Letter for the Jubilee year of the Order of Preachers

My dear sisters and brothers,

Go and preach!

Since the celebration of the anniversary of the installation of the first nuns of the Order in Prouilhe, each year of the novena proposed by brother Carlos has been preparing us to hear today this sending. Our Dominican tradition tells us that Dominic one day heard from Saint Peter and Saint Paul: « Go and preach, for God has chosen you for this ministry », they said. By the door of the Basilica of Santa Sabina this same formula was used by the one who wrote the beautiful icon where Saint Dominic, in turn, addresses all of us, brothers and sisters in the Dominican family: Go, and preach! Vade Praedica!

Answering this call will be our way to bring the confirmation of the Order up to date as we celebrate the eight-hundredth anniversary. Answering it not only each of us individually but all of us together, as a fraternal communion, in apostolic solidarity with our communities, and by committing ourselves in the most vibrant way in the dynamic of the holy preaching that is the Dominican family. At the request of Dominic of Osma, Pope Honorius III confirmed the Order as the Order of Preachers in 1216. Today, at the request of the needs of the world and with the same determination as Dominic to serve the Church and the mystery of her communion, it somehow comes back to us to confirm in our turn this Order of Preachers. Of the Order Honorius III wrote that, by devoting all their forces to penetrating the Word of God and to evangelizing the name of our Lord Jesus Christ throughout the world, Dominic and his brothers responded to the desire of Him « who ever makes His church fruitful with new offspring, wanting to make these modern times measure up to former times, and to propagate the Catholic faith » (18 January 1221).

«Announcing the Gospel is not a source of pride for me, it is a necessity that is imposed on me: woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel! ». We are certainly far from the time when Paul wrote, but by the preaching of so many of our sisters and brothers, the Church has enlarged the tent of friendship with God! These years of
preparation for the Jubilee have been for all of us, sisters and brothers, lay and religious, an opportunity to assess the way in which we, in our turn, are contributing, according to the path opened by Dominic, to establishing the tent of friendship with God. This was probably also an opportunity to become aware of the obstacles which were able gradually to restrain the enthusiasm of the first days, the institutional burdens, the fears and needs of personal security, the need for recognition, the indifference or the discouragements faced with fractures that disfigure the world. Certainly, we need to take steps to evaluate what we do and can do, to establish plans, in one place by developing our preaching to give full scope to the creativity brought by new vocations, in another place to prepare for a time of transition, even of recession. But the future of the preaching of the Gospel of peace, the future of the proclamation that this world as it is, is the place where God wants to germinate the seed of the Kingdom, will probably not be primarily the result of strategic plans, as pertinent as they can be. As Dominic wanted to make it clear to the Pope when he was asking him to confirm the first fruits of his intuition, the fire of the Gospel must first set alight the existence of each Preacher: they were to « be » preachers. It is this inner fire that one day gave us the audacity to ask for the grace to devote our whole life to the Word. It is the same fire that can establish in us impatience, insomnia, the hope that, going from town to village, the name of Jesus Christ becomes the name of a brother and a friend who comes to live familiarly with men, inspiring in all the confidence to go towards Him (ST III q 40 resp3).

When Paul expresses this « inner necessity », he does it by saying how he himself wanted to try to be familiar with all, free in regard to all, making himself the slave to all: « Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible » (cf. 1 Cor 9, 19f). This is the same fire that lives within Dominic: the ardour of preaching. The first task of the preacher appears to be that of joining himself with those to whom he is sent. Because he desires that the Gospel become the abode of all, the preacher links his destiny with that of his interlocutors, to the point of accepting that his freedom depends on these new friendships, to the point of receiving his freedom and creativity from this dependency (is that not what begging means?). For the apostle, the fire inside is not only that of having something to say or to contribute, but it is the fire of impatience to share with all in this world, a world that will, on the day willed by God, receive its transfiguration from the truth of the Gospel. For Paul, we know, this transfiguration is the figure of the mystery of the unity of love in Christ (Eph 3-4). How can we not mention here the prophetic mosaic of Santa Sabina? (Gal 3, 28; Col 3: 11): all of you are one thing in Jesus Christ, for he is all, he is in all! Our mission is to proclaim this promise of communion: the star on Dominic’s forehead reminds us of the star of Bethlehem which appears where the Word enters into alliance, into communion with human beings. This is the same light of the Word that comes to live at the heart of the community. This « coming » is like an inner fire, and it is this fire that we burn to transmit to others. The flame of preaching: symbol of our Jubilee and of our mission. Moved by this fire, in a world that sometimes seems to be doomed to divisions and conflicts, when identitarianisms and polarizations conspire to create obstacles to communion in diversity, at a time when the religions themselves do not always know how to escape these temptations, moved by this fire of desire for this promised communion, go and preach!

And now the image of Dominic’s vision returns: Peter’s staff and Paul’s book. Peter’s staff, first, never to forget that there is only one Shepherd, of whom Peter was the first of the servants. Thus, preachers are sent tirelessly to preach the grace of salvation of which the Church, in the unity of its communion, is the sacrament. But the staff also because it is about setting out, getting out of our establishments, to go beyond the boundaries of our safety, to step over the ditches that separate cultures and human groups, to accompany people’s steps when it comes to moving forward on uncertain paths. The staff on which to rely when, aware of our weaknesses and sins, we ask for the grace of mercy so it might teach us to become preachers. The staff of the itinerant preacher of the grace of mercy. The mobility of this itinerary, internal as much as it is external, means that the staff must always be accompanied by the Book, carried by Paul. Certainly, because in the Book is written what God wants to reveal to all. And also because it is in the Word that must be immersed the experience of faith, the conversation of evangelization, and the work of intelligibility that theology pursues. But the book with the staff, because the meeting, the dialogue, the study of other cultures, the esteem for other quests for truth, all this will constitute gateways to a deeper knowledge and understanding of this Word, which gradually reveals itself by dint of scrutinizing the Scripture that has been recorded in the Bible. Go and preach could also be declined as « go and study », not to become a savant, nor to pretend either to « teach others », but study in order to scrutinize the signs of the times, to discern the traces of grace which works at the heart of the world, to learn how to rejoice and give thanks and to
understand a little better each day the depth of the mystery of His presence which is Word and Truth. Go, because the grace of which you want to become the preacher precedes you to Galilee, and you must learn to recognize it, to study it, to contemplate it, so as then to have the joy of sharing the news!

Off we went, taken into the crowd of those who have gone before us in the school of Dominic. Many schools of holiness are proposed to us! Because, as we well know, this « go and preach », by sending us on the roads of preaching, invites us to discover how these roads will become those of our adjustment to the Lord. At the start of this year of the Jubilee, it seems to me that the memory of the first community of disciples and friends who accompanied Jesus on the roads of Galilee must not leave us. It is in following him that this community was gradually « formed for preaching ». It was by returning to these first apostolic times that Diego and Dominic already had the intuition, the need for a renewal of the methods, the ardent, and the message of evangelization. Today and tomorrow, in our turn, we are invited to this same work of renewal, in order to contribute « to make these modern times measure up to former times, and to propagate the Catholic faith ». And we have the chance to do so by welcoming in all continents new vocations that also constitute a call for an unceasing renewal of the dynamism of the preaching of the Order. So what are these roads on which we are called upon today to live familiarly with men? « I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent » (Lk 4, 43-44). The Order of Saint Dominic, as a whole, must be animated by a similar sense of the urgency of the « Visitation of the Gospel » (Lk 1, 39)! Certainly, we all have, sisters, brothers and laity, good reasons for saying that we must, above all, assure what we are already doing. Certainly, we can sometimes be « paralysed » when we consider the magnitude of the task and how few we are. Of course, we are right to emphasize that, where we are established already, the task of preaching is essential. But the « Visitation of the Gospel » urges us to join people, groups and places where the announcement of the Good News of the Kingdom must, yet again, « also » be heard. The object of preaching is this discrete and respectful approach of the One who comes, familiarly, offering friendship and the Mercy of God. It is well known that Dominic was not the « creator » of the Rosary. But it is not a coincidence that his Order was entrusted with the meditation and the preaching of the mystery of Christ by the contemplation of the mysteries of the Rosary. By being well established in the heart of the life of the Preacher, the mysteries of the life of Jesus, living among his own, establishing his place among men, confronting treason and death, and yet not ceasing to propose forgiveness, guide the way in which the preachers will, by their human words, serve the familiar coming of mercy so that the world might have life.

The Order yesterday, today, and tomorrow, sets the theme of this year of the celebration of the Jubilee. What will the Order be tomorrow? It will no doubt be the preacher, free, and joyful. As yesterday and today, it will no doubt be motivated by the desire to live and preach, for its own time, communion as the first apostolic community lived with Jesus in order to make the promise of the Kingdom be heard as Good News for all. Of course I do not want to pretend to draw the concrete figure of the « holy preaching » of tomorrow: this will be the fruit of the apostolic creativity of our brothers and sisters and laity in all the latitudes, driven by the creativity of the Spirit. But, whatever this figure, it seems to me that the Order will, for the future, have to make its own some of the crucial questions that I would like to formulate from the visits that I have the opportunity to carry out with brothers and sisters around the world.

How can we hear and understand what the Lord is saying to us through the new vocations with which He entrusts us by sending them to us? Looking at the early history of the Order, I am struck by the way in which the new brothers and sisters were carried to preaching, through their experience of faith, their formation, their history, their culture. The conversion of some, the extensive studies carried out by others, the experience of life … all this gradually shaped the diversity and creativity of the Order of Dominic. What about today? A lot of new brothers and sisters join the Order after studies which have engaged them in new contemporary forms of knowledge, many come from cultural and family backgrounds with which the Church does not always easily engage. Many precisely because of the fact that they have been « seized » by the urgency of the Word at the heart of a life in which they left securities or plans for the future: how will the Order enable them to remain faithful to this generosity and deploy fully their creativity for the benefit of the apostolic creativity of the whole Order? The richness of these new vocations is a responsibility for all of us: continually to deepen and diversify our « service of the conversation of God with human beings ». 
This service, if it is our common responsibility, is realised in a wide variety of cultures and the Order never ceases to become more international and intercultural. At the same time, in the Order as is the case in the world, even if we keep talking about globalization (or perhaps because we talk about it) the temptation exists to fall back on identities that are more «controlled» and closed in on themselves, with the risk of always being a little on the defensive when it comes to exchange, collaborations, choice for the common good which make you take the apparent risk of fragility and, especially, being unable to achieve the short-term projects that each entity has elaborated for itself. How will we, in the future, open wide the ways of the intercultural, exchange between the provinces and the congregations: how to place the international reality of the Order more fully at the service of the Church? Do we dare take the risk of internationalizing our communities, of witnessing to the symphony that is possible between cultures, between the modalities of familiar proximity with the world, between theological schools, between forms of knowledge, between understandings of the Church? ... How, in fact, can the Order itself be, at the heart of the Church, this «conversation» for which Blessed Pope Paul VI called?

To achieve this, it seems to me that the Order in the future must, more and more, become the Order of a contemplative preaching. Paradoxically, while it does not cease to say, with reason, that the Church always needs more workers for the harvest, the Order should without a doubt offer a service that will not mean simply being devoured by pastoral action, but which will mean rather places of contemplation, of the search for wisdom, of the quest for the truth. That is to say the place that concern for the witness of fraternal communion must have in the future, the non-negotiable priority given to meditation of the Word, to the liturgy of the hours and to intercession, to patient watching in the presence of the Lord. But it is also to speak of the determination with which we will have to consolidate and deepen the intensity of study, a privileged way of contemplation but also a service for the Church that, in the name of the tradition that has been passed on to us, we cannot decline.

The Order, tomorrow should be more than ever animated by the desire to become more and more the «family of Dominic» which, from the beginning, was an innovation for the Church. This ought to lead us well beyond good fraternal relations between all the members of the Dominican Family. More sharply the question will no doubt be the following: how being this «family» allows us together to identify better the needs of the Church and of the world, and to respond in assuming together a common apostolic and evangelical responsibility?

It is largely through the realisation of this family that the Order will seek, tomorrow, to continue to be the servant of the friendship of God with the world. To do this, the brothers as also the sisters, and the laity too, will need to cultivate their willingness for mobility, for itinerancy. The needs of the Church, the needs of the world, change at a fast pace. At the same time, we have assumed onerous institutions and projects, conventual presences that are difficult to maintain, personal projects that struggle to be integrated in a common project. The challenge will be to give us the means to be always attentive more to the needs of others than to our own will to «maintain» what we want to do, or want to continue doing. How not to forget that it is characteristic of the Order, yesterday, today and tomorrow, always to go beyond established situations, to go out to meet those who have not yet had the joy of a personal encounter with Jesus Christ, to take the risk of leaving securities in order to witness the mercy and the friendship of God for those for whom God is still, or has become, distant and foreign. How can we let ourselves be carried by the fire of the desire to go, once again, to other places to other cultures? …

In the Basilica of Santa Sabina, where we celebrated the opening of the Jubilee year, Dominic loved to pray, to express to God his concern for the poor, for sinners and for faraway ones. He also loved to entrust to the mercy of the Lord the brothers that he sent out, in spite of their fears and uncertainties … he did it with the conviction that only the mercy of God, tirelessly contemplated and announced, would be the strength of preaching. In this Year of the Jubilee of the Order, it is this same conviction that sends us in our turn to proclaim the Gospel of peace.

Go, and preach!

Brother Bruno Cadoré, OP
Master of the Order of Preachers
Rome, 1 January 2016, Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God
• Episcopal Ordination of Fr Lorenzo Piretto, OP as the Metropolitan Archbishop of Izmir, Turkey

On Saturday, 19 December 2015, at the Cathedral of Izmir, fr Lorenzo Piretto was ordained as the Archbishop of that city. The Mass was concelebrated by all the bishops of Turkey, presided over by the Archbishop of the Armenians of Istanbul and assisted by more than forty priests.

The Mass was attended by representatives of the multifaceted Christian diversities of the land: Orthodox, Armenians, Syrians, Anglicans, Evangelicals. The Cathedral was filled with a crowd of more than four hundred faithful, substantial and far more than just a representation of the small population of Catholics in that country.

Archbishop Piretto is a son of the Italian Province of St Dominic and has been a missionary in Turkey since 1983. There he has been involved in various educational and pastoral apostolates. Friars of the Province of St Dominic in Italy led by their Provincial (Fr Fausto Arici) were fully represented at the ordination.

All our love, good wishes and prayers are with our brother, Archbishop Piretto in his new episcopal ministry.

• Christmas Letter from the Dominican Sisters of St. Catherine of Siena, IRAQ

“‘They went their way, and the star which they had seen in the East went before them...’ (Matthew 2: 9)

Dear friends and benefactors,

Being in the Middle East and seeing what is happening around us makes it hard to believe that our world is ready to welcome the Lord. The star of Christmas shines on us in our second year of exile to tell us how similar our world is now to the time when Jesus was born. The wandering magi who had lost their way are still there, but they are not only three - there are thousands of them. Herod who wanted to kill the innocents is still there, but he has become many. The Holy Family is still fleeing to escape with their lives, followed by many other families who are immigrating in all directions. And, Rachel is still weeping over her children who were stripped out of her arms, and she is accompanied by her neighbours whose grief just leaves us speechless.

Yet, it is still the star of Christmas that shines to show where the King of peace is born. It is in this world, and no other world where Jesus is born to be with us and for us. The Lord comes unexpectedly, challenging our mentality and our expectations. He comes in our worn out world, even when the world is not ready for Him. He comes to our aid in times of weakness, pain, violence, and darkness in order to be close to us. He is always there, guiding the wandering people, accompanying those who flee, and wiping the tears of the weeping mothers.

Having confidence in Him and in his powerful presence among us, we dare to continue our journey with those who are left in Iraq, although nothing is clear about the future. News is not encouraging at all, and people do not have the capacity to think anymore. We ask your prayers that God may strengthen our faith, enlighten us and grant us His wisdom to discern in our reality despite all the difficulties and pressures we are living. How much enlightened vision and courage we need!

On this blessed occasion, and with confidence that the word of the Lord will prevail, I extend my greetings to all sisters, brethren, friends, benefactors, and organizations who have been accompanying us in our dark night. Thank you for being a guiding star that shows us God’s loving care. We believe that His light will tear through the darkness, and He will come down. O Come, Lord Jesus. You are our joy...our peace...and our life.

Sister Maria Hanna OP
Dec 2015

• Timothy Radcliffe, OP: Special Report from Syria

Timothy Radcliffe OP, Director of the Las Casas Institute, has just returned from a special visit to Syria with an international peace delegation

I was invited by Mairead MaGuire, who jointly (with Betty Williams) won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1976 for her work in Northern Ireland, to join a small Peace delegation to Syria. We were Christians, a Hindu, and a
few agnostics. I leapt at the opportunity to go. For me this was, above all, a chance to show some solidarity with Christian communities, among the oldest in the world, who felt deserted and forgotten.

Our base was a Carmelite monastery in the mountains, half way between Damascus and Homs. It was about three miles from the frontline with ISIS. Sleep at night was difficult because of the artillery fire. We met government officials, imams, bishops, opposition leaders, religious communities, and ordinary people in the street.

I was deeply struck by the profound friendship between Christians and so many Muslims. In the village just below the monastery, Muslims came to the Catholic Church to celebrate the birth of the prophet and Christians went to the mosque to celebrate Christmas. Yes, that way around! As I had seen in Baghdad, Muslims were putting up Christmas trees as a sign of their closeness to Christians. In Tartus we visited the first mosque ever to be dedicated to Our Lady, and the imam there sung the sutra from the Qur’an that is in her honour. We had a day with the Melkite Patriarch who was overjoyed at our visit, and who is a close friend of the Grand Mufti of Syria, with whom we had a couple of hours.

It is hard to discern the true situation of Syria. The West has its own narrative, in which the President, Bashar al-Assad, is seen as a cruel tyrant who must be removed from power as soon as possible. Nearly all the people with whom we talked had other narratives. People feared an imposed regime change even more than Daesh. They had seen how in Iraq and Libya this had led to chaos and the flourishing of terrorism. As Dominicans, we know that the truth is to be arrived at patiently and humbly, listening attentively all voices. I was saddened, returning to the UK, by the simplistic certainty with which so many politicians write of this complex country.

The atmosphere is saturated with violence. In Damascus people carried around AK 47s as if they were umbrellas. Homs was virtually destroyed. We visited Maaloula, a Christian village in which Aramaic is still spoken. Before we could have breakfast we were hustled into cars and driven away at speed. We had been spotted by al-Nusra Front, an affiliate of al-Qaeda; an attack was imminent.

Everywhere, Christians and Muslims are labouring to produce reconciliation, at the risk of their lives. I slowly became aware of how much this violence magnifies upon a terrible screen the violence that is so pervasive of Western gun culture. I went to see Spectre, the latest James Bond movie, shortly after my return. This is the sort of film that the jihadists love. But Bond’s final act was to throw away his gun. We shall only defeat Daesh if we heal our souls of violence.

• Aging into the Heart of Mercy

Dominicans around the world have begun a year of celebration marking the 800th anniversary of the official approval of the Order of Preachers by Pope Honorius III in December, 1216. As I think about the rich spiritual heritage of the Dominican Family, I realize that our spirituality has much wisdom to offer to anyone looking for ways to age into a life-giving future—it has been doing so for eight centuries! Moreover, this 800th anniversary celebration coincides with that of the extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy announced by Pope Francis—a perfect backdrop for exploring what Dominican spirituality has to say about a “spirituality” of aging.

Not a portrait, but a family album

From its very beginnings, Dominican spirituality has always been focused on the Word of God—in liturgical celebration, in study and contemplation, and in the living out of the primary mission of Dominicans in the Church: to preach the gospel. To understand this spirituality of the Order of Preachers, one must look not only to the founding charism of Saint Dominic, but also to the lived legacy of his many followers. Dominic (1170-1221) did not leave great treatises or detailed instructions for his followers; rather, he modeled a way of preaching the gospel and left behind a community committed to preaching the good news of God’s mercy and grace.

Early Dominican sources do not focus on Dominic’s persona; instead, they paint a picture of a community of preachers based on the vision and ideals that Dominic left imprinted on the psyche of the community, ideals
that prompted others to follow in their footsteps. The Dominican spiritual tradition will continue to evolve as long as there are Dominicans bringing to life Dominic’s vision of a community of itinerant preachers responding to new currents of thought in ever-new circumstances. And as we draw on the wisdom that has shone so brightly in Dominic and in the lives of the men and women of the Order over the centuries, we can see that Dominican spirituality, including a spirituality of aging, is rooted in a firm trust in the mercy and compassion of God.

**Dominican spirituality and divine mercy**

Dominicans follow the example of Saint Dominic, the “preacher of grace.” In his recent letter announcing the 800th Anniversary Year, the Master of the Order, Bruno Cadoré, reminds us that “preachers of the Gospel are the preachers of grace, and the preachers of grace are the preachers of the mercy of God.”

Saint Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), perhaps the best known of the great Dominican intellectuals, tells us that every divine action has its roots in mercy. When we truly grasp this radical understanding of mercy as God’s very self in God’s care and love for creation, we can even go so far as to say that “Mercy” is the name of God in relation to creatures, an insight demonstrated in the prayer of Dominic himself.

One of the earliest descriptions of Dominic recounts that “God had given him a special grace to weep for sinners and for the afflicted and oppressed; he bore their distress in the inmost shrine of his compassion.” According to eyewitnesses, Dominic spent whole nights in prayer, invoking God: “My God, my Mercy, what will be come of sinners?”

Dominic’s focus on God’s mercy continues in the spirituality of Dominicans. Damian Byrne, Master of the Order from 1983 to 1990, once told me that when he taught preaching to the student brothers in Ireland, he would tell them that there is only one rule they need to remember: “Every homily—every homily—must be about the mercy of God. And if one is preaching to priests or religious, that rule applies doubly because they really don’t believe it!”

Our brother Damian’s insight is one that rings true. God’s mercy is so beyond our human experience of forgiveness. During this Jubilee Year of Mercy, when Pope Francis is asking us to lift up God’s merciful face to the world, we might all do well to follow Dominic’s lead, praying as he did, “My God, my Mercy,” asking God to give us eyes of deep compassion with which to see our world so that we ourselves may continue to become reflections of divine mercy in our own situations. Moreover, as we age, we are also called to let go of our own past failures. To see with God’s eye of compassion gives us the courage and peace we need to do just that.

**Preaching and elders**

There’s a strong link between the gospel message of salvation and the preaching of mercy—which is the heart of the gospel. Indeed, the spirit of Dominic’s own preaching can be summed up in one word: compassion. To preach as a Dominican is to proclaim the tender compassion of God.

While the challenges of aging can present obstacles for many forms of ministry, preaching is certainly not one of them. Aging should never lead us to give up on preaching! So, as elders, how do we preach the good news?

A good way to explore this question is to reflect on the three “mottos” of the Order: (1) Contemplari, et contemplata aliis tradere – To contemplate, and to hand on to others the fruits of one’s contemplation; (2) Veritas – Truth; (3) Laudare, Benedicere, Praedicare – To praise, to bless, to preach. These three mottos shed light on the fundamental mission of the Order: to preach in the spirit of Dominic, in season and out of season, no matter what our limitations may be.

**To contemplate, and to hand on to others the fruits of one’s contemplation**

For a Dominican, the fruit of one’s study and contemplation is meant to be shared. The Dominican tradition has always had great respect for the particular, personal charism of each of its members; for it is the individual Dominican’s living of the mission that moves the group’s charism forward. In other words, each Dominican’s life is a needed chapter of the book of Dominican spirituality, critical to the evolving charism
of the community. We follow the foot-prints of those who have gone before us, but our steps take us on our own unique path. Lived well, our lives become a light for others who will come after us. Our experience becomes a source of wisdom for others about how to live into the mystery of God.

When we reach our retirement years, we can find ourselves with more leisure for the study, prayer, and contemplation we longed for during our years of ac-tive ministry. For each of us, this is a time to ask: Do I continue to welcome and contemplate new and per-haps challenging ideas (as did Thomas Aquinas!)? Can I let go of the security of my past ways of think-ing and live in the “now” in order to be Christ’s pres-ence in response to circumstances I find myself in?

Veritas … the truth to be dis-covered as we age
Dominicans never cease their pur-suit of truth. As we get older we are drawn more deeply into the mystery of God, and “truth” takes on a meaning beyond articulations of “objective” truth. We find ourselves returning to the most basic questions about our existence and the deepest meaning of our humanity: Who am I? What does my life mean? In the words of Saint Catherine of Siena (1347-1380), we find ourselves called to enter the “cell of self-knowledge.”

Asking these questions as we age is not to be mistak-en for a narcissistic concern with our own well-being or personal self-fulfillment; rather, the search for self-knowledge leads us to discover as Catherine did that God is at the center of our very being. The “truth” of our situation is that we have always been—and continue to be—held in the loving embrace of God’s mercy. No matter what our fail-ings may be, we are unconditionally loved and treasured by God. As Catherine so eloquent-ly recorded in her Dialogue, God tells us, “It was with provi-dence that I created you, and when I contemplated my crea-ture in myself, I fell in love with the beauty of my creation.”

The cell of self-knowledge becomes the place of our contemplative prayer. There we meet the God who delights in us and showers us with love. There we are truly free to be ourselves, with all of our flaws and weaknesses, apprehensions and fears. Only there, where we are who we really are, is God able to speak directly to our hearts—precisely because our hearts are laid bare of all pretense. When we are at home with ourselves “where we are,” we are most real and most ready for God’s grace to enter in and transform us.

This experience of the truth of our situation shines forth in our own ability to love and treasure others, even in the midst of the limitations that age can bring. Being free to be ourselves, we become who we are truly meant to be, beacons of God’s love and compassion for others who are also struggling to be themselves. In the words of Catherine, “If you are who you are meant to be, you will set the world ablaze.”

To Praise, To Bless, To Preach
Laudare – To Praise. When we come to know the truth that we are loved and blessed by God, the natural response is gratitude and praise. Each day, we are invited to ask ourselves anew, “What is my greatest cause for joy? For what am I grateful… and how shall I re-spond?”

In a sermon on Philippians 4:4, our Dominican brother Meister Eckhart (1260-1328) said that if the only prayer we ever make to God in our whole life is “thank you,” it would suf-fice. As we age, we are encouraged to continue mak-ing that joyful prayer of thanks each and every day.

Benedicere - To Bless. For Dominicans, the ritual of profession of vows begins by asking the novice: “What do you ask?” The traditional answer is: “The mercy of God and your mercy.” In asking mercy of the community, the novice touches upon a key ele-ment of Dominican spirituality: we are called to be a blessing for the members of our communities, an in-car-nated “word” of mercy for one another.

Mercy in community means that all members are offered acceptance and love without con-dition. Anyone who has lived in community knows that it is a lifelong challenge to be a compassionate presence to all those with whom one lives. We might even say that we are called to “grow into” the face of mercy for each other. By simply being there for each other, offering the compassion that comes with the wisdom that age brings,
we can be a true blessing for our communities, giving those with whom we live the freedom to be themselves.

Praedicare - To Preach. The charism of preaching is central to Dominican identity. Each member of the Order of Preachers is called to preach according to his or her gifts. Blessed John of Fiesole (better known as Fra Angelico, 1395-1455) used his skills as an artist to bring the scriptures to life in paintings and frescoes, inspiring countless souls throughout the centuries through the eloquence of his art. We too are called to use our own unique gifts to witness to God’s mercy. How best to do this as we age? How shall we preach God’s word of compassion in our world and in our communities?

Perhaps we can take our cue from another one of Dominic’s great virtues: trust in divine providence. I think that it was Dominic’s great trust in God that gave him his characteristic joy, a joy so evident that he became known as the “joyful friar.” It was Dominic’s joy that attracted others to God—a way of preaching that we can all strive for!

How do we become gospel witnesses of joy? I believe that it is the fruit of a deep trust in the mercy of God. Trust in God gives us the courage to let go of our past failures and our need to be in control as we face the autumn years of our lives. It allows us to expand the compassion we may so freely extend to others to include ourselves. And the result is a joy and peace that the world cannot give! Joy and peace are surely the mark of aging well.

Our witness as we age
Perhaps the most profound preaching that elders are able to offer is their witness to this truth: our lives will always continue to have meaning. The longer we live, the more we are able to give witness to the power of God in our lives. Each of our lives has been an experience of God’s mercy; the longer we live, the more we can attest to that—both as recipients of God’s love and mercy and as conduits of love and mercy to others when we have allowed God to act through us.

How do we preach this good news? By being persons whose joy and gratitude point to the source of the gifts we have been given. Each time we do that, we become a light, filling the world with the light of Christ’s presence by our own living of the gospel of mercy. In this way, we can emulate Dominic who is commemorated as Lumen Ecclesiae, “Light of the Church.” And, as we age, let us be encouraged by remembering that some of the most powerful preaching that is done in each of our congregations is the witness of our elder members. Perhaps, like the wine in Cana, the best preaching is truly saved for last!

By Sister Margaret Palliser, OP. A member of the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill, New York, serves on her congregation’s leadership team. Prior to her current ministry, she spent many years as a university administrator and professor of religious studies. In addition to her work in higher education, Sr. Margaret was the editor of Living with Christ from 2009 to 2012. She holds a Master of Music degree from Boston University and a Doctorate in Sacred Theology with a concentration in spiritual theology from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. A theologian, educator, liturgist, and musician, Sister Margaret feels privileged to be involved in the area of ongoing formation.

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SOURCE: NRRO publication Engaging Aging

● Dominican Friar’s Documentary Wins International Awards

The International Independent Film Awards awarded three awards to a feature documentary, written, produced and directed by Armando P. Ibanez, O.P., a friar of the Southern Dominican Province and who also serves as Assistant Professor, Director of Radio-Television-Film at Texas A&M University-Kingsville.

The film—dedicated in commemoration of the Order’s 800th anniversary—received three Gold Awards in Directing, Documentary Feature and Animated Visuals categories.

In addition, Los Angeles CineFest selected the documentary as an Official Selection, and is now in competition with seven other selected films in the feature documentary category, which will be decided later this month.

The International Independent Film Awards states on its website:

The International Independent Film Awards is dedicated to showcasing and celebrating the many talented independent filmmakers and artists from around the world who share their visions in a powerful, creative and entertaining way.

“My hope and prayer is that many more Dominicans become filmmakers,” said Ibañez. “We are bearers of God’s love, empowering and life-giving. Where else can we bring Christ’s Good News more effectively than where people gather? — Around computers, television sets, smartphones and theaters.”

He added: “I’m not saying something new. The General Chapters of the Order have been mandating, urging, pleading, and encouraging Dominicans to become filmmakers for the past 38 years.”

The documentary is produced by Pluma Pictures, Inc., a non-profit film production company, and by Prospect House Entertainment. The film is about the great impact Dominican friars, headquartered in San Diego, Texas, had on the history and development of central South Texas, especially on how their presence assisted many Mexican-Americans struggle against injustice and harsh racism, especially in Alice and other surrounding communities, which bespeaks of the experiences of many Latinos in the Southwest.

“The film represents a chapter of the ongoing universal story of people grappling to understand and accept each other as equals,” says Ibañez. “It is a chapter that traces its roots to the Spanish Conquista—a wrestling match of greed and brutality against equality and Salvation. It is part of the universal story that began with Cain slaying his brother Abel.”

“These honors are a testament to a great crew,” Ibanez added. Emmy Award nominee, Joe O. Barrera, a native of San Diego, is the documentary’s music composer and music supervisor. Barrera was named by the Hollywood Reporter as a film music composer to watch, and has won numerous prestigious honors for his music. Todd Schmidt, is the documentary’s co-producer and visual effects artist, Neil de la Peña, Director of Photography, and Alan Jouet, audio engineer.

“A unique component of our film is poetry,” says Ibañez, who is listed in the Dictionary of Literary Biography, and wrote poetry for the documentary.

The documentary, which was completed earlier this year, has also won three prestigious awards: Award of Merit, Feature Documentary, The Accolade Global Film Competition, Award of Excellence, Feature Documentary, and Award of Merit Special Mention, The IndieFEST Film Awards. Also, WorldFest-Houston International Film & Video Festival honored the doc with a Gold Remi Award.
Pluma Pictures, Inc., board of directors are Dr. Thomas M. Hedberg, vice president, fr. Christopher Renz, O.P., Secretary, Ned Greene, Treasurer, fr Bruce Schultz, O.P., Dr. James Moises, Laurie Scheer, Michael Paz, and Dr. Erlinda Grey.
Source: Armando P. Ibañez, OP

- **Statement by Dominicans for Justice and Peace on the Human Rights Situation in Burundi**


Mr President,
Dominicans for Justice and Peace congratulates you for calling this Special Session of the Human Rights Council as we are extremely concerned about the rapidly deteriorating situation of human rights in Burundi.

Mr President,
Burundi is on fire!

Since the theft of arms from various military camps on 11 December 2015, the pursuit of the alleged thieves has been carried out in a way that has gone far beyond any international norms for dealing with armed robbers. Several witnesses have reported the kidnapping of young people from their homes by military and police in uniforms and their summary execution by being shot in the head or the heart. The violence is also showing an alarming tendency towards ethnic targetting. Families are being prevented from burying their children by being denied access to their bodies, the whereabouts of which are unknown.

In short, a total disregard for human life is evident, the rule of law has disappeared, and people are living in terror with a total absence of security.

In this situation, the priority is not to impose sanctions which will likely largely primarily punish the poorest people. The urgent priority is to provide immediate protection and security to the people of Burundi. Since this cannot be provided internally at the moment, it is the responsibility and duty of the international community through the UN or the African Union to urgently step in. A failure to do so will result in further massacres and a new genocide.

Once security is provided, inclusive negotiations between all the stakeholders in the country needs to be embarked on as soon as possible, as only a just political solution can end all the violence.

There is great appreciation in Burundi for the calling of this extraordinary session of the Human Rights Council to address the current crisis in the country. However, there is also a cynicism that it will only result in another commission of enquiry while everyone already knows what is happening and while people are dying!

Mr President,
Please do not let the people of Burundi down! Please take immediate action to provide them with protection and security!
Thank you Mr President!

- **Gaudeamus - Music to celebrate 800 years!**

For Dominicans, effective preaching involves more than just a well-crafted homily; it includes an entire life lived in praise of God. One motto of the Order of Preachers, “laudare, benedicere, praedicare” (“to praise, to bless, to preach”), tells us about the mindset of the Order from its earliest days. As a friar of the St Joseph Province recently noted, these words are extracted from an ancient Dominican liturgical text. The text describes the early friars’ act of worshipping God in joyful thanksgiving for His blessings. This religious order—an order explicitly founded for the sake of preaching—solemnly sings God’s praises as part of its fundamental identity and sacred mission.
Eight centuries after its foundation, the Dominican Order, engaged in countless ministries throughout the world, still focuses on the praise of God. In order to share the abundant graces given to the Order during this Jubilee year, the student brothers of the Province of St. Joseph announce the release of Gaudeamus: Celebrating 800 Years of Dominican Life. This album, their third in the last three years, offers insights into various characteristics of Dominican life—from Eucharistic worship, devotion, and fellowship with the saints (especially the Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, and St. Dominic), to preaching and prayers for the deceased—through beautiful chants, choral motets, and original compositions by the friars. May this work inspire you to join us, along with 800 years of Dominican saints and blesseds, in praising, blessing, and preaching God, who has been so good to us all.

Gaudeamus may be purchased digitally or on CD. Proceeds go to support the formation of the Dominican student brothers in Washington, DC.

**DO RELIGIONS HAVE A SIGNIFICANCE FOR EUROPE?**

*International Conference at Mala dvorana, Lisinski Concert Hall, Zagreb, 8th-10th January 2016.*

The Croatian Dominican Province and the General Curia of the Order of Preachers in collaboration with several institutions are organizing an international conference with the theme: “Do religions have a significance for Europe?” The conference is part of the celebration of the Jubilee of the 800th Anniversary of the Order Of Preachers (1216-2016).

The key objective of the conference is to reflect on important topics and issues of our society. It will try to examine in what fashion the relationship between religion and society is expressed, as well as the ones between the past and present, and religious and political determination and direction.

The conference is organized in collaboration with: The University of Zagreb, DOMUNI University, The Faculty of Philosophy of the Society of Jesus in Zagreb, the Faculty of Teacher Education of Zagreb. The Woolf Institute in Cambridge, the Pontifical University of St Thomas Aquinas in Rome, the Islamic Community in Zagreb, the Jewish Community Bet Israel in Zagreb, URI Europe, Styria...

If you are interested in participating in the conference, please send an email to: Mirko Vlk, OP - mirko.vlk.op@gmail.com, Registration is required.

Srećko Koralija OP, organizer of the congress (regens@dominikanci.hr )

**Mini-Summit of Inter-Africa and Regional Meeting of the Regents of Studies**

The Mini-Summit of the Inter-Africa (IAOP) coupled with the Regional meeting of the Regents and Directors of studies, kicked off on Saturday morning, December 12, 2015 in Luanda, Angola. The opening Mass which took place in the Chapel of St Thomas Aquinas community of our brothers in Luanda, was presided over by brother Michael Mascari, OP, Socius for Intellectual Life.

Take part in this meetings, the following brothers: Gabriel SAMBA, Socius for Africa, Charles UKWE, Provincial of St Joseph the Worker Province, Nigeria and Ghana, Paul AKIN- OTIKO Regent of Studies of this province and IAOP Councillor for Intellectual Life, Brice BINI, Regent of Studies of the Vice-Province St Augustin in West Africa, Justin ADRIKO, Vicar General of the Vicariate General of St Pius V, D.R.Congo, Marie-Victor KISYABA, Regent of studies of this Vicariate and IAOP Councillor for Formation, Sikhosiphi Mgoza, Vicar General of the Vicariate General of Southern Africa, Philippe Denis, Regent of studies of this Vicariate, Sixbert HATEGEKIMANA, Vicar provincial of Rwanda and Burundi, Emmanuel NTAKARUTIMANA, Director of studies of this Vicariate, Maury SCHEPERS, Vicar provincial of Easter Africa, Denis Vincent WISEMAN, Director of studies of this Vicariate, José PAULO, Vicar provincial of Angola, Julio CADEEIRO, Director of studies of this Vicariate. Brothers Prudence HATEGEKIMANA (Rwanda), IAOP Syndic, Mario RUI, IAOP Councillor for Justice and Peace and Dominican Family and Zéca (Angola) are also part of the meeting.

Three brothers apologized: Benjamin Sombel SARR, Vice-provincial of the Vice-Province St Augustin in West Africa, Jean-Paul Kamaheu, Vicar provincial of Equatorial Africa and Justin N’DEMA, Director of studies of this Vicariate.
In organising this regional meeting, the IAOP responds to the recommendations of the General Chapter of Trogir (ACG Trogir 2013, n° 85-86). The meeting is chaired by the Socius for Intellectual Life. The first day the regents and directors work together with brother Mascari, while the Superiors work in groups. The second day (Sunday December 13), regents, directors of studies and the superiors will come together for a plenary session and make the final recommendations. Strictly speaking, the Mini-Summit which is only for the Superiors and the members of the Coordinating Committee of IAOP, begins on Monday 14th December.

The tasks of this meeting which takes place, midway between the two General Assemblies of IAOP are: to evaluate whether the decisions of the General Assembly have been implemented, to take stock on inter-African situations and problems, and to make proposals for the date, venue and agenda of the next General Assembly which will take place in 2017.

The Mini-Summit ends on Wednesday 16th December with a closing Mass.

Fr. Gabriel Samba, op

**Fr Bruno Cadoré Encounters Muslims and Hindus during his Visit to Pakistan**

From the 1st to the 9th of December 2015, fr Bruno Cadoré visited the Dominican family in Pakistan in the company of fr Vincent Lu Ha (Socius for Asia-Pacific) and fr Orlando Acevedo Rueda (Socius for Apostolic Life). He was warmly received by Fr Pascal Paulus, OP (Vice Provincial of the Vice Province of Pakistan), the entire brothers and members of the Dominican family.

At the House of Studies in Karachi, fr Bruno met with the brothers in the Community, including the student brothers and their formators. He shared with them on their apostolates and its challenges. He encouraged the brothers and assured them of his prayers. He went ahead to inaugurate and bless the new building of the House of Studies in Karachi. He presided at the Eucharistic celebration and in his homily he reminded the brothers to be sensitive to the needs of the poor, showing them mercy and compassion as our heavenly Father does to us. After the Mass, there was a reception by the Dominican Laity and Youth with traditional wears and displays. In his speech, fr Pascal thanked all those present and in a special way, all the benefactors who have contributed towards the construction of the new building. The blessing of the new building concluded with the lighting of the jubilee candle by fr Bruno which he gave to the Dominican brothers and sisters, sending them forth to preach anew.

Fr Bruno participated at the joint Bhaghti organized by the Rahim Yar Khan and Bahawalpur Marwari Tribal communities. Many Hindu and Christian faithful were also present at the historic occasion. The Bhaghti which is a ritual of praises to God through singing of Hymns was led by Bro. Shahzad Aquinas OP and Catechist Maurice. The whole congregation sat on the ground for this including fr Bruno. He was later honoured with the turban by the tribal representatives. Bhaghti is the only effective way of evangelization among the Marwari Hindu tribe.

Fr Bruno visited St Dominic Priory and St Dominic Convent Higher Secondary School at Bahawalpur. At the priory he blessed the Jubilee Pole erected in honour of the 800th anniversary of the Order. He was later entertained by the students who gave a beautiful rendition of the official Jubilee hymn. He was also at Sahiwal to visit the brothers and the faithful of Sacred Heart Parish and he was welcomed with a grand reception. There he celebrated the Holy Eucharist with the entire community.

Before he left Pakistan, he was at the Peace Center in Lahore for an interfaith celebration in honour of the Jubilee of the Order. He was joined by dignitaries from other denominations and religions including: Maulana Syed Abdul Khabir Azad, the Grand Imam of the Badshahi Mosque and Dr. Munawwar Chand, a Hindu leader. Here, Fr James Channan (Director of the Peace Center) is working actively with other religious leaders to sow and nature the seed of peace. At the ceremony, fr Bruno and fr Orlando were presented with Peace Awards by the centre.

Fr Bruno later paid a visit to the Badshahi Mosque in Lahore and was warmly welcomed by the Grand Imam Maulana at the steps of the mosque and then taken for a guided tour. The 17th century Mosque is the second largest Mosque in Pakistan. Maulana expressed great joy in fr Bruno’s visit and also shared of the interfaith
message he carries through this mosque. Fr Bruno in turn expressed great joy and appreciation at the openness of the Grand Imam. This visit is a milestone to further strengthen the much needed Christian-Muslim bonds and dialogue in Pakistan.

This visit has afforded fr Bruno the opportunity to experience first-hand the efforts of the friars and sisters at preaching and coexisting in peace in a delicate multi-religious environment. He expressed his appreciation and promised his continuous support and prayers.

**Xavier Plassat, OP - Fighting Slavery in the Amazon for 25years**

Like tuberculosis and landlines, slavery seems very much a throwback to another century. But as William Langewiesche reports in his stirring dispatch “Slaves Without Chains,” slavery can still be found in some form all over the world. Indeed, it is estimated that upwards of 20 million people are currently held in bondage. The problem is global, but Langewiesche focuses his tale on a single heroic figure—a Dominican friar in Brazil named Xavier Plassat—who for 25 years has been fighting slavery in the Amazon, at great risk to himself but with considerable success. Plassat’s target isn’t sex slavery—a global disgrace all its own. Most slaves are ordinary workers, women and men alike, condemned to lives of punishing labor: in diamond mines in parts of Africa, in the fields and jungles of South America, in the construction sites of Arabia, in the fishing fleets of Asia. As The New York Times pointed out recently in a remarkable report on human bondage on the high seas, there is a good chance we have all eaten shrimp caught by slaves.

Plassat is not some pious goody-goody with a death wish and no battle plan. Like any good operative, he drinks and smokes and swears. He’s a man of the world whose intelligence networks run deep into the jungle. In the remote Amazon where he lives, he gathers reports, confirms them as best he can, and alerts a special Brazilian police force, the Mobile Group, that then raids the plantations and slave camps that exist all over Amazonia. It is dangerous work, and not just for Plassat (who has been repeatedly threatened). As Langewiesche writes, “At least 12 of his colleagues and more than a thousand associated peasants have been murdered, rarely with legal consequence.” One of those colleagues was an American nun, Sister Dorothy Stang, gunned down in 2005. The good news is that some 50,000 men and women have been freed from slavery in Brazil during the past two decades—and these methods could work in other places, if governments cared. The bad news is that the economic forces that drive slavery are relentless: worldwide, the numbers are not going down.

**What is the Dominican Heart?**

Several weeks ago a call came from Nashville, Tennessee. The Dominican Sisters of the Congregation of Saint Cecelia had asked me to give a talk for the Aquinas College faculty retreat. I jumped again at the chance. I had spoken to them two years before about whom of all Saints, but St. Dominic de Guzman himself. Still, I was a bit daunted when I was told my topic would be revealed in a conference call the next week.

The day of the call arrived and three holy and learned sisters revealed to me the topic – “What is the Dominican heart?” My first impulse was to fire back a quip, “Dominican heart? I thought that the Dominicans are all about the mind?” (After all, their very motto is “Veritas!” or “Truth!”). One of the sisters did not miss a beat. “For the Dominicans,” she responded, “the way to the heart is through the mind!”

Veritas et Caritas

I had to admit Sister had me. After all, right across my Aquinas College coffee mug was emblazoned the motto “Veritas et Caritas,” truth and the love of charity! Okay, so Dominicans have heart, but “what is the Dominican heart?”

Here were three learned professors who had given me as my topic a test of sorts with only one question. If I were to give the wrong answer, that would be like getting a zero! So the student in me emerged and I decided to approach the question as a multiple guess, treating it from multiple angles, offering several answers in the hope that at least one might be right, or at least come close.
The sisters knew well that I had just written a book called Hounds of the Lord about great Dominican saints and blesseds in honor of their Order’s upcoming Jubilee of 800 years (indeed, one had written the Foreword!), so I figured I’d look at that book again to see if what I had written might contain some clues. “Control+F” revealed to me that I’d used “heart” and its variations a full 98 times, almost on every other page!

The Dominican Heart of St. Rose of Lima

Shortly after, I remembered a story of the life of St. Rose of Lima and the day she discerned her call to become a Dominican. Rose at age twenty felt the calling to a deeper commitment to Christ and desired to join a religious order. Archbishop (and later Saint) Turibius Mongrovejo suggested Rose join a convent of Poor Clares, newly founded by his niece. The Augustinian Convent of the Incarnation also actively sought Rose out, and she apparently decided to join them. When she went to the Dominican Chapel of the Rosary and knelt down in prayer to bid the Blessed Virgin farewell, she found herself unable to rise, even with the help of her brother. She decided to go back home instead of to the convent and found herself able to rise.

Rose saw this as a sign from heaven, and she soon received a second sign as clear as day in black and white. That day in her garden, amid a sea of flowers and multicolored butterflies, a black and white butterfly, (the colors of the Dominican habit), came and fluttered around her heart, leaving a mark on her dress in the shape of a heart. Rose believed in her mind and heart from that moment on that she was to follow in the footsteps of Saint Catherine of Siena and join the Third Order Dominicans. Rose joined them, donned the black and white habit, and lived as a daughter of St. Dominic the last eleven years of her life.

St. Rose had been given a Dominican heart. So I asked myself, what then was the Dominican heart that the butterfly had traced on St. Rose?

I decided to tackle the question with four main approaches: 1) to examine the nature of the actual physical human heart for some clues, 2) to examine the metaphorical meanings of the word heart, 3) to reflect on how the Dominican heart was shown to me throughout the education in my own childhood under the tutelage of the Dominican Sisters of Springfield, II and through my interaction with Dominican Sisters of the Congregation of Saint Cecelia and the faculty and students of Aquinas College itself, and lastly, 4) to examine the meaning of the Dominican heart as revealed in the lives and writings of those hounds of the Lord themselves, some great Dominican saints and blesseds. (In the remainder of this article, I’ll address points 1 and 2. Two follow-up articles will address points 3 and 4 respectively.)

Dominican Cardiology 101

1.) As for its structures, the human heart has four chambers, the left and right atria up on top that receive blood and the left and right ventricles below them that pump the blood out to the body and lungs. Well, the Dominican heart has four chambers too, but they have always called them “pillars,” namely, study, prayer, preaching, and community. Prayer and study are the atria that pull in the graces and preaching and community are the ventricles through which they pour out those graces to all of mankind and to each other. Preaching is that mighty left ventricle that pumps the life-giving blood to all of the body of Christ. Community, according to the Rule of St. Augustine that Dominicans follow, means to be gathered in one house in harmony and unity so that they may be of one mind and one heart in God.

The human heart muscle has two main functions: systole where the muscles of the chambers contract to pump out blood and diastole where the chambers dilate and suck in blood. We see these functions measured in blood pressure readings which are a fraction of the pressures of systole over diastole. I once encountered a man who claimed that his heart had not two but three functions early in my career of disability evaluation. He gave me the name and phone number of his doctor so I could call him to get information. When I called I asked the “doctor” if anyone had ever told him he sounded just like his patient, but he told me that nobody had. Well, I was pretty sure the man was impersonating his own doctor, so I thought I’d see how he responded to a ridiculous question. When asked if he’d taken the patient’s blood pressure, he said yes and gave me some numbers. I asked if that represented his systolic pressure over his diastolic pressure and he said that it did. I then asked him if he’d gotten around to measuring his patient’s “hyperstolic” blood
pressure, (a word I had just made up). When he assured me that he did and gave me the number, I knew this
guy was no doctor!

Yet I am about to aver that the Dominican heart does have not two but three main functions that reveal the
Dominican heart, a motto of St. Dominic himself, not systole, diastole, and the fictional hyperstole, but
“Laudicare, Benedicere, Praedicare!” (“To Praise, To Bless, To Preach!”) These are three key functions of
the Dominican heart. That’s what the study, prayer, community, and preaching prepare them to go out and
do.

2). Moving on from lessons drawn from anatomy and physiology, we know that to get at the heart of
something means to get at its essence, its innermost meaning, its core. After all, the Latin word for heart is
cor. Proverbs advises us to write God’s Commandments on the tablets of our hearts (Proverb 3:1-3). When
we know something by heart, it has become a part of us, etched in our memories. Christ tells us we are to
love God with all our heart, soul, and mind, that is, with all that we are (Matt. 22:37). So, I think we can
safely assume that whatever kind of thing a Dominican heart might be, it defines what it means to live as a
Dominican.

Real-Live Dominicans Sharing Their Hearts
I’d also like to share a few anecdotes of my own experiences of the Dominican heart as a child going through
a Dominican grade school, as an adult who considered himself an atheist for 25 years of his early adulthood,
and later to his surprise, was drawn back to the Church because of another great Dominican mind (and yes a
great heart too.)

As the Dominicans themselves are sometimes wont to say: “If you’ve met one Dominican, you’ve met one
Dominican!” In our next article we’ll meet some unique and memorable Dominicans. We’ll see how they
revealed their hearts to me and to my fellow students long away, but not so far away, in the still wavy wake
of Vatican II all the way up today.
Dr. Kevin Vost

Official News

- **Suppression of the General Vicariate of Puerto Rico**

In line with the programme of the restructuring of the Order, the Master of the Order, fr Bruno Cadoré has
issued the Decree of the suppression of the General Vicariate of Santa Cruz in Puerto Rico and transferred
the responsibility of the mission of the Order in that territory to the Province of San Luis Bertran in
Colombia. The Decree takes effect from the 1st of January 2016

This decision was taken after due consultation with the friars and council of the General Vicariate of Puerto
Rico, the Prior Provincial and Council of the Province of Colombia and the General Council of the Order.

By this Decree, the 21 friars of the General Vicariate of Puerto Rico shall now be affiliated to the Province of
Colombia with all their rights and privileges. The 5 communities and all the properties of the General
Vicariate of Puerto Rico shall now become part of the patrimony of the Province of Colombia.

It is hoped that this move will help to strengthen and promote the apostolic mission and regular life of the
friars in Puerto Rico which will in turn ensure the sustenance and growth of the mission of the Order there.

- **Fr. Jesús Díaz Sariego is the Provincial of the New Province of Hispania**

The Master of the Order, fr. Bruno Cadoré has named fr. Jesús Antonio Díaz Sariego as the Prior Provincial
of the new Province of Hispania. The new Province of Hispania arose from the unification of the Provinces
of Spain, Aragon and Andalusia. To lead the first Provincial Chapter of the new Province, the Master of the
Order is appointing its first Prior Provincial.
Fr Jesús Díaz was born in 1962 in Riosa, Asturias, Spain. He made his first profession in the Order in 1983 and was ordained to the priesthood in 1989. He has a Doctorate in Theology from the University of Fribourg, Switzerland.

In the Province of Spain, he has been the Master of Pre-novices, Master of Students and Regent of Studies. In 2009, he was appointed as the Socius of the Provincial of Spain, the position he was holding at the time of this appointment. He is also the Director of the Spanish section of DOMUNI, Professor at the Pontifical Faculty of Theology in Salamanca and at the Faculty of St Vincent Ferrer of Valencia.

Fr Jesús Díaz is expected to assume office at the first Provincial Chapter of the Province of Hispania on the 3rd of January 2016 in Caleruega. Until then, he will work with the three Provincials of Spain, Aragon and Andalusia to prepare the final steps of the unification.

The new Province of Hispania will have about 500 friars in 40 communities in Spain alone and missionary presence in the Dominican Republic, Peru, Cuba, Venezuela and Equatorial Guinea. This will make it the largest Province in the Order.

- Fr Bruno Cadoré has Convoked the General Chapter of Bologna 2016

The Master of the Order, fr Bruno Cadoré has convoked the next General Chapter which will take place in the city of Bologna, Italy from the 16th of July 2016.

In accordance with LCO 413 § 11, he has written a letter of convocation to the entire Dominican family. According to his letter, the choice of the venue of the next Chapter is in accordance with the mandate of the last Chapter of Trogir 2013. Therefore, the next Chapter shall be a General Chapter of Provincials and it shall take place at our Patriarchal Convent of St Dominic in Bologan of the Province of St Dominic in Italy.

The Chapter is expected to start with the celebration of the Mass of the Holy Spirit after which the capitular friars will proceed to set the programme and procedure. It is also hoped that the Chapter will close on the 4th of August, the day the Solemnity of St Dominic is celebrated in Bologna. However, this will be determined by the programme of the Chapter.

Fr Roberto Giorgis of the Province of St Dominic in Italy shall be the Secretary General of the Chapter.

As preparations are now in top gear for the Chapter, the Master is calling on all members of the Dominican family to pray for the success of the Chapter. All are expected to offer Masses and intercessory prayers during the Divine Office for the Chapter.

**Calendar of the Master of the Order for January 2016**

- Dec 27-Jan 4, 2016: Christmas Break
- 2-4: At the Inaugural Chapter of the New Province of Hispania
- 8-10: At a Conference in Zagreb, Croatia
- 15-18: Travel to Toulouse, France
- Jan 22-Feb 3: Visitation to Colombia and Puerto Rico

*All articles are available on www.op.org*