

## CHAPTER VII

### STUDY AND FORMATION

#### (I) BECOMING A DOMINICAN

*“Proclaim the Lord Christ Holy in your hearts and always have your answer ready for people who ask you the reason for the hope that you have. But give it with courtesy and respect and with a clear conscience” (I Peter 3,15).*

98.1. What does it mean to become a Dominican? The words of Peter give an answer for our time. In a world often marked by despair and fear, when hope for justice, peace and meaning are not realized, the Dominican is one who continues, in the pattern of St. Dominic, to witness to that hope which is founded in the truth of the Gospel, to discern God’s presence in the world in the achievements as well as the yearnings of peoples and societies and, through our preaching, to build up a community of hope,

98.2. To be ready to give an account of our hope, we must have eyes open to see the manifold and varied needs of men and women, and hearts ready to share their suffering and to respond to their needs in accordance with the four priorities of the Order. This requires a single, unified formation of the whole person - intellectual, spiritual, personal and apostolic. It means a formation grounded in the truth of the Gospel and nurtured through assiduous study, in which reason, guided by faith, seeks for an understanding of truth following the tradition of St. Thomas. Only through this approach can we speak to a world marked by pluralism, and fundamentalism secularism and a crisis of reason. Finally, it means a formation that continues beyond solemn profession or ordination so that, like St. Dominic, we are always ready to give an account of our hope.

98.3. At profession, each of us replied to the question "What do you seek?" with the words, "God's mercy and yours". Our common response reflects the faith with which we all began our lives as Dominicans and it creates a bond among us that transcends differences of age and culture, experience and perspective. It also means that we seek mercy in the company of others, in a community of belief and hope, friendship and trust, care and concern, healing and forgiveness. Moreover, since we make profession to Blessed Dominic, the Master of the Order and his successors, we are united to all other Dominicans who have preceded us or who will follow us.

98.4. To show that our search for truth through study and our growth in Christ through spiritual formation are inseparable and to stress the dynamic and continuing process involved in preparing spiritually mature and informed preachers, we produced a single document, titled: BECOMING A DOMINICAN.

## (II) THE CHARACTER OF DOMINICAN STUDY

99.1. Dominican study is not an end in itself, but has its source in compassion and is oriented toward the salvation of souls. It is a work of reason, rooted in listening to the Word of God, and leading us to live the compassion of Jesus. It is also an effort to understand reality in the light of the Gospel, so that we may become authentic preachers, aware of the growing complexity, radical changes, and multiplicity of cultural contexts that characterize the present world. So it is that we live with creative fidelity in a time not unlike that of St. Dominic.

99.2. Open to all created reality, our tradition encourages us to discern the elements of truth present in every culture - to recognize the diversity of peoples and cultures as a mystery revealing God's plan as Creator and Savior. (*Ratio Studiorum Generalis*, Preface. VII). We recognize that a knowledge of philosophy and the human sciences is essential for understanding and dialoging with other societies and cultures. We therefore emphasize that initial formation must include at least two years of philosophy, an introduction to human

sciences, and ecumenical and inter-religious studies (RSG,I, 14,2 1). We also affirm the value of specialized studies in philosophy in understanding contemporary culture.

99.3. The study of theology, as an essential part of our Dominican formation, has a contemplative as well as an intellectual dimension. It is not divorced from, but rather grows out of, our apostolic commitment. Indispensable for our work of preaching, it does not draw us away from pastoral concerns, but allows us to respond more effectively to the needs and sufferings of people.

99.4. Study is a task of the whole community. It is the community, not the isolated individual, who is the subject of study and preaching. Our convents should therefore be places of theological dialogue and contextual reflection.

### (III) UNITY AND PLURALITY IN FORMATION

100.1. An effective program of initial formation must necessarily involve elements of unity and plurality. Plurality reflects the reality of our present world and the situation of candidates entering the Order. Unity is demanded if the formation program is to be faithful to the continuity of our Dominican tradition and responsible to the integrity and wholeness of the individual who has been called to Dominican life.

100.2. The unity of our Dominican tradition is reflected in our common history and vision which are rooted in the thought of Thomas Aquinas. The newly developed *Ratio Studiorum Generalis* (RSG) and *Ratio Formationis Generalis* (RFG) provide a common outline for the formation of cooperator brothers and clerical candidates, while allowing for diversity as each province develops its own *Ratio Particularis*. The common vision of the Order is espoused in its four priorities of Justice and Peace, catechesis in a de-christianized world, evangelization in the diversity of cultures, and use of modern media of communication - priorities which should shape each formation program.

100.3. Plurality enters the program of formation most evidently in the variety of individuals who are called to the Order, each with his own charisms, social background, education, age, culture, wounded experiences. To match this reality, there must be a plurality of models for formation and a plurality of approaches in any one formation program. Only in this way can the individual be enabled to grow, and gradually share responsibility in the Order. Special attention should be paid to the formation of cooperator brothers in preparing them for the various ways in which they will participate in the preaching apostolate of the Order. At least a part of their formation should take place in the area where they will exercise their ministry. Each student is primarily responsible for his own formation (LCO, 156), but all need direction in seeing the unity and interrelation of the many aspects of Dominican life: personal, affective, apostolic, intellectual, spiritual, communal. Particular attention must be given to the desire for relationship and community among young people who enter the Order. They may also need help in discovering their gifts and developing them. In this sense, formation should involve a kind of specialization from the beginning.

#### (IV) COLLABORATION

101.1. Collaboration is much espoused in discussions and documents (México, 28,151), but does not seem to be actualized to the degree that is desirable or, in some instances, necessary for the Order's formation programs and Centers of Study. Collaboration must be understood as cooperation both within and beyond the limits of the Dominican Family. It is required on three levels in initial and permanent Dominican formation.

101.2. *First*, each Dominican must learn to be a collaborator and to develop a collegial style of leadership. As part of the formation program, the student should discover the communal nature of Dominican study and learn the skills necessary for team ministry both practically and theoretically.

101.3. *Secondly*, to this end, the formation program itself must be a model of collaboration. The program should be intentionally designed and implemented as far as possible in collaboration with other branches of the Dominican Family and with other provinces or regions. Though constitutionally the program is under the direction of a single master of novices or students, it should be carried out in collaboration with all who are concerned with formation. A particularly effective way to achieve this is through the establishment of a “formation team.” The formation program should always involve the close cooperation of the formation community, the conventual prior, lector, regent, formation council and provincial. Regular occasions for dialogue between Dominican formators should be developed. Possibilities for collaborative formation of formators should be investigated.

101.4. *Thirdly*, only through increased collaboration, will the Order be able to maintain its present Centers of Study and provide a Dominican formation program in areas where students receive their academic formation outside a Dominican Center of Studies. This may involve patterns of South-South cooperation. It may also require an increased itinerancy of Dominican professors to answer these needs by teaching short courses on particular aspects of the Dominican tradition in areas where such instruction is not otherwise available or by committing themselves for more extended periods of time to the service of the Order’s Centers of Study.

#### **(V) CONTINUING FORMATION**

102. Formation and study are united aspects of becoming Dominicans, an ongoing process of one’s whole life (LCO, 224; RSG, VI). Continuing formation consists not only in personal, intellectual updating, but also involves putting our charism into action with regard to the challenges of the world around us. This demands communication between brothers and a willingness to adapt the structures of our personal and communal lives to the context of our apostolic commitment.

**ORDINATIONS**

103. We ordain that each center of institutional studies and each formation community assess its present level of collaboration and consider possible initiatives for increased cooperation with other provinces and centers as well as with other parts of the Dominican Family. These assessments are to be sent to the provincial(s) by May 30, 1997 and shared at regional meetings of Dominican regents and formation personnel.

104. Because the work of formation is a primary and integral part of the community project of each formation community, ensuring the collaboration of all members of the community in this work (Walberberg, 17, D; Oakland, 38; LCO, 100, 311; México, 39), we ordain that, in preparation for the canonical visit of the provincial, the formation community review its community project and make a written assessment of the community's collective success and difficulties in implementing it. This assessment is to be given to the provincial as part of the canonical visit (México, 40).

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

105. We recommend that each region include, as an agenda item at one of its meetings, a discussion of how well directors of pre-novices and masters of novices and students in the region are prepared for their work, both before and during their terms of office. This will include a review of the means that might be used to provide better formation for them, such as courses, exchanges and discussions with other regional formation directors regarding their work (pedagogy, psychology, spirituality, history of the Order, etc.) (RFG, 139). We especially recommend the program of formation in Justice and Peace being prepared by the assistant for apostolic life (Cahiers Justice et Paix).

106. Recognizing the importance of discernment in accepting candidates to the Order, we recommend that each region include, as an agenda item at one of its meetings, a discussion of the criteria being

used in accepting candidates, the means by which each candidate is evaluated, and the ways that vocation directors are prepared for the work of recruiting and evaluating candidates.

107. We recommend that the commission for the promotion of studies be reconstituted as soon as possible and directed to continue the work outlined for it by the México Chapter (166). We ask the assistant for the intellectual life to encourage the faculties of the Order to recruit members of the Dominican Family to teach in the Centers of Study of the Order.

108. We recommend that the theological faculties of the Order establish a program of support (parrainage) to assist General Vicariates or Regional Vicariates such as Zaire, West Africa and those in Latin America and Eastern Europe in founding and supporting their own centers for institutional studies.

109. We recommend that formation and study be integrated into each community's project (México, 39). Since the conventual lector is essential in promoting permanent studies at the local level, we urge conventual lectors to be attentive to the responsibilities outlined in LCO, 326 bis, II and RSG, 32, III. We also encourage smaller communities to collaborate with other communities and to make use of resources at the provincial and regional levels.

110. We recommend that each community, under the direction of the conventual lector, devote at least part of its monthly meeting to discussions fostering continuing formation as distinct from current community business. A written summary of such discussions should be kept for examination by the provincial at times of visitation. We remind the Regents of Studies of their role in this process (RSG, 67,4).

111. We remind provincials of their serious responsibility in making the first assignment of brothers, especially the criteria given in México, 32.

**(VI) CENTERS OF STUDY****COMMENDATIONS**

112. The Chapter of México has approved the new *Ratio Studiorum Generalis* (RSG) which has been promulgated by the Master of the Order and the General Council, May 17, 1993 (México, 176-177). Since that time, different provinces, vice-provinces and general vicariates have submitted their *Ratio Studiorum Particularis* (RSP) for approbation. We thank them for their effort to put into practice the fundamental orientations of the RSG and to establish a structure of studies adapted to their particular context.

113. We commend the different entities who have made great efforts to establish, develop and stabilize their centers of institutional and higher studies, or to create a center of special studies (RSG, 44; México 169). Among them we mention the “Dominican Institute of Philosophy and Theology” at Ibadan; the “Escola Dominicana de Teologia” at Sao Paulo; the “Centro de Estudios y Teologia, Santo Domingo de Guzman” at Santo Domingo; the “Center Ak’ Kutan” in Guatamala; the “Institute of Theology” at Multan; “Centro de Estudios de los Dominicos del Caribe” (CEDOC) in Puerto Rico, and the “Instituto Universitario de Teología” in México.

114. We commend all the brothers teaching in various countries at specialized and higher institutions of study not belonging to the Order as well as in centers for adult education. We applaud them for their intellectual activity, through which they realize their vocation as teachers and missionaries and encourage the provinces to recognize and foster their work.

**PONTIFICIA UNIVERSITAS SANCTI THOMAE  
IN URBE - (PUST)**

**DECLARATION**

115. We thank the brothers and sisters who are committed to teaching and research at our University at Rome. We recognize that their work contributes in large measure to the reputation of the Order in the world of science. We hope that the University may develop its participation in exchanges with other Roman universities and with other Catholic universities in the world. We recognize that through affiliation and aggregation PUST offers its services to many Dominican centers of institutional and higher studies. We renew the recommendation of México 165 that the Angelicum may become a privileged place for the study of Thomas Aquinas. We encourage the work of the different institutes of the University and their efforts to intensify the life of the University through the organization of congresses and scientific colloquia. We particularly thank those who have been engaged in maintaining and developing the faculty of social sciences. We urge the officials of the University to promote the publishing activity of the professors and to provide them with academic resources suitable for scientific work, especially with regard to the library.

**EXHORTATION**

116. We recognize the efforts which have been undertaken since the México Chapter to create a climate of confidence and openness between the Order and its University. This is reflected in an awareness of mutual responsibility in the areas of finance and the recruitment of faculty. The officials of the University should intensify their collaboration with the Directorium to promote the development of the University as a center of higher and special studies.

**COMMISSION**

117. We commission the Master of the Order to establish an evaluation commission to help the Directorium in planning the future of our University. This commission should include representatives of the University, the General Curia, and some external experts. Before the next General Chapter, it should examine the measures which must be taken for restructuring the University and for improving the student faculty ratio. Together with the Economic Commission of the Order, it should look for ways to improve the financial situation of the University and the condition of the buildings. It should especially examine the advisability of maintaining institutional studies at the Angelicum and look for ways to reinforce the various specializations which the University can offer through its Institutes.

**UNIVERSITAS S. THOMAE DE MANILA  
(UST)****DECLARATION**

118. We reviewed the report of the commission which was established by the Chapter of México (154) to examine whether it was possible and opportune to execute the decisions made by the General Chapters of Rome in 1983 (161) and of Avila in 1986 (158), regarding the transfer of UST from the jurisdiction of the Master of the Order to the Province of the Philippines.

**RECOMMENDATION**

119. We recommend that the convent of St. Thomas Aquinas at UST be transferred from the jurisdiction of the Master to the jurisdiction of the Dominican Province of the Philippines as soon as possible. The details of this transfer and the new statutes of the convent must be discussed by the provincials of the Holy Rosary Province and the Province of the Philippines, two representatives of the Convent of St. Thomas at UST, the assistant for the Asia-Pacific region,

and the assistant for the intellectual life. The statutes will be submitted for approbation to the Master and his Council.

### **COMMISSIONS**

120. We understand the transfer of the convent as a first step in principle toward the subsequent transfer of UST to the jurisdiction of the Dominican Province of the Philippines. We insist that the concrete measures for this transfer, some of which have already been formulated by the above mentioned commission, be discussed and prepared by all parties concerned in a climate of mutual understanding and of fraternal search for consensus. We ask the assistant for intellectual life and the assistant for Asia-Pacific, together with the Dominican authorities of the Philippines and the Roman Congregation for Catholic Education, to find juridical ways which permit the Master of the Order to remain as a guarantor of the autonomy, security and continuance of the University as a Dominican Center for higher and special studies.

121. We wish that the specific character of UST as a Catholic, Pontifical and Dominican institution may endure and that the University be a center of excellence in teaching and research for the whole region. We ask the Dominican Province of the Philippines to provide a sufficient number of brethren suitably prepared to take academic and administrative responsibilities at the University. We also ask the entire Dominican Family to continue to help UST by sending brothers and sisters to reinforce the faculties of theology, canon law and philosophy.

### **COMMENDATION**

122. We are grateful to the brethren of the Dominican Province of the Philippines and Holy Rosary Province for their commitment to UST. We recognize the generosity of the Dominican Province of the Philippines in their willingness to assume full responsibility in the future for UST, and we thank them for their decision. We joyfully thank the University for its initiative to create a center of special studies to promote dialogue with other religions.

**ÉCOLE BIBLIQUE****COMMENDATION**

123. We acknowledge the plan of the École Biblique to construct a library which will offer more security for the valuable patrimony of the École and provide a more adequate resource for contemporary means of research. The library will contribute to the attractiveness of the school as a place for specialized studies in scripture and archeology. We thank the brethren who, through their teaching and research, work for a better critical and historical understanding of the Word of God in Scripture. Their work is a remarkable contribution to the realization of the mission of the Order.

**FACULTÉ DE THÉOLOGIE À L'UNIVERSITÉ DE  
FRIBOURG****COMMENDATION**

124. We acknowledge that the agreement between the Dominican Order, the Bishops' Conference of Switzerland and the Canton of Fribourg has been renewed for ten years. The Master of the Order continues to be the Grand Chancellor of the Faculty of Theology (México, 157). We recognize the importance of a Dominican presence at the University of Fribourg. We thank the civil authorities of Fribourg for giving our brethren the opportunity to collaborate in an institution marked by its Catholic, multilingual and international character. We encourage the provinces to contribute in the future so that an adequate number of qualified professors will continue to be available to maintain the Dominican presence at the University of Fribourg so that the theological faculty may continue to be a place of specialization and formation of Dominican professors for the centers of study in our Dominican provinces. We thank the brethren of the Convents of St. Albert and St. Hyacinth for their commitment to teaching and research as well as for the help they give to brethren in formation through scholarships.

**COMMISSIO LEONINA****COMMENDATION**

125. We express our esteem for the brethren of the Leonine Commission who, through their critical editions, contribute to a better understanding of the works of St. Thomas Aquinas. We thank the president of the commission for his efforts to stabilize the number of members of the commission and to promote its recent publications.

**INSTITUTO PEDRO DE CÓRDOBA  
(SANTIAGO DE CHILE)****RECOMMENDATION**

126. We thank all those who have contributed to the creation of the Instituto Pedro de Córdoba at Santiago de Chile (México, 173). We underline the importance of this new center which is consecrated to the analysis of the manifold changes in the Latin American reality and to interdisciplinary research for a better theological understanding of the relation between Christianity and society in its economic and cultural expressions. We ask the provinces and vicariates, members of CIDAL and CODAL, and the whole Dominican Family to increase their efforts so that, through their help regarding finances and faculty, the Institute may continue as a Dominican Center for special studies.

**ISTITUTO DI TEOLOGIA ECUMENICA  
"SAN NICOLA" DI BARI****RECOMMENDATION**

127. We affirm the recommendation of México (171) and invite brothers and sisters who are committed to the dialogue with the Oriental Churches to use the resources of the Institute. We recognize that at the Congress of Mechelen (July 6-9, 1995), on the mission of the Order in Europe, the wish was expressed to have the next congress in Bari on the topic of the encounter with Orthodoxy. We

encourage the brothers and sisters of Eastern Europe to come to the Center for complementary study, and we thank the Center for the grants that it offers them.

**FACULTAD DE TEOLOGIA  
“SAN VICENTE FERRER” DE VALENCIA**

**DECLARATION**

128. We recognize that the assistant for intellectual life has taken into account the recommendation of México, 172. Certain difficulties had indirectly affected the faculty of theology of Valencia, especially in the context of the erection of the John Paul II Institute for the Family which is dependent on the Lateran University in Rome. Together with the provincial of Aragón, Vice Grand Chancellor of the faculty, the assistant for intellectual life visited the Archbishop of Valencia, Grand Chancellor of the faculty, in order to clarify those difficulties. We confirm the proposal of the Chapter of México regarding the theological faculty of Valencia (México, 172).

**FACULTAD DE SAN ESTEBAN DE SALAMANCA**

**RECOMMENDATION**

129. We recommend that the assistant for intellectual life examine the possibility that the faculty of San Esteban of Salamanca, as long as it is reserved to the Order, make its program of study and degrees available to the whole Dominican Family.