



**FRIARS OF THE ORDER OF PREACHERS**

**DOMINICAN COOPERATOR BROTHERS STUDY-2013**

*“DEDICATING OURSELVES TO GOD, FOLLOWING CHRIST TO LEAN AN  
EVANGELICAL LIFE IN THE ORDER” (LCO 189, I)*

**FINAL REPORT WITH RECOMMENDATIONS AND APPENDICES  
PRESENTED TO THE MASTER OF THE ORDER AND THE GENERAL CURIA**

**1 SEPTEMBER 2013**

## PROLOGUE

For nearly eight hundred years, Dominican cooperator brothers, impelled with the power and grace of the Eucharist, the Sacrament of Charity, have followed the vision of St. Dominic and “gone forth into the whole world to proclaim the good news to all creation” (Mk 16:15). Dominican cooperator brothers freely and generously bring to others the gifts of their presence and their lives vowed to the Order’s mission of evangelization through preaching. The greatest gift Dominican cooperator brothers are privileged to bring to the encounter with others is the very person of Jesus in the Eucharist made flesh in them.

This historic study, the first ever conducted on the vocation, formation and ministries of Dominican Cooperator Brothers, presents in intimate detail the extraordinary gifts and reflections of men consecrated to the Word; each one a masterpiece of God’s creative act; each one called by God alone to embrace Dominican Life.

As we read in *Vita Consecrata* (No. 110), “you have not only a glorious history to remember and to recount, but also a great history still to be accomplished! Look to the future, where the Spirit is sending you in order to do even greater things.” The findings and recommendations of this important study calls all Friars of the Order to continue the journey of the Holy Preaching, celebrating the gift of our vocation, and welcoming new preachers who experience the call to journey on the pathways of Dominican life to holiness and to preach in His name.

It is the hope of the Brothers who participated in this study that all Friars of the Order and indeed the whole Dominican Family will engage in the process of renewal of the whole Order as an essential component for fulfilling the Church’s plan for the New Evangelization through the Holy Preaching.

The Core Committee  
Cooperator Brothers Study  
1 September 2013

## Table of Contents

I.	Introduction and Overview	5
II.	Processes Used in Conducting the Study	5
III.	Findings	7
IV.	Themes	8
V.	Recommendations:	
	Primary	16
	Thematic	18
VI.	Summary	29

### APPENDICES:

- I. Regional Gatherings: Notes and Press Releases:
  - A. Province of St. Augustine, Argentina: May, 2013
  - B. Province of St. Dominic, Canada, May, 2012
  - C. Vicariate of Congo, December, 2012
  - D. International Gathering (23 entities of the Order), Lima, October, 2012
  - E. Province of St. James, Mexico, June, 2012
  - F. Province of St. Hyacinth, Poland, October, 2012
  - G. Province of St. Dominic, Toulouse, January, 20013
  - H. Provinces of the United States (St. Joseph, Holy Name of Jesus, St. Albert the Great, St. Martin de Porres), March 2012
  - I. Province of Viet Nam, June, 2012
  
- II. Presentations, Manuscripts, Statistics and Study Questions
  - J. *Dominican Cooperator Brother-Saints – Blesseds – Martyrs*. Bro. Paul Byrd, OP, Province of St. Albert the Great-United States (2013)
  - K. *Preachers Without A Stole: Being Brothers: Embracing the Evangelic Church and the Project of St. Dominic*, Bro. Andre Arguello Parra, P, Province of St. Louis Bertrand, Columbia, (October, 2012)
  - L. *The Formation and the Ministries of the Cooperator Brother in the Province of Santiago of Mexico*, Bro. Martin Francisco Olivera Escamilla, OP, Province of St. James, Mexico, (October, 2012)
  - M. *Dominican Cooperator Brothers-Consecrated to the Word: Re-visioning Our Vocation and Ministry for the New Evangelization*, Bro. Ignatius Perkins, OP, Province of St. Joseph, United States (October, 2012)
  - N. *The Dominican Cooperator Brothers-Dedicating Ourselves to God, Following Christ to Lead an Evangelical Life in the Order*, Brothers Michael Downey, OP, Ignatius Perkins, OP and Gerard Thayer, OP, Province of St. Joseph, United States, (2011)
  - O. *The Dominican Cooperator Brothers*, Bro. Jacques Ambec, OP, Province of Toulouse, (2002)
  - P. *On the Formation and Diverse Ministries by the Cooperator Brothers*

- in the Province of St. Augustine of Argentina.* Bro. Roberto Clark, OP, Province of St. Augustine, Argentina (2012)
- Q. *Toward a Spirituality of the Dominican Brothers*, Bro. Edward Van Merrienboar, OP, Province of St. Albert the Great, (1990)
- R. Essays on Brotherhood: Three Blog Entries from *The Dominican Cooperator Brother*:
1. *Neither Priest nor Lay Brother; O Canada!*
  2. *How My Recent Trip to Ottawa Has Me Wondering About the Future of Religious Brotherhood in the Church*
  3. *Ottawa Reflection Part II: Why I Stay a Dominican*
- Bro. Paul Byrd, OP, Province of St. Albert the Great, United States (2010)
- S. *In Memoriam: For the Brothers Who Have Gone Before Us*, Bro. Gerard Thayer, OP, Province of St. Joseph in the United States (2013)
- T. *Statistics on Cooperator Brothers-1980-2012*
- U. *Study Questions*

## I. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

In his letter of July 23, 2011 to the Prior Provincials of North America (*Prot. n. 50/11/661*), the Master of the Order recalled the Petition of the General Chapter of Rome, 2010, No. 218, that states “*We petition the Master of the Order to appoint a committee of cooperator brothers to organize an international congress of cooperator brothers to focus on the re-visioning and renewal of the vocation and ministry of the Dominican cooperator brothers for our time.*”

He continues in his letter, “*The cooperator brother has been and remains very important for us in our preaching mission and especially in holding before us that the essential part of this preaching mission is living an evangelical life. Before we move toward an international congress, I want a serious study to be made about the life and mission of the cooperator brother within the whole Order. This vocation is beginning to disappear in many of our provinces. I believe this weakens our mission. In other provinces this vocation thrives. What has our history told us these past several years? Must we make some adjustments?*”

In order to implement this study, he appointed the following Core Committee to facilitate this work:

Bro. Jacques Ambec, OP – Province of Toulouse  
 Bro. Jose Bolabato, OP – Vicariate of Congo  
 Bro. Martin Nguyen Si Luu, OP – Province of Viet Nam  
 Bro. Ignatius Perkins, OP – Province of St Joseph, Chair  
 Bro. Tomasz Syperek, OP – Province of Poland

In this letter the Master, and in the general letter sent to the Prior Provincials and Vicars General of the Order on 1 October 2011 (*Prot. N. 50/11/854*), he called for regional meetings of cooperator brothers to engage in a serious reflection on their vocation, formation, ministries, diversity of situations according to regions, the history of the provinces and their cultures.

Additionally, on the occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Canonization of St. Martin DePorres, the Province of Peru, at the request of the Master of the Order, prepared a celebration that provided another opportunity for cooperator brothers from all the entities of the Order to gather together to engage in discussions on their vocation, formation and ministries.

## II. PROCESSES USED IN CONDUCTING THE STUDY

In discussions with the Master on the process to be used in conducting this study, the following points guided the work of the Core Committee:

- A. Purpose: The purpose of this qualitative study was to gather information from cooperator brothers in our Order on their vocation, formation and ministries. The

written findings, recommendations, reports of the regional gatherings and additional reports are presented to the Master and the General Curia and will be used to help design the work for the International Congress on Cooperator Brothers as called for by the General Chapter of Rome, 2010, No. 18.

- B. Process: The Core Committee was charged with the responsibility to design a process of listening, reflection and dialogue, to assure that the information gathered would reflect the experiences of cooperator brothers that are unique to them as well as in their provinces and distinctive cultures. Given the rich diversity of cultures, traditions and the ministries of our cooperator brothers throughout the Order, the design of the study was especially mindful and sensitive to all cooperator brothers in all entities of the Order. Members of the Core Committee and other Brothers in the Provinces assisted in developing the agenda and making the necessary arrangements for scheduling, lodging, travel, financing, etc.

So that the process for the study could be refined as needed, regional meetings were held, initially, in the United States and Canada. From these experiences the Core Committee determined that the process for conducting the study was appropriate. The full study was then implemented throughout the whole Order.

All meetings of the Core Committee were conducted via electronic means except at the Assembly in Lima when the Committee personally met with the Master of the Order.

- C. Discussion Questions: So that the essential purpose of the study was protected, a general set of open-ended questions was designed and approved by the Master of the Order. These questions were offered simply as guides to focus the reflections and not to limit discussions. Appended to this report is a list of the questions, prepared in English, French and Spanish that was distributed to all participants.
- D. Discussion Format: The majority of the discussions occurred among cooperator brothers assembled in regional gathering in their own provinces and regions. The United States cooperator brothers from the four provinces met together. In Lima, Peru, cooperator brothers from around the world met in plenary sessions (with interpreters) and in language groups.
- E. Reporting Mechanisms: In order to keep the Master informed of the progress of the study, periodic progress reports, including reports of the regional meetings, were electronically transmitted to Fr. Ed Ruane, O.P., the Vicar of the Master of the Order and then later to Fr. Dominic Izzo, OP Socius to the United States Provinces and the Vietnamese Vicariate.
- F. Time Frame: The time frame for submission of the completed study to the Master of the Order and the General Curia was set for 1 September 2013. A synopsis of the progress of the study was presented to the delegates of the General Chapter of Trogir (2013). Prior Provincials and General Vicars were reminded to submit

findings of regional gatherings to the Chair of the Core Committee by April 15, 2013. General themes from the discussions at the General Chapter have been incorporated in this final report.

- G. Recommendations: Definitive recommendations, following the completion of the study and accompanied by copies of the reports of the regional gatherings and presentations have been formulated and are included in this final report presented to the Master of the Order and the General Curia.

### III. FINDINGS

- A. Participants: Nine (9) regional gatherings with cooperator brothers representing twenty-four (24) out of fifty-one (51) Provinces and General Vicariates were held in the following entities:

1. Argentina      May, 2013
2. Canada          May, 2012
3. Congo            December, 2012
4. Lima             October, 2012
5. Mexico          June, 2012
6. Poland          October, 2012
7. Toulouse        January, 2013
8. United States   March, 2012
9. Viet Nam        June, 2012

One hundred eighty (180) cooperator brothers participated in the Study either in person, through personal interviews or by other means of communication. Based on the *De Re Statistica, December 31, 2012*, this number represents 52 % of all cooperator brothers in our Order. Recommendations from these meetings have been received and are included in the final report. Provinces and entities where cooperator brothers are present but did not submit reports are highlighted in bold in the *De Re Statistica* located in Appendix T.

- B. *De Re Statistica, December 31, 2012*: Appended to this Report are Statistics on the Friars of the Order and specifically on cooperator brothers for the period 1980 through 2012. The following findings are noted in these data:

1. As of December 31, 2012, cooperator brothers represent 5.7% of the total number of professed friars in the Order.
2. There is a 59% decline in the number of cooperator brothers as compared to a 20% decline among priest brothers for the same time period. This decline is three times greater among cooperator brothers when compared with priest brothers for the same time period.
3. Among the fifty-one entities of the Order (cf. *De Re Statistica, December 31, 2012*):
  - i. 5 have no Brothers;
  - ii. 25 have between 1 and 5 Brothers;
  - iii. 13 have 6-10 Brothers;

- iv. 4 have 11-20 Brothers;
  - v. 3 have 21-30 Brothers;
  - vi. 1 have 31-39 Brothers;
4. In order to better understand the vocation, formation and ministries of cooperator brothers in the Order the following additional data are needed:
- i. Demographics, e.g. age, novices, dates of profession, departures;
  - ii. Formation Programs
  - iii. Ministries

C. Press Releases: Following several regional meetings, press releases were prepared and distributed via the web sites of the Provinces, Vicariates and the Order.

#### IV. THEMES:

The following eight themes emerged from the Study:

1. Renewal for the New Evangelization: In carefully reviewing the data that emerged from these historic meetings of the cooperator brothers, an overarching theme that emerged called for the whole Order to renew and revitalize itself to embrace the New Evangelization (*Relatio de statu Ordinis to the General Chapter of Trogir, 2013, No. 3*). This challenge was a grace-filled moment when the Brothers, living witnesses of their consecration to the Word, discussed the power of the Order's charism of preaching to the world and their critical and active role in this mission. This vision gives evidence that the Brothers understand the needs of the Church that can be addressed through the charism of the Order and especially through their vital role in the New Evangelization. The specific challenges facing the revitalization of the vocation, formation and ministries of cooperator brothers as the Order prepares for the New Evangelization are identified in the following specific strategic themes.
2. Identity and Dignity of the Vocation: In a few entities of the Order the identity and dignity of the vocation of cooperator brothers as consecrated persons and as full members of the Order is respected and highly valued. In these entities there is evidence of increasing numbers of vocations.

In other entities the identity of cooperator brothers as full members of their communities is diminished and marginalized. In some instances, cooperator brothers are seen as employees and valued principally for what they do rather than their vowed call to Dominican Life. Some Brothers reported occasions of often having to plead to be acknowledged in their communities while yet others spoke of being ignored when voicing opinions on matters pertaining to community life and ministries. The presence of cultures and behaviors that institutionalized distance in the

vocation of the cooperator brother from the corpus of the Order rather than promoting the distinctive identity of the vocation was also acknowledged. This distancing has promoted marginalization of cooperator brothers from fullness of the life of the Order leaving the impression among those discerning a vocation to Dominican life that cooperator brothers are essentially auxiliary to the Order's mission.

Concerns were also articulated on the continued use of the term "cooperator brother" that in many instances this term further enables distancing of the Brothers from the fullness of Dominican life.

A number of respondents observed that in order to interrupt this cycle of marginalization it would be necessary to first, seriously and carefully; study the distinctive characteristics of the cooperator brothers' vocation along with the commonalities and unique contributions of all Dominican Friars. With this renewed awareness and understanding of the gifts each brings in responding to his call to evangelical living in community cooperator brothers and indeed the whole Order will be able to respond more authentically to the needs of the universal Church.

3. Community Life: Brothers spoke of the richness of the fullness of evangelical living in community and in their journeys toward holiness. Others spoke of the valued presence they bring to the richness of this encounter and as witnesses of the consecrated life that all Friars have been called. For some brothers, community life holds the rich heritage given to the Order by St. Dominic which includes a fraternal life of listening, encounter with others, prayer, contemplation and ministry. Community life was identified as foundational to the work of the New Evangelization. Other Brothers reported experiences of not being acknowledged as full members of their communities, for example, not included in all community discussions, having to be persistent in establishing their place in the community, the use of exclusive language and actions that communicates to Brothers that their place in the Order is only secondary, peripheral and not essential. The lived reality of the commitment to the call to evangelical living (LCO 189, I) was often absent in communities especially in those entities where Brothers experienced being distanced from one another and from community life. Young men discerning a Dominican vocation when visiting some communities often reported this culture of exclusion.
4. Recruitment and Promotion of Vocations. In all reports prepared for this Study, concerns were expressed on the processes for the recruitment and promotion of the Brothers vocation. A significant variable that correlated with these concerns is the lack of clarity on the identity and dignity of the vocation and the essential role of Brothers in the life and mission of the Order. This status contributes to increasing levels of doubt about the

contemporary importance of the Brothers vocation and of its long-term survival in the Order. Examples of this dilemma are portrayed in the use of exclusive language in primarily promoting the priestly vocations and secondarily promoting Brothers vocations. Printed materials and the electronic media often challenge the inquiring mind to find materials on the Brothers. Rarely, are there explicit mentions of the Brothers vocation. Recruitment and promotion that leads to the revitalization of the Brothers vocation must use a new paradigm that is explicit, focused and consistent especially when the number of men interested in the vocation of religious brothers is increasing.

More significant in the processes of recruitment and promotion of vocations to the cooperator brotherhood are the encounters among Friars themselves and with those discerning a vocation to the consecrated life. Some entities are seeing an increasing interest in Brothers vocations and this positive change is occurring for at least two reasons: a) the identity of the vocation is clear and inviting; and b) there is an increasing number of men seeking the consecrated life as cooperator brothers believe they are called to a common life, prayer and ministry,

In the majority of the responses from the data received to date, actively engaging cooperator brothers in recruitment and promotion of vocations does not exist in many of the provinces. As a result, those seeking information on the cooperator brothers' vocation receive information from the lens of ordained friars, including the Promoter of Vocations, his assistants and members of Vocation Councils, who are not always familiar with the uniqueness of the Brothers vocation nor possess a level of comfort or confidence in responding to inquiries from candidates. Cooperator brothers need to have a higher profile and be directly involved in promoting vocations to the Order so that all candidates have an understanding of the fullness of the lives of the Friars who compose a Dominican Community.

The validity of the information provided on the Dominican vocation for all those interested was questioned as being incomplete and often naturally focused on the ordained ministry rather than being focused on the vocation to Dominican life and how this vocation is expressed among the friars, some of whom are ordained. In these instances, the opportunity to give expression to the total experience of the Brothers vocation by Brothers themselves (as a deliberate component of the recruitment process for all aspirants) many times was not provided at all or only mentioned when a question was raised. More often than not, when questions are voiced the explanation of the Brothers vocation often center on their specific works, and rarely on the fullness of the vocation. Additionally, there were some concerns expressed about differences in requirements for admission to the Novitiate that were more restrictive for cooperator brother candidates.

The limited number of Brothers in the Order in many entities also contributes to the invisibility of the vocation in the Church. A more significant variable in this whole process of renewal is the importance of clarifying the essence of the Dominican vocation among all the friars, not just cooperator brothers. Identifying the elements that bind the friars together in community and in mission rather than focusing on specific roles and functions that can lead to separation, alienation and distancing of the Friars from one another and more seriously, distancing the Brothers from the corpus of the charism of the Order, can only serve to strengthen the bonds of our fraternity. The phenomenon of clericalism and exclusivity in the Order and the Church, and the dismissal of dialogue on certain subjects, i.e. preaching; governance; ministry; ecclesiastical structures; based on the rationale that the Order is a clerical Order, are considered imminent threats to the revitalization of the Brothers vocation as well as renewing the role of the laity in the work of the Order in the Church, especially in the programs for the New Evangelization.

5. Formation Program and Formators: The importance of the need for a *Ratio Formationis* for cooperator brothers was a topic of considerable discussion among the Brothers participating in the regional gatherings. It was reported that more than a few entities develop programs of formation only after a candidate seems viable for admission to the Novitiate. Since some entities have difficulty in articulating the identity of the Brothers vocation and its importance in the Order, discussion naturally drifts to the work of Brothers with little attention to the formation of the person for Dominican Life.

Several entities have a *Ratio Formationis Particularis* that includes common and particular components for all friars in formation. Other entities have distinct Programs that cohere with the *Ratio Formationis Particularis* of the Province but are distinct from it.

It was strongly emphasized that there is a need throughout the whole Order, as carefully articulated in the Master's *Relatio de statu Ordinis* submitted to the General Chapter of Trogir, 2013 (Nos. 98, 99, 100), to critically assess and design a program of formation that will prepare young men for the New Evangelization through the fullness of Dominican Life. Formation of our friars from the moment of their first encounter with a Dominican Friar and later admission to the Novitiate followed by religious profession, and in the case of clerical students, their Ordinations, was identified among the Brothers as setting the foundation for future Dominican Life. It is in this process of formation that the candidate is gradually molded into the image and charism of St. Dominic. This molding must occur in a fraternal culture where the dignity and the freedom of the Friars must be protected, where exclusivity in hierarchal

roles and functions are removed, and all friars are held accountable for living the fraternal life and “*following Christ to lead an evangelical life in the Order (LCO 189, I)*).

A common theme expressed in the discussions was the importance of cooperator brothers serving on formation teams and with residence in the houses of formation. While some individual provinces may not have cooperator brothers qualified to serve as formators, inter-provincial collaboration can provide brothers from other provinces to serve in these roles.

As part of their institutional programs, some Brothers reported experiences of receiving conflicting messages about the importance of studies in the Order; some felt pressure in being directed to seek academic degrees; others were frustrated when seeking permission to enroll in academic programs. It was the consensus that the multiple talents, ministries and needs of the Province should be considered when a Brother is interested in pursuing particular ministry. While all Friars are called to study, as one of the four pillars of Dominican life, this call does not always require the pursuit of academic degrees. The rich diversity of the ministries of the Order and the diversity of the many talented Brothers needs to be celebrated and brought to bear on the needs of the Church. With this understanding, the ability of Brothers being involved in ministries not ordinarily undertaken by the Provinces moves the Brothers to new levels of ministry and especially among those who have heard the Word of God and do not believe, those who are far from the faith and especially those who live on the peripheries of human existence, the unwanted, the unloved and those who have lost hope.

Continuing formation for the period of Dominican life following the completion of institutional studies was identified among the Brothers as a critical omission in most formation programs. More often, the support structures in the institutional formation programs are absent leaving the newly assigned brothers vulnerable and, at times, conflicted between what they learned in their formation programs and the application of this learning in the lived realities of their new assignments.

In the case of cooperator brothers this level of vulnerability often becomes accelerated leading to a near complete immersion into the work ethic thus leaving the process of continuing formation of the Dominican vocation minimized or abandoned all together. This alienation fuels the exclusivity and distance between the Brother’s vocation and his full integration into Dominican life. Brothers who complete their institutional formation programs need to be mentored over time to assure that their integration into the fullness of Dominican life is positive, fulfilling and not frustrated.

Critical to the design and implementation of a holistic formation program are formators who are experienced in human, psychological, spiritual and sexual development and have the credentials to help form a group of contemporary friars who bring a wide variety of talents and experiences to the formation experience. In this process of formation, novices and students need to be exposed to confident and competent role models who understand and can articulate the Dominican Vocation as it is lived in all Friars. It is especially important that cooperator brothers be assigned roles on formation teams so that all brothers in formation (clerical students and cooperator brother students) understand the fullness of Dominican life. If brothers in formation are not exposed to the living vocation of cooperator brothers, they will complete their formation, understanding the vocation of the cooperator brother only through the lens of history.

6. Ministry and Service: As described in the regional meetings and in presentations, in many entities of the Order the diversity of ministries of the Brothers represents the versatility of the Dominican vocation in service to the Church through the Province and the local community. Comparing the variety of ministries today with those of earlier decades is a testimony to the Order's response to the emerging needs of the whole Church. Brothers can be found in a wide variety of ministries that constitute the unique talents of the Brothers and how these are expressed in their lives and service to others. Common characteristics of many cooperator brothers are the possession of multiple talents and adaptability to engage in several ministries within and outside their communities.

The historical and evolving anthropology of the ministry of cooperator brothers has been invigorating for some but has not been easy or without difficulties for others. Traditional and antiquarian notions of ministries of the Brothers in some entities have led to frustrations in men discerning their vocation in light of contemporary opportunities for evangelization.

In other entities, ministries have broadened and expanded thus providing cooperator brothers with many new opportunities in response to the needs of the Province and the universal Church. Brothers participating in this study were definitive in expressing their experiences and support for a broad range of opportunities for ministry that enables their many talents in the context of their culture in service to the Preaching of the Word.

Engaging in non-traditional new ministries and receiving the necessary educational preparation for them has not always been well received or easily supported. Brothers reported experiences of being limited to the traditional roles in ministry while their priest brothers were encouraged to embrace contemporary roles in ministry based on their talents, interests and the needs of the Province and the Church.

The breadth of options for ministries was identified as a significant strength for the cooperator brothers' vocation especially in light of the needs of the Church today. With courage and commitment as cooperator brothers consecrated to the Word, the breadth and depth of ministerial opportunities has taken the Preaching of the Word to the peripheries of human existence, among the poor, the disenfranchised and the unwanted not unlike the work of Sts. Martin dePorres and Juan Macias. The Brothers participating in the regional gatherings were consistent in their position to guard against defining the vocation in terms of ministerial functions rather than understanding the fullness of vocation in terms of the dignity of the person consecrated to the Word as a Dominican friar.

7. Inter-Provincial Collaboration: In the course of their discussions, the Brothers recommended establishing fraternal gatherings for critical dialogue, conferences, retreats, vocation promotion, the use of the media, formation planning, programs, and ministries among the Brothers themselves.

Acknowledging the realities and the limitations of resources as well as the responsibility to provide good stewardship of them, it was further acknowledged that the urgent call of the Master General to revitalize the vocation of cooperator brothers throughout the Order, by inter-provincial collaboration among the entities of the Order, could be the very means to achieve this desired outcome.

It was also noted that to facilitate this goal a general promoter with the assistance of regional promoters for the cooperator brothers should be appointed to assist this work, especially since the need is greater than any one entity and fulfill. Without some definitive oversight, progress in responding to these recommendations may never be realized.

Bringing the cooperator brothers together to encounter one another in critical dialogue and in prayer, to embrace the challenges and to plan for the future with confidence and commitment, was greatly valued and repeatedly mentioned as one of the highlights of the regional gatherings.

This model of fraternal living through listening, encounter, prayer and study that leads to a common discovery of the richness of the Brothers vocation and the vital role the Order serves in the New Evangelization should be implemented throughout every entity in the Order as one of the strategic initiatives which can be used in the renewal of the Order as called for in the Master's *Relatio* (2013), No. 3.

8. Governance and Leadership: During these regional gatherings, the Brothers acknowledged the gradual positive changes of inclusion in their role in the mission, governance and leadership both at the local and

Province levels in the Order since the General Chapter of Chicago, 1968. Petitions, commissions, commentaries, admonitions and recommendations in subsequent General Chapters: Madonna del'Arco, 1974; Quezon City, 1977; Mexico, 1992, Bologna, 1998; Providence, 2001; Krakow, 2004, including the Krakow Commission, Bogota, 2007; and Rome, 2010 have continued to enlighten the whole Order on the need for further integration of the cooperator brothers in the life and governance and the promotion of our Vocation. With the exception of passive voice in some elections, few interventions concerning cooperator brothers arising from the General Chapters were approved as ordinations or statutes. As a result, there was no legislative authority or accountability to give serious attention to their implementation.

The number of cooperator brothers in the Order continues to decrease at a steady rate. Currently, cooperator brothers represent only 5.7% of all professed friars in the Order. The disappearance altogether of cooperator brothers in some entities of the Order and the steady diminution in others is of grave concern and considered a threat to the core identity of the Order as a whole.

In response to this concern the General Chapter of Rome, 2010 called for an International Congress (#218) to "*focus on the re-visioning and renewal of the vocation and ministry of the Dominican cooperator brother for our time.*" At the direction of the Master of the Order, this congress has been delayed in order to provide opportunities for Brothers to gather to discuss all aspects of their lives in order to then identify the agenda of issues that need to be addressed in an international congress.

While the experience of regional gatherings among the Brothers was extremely positive and revealing especially in light of the New Evangelization, continued dialogue will have only limited impact on the urgency of interventions in order to prevent the disappearance of Brothers from the Order. Voiced in the regional gatherings was the recommendation that in light of the persistent decline in cooperator brothers that the Master and the Curia act definitively with deliberate speed to interrupt this trend. The appointment of a promoter for cooperator brothers to serve the whole Order in the same manner as promoters for the Nuns, Apostolic Sisters, and Laity was frequently mentioned. This position would serve to promote and influence positive change and advocacy at the highest level of governance in the Order while also being in service to the entities of the Order as the vocation is re-vitalized.

In addition, the appointment of regional promoters, directly accountable to the Master and the Curia, was also considered that, if approved, could provide the network between provinces, regions and cultures to facilitate

the revival of the vocation (cf. *Relatio de statu Ordinis to the General Chapter of Trogir, 2013, No. 110*). Appointment of Provincial Promoters for cooperator brothers was not considered viable since in the first place, competent resources are limited or non-existent, and in other Provinces, the identity of the contemporary cooperator brother is poorly understood or unknown altogether. Additionally, these appointments are subject to the authority of the individual entities. In the absence of a sense of urgency, these appointments are not given any priority and little definitive action would be forthcoming.

It was reported that in some Provinces, recruitment of candidates for the cooperator brotherhood no longer exists. Regretfully, in some entities the reason for no longer promoting vocations to the cooperator brotherhood was captured in the statement “we do not recruit candidates for the cooperator brotherhood because we do not know what to do with them.” Is the absence of cooperator brothers in some entities or indifference to the value of the vocation and presence in the Order contributing to the disappearance of the Dominican presence in these entities? Brothers participating in the regional gatherings voiced concerns that if this scenario spreads to other entities of the Order the vocation of the cooperator brother will disappear and the vocation will be enshrined only in our Saints, Blesseds and Martyrs.

It is worth recalling the words from the General Chapter of Quezon City, 1977, Chapter V, No. 62:

Where the cooperator brothers are not greatly involved and active in the apostolate of the Order, or are not encouraged to participate fully in our life and ministry according to the mind of the Order as clearly expressed in the Constitutions (cf. LCO 100, I and II), our Order, as St. Dominic intends it, is diminished in this respect, even as is the nature of our common profession.

- V. **RECOMMENDATIONS**: Following a careful analysis of the findings of this study, the following recommendations have been developed that best represent the consensus of this study. The findings of the regional gatherings and individual reports provide the basis for these recommendations.

In presenting these recommendations, the Core Committee acknowledges that some can be implemented quickly while others will require more study. In order to establish priorities in facilitating the implementation of these recommendations we propose the following primary recommendations followed by thematic recommendations.

## PRIMARY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Recommendation: We recommend that a plan for the renewal of the whole Order, with participation of the whole Dominican Family, be developed and implemented that:
  - a. emphasizes the responsibility and accountability of the whole community for the Holy Preaching, not just those who by priestly ordination have the ecclesiastical authority to exercise the preaching office;
  - b. includes initiatives in which cooperator brothers exercise their distinctive role and responsibilities in participating in the preaching mission of our Order;
  - c. articulates in the plan for renewal of the Order the importance of the consecration to the Word of all friars and the four pillars of Dominican life that are coherent with the New Evangelization;
  - d. respects and affirms the ethnic diversity and the international and intercultural characteristics of all communities, Provinces and the needs of the universal Church;
  - e. the strategic initiatives noted in the *Relatio of the Master of the Order to the General Chapter of Trogir (2013)* serve as a framework for this work;
  - f. every community participate in a self-study according to the Plan for Renewal;
  - g. revisits the documents on the *New Frontiers* published in the Acts of the General Chapter of Avila in light of the New Evangelization, including as well, *Lumen Gentium (1964)*, *Vita Consecrata (1996)*, and *Starting Afresh From Christ: A Renewed Commitment to Consecrated Life in the Third Millennium (2002)* in order to present them to the Order in a current, interesting and practical manner.
  
2. Recommendation: We recommend that a plan for the renewal of the vocation and ministry of cooperator brothers be developed and implemented by the next General Chapter in 2016 that:
  - a. calls for a review and reflection of the Cooperator Brothers Study, 2013 by every community of the Order (ACG 2013, Trogir);
  - b. incorporates the recommendations of this study in conjunction with the program of renewal of the whole Order;
  - c. this work be assigned to the Promoter General and the Regional Promoters so that the work is initiated, monitored and outcomes are realized;
  - d. periodic progress reports be presented to the Master of the Order, to the Prior Provincials, General Vicars and to all cooperator brothers;
  - e. in those entities, especially fragile ones, where cooperator brothers are diminishing or no longer present, that cooperator brothers from

other entities be assigned for the purpose of assisting the entity in re-establishing the vocation and ministry;

3. Recommendation: In keeping with the original purpose of this study, its findings and their implications for the renewal of the whole Order, we recommend that the Master of the Order to appoint a core committee, composed largely of cooperator brothers, whose responsibility it is to develop a strategic plan to facilitate the implementation of the findings of this study. Without this oversight, accountability and collaborating with the Provinces, the original purpose of the study may never be realized.
4. Recommendation: In order to respond to the critical condition of and the serious risks to the long term viability of cooperator brothers in the Order, we recommend that the Master of the Order:
  - a. appoint a Promoter of Cooperator Brothers (who is a cooperator brother) similar to Promoters of other entities of the Order, e.g. Nuns; Dominican Laity, whose responsibilities will be to:
    - i. provide consultation, direction, oversight to the Master of the Order and to the Prior Provincials in the implementation of the plan of renewal of the life of cooperator brothers;
    - ii. promote and advocate for the development and implementation of new models of recruitment, formation and ministries for cooperator brothers in collaboration within and among the Provinces;
    - iii. implement and monitor a strategic plan for facilitating the implementation of the recommendations arising from the Cooperator Brothers Study.
    - iv. provide periodic progress reports to the Master of the Order and to the Prior Provincials on the scope of the work as outlined in the recommendations of this study;
    - v. collect more descriptive data and information on ministries in order to develop a more informed profile of cooperator brothers in the Order;
  - b. appoint regional promoters to assist in the work of the Promoter.

## **THEMATIC RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **A. IDENTITY AND DIGNITY OF THE VOCATION**

5. Recommendation: We recommend that in the process of renewal of the vocation and ministries of cooperator brother throughout the whole Order, the following elements be emphasized:
  - a. all Dominican Friars are consecrated men religious whose dignity, freedom, and identity are rooted in Sacrament of Baptism, Confirmation and in Solemn Profession;

- b. the vocation of the Dominican Cooperator Brother be seen as mystery, not just a function, a prescriptive rubric, a convenience, or resource to be employed as occasionally needed ;
  - c. the canonizations of St. Martin de Porres, St. Juan Macias, St. Francis Shoyemon, St. Matthew Kihioye and forty Blessed Cooperator Brothers and Martyrs, many who died defending the Faith, be seen as affirmation by the universal Church that the vocation and way of life as Dominican cooperator brothers is a path to holiness;
  - d. the vocation of Dominican cooperator brothers is unique in the work of the New Evangelization especially as clericalism continues to increase and fracture our fraternity, and the theology of Vatican II continues to become silent or disappear;
  - e. in all forms of communications, to always describe the vocation of the Dominican Cooperator Brother in terms of who he is as a Dominican Friar consecrated to the Word, not what he does and to do the same for the priestly vocation in the Order as well;
  - f. to affirm and celebrate the dignity of cooperator brothers as men of prayer, a treasure for their communities and for the universal Church through their life of prayer, their presence, their labors and faithfulness to evangelical living.
6. Recommendation: We recommend that the *Ratio Studiorum Generalis (RSG)* and the *Ratio Formationis Generalis (RFG)* be revised to include specific strategies to facilitate the development of the distinctive identity of the vocation and ministries of cooperator brothers and that these strategies be incorporated in the *Ratio Studiorum Particularis (RSP)* and in the *Ratio Formationis Particularis (RFP)* of the Provinces. Where feasible institutional formation programs for student cooperator brothers should be located in communities separate from formation programs for student clerical brothers. Provinces should be encouraged to collaborate in this interprovincial effort.
7. Recommendation: We recommend that definitive strategies be designed and implemented to promote vocations to the cooperator brotherhood among candidates from contemporary cultures, from among indigenous people, in cultures where caste systems are prevalent, and from among men who have been differently educated with greater world and work experiences than has been found in our historical past, and to bring our rich Dominican charism into our contemporary world rather than lock the contemporary cooperator brother into roles and in a time and place in history.
8. Recommendation: We recommend that in exercising our ministry of preaching as Dominican cooperator brothers we need:
- a. to accept our personal responsibility to actively engage one another in community to talk about Jesus and with Jesus and help one another to see His Face and to actively show Him to one another and to the world;

- b. to listen with all of our senses to the voices of our brothers in community and to the people of God as they speak about the impact of Dominican cooperator brothers in their lives and in this way engage them in the process of renewal of our lives for the work of the Church;
  - c. to seize every opportunity to preach the New Evangelization wherever and whenever it is needed: to those whose faith has dimmed; to those who are marginalized, the unwanted and unloved in our midst; and to those who live on the lines of brokenness in our world and in our streets – the least, the lost and the last among us;
  - d. to engage in the strategic use of all forms of mass media by creating and maintaining web pages on the Order’s main site as well as in the Provinces and regions that is dedicated to the vocation, formation and ministries of cooperator brothers.
9. Recommendation: We recommend that by the Feast of St. Martin de Porres, November 2, 2016 and in tandem with the 800<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Order, a rich history be published on the history, vitality, permanence and presence of cooperator brothers in the life and mission of the Order, including biographies on the Saints, Blesseds and Martyrs and personal narratives since its foundation to the present (see Appendix J). In anticipation of this Anniversary, we further recommend that periodic articles on the vocation and ministries of the cooperator brothers be published on the web site of the Order, in the I.D.I., in publications of the Provinces in those of the whole Dominican Family.
10. Recommendation: We recommend that cooperator brothers actively and visibly participate in the process of planning and implementing the celebration of the 800<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the foundation of the Order in 1216 at the level of the Curia, in Provinces, and in local communities.
11. Recommendation: We recommend that the Order collaborate with other Orders and Congregations as well as with international and national conferences of men religious to promote the dignity and identity of the vocation and ministries of religious brothers in the Church.
12. Recommendation: We recommend that during his canonical visitations that the Master of the Order ask the Provinces to examine the following questions and to provide an analysis on:
- a. why some Provinces do not have cooperator brothers among their members;
  - b. why some Provinces have no written plan for promoting vocations, and no written plan of formation; and
  - c. why Brothers have departed from the Provinces.

**B. COMMUNITY LIFE**

13. Recommendation: As Dominican Friars consecrated to the Word, we exhort one another to accept our responsibility:

- a. to renew our fraternal life and eradicate all language and eliminate all behaviors and reject all decisions that threaten our common life and diminish our fraternity;
- b. to take seriously the Gospel message that we are our brother's keeper and do all in our power to promote, protect, and defend the singular gift each of us has been given by God alone, our Dominican vocation, thus allowing our consecration to the Word to come alive and be authentic witnesses of evangelical living in the Church;
- c. to care for one another in the same spirit of St. Dominic as consolers of the sick and those in distress;

14. Recommendation: In order for vocations to the cooperator brotherhood to take root and flourish, our ways of communicating and living with each other are to witness to "mutual understanding and fraternal communion (LCO 5).

Therefore, we recommend that all Dominican Friars and every community assume responsibility to implement policies and procedures that:

- a. are inclusive of all members of the community and are periodically reviewed;
- b. facilitate dialogue and fraternal corrections and are proactive in confronting issues that threaten the integrity of Dominican life, in general, and our vocation, in particular, which includes exclusivity in communication, language and the media, discriminatory and dismissive behaviors and decisions, celebrations, clericalisms, etc.;
- c. all Friars make every effort to welcome men called to Dominican life as cooperator brothers and then help form and support them to be faithful witnesses, vibrant signs of ecclesial communion, and architects of the plan for unity, the crowning point of human history in God's design (Blessed John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata*, No. 46, 1996).
- d. the programs of study in our communities address the needs and interests of all brothers so that none are disenfranchised and alienated from these important exercises in building up the community.

**C. RECRUITMENT AND PROMOTION OF VOCATIONS**

15. Recommendation: We recommend in order to promote Dominican life among men interested in pursuing their call as cooperator brothers that the following strategies be included in these efforts:

- a. cooperator brothers assume responsibility as promoters of vocations to be proactive and directly involved in the recruitment and promotion of all vocations not just among those interested in the vocation to the cooperator brotherhood;

- b. implementing programs that promote self-awareness regarding the life and ministries of cooperator brothers in today's world, especially when interacting with young people;
- c. where cooperator brothers are not easily available to serve on vocation teams, that brothers from other Provinces be invited to assist in this work;
- d. promoting vocations should include presentations of the cooperator brothers' vocation as full members in the Order and never as an adjunct member. In doing so, we shall overcome the characteristic silence about the cooperator brothers' vocation that presents an inaccurate view of the richness of Order to potential aspirants.

16. Recommendation: We recommend that programs of recruitment and promotion of the vocation and ministries of cooperator brothers:
- a. use all appropriate forms of the communications media for promoting vocations and dedicating a prominent space on web sites for providing information that promotes the vocation and ministerial life of cooperator brothers;
  - b. develop and implement recruitment programs and materials in formats that are inclusive and explicitly attentive in providing a more central prominence in promoting the vocation to the cooperator brotherhood.
17. Recommendation: We recommend that promoters of vocations (and formators, as well) actively promote the Order's approved vision of the vocation and ministries of cooperator brothers within the concrete context of the reality of the Provinces, so that programs of promoting vocations and formation may be founded upon such contextual reality.
18. Recommendation: We recommend a careful review of all criteria for recruitment and promotion of vocations so that the Province's statutes, acts, the *RSP* and *RFP* follow upon the Order's *RSG* and *RPG* to assure consistency in their application for admission, formation and profession of vows for both clerical brothers and cooperator brothers.
19. Recommendation: We recommend that the care for the cooperator brother vocation be developed and protected in the early stages of discernment by offering special vocational retreats and include participation of the mature cooperator brother in these retreats. Additionally, separate times or sessions during the pre-novitiate for the cooperator brother candidates should be considered.
20. Recommendation: We recommend the appointment of experienced professed cooperator brothers accompany new vocations in order to help them bring about better clarity in their discernment in their vocational process.

21. Recommendation: We recommend the implementation of educational programs and seminars on the vocation and ministry of cooperator brothers for all friars serving in any role related to the recruitment and formation of cooperator brothers.

#### **D. FORMATION PROGRAMS: INSTITUTIONAL FORMATION**

22. Recommendation: We recommend that *Ratio Studiorum Particularis* and the *Ratio Formationis Particularis* of the Provinces be reviewed and revised, as necessary, to help brothers (student cooperator brothers and student clerical brothers) in institutional formation programs to be properly formed in their unique but complimentary vocations, emphasizing what unites them deeply in the Order and what distinguishes them so that their vocations will enrich the one single Dominican vocation as a community of brothers radically tied to one another in evangelical living in community and in mission.
23. Recommendation: We recommend continued clarification of the mission of the cooperator brother within the concrete context of the reality of the respective Provinces, so that from that same reality we may create ideal programs of formation and of discipleship for the brothers.
24. Recommendation: We recommend the implementation of a formation plan that considers the talents, capacities and cultural diversity of cooperator brothers; a plan that facilitates the accomplishment of the formation of the cooperator brothers and prepared them for ministries in contemporary times.
25. Recommendation: We recommend during the process of revising formation programs for cooperator brothers that appropriate methods for reviewing the unique talents of each formandi be incorporated in formation programs so that having received the basic knowledge in philosophy and theology, and according to their own capacity, they may continue achieving the necessary credentials to better develop particular disciplines.

Rather than diminishing the vocation of cooperator brothers, we must instead foster their talents and abilities, facilitating in them their becoming fully men religious within the Dominican life. We are aware that the urgent needs of the Province demand sacrifices and great efforts made by all our brothers, but this should not annul the possibility that cooperator brothers develop a specialized knowledge in a work in which they demonstrate competencies.

26. Recommendation: We recommend when designing and implementing new or revised formation programs for cooperator brothers that the following components be included, incorporating the four pillars of Dominican life:
- i. human formation that promotes the personal growth of the formandi;
  - ii. Dominican formation in the particular charism and spirituality of the Order;

- iii. ministry formation that reflects the uniqueness of the Brother's vocation and the needs of the universal Church;
- iv. technical formation that will provide the proper training that reflects the needs of the Province and the Church and the particular talents of the formandi, facilitating the fulfillment of their particular apostolic mission.

27. Recommendation: We recommend that common gatherings of cooperator brothers (perhaps during a summer) according to linguistic regions be scheduled for formative development and reflection. This can occur during initial formation and as a part of ongoing formation for a period of time after Solemn Vows.

28. Recommendation: We recommend that requests for formal programs of study be flexible and adaptable to the needs of the Province, the Church and the interests of the Brothers. Although study in theology, philosophy, scripture, Dominican spirituality and human development are essential elements in the formation of cooperator brothers, mandating that all cooperator brothers receive certifications or academic degrees is not absolutely essential.

#### **E. FORMATION PROGRAMS: CONTINUING FORMATION**

29. Recommendation: We recommend in order to provide for the continuing formation of cooperator brothers following the conclusion of institutional studies that initiatives include:
- a. promoting awareness and responsibility in each Dominican Brother for taking permanent formation seriously;
  - b. appointing senior cooperator brothers as mentors to younger cooperator brothers;
  - c. promoting opportunities for regularly scheduled sabbaticals;
  - d. scheduling regional meetings every few years to reflect on the Brothers joys, hopes, positive experiences as well as their struggles, concerns and needs;
  - e. scheduling interprovincial meetings, retreats and pilgrimages for cooperator brothers to continue the discussions that have been initiated as part of the *Cooperator Brothers Study*. Particularly important is to schedule the time and location of these meetings, at places where they are free from regular assignments, and well in advance in order to maximize participation. Brothers from any entity of the Order would be welcome to attend;
  - f. implementing continuing formation programs that encourage cooperator brothers to continue their formation by participating in workshops, earning certifications, and other academic opportunities in response to the Order's *Ratio Studiorum Generalis*, which states "all clerics and cooperator brothers, whatever their ministry might be, must

undertake a personal responsibility for their own formation, and in dialogue with their community and superiors.”

**F. FORMATORS:**

30. Recommendation: We recommend the appointment of Promoters of Vocations, Masters of Postulants, Novices, Students and Regents of Studies, with written position descriptions, who:
  - a. are sensitive, enlightened, proactive and committed to actively promoting vocations and forming men as cooperator brothers;
  - b. understand male religious life and do not identify themselves simply as priests who also happen to be Dominicans.
  
31. Recommendation: We recommend the appointment of a cooperator brother within each province to assist with the formation of cooperator brothers and clerical brothers preparing for priesthood, so that there is a greater awareness of our vocation among all Dominican friars, and a balance between the emphasis we place on our apostolic mission in the universal Church, and the discernment of our call as friar preachers.
  
32. Recommendation: We recommend the assignation of cooperator brothers to houses of formation so that there is a living witness for novices and students and to protect new vocations to the cooperator brotherhood from being assimilated to the clerical state and compromising the intrinsic character and dignity of this vocation in the Order and in the Church.
  
33. Recommendation: We recommend participation in education programs for formators so that they are not simply filling a position, but will receive formal guidance in accord with our legislation, spirituality and human development in Dominican life with particular attention to the distinctive characteristics and richness of diversities of the vocation of cooperator brothers;
  
34. Recommendation: We recommend the design and implementation of formation programs that:
  - a. focuses first on Dominican spirituality, followed by doctrinal studies and the seeking of the truth, and then the necessary technical training;
  - b. are tailored to the individual brother's gifts;
  - c. make studies (philosophy, theology, etc.) available, but in accord with the intellectual abilities of the friars.
  
35. Recommendation: We recommend that in the course of the formation of all friars, there should be an exposition on the life of cooperator brother, so that all the friars in the community will be aware of the richness of this vocation and assume responsibility to promote and protect it.

**G. MINISTRY AND SERVICE:**

36. Recommendation: We recommend that in renewing and promoting and the ministerial life of cooperator brothers in light of the needs of the People of God and consistent with the mission and charism of the Order and the plan for the New Evangelization that:
- a. the gifts of cooperator brothers be carefully assessed and explored with them, as well as new and diverse opportunities for ministry especially those that are not typically undertaken by some Provinces yet are part of the Order's mission and charism;
  - b. the current variety of ministries of the laity be open to cooperator brothers, except ministries reserved to priesthood;
  - c. opportunities for cooperator brothers to preach at liturgical celebrations, such as Lauds, Vespers, etc. be provided;
  - d. cooperator brothers not be restricted to only one type of ministry of service in the Order, e.g. traditional categories; maintenance; catechist; educator. At the same time, do not expect brothers to completely live in two distinct categories of life, e.g. internal community ministries; professional in the world;
  - e. ministries of our Provinces that militate against Dominican Life and have inhibited our community life be transferred to the care of others;
  - f. new frontiers of the Order and the Church be explored and implemented, if feasible, where cooperator brothers can bring the message of salvation and the healing ministry of Jesus to the poor, the disenfranchised, those who live on the lines of brokenness, those who are unwanted and unloved and wherever the Word of God needs to be proclaimed;
  - g. distinctive ministries of the community both internal and external be developed and promoted in order to welcome all men called to Dominican life without any discrimination based on work or academic proficiencies alone. In this approach, we are called, simply, to the Preaching of the Word wherever and whenever it is needed.
  - h. ministries of cooperator brothers that collaborate with ministries of other branches of the Dominican Family be explored and implemented;

**H. INTERPROVINCIAL COLLABORATION**

37. Recommendation: We recommend the Provinces carefully explore opportunities for interprovincial collaboration that specifically address:
- a. how the principles of diversity, complementarity and collaboration between cooperator brothers and priest brothers and other members of the Dominican Family are to be carried out in today's diverse cultures as they all give new life together to the Holy Preaching in the New Evangelization;

- b. the development of formation programs for cooperator brothers within and among Provinces that reflect the renewal of the vocation and ministries of cooperator brothers, i.e. gatherings of cooperator brothers at least every two years for renewal, for retreats, etc.
- c. including cooperator brothers as active participants in local, regional and national meetings of director of vocations and formation in order to continue to help them understand that all friars are called to Dominican life and that cooperator brothers are a radical part of the Order and its charism and never distant from it;
- d. development of new initiatives to expand the influence of the cooperator brothers in the ministries of the Provinces especially among the poor, the disenfranchised, those who live on the lines of human brokenness, the unwanted and the unloved;
- e. development and implementation of one formation program for several Provinces that are related by language and geography, especially where candidates are present and where formators and resources are limited;
- f. actively promote the exchange of information using all forms of communication within all entities of the Order but especially where cooperator brothers are present;
- g. develop Vocations Weekends among Provinces for applicants for the Brotherhood especially among entities of the Order with limitations of personnel;
- h. seek grants that might be available to support these new initiatives.

## **I. GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP**

38. Recommendation: We encourage the review and approval of legislation at the level of statutes and ordinations in the ACTS of General and Provincial Chapters including new structures of leadership and governance that:
- a. actively involve cooperator brothers in the process of renewal of their lives and their communities and remove the centuries-old and current structures that are exclusive and create distances and indifferences about the vocation of the Dominican Cooperator Brother in the Order's mission in the Church;
  - b. assure that all committees and councils of the Order and the Provinces include cooperator brothers with particular emphasis on the work of vocation, formation, ministries and governance;
  - c. assure that cooperator brothers with active and passive voice participate in the General Chapters;
  - d. promote the participation of cooperator brothers in General Chapters, representative of Provinces and language groups as periti, if not as delegates, in order to assure that the voice of the cooperator brother is heard and acknowledged in written and oral forms.

39. Recommendation: We recommend the deletion of the adjective “cooperator” from our Constitutions and Acts of General and Provincial Chapters and all promotional materials since the common interpretation of the term often identifies “cooperator” as secondary to ordained friars and diminishes their vocation as being distant from the heart of Dominican life and the charism of the Order.
40. Recommendation: We recommend that new opportunities continue to be explored to enhance a greater participation of cooperator brothers in the governance of the Order of which they are full members.

#### **J. AGENDA FOR THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS:**

41. Recommendation: We recommend that the Agenda for the International Congress on the Cooperator Brother, as called for by the General Chapter of Rome, 2012, No. 218, include:
- a. a review of the findings and recommendations of the *Cooperator Brothers Study* with specific focus on the eight themes that emerged from the study, namely,
    - i. Renewal for the New Evangelization
    - ii. Identity and Dignity of the Vocation
    - iii. Community Life
    - iv. Recruitment and Promotion of Vocations
    - v. Formation Program and Formators
    - vi. Ministry and Service
    - vii. Interprovincial Collaboration
    - viii. Governance and Leadership
  - b. a celebration of the vocation and ministry of Dominican Cooperator Brothers within the context of the 800<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the Order including, for example, multiple art forms, presentations, seminars and publications;
  - c. the expansion of the participants to include representatives of the Dominican Family.

#### **K. SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE MASTER OF THE ORDER:**

42. Recommendation: We recommend that the Master of the Order issue a pastoral letter to the whole Order, accompanied by the full study, on the vocation, formation, spirituality and ministries of the cooperator brother that emphasizes, for example, these elements:
- a. that each community of the Order engage in a serious reflection of the final report (c.f. *Relatio de Statu Ordinis of the Master of the Order*, 2103, no. 113; ACG 2013, Torgir)
  - b. the findings of this historic study and the recommendations will promote the quality, the distinctive character and the presence of

- cooperator brothers vocation as essential for fulfilling the mission of the Holy Preaching throughout the whole Order;
- c. the importance of recruiting Brothers who are happy, holy and committed to the Holy Preaching;
  - d. the Provinces apply the same intensity of enthusiasm in promoting vocations of cooperator brothers as they do in promoting vocations to the priesthood;
  - e. the findings reported in this Study will be taken seriously and its recommendation acted upon enthusiastically and in a timely manner;
  - f. the spirit of itinerancy direct the work of renewal and that the Order be willing to travel to unknown places and amid new challenges where the Word of God has become dimmed or remains unknown;
  - g. will help all members of the Dominican Family to recommit themselves to the uniqueness of the Dominican Vocation and to one another in Dominican life through evangelical living; and
  - h. the inclusive, accountable and transparent process used in the model for the Brothers Study serve as the impetus for a renewal of the whole Order;

43. Recommendation: We recommend that events that celebrate the 800<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the foundation of the Order specifically feature cooperator brothers.
44. Recommendation: We recommend that the Master of the Order propose to the Prefect of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life:
  - a. the promulgation of a document on the vocation, formation and ministries of religious brothers in the Church, and
  - b. the establishment of a Year of Consecrated Life that will highlight the importance of vocations among men and women religious in the universal Church;

VI. SUMMARY: In the course of this historic study, the first of its kind in the nearly eight hundred history of the Order, one hundred eighty cooperator brothers have participated in nine regional gatherings or contributed to the study by other means of communications. The initial findings of this study are gathered together into eight themes, namely:

1. Renewal for the New Evangelization;
2. Identity and Dignity of the Vocation;
3. Community Life;
4. Recruitment and Promotion of Vocations;
5. Formation Programs and Formators;
6. Ministry and Service;
7. Inter-Provincial Collaboration; and
8. Governance and Leadership.

These are the critical themes that have been identified by the Brothers who participated in the regional gatherings as essential for re-visioning and renewal of the vocation and ministry of the Dominican cooperator brothers for our time” (*General Chapter of Rome, 2010, No. 218*) and that they believe are integral elements in the renewal of the whole Order as called for by the Master of the Order (*Relatio de statu Ordinis to the General Chapter of Trogir, 2013, No. 3*).

Representing twenty-four entities of the Order, from different continents and language groups with rich historical, cultural heritages, including Brothers in formation and those long in years, it was the overwhelming impression among all gathered that the question of renewal of the cooperator brothers vocation is vital to the renewal of the whole Order. One Brother remarked:

“It is a question of renewal of our entire way of life. We speak frequently about being a Dominican Family, but to be that family we need every part to be thriving. As communities of friars, cooperator brothers cannot flourish without our priest brothers and neither can the priest brothers without the cooperator brothers”.

In every way Dominican cooperator brothers are called to be “*in medio Ecclesiae*” but the Brothers who participated in the regional gatherings, emphasized that they also must be “*in medio Ordinis*” as well.” It is the central hope of the Brothers who participated in these gatherings that all friars of the Order will come to believe that renewal of the whole Order, not one part of the corpus, is essential in the Church’s plan for the New Evangelization and the preeminent role of all Dominican Friars and indeed the whole Dominican Family in this noble work.

As Dominican Brothers consecrated to the Word, we commit this report to your prayers and we assure you of ours as together we continue this incredible journey of being sent forth to preach the Gospel seeking always the Face of Jesus.

Fraternally,

Bro. Jacques Ambec, OP – Province of Toulouse

Bro. Jose Bolabato, OP – Vicariate of Congo

Bro. Martin Nguyen Si Luu, OP – Province of Viet Nam

Bro. Ignatius Perkins, OP – Province of St Joseph, Chair

Bro. Tomasz Syperek, OP – Province of Poland

1 September 2013