I set out on a ten-day visit to Tucson, Arizona, to volunteer at Casa Alitas, a migrant hospitality center operated by Catholic Community Services of Southern Arizona. Our mission was to see the border situation firsthand while working with other Dominican sisters to aid migrants.

We “pitched in” by making breakfast and serving food, washing and folding laundry, sorting clothes and more. Most new arrivals were from Honduras or Guatemala. We learned that after being cleared by Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the migrants had permission to be in the country but had to appear before immigration judges at their destinations. We packed bags of supplies for the migrants to take on their journeys, and we met families going to California, Texas, Kansas, and New York. We also made lots of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and salsa!

For a typical lunch, we had 60 to 100 guests to feed. New arrivals must complete an intake process, and Sister Pat used her Spanish skills to help with this task. New arrivals were always seen by a doctor or nurse, and all children were given flu shots. After completing the intake process, the migrants could choose clothing for their journeys.

We were so impressed by the variety of helpers at Casa Alitas. Volunteer nurses frequently work at the center via a nurses’ outreach program. A resilient husband-and-wife team, Frank and Dale, came almost every day to help with the laundry. Another group helped sort clothes, and yet another served soup. Even a group of local Catholic high school students came with supplies.

When buses with new migrants arrived, Sisters Pat and Mary Pat saw how those present looked out the windows in silence, hoping to glimpse loved ones. We observed several reunions of families separated at detention centers, and we were particularly moved by a Honduran father with his daughter, separated from his still-detained wife and second daughter. The joy we witnessed when they were reunited!

While helping do laundry, we talked with Frank and Dale and learned of the different groups helping migrants in the Arizona desert. The Samaritan group has placed over 800 crosses where remains have been found. They also place food and jugs of water along the migrant trails. The Humane Borders group places large water barrels with pictures of Our Lady of Guadalupe on the front and flags to show that the water is safe to drink. Nurses and doctors also walk the trails to feed migrants and care for their medical needs.

On our last day, we visited El Comedor, a Jesuit outreach center in Nogales, Mexico. Like Casa Alitas, they served food, distributed clothes, and helped with small medical needs. Here, the migrants were in the process of seeking asylum or had been deported back to Mexico. Re-entering the United States at the Mariposa Port of Entry, we were overwhelmed by the sight of razor concertina wire.

As we left Tucson, it was difficult saying goodbye to all the wonderful volunteers we had met, but we were grateful to have shared the experience. We journeyed to Tucson looking for truth and hoping to be of assistance; we returned home enriched by the people with whom we shared life.
Earlier this summer I had the opportunity to travel to southern France for the “Lands of Dominic” pilgrimage. Serving as the mission designee for Caldwell University to the Sisters of Saint Dominic of Caldwell has introduced me to the wider mission of the Dominican family. It is through this family and this connection that led me to walk the same grounds that Saint Dominic walked over 800 years ago.

Growing up Catholic I never interacted with Dominican sisters, friars, or even lay associates. However, through my years of schooling, being involved in ministry, I have encountered many religious orders including Benedictines, Marianists, Jesuits, Vincentians, and Sisters of Saint Joseph. Since serving as the director of campus ministry at Caldwell University, I have become steeped in the Dominican mission and identity. Participating in the National College Preaching in Action Conference every year with my students has helped me to grasp the core aspects of this mission. Focusing on the four pillars of prayer, study, community, and service, I try to bring that to all my students as well to encourage them to dive deeper into what it means to attend a Dominican school.

Heading into the pilgrimage at the end of June, I was in a difficult place in my life. Faith was not coming easy to me and my heart longed to feel a deep grace given to me by God, leaving me assured of God’s love for me and the world. Let’s be honest, our world isn’t in the happiest place right now. I longed to feel that with God all things can be possible, but life circumstances were leading me to think otherwise. On our first night in Fanjeaux we shared why we came on this pilgrimage and each chose a scallop shell to carry with us as a sign of being a pilgrim. The names, stories, and they “why” of each sister, associate, lay person present was different, a testament that as we each traveled from different parts of the country, we all came together to experience something, to come to know a man who was so much more than stories or facts read from a book.

Throughout the week we visited many different sites where Saint Dominic lived, prayed, and preached. All these sites have been commemorated, have lasted through the French revolution, and are present today for pilgrims and tourists to visit. Perhaps the site that impacted me the most was the “Assassins Cross.” This cross on the road from Fanjeaux to Prouilhe marks the location where Saint Dominic was walking and came upon a group of Cathars, people practicing heresy in southern France whom Dominic was tasked with trying to convert to the truth. This group of Cathars was waiting to kill Saint Dominic as he came by. Through the grace of God their hearts were converted and they let him pass by and continue on his journey. Something impossible that became possible with the grace of God. The stories of Saint Dominic are filled with God moving mountains to make things possible. That is easy to forget. It is easy to forget that in our world filled with violence, hatred, disappointment, and uncertainty, where everything feels impossible to overcome, goodness can rise above it all. That God is bigger; God can make things possible for us, just as he did with Saint Dominic. Learning about all the obstacles that Saint Dominic encountered during his time in southern France, it is truly a miracle and a grace of God that we sit here today as a Dominican family, and I for one have a new found gratitude for that gift.

Colleen O’Brien, Director of Campus Ministry, Caldwell University
Since the invention of the printing press in 1440, over five billion Bibles have been printed and handwritten Bibles ceased to be created, until now. The Saint John’s Bible is the first hand-written, hand-illuminated Bible since the invention of the printing press. It’s history began with a man named Donald Jackson, who “is one of the world’s foremost Western calligraphers.” In 1995 at a calligraphy conference, Donald Jackson approached Fr. Eric Hollas, OSB, and shared his lifelong dream to produce a hand-written, hand-illuminated Bible for the modern world. In 1998 the Benedictine community of Saint John’s Abbey in Collegeville, Minnesota, officially commissioned Jackson to lead the project to produce a hand-written Bible. The project took about 15 years to complete and is housed at Saint John’s University Hill Museum and Manuscript Library in Collegeville, Minnesota.

Caldwell University is participating in St. John’s “Heritage Program” in which we have on loan the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles, one of the seven volume set, for the 2019 calendar year. The Bible is on display in the Jennings Library lobby and visitors are encouraged to stop by during docent hours, listed on the Caldwell University website.

Having the Saint John’s Bible at Caldwell University has been a true gift for our faculty, staff, students, and the wider community. The Bible highlights the Word of God in a new and profound way through the use of calligraphy, an art form in itself, and through the use of illuminations the Scripture comes alive for the viewer. Included in the illuminations are modern images that connect with the themes of Scripture, including the twin towers in conjunction with the parable of the prodigal son; an up close view of the HIV AIDS virus representing a present day experience of hell for those who live with the terrible disease; and images from the Hubble telescope connecting the illuminations to the depth of God’s creation. The illuminations also depict elements of Benedictine traditions and landmarks at Saint John’s University.

Through sharing the Saint John’s Bible with others, people are intrigued by the time, effort, and talent that went into the process of making this particular Bible. They gaze in awe at the illuminations that seek to draw the reader deeper into the Word of God and the heart of sacred Scripture. The intention was always to touch the reader on a spiritual level that allowed God to speak to each person individually about their own faith journey. Upon giving presentations to groups regarding the Saint John’s Bible, I am touched deeply by the way each person feels connected to the illuminations.

This is a tremendous opportunity to have a copy of the Saint John’s Bible with us at Caldwell University, I hope everyone takes the time to engage with the Bible, reflect with it, or just stop by to view the beautiful calligraphy or illuminations. This is a magnificent work of art.

For more information about the Saint John’s Bible at Caldwell University visit: https://www.caldwell.edu/thesaintjohnsbible

For more information on the making of the Saint John’s Bible visit: http://saintjohnsbible.org/

Colleen O’Brien,
Director of Campus Ministry at Caldwell University
Sister Mary Thomas Aussem, OP

Sr. Mary Thomas (Catherine Aussem) was born November 3, 1928 to Joseph and Catherine Aussem and was nurtured in a loving family together with her siblings Joseph, Stewart, Joan and Muriel. She entered the Dominican Sisters of Caldwell on Sept. 8, 1949 at the age of 20, and progressed through her novitiate (1950), first profession (1951) and final profession (1957) giving evidence of her prayerful and devout way of living. She died at the age of 90 on May 4, 2019 after having served as a faithful Dominican Sister for 70 years.

Sr. Mary Thomas’ years of ministry began as an elementary school teacher of young children in Elizabeth, Union City, and Jersey City. She loved being with the children as she taught and led them through their early learning experiences with care, guidance and example.

The Community recognized her efficiency and communication skills and appointed her secretary in the office of the generalate. In this role she served four major superiors (1963–1995). It was said of her that she was trustworthy, discrete, and able to graciously meet/greet persons seeking to speak with or make an appointment with a member of the Council.

Upon the opening of Siena Village, a retirement home for senior citizens, Sr. Mary Thomas served as administrative assistant in a challenging shift in ministry. She enjoyed interacting with the residents, sharing in their lives, supporting and comforting those who needed a kind word, a listening ear, an understanding heart. She retired from Siena Village, a ministry she came to enjoy.

Her responsibilities in St. Catherine Convent where she resided continued to show her devotion to prayer, her generosity of time and talent in community and her concern for others through her thoughtful acts of kindness. Sister served as sacristan, eucharistic minister, lector and a driver to taking sisters to doctor appointments.

She enjoyed the simple things in life – traditional in her manner and choices – yet loved people and enjoyed companionship. She was a faithful friend who enjoyed sharing news, joys, and even the sadness that life sometimes brings. She found so many ways to continue her friendly outreach to others when she herself became a patient, and in turn, became a visitor to other patients.

Mary Thomas’ life mirrors what beauty and grace there is when one gives all to follow the Lord. A true Dominican who lived her vows made to God throughout her 70 years in Community. Be at peace now Mary Thomas - thank you for showing us the way by your life of prayer, kindness, example, and beauty. You will be missed and loved forever. Pray for us.

Sister Emma Patricia Murphy, OP

Our beloved Sister Emma Patricia Murphy passed away on the early evening of June 4, 2019 in St. Catherine of Siena Healthcare Center in Caldwell. She died as she lived, peacefully and with a quiet joy. A Mass of Resurrection was celebrated for her on June 8 in St. Catherine Chapel.

A resident of Lawrence, Massachusetts, Sister entered the Caldwell Dominicans in 1949 and professed her vows in 1950. She then began a career of loving service in various ministries. She devoted the first twenty-seven years to education as a teacher and an administrator. Her ministries included Lacordaire Academy in Upper Montclair, St. Mary’s in Wharton; St. Catherine, Mobile, Alabama; Assumption, Lawrence, Massachusetts; and Mount Saint Dominic in Caldwell. She was an excellent educator and thoroughly enjoyed her time in the schools but was always ready to answer a community need. She became the first receptionist and secretary at Marian Manor in Caldwell. She also gave years of service as a nurse’s assistant at St. Catherine of Siena Healthcare Center. She was secretary at our two community sponsored schools, Lacordaire Academy and Mount Saint Dominic Academy.

Wherever Sister Emma went she was a strong influence for good. Gentle and soft spoken, she nevertheless could be very clear as she spoke of her values. Her favorite scripture reading was from Micah (6:6-8). Sr. Emma Patricia was a beautiful example of acting justly, loving kindness, and walking humbly with her God.

Sister Jeanne Catherine Sheridan, OP

I wouldn’t be surprised if, back in 1958, when Jeanne announced that she was entering the convent, there may have been those who thought she was choosing some kind of Death ... following the life of an active St. Mary High School student in Rutherford. A big basketball player. A lover of Life!

But – was it a Death? Or the Birth of a new life? The life of a religious, a gifted educator - where she could also coach and moderate basketball teams!

Yes – dying to one type of life gave birth to another. A life filled with new moments, new places, new rolls to play out. New opportunities to share her giftedness! And – she was gifted in so many ways! Was there anything her hands couldn’t do? Yes, hers was a life fondly remembered by her students in St. Catherine’s, St. Mary’s, Lacordaire and Holy Angels. She impacted their lives in so many ways!

Then, on to a new way to share her gifts.

Was stepping out of the classroom a Death? Or the Birth of a new Life of sharing her gifts with her sisters in community? Driving our sisters here in St. Catherine’s was a chance for sisters to get to know one other on a deeper level, as well as for relationships with staff to grow.

Working in our Development Office was an opportunity to contribute to community needs, as well as to minister to those whose generosity touches us all.

Then came the time for retirement. Once again, a Death to “Active Ministry” or a Birth to “Active Retirement”?

Jeanne dreamed of being able to live full time in Little Egg Harbor, where she enjoyed strong community ties with her neighbors. Interestingly, she named her house “Shalom,” this word which is so rich in meaning. I sometimes wondered if it was a word that was studied with Paul Sansone in his Thursday night study group which Jeanne was so faithful to. The word Shalom is used for either Hello OR Goodbye. There is a balance between the two.

Just as our journeys are filled with births and deaths and births – a balance of sorts, our journeys are filled with hellos and goodbyes – and – hopefully - with peace and harmony in between.

So – back to the Story –

What say you of these travelers? Life and Death? They go from one place to another in each other’s company. Can one be the elder and the other the younger? If you do not know, let us consider other things.

That’s a question each of us has to answer for ourselves. But for our Sister, Jeanne Catherine, I think in these last few weeks, she was telling us something. She was letting go – and perhaps she was telling us to let go.

Perhaps she knows the answer as to who is the eldest and who is the youngest, as she HAS journeyed with these two, Life and Death, and is now enjoying the fullness of Life.

Shalom!
For the past ten years, Kathy Detlet has been the Co-Director of the Lumen Center. When asked why she continues to be so busy after “retiring,” she responds, “I retired from full-time teaching, not life.” The Lumen Center is a life-giving experience for her and one that she considers as ministry, not work.

One of her main responsibilities is to invite speakers to share their gifts with those who come seeking opportunity for growth in their personal and spiritual lives. Calling upon creative energy, she finds presenters who are committed to a faith quest and happy to share their journey with others. Many are from New Jersey, but a few from as far away as Texas and Ireland!

“Part of the excitement of this ministry,” Kathy says, “is meeting the many people who attend the programs.” Book discussions and presenting retreats are particularly special to her time spent in Caldwell. “Individuals find sharing their lives, their faith, their questions with others most helpful.”

“The Sisters of St. Dominic were wise in initiating such a ministry as the Lumen Center; it reaches hundreds of people each year seeking more meaningful lives. Because of their wisdom and generosity, the Lumen Center continues to invite others to share in the light and to be the light.” Kathy feels, “truly blessed and grateful to be part of such a ministry.”