

ACTS
OF THE
GENERAL CHAPTER OF PROVINCIALS
OF THE
ORDER OF PREACHERS

KRAKOW
FROM THE NINETEENTH DAY OF JULY
TO THE EIGHTH DAY OF AUGUST
IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 2025

CELEBRATED UNDER
FR. GERARD FRANCISCO TIMONER III
PROFESSOR OF SACRED THEOLOGY
AND MASTER OF THE WHOLE ORDER



ROME
GENERAL CURIA AT SANTA SABINA
2025

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Letter of Promulgation

WE

FR. GERARD FRANCISCO TIMONER III
PROFESSOR OF SACRED THEOLOGY
AND HUMBLE MASTER AND SERVANT
OF THE WHOLE ORDER OF PREACHERS

Dear Brothers in St. Dominic,

We give thanks to God, *Gratiarum omnium largitori*, Giver of all good gifts, for the General Chapter of Priors Provincial we celebrated under the auspices of the Convent of the Holy Trinity in Krakow of the Province of Poland. By this letter, I promulgate the Acts of the General Chapter of Krakow, celebrated from 19 July to 8 August 2025.

As the Father has sent me, so I send you (John 20:21). Our mission as preachers of the Gospel is primarily a participation in the mission of Jesus, who sends us for the salvation of the world (John 3:17). *Missio Dei* is God's gratuitous initiative and gracious action to bring us to deeper communion with Him.

Our task as collaborators in the *apostolic mission* is to discern and cooperate with what God is already doing in the world.

We have structured the chapter commissions to focus on the persons to whom we address our preaching, the *four publics*. Certainly, we hope that the “publics” will respond to our preaching, thereby becoming our “interlocutors”, our companions in our continuing dialogue *with* God and *about* God. In his letter to the capitulars, Pope Leo XIV encouraged all of us: “Your chosen theme to address in a more dedicated way your varied forms of preaching to ‘four publics’ - those who do not yet know Jesus, the Christian faithful, those who have fallen away from the Church, and the young people found in these situations - is particularly timely.” We keep in mind our “prophetic function, by which, considering the conditions of people, times and places, the Gospel of Jesus Christ is everywhere announced by word and example, so that faith may be aroused or more deeply inform the whole of life in building up the Body of Christ, which is brought to perfection in the sacraments of faith” (LCO 1 § V).

As we intentionally renew the focus of our preaching, we look up to the example of our holy founder. Dominic’s preaching did not only convert people to the true faith; his experience of encounter and dialogue also transformed him in a profound way. We recall how Dominic spent the night in conversation with the innkeeper which, we believe, resulted in the latter’s conversion. But that event must have profoundly influenced Dominic’s decision to leave behind a promising ecclesiastical career as a canon of the cathedral of Osma and choose to be called “Brother Dominic.” (*Libellus* 21) **Preaching transforms both the preacher and the hearer of the Word of God.**

I believe the General Chapter we have celebrated must have affected us in different but positive ways and, hopefully, converted us. On separate occasions, some friars intimated to me how they were unenthusiastic about coming to the chapter, either because they were tired, indifferent, or skeptical about what the chapter could accomplish. And yet during the chapter, one felt reinvigorated, another felt confirmed in his Dominican vocation, and one felt he had a fruitful retreat! In general, everyone was happy with the experience of fraternity within the universal Order.

As I promulgate the Acts of the General Chapter, I also wish to present to you the *Letter of the Capitulars to all the Brethren*. Though the final text of the letter was completed after the Chapter concluded, the capitulars approved its essential content. To a significant extent, the letter expresses the heart and mind of the capitulars, especially regarding the evangelical counsel of obedience, common fraternal life, and mission. In the spirit of ACG Krakow 2025, 340, I ask priors and superiors to give each friar a copy of this letter and have it read in one of their conventual chapters for communal reflection and discussion.

Finally, in the name of the Order, I wish to express our gratitude to the following: the Brothers of the Province of Poland, specially brothers Łukasz Wiśniewski, Prior Provincial, and Jakub Bluj, Secretary General of the General Chapter for their excellent service, fraternal dedication in organizing the chapter, and providing for the needs of the capitulars; the General Chapter Committee of the Curia; the members of the Steering Committee, the Moderators, and the Presidents and Secretaries of the chapter commissions and

linguistic groups, who, by their collective wisdom and experience, helped all of us in “shepherding” this chapter; and finally, our brother interpreters and translators who tried their best to let our voices be heard and understood in different languages.

Given at São Paulo, in our Convent of Saint Albert, the twenty-second day of the month of August in the Year of our Lord 2025, the Memorial of the Queenship of Mary.



Br. Gerard Francisco P. Timoner III, OP
Master of the Order



Br. Fernando Delgado Flórez, OP
Pro-Secretary

Prot. n. 50/22/487 Krakow 2025

Membership

under

Fr. Gerard Francisco Timoner, III
Master of the Whole Order of Preachers

FORMER MASTER OF THE ORDER

fr. Bruno CADORÉ

PRIORS PROVINCIAL

fr. Jesús Antonio DÍAZ SARIEGO, *Province of Hispania*

fr. Olivier DE SAINT MARTIN, *Province of Toulouse*

fr. Nicolas TIXIER, *Province of France*

fr. Luca REFATTI, *Socius of the Prior Provincial of the Province of St. Dominic in Italy*

fr. Antonio COCOLICCHIO, *Roman Province of St. Catherine of Siena*

fr. Francesco Maria RICCI, *Province of St. Thomas Aquinas in Italy*

fr. Daniel STADTHERR, *Socius of the Prior Provincial of the Province of St. Albert in Austria and Germany*

fr. Nicholas Paul CROWE, *Province of England*

fr. Łukasz WIŚNIEWSKI, *Province of Poland*

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fr. Tomislav KRALJEVIĆ, *Croatian Province of the Annunciation of the BVM*

fr. José Manuel CORREIA FERNANDES, *Province of Portugal*

fr. John Martin HARRIS, *Province of Ireland*

fr. Luís Javier RUBIO GUERRERO, *Province of St. James in Mexico*

- fr. Rómulo VÁSQUEZ GAVIDIA, *Province of St. John the Baptist of Peru*
- fr. Franklin BUITRAGO ROJAS, *Province of St. Louis Bertrand of Colombia*
- fr. Juan José BALDINI, *Province of St. Augustine in Argentina and Chile*
- fr. Rubén MARTÍNEZ ORTEGA, *Province of Our Lady of the Rosary*
- fr. Didier CROONENBERGHS, *Province of St. Thomas Aquinas in Belgium*
- fr. Allen Bernard MORAN, *Province of St. Joseph in the USA*
- fr. Vincent Mary MICALLEF, *Province of Malta of St. Pius V*
- fr. Yves BÉRIAULT, *Province of Canada of St. Dominic*
- fr. Christopher Paul FADOK, *Province of the Holy Name of Jesus in the USA*
- fr. Louis Stephen MORRONE, *Province of St. Albert the Great in the USA*
- fr. Dominic MURPHY, *Province of the Assumption of the BVM of Australia and New Zealand*
- fr. André Luís TAVARES, *Province of Fr. Bartolomé de las Casas in Brazil*
- fr. Thomas Aquinas NGUYỄN TRUỜNG TAM, *Province of the Queen of the Martyrs in Vietnam*
- fr. Filemon I. DELA CRUZ Jr., *Province of the Philippines*
- fr. Roberto MERCED, *Province of St. Martin de Porres in the USA*
- fr. Ricardo GUARDADO, *Province of St. Vincent Ferrer of Central America*
- fr. Modestus Jideofor NGWU, *Province St. Joseph the Worker in Nigeria*
- fr. Peter MENDONSA, *Province of India*
- fr. Damián MAČURA, *Province of Slovakia*

fr. Bertrand Claude AKPAGBE, *Province of St. Augustine in Western Africa*

fr. Gabriel SAMBA, *Province of St. Charles Lwanga in Equatorial Africa*

VICE-PROVINCIALS

fr. Armando Alonso VILLALTA SALAZAR, *Vice-Province of St. Catherine of Siena of Ecuador*

fr. Pascal PAULUS, *Vice-Province of the Son of Mary of Pakistan*

fr. Augustin WILIWOLI SIBILONI, *Vice-Province of St. Pius V of the Democratic Republic of the Congo*

fr. Clement MWENI, *Vice-Province of South Africa*

fr. Angelik Petro KITSULA, *Vice-Province of the Queen of China*

fr. Yinmy CABALLERO SUAREZ, *Vice-Province of Bolivia*

DELEGATES OF PROVINCIAL VICARIATES

fr. Leoncio VALLEJO BENÍTEZ, *Vicariate of Antón de Montesinos (in the Paraguayan Republic and Uruguay)*

fr. Jarosław KRAWIEC, *Vicariate of Ukraine*

fr. José Sebastião PAULO, *Vicariate of the Republic of Angola*

fr. Luke Kipkoech ARAP BETT, *Vicariate of Eastern Africa (in Kenya)*

DELEGATES OF THE CONVENTS UNDER THE IMMEDIATE JURISDICTION OF THE MASTER OF THE ORDER

fr. Loïc-Marie LE BOT, *Convent of Sts. Dominic and Sixtus in Rome*

fr. Olivier POQUILLON, *Convent of St. Stephen Protomartyr in Jerusalem*

ALSO PRESENT AT THE CHAPTER

Socii of the Master of the Order and Syndic of the Order

- fr. Pablo Carlos SICOULY, *Socius for the Intellectual Life*
fr. Juan Manuel HERNÁNDEZ HERNÁNDEZ, *Socius for Fraternal Life and Formation*
fr. Florentino A. BOLO Jr., *Socius for the Apostolic Life*
fr. Pavel SYSSOEV, *Socius for the Provinces of Europe I*
fr. Thomas Gabriel BROGL, *Socius for the Provinces of Europe II*
fr. Juan Luis MEDIAVILLA GARCÍA, *Syndic of the Order*

Brothers invited by the Master of the Order

- fr. Benjamin EARL, *Procurator General*
fr. Aniedi OKURE, *General Promoter for Justice and Peace*
fr. Fabian STANISZ, *Cooperator Brother, Province of Poland*

Guests from the Dominican Family invited by the Master of the Order

- Sr Stanisława PEŁECHATA, *Nun*
Jacek ZEJMA, *Lay Fraternities*
Rev. Serge MAUCQ, *Priestly Fraternities*
Cristina EXPÓSITO, *International Dominican Youth Movement*
Sr. Gracja Agata BASIAGA, *Apostolic Sister*
Agnieszka KURYŚ, *Secular institute*

Secretaries

- fr. Jakub BLUJ, *General secretary*
fr. Dawid KOŁODZIEJCZYK, *Vice-secretary general*
fr. Dominik JARCZEWSKI, *Vice-secretary general*
fr. Michał PAC, *Coordinator of secretaries*
fr. Piotr TASAK

Tellers

fr. Olivier CATEL

fr. Piotr SKIBIŃSKI

Moderators

fr. Vincent DÁVILA

fr. José Rafael REYES GONZÁLEZ

fr. Jacques-Benoît RAUSCHER

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fr. Thomas-Marie GILLET

fr. Louis-Marie ARIÑO-DURAND

fr. Mario JABARES CUBILLAS

fr. Atanasio FLÓREZ MOLINA

fr. Erik ROSS

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fr. Arkadiusz PIJANOWSKI

fr. Jakub FUTRZYŃSKI

fr. Piotr SHYTSIKAU

fr. Szymon OBRZUT

Abbreviations

ACG	<i>Acta Capituli Generalis</i>
CIC	<i>Codex Iuris Canonici</i>
CIDALC	<i>Conferencia Interprovincial Dominicana de América Latina y el Caribe</i>
EBAF	<i>École biblique et archéologique française de Jérusalem</i>
IAOP	<i>Inter Africa O.P.</i>
IDYM	<i>International Dominican Youth Movement</i>
IEOP	<i>Inter Europe O.P.</i>
LCO	<i>Liber Constitutionum et Ordinationum Fratrum O.P.</i>
OPTIC	<i>Ordo Prædicatorum for Technologies of Information and Communication</i>
PUST	<i>Pontificia Università San Tommaso d'Aquino, Roma</i>
RFG	<i>Ratio Formationis Generalis</i>
RFP	<i>Ratio Formationis Particularis</i>
RSG	<i>Ratio Studiorum Generalis</i>

CHAPTER I

Declarations

1. We report that, with a circular letter dated in Rome on November 7, 2024, on the feast of All Saints of the Order of Preachers, the Master of the Order, Brother Gerard Francis Timoner III, OP, in accordance with LCO 413 §II, convened the General Chapter of Priors Provincial, to be held at the Convent of the Most Holy Trinity, in the city of Krakow (Poland), from July 18 to August 8, 2025.

2. We report that the Master of the Order, pursuant to LCO 414, has appointed fr. Jakub Bluj, OP, as Secretary General of the Chapter of Provincial Priors of Krakow on May 13, 2023.

3. We report that the Master of the Order invited the following members of the Dominican Family to attend the Chapter: fr. Fabian Stanisz, OP, Cooperator Brother (Poland); sr. Sister Stanisława Pelechata, OP, contemplative nun of the Monastery of Saint Anne, in Święta Anna (Poland); Jacek Zejma, of the Dominican Lay Fraternities (Poland); Fr. Serge Maucq, priest of the Diocese of Mechelen-Brussels (Belgium), member of the Priestly Fraternities of Saint Dominic (Toulouse); Cristina Expósito, of the Dominican Youth Movement (Hispania); Sr. Gracja (Agata) Basiaga, OP, of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Dominic; and Agnieszka Kuryś, of the Dominican Secular Institute of Orleans.

4. We report that the Master of the Order has invited the following members of the General Curia: Br. Pablo Carlos Sicouly, OP, Socius for Intellectual Life; Br. Juan Manuel Hernández, OP, Socius for Fraternal Life and Formation; Br. Florentino Bolo, OP, Socius for Apostolic Life; Br. Pavel Syssoev, OP, Socius for Europe I; Br. Thomas Brogl, OP, Socius for Europe II; Br. Juan Luis Mediavilla García, OP, Syndic of the Order; Br. Aniedi Okure, OP, General Promoter of Justice and Peace and Permanent Delegate of the Order to the UN.

5. We report that the Master of the Order has invited fr. Benjamin Earl, OP, Procurator General of the Order, to the General Chapter as an expert in canon law.

6. We report that fr. Timothy Card. Radcliffe, OP, former Master of the Order, has been excused from participating in the General Chapter, except from July 23-26.

7. We report that on July 8, 2025, the Master of the Order sent a letter to Pope Leo XIV, informing him of the celebration of the General Chapter of Prior Provincials in Krakow.

Rome, July 8, 2025

His Holiness
Pope LEO XIV
Vatican City

Your Holiness,

We, your brothers in the Order of Preachers (Dominicans) will celebrate our General Chapter of Priors Provincial in

Krakow, Poland from 17 July to 8 August 2025. We ask for your paternal and fraternal blessing and message to the capitulars as we discern and decide on how we can renew ourselves in serving God and His people today.

Holy Father, I beg your indulgence for this long letter. I thought that in the name of the Order, I need to present to you what I hope we will do in the coming years, in helping serve the mission of our Holy Mother Church.

Our theme for this Chapter is how to address in a more dedicated way our varied forms of preaching the Gospel to these four publics:

I. Mission *ad gentes*, the mission of St. Paul to persons who have not yet known Jesus: **“I even discovered an altar inscribed, ‘To an Unknown God.’ What therefore you unknowingly worship, I proclaim to you”** (Acts 17:23).

Today, we recognize that the place of mission is no longer just the one that is far from home; it is also close to home! At times, when we leave the convent, we encounter “many men, women, and children who do not know the joy of friendship with Jesus”. Mission *ad gentes* is not just a mission to certain parts of the world, but to all parts of the world! We appreciate our brothers and sisters who are in places of *missio ad gentes*, where the Church is in the process of implantation. But the Order has to be intentional also in reaching out to seekers, to those who are yet to hear and believe in Christ. Some areas where our brothers are already working are: presence and ministry in universities, preaching in the digital continent, etc.

II. Mission to deepen the faith of believers, the “mission” of Luke in writing the Gospel addressed to a certain “Theophilus”, a “friend of God” who typifies every believer who opens himself to God and desires to know the Gospel: **“I have decided to write an ordered account for you, Theophilus, so that you may learn how well founded the teaching is that you have received”** (Luke 1:1-4).

To take care of a stable community (e.g., parish, university, school chaplaincies etc.) is to walk with its members in their journey of life and faith, and is a special form of “itinerancy”, or “synodality”, of walking with people in the deepening of their life of faith.

III. Mission to encounter and accompany those who are walking away from the Church, those who are on the same “road” as the two disciples walking away from Jerusalem, the community of faith, towards Emmaus. Their “eyes were prevented from recognizing Jesus who was walking with them”, but later, they recognized Jesus in the Scriptures and the Breaking of the Bread. (Luke 24:13–32).

Secularization has a lot to do with people who have gradually distanced themselves from the practice of the faith. They have lost that sense to recognize Jesus in Word and Sacrament. How can we engage them and invite them back to see Jesus once again? How can we walk with them, talk with them, sit at a table with them like St. Dominic did with the innkeeper?

The two disciples who were walking away from Jerusalem were shocked by the crucifixion, “How can the Messiah die on us?”, they must have thought. In our time, we cannot deny

that many people are walking out of the Church because they have been scandalized by us, by the different abuses (sexual, spiritual, psychological) committed by their spiritual brothers and sisters. What are we doing as an Order to invite these people back to the community of faith? What more could we do so that our preaching (*verbis et exempli*) could help them recognize Jesus in his saving Word and in the breaking of the Bread? What should we do so that the wounds that helped Thomas recognize the Risen Lord - "my Lord and my God" - can heal the wounds of broken trust and fractured relationships?

IV. A special Mission to the Youth, who are found in the aforementioned faith-situations. Many young people, even in places imbued with a "Christian culture", are not leaving the Church; they have not even "entered" the Church for the first time because their parents decided not to bring them to the Church!

Many young people today probably have a question similar as the young man who asked Jesus: "Teacher, what good must I do to gain eternal life?" (Matt 19:16). We should welcome them and engage them in their search for what is true and good. We believe that our brothers in schools, university chaplaincies, or in other forms of ministry to young people in parishes and shrines share a mission similar to that of the apostle Andrew. In the wonderful story of the multiplication of the loaves and fish (John 6:5-15), Jesus fed thousands, thanks to the boy who generously offered his bread and fish to the Lord, and to Andrew, who wisely perceived that the boy had something to offer. There would be no miracle without the boy, and without Andrew, the boy's

offering might not have reached Jesus. The boy was not just hungry for food; he was hungry to do something good for others! We need “Andrews” who can accompany young people willing to share their gifts and talents with the Church! We must give young people opportunities to feel the joy we feel when we serve the people of God.

As Your Holiness knows, we Dominicans also follow the Rule of St. Augustine. As we try our best “to be of one heart and mind on the way to God” (*et sit vobis cor unum et anima una in Deum*), we assure you that you can count on us as among your *synodoi*, companions in the journey towards deeper communion with God.

With utmost respect and reverence, I remain, Your devoted son in Christ,

fr. Gerard Francisco Timoner III, OP
Master of the Order

8. We report that on the 22nd of July, His Holiness Pope Leo XIV sent a letter to the Master of the Order on the occasion of the celebration of the General Chapter.

*To Father Gerard Francisco Timoner III, OP
Master of the Order of Preachers*

I was pleased to learn that the Order of Preachers is holding its General Chapter of Priors Provincial in Krakow, Poland, from July 17th to August 8th, and I willingly assure you and all participating of my closeness in prayer.

As you gather during this Jubilee Year, I trust that these grace-filled days will prove to be an opportunity for renewal, rooted in the hope which never disappoints and in the knowledge that the Lord has called you as preachers to proclaim the Good News in the midst of today's unique challenges (cf. Rm 5:5; Mt 10:7). Your chosen theme to address in a more dedicated way your varied forms of preaching to "four publics" - those who do not yet know Jesus, the Christian faithful, those who have fallen away from the Church, and the young people found in these situations - is particularly timely. I pray that your deliberations will enable you to listen attentively to the Holy Spirit, who continues to guide the Church in the fullness of truth (cf. Jn 16:13).

I likewise hope that this time together will strengthen your commitment to serve the Body of Christ in the form of evangelical life chosen by Saint Dominic. May your shared experience of fraternity and prayer enhance the bonds of communion that unite you as Dominicans and inspire you to live out your vocation ever more fully as contemplative preachers. In this way, faithful to the charism and the spirituality of your founder, you will surely continue to carry out your mission in the heart of the Church.

Entrusting the General Chapter to the intercession of Our Lady of the Rosary, I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing to all in the Order as a pledge of wisdom, joy, and peace in the Lord.

From the Vatican, 17 July 2025

Pope Leo XIV

9. We report that the Master of the Order, Friar Gerard Francisco Timoner III, OP, made the following appointments after the 2022 General Chapter of Tultenango:

Appointments to the Curia

- fr. Benjamin Earl, OP, Procurator General of the Order (11.7.22).
- fr. Jean-Ariel Bauza Salinas, OP, as Secretary General of the Order (11.7.22).
- fr. Pablo Carlos Sicouly, OP, as Vicar of the Master of the Order (2.25.23).
- fr. Juan Manuel Hernández Hernández, OP, as Socius of the Master of the Order for Fraternal Life and Formation (9.3.23).
- fr. Fernando Delgado Flórez, OP, as Socius of the Master for Latin America and the Caribbean (9.3.23).
- fr. Cristóbal de la Encarnación Torres Iglesias, OP, as General Promoter of the Dominican Laity (9.8.23).
- fr. Jordan Turano, OP, as Socius of the Master of the Order for the Provinces of the United States of America (10.17.23).
- fr. Raúl Gómez Sánchez, OP, as Secretary General of the Order (11.8.23)
- fr. Roger Gaïse N'Ganzi, OP, as Socius of the Master of the Order for Africa (11.21.23)
- fr. Pavel Syssoev, as OP, Socius of the Master of the Order for the Provinces of Europe I (9.8.24)
- fr. Thomas Brogl, as OP, Socius of the Master of the Order for the Provinces of Europe II (9.8.24)
- fr. Raúl Gómez Sánchez, OP, as Promoter General of the Priestly Fraternities (6.24.25)

Other appointments

- fr. Florentino Bolo, OP, fr. Franklin Buitrago, OP, fr. Didier Caenepeel, OP, fr. Benjamin Earl, OP, and fr. Wenifredo Padilla, OP, as members of the revision Committee of the Procedural Norms of the General Chapter (9.19.22).
- fr. Gabriel Samba, OP, as Vicar of the St. Charles Lwanga Province in Equatorial Africa (9.21.22) until the first provincial chapter of the province (September 2023).
- Madelen Jaimes Hurtado, as a member of the International Commission for Justice and Peace (11.28.22).
- Sébastien Milazzo, as President of the Council of Lay Dominicans of Europe (11.7.22)
- Sister Merete Ruud-Christensen, as Delegate of the nuns to the International Council of the Dominican Family (12.20.22).
- Sister Mary Catherine of Jesus Perry, Sister Mary Augustine Cruz, and Sister María Belén Marín López, as members of the International Council of *Spem Miram Nuns* (12.20.22).
- fr. Loïc-Marie Le Bot, OP, fr. Gregory Pearson, OP, fr. Piotr Skonieczny, OP, fr. Nicolas Tixier, OP, and fr. Emiliano Vanoli, OP, as members of the Commission on the LCO, according to ACG 2022 Tultenango 366 (1.10.23).
- fr. Juan Luis Mediavilla, OP, fr. Juan Ubaldo López Salamanca, OP, fr. Johannes Shäffler, OP, fr. Richard Ounsworth, OP, fr. Luis Enrique Ramírez Camacho, OP, and Sr. María da Silva, OP, as members of the Economic Council of the Order (7.3.23).
- fr. Angelik Kitsula, OP, and fr. Privatus Jamhuri Sullusi, OP, as members of the Extraordinary Economic Council of the Order (3.7.23).

- Sr. Theophilus Atmadi, of the Dominican Laity of Asia, as a member of the International Council of the Dominican Laity (2.18.23).
- fr. Anthony Walsh, OP, fr. Pablo Condrac, OP, fr. Stephen Maria Lopez, OP, fr. Richard Ounsworth, OP, and fr. Juan Ubaldo López Salamanca, OP, as members of the Council of *Spem Miram Internationalis* (3.18.23).
- fr. Carlyle Fortune, OP, as Vicar of the Master of the Order for Economic and Administrative Affairs in the Vice Province of South Africa/Southern Africa.
- Mariee Belle Baldó Liscano, as member of the International Council for Justice and Peace (8.10.23).
- Cristina Expósito de Vicente and Humberto de Jesús Rico Camacho, as members of the International Council of the Dominican Youth Movement (IDYM) (8.14.23).
- fr. Olivier Poquillon, OP, as Director of the *École biblique* (Biblical school) in Jerusalem (8.15.23).
- fr. Pablo Javier Coronello, OP, as Promoter for Initial and Ongoing Formation in Latin America and the Caribbean (CIDALC) (4.2.24).
- Wilson Domingos Amado as a member of the International Council of the Dominican Youth Movement (IDYM) (8.15.24).
- fr. Daniel Stadtherr, OP, and fr. Adam Sulikowski, OP, as members of the Order's Economic Council (9.19.24).
- Wilson Domingo Amado, of the Dominican Youth Movement, as a member of the Order's Justice and Peace Commission (11.9.24).
- fr. Georges Alahou, OP, fr. Cecilio Vladimir Magboo, OP, fr. Jordan Schmidt, OP, fr. Serge-Thomas Bonino, OP, fr. Martin Staszak, OP, fr. Nicanor Austriaco, OP, as

members of the Permanent Commission for the Promotion of Studies in the Order (1.15.25).

- fr. Osvaldo Robles, OP, as Promoter for Continuing Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (CIDALC) (2.25.25).
- fr. Manuel Aristides Gonzales, OP, as Promoter of Intellectual Life in Latin America and the Caribbean (CIDALC) (2.25.25) and member of the Permanent Commission for the Promotion of Studies in the Order (3.10.25).
- fr. Juan David Montes Flórez, OP, as Promoter of Justice and Peace in Latin America and the Caribbean (CIDALC) (2.25.25).
- fr. Robert Gay, OP, as Vicar of the Master of the Order for the Province of Saint Dominic in Italy (5. 27.25).
- fr. Pavel Syssoev, OP, as Vicar of the Master of the Order for the Convent of Saint Stephen in Jerusalem (5.28.25).
- fr. Ivan Attard, OP, as Promoter of Justice and Peace for Europe (IEOP) (6.9.25).
- fr. Thomas Joseph White, OP, as Rector of the Pontifical University of Saint Thomas Aquinas, Rome (PUST) (6.20.25).

10. We report that fr. Gilles Hervé Masson, OP, has been appointed religious assistant to the Federation of Saint Catherine of Siena (4.15.25).

11. We report that on June 23, 2025, fr. Orlando Rueda Acevedo, OP, Prior and Rector of the Convitto Internazionale di Roma, died of a heart attack. The Master of the Order celebrated the Eucharist for his soul at the Conventual Church of Saints Dominic and Sixtus, in Rome.

Appointments made by the Pope/the Holy See

12. We report that Friar Juan Carlos González Del Cerro, OP, has been appointed religious assistant to the “Mother of God” Federation of Dominican Monasteries (10.20.22).

13. We report that fr. Wojciech Giertych, OP, has been confirmed as Theologian of the Papal Household until his seventy-fifth birthday (5.16.23)

14. We report that fr. Giuseppe Marco Salvati, OP, has been appointed Prelate Secretary of the Pontifical Academy of Theology (9.26.23).

15. We report that fr. Rómulo Vásquez Gaviria, OP, has been appointed religious assistant to the “Our Lady of the Rosary” Federation of Dominican Monasteries of Peru (3.27.24).

16. We report that since the General Chapter of Tultenango 2022, the following brothers were consecrated bishops: fr. Juan Carlos Huaygua Oropeza, OP, bishop of Coroico, Bolivia (1.31.23); fr. Steven John Maekawa, OP, bishop of Fairbanks, Alaska, USA (12.10.23); fr. Napoleon B. Sipalay, OP, Bishop of Alaminos, Philippines (3.18.24); fr. Xavier Gómez García, OP, bishop of Sant Feliu de Llobregat, Spain (11.30.24); fr. Emmanuel Ntakarutimana, OP, Bishop of Bubanza, Burundi (4.5.25).

17. We report that fr. Jean-Paul Vesco, OP, Bishop of Oran, Algeria, and fr. Timothy Radcliffe, OP, former Master of the Order, were created cardinals at the consistory held on December 7, 2024.

Masters in Sacred Theology

18. We report that since the 2022 General Chapter of Tultenango, the Master of the Order has promoted to the degree of Master in Sacred Theology:

- fr. Vito Tomás Gómez García, OP, of the Province of Hispania (11.21.22);
- fr. Michał Paluch, OP, of the Province of Poland (11.21.22);
- fr. Manuel Ángel Martínez Juan, OP, of the Province of Hispania (2.23.23);
- fr. Anthony Akinwale, OP, of the Province of Nigeria and Ghana (2.23.23);
- fr. Alfonso Esponera, OP, of the Province of Hispania (5.25.23);
- fr. Vicente Botella Cubells, OP, of the Province of Hispania (5.25.23);
- fr. Jean-Michel Poffet, OP, of the current Vicariate of Switzerland (9.15.23);
- fr. Basil Cole, OP, of the Province of St. Joseph, USA (10.17.23);
- fr. Thomas Joseph White, OP, of the Province of St. Joseph, USA (10.17.23);
- fr. Gerardo Cioffari, OP, of the Province of St. Thomas Aquinas in Italy (3.25.24);
- fr. Jorge Alejandro Scampini, OP, of the Province of St. Augustine in Argentina and Chile (11.22.24).

Erections and Suppressions

19. We report that on November 7, 2022, the Feast of All Saints of the Order, the Master of the Order promulgated the Decree of Canonical Erection of the Province of Saint-Charles-Lwanga in Equatorial Africa, a former vicariate of the

Province of France. Thus, all the convents and houses of the former vicariate were incorporated into the new province.

20. We report that on January 27, 2024, the Master of the Order promulgated the Decree of Union of the Provinces of Teutonia and Saint Albert the Great in Southern Germany and Austria, into the single Province of Saint Albert the Great in Germany and Austria.

21. We report that on February 3, 2024, the Master of the Order promulgated the Decree of Suppression of the Province of Switzerland, entrusting the mission of the Order in that territory to the Province of France. Therefore, all the convents and houses of the former Province of Switzerland were incorporated into the Province of France.

Letters

22. We report that on September 14, 2022, the Master of the Order sent a letter to all prior provincials and regents of studies, as well as to all friars responsible for the Order's academic institutions, and to all friars in general, reminding them of the need to share with the Order's Archives the proper copy of the friars' published works.

23. We report that on November 30, 2022, the Feast of Saint Andrew the Apostle, the Master of the Order published the new Regulations on the relics of the Order's saints and blessededs regarding their acquisition and distribution.

24. We report that on January 25, 2023, the Feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul, the Master of the Order addressed a Letter to the entire Dominican Family regarding the Double

Jubilee of Saint Thomas Aquinas, Doctor of the Church, which commemorated the 700th anniversary of his canonization and the 750th anniversary of his death. Along with the Letter, the Master also shared the rescript of the Holy See granting the Plenary Indulgence according to the conditions promulgated by the Church.

25. We report that on February 25, 2023, the Master of the Order addressed a letter to the entire Dominican Family, inviting and promoting joint collaboration in preparation for the International Assembly of the Dominican Youth Movement (IDYM) in Lisbon, Portugal, to be held from August 6 to 9 of the same year.

26. We report that on September 1, 2023, the Master of the Order addressed a letter to the entire Dominican Family regarding the Dominican Month for Peace in the Amazon.

27. We report that on September 8, 2023, the Master of the Order addressed a letter to the International Commission for Justice and Peace, encouraging it to make the entire Order aware of the existing justice and peace programs and projects carried out by the Dominican family in various parts of the world.

28. We report that on May 2, 2024, the Master of the Order addressed a letter to the Dominican Youth Movement (IDYM) on the occasion of the publication of the Minutes of the XIV International Assembly of the IDYM in Lisbon, 2023.

29. We report that on June 13, 2024, the Master of the Order addressed a letter of greeting to vocation promoters on the

occasion of the First International Meeting of Vocational Promoters in Rome.

30. We report that on September 1, 2024, the Master of the Order addressed a letter to all members of the Dominican Family regarding Dominican Peace Month in Haiti.

31. We report that on September 8, 2024, on the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Master of the Order addressed to all the prior provincials of Europe and Canada the letter announcing the appointment of the new socii for Europe and the respective distribution of the provinces under their responsibility.

32. We report that on September 17, 2024, the Master of the Order addressed a letter to the entire Dominican family and especially to the members of the Rosary Confraternities on the occasion of the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary and the invitation to pray the Rosary in preparation for the Jubilee of Hope in 2025.

33. We report that on October 8, 2024, the Master of the Order addressed to the entire Order the letter *Eucharist, Source and Paradigm of Synodality* on the occasion of the second session of the XVI Ordinary Synodal Assembly of Bishops.

34. We report that on October 23, 2024, the Master of the Order addressed a letter to all prior provincials and vice-provincials, and to all friars of the Order, regarding prayer for vocations, along with which he promulgated the prayer for vocations to the Order of Preachers.

35. We report that on November 7, 2024, the Feast of All Saints of the Order of Preachers, the Master of the Order, together with his Socius for Fraternal Life and Formation, addressed a letter to all prior provincials and vice-provincials regarding the institution and work of the Order's Abuse Commission (ACG 2022 Tultenango 218).

36. We report that on November 21, 2024, on the Memorial of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Master of the Order addressed a letter to all members of the Dominican Family on the occasion of Pope Francis' announcement of the canonization of Pier Giorgio Frassati, a member of the Dominican laity.

37. We report that on May 21, 2025, the Master of the Order addressed a letter to all the provinces and vice-provinces of the Order extending an invitation to support the mission in the Peruvian Amazon.

38. We report that on May 24, 2025, on the Feast of the Translation of our father Saint Dominic, the Master of the Order addressed the letter *The Publics of the Preaching of the Gospel* to the entire Dominican Family.

Canonical Visits

39. We report that, during 2022, the Master of the Order made canonical visits to the Vice Province of Ecuador (September 24-30, 2022); to the Province of the Most Holy Name of Jesus (October 1-14, 2022); to the Vicariate of Vietnam in Canada (October 15-19, 2022); to the Province of Canada (October 19-30, 2022); to the Province of Saint Albert the Great in the United States (December 2-12, 2022).

40. We report that, during the year 2023, the Master of the Order made the canonical visit to the Province of India (January 17 to February 4, 2023); to the Province of Toulouse (March 20 - April 2, 2023); to the vicariates of the Province of France in the Baltic countries and the Vicariate of Poland in Ukraine (April 22 - May 7, 2023); to the Province of Croatia (May 28 - June 7, 2023); to the Vicariate of the Province of Our Lady of the Rosary in Japan (June 19 - 29, 2023); to the Vicariate of the Province of St. Joseph in East Africa (July 16 - 23, 2023); to the Vice-Province of St. Pius V of Congo (July 25 - August 4, 2023); to the Vicariate of the Province of Portugal in Angola (August 24–31, 2023); to the Province of Portugal (September 19–23, 2023); to the Province of Poland (September 24–October 14, 2023); to the Province of St. Louis Bertran of Colombia (October 18–November 4, 2023); to the Vice-Province of Bolivia (November 27–December 3, 2023); to the Province of Santiago de México (December 4–19, 2023); to the communities of the Province of France in Iraq – Baghdad and Erbil [Ankawa] (December 24, 2023–June 3, 2024).

41. We report that during the year 2024, the Master of the Order made the canonical visit to the Queen of China Vice-Province, Taiwan (January 13-21, 2024); to the Province of France (March 8-25, 2024); to the Province of Our Lady of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands (April 7-18, 2024); to the Singapore territory of the Province of the Rosary (April 18-19, 2024); to the Vicariate of the Province of the Holy Rosary in Venezuela (April 23-29, 2024); to the Province of Saint Augustine in Argentina and Chile, and to the Vicariate of Fray Antón de Montesinos in Uruguay and Paraguay (June 3-21, 2024); to the Province of St. John the

Baptist of Peru (June 22–26; August 16–31, 2024); to the Province of St. Vincent Ferrer in Central America (June 27–July 18, 2024); to the Province of Hispania (September 18–October 2, 2024); to the Vicariate of the Province of the Rosary in Spain (October 5–7, 2024); to the Province of England (October 8–20, 2024); to the Province of St. Martin de Porres, USA (October 22–November 6, 2024); to the Province of St. Thomas Aquinas in Belgium and the Netherlands (November 30–December 10, 2024); to the Vice-Province “Filius Mariae” of Pakistan (December 17–22, 2024); to the Rosario Province in Myanmar, Macao, Hong Kong and East Timor (December 18 – January 8, 2025).

42. We report that, in the first half of 2025, the Master of the Order made the canonical visit to the Province of Saint Thomas Aquinas in Italy (January 15-29, 2025); to the Province of Saint Dominic in Italy (February 1 - June 28, 2025); to the Roman Province of Saint Catherine of Siena (March 8-15, 2025); to the Province of Vietnam (Laos, Thailand) (March 30 - April 16, 2025); to the territories of Trinidad and Tobago (Province of Ireland), Grenada and Jamaica (Province of England) (April 26 - May 1, 2025); to the Vicariate of Pedro de Córdoba (Hispania) in Cuba and the Dominican Republic (May 1-5, 2025); to the Province of Saint Joseph in the USA (May 27 - June 18, 2025); and to the Province of St. Pius V in Malta (June 30 – July 7, 2025).

Fraternal Visits and Participation in Other Events

43. We report that, during the past three years, the Master of the Order made fraternal visits and participated in various international meetings and events, namely:

Provincial Assembly of the Province of Saint Albert the Great in Chicago, Illinois; fraternal visit to the community of San José, California (August 12-23, 2022); Suffrage for the Faithful Departed of the Dominican Family at Verano Cemetery, Rome (November 19, 2022); General Assembly of Superiors General in Rome (November 23-26, 2022).

Vice-Provincial Assembly of the Vice-Province of South Africa (February 5-10, 2023); Workshop for new provincials in Rome (March 7-16, 2023); fraternal visit to the Convent of Santa Maria *delle Grazie* in Milan (April 19-20, 2023); fraternal visit to the IDEO (Dominican Institute of Oriental Studies) (June 8-11, 2023); Common study program for the friars of Asia-Pacific in Biên-Hòa and Đà Lạt, Vietnam (July 1-4, 2023); General Assembly of the Dominican Youth Movement (IDYM) in commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the Movement's founding, in Lisbon, Portugal (August 5-9, 2023).

Asia-Pacific Formators Course in the Philippines (January 4-12, 2024); Fraternal visit to the Province of the Philippines (22-25 January 2024); Mass at the Church of St. Andrew in Cologne, Germany, on the occasion of the erection of the new Province of St. Albert the Great in Germany and Austria (26-28 January 2024); visit to Fribourg, Switzerland, on the occasion of the proclamation of the decree of suppression of the Province of Switzerland and the erection of the new Vicariate of Switzerland, of the Province of France (02-04 February 2024); Fraternal visit and Eucharistic celebration at the Church of St. Saviour, Dublin, Ireland, on the occasion of the celebration of the 800 years of the Order's presence in that country (09-11 February 2024); concelebration at the Mass in honor of St. Thomas Aquinas in the context of the Aquinas

Jubilee, at the Abbey of Fossanova, Italy (07 March 2024); Meeting with IEOP members in Milan, Italy (April 2–4, 2024); General Assembly of Superiors General (May 21–24, 2024); Conference and homily at the International Assembly of European Novices in Caleruega, Spain (May 23–25, 2024); Fraternal visit to monasteries in New York, USA, and meeting with friars working in university chaplaincies in the USA (May 26–June 2, 2024); Celebration of the 150th Jubilee of the Church of St. Dominic in California, USA (August 2, 2024); Eucharistic celebration on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the Feast of the Coronation of Our Lady of the Arch (September 6–7, 2024).

Assembly of Dominican canonists in the Philippines (April 22, 2025); Assembly of the Union of Superiors General (USG) (21 – 23 May 2025) and the International Meeting of Novices of Europe (29 May – 4 June 2025).

Promulgation of Canonization Decrees

44. We report that, on June 13, 2025, during the Ordinary Public Consistory celebrated by Pope Leo XIV, the Decree of Canonization of Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, a member of the Dominican Third Order (what is now the Dominican Laity), was solemnly promulgated, setting September 7, 2025, as the date for the liturgical ceremony.

45. We report that on July 18, the Master of the Order, fr. Gerard Francisco Timoner III, received Grzegorz card. Ryś, the Archbishop of Łódź (Poland), who spoke to the capitulars and those invited about new evangelization. Card. Ryś celebrated the Mass with the capitulars and preached on the same day.

46. We report that fr. Loïc-Marie Le Bot, OP, fr. Ricardo Guardado Flores, OP, and fr. Angelik Kitsula, OP, examined the testimonial letters of the vocals on the afternoon of 18th July.

47. We report that the General Chapter was opened on Saturday, July 19, with the Solemn Mass of the Holy Spirit, concelebrated by all the capitulars and presided over by fr. Łukasz Wiśniewski, OP. In his homily, fr. Łukasz recalled a few times the opening words from the two oldest Dominican documents preserved in Kraków convent's archives "*Cum qui recipit prophetam*" (cf. Matt 10:41), and entrusted the participants to the Holy Spirit to be guided towards inner freedom, to serve the truth, and to be generously available to assume the mission wherever God sends them.

48. We report that on July 18, the Master of the Order, in accord with LCO 417 § I, 2, appointed fr. Olivier Catel, OP, and fr. Piotr Skibiński, OP, as tellers of the General Chapter.

49. We report that on July 18, the Master of the Order, having listened to the opinion of the capitulars as provided by LCO 417 § I, 3, appointed as reviewers of the text of the Acts of the General Chapter: fr. Franklin Buitrago Rojas, OP, fr. Christopher Fadok, OP, and fr. Damián Mačura, OP.

50. We report that the Master of the Order, after hearing the capitulars, in accordance with LCO 417 § I, 4, confirmed the previously prepared distribution of the members and presidents of the seven commissions:

Comisión I: *Missio ad gentes* – to those who have not yet known Jesus

President: Didier CROONENBERGHS, OP (27)
Luca REFATTI, OP (04)
Lukáš Jan FOŠUM, OP (12)
Rubén MARTÍNEZ ORTEGA, OP (25)
Thomas Aquinas NGUYỄN TRƯỜNG TAM, OP (40)
Roberto MERCED, OP (42)
Modestus Jideofor NGWU, OP (45)
Pascal PAULUS, OP (43)
Aniedi OKURE, OP (45, Promoter of Justice and Peace)
P. Serge MAUCQ (Diocese of Malines-Brussels) (guest)

Commission II: Mission to deepen the faith of believers

President: Bertrand Claude AKPAGBE, OP (84)
Olivier de SAINT MARTIN, OP (02)
Francesco Maria RICCI, OP (06)
Tomislav KRALJEVIĆ, OP (13)
Vincent Mary MICALLEF, OP (30)
Peter MENDONSA, OP (46)
Gabriel SAMBA, OP (86)
Augustin WILIWOLI, OP (47)
Fabian STANISZ, OP (10, guest)
Jacek ZEJMA (guest)

Commission III: Mission to those who walked away from the Church, or those on the margins of the Church

President: André Luís TAVARES, OP (37)
Bruno CADORÉ, OP (03)
Nicolas TIXIER, OP (03)
Christopher Paul FADOK, OP (32)
Damián MAČURA, OP (83)

Angelik Petro KITSULA, OP (49)
Sr. Stanisława PEŁECHATA, OP (guest)
Agnieszka KURYŚ (guest)
Thomas Gabriel BROGL, OP (08, Socius for Europe II)

Commission IV: Mission to young people

President : Yinmy Caballero SUÁREZ, OP (85)
Antonio COCOLICCHIO, OP (05)
José Manuel Correia FERNANDES, OP (15)
Rómulo Vásquez GAVIDIA, OP (20)
Leoncio Vallejo BENÍTEZ, OP (01.1)
Florentino A. BOLO Jr., OP (41, Socius of the MO for
Apostolic Life)
Cristina EXPÓSITO (guest)
Sr. Gracja Agata BASIAGA, OP (guest)

Commission V: Fraternal life, formation and intellectual life

President: Nicholas Paul CROWE, OP (09)
Jesús Antonio DÍAZ SARIEGO, OP (01)
John Martin HARRIS, OP (18)
Luís Javier RUBIO GUERRERO, OP (19)
Franklin BUITRAGO ROJAS, OP (21)
Filemon I. dela CRUZ Jr., OP (41)
Luke Kipkoech ARAP BETT, OP (29.1)
Olivier POQUILLON, OP (03)
Juan Manuel HERNÁNDEZ HERNÁNDEZ, OP (19,
Socius of the MO for Fraternal Life and Formation)
Pablo Carlos SICOULY, OP (24, Socius of the MO for
Intellectual Life)

Commission VI: Government and Economy

President: Łukasz WIŚNIEWSKI, OP (10)

Daniel STADTHERR, OP (08)

Juan José BALDINI, OP (24)

Ricardo GUARDADO, OP (44)

Armando Alonso VILLALTA SALAZAR, OP (23)

Clement MWENI, OP (48)

Jarosław KRAWIEC, OP (10.1)

José Sebastião PAULO, OP (15.1)

Juan Luis MEDIAVILLA GARCÍA, OP (01, Syndic of the Order)

Commission VII: LCO

President: Louis Stephen MORRONE, OP (35)

Allen Bernard MORAN, OP (29)

Yves BÉRIAULT, OP (31)

Dominic MURPHY, OP (36)

Loïc-Marie LE BOT, OP (02)

Benjamin EARL, OP (09, Procurator General, *Peritus in iure canonico*)

Pavel SYSSOEV, OP (02, Socius of the MO for Europe II)

51. We report that on July 18, the General Chapter approved the moderators for the plenary sessions: fr. Vincent Dávila, OP, of the Province of St. Albert the Great, USA; fr. José Rafael Reyes González, OP, of the Province of Hispania; and fr. Jacques-Benoît Rauscher, OP, of the Province of France, previously proposed by the Master of the Order.

52. We report that on July 19, the Chapter approved the general procedural norms that had been duly proposed to the capitular friars.

53. We report that on July 19, the Master of the Order, fr. Gerard Francisco Timoner III, OP, presented to the capitulars his *Relatio de Statu Ordinis*. The document (cf. Appendix 1), signed in Rome on March 8, 2025, had previously been sent to the capitulars. Following the presentation, meetings were held in language groups, and a session of questions and answers with the Master of the Order in the chapter hall.

54. We report that the Socii of the Master of the Order, as well as the Procurator General and other officials of the Order, presented their respective reports, which were made available to the members of the Chapter. On July 19, Juan Luis Mediavilla García, OP, Syndic of the Order, presented his report on the financial state of the Order.

55. We report that on July 20, after Sunday Mass, a social gathering with members of the Dominican Family in Poland took place.

56. We report that on July 21, 22, and 23, the capitulars, divided into seven language groups held discussions on diverse dimensions of the Order's mission (to those who have not yet known Jesus, to deepen the faith of believers, to those who walked away from the Church, or those on the margins of the Church, and to the young people), fraternal life, formation, and intellectual life, and government and economy.

57. We report that on July 22, the Master of the Order proposed, and the steering committee approved, the composition of the prologue commission. The following

brothers, one from each of seven commissions, made up the commission:

President: Jesús Antonio Díaz Sariego, OP (01)
Thomas Aquinas Nguyễn Trường Tam, OP (40)
Gabriel Samba, OP (86)
Nicolas Tixier, OP (03)
Rómulo Vásquez Gavidia, OP (20)
José Sebastião Paulo, OP (15.1)
Yves Bériault, OP (31)

58. We report that during the general chapter, several fraternal sharings took place: fr. Vivian Boland, OP (July 21; “The Vocation of the Cooperator Brother in the Order and in the Church”; cf. ACG 2019 Biên Hoà, 194); fr. Thomas Joseph White, OP (July 23; Pontifical University of St. Thomas, *Angelicum*); fr. Olivier Poquillon, OP, and fr. Olivier Catel, OP (July 25; *École biblique et archéologique française de Jérusalem*); fr. Adriano Oliva, OP and fr. Marc Millais, OP (July 28; *Leonine Commission*); fr. Didier Croonenberghs, OP (July 28; KU Leuven and Université Catholique de Louvain); fr. Bernhard Blankenhorn, OP (July 29; Institute of Dominican Studies at the Université de Fribourg); prof. Clarita D. Carillo, fr. Georges Alahou, OP, and fr. Brice Bini, OP (July 30; Dominican LAMP); Sr. Marie Monnet, OP (August 1; Domuni Universitas); fr. Pablo Carlos Sicouly, OP, fr. Juan Manuel Hernández Hernández, OP, and fr. Florentino A. Bolo Jr., OP (August 4; evaluation of the activities of collaboration, cf. ACG 2022 Tultenango, 168); fr. Éric Salobir, OP (August 5; OPTIC).

59. We report that fr. Timothy card. Radcliffe, OP, was present at the Chapter between July 22 and 27. On July 24, he addressed the chapter and on the following day he preached during the Mass.

60. We report that on July 25, fr. Mykola Petro Luchok, OP, Bishop of Mukačeve, Ukraine, presided over a prayer for peace. On August 1, the Chapter received a group from Ukraine who shared their experiences of living in a warzone.

61. We report that on July 25, fr. Carlos Alfonso Azpiroz Costa, OP, Archbishop of Bahía Blanca sent a letter to all those participating in the General Chapter of Provincials.

62. We report that on August 6, Archbishop Marek Jędraszewski of Kraków presided over the vespers of the feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord and addressed the capitulars in a homily.

63. We report that the General Chapter of Kraków concluded its work on August 8, the Solemnity of Our Holy Father Dominic, with a solemn Eucharist concelebrated in the basilica of the Most Holy Trinity in Kraków. The Eucharist was presided over and the homily was delivered by fr. Gerard Francisco Timoner III, OP, the Master of the Order. Fr. Gerard emphasized that St. Dominic's sanctity lay in the total orientation and "exposure" of his life to Christ. Dominican preaching, through the witness of fraternal life amid a divided humanity, embodies the true "audacity of the improbable"—testifying that, with steadfast faith and hope, even the improbable becomes possible through the grace of God. During the Eucharist, five novices from the Polish

Province made their first profession in the hands of the Master of the Order.

CHAPTER II

Prologue

“Vade et praedica!”
A Chapter for Dominican Mission

*“Peace be with you.
As the Father has sent me,
so am I sending you.”*
(Jn 20:21)

64. The General Chapter of the Order was celebrated in Krakow in the months of July and August of 2025. While we were gathered in Poland, world events continued to unfold before our eyes, and the Church enthusiastically celebrated the Jubilee. It is an understatement to say that this convent in Krakow is important for the history of our Order, since it is, in fact, one of the three places where the Dominican presence has never been interrupted, along with the convents of Vienna and Dubrovnik, since the foundation of the Order. Also, celebrating this chapter on the banks of the Vistula invited us to make the link between our long history of eight centuries – by drawing on what it can teach us about its beauties and its errors – and our era and its many challenges (without claiming to be exhaustive here, and in no particular order: deadly conflicts and uncertainty about the political stability of the world, the environmental crisis, questions linked to the rise of artificial intelligence, growing religious

indifference in certain regions, etc.) by striving to be attentive to the signs of the times.

65. Its long history is not the only peculiarity of the Krakow convent, since it is also well known for housing within it the tomb of Saint Hyacinth, an eminent figure of the Order, a great preacher. Hyacinth was one of the brothers of the first generation of the Order. He received the Dominican habit in Rome from the hands of Saint Dominic himself and carried out very intense missionary activity. A few meters from his tomb, it is this mission that the general chapter desired, eight centuries later, to seize, making the central object of its attention.

A. Giving One's Life for the Mission

66. "Vowed to Mission" was the title of a letter addressed by Brother Timothy Radcliffe to the entire Order in 1994. Giving one's life for the mission is, of course, the purpose of the entire Order and of the Dominican family along with it, taken on in its various branches: brothers, nuns, members of Dominican lay or priestly fraternities, apostolic sisters, members of secular institutes or of the life of those who constitute it, Dominican youth. It will be said that the subject is not new and that, since its birth, the Order has been entirely animated by this concern, relaying the cry of Saint Dominic which has come down to us: "What will become of sinners?" In evoking the mission, the chapter intended first of all to signify that the field of mission is never saturated with those who could work for it. In fact, the harvest is abundant and the workers are few. (Lk 10:2) The time to reap, to which we may have been

accustomed, has not always come, unlike the time of sowing, which is always current, a time of hope.

67. There are many ways of speaking about mission, and over the course of its eight centuries of history, the Order itself has reflected on it on many occasions. Thus, the Biên Hòa General Chapter, for example, emphasized the life-mission synergy that underpins our Dominican life and our preaching. Without neglecting this fundamental aspect of our life, this time we wanted to look at the mission's publics, in other words, the immense people who make up the world in which we live today. Our hope, which we wish to affirm here, is that they will not remain our publics, but will truly become the interlocutors of our mission. The term "Interlocutors" is important because we will see in these acts that the Chapter did not understand mission as a one-way enterprise, but as a conversation that we hope will be fruitful for all. It is a "conversation of friendship," since the love of charity – to use terms dear to Saint Thomas Aquinas – extends to God, to our neighbor, to our body, and to ourselves. (cf. *Summa Theologiae*, IIa IIae q. 25, a. 12)

68. Speaking of mission was in itself a challenge, because evoking this vast field, represented by the capitulars from the four horizons of the world, requires highlighting its immense diversity, and the work of inculturation that preaching obviously requires. We could therefore have undertaken a reflection by cultural or linguistic area, but the chapter chose to treat this mission as a single object, the object of our Order, itself considered in its uniqueness.

B. Coming to Listen: A Spirituality of Listening for Mission

69. What did we come to Krakow to do? Did we come primarily to enact laws? To take stock of the life of the Order? Certainly, these are the tasks of a general chapter, but it was first and foremost to listen, and to listen to ourselves, that we came. This listening was at the heart of these meetings: listening to God under the vaults of the venerable basilica, listening to the stories of brothers from the four corners of the world, listening to the capitulars in commissions, language groups, and in plenary assembly. This listening is, as we well know, fundamental to our mission, and it appears in many places in these acts. It is also at the heart of our Dominican life, expressed in our lifestyle and in the profession we once made. Professing obedience aloud and summarizing our entire promise in this word, we have in fact promised to listen for our entire lives.

70. Yet, we have noted that listening is a sense that has often been neglected in the history of the Church's preaching. How many men and women have distanced themselves from the Church because they were not truly listened to? How many did not feel welcomed and preferred to withdraw? In its reflection on the mission, the chapter had to note that we, brothers of the Order, could also have been the cause of such estrangement. We have therefore chosen to reflect extensively on mission methods in today's context, noting that there can be no authentic preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ — the true heart of our mission — without listening to our contemporaries and their expectations and needs, like Dominic the preacher conversing with the innkeeper in

Toulouse. Like Jesus himself before him, he became a companion to the men and women he encountered along the way. "Saint Dominic said to his followers: 'Let us go out with bare feet to preach.' It reminds us of the passage of the burning bush, when God said to Moses: 'Put off your shoes from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.' (Exodus 3:5) The good preacher is conscious that he moves on holy ground, because the Word he takes with him is sacred, and so are its recipients." (Pope Francis, Address to the participants of the General Chapter of Bologna, August 4, 2016)

71. This listening should be for us, preachers, a true conversion, something the chapter intended to recall solemnly. We wanted to reiterate our conviction that we can only be the ground that announces the good news if we receive for ourselves the gospel that we preach and if we allow ourselves to be profoundly transformed by it. There is no true preaching that is not the manifestation of this conversion (or of the sincere desire for this conversion), of our representation of God, and of our representation of the other to whom we claim to speak of God. How, in fact, can we proclaim the Gospel to the world if we do not engage ourselves in this *metanoia*, in the joy of welcoming the Kingdom today? The chapter also wanted to recall that this conversion is not only an individual necessity, but a communal one. Indeed, it is the entire Order of Preachers that must constantly renew itself, convert itself, to remain faithful to its purpose: the salvation of souls.

C. The Urgency of the Mission

72. "Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel!" The cry of Saint Paul addressed to the Corinthians (1 Cor 9:16) reached the capitulars in Krakow, like the words of the conclusion of the Gospel of Saint Matthew, dear to Saint Dominic: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations; baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (Mt 28:19) We note, moreover, that this last text was never considered as a simple invitation to go on a mission, but as a command, an order given by Jesus.

73. There is reason to fear, it is true, that we are no longer aware of the urgency of the mission. Indeed, if we must reaffirm that our community life is a precious asset for our apostolic mission, we are also aware that our way of life can, if we are not careful, isolate us from the necessities of the world, protect us against its vulnerability, and cut us off from its needs. Our convents can turn into fortresses, and our internal debates can cut us off from the concerns of the world around us. In short, accustomed to believing, we can lose the zeal for the mission. Yet the call that urged the steps of Saint Dominic still resounds, an echo of that of the Lord to his prophet: "My people perish for want of knowledge!" (Hos 4:6)

74. This is why we are aware of the danger of no longer hearing the Lord's call, of giving up on seeking him tirelessly, as he invites us to do. It is not only the quality of our preaching that is at stake, but our very life ("For thus says the LORD to the house of Israel: 'Seek me and live.'" Am 5:4). How great also is the temptation to defend our interests or protect

our comfort, forgetting that for us it is nothing less than seeking a treasure buried in a field, a pearl of great price. (Mt 13:44-46) Evangelization depends on witnesses whose transformed lives bear witness to Christ. What a risk for us to forget God.

75. If we forget God, who will announce him to those who themselves are ignorant of him? For there are still so many who are ignorant of God. There are also so many who know trials, despair, who suffer evil every day without knowing to whom to express their cry. This chapter was an opportunity for us to hear such questions in confrontation with the mystery of evil. Doubtless, nothing could illustrate this evil better than the horror of the Auschwitz and Birkenau camps, where we went together, meditating on the madness of humanity and on the terrible test that this evil constitutes for our faith, and for our preaching.

76. To speak of the urgency of the mission is, therefore, at the beginning, to evoke the situation of those who, from the depths of the abyss in which they stand, confronted with violence, poverty, illness, corruption, the forced displacement of populations, and all situations of dereliction, await, more than others, a word of consolation. We think of those regions of the world where our Dominican family courageously pursues its mission, especially amidst the horrors of war, hoping for justice and peace. A prayer vigil together and a moving meeting with friends from Ukraine – so close to Krakow – solemnly reminded us of our common responsibility to be close to our brothers and sisters who are sorely tried in all these regions. We are convinced that all of them, in their particular situations, in joy as well as in

sometimes atrocious pain, are a concrete sign of the realization of the Kingdom and its discreet but certain advance.

77. "Why do you stay?" This was the question put to our blessed brother Pierre Claverie, Bishop of Oran in Algeria, who was assassinated on August 1, 1996, along with his Muslim driver. This question called for a second: "Why don't you go home?" And he replied, a few days before his death: "*Where are we at home? ... We are there because of this crucified Messiah. For no other reason and for no one else! We have no interest to save, no influence to maintain. We are not driven by some masochistic perversion (...) but we are there as if at the bedside of a friend, a sick brother, in silence, holding his hand, mopping his brow.*" (Homily delivered on June 23, 1996). We, brothers, recognize ourselves in this testimony.

D. Preachers in the Church on Mission

78. Dominic, as we know, hastened to place his missionary enterprise under the protection of Bishop Fulk of Toulouse, and then under that of Pope Honorius. It is an understatement to say that he intended, from the very beginning, to place his missionary project (including the foundation of our Order) at the heart of the Church of his time. Even today, we affirm, if there is any need to do so again, that the mission of the Order is indeed at the heart of the Church, *in medio Ecclesiae*.

79. If it seems necessary in this chapter to reaffirm the place of the Order in the Church, it is because we are aware that the latter, the Church, however holy it may be, has been able to show a very sad face in recent years in many places, marked

by the scandal of sexual and spiritual abuse, the long list of victims of which is also accompanied by the loss of credibility of the ecclesiastical institution among many of our contemporaries. It has also been able to provoke incomprehension or disaffection among many because of what was sometimes perceived as a difficulty in listening to the men and women of our time, presenting them with the face of an institution considered closed off and not very evangelical.

80. In all these situations, the temptation would be great for an Order like ours to appear as a sort of “alternative Church,” ensuring an audience at little cost. This is why we want to affirm that, if our mission is indeed to reach all people—whether they are close to the Church or have distanced themselves from it—we must carry out this endeavor in deep communion with our Church, including locally, and not alongside it.

81. This service of communion is, moreover, we believe, at the heart of our Dominican mission, as we ourselves try—very humbly—to live such an experience of communion at the heart of our communities, particularly in our synodal mode of government. Is it not essential that, in a world and a Church so polarized, we can bear this fundamental witness? We must preach this communion, which presupposes an authentic search for reconciliation. In this, it is permissible to say that our fraternal life is our first preaching.

E. The Interlocutors of Our Mission

82. As has been said, the particularity of the general chapter of Krakow was to be less interested in the portrait of the Order itself as in drawing up that of the interlocutors of our preaching, insisting on the dimension of reciprocity of our apostolic mission. Thus, we will see that on several occasions the need arose to consider the mission not as the sole action of the preacher, who came to teach a people awaiting new knowledge, but rather as the fruitful encounter between him and those called to become partners, even participants, in his mission.

83. In his *Relatio*, the Master of the Order evoked the episode of Paul's speech at the Areopagus in Athens (Acts 17), representing the place where those who have not known Jesus stand. As fr. Gerard points out, there are many such *areopagi* in our contemporary world and, in their own way, each of the commissions of our chapter has striven to care for them, like a first missionary adventure, at the margins. This is the case first and foremost of those who do not yet know the name of Jesus and are waiting (or are not yet waiting) for those who will be able to pronounce it for the first time to them, like good news delivered personally, in their own language and their own culture. It is also the case of those who have distanced themselves from the Church or stand on its margins. Wounded or not by the institution, little concerned by the message of the Church that they do not receive – or angered by it – they constitute another place of mission. The world of young people also seemed to be, in many ways, another *areopagus* where the gospel sometimes

does not yet resonate, particularly on the social networks they frequent.

84. But it also seemed that, even among those who already know Jesus and fully recognize themselves as members of the Church, there are mission territories in need of strengthening the faith and deepening it through solid teaching and appropriate accompaniment. When the great questions of human existence or the trials of life present themselves, in fact, each person is confronted with the margins of his or her own faith. When crossing the valley of death (Ps 22) will he or she have the necessary provisions to continue the journey without fear of any harm? It is probably our responsibility, too, to help him or her answer this question.

Conclusion: Dominican Life, a Mission of Hope for a Wounded World

85. “Proclaim the message and, welcome or unwelcome, insist on it. Refute falsehood, correct error, give encouragement — but do all with patience and with care to instruct!” (2 Tim 4:2) In evoking the immense task of the mission that falls to us, the chapter intended to rekindle within us the apostolic flame. We know that the task is not easy and, like the image of discouraged prophets that Scripture sometimes gives us to contemplate, we preachers can occasionally experience weariness or disillusionment. We know that, for some, this zeal seems a little extinguished and that the flame is flickering. We must therefore take courage, and this is where this prologue will end: with encouragement.

86. Where could this courage come from? From our own strength? Perhaps we could draw from our own willpower and our enthusiasm some provisions for the journey, but in truth, this may not be enough and could add to the fatigue. More surely, we will seek in Christ himself, with the strength of the Holy Spirit, the courage we await, and we will draw from him the hope that does not disappoint. It is then that the image of Saint Dominic returns to us, absorbed in the long night vigils of his prayer. The first place, no doubt, of his struggles. The first place, also, of his hope.

87. In this Jubilee Year, we wish to affirm that hope animates us, like a profound conviction that Christ is among us and that he never ceases to act in us and around us. Our hope is not based, in fact, on hopes, but on a promise: the promise of salvation that God offers to his people. We do not hope alone, and the experience of the General Chapter itself reminds us of this magnificently. Indeed, what a sign of hope it is to be gathered together in this way, despite our differences, seriously yet joyfully debating the great questions of our Dominican life. A sign that may be fragile, but nonetheless powerful, in a deeply divided world. But we also follow in the footsteps of those who lived this hope before us and gave an account of it long before we did so ourselves. Such is the beauty of the Order that it offers us the faces of all those who, anchored in this hope, courageously attempted the exciting adventure of mission as preachers. Mentioning only a few, we will remember their *areopagi*, their mission territories: Jordan of Saxony, who left for the Holy Land in 1236; Hyacinth of Poland, missionary to the confines of Christian Europe; Thomas Aquinas, in dialogue with Greek and Arab thinkers; Catherine of Siena, engaged in the troubled Church of her

time; Montesinos, Vitoria and Las Casas, fierce defenders of human rights. And so many others...

88. It is with one of them, moreover, that we will conclude this prologue: the young Pier-Giorgio Frassati, who will be canonized on September 7, 2025, a few weeks after the close of our chapter. He leaves us the joyful teaching of his impressive missionary courage, his dedication to the poor, and his political commitment in a troubled period. But above all, he leaves us the testimony of his deep friendship with Christ, inviting us, as he did the members of his *Società dei Tipi Loschi* (Society of Shady Characters), not to eke out a living (*vivacchiare*) but to live (*vivere*).

89. Making himself close to everyone, even the smallest, he always had only one goal, which we have retained as his motto, and which sums up better than anything the momentum which animated our chapter: "*Verso l'alto!*" (To the heights!)

*"Wait for the Lord; be strong,
and let your heart take courage;
wait for the Lord!"
(Ps 26:14)*

CHAPTER III

Missio ad gentes – To Those Who Have Not Yet Known Jesus

A. *Missio Ad Gentes*

“Go and make disciples of all nations” (Mt 28:19)

90. [DECLARATION] In his *Relatio*, the Master of the Order reminds us that *“the place of mission is no longer only far from home, it is also close to home”* (*Relatio* 2025, 21; ACG 1995 Caleruega 46.8.v). The Chapter reaffirms the importance and priority of both forms of mission *ad gentes*.

91. [DECLARATION] This mission involves reaching out both to those who have never encountered Christ and to those shaped by a cultural Christianity in which the image of Jesus is often distorted. Yet, both are part of the same mission: to proclaim Christ as Savior (*kerygma*), beyond historical or cultural boundaries.

92. [DECLARATION] *‘We need a profound conversion and to abandon the comfort and security that produce a mentality opposed to all change.’* (ACG 1986 Ávila) A clear sign that we are truly engaging in *missio ad gentes* is found in the fear, unease, and vulnerability we may feel when stepping beyond our comfort zones and apostolic security.

93. [EXHORTATION] Even though we are aware of our available human resources, the Chapter encourages the

brothers to be open to being sent on mission and to immerse themselves in other contexts, environments, or cultures.

94. [ACT OF THANKSGIVING] The Chapter rejoices in the missionary zeal of the members of the Dominican Family, who proclaimed Christ with generosity and courage where he was not yet known.

95. [ACT OF THANKSGIVING] The Chapter wishes to express its compassion, solidarity, and gratitude to all our brothers and sisters working in contexts of persecution, for the name of Christ, being made partakers of their sufferings. (cf. Second Vatican Council, *Ad gentes* 42) They are witnessing to the Gospel in challenging, violent, and restricted regions, such as the Central African Republic, Cameroon, Congo (DRC), Haiti, the Holy Land, India, Iraq, Myanmar, Nigeria, Pakistan, Ukraine, Venezuela, Vietnam, and many others.

B. Ways to live this mission

*“Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.
(Rm 10:17)*

96. [DECLARATION] Mission begins simply through presence, listening, and hospitality—by dwelling among the people, with a way of life appealing to and confronting the values of society. (ACG 1995 Caleruega 20.7) This presence is not, first and foremost, about administering sacraments, but about building genuine relationships that may, in time, lead to the celebration of a sacrament.

97. [COMMENDATION] We encourage the brothers to be mindful, in their preaching and liturgical celebrations, of the diversity of those gathered—believers, seekers, and those who may not yet share our faith. By choosing words that are understandable to all, they can gently open hearts and invite everyone present to experience God’s grace.

C. “Areopagi”

“What you unknowingly worship, I proclaim to you” (Acts 17:23).

98. [EXHORTATION] The Chapter recalls that “there are many forms of ‘Areopagus’ in today’s world toward which the Church’s missionary activity should be directed.” (John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, 37) We invite every community to identify at least one *areopagus* in its community project.

These areas can be every place of human encounter, such as cafés, museums, libraries, hospitals, digital worlds, beaches, exhibitions, festivals, pubs, etc.

Philosophy, literature, the arts, and the social sciences provide meaningful spaces for dialogue with contemporary thinkers and artists, whether Christian or not.

99. [COMMENDATION] Our churches and convents, often rich in art, architecture, and history, welcome many visitors from around the world. These spaces offer valuable opportunities for a first proclamation of the faith. We recommend that brothers be available to receive guests with warmth and, when appropriate, offer interpretation that opens paths to the Gospel.

D. A culture of mission

"I thank my God every time I remember you because of your partnership in the gospel." (Ph 1:3,5)

100. [ORDINATION] The foundation of a mission outside the territory of a province by that same province is an integral part of its identity. (ACG 2004 Kraków 83) Where the establishment of a mission is not possible or realistic, cooperation between provinces may be established to ensure a shared missionary responsibility. In this spirit, each province that does not yet have an established mission outside its own jurisdiction has to identify and develop a supportive and collaborative relationship.

101. [EXHORTATION] We encourage each priory to identify in its community project a particular mission, especially one serving in areas where the Gospel is not yet known or where the Church faces difficulty. This partnership can take various forms: faithful prayer, fundraising, financial support, reaching out to brothers working in those areas, or raising awareness within the wider Dominican Family.

102. [COMMISSION] We commission the Socius for Apostolic Life to ensure that the updated list of the apostolic opportunities of the Order is made available every year. The priors provincial are invited to contribute actively to the development of this database and its sharing.

Mission Amazon

103. [ACT OF THANKSGIVING] We extend our gratitude to the brothers from the provinces of Hispania and Peru for their

dedicated care of the Vicariate of Puerto Maldonado in the Peruvian Amazon for over a century.

104. [DECLARATION] We declare the Apostolic Vicariate of Puerto Maldonado as the *ad gentes* priority for the Order until the next General Chapter (ACG 2022 Tultenango 139-143).

105. [EXHORTATION] We invite brothers to respond to the call of the Master of the Order (Letter “Invitation to preach the Gospel in the Amazon”, May 2025) by participating in this mission.

106. [EXHORTATION] We exhort the provinces of the Order to look for financial support for this mission. (ACG 2022 Tultenango 141)

107. [COMMENDATION] In case there is no response from the provinces, we remind the Master of the Order of the possibility to assign brothers directly for this mission in accordance with LCO 271 § I.

108. [COMMISSION] We commission the prior provincial of Peru to submit an evaluation of the mission to the Amazon for the next General Chapter.

Regional meetings

109. [COMMISSION] We commission the regional meetings (Asia-Pacific, North America, CIDALC, IAOP, IEOP) to assess yearly the situation of the existing fragile houses outside the territories of the provinces and to map them, in order to promote collaboration among provinces and encourage support from the entire Order.

E. Evaluation in 2028

110. [COMMISSION] The General Chapter of 2028 shall evaluate the Order's progress in the *missio ad gentes* (*Relatio* 2025, 26), based on these elements:

- a) the provinces that have committed to developing creative initiatives among non-believers (nn. 9-12),
- b) the integration of missionary formation in initial and ongoing formation,
- c) the care for missionary presences or interprovincial collaborations (nn. 13),
- d) the concrete support offered by priories (nn. 14).

111. [COMMISSION] We request that the Socius for Apostolic Life prepare a report for the General Chapter of 2028, reflecting on these points and including testimonies and indicators of missionary vitality throughout the Order.

CHAPTER IV

Mission of Deepening the Faith of Believers

112. [DECLARATION] “The Church must (...) [advance] forward to new frontiers, both in the initial mission *ad gentes* and in the new evangelization of those peoples who have already heard Christ proclaimed.” (John Paul II, *Redemptoris missio*, 30) Our prophetic vocation aims to give birth to faith or to enable it to penetrate more deeply into the lives of men and women with a view to building up the Body of Christ. (cf. LCO I § V, *Relatio* n°20-35) As cooperators of the bishops, the brothers participate in their mission of confirming the faithful in the faith. (cf. Lk 22:31-32) This includes a true friendship with Christ, a true knowledge of the faith, renewed fraternal relationships, and a missionary responsibility.

A. “The community of believers was of one heart and mind” (Acts 4:32)

113. [DECLARATION] The Second Vatican Council reminds us that the Church is *veluti sacramentum* (cf. *Lumen gentium* 1), having both an invisible and a visible dimension. This highlights the importance of communities of believers bearing witness to the unity brought about by Christ, first and foremost, the one we ourselves embody (cf. LCO 2 § II).

114. [DECLARATION] We declare that our conventual life is our principal witness (cf. CIC 673, ACG 2007 Bogotá 60; ACG

2019 Biên Hoà 58–60, 176 ; ACG 2022 Tultenango 136). It needs to be nourished and cherished like the early Christian community (cf. Acts 2:44-47) in order to have a closer experience of the Lord. We “are called to radiate the word of truth that the Lord Jesus has left us.” (Benedict XVI, *Porta Fidei*, 6)

115. [DECLARATION] We declare that the parish ministry can respond to contemporary needs (cf. ACG 2019 Biên Hoà 58–59), since it is a space for growing in faith through the sacraments and accompaniment on the journey for many people. (cf. 2 Tim 4:2) It ought to be a community of living faith and grace.

116. [ADMONITION] We remind the brothers that the provincial chapter or the provincial and his council are the ones who accept the entrustment of a parish to the Order (cf. LCO 128 § III).

117. [EXHORTATION] We exhort each province to define the criteria for accepting such a ministry, in accordance with the Dominican charism.

118. [ADMONITION]: We recall that while the care of souls as well as the public exercise of divine worship fall under the authority of the Bishops, the Code of Canon Law also affirms that any religious who has received a diocesan mandate remains under the authority of his superior, and that the Bishops themselves must ensure this. (cf. CIC 678) The offices entrusted to the brothers must therefore not become an occasion for evading the obligations of their religious life.

119. [EXHORTATION] When a parish is entrusted to the Order, the friar in charge shall ensure that it is imbued with a Dominican spirit. We urge that particular attention be given to the communal dimension of pastoral governance. This should be done regularly with the chapter and in consultation with the local superior, both regarding the brothers' participation in parish life and in matters of material administration.

120. [DECLARATION] We declare that caring for a stable community (parish) and helping it grow in faith can itself be a form of itinerancy (cf. *Relatio* 2025, 28) in which the friars not only “accompany” the faithful but are *united with them on a common pilgrimage*. At the same time, this should not hinder the friars' availability for new missions.

121. [COMMENDATION] In an anonymous urban context, small Christian communities ought to foster sharing, fraternity, formation, and mission. We recommend creating such groups to promote effective, friendly relationships and the sharing of both joys and personal problems.

122. [COMMENDATION] We recommend that the members of the Dominican Family be engaged, so that the parish may benefit from Dominican spirituality. (cf. LCO 128 § I; ACG 2022 Tultenango 128–135) This ought to be done through the living of the Dominican charism of study, prayer, community life, and preaching. (cf. *Relatio* 2025, 28)

B. “Offer to God the sacrifice of thanksgiving” (Ps 49:14): Liturgy & Sacraments

123. [ADMONITION] The liturgy expresses and transmits what the Church lives and believes. We exhort each community to take care in celebrating the sacraments and recall the requirement of celebrating the office in public. (cf. LCO 58)

124. [EXHORTATION] Confession is a major place for renewing friendship with God. The brothers will explain to the faithful the importance of this sacrament for their spiritual life. Confessors will always remember that they are at the service of the reconciliation of humans with God. They will welcome and accompany the faithful with truth and compassion, avoiding both laxity and rigor. (cf. Francis, *Dives in misericordia* n°10)

125. [EXHORTATION] The sacramentals, like popular piety, are an important heritage, an opportunity for encounter with Christ, as all the popes from Paul VI to Francis have recalled. We exhort the brothers to welcome with solicitude the requests of the faithful, respecting the *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy*.

126. [EXHORTATION] The Sanctuary of Saint Dominic in Soriano Calabro is a historic place for the Order, as evidenced by the dissemination of its image at the request of several general chapters. We support the project of a Jubilee year on the occasion of the fifth centenary of the apparition. We exhort the Province of Saint Thomas Aquinas in Italy to undertake the necessary steps for the smooth running of this Jubilee.

**C. “Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you.” (Mt 28:19-20):
Preaching and Formation**

127. [EXHORTATION] We exhort the brothers to offer **solid, doctrinal preaching, nourished by the** questions of our contemporaries and enlightened by our contemplation. This preaching, which takes into account all that constitutes our humanity, must address everyone, including the “simplest”, in accessible language. (cf. Francis, *Lumen fidei*, 36) Particular attention should be paid to neophytes and those who are going through difficult times.

128. [EXHORTATION] Education (schools, universities, conventual formation programs, etc.) plays an essential role in awakening and deepening the faith. It allows for the acquisition of frameworks for personal reflection, a better understanding of the faith, and a meaningful Christian commitment. We give thanks to God for the involvement of many brothers in this area. We exhort everyone to deepen their knowledge, particularly in the social doctrine of the Church, in order to better transmit it. (cf. ACG Biên Hoà 2019 125-175)

129. [EXHORTATION] We exhort the brothers not to neglect the preaching of retreats, seminars or sessions which allow, over a longer period, a deepening of faith and exchanges between participants. These exchanges also nourish the faith of the preacher.

130. [EXHORTATION] **Families** are privileged places for the transmission of faith. (cf. Francis *Lumen fidei*, 54 ; *Evangelii gaudium*, 139-140 ; *Amoris laetitia* 50, 192, 287, 292) We exhort the brothers, in their pastoral work, to do everything possible to help families respond to this vocation.

131. [EXHORTATION] Dominican lay fraternities are part of the Order. They must be encouraged and supported since they fulfill a particular form of the Dominican vocation. Preaching the Gospel in common (laity-with-brothers) is beneficial for everyone in society: it deserves to be promoted.

132. [EXHORTATION] The *Disputatio* is a precious Dominican heritage to promote in a fractured world, where opinions violently clash. (cf. ACG Bogotá 2007 103, ACG Tultenango 2022 146) We exhort the brothers to encourage this culture of debate in a spirit of listening, dialogue, and mutual respect, particularly in houses of formation.

133. [COMMENDATION] To foster apostolic creativity and the renewal of our preaching, we encourage brothers to participate in the forums created by the Curia. (cf. ACG Tultenango 2022 105-106) We also recommend, within the provinces, the sharing of experiences between brothers working in the same apostolic field.

D. *“You shall treat the alien who resides with you no differently than the natives born among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you too were once aliens in the land of Egypt” (Leviticus 19:34): Welcoming Migrants.*

134. [EXHORTATION] The Lord commands us to love our neighbor as he has loved us. (cf. Jn 15:12) Welcoming migrants is one of the most expressive forms of this love. This is why we are invited to draw close to those who have been forced to abandon their homes and to denounce the discourses that arouse fear and mistrust towards migrants.

135. [COMMENDATION] Welcoming migrants is something that demands more than just words. To live it in a fully evangelical way, we encourage the brothers and all members of the Dominican family to form a prudential judgment (cf. Mt 25:34, 38) and to promote initiatives that contribute to the integration of migrants and the deepening of their faith.

136. [ACT OF THANKSGIVING] Many migrants are fervent believers, and their faith revitalizes local communities today. We give thanks to God for the Dominican vocations that come to us through immigration and allow us to bear witness to interculturality in our communities. They challenge us to value the cultural characteristics of each brother and to generate expressions of shared life and mission in a climate of mutual respect and appreciation. (ACG Tultenango 2022 173)

E. *“Proclaim the word; be persistent, whether it is convenient or inconvenient [...] through all patience and teaching.” (2 Tim 4:2): Pastoral Attitudes and Skills to Develop*

137. [EXHORTATION] Each of us must nourish his life of faith and remember that the meaning of our lives comes solely from the grace and mercy of God, the Father. Deepening one’s faith is not merely about “knowing,” but about becoming a preacher oneself, in the image of Saint Dominic, who was sent with the command: “Go and preach!” (cf. ACG 2007 Bogotá 46, 50)

138. [EXHORTATION] The mission is addressed to all: believers and non-believers. It requires courage, humility, sensitivity, personal witness, and attention to each person’s unique path. Preachers should first listen and understand, then instruct. They should preach using the wisdom of the Church and their own testimony, being open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

139. [EXHORTATION] Understanding the culture and needs of the current generation is essential to finding the right approach to deepen or awaken the faith of believers.

140. [EXHORTATION] We must dare to explore various forms of preaching, using also the new tools and methods offered by the contemporary world, but without abandoning the richness of Tradition.

- a) Digital media offer new opportunities for evangelization: e.g., retreats, homilies, and catechesis. (cf. ACG 2022 Tultenango 92, 94, 99) They give an opportunity to reach both believers and those who are far away from the Church. Friars should be trained in their use, while maintaining a connection with incarnate preaching (cf. ACG 2022 Tultenango 100, 145);
- b) Modern teaching methods can include: gamification, the use of art in expressing various aspects of faith, the use of psychological tools, etc. Some methods should not be used without proper preparation; therefore, cooperation with lay specialists will be very fruitful in this area of preaching.
- c) We can find new inspirations from other pastoral practices and learn from the good experiences found elsewhere, maintaining a balance between emotion and doctrine. (cf. ACG 2022 Tultenango 127) Especially here it is necessary to underline that these new forms of preaching are intended to assist in spreading the Gospel without eliminating Tradition.

In all forms of preaching, one can consider cooperation with lay people, especially with lay Dominican fraternities. Therefore, appropriate theological and spiritual formation of lay people is very important.

141. [EXHORTATION] Some brothers have written books or produced online content that helps deepen the faith. Some of these productions deserve to be known and translated into other languages so that they can be used, with appropriate

adaptations. We encourage this work of sharing, editing, and promoting.

142. [COMMENDATION] We recommend the establishment of evaluation criteria by communities for their pastoral initiatives

143. [EXHORTATION] We must be aware of the obstacles and dangers that can hinder our preaching. In particular (cf. ACG 2019 Biên Hoà 70–73):

- a) *Individualism, which can lead to isolation or even a form of narcissism.* In particular, the Order should take care of brothers who are influential in the media. They may be spiritually or physically exhausted; they may also be tempted to preach themselves.
- b) *The fragility of our communities, which introduces anxiety and distrust into our lives.* In order to strengthen the community, it is necessary to cultivate brotherhood, the ability to forgive, and a culture of discussion. Joint activities are also important, especially recreational activities. A good community gives us joy in life, which is also a form of preaching, but it must be genuine.
- c) *Excessive activity that crowds out contemplation and theological reflection, and weakens our communal life.* Abandoning communal and individual prayer, retreats, and personal relationships with brothers, threatens our preaching and even our presence in the Order.

CHAPTER V

Mission to Those Who Walked Away from the Church, or Those on the Margins of the Church

A. Addressing Reality

144. [DECLARATION] Our Order was born of the recognition of Saint Dominic of those on the margins and those who walked away from the Church. His love for them and his love for the Truth moved him to leave his home to bring them the fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It happened in the same spirit that moved the Word to become flesh: He “emptied himself and took the form of a slave, being born in the likeness of men.” (Phil 2:7). Over the centuries, in this approach many members of our Order experienced that “God reveals himself to people only to the extent that they are completely immersed in the realities they are given to live” (Blessed Pierre Claverie).

145. [DECLARATION] Like Saint Dominic, we are called to engage with the reality we live in. We encounter those who do not recognize themselves in the status or the attitude, the teaching, or the practice of the Church. There are those who are indifferent, who are distanced by secularization and the sense of a loss of meaning, or who seek meaning elsewhere. They are pulled out of the Church by what is happening in society. And there are those who are not indifferent, but who

are alienated and pushed away by what the Church and its members do or fail to do. Some of them leave the Catholic Church to join other Christian communities. Many are close to us, because they belong to our families, friends, or even former members of our Dominican family.

146. [ACT OF THANKSGIVING] This challenge has been a reality for the Order since its beginning, and it is one to which we feel particularly called. Different generations approach it in various ways. We appreciate that our younger brothers and sisters take up this challenge. Perhaps they may have a different approach to it, but we trust them, and we trust in the Spirit who moves them.

B. Jesus and His Mission

147. [DECLARATION] “For the time is coming when people will not put up with sound doctrine....” (2 Tim 4:3) These words are particularly significant in our world marked by indifference and estrangement from the Church. Precisely for this reason, our vocation as seekers and preachers of the truth takes on a special importance for our contemporaries. This truth sets us free. (Jn 8:32) Thomas Aquinas constantly links truth to freedom. (cf. *Super Ioannem*, c. 8, l. 4, n. 1199) Bartolomé de Las Casas, in his work *De Unico Modo*, insists on the value of gentle, humble, and loving means in transmitting the faith, “as Christ and the Apostles did.” Serving the truth in charity serves the people of God in their unity, like the preaching of Jesus, the first preacher.

148. [DECLARATION] The Gospel presents us with its preaching of unity in a paradoxical way. Indeed, Jesus strives

to gather the people of God, as illustrated by the parable of the lost sheep (Mt 18:12-13) or the encounter with the adulterous woman (Jn 8:1-11), while recognizing that his words will be divisive (““This is intolerable language. How could anyone accept it?”” Jn 6:60).

149. [EXHORTATION] In all his encounters, Jesus adapts to his interlocutors and becomes their companion, like the pilgrims of Emmaus. (Lk 24:18-35) He draws near and walks with them. He listens to them and reaches out to them where their hope is wounded. He teaches them: it is through the mystery of the Cross that he gives new life. (Jn 20:24-29) Today, such an approach in following Christ invites his disciples to conversion. In fact, we must convert our image of God and our image of our neighbor, especially our neighbor who is far from the Church. As members of an Order with a missionary foundation, this conversion must be both personal and communal for us, in the hope of unity, for which Jesus prays (““that where I am with you, Father, they may all be with me”” cf. Jn 17:20.24).

C. Principles for Engagement

150. [DECLARATION] Though we are to be perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect (cf. Mt 5:48), the Church will remain sinful in her members, even as we make every effort to do what is right. We believe that God works in the midst of our sinfulness. (cf. 1 Jn 2:1) Our honest dealing with it can itself become a witness to the Gospel.

151. [EXHORTATION] When preaching to people on the margins or leaving the Church, we exhort brothers to keep in

mind three things: the priority of unity in a time of polarization, the indispensable bond between charity and truth, and theological reflection as a specific mission of the Order.

152. [EXHORTATION] We are living in a time of polarization, both in the world and in the Church. Preaching to those on the margins or leaving the Church is one of those places where the divisions inside the Church and society manifest themselves the most. Our Order, in which the tensions among us have never led to a division, has an important experience to share. The Order's intellectual and spiritual traditions are meant to serve the unity of the Church and we should refrain from contributing to polarization. We exhort our communities to remain a sign of unity *in medio Ecclesiae*. We should not present ourselves as an "alternative Church," focusing only on certain aspects of ecclesial life to the detriment of others.

153. [EXHORTATION] As Ephesians 4:15 teaches, we're called to speak the truth in love. This means following Jesus' example with the sinful woman, offering in profound compassion a clear call to "go and sin no more." (Jn 8:11) In this compassion, we exhort brothers to bring together truth and mercy through a contemplative and vulnerable presence and attentiveness to the very needs of the person. As our brother Paul Murray reminds us, an anonymous Dominican author of the thirteenth century writes: Among the things "a man ought to see in contemplation" are "the needs of his neighbor." As we embrace others out of Love, we must be sure to remain in the embrace of Truth. Likewise, embracing Truth, we must reach out to others in Love. Even in

disagreement about the truth, “we must love them both, those whose opinions we share and those whose opinions we reject. For both have labored in the search for truth and both have helped us in the finding of it.” [Thomas Aquinas, *In Meta.* XII, 9; n. 2566]

154. [EXHORTATION] We believe firmly that God is working in people even before the preachers encounter them. Based on positive experiences, we exhort brothers to pay attention to the richness of the treasure of sacramentals to make contact with people in their particular situations where their quest for something sacred or a desire to return to the Church can be awakened (e.g., blessings of persons, vehicles, or houses; icons; candles; holy water). We always have something to offer, even in moments when people cannot receive the sacraments.

155. [DECLARATION] When we look at people leaving the Church or those who feel distanced from her, we can perceive a certain failure in the mission of the Church. Therefore, we need preachers and theologians in dialogue to discern the truth of God in these situations in which people are leaving the Church. That could result in the development of a certain “theology of failure.” We are convinced of an indispensable and fruitful mutual influence of pastoral experience and theological reflection for which the Order needs to take responsibility.

156. [COMMISSION] Authentic theological research is the specific contribution of our Order to the Church. It is a certain richness of the Order that we can carry on this research in different cultural contexts. We commission the provincials in

each region together to designate an academic institution in the region to reflect on, over the next three years, the burning issues marginalized persons face, so that the results will be adapted to the regions and cultures. We commission the regional *socii* to follow, support, and receive the results to be reported at the next general chapter.

D. The Abuse Crisis

157. [ACT OF THANKSGIVING] Following the General Chapter of Tultenango, an interdisciplinary commission on abuse was established by the Master of the Order (ACG Tultenango 2022, 218). The commission has begun fulfilling its mission in accordance with the specifications set for it. We welcome this and encourage it to continue its work. We also welcome the work accomplished by the provinces in this area.

158. [ORDINATION] In order to continue promoting a strong culture of safeguarding and anti-abuse within the Order, we ordain the Master of the Order to establish a permanent multidisciplinary commission on safeguarding of people, which will incorporate the experiences of different entities and realities within our Order. It will present its report at each General Chapter.

159. [ORDINATION] We ordain priors provincial to support the reception in their provinces of the work of this commission, with the requisite instruction, and to continue to promote a culture of respect for people and the fight against abuse. This culture must be promoted from initial formation and throughout permanent formation.

160. [ORDINATION] We ordain the Master of the Order, during his canonical visits, to ensure the implementation of the acts of the General Chapters in the fight against abuse. (ACG 2010 Rome 235, 237; ACG 2013 Trogir 142; ACG 2016 Bologna 255, 348; ACG 2019 Biên Hòa 109, 118-122, 188, 291-296; ACG Tultenango 175-178, 372-376; and in particular numbers 159, 161-166, 176.g, 269, 299, 306 of this present chapter)

161. [DECLARATION] Promoting a culture of respect for people and combating abuse requires awareness of the role of the virtue of chastity in preaching. It requires particular attention to the link between affectivity and preaching. As some serious situations have unfortunately shown, there are indeed risks when we place too much emphasis on the freedom of brothers and the exercise of their individual charisms without any real connection to their community. Or when we use theology as an instrument for spiritual control. Or when we resort too easily to mercy, disregarding the demands of justice and respect for people. All of these make demands on us.

Safeguarding

Formation for safeguarding and prevention of abuse (cf. B 348; BH 119; T 372)

162. [ORDINATION] We ordain that priors provincial ensure that the brothers and employees and volunteers who collaborate with the brothers in stable works proper to the Order are educated in the types of abuse (such as sexual, psychological, physical, emotional, and spiritual, among

others), the importance of promoting safe practice, minimizing risks of abuse and responding immediately and appropriately to reports of concern. Furthermore, brothers, as well as employees and volunteers, should attend seminars and workshops on the various forms of abuse and the relevant requirements of local civil law. Superiors should ensure that all brothers have access to these resources.

Safeguarding policies (cf. B 348; BH 120; T 373)

163. [ORDINATION] We ordain that priors provincial and their councils ensure that their province has clear and detailed policies and procedures that properly address questions of ensuring safe environments, pastoral care, and responding to concerns and allegations of abuse, as well as clear communication strategies both internal and external, taking into account the norms of canon and civil law, as well as safeguarding norms of the ecclesiastical territory(s) in which the province is located. These policies and procedures are to be reviewed regularly, renewed at least every four years, and implemented. When they are updated, one copy is to be sent to the Master of the Order.

Screening of Candidates (cf. BH 188; T 374)

164. [ORDINATION] We ordain that priors provincial ensure that the proper screening of all candidates is carried out including psychological and medical evaluations, letters of reference, and criminal, financial, and social media background checks. In the case of clerical candidates, this should be done taking into account the requirements of the applicable *Ratio Nationalis* of the *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis*. Any candidate who has been convicted of abuse of a minor or of possession of child

pornography may not be admitted to the Order, without prejudice to LCO 420.

165. [COMMISSION] We commission the Master of the Order to insert a norm to this effect into the *Ratio Formationis Generalis*.

Informing a local community about convictions and restrictions on a brother's ministry (T 376)

166. [ORDINATION] The commission by our brothers of delicts, especially serious delicts involving the abuse of minors or the possession of child pornography, causes harm, especially to individuals, but also to the good of the Church and the Order. To aid in the restoration of justice, the correction of offenders, and the repair of scandal, it is essential that affected local convents remain properly informed regarding such brothers. Therefore, we ordain that when a brother has been convicted of such a delict, the prior provincial shall inform the superior and conventual chapter of the house in which such a brother resides of the said conviction. In addition, to prevent harm either in the victimization of others or by creating scandal, the prior provincial may also be obliged in justice to impose restrictions on the public ministry of a brother as an administrative restriction or penal precept, even if he has not been found guilty of a delict in a formal process. Any restrictions so imposed are ordinarily done in consultation with the diocesan bishop (see CIC 103, 967 § 2), with the counsel of a qualified canonist, and are to be reviewed regularly, at least every five years. We further ordain that when restrictions, whether by penal sentence, by penal precept, or administratively, have been imposed on a brother, the prior provincial shall inform

the superior and conventual chapter of the house in which the brother resides of such restrictions.

CHAPTER VI

Mission with the Young

167. [CONGRATULATIONS] The Chapter recognizes and congratulates the apostolic work of the entire Dominican Family with young people, in chaplaincies, parishes, schools, universities, etc.

168. [DECLARATION] We declare the importance of recognizing the plurality of young people and embracing their diversity, being aware of their distinct realities, contexts, concerns, and pursuits. In this journey, it is essential to demonstrate an attitude of hospitality, respectful closeness, understanding, consistency, and life witness.

169. [COMMISSION] We commission the Promoter General of the Dominican Laity and the Socius for Apostolic Life, in collaboration with all entities, to compile and evaluate experiences in working with young people in the Order to enhance the apostolate with them. We further recommend that the Promoter General formulate evaluation criteria and then share these activities through the youth forum under the care of the Socius for Apostolic Life.

170. [COMMISSION] We commission the General Promoter for the Dominican Laity, in coordination with the International Commission of the IDYM, to ensure the updating of its website to facilitate the exchange of training and information resources among groups belonging to the

Dominican Youth Movement. (cf. ACG Tultenango 2022 95, 99)

171. [EXHORTATION] We exhort those responsible for the accompaniment of youth groups and local promoters, in coordination with superiors, to creatively encourage the creation of spaces and opportunities for welcoming young people and for active participation in liturgical celebrations, social activities, and apostolic projects of the province. (cf. ACG Tultenango 2022 133)

172. [EXHORTATION] We reiterate the reminders contained in the Acts of Bologna (cf. ACG 2016 Bologna 139), Biên Hòa (cf. ACG 2019 Biên Hòa 274) and Tultenango (cf. ACG 2022 Tultenango 133-134) so that, in the provinces where there are not yet groups of Dominican youth between the ages of 18 and 35 with links to the IDYM (cf. IDYM Statute, n. 1.4), priors provincial and their councils strive to facilitate the presence and promote the belonging of these groups of young people to the Dominican Family through the IDYM.

173. [EXHORTATION] We exhort that groups of young people under 18 years of age, present in all regions, be accompanied by members of the various branches of the Dominican Family and participate in the Dominican charism.

174. [EXHORTATION] We exhort the members of the Dominican Family whose apostolate is carried out in our apostolic and educational institutions to strengthen their Dominican identity and have an active and visible presence.

175. [EXHORTATION] We exhort priors and those responsible for youth ministry to foster youth communities led by young people themselves, accompanied by members of the Dominican Family. It is essential that young people be valued, formed, and encouraged in their capacity for leadership and active participation in ecclesial life, in accordance with the exhortations of Biên Hòa (cf. ACG 2019 Biên Hòa 147-148) and Tultenango (cf. ACG 2022 Tultenango 132).

176. [COMMISSION] We commission the General Promoter of the Dominican Laity, in collaboration with the International Commission of the Dominican Laity, to create a formation plan for young people, based on the following guidelines:

- a. That they be rooted in Christ, cultivating a personal and living relationship with Him, knowing the Gospel not only as a teaching, but as an incarnated way of life.
- b. That they be missionary disciples, capable of bearing witness to their faith in the various spheres of life: in school, at work, in digital environments, and in the peripheries where the presence of the Gospel is most urgent.
- c. That they be formed as integral people, whose spirituality is expressed in a faith united to reason, ethics, and concrete daily decisions, rooted in contemplation.
- d. That they be present in the digital world and anchored in the spiritual, with a critical, ethical, and creative presence

in virtual environments, evangelizing from a digital culture without neglecting their interior life.

- e. That they be hopeful disciples, with a firm and reflective faith, committed, deeply human, and passionately in love with Christ and his mission.
- f. That they present the Dominican experience of humanity as a support for religious experience: the experience of freedom, the mode of government, the foundation of being in grace, critical thinking, etc.
- g. May all our young people be aware of their role in building a culture of protection in our youth ministries. To this end, it is essential that all collaborators in youth ministry receive training in the recognition and prevention of abuse, as well as in appropriate protocols for reporting accusations, in accordance with the ecclesiastical and civil regulations in force in each country, promoting care and responsibility in pastoral actions of young people for young people.

177. [EXHORTATION] We exhort the regional socii, together with provincial promoters, to organize and promote, according to their possibilities and means, in collaboration with the International Commission of IDYM, when possible, regional meetings of groups of Dominican youth in order to get to know each other, share experiences, and common projects.

178. [ADMONITION] We remind the entire Dominican Family of the importance of continuing to promote the

communal dimension of the mission with and for young people, transcending isolated or individualistic initiatives. We especially recognize the importance of training those in charge of and assisting youth groups so that they carry out their service within the culture of protection with competence, humility, generosity, and a synodal spirit (cf. ACG 2019 Biên Hòa 180, e).

179. [ADMONITION] We remind local youth promoters to ensure that the Dominican Youth Movement (IDYM) is duly represented in the local Dominican Family Commission, where it exists. (cf. ACG 2019 Biên Hòa 273; ACG 2022 Tultenango 179)

180. [COMMENDATION] We recommend that the Dominican Family promote and make known the figure of Pier Giorgio Frassati among young Dominicans, presenting him as a role model who embodies the kind of youthful holiness that the Church wishes to cultivate in our time: joyful, courageous, socially committed and rooted in Christ, making him a source of inspiration that “points us ‘to the heights’ (*verso l’alto*). Through his intercession, may all Dominicans draw inspired breath, and commit to preaching to, with, through the young, who remain as the future of society and the hope of the church.” (cf. *Relatio* 2025, 36)

CHAPTER VII

Fraternal Life, Formation, and Intellectual Life

“I call you friends” (John 15:15)

181. [DECLARATION] Dominican life begins in friendship with Christ, a transformative communion at the heart of our personal and liturgical prayer, study, and fraternal life. Authentic friendship with God, nurtured in community, is contagious and foundational to our life and mission to our interlocutors.

A. Fraternal Life

Consecration as a Sign of Hope and Prophetic Wisdom

182. [EXHORTATION] We exhort the brethren to live deeply their friendship with Christ as consecrated religious, both as clerics and cooperator brothers. This is not an abstract idea but is incarnated in the constituent elements of our fraternal life: our system of government, common prayer, common meals and recreation, common study, and a shared mission.

183. [EXHORTATION] In a divided world that is often fractured and individualistic, our fraternal communion stands as a prophetic sign of hope. As preachers, let us be wise stewards of the manifold grace of God; each one of us should use whatever gift he has received to serve one another. If anyone speaks, he should speak as one conveying the words of God. (1 Peter 4:10-11)

184. [EXHORTATION] Given the social and ecclesial reality in which we find ourselves, we exhort the brethren to reflect upon the significance of their religious consecration, which requires constant renewal. We are preachers called to an ongoing conversation with God and each other in the spirit of St. Dominic. In the historical moment in which we find ourselves, it is necessary that our consecration be translated into prophetic wisdom in the service of the Holy Preaching. (Francis, *Apostolic Letter to All Consecrated People on the Occasion of the Year of Consecrated Life, 21 November 2014*)

Cooperator Brothers

185. [ACT OF THANKSGIVING] We congratulate the members of the Theological Commission for their report on the *Vocation of the Cooperator Brothers in the Order and in the Church* prepared for this chapter.

186. [COMMISSION] We commission the Permanent Commission for the Cooperator brothers to publish a 'Vademecum' collating the acts of previous general chapters and other relevant documents concerning the cooperator brothers. This should be distributed to the provinces for easy reference and made available online.

187. [COMMISSION] We commission the Master of the Order to renew the Permanent Commission on Cooperator Brothers, ensuring the full representation of the regions of the Order.

188. [COMMISSION] We commission the Standing Commission for the Cooperator Brothers to work closely with the regional socii to ensure that the provisions of the LCO, the RFG, and the RSG pertaining to cooperator brothers are

applied where they have not yet been implemented. We also reaffirm and entrust to the Standing Commission for the Cooperator Brothers the responsibilities entrusted to them by the General Chapter of Biên Hoà. (ACG 2019 Biên Hoà 194)

189. [ORDINATION] We ordain that the feast of St. Martin de Porres become a day for celebrating and promoting the vocation of the Cooperator Brother throughout the Order. (cf. ACG 2022 Tultenango 195)

Fraternal Life and Government

190. [DECLARATION] Authentic Dominican government is rooted in shared responsibility and shared commitment. It calls each member to a mature participation in the common good, recognizing that governance in the Order is not the task of a few but the shared duty of all. This structure, which draws on the wisdom of our tradition, fosters accountability, dialogue, and co-responsibility, so that our life together may truly reflect the Gospel we preach. The conventual chapter is the venue for this shared responsibility.

191. [EXHORTATION] It is especially important for convents of formation to model authentic Dominican government to brothers in initial formation.

192. [COMMISSION] We entrust to the Master of the Order the re-establishment of the commission requested by Bien Hoa, 100, so that it may continue the work assigned to it and draw up a list of strategies and procedures to facilitate communication within communities and among the brothers. The aim is to help the brothers continue to grow in maturity, both in the human and spiritual dimensions of Dominican life. These strategies are then to be offered to the promoters of

permanent formation in the provinces so that they may implement them as appropriate. (ACG 2019 Biên Hoà 100)

193. [COMMISSION] We ask the provincials to convene an annual meeting of priors and superiors to encourage fraternal exchanges and to facilitate good government and the implementation of general and provincial chapters.

B. Permanent Formation

Community as Base

194. [DECLARATION] “The Dominican friar is in continuous formation” (cf. ACG 2022 Tultenango 214). This reality calls us to continual conversion of heart and mind. Permanent formation is both a communal and an individual responsibility. The life of the community is the foundation of permanent formation. It is in the daily sharing of prayer, mission, fraternal life, and government that our Dominican identity is deepened and renewed. Common life grounds us, challenges us, and sustains our growth in the Lord.

195. [EXHORTATION] We exhort the provincials wherever necessary to support local superiors by developing objective standards, clear protocols, and well-signposted pathways to resources to assist superiors in maintaining community health and addressing challenges.

196. [COMMISSION] The Conventual Lector is the local promoter of permanent formation in collaboration with the Prior.

197. [COMMISSION] Provincials, priors, promoters of permanent formation and conventual lectors must work together to ensure communal accountability and individual accompaniment, particularly for young priests and for brothers experiencing midlife crises. (ACG 2022 Tultenango 217)

Accompaniment, Human Development/Formation

198. [COMMENDATION] There is a continual need for human development at the various stages of our lives. Provinces are encouraged to make use of the expertise of centers and specialists outside the Order in order to foster integral human growth.

199. [COMMISSION] Each province should draw up a permanent formation plan, clearly outlining the different stages of permanent formation. In provinces where such programs already exist, sharing them with other provinces is strongly encouraged, fostering collaboration and mutual enrichment. (cf. ACG 2022 Tultenango 217)

200. [COMMISSION] When drawing up such programs, particular attention should be given to human formation. This is essential for establishing healthy personal boundaries and fostering a culture of safeguarding. When those in ministry grow in self-awareness, emotional maturity, and an integrated understanding of their vocation, they are better equipped to navigate relationships with appropriate respect and care.

201. [EXHORTATION] We recognize that brothers, particularly in the years following ordination and during midlife, often face significant personal and vocational

challenges. It is vital that such brothers know they need not face these struggles alone. They should be neither afraid nor ashamed to seek help, but rather be encouraged to speak openly and to receive support within our fraternal structures.

202. [EXHORTATION] We exhort formators and superiors to appreciate the role of a brother's family of origin. Understanding a brother's family of origin is an important aspect of both vocation discernment and ongoing formation. A man's family background often shapes his emotional patterns, relational style, and capacity for community life.

C. Initial Formation

Formation for Human Maturity

203. [COMMISSION] Formation for human maturity is fundamental to the integrity of our religious life and the health of our communities. We commission those responsible for initial and ongoing formation to provide pedagogical and psycho-affective elements and to accompany processes to promote the integral human development of friars. (ACG 2013 Trogir 134)

204. [COMMISSION] Family life influences the human and vocational maturity of candidates and friars at all stages of life. The family can offer valuable support in times of difficulty. We commission superiors and those responsible for formation with maintaining communication with the families of candidates and friars, seeking to foster their understanding of our life commitments and to establish healthy relationships that contribute to the human and religious maturity of friars.

Authentically Dominican Formation

205. [ADMONITION] We recall that our RFG and the last general chapters have highlighted the obligation to offer all brothers in initial formation an authentic Dominican formation. (cf. ACG 2022 Tultenango 208, RFG 59-62)

206. [COMMISSION] We commission priors provincial and all those responsible for initial formation in the provinces to continue implementing the ordination and criteria outlined by the General Chapter of Tultenango. (ACG 2022 Tultenango 208-209)

207. [COMMISSION] We commission the Master of the Order to continue implementing these criteria and to determine when an entity does not meet them in order to assist it in the necessary search for collaboration with other entities. (cf. ACG 2022 Tultenango 209)

208. [COMMISSION] We value the efforts of many organizations to offer their brothers authentically Dominican formation and the application of the RFG through their RFPs. This has led to good collaborative practices for formation. We commission the regional socii, together with the Socius for Fraternal Life and Formation, to conduct an evaluation within a year and identify pending tasks and challenges in this area, to be presented to the General Council of the Order and to the provincial councils.

Challenges in the Formation of Young People Today

209. [ADMONITION] The young people who come to our formation processes face new challenges, such as the diversity of cultural origins, the lack of religious or Christian formation,

the lack of role models, the lack of human and emotional integration and the challenges inherent in the digital world; we insist that those responsible for formation and formation communities be vigilant in complying with the provisions of RFG (83): “Formators need to be well informed about current trends and pressures on young people and wise in their understanding of the implications for those who come to join the Order.”

210. [COMMISSION] We commission the regional socii, with the support of the Socius for Fraternal Life and Formation, to organize or continue formation programs or projects in each region and/or cultural area. These programs must be systematic and carried out in accordance with our tradition and values. (RFG 13-32)

211. [COMMISSION] We commission provincials to free formators from other major responsibilities so that they can dedicate themselves to formation as their primary ministry. (RFG 76)

Foci of Formation

212. [COMMISSION] Preaching to different “interlocutors” requires systematically training specific friars to know, understand, and dialogue with each of these interlocutors. We commission provincials and those responsible for formation with the task of identifying and preparing friars, based on provincial apostolic planning, to preach to different interlocutors by learning certain skills (languages and cultures) and developing talents for dialogue, offering periods of guided pastoral experience with these interlocutors. (cf. RFG 32)

213. [EXHORTATION] We exhort those responsible for formation to ensure that friars in initial formation are in contact with the social and cultural realities of their time, seeking to maintain the openness and skills necessary for preaching to different interlocutors.

214. [COMMISSION] We commission priors provincial and those responsible for formation to bear in mind the universal character of our Order (RSG 31) so that friars in initial formation may receive information about the apostolic work and academic resources of our Order in diverse contexts and cultures. We remind them that friars must study at least one of the official languages of the Order (ACG 2022 Tultenango 248) to be open to future service in other cultural contexts, always remembering that our *communion* in Christ invites us to live in open *communities* and *in communication* with the entire world.

Vocational Culture

215. [COMMISSION] The future of the Order depends on the effective promotion of vocations. We commission provincials, with the help of their vocation promoters, to plan a vocational promotion that creates a "vocational culture" (John Paul II, 30th World Day of Prayer for Vocations, 1993; Pontifical Society for Ecclesiastical Vocations, "New Vocations for a New Europe," 1997, 13; Francis, *Evangelii gaudium*, 107) that develops the following elements:

- a) Promote meaningful Dominican communities that live out all the dimensions of our lives visibly and coherently (ACG 2016 Bologna 236, RFG 97).
- b) Renew and strengthen the life and vocation of each brother (ACG Biên Hòa 2019, 187).

- c) Involve each and every friar, community, and institution in promoting vocations. (LCO 165 § II) It is everyone's responsibility to ensure that the flame of Dominican life and mission, which we have received, is faithfully passed on to the next generation.
- d) Direct our efforts toward fostering and training suitable vocational leaders within the Dominican Family.
- e) Promote the expression of vocational ministry with the various apostolic areas of each province.
- f) Strengthen work with university-aged youth and those in their early years of employment. Currently, this is the stage of life in which the most important decisions are made, so it is necessary to explore new ways of approaching this reality. (RFG 96)
- g) Care for forms of collaboration in vocational ministry with the Dominican Family and with other entities in the same region. (RFG 103; ACG 2016 Bologna 235; ACG 2019 Biên Hoà 182, ACG 2022 Tultenango 183)
- h) Strengthen our visibility and impact in digital media by seeking clarity and unity in each province's online presence. It is important to have specialized personnel in provincial curias for this task. (ACG 2022 Tultenango 193.c)
- i) The first and most important way to create a vocational culture is to pray for vocations. (Mt 9,38; ACG 2022 Tultenango 189-190)

Prayer for Vocations (T 190)

216. [ORDINATION] We ordain that priors ensure the daily recitation of a prayer for vocations in common. The prayer prepared by the Order's International Liturgical Commission and published by the Master of the Order on 23 October 2024 should be adopted if no other prayer is in use.

D. Intellectual Life

Preaching as the Goal of Our Intellectual Life

217. [EXHORTATION] We exhort provincials and those responsible for promoting the intellectual life in provinces of the Dominican intellectual life's orientation toward preaching, as stated by our RSG (12): "Even as it nourishes contemplation and fosters the living of the evangelical counsels, our study is directed to the preaching of the Word of God and has this as its goal." We exhort them to ensure that all brothers receive adequate formation for preaching, both in theology and in pastoral practice.

218. [COMMISSION] We commission provincials, regents of studies, and those responsible for the intellectual formation of friars, both in institutional studies and in ongoing formation, to ensure that such formation enables them to understand, dialogue, and offer significant contributions in relation to the four interlocutors included in the mission *ad gentes*: the mission to those who have distanced themselves from the Church or live on its margins, the mission for the deepening of the faith of the faithful, and the mission to young people.

Unity of Dominican Life and Intellectual Tradition

219. [ADMONITION] We recall that our LCO, the RSG, and the last two General Chapters have emphasized the importance of making a truly Dominican integral formation, including the intellectual dimension, accessible to all brothers. (cf. ACG 2019 Biên Hòa 305; ACG 2022, Tultenango, 240) We affirm the need to continue advancing in the implementation of this objective. In this context, we wish to specifically highlight the following points.

220. [COMMISSION] We commission provincials and all those responsible for promoting intellectual life in the provinces to continue implementing the ordinance of ACG 2022, Tultenango 245, with a view to ensuring optimal Dominican intellectual formation.

221. [COMMISSION] We renew the commission to the Master of the Order and the Socius for Intellectual Life to continue collaborating in the implementation of this objective and to continue assisting the provinces for this purpose. (cf. ACG 2019 Biên Hòa 306; ACG 2022, Tultenango 245)

222. [COMMISSION] We commission regents of studies to continue to promote the friars' understanding of the RSG and its implementation (including the additions made in accordance with ACG 2022 Tultenango 239), especially highlighting the features of the "Dominican intellectual tradition" and a "Dominican vision of theology" (RSG 16-23), which are inseparable from our Dominican community and fraternal life.

223. [ADMONITION] We recall that the formation and cultivation of the living Dominican tradition includes an appropriate biblical, philosophical, and theological foundation, and the study and deepening of the thought of Saint Thomas Aquinas, our "best teacher and model" (LCO 82), who teaches us how to think. It also includes the study of the history of theology as a whole and the contributions of other doctors, brothers, and sisters who are members of the Order. (cf. RSG 19; 21)

224. [COMMISSION] We commission provincials, regents of studies, and conventual lectors to ensure that Dominican

components are present in the intellectual formation of the brothers, even when they pursue their institutional studies "outside the Order" (cf. RSG, 66-67), and in the life of study of communities.

225. [COMMISSION] We commission the Master of the Order and the Socius for the Intellectual Life, with the assistance of the Permanent Commission for the Promotion of Studies, to implement the proposals of the *Report on Philosophical Studies in Initial Formation* (cf. ACG 2022 Tultenango 234), in dialogue with the regional coordinators of the regents of studies and the regents of each province, especially specific proposals for each entity with a view to enriching said formation.

226. [COMMISSION] We commission provincials, regents of studies, and those responsible for formation to accompany and assist our brothers in their initial and ongoing formation, promoting an intellectual formation that is open and capable of entering into fruitful dialogue with diverse currents of thought, cultures, religions, and disciplines. (cf. RSG 22)

Congratulations

227. [ACT OF THANKSGIVING] We thank Friar Wojciech Giertych, O.P., for his theological service to the Order and as Theologian of the Papal Household.

Centers of Study

228. [COMMISSION] We commission provincials, regents, and those responsible for existing centers of study in provinces to contribute to the strengthening of these centers (cf. LCO, 92; RSG, 40), especially centers of theological studies, keeping in mind the priority importance of having a

center of institutional studies (cf. ACG 2022 Tultenango 241-242).

229. [COMMISSION] We commission provincials and regents of studies of those provinces that do not yet have a center of study to establish one, in the terms indicated by LCO 90-91 (cf. ACG 2022 Tultenango 300), before the next General Chapter.

230. [COMMISSION] We commission the Master of the Order, the Socius for Intellectual Life, in collaboration with the Permanent Commission for the Promotion of Studies, and provincials, to accompany and assist theological study centers so that there may be at least one high-level academic theological study center in each region of the Order.

Obstacles and Challenges to the Intellectual Life

231. [EXHORTATION] The shortage of friars familiar with the Order's intellectual tradition and dedicated to teaching and research is a challenge in various regions of the Order. We exhort provincials and regents of studies to be aware of the priority need to train friars as teachers and to support those who are training for this profession or are dedicated to this work.

232. [ORDINATION] We renew the ordinance of the chapters of Biên Hòa (ACG 2019 Biên Hòa 328) and Tultenango (ACG 2022 Tultenango 229) on the need to plan complementary studies with a view to the mission of the Order and our service to the local churches:

We commission provincials assisted by regents of studies to draw up, in each entity, a plan for complementary studies of brothers.

[Said plan] *will be submitted to the Master of the Order and will be updated within three months after each provincial chapter. It will estimate the number and the concrete proportion of brothers who will carry out complementary studies, as well as the disciplines to which they will devote themselves. The implementation of this planning will be included in the annual report of the regents of studies and evaluated in canonical visitations of the provinces.*

Academic Institutions under the Immediate Jurisdiction of the Master of the Order

Pontifical University of Santo Tomas (PUST-Angelicum)

233. [ACT OF THANKSGIVING] We thank friar Thomas Joseph White, O.P., Rector of PUST, and the brothers and sisters co-responsible for management and teaching in the various faculties and institutes, for strengthening academic excellence, creating new institutes, and for efforts in raising funds that have allowed for the renovation of the building, including the library (ACG 2019 Bien Hoa 346), during this past three-year period.

234. [COMMISSION] We commission the Rector of PUST and the brothers and sisters co-responsible for management and teaching in the different faculties and institutes to continue this process of development of the University and to ensure, through an endowment, its economic sustainability in the future.

235. [EXHORTATION] We exhort priors provincial and regents of studies to consider sending teaching and student friars to PUST-Angelicum to participate in this common effort according to the needs of their provinces and the Order.

236. [COMMISSION] We commission the Rector of PUST to create a program dedicated to research on early Christianity in Africa, in collaboration with the Order's study centers in Africa. This program could be transformed into an Institute in the future.

Convitto Internazionale San Tommaso d'Aquino

237. [ACT OF THANKSGIVING] We recognize the valuable work carried out by fr. Orlando Rueda Acevedo, O.P., of the Province of Colombia, who recently passed away, in the service of the Order as a Socius for the Apostolic Life and as rector of the Convitto Internazionale San Tommaso d'Aquino in recent years.

238. [CONGRATULATIONS] We congratulate the renovation work on the Convitto Internazionale San Tommaso d'Aquino building to continue ensuring the housing of students in Rome.

Faculty of Theology, University of Freiburg.

239. [DECLARATION] We value the renewal of the formal agreement between the Order, the University of Fribourg, and the Swiss Episcopal Conference for ten years, in accordance with the mandate of the previous General Chapter (cf. ACG 2022 Tultenango 264).

240. [COMMISSION] We rejoice at the creation of the Institute of Dominican Studies within the Faculty of Theology of the University of Fribourg. We commission its Director and members to continue working to implement its mission, making the Dominican intellectual and spiritual tradition and the activities of the Order's other academic institutions

present within the University (cf. Statutes of the Institute, Art. 3).

241. [ACT OF THANKSGIVING] We thank the friars teaching at the University of Fribourg for their teaching and research work and encourage them to continue presenting the Dominican intellectual tradition in dialogue with other disciplines.

242. [COMMENDATION] We recommend the Master of the Order, together with the Provincial of France, and in dialogue with the communities of the Albertinum and the Convent of Saint Hyacinth, to complete the process of unification of both communities with the corresponding agreements. (cf. ACG 2019 Biên Hòa 354, ACG 2022 Tultenango 268)

École biblique et archéologique française de Jérusalem
(EBAF)

243. [ACT OF THANKSGIVING] We thank the members of the *École biblique et archéologique française de Jérusalem* (EBAF) and the provinces that contribute to its operation for the actions undertaken to promote excellence in teaching and research, especially during this time of war.

244. [EXHORTATION] Recognizing the importance of the Word of God in our lives, we exhort the Order's entities to send students to complete their training at the EBAF and exhort them to collaborate in the formation of friars to contribute to the teaching of the Bible, archaeology, and other tasks related to their mission.

245. [COMMISSION] We commission the Master of the Order, provincials, the Director of EBAF, and the Socius for

the Intellectual Life to identify two brothers before the next general chapter to begin biblical and archaeological studies, with a view to collaborating with EBAF. (cf. ACG 2022 Tultenango 274)

Leonine Commission

246. [ACT OF THANKSGIVING] We thank the members of the Leonine Commission for sending the Master of the Order their editorial work plan for the coming years and encourage them to move forward with its implementation. (cf. ACG 2022 Tultenango 283. We also encourage them to continue collaborating with the Order's institutional entities and study centers. (cf. ACG 2022 Tultenango 282)

Activities under the Supervision of the Master of the Order

OPTIC

247. [ACT OF THANKSGIVING] We thank the Director of OPTIC and his team for submitting their activity report, especially regarding the topic of Artificial Intelligence, and we encourage them to continue their work in collaboration with Dominican universities and other institutions.

248. [COMMISSION] We commission the Master of the Order to renew OPTIC's declaration as an activity under the supervision of the Master of the Order for three years. (cf. ACG 2019 Biên Hoà 372)

Center for Dialogue with Cultures and Religions in Asia

249. [ACT OF THANKSGIVING] We thank the Director of the Center for Dialogue of Cultures and Religions in Asia and the Dean of the UST Faculty of Theology for the activities carried out over the years. We encourage them, in coordination with the Asia-Pacific Partner and the Regional Coordinator of the

Regents of Studies, to develop activities in the various provinces of the region.

250. [COMMISSION] We commission the Master of the Order to renew the declaration of the Center's collaborative activity as an activity under the supervision of the Master of the Order for three years. (cf. ACG 2019 Biên Hoà 375)

Institute for Dialogue with Cultures and Religions in Africa

251. [DECLARATION] We appreciate the steps taken by the Institute for Dialogue with Cultures and Religions in Africa to approve its statutes within the framework of the *Dominican University* of Ibadan. We encourage the Director, in coordination with the Socius for Africa and IAOP Partner for Africa and the Socius for the Intellectual Life of IAOP, to organize activities in the various provinces of the region.

252. [COMMISSION] We commission the Master of the Order to renew the declaration of the Institute's collaborative activity as an activity under the supervision of the Master of the Order for three years. (cf. ACG 2019 Biên Hoà 378)

Facultad de San Esteban de Salamanca

253. [COMMISSION] We commission the Master of the Order to declare the collaborative activity of the faculty (or of the future institute, cf. ACG 2022 Tultenango 296) of San Esteban of Salamanca, dedicated to research and teaching on the School of Salamanca and Dominican theology and open to collaboration with the entire Order, as an activity under the supervision of the Master of the Order for three years.

254. [EXHORTATION] We exhort provincials and regents of studies to consider sending friars to study and teach at the faculty (or future institute) of San Esteban of Salamanca.

DOMUNI Universitas

255. [COMMISSION] We welcome the request of the provincials of France and Toulouse to clarify the relationship between DOMUNI Universitas and the Order. We commission the Master of the Order, the provincials of France and Toulouse, and the leaders of DOMUNI Universitas to advance this clarification and its corresponding implementation, defining the roles and responsibilities of the parties involved.

Network of Universities of the Order (NUOP-RUOP)

256. [COMMISSION] We commission the Master of the Order, the Socii for Intellectual and Apostolic Life, and the rectors of Dominican universities and academic institutions with the implementation of the Order's network of universities and academic institutions (NUOP-RUOP) through a program aimed at sharing best practices, forms of academic collaboration, and common activities. (cf. ACG 2022 Tultenango 290) This program must be presented to the General Curia within the next six months. A report on its activities must be presented to the next General Chapter.

Network for Dialogue with Cultures and Religions in the Order

257. [COMMISSION] We commission the leaders of the Dominican centers working in the field of dialogue with cultures and religions (IDEO, Cairo; DOSTI, Istanbul; Institute for Dialogue with Cultures and Religions in Asia - UST, Manila; Institute for Dialogue with Cultures and

Religions in Africa - Dominican University, Ibadan; Institute for Interreligious Relations - PUST) to establish, in dialogue with the Socii for Intellectual Life and Apostolic Life, a plan of activities for the next three years. (cf. ACG 2022 Tultenango 291)

Artificial Intelligence

258. [COMMISSION] We commission the Master of the Order to form a study group in connection with, but not limited to, OPTIC to reflect on the challenges and opportunities of emerging technologies—including Artificial Intelligence—on our consecrated lives, preaching, and institutions, taking into consideration the Vatican document *Antiqua et Nova* (Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith and Dicastery for Culture and Education, *Antiqua et Nova. Note on the Relationship Between Artificial Intelligence and Human Intelligence*, January 14, 2025). This study should consider the impact of these new technologies on our mission to preach the truth, provide ethical guidance, and promote the dignity of the human person called to live the life of grace.

E. Collaboration

259. [CONGRATULATIONS] We celebrate the many ongoing collaborations across the Order in formation, intellectual life, and pastoral outreach. This has enriched and synergized our fraternal life, formation, and ministry in many provinces. (ACG 2019 Biên Hoà 330; ACG 2022 Tultenango 246)

260. [DECLARATION] Yet it must be acknowledged that in the last 60 years the Order has halved in number, financial resources are scarce, and a lack of appropriately skilled brethren for specific tasks. Certain important missions,

centers of study, and formation will decline if we fail to cooperate. We recognize, however, that fears persist which impede collaboration:

- a) Fear of losing people: brothers in formation sometimes have bad experiences in other provinces; fear that if a brother goes to another institution within the Order he might be lost forever.
- b) Fear of undermining our witness: young people attract young people; if all a province's young people are formed outside of their province, their province loses a certain visibility among the youth; fear of a brain drain or a hemorrhaging of skills to another entity within the Order that diminishes a province's capability to carry out its mission.

261. [COMMENDATION] Because of the importance of collaboration, we commend the following practices:

- a) **Memorandum of Understanding:** which clarifies the job description and specifies the duration of the mandate, mechanisms for evaluation, review, and renewal.
- b) **Mutual Interest:** both sides in a collaboration should strive to recognize and meet the other's legitimate needs and concerns.
- c) **Shared Responsibility:** both sides in a collaboration should be alert to the needs of a brother assigned outside of his province and agree on a protocol of care for the brother. Open communication, regular meetings, and visits are a necessary way of building trust and understanding,

agreeing on expectations, and fostering a shared sense of responsibility and personal accountability.

262. [COMMISSION] We commission the Master of the Order and his socii to identify specialization shortages within the Order (including, for example, canon lawyers, fundraisers, scholars), to identify and nurture young talent in these areas, and to work with provincials to foster long-range planning and the sustainability of our institutions. (cf. ACG 2022 Tultenango 229)

263. [EXHORTATION] We exhort the Order's varied centers of study and other entities to collaborate, especially on the question of fundraising and scholarships. Raising funds for scholarships for brethren engaged in complementary studies is living out our mendicancy and an urgent priority. Such scholarships ensure that our brothers can access elite-level education. Such investment strengthens the viability of the teaching institutions that welcome our students. By working together in this way, we honor our tradition of shared responsibility and ensure that our preaching remains grounded in the highest levels of theological and intellectual excellence.

264. [COMMISSION] We commission the regional socii to communicate the challenges of growing entities to the wider Order so that obstacles such as financial resources, inadequate buildings, and a lack of formators do not impede the growth of the Order in their regions.

F. Fundraising

265. [DECLARATION] The living out of our mendicancy today involves a serious commitment to fundraising. Without adequate financial backing, our ability to be faithful to the preaching mission is greatly diminished. Financial constraints currently limit the number of vocations accepted by the Order in some regions. Access to higher studies is similarly restricted by a lack of scholarships. There is an urgent need for entities and institutions in the Order to collaborate on fundraising.

266. [EXHORTATION] A culture of fundraising can help us to live our consecrated lives in a more authentic way, as it requires us to grow in humility and demands of us an openness to accountability and change. It is closely related to our willingness to improve.

267. [COMMISSION] The key to effective fundraising is subsidiarity. Each entity and institution must take responsibility for encouraging an increase in its funding. However, there is a role for the General Curia in assisting these efforts. Therefore, we commission the Master of the Order to establish a dedicated office or team for fundraising in the General Curia:

- a) To support fragile entities in their efforts to raise funds for formation.
- b) To assist and encourage institutions and projects under the direct care of the Master in their fundraising efforts.
- c) To assist entities in their fundraising efforts by networking interested parties, disseminating promotional material, signposting to resources, and facilitating training.

- d) To fund scholarships for the brethren's complementary studies.
- e) To collaborate with the Promoter of Communications, the Socius for Apostolic Life, and regional socii in the development of high-quality promotional materials and practices.
- f) To support other works of the Order according to the judgment of the Master.

268. [DECLARATION] Effective fundraising aligns closely with vocation promotion, as both require a clear articulation of the value of our way of life and the importance of our preaching.

CHAPTER VIII

Government and Economy

A. Government

Authentically Dominican Government and the Common Good

269. [DECLARATION] We declare that the “*community government in its own way*” [cf. LCO 1 § VII] is fundamental to Dominican spirituality and the necessary basis for the preaching of the Gospel. It is a unique heritage in the Church, lived during eight centuries. The Order of Preachers, according to the sending of our Lord “ahead of him in pairs” (Lk 10: 1), has made a joint journey since the first chapter called by Saint Dominic, for which it has much to offer to a Church that today wants to live synodally.

In the context of a crisis of diverse abuses in the Church and beyond, our Order has the responsibility to promote healthy, transparent, and balanced forms of exercised governance.

270. [ADMONITION] We remind all friars in the service of governance that they be concerned before all else for the common good, the good of each of the friars, and the apostolic mission of the Order. (cf. LCO 299-300; 339) The exercise of an office is a service and a giving of oneself in favor of the community and the preaching of the Gospel. It should never be considered as a source of personal benefits.

271. [EXHORTATION] We observe a decreasing availability on the part of friars to assume responsibilities as superiors. We are aware that this is due, among other reasons, to an increase in expectations (often unrealistic) of brothers towards their superiors, as well as an increase in administrative requirements in many regions of the world. We exhort the friars to be willing to serve in the governmental exercise in our Order.

272. [ACT OF THANKSGIVING] We express our gratitude to all the superiors of the Order: to the Master of the Order, to provincials and to local superiors, for assuming this generous service in favor of the brothers and the mission of the Order. We also thank the members of the General Curia for their support of the Master of the Order in fulfilling his mission.

273. [COMMISSION] We are aware of the value of Dominican government, of its relevance in the ecclesial context and world of today, as well as of the need to train brothers for this service. We commission provincial promoters of permanent formation to organize, before the end of the year 2026, meetings for priors and superiors on the Dominican way of exercising government.

274. [EXHORTATION] We exhort priors provincial in their regional meetings to analyze the reasons for the departure of brothers from the Order in their region after solemn profession, to help provinces in the elaboration of permanent formation programs.

Accompaniment in Government

275. [COMMISSION] Considering that in the last 15 years the Order has undergone—and continues to undergo—intense

restructuring processes (the suppression of general vicariates, the establishment of provincial vicariates, the reduction of provinces to vicariates, the merger of provinces, and the creation of new provinces), we commission the Master of the Order to carry out an evaluation of these processes, the results of which must be presented to the General Chapter in 2028.

This evaluation should be based on at least the following questions:

- whether authentically Dominican life and mission, government, and formation are guaranteed in the newly established entities;
- whether adequate mechanisms for collaboration between the prior provincial and the vicar provincial have been established in each entity;
- whether effective mechanisms exist for support from the province to the respective provincial vicariate;
- whether a review of the assignment of certain vicariates to their respective provinces is necessary.

We also commission that the assessment include:

- a list of entities that, in the short or medium term, should be considered for restructuring processes; (LCO 28, 29)
- and a proposal for steps or guidelines to be followed when carrying out such processes in the future.

Provinces, Vice-Provinces and Vicariates not Fulfilling the Conditions of the LCO (cf. BH 278-279; T 380-381)

276. [ORDINATION] We ordain that, if they have not already done so, provinces that do not fulfil the requirements of LCO 253 § I or 257, 1° evaluate their situation and, within one year after the promulgation of these Acts, submit a report to the Master of the Order with concrete proposals for their future

development or restructuring. Provinces that in the next five years risk facing a similar lack of fulfilment of these requirements must follow the same procedure.

277. [ORDINATION] We ordain that where a provincial vicariate does not fulfil the requirements of LCO 384 § I, the prior provincial, with his council and after consulting the brothers of the vicariate, evaluate its situation and produce a report with concrete proposals for its future development or restructuring to be submitted to the next provincial chapter. Provinces with a provincial vicariate that in the next five years risk facing a similar lack of fulfilment of these requirements must follow the same procedure. A clear statement will be part of the acts of the provincial chapter.

278. [COMMISSION] We commission the Master of the Order to carry out an evaluation of the solidarity mechanisms among the Order's provinces (solidarity in the area of material and human resources) and to present his conclusions at the General Chapter in 2028.

The objective of this evaluation is to verify whether, in the new and other fragile entities of the Order, authentic Dominican government, life, mission, and formation are effectively guaranteed.

279. [COMMENDATION] In relation to the delays in carrying out canonical visits caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and travel restrictions, we recommend that the Master of the Order, as he deems most appropriate, carry out a second round of canonical visits through his *socii* or delegates. (LCO 398 § 2)

280. [ORDINATION] We ordain (if not already done) that the mission of the Provincial Promoter of Justice, Peace, and Care for Creation, to whom the provincial chapter may assign an alternative title, be part of the offices to be filled by the provincial chapter. The chapter must ensure that the appointed friar has the required competencies and availability for this office and that he is given the necessary resources to carry out his mandate. (cf. ACG 2022 Tultenango 102)

The Dominican Family

Recognition of groups as part of the Dominican Family

281. [DECLARATION] The fundamental constitution of the Order states that the Dominican Family is made up of friars, nuns, sisters, members of secular institutes, and of the priestly and lay fraternities of St Dominic (cf. LCO 1 § IX). Besides these branches of our Dominican Family, there exist other associations connected with the Order and sharing in some manner in the Dominican charism (cf. LCO 152). These include, among others, the confraternities entrusted to the Order (cf. LCO, appendix 4) and the various groups making up the International Dominican Youth Movement.

Previous General Chapters have indicated that new groups may be recognized as belonging to the Dominican Family. This recognition may be granted not only by a General Chapter or the Master of the Order, but also by provincial chapters, by priors provincial with their councils (cf. ACG 1986 Ávila 89), and by prioresses general of institutes of sisters aggregated to the Order. (cf. ACG 1998 Bologna 173)

Likewise, previous General Chapters have indicated basic criteria for the evaluation of new groups before they are

recognized as part of the Dominican Family. (cf. in particular ACG 1998 Bologna 177) We reaffirm these criteria for evaluation of new groups, and emphasize in particular the need for a process of collegial discernment, including the different branches of the family through the structures established in various countries and regions. (cf. ACG 1998 Bologna 177, 7°)

Groups which are part of the Dominican Family have their own proper autonomy, while remaining in relation to other branches of the family and subject to the vigilance of the competent ecclesiastical authority (cf. CIC 305). In accordance with LCO 153 and CIC 304 § 1, the structure and governance of each group are determined by its own statutes in such a way that the exercise of authority fosters the unity of our charism.

282. [ORDINATION] We ordain that, for a group to be recognized as part of the Dominican Family, its statutes must contain the following elements:

- a) a clear statement of its canonical nature, most likely as a private or public association of the faithful;
- b) in the case of a private association, a clear indication of the ecclesiastical authority, if any, which has recognized it, reviewed or approved its statutes, has formally praised or commended it, or has granted it juridical personality (cf. CIC 299, 322);
- c) in the case of a public association, a clear indication of the ecclesiastical authority which erected it and approved its statutes, and to which it is subject (cf. CIC 312);
- d) in the case where superiors of the friars or other branches of the Dominican Family have any responsibility towards

the group, a clear indication of what this responsibility entails;

- e) in the case of a lay group, explicit acceptance of the Fundamental Constitution of the Dominican Laity found in nn. 1-7 of the Rule of the Lay Fraternities of St Dominic (cf. ACG 1986 Ávila 85B, 87);
- f) a commitment to prayer, study, community, and preaching in the Dominican tradition (cf. ACG 1998 Bologna 176-177);
- g) a participative form of governance in accordance with the Dominican tradition (cf. ACG 1998 Bologna 177, 3°);
- h) a commitment to fraternal communion in the Dominican Family.

283. [PETITION] We ask those groups already recognized as part of the Dominican Family to ensure that their statutes comply with these requirements.

284. [DECLARATION] We declare that groups which do not comply with these requirements within three years of the promulgation of these Acts are no longer to be considered recognized as part of the Dominican Family. Should the need arise, the authority competent to recognize a group as part of the Dominican Family may declare that a particular group is no longer so recognized.

285. [ADMONITION] We remind superiors of the Order that they do not have the authority to recognize or erect new associations of the faithful in the name of the Church, except in those cases when this faculty has been granted by apostolic privilege. (cf. CIC 312) Such a privilege exists in the cases of the Lay and Priestly Fraternities of St Dominic (cf. *Rule of the Lay Fraternities*, 20(a); *Rule of the Priestly Fraternities*, 16 § 1),

and for branches of the various confraternities associated with the Order (cf. LCO appendix 4), but not for other kinds of associations.

Admission of former friars to Lay or Priestly Fraternities

286. [ADMONITION] While it remains possible for a former friar of our Order to be admitted to a Lay or Priestly Fraternity of St Dominic (cf. ACG 1980 Walberberg 95; ACG 1986 Ávila 90) as appropriate, we remind those responsible that the former friar's canonical situation must first be clarified and, if necessary, regularized. He must fully embrace his new canonical status and avoid any situations that might lead to confusion or scandal.

Appointment of religious assistants to Lay Fraternities

287. [ADMONITION] We recall that in accordance with n. 21(c) of the Rule of the Lay Fraternities of St Dominic, the religious assistant of a fraternity is appointed by the prior provincial, having heard the provincial promoter and the council of the fraternity. While the local Ordinary may be consulted and/or informed about the appointment of the religious assistant, the appointment itself is reserved to the competent authority of our Order *ad validitatem* (cf. CIC 124 § 1).

288. [EXHORTATION] We exhort the provincial councils of the lay fraternities of Saint Dominic that have not yet done so to review their provincial directories in light of the Rule and the General Declarations promulgated by the Master of the Order on March 9, 2019. It is the responsibility of the Master of the Order, after consulting the Prior Provincial with his council, to approve these directories (cf. *General Declarations* 2019, 10 § I).

289. [COMMENDATION] We recommend that the update of the provincial directories of the lay fraternities provide that the election of the president and provincial councilors require the confirmation of the prior provincial.

290. [COMMISSION] We commission the provincials, vice-provincials, and vicar provincials to engage in a dialogue at their regional meetings, with the participation of the Master of the Order and/or regional socii, on authentically Dominican governance, identifying specific themes and aspects.

291. [COMMISSION] We commission the Master of the Order to include the themes on the governance of the Order identified at the regional meetings in the organization and carrying out of the 2028 General Chapter.

292. [EXHORTATION] We exhort the Master of the Order to conduct a survey within the Order on the governance of the Order and to present its results at the 2028 General Chapter. The Master should consult with the provincials during the 2026 regional meetings on the form and specific themes of this survey.

293. [COMMISSION] We commission the Master of the Order, together with the organizing commission of the next General Chapter of 2028, to study, in consultation with the provincials, how to optimize the time and work of the General Chapter, and the way in which said chapter is developed and the expectations that the Order has in this regard.

B. Economy

294. [ADMONITION] We remind the brothers that the spirit of apostolic poverty present at the beginnings of the Order must also animate us, according to ways adapted to different times and regions. This poverty is manifest and becomes significant for us and for today's world by a proper administration, by all the friars, of the temporal goods of the convent, of the province, and of the entire Order. (LCO 30; 537; 576-577) The acquisition of personal property, or similar practices, is incompatible with our spirituality and legislation.

Transparency and Solidarity

295. [COMMISSION] We commission the Master of the Order to evaluate the economic model of the General Curia, review the criteria for contribution to the budget of the General Curia (Cfr. ACG 2007 Bogotá 261), and prepare a report, which will be presented at the General Chapter of 2028.

296. [ORDINATION] We ordain that the Syndic of the Order continue organizing meetings across regions with the provincial syndics. (ACG 2019 Biên Hòa 243, ACG 2022 Tultenango 329)

297. [ADMONITION] In continuity with the Chapters of Biên Hòa (Culture of Transparency, ACG 2019 Biên Hòa 221-227) and Tultenango (Transparency and Responsibility, ACG 2022 Tultenango 311-313), we insist on the mechanisms that are meant to guarantee the transparency and integrity of the economic and financial information of our entities.

298. [ORDINATION] We ordain the provinces and vice-provinces of the Order to submit their accounts and financial

reports to external audits in accordance with ecclesiastical legislation, our Constitutions (LCO 550), and their own financial statutes, as well as civil law, if it exists. The results of these audits will be sent to the General Curia along with the financial report.

299. [ORDINATION] We ordain the provinces and vice-provinces of the Order to establish, within the framework of their economic statutes, an intervention protocol in the case of economic crimes and abuses. (cf. ACG 2022 Tultenango 377)

Economic Mismanagement (cf. BH 227; T 377)

300. [ORDINATION] Every apostolic work proper to the Order, even one initiated by a single friar, is a work of the Order. As such, the goods of that apostolic work are considered ecclesiastical goods as they properly belong to a public juridic person and are therefore subject to the requirements of Book V of the *Code of Canon Law*, regardless of any separate civil juridic status of the work. In the case of economic mismanagement of such a work, we ordain that the prior provincial warn the brother responsible in writing, indicating a reasonable period of time in which the mismanagement must be corrected, which may not be more than one year. If the mismanagement is not corrected within the time period, the brother shall be removed from the management of the work, without prejudice to the imposition of applicable penal remedies for delicts which may have been committed (e.g., CIC 1376).

301. [COMMISSION] We commission the priors provincial to organize, within six months of the approval of the intervention protocol, a training and refresher course for priors, superiors, and all friars and lay people who perform

functions related to the management of temporal goods. We also commission the Syndic of the Order to offer this training to the convents and institutions under the jurisdiction of the Master of the Order.

Economic Administration

302. [ORDINATION] We ordain that no economic subsidy be paid to that institution or convent under the jurisdiction of the Master of the Order whose financial report has not been approved by the General Council of the Order for several months following the completion of the current year. (Biên Hòa 2019 n. 226, Tultenango 2022 n. 319)

303. [ORDINATION] We ordain the Syndic of the Order to establish, for accounting purposes, a single fund for solidarity called: “Solidarity Fund of the Order”, with the sum of the existing funds: Solidarity, Saint Dominic, and Initial Formation.

304. [ORDINATION] We ordain that, within a year, the Council of Spem Miram reformulate and present the General Council for its approval a single Statute of Solidarity with its procedures. To that end, it should consider the model of the current ones, prioritizing initial formation of the economically weakest provinces, scholarships for complementary and additional studies, and projects for the mission of the Order.

305. [ORDINATION] We ordain that the limit of expenses that the Master of the Order can authorize, without the approval of his Council, be 100,000 euros.

306. [COMMENDATION] We recognize that several provinces of the Order bear a considerable financial burden

related to the payment of financial compensation to victims of sexual abuse, as well as the associated legal costs. We recommend that the provinces set aside a provision in their budgets to cover compensation to victims of abuse, as well as to address other unforeseen and difficult situations.

307. [COMMISSION] We commission the Master of the Order to address the particular situations of provinces with serious and verifiable economic problems, as a consequence of compensation to victims of abuse or other unforeseen situations, in order to help find appropriate solutions; this may include a reduction in the contribution of said province or vice-province to the annual budget of the General Curia.

Financial and Economic Reports

308. [DECLARATION] We declare that the Syndic of the Order, fr. Juan Luis Mediavilla García OP, in accordance with LCO 569, presented to the General Chapter the economic administration report of the General Curia corresponding to the years 2022, 2023 and 2024. This report includes economic reports from convents and institutions under the jurisdiction of the Master of the Order.

309. [DECLARATION] We declare that the Syndic of the Order, fr. Juan Luis Mediavilla García OP, presented to the General Chapter the financial state of the various funds managed by the General Curia (Master's Fund, Spem Miram Funds, Nuns' Fund, Leonine Commission Fund and other smaller funds).

Contributions and Subsidies

310. [ORDINATION] We ordain that the contribution of each province and vice-province to the annual budget of the

General Curia be determined in accordance with the norms of the General Chapter of Bogotá n. 261 (ACG 2007 Bogotá 261), including deductions for medical and health expenses, institutional training expenses and donations to other entities of the Order that are not under its jurisdiction (excluding the annual contribution to the budget of the General Curia).

311. [ORDINATION] We ordain that the contribution of the provinces and vice-provinces to the annual budget of the General Curia not be less than 3,000 euros or more than 10% of the Curia's budget (ACG 2019 Biên Hòa 250, ACG 2022 Tultenango 325).

312. [ORDINATION] We ordain that the contributions of the convents and other institutions under the immediate jurisdiction of the Master of the Order to the annual budget of the General Curia be 6% of their gross income (ACG 2019 Biên Hòa 252, ACG 2022 Tultenango 327).

313. [ORDINATION] We ordain that the Syndic of the Order include in the budget of the General Curia an annual subsidy to the following institutions under the immediate jurisdiction of the Master of the Order:

- I. University of Santo Tomás (Angelicum): 200,000 euros, of which 150,000 euros will be allocated to ordinary operating expenses and 50,000 euros to complement salaries for teaching done by brothers assigned *simpliciter* to the Convent of Sts. Dominic and Sixtus;
- II. École biblique et archéologique: 70,000 euros to support the research activities of the brothers who teach at the École biblique;
- III. Leonina Commission: up to 180,000 euros;
- IV. Historical Institute: up to 150,000 euros.

Others:

V. Headquarters of Justice and Peace before the UN: up to 180,000 euros

Each institution that receives a subsidy from the General Curia will be required to provide accounts of its expenses. This report will be made available to all capitulars at the next General Chapter.

314. [ORDINATION] We ordain the Syndic of the Order that, until the next General Chapter, he not include in the annual budget of the Curia the subsidies assigned to the regions because these have accumulated resources of their own. For the African Region, we ordain that he include €50,000 for the first year and €150,000 for each of the two successive years. At the same time, we ask the Syndic of the Order to submit to the Master of the Order a report before the end of the year that will help to definitively clarify the origin and purpose of the fund called "24213 IAOP Fund."

315. [ORDINATION] We ordain that the cost of the General Chapter be distributed equitably and proportionally among the provinces. All administrative costs must be paid by the provinces and in the same proportion as the contribution to the budget of the General Curia for the year 2025. Travel expenses will be divided equally between all capitulars, excluding the host province. Each delegate must pay the cost *per diem*.

CHAPTER IX

On the Book of Constitutions and Ordinations

Prior Notes

316. For a clearer presentation of changes to the LCO made in the Chapter, we will proceed in a similar way, just as it has already been done in the Acts of previous General Chapters.

The numbering of the LCO is retained. For every number, the following symbols indicate whether the text has been approved for the first, second, or third time:

- ★★★ constitution confirmed (by three chapters)
- ★★ constitution approved (by two chapters)
- ★ constitution initiated (by one chapter)

(NB: A constitution will be marked with ☼ or ☼☼ if it has been initiated or approved “with ordination”.)

- ◆◆◆ ordination definitively added to the LCO
- ◆◆ ordination voted for the second time, abrogating the previous ordination
- ◆ ordination accepted for the first time

[A] text abrogated

New texts are printed in *italics*.

Nonetheless, since a good interpretation of the changes that have been made requires knowledge of the prior text and its history, references are given for the preceding chapters with the following abbreviations:

B = Bologna, 2016

BH = Biên Hòa, 2019

T = Tultenango, 2022

This chapter has altered a certain number of texts in a technical way without changing the substance of the law. The abbreviation “*Techn.*” will indicate changes that have been made to our laws to conform them to the CIC, to harmonize the texts with other numbers in the LCO, or where there has been a simple editorial change.

Whatever is said in our legislation with respect to convents applies also to houses unless expressly noted otherwise (LCO 260 § II).

In accord with LCO 252-256, when our legislation uses the word “*province*”, this applies likewise to vice-provinces.

317. LCO 45 § I (T 338)

◆◆ 45. Ord. — § I. — A brother who is going to spend some time in the territory of another province should notify the relevant prior provincial in advance, with due regard for n. 137. *However, in order lawfully to extend the length of stay beyond three months, the permission of said prior provincial is required.*

318. LCO 107 (BH 113 T 371)

◆◆◆ 107. Ord — § I. — The province or vicariate... [*as in the text*]

§ II. — *In order to sustain the culture of mobility and vitality of the province’s ministries, the prior provincial, together with his council,*

must prepare a plan of succession for the province's apostolates, which is to be reviewed every four years.

319. LCO 165 § II (BH 390 T 341)

◆◆◆ 165. Ord. — § II. — *Every province should appoint a promoter of vocations for whom, insofar as this is possible, this is to be his primary task.*

§ III. Everyone should remember, however...[as in the text]

320. LCO 199 § I (T 342)

★★ 199. Const. — § I. — Simple profession is to be made according to this formula:

“I, brother N.N. make profession and promise obedience to God, to blessed Mary, and to blessed Dominic, and to you, brother N.N., Master of the Order of ~~Friars~~ Preachers and to your successors (or: to you, brother N.N., prior provincial of the province of...; or: delegated...; in place of brother N.N. Master of the Order of ~~Friars~~ Preachers and his successors), according to the rule of blessed Augustine and the institutions of the Friars Preachers, that I will be obedient to you and to your successors for three years (or: for one year).”

321. LCO 253 § I

★ 253. Const. — § I. — A province consists of a least three convents, two of which must have at least eight voters *assigned and habitually dwelling there*. Furthermore, each province must have at least forty voters.

322. LCO 297-ter

◆ 297-ter. Ord. — *Vocals are not easily to abstain from casting a determined vote, especially regarding admission to profession, but only for a just cause that prevents them from forming a judgement.*

323. LCO 369 § I

◆ 369. Ord. — § I. — *Ordinarily, the chairman and the councilors must be present in person at the place where the council meeting is held. In exceptional and more urgent cases, however, the council meeting may be held by electronic means, provided that a genuine dialogue between the participants is possible and that votes remain faithful, secure, and ordinarily secret, observing the provisions of n. 455-ter § IV, 3° and 4°. If an electronic meeting is not possible either, when more are unable to be present, it suffices that at least two councilors be present with the chairman.*

§ II. — *When it comes to matters relating to study... [as in the text]*

324. LCO 375 (T 346)

◆◆ 375. Ord. — § I. — *Two years after a prior provincial has been confirmed in office, ~~At the first council~~ at the time of the next meeting of the provincial council, the prior provincial must summon to a larger council, in addition to the members of the provincial council, the vicars provincial and conventual priors in the strict sense; ~~unless the provincial chapter has determined otherwise regarding regional priors, vicars provincial, and priors in remote regions~~ the statute of the province can determine whether vicars provincial and priors from remote regions are to be summoned, as well as designate others who, as the case may be, are to be summoned.*

§ II. — *At this larger council meeting, which may exercise only a consultative vote, all topics are to be dealt with that seem to be useful for the good of the province; first of all, there shall be a review of whether the ordinations and exhortations of the last provincial chapter and general chapter have been put into practice.*

325. LCO 382 (BH 400 T 347)

◆◆◆ 382. Ord. — The prior provincial shall have a secret archive in which are kept secret documents, the import of which he is bound to convey to his successor. These documents shall be burned *seventy years* after the death of the brothers mentioned in them, provided this can be done without prejudice to those who are still alive, *taking into account the requirements of civil law.*

326. LCO 417 § IV (cf. ACG 1998, 200; B 337; BH 435; T 368)

◆◆◆ 417. Ord. — § IV. — *In the General Chapter, in addition to Latin, the languages mentioned in n. 438-quater can be used.*

327. LCO 438-quater (cf. ACG 1998, 200; B 337; BH 435; T 368)

◆◆◆ 438-quater. Ord. — *Documents published in the vernacular by the General Curia for the entire Order must be translated into English, French, and Spanish.*

328. LCO 443 § II (T 353)

★★ 443. Const. — § II. — When it is a question of the election of superiors, in order for one to be elected ~~or postulated~~, it is also required:

1° that he be a priest;

2° that he be solemnly professed for three years;

3° that he have the Order's approval for hearing confessions.

329. LCO 481 § III (T 360)

◆◆ 481. Ord. — § III. — *If the prior provincial does not appoint a vicar provincial within a month of his being informed that it falls to him to do so, the right of providing for a vicar provincial devolves to the Master of the Order.*

330. LCO 571 (BH 224 T 317)

◆◆◆ 571. Ord. — Superiors of convents under the immediate jurisdiction of the Master of the Order, and also moderators of institutes under his immediate jurisdiction, must send accurate reports approved by their respective councils *and duly reviewed by an external expert* to the Master of the Order as set out above in nn. 563 and 565.

331. LCO 589 (BH 225 T 318)

◆◆◆ 589. Ord. — § I. – What has been said regarding the construction of buildings applies, with due adaptations, to restoration and major repairs, as well as to other matters of greater importance.

§ II. – *The General Curia and each of the institutes under the immediate jurisdiction of the Master of the Order, which possess real estate, must include in the annual report an adequate provision for carrying out necessary renovation works in the future.*

332. LCO 601 (T 363)

◆◆ 601. Ord. When brothers have an official position or work permanently in institutions, projects, or other establishments of this kind which do not belong to convents or provinces of the Order, the prior provincial should ensure that a contract be drawn up in which all the conditions are clearly set out. *Furthermore, when the brother has an official position in the territory of another province, the prior provincial of the place must be informed of the contract.*

Authentic Interpretations

333. [DECLARATION] In accordance with LCO 290, we confirm the declaration made by the General Chapter of Biên Hòa, n. 443, and approved by the General Chapter of Tultenango, n. 382, namely that the members of the General

Council, directly assigned under the immediate jurisdiction of the Master, have active and passive voice in the election of the delegates mentioned in LCO 407 § I, 8°, LCO 408, 6° and LCO 409, 6°. This interpretation has now been approved by three chapters and has the force of a constitution.

334. [DECLARATION] We declare that the expression "*ordinationes superiorum et eorumque vices gerentium*" in LCO 287, in the context of the article entitled "*de legum Ordinis promulgatione, duratione, interpretatione et dispensatione*", refers to ordinations of superiors with a general character, binding the members of a community capable of receiving a law. Such ordinations cease when the superior in question leaves office, without prejudice to LCO 284 and 288.

In accordance with canon 46, a singular administrative act of a superior of the Order remains in force even after the authority of the one who placed it has expired, unless the law expressly provides otherwise, and in particular without prejudice to LCO 296 in the case of a formal precept.

Online Publication of the LCO (ACG 2007 Trogir 241; B 339; BH 434; T 364)

335. [ORDINATION] We ordain that modifications to the LCO made by this chapter appear on the Order's website by the end of the calendar year 2025.

Final Declaration

336. [ORDINATION] In order to avoid any ambiguity, we declare that the ordinations of previous general chapters which have neither been renewed at this Chapter nor inserted

into LCO are no longer in force, either because they have been fulfilled or because we revoke them as no longer being necessary.

Location of Next General Chapter

337. [DECLARATION] We declare that the following General Chapter, which will be an elective chapter, will be celebrated in Bogotá, Colombia, in July or August of 2028. The exact date will be set later.

Suffrages for the Living

338. [ORDINATION] For Pope Leo XIV, Supreme Pastor of the Church and most benevolent benefactor of our Order, each province shall celebrate one Mass.

For fr. Gerard Francisco Timoner III, Master of the Order, each province shall celebrate one Mass.

For fr. Timothy Radcliffe, fr. Carlos A. Azpiroz Costa, and fr. Bruno Cadoré, ex-Masters of the Order, each province shall celebrate one Mass.

For the entire Episcopal Order, for the socii of the Master of the Order, for the Procurator General of the Order, for our benefactors and for the well-being of the entire Order of Preachers, each province shall celebrate one Mass.

Suffrages for the Dead

339. [ORDINATION] For the soul of Pope Francis, each province shall celebrate one Mass.

For the soul of Pope Benedict XVI, each province shall celebrate one Mass.

For the soul of fr. Damian Byrne, the most recently deceased Master of the Order, each province shall celebrate one Mass.

For the souls of the brothers and sisters of the Order who have died since the last General Chapter, each province should celebrate one Mass for them all together.

For the souls of all those who have died in war, or who have been victims of persecution because of their faith, each province shall celebrate one Mass.

When these prescribed suffrages for either the living or the dead are to be fulfilled, they should be announced publicly and in sufficient time, so that the brethren of the convent where the suffrages are to be fulfilled can participate in the Mass celebrated for these intentions.

Reading of the Acts

340. [ORDINATION] We ordain that the superiors of all provinces, convents and houses ensure that each brother receives at least an electronic copy of these Acts and that they read and dialogue about these in their respective communities within six months of their promulgation, and see to it that they be observed by all.

PRAYER

341. [DECLARATION]

During the General Chapter held in Kraków, the capitulars had the opportunity to personally meet Ukrainians who bear witness to the consequences of the war in their country. They prayed with them and thus feel particularly close to them.

Gathered in General Chapter, the Brothers express their deep closeness to every child, elderly person, woman, and man who face violence, armed conflict, and insecurity — whether in Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe or Latin America.

Aware that the war in Ukraine also has global repercussions, the members of the Chapter invite the entire Dominican family to join in the following prayer:

Lord, we pray to you with urgency for peace in the world.

We especially implore you for peace in Ukraine.

Nothing is impossible for you.

Help us bring an end to this war,

and above all, touch the hearts of those who have the power to stop it.




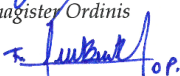
CAPITULUM GENERALE
ORDINIS PRÆDICATORUM
CRACOVIA 2025


Haec sunt acta capituli generalis provincialium in conventu SS. Trinitatis Cracoviæ (Polonia) a die XIX mensis Iulii ad diem VIII mensis Augusti a.D. MMXXV celebrati, quorum exemplaribus impressis ac sigillo curiae generalitiae munitis eadem fides adhiberi ac originali textui debet.

In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti.

Datum in Cracovia, in conventu SS. Trinitatis, die VIII mensis Augusti a.D. MMXXV.


fr. Gerard Francisco Timoner OP
magister Ordinis



fr. Franklin Buitrago Rojas, OP
prior provincialis Provinciæ S Ludovici Bertrandi de Colombia


fr. Christopher Paul Fadok, OP
prior provincialis Provinciæ SS Nominis Iesu in SFAS


fr. Damián Mačura, OP
prior provincialis Provinciæ Slovachiae


fr. Jakub Bluj, OP
secretarius generalis

fr. Olivier Catel, OP
actuarius


fr. Piotr Skibiński, OP
actuarius


Br. Piotr Skibiński

APPENDIX 1

Relatio on the State of the Order

Fr. Gerard Francisco Timoner III
Master of the Order
to the General Chapter of Krakow
2025

Prot. 50/22/487 Krakow 2025

The Call of the Jubilee

You shall count seven weeks of years (sabbath)... This year shall be a jubilee for you... each one shall return to his household... you shall not sow or reap the sprouts of the previous harvest, nor shall you gather the grapes from the vine that is unpruned. For it is a jubilee, and it shall be holy to you. (Leviticus 25:8-12)

1. The Order celebrates the General Chapter in Krakow within the Jubilee Year of the Lord 2025.

The book of Leviticus tells us that the Holy Year has two important objectives: *returning to one's family* and *entering into the Sabbath*. Thus, the Jubilee is first of all an invitation to "return" to the Lord (conversion and renewal); and, for us Dominicans, to "return" to the charism that Dominic received, to renew our commitment to preach the Gospel as Dominic did. The second invitation is to enter the Sabbath, to "rest in God." Paradoxically, the preaching of the Gospel is a demanding and interminable task from which we cannot "rest." What then is this rest? Jesus invites us: "Come to me,

all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will be refreshed.” (Mt 11:28-29) The jubilee “rest” is not a cessation of activity, but an experience of closeness and union with God, who shares with us his “yoke” or mission. It is the rest St. Augustine wrote about: *our heart is restless until it rests in God.*

Commemorating the General Chapter of Madonna dell’Arco

2. Last year, 2024, we commemorated the 50th anniversary of the General Chapter of Madonna dell’Arco, the chapter that confirmed the Constitution of the Order after the Second Vatican Council, which River Forest inchoated in 1968, and Tallaght approbated in 1971. The then Master of the Order, Aniceto Fernández, sadly noted in his *relatio* that the Order lost around 2,000 brothers from 1963 to 1974, i.e., there were 10,150 brothers in 1963, and at the time he wrote his report, there were 7,952 friars. Aware of the divisions and uncertainties in the church after the Second Vatican Council, the newly elected Master, Vincent de Couesnongle, called on the Order to have *courage for the future!*

3. The capitulars wrote a letter to the brothers and sisters of the Order regarding the “present-day problems (*de problematibus hodiernis*) which might affect the life and work of the Order”.

4. The world described by the capitulars fifty years ago seems dreadfully familiar to us: “a world marked by divisions and war....” Looking at the church then, they said: “The church must have an evangelical face. But we know how human frailty weighs it down! Regarding this, a very

important question arises for us: what kind of Church do we want? Do we want a powerful, rich, and strong church that resembles the powers of this world? Or do we want a servant-Church where the Spirit's action and the *charismata* with which He builds up the Christian faithful are not blocked or tarnished by the harshness of human institutions?" (ACG 1974, 253 II, 2)

5. Faced with these challenges, the capitulars affirmed that the Order will help build the Church through the charism received by Dominic: "We cannot be prophets of the Kingdom unless our preaching is both life and words. The **form of evangelical life** chosen by Dominic is *not an adjunct* of our apostolic mission; on the contrary, **it is an indispensable foundation**, without which our message would lack all credibility; *our form of life is in itself preaching*" (*forma vitae jam est in actu praedicatio*) (ACG 1974, 253 II, 3, emphasis mine). I believe that this affirmation should be the point of departure for the discussion of the recurring topics in our recent general chapters: the vocation of cooperator brothers, conventual structure, restructuring, "authentic Dominican formation," etc.

Dominican Life as Indispensable Foundation of our Apostolic Mission

6. The form of evangelical life chosen by Dominic is **an indispensable foundation, not an adjunct of our apostolic mission**. Dominican life has various constitutive elements or aspects: religious consecration, common fraternal life, intellectual life, apostolic life, etc. Given this, it seems odd that we sometimes feel the need to "balance" or "harmonize" life and mission, as if there could be a "Dominican mission" that is not rooted and nourished by the "Dominican life" with all

its integral elements. We seem to look at a “part” as though it were a “whole” in itself. Or, as if it is possible to choose only an aspect of Dominican life and set aside the other aspects - for instance, we sometimes hear some friars say: “The mission is important, and for the sake of the mission, we can do away with conventual structures;” or “I am a parish priest, so I must live in the parish rectory apart from the convent;” or, “I love preaching and teaching, but I would rather not live in community;” or “I love the monastic aspect of Dominican life, but I do not want to go out of the convent to teach, or preach, or minister to people,” etc. In one canonical visitation, an elderly friar who lives outside the convent for a long time told me, “I want to die a Dominican.” I replied, “I agree, but first, I want you to live as a Dominican!” We are *friars-preachers*, we are neither monks nor clerics regulars. Yet when we “choose” only one aspect of our Dominican life without the other constitutive elements, we seem to tend towards one or the other form of religious life.

7. Throughout the years, we found it challenging to define the life of a cooperator-brother; when in fact, “their” religious life is *the same Dominican religious life* that “we” all should live, including those who are ordained among us. When we say, “I am a *Dominican* priest,” that means *being* “Dominican” *qualifies* our priesthood, i.e., we are not clerics regulars or diocesan priests, etc. So, instead of endlessly discussing the cooperator-brotherhood, should we not rather discuss what “Dominican priesthood” means? Can one really say that I am authentically living my “Dominican priesthood” apart from the Dominican religious life that our cooperator brothers live, or apart from a religious community, or without the elements of Dominican religious life? What does it mean for a Dominican religious to be “*cooperator* of the episcopal

order" (*Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 2)? This does not mean that we should slacken in promoting vocations to the cooperator brotherhood; rather, we should continue to promote integrally the vocations to the Dominican religious life, wherein some are ordained and some are not.

8. Jesus asked two disciples who were following him, "What do you seek?" They answered, "Rabbi, where are you staying?" (Ποῦ μένεις John 1:38) We know that the disciples were not asking for Jesus' "address," the place where Jesus lived. The disciples were seekers, and they wanted to know not so much "where," but "how" Jesus lived, so that they could discover the meaning of their own lives, and live them according to Jesus' invitation, "Come and see." We know that the Greek μένω means "to remain, to abide," which in the New Testament expresses an abiding connection with Jesus.

9. We are in the Order because we followed the path of Dominic in responding to Jesus' call. We believe that Dominican life in its entirety, i.e., the integrity of all its elements (common life, study, preaching, evangelical counsels, etc.) corresponds to the life we seek. *What is important is Dominican life in its fullness, not walls and buildings*, said a Dominican nun who contemplated the impending closure of her monastery and, consequently, her transfer to another monastery.

10. The "theology of the jubilee year" as read in the Old Testament is complemented and completed by Jesus' messianic mandate in the New Testament. In the Gospel of Luke (4:16-21), integral to the inauguration of Jesus' public ministry is his return to His home in Nazareth to His custom

of “sabbath in the synagogue” and to his reading of the Scriptures and preaching.

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.

Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

11. Isaiah’s vision is fulfilled in Jesus’ messiahship and mission. In like manner, “Mission is primarily *who we are* and, secondarily, *what we do*.” Dominic asked Pope Honorius III to make a small but meaningful change in the Bull of 21 January 1217 i.e., to have the original word “*praedicantes* (persons who are preaching) replaced by the substantive *praedicatores*.”¹ Thus, our founder’s vision is realized in the preachers who formed his Order. Our mission is who we are (preachers), not primarily what we do (preaching). We are preachers even when we are old or sick and can no longer speak, we are preachers even when we are young and silenced by our shyness, we are preachers even when we are not ordained, etc. We incarnate preaching by our very lives. This is our mission, our being.

12. The instruction *The Pastoral Conversion of the Parish community in the Service of the Evangelizing Mission of the Church* published a few years ago by the Holy See affirms: “The contribution that consecrated men and women can bring to

¹ Vladimir Koudelka, *Dominic*, trans by Simon Tugwell (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1997) p. 9.

the *evangelizing mission* of the Parish [church] community is *derived firstly, from their 'being,' that is, from the witness of a radical following of Christ through the profession of the evangelical counsels*, and only secondly from their 'doing,' that is, from the works carried out in accordance with the charism of each Institute."² Thus, for us Dominicans, we fulfill the *propositum* of the Order, i.e., **preaching for the salvation of souls**, primarily by our fidelity to Dominican life (*being*)³ and secondarily, by the different works of preaching (*doing*), after all, *being* precedes *action* by nature ("*esse est prius natura quam agere*" S. Th. III, q., 34, a.2 ad 1um).

Vision and Priorities to Realize the *Propositum Ordinis*

13. The *propositum Ordinis* (LCO I and II), "preaching for the salvation of souls", remains unchanged, yet it is concretized in diverse ways in the living tradition of the Order through time and space, through the march of history and the expanse of geography. The preaching of Dominic with the innkeeper, the preaching of Thomas Aquinas in the university of Paris, the preaching of Fra Angelico in Florence, the preaching of Catherine of Siena in Italy, the preaching of Antonio Montesinos in Hispaniola, the preaching of Martin de Porres in Lima, etc. are concrete realizations of the same *propositum*, yet they are not exactly the same in terms of form and, sometimes, content. But all are directed to the same end: preaching for the salvation of souls. But how does "preaching

² Congregation for the Clergy, "The Pastoral Conversion of the Parish community in the Service of the Evangelising Mission of the Church" (29 June 2020), no. 84. Emphasis mine.

³ This recognition from the Holy See that *being* a religious, living the religious life, is the primary contribution of consecrated people to the evangelizing mission of the Church resonates with our tradition in calling the convent/community as "*sacra praedicatio*" (cf. LCO 100 § I.) and Madonna dell'Arco's affirmation: *forma vitae jam est in actu praedicatio* (ACG 1974, 253 II).

for the salvation of souls” look like in our time, in the different provinces and communities of the Order?

14. *Without a vision, the people will be lost!* (Proverbs 29:18) We trust in God’s *providence*; He provides (*pro-videre*) for our needs. But we are also called to participate in that providence i.e., to “foresee” the need and to envision the most appropriate response to such need. In this sense, to envision concretely how we intend to realize the *propositum Ordinis*, according to our concrete circumstances is to participate in God’s *providence*.

15. Certainly, we have a “sense” of a common **vision** and **priorities** of the Order and our Provinces, but often, we do not articulate them clearly so that all brothers know and feel they are truly working together for the realization of such vision and priorities. Thus, some brothers think that their province or some convents have no “culture of long-term planning,” or that they are simply in “maintenance mode.” The articulation of a vision, for example, “where we want the province to be in ten years,” is important because it will serve as a reference point in making decisions that, cumulatively, will bring about its realization. When a clearly articulated vision and priorities are lacking in our community projects, we miss the fundamental elements that give coherence to our communal task, we fail to grasp where we are going, and we lack the criteria to evaluate whether we are progressing or not.

16. The vision and priorities will help a province in the formation and complementary studies of the brothers who will carry out the vision and serve in the priorities of the province. Our vision and priorities should guide our

decisions in opening or closing a Dominican presence. At times, our decisions are influenced by opportunities that open up e.g., a bishop is friendly to us or there is a benefactor who will donate a property for the use of the Order etc. But would such a decision help us obtain our vision and stated priorities or simply be a distraction? Certainly, an important criterion in setting the priorities of a province is to discern and decide where the charism of the Order can serve better the needs of the Church (cf. LCO 106 § I).

Without a clearly articulated vision and priorities, we could fall into any of these tendencies:

- *“SWOTING”*: Identifying and responding to strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats without any reference to our identity and mission.
- *“TRENDING”*: Choosing projects based on whatever is trendy or popular.
- *“LOBBYING”*: Each friar advocating for his favorite project.
- *“ROUTINING”*: Doing simply more of the same without considering the need for change.
- *“ANCHORING”*: Being attached to the flagship programs of a grand past heritage.
- *“HERO-ING”*: Meeting the greatest needs and demands without taking into account charism, capabilities or resources.
- *“INFLUENCER-FOLLOWING”*: Doing whatever funders and authorities want the organization to do.”⁴

One begins with the *end* in view. “The end is last in the order of execution, yet it is first in the order of intention.” (ST.I-II, q.1, resp.1) A concise yet comprehensive vision and priorities

⁴ Christina Keng, “A Presentation on Pastoral Planning”, 2023.

should provide a clear direction or “roadmap” which provides a foundation for continuity even when there are changes in leadership, and serve as a basis for community projects and integrate them into a coherent “provincial community project”.

Dominican Mission *In Medio Ecclesiae*

17. The Order is at the service of the Church whose mission is “*to proclaim always and everywhere the Gospel of Jesus Christ.*” Yet sometimes we ask ourselves, should Dominicans be involved in parish ministry? Or take care of sanctuaries and shrines? Should we not be itinerant preachers, going to places where the Gospel is yet to be proclaimed? Or should we be stable professors in faculties and universities?

18. Br. Damian Byrne, 84th Master of the Order said: “I am more convinced than ever that the **Four Priorities of the Order** as enunciated at the General Chapter held at Quezon City (1977) and reiterated at subsequent chapters have a deep and unfolding significance for us. [...] Rooted in our heritage, these reflect the whole tradition of the Order. They are not just something conjured up at Quezon City.” True, the four priorities - **Evangelizing** culture through philosophical and theological investigations, **Catechizing** a de-Christianized world and a secularized Christianity, **Justice and Peace** for the integral liberation of humankind, using the new means of **Social Communication** for the preaching of the word of God - remain valid until today. After some years, the General Chapter of Avila (1986) identified **Five Frontiers of Evangelization**, namely the frontiers *between life and death* (challenge of justice and peace), *between humanity and inhumanity* (challenge of the marginalized), *Christian experience*, (challenge of the great world religions), *religious*

experience (challenge of secular ideologies), and *the Church* (challenge of non-Catholic Christians and of the sects) identified the *boundaries* where preachers must bring the light of the Gospel. The General Chapter of Rome identified the mission mandates. Br. Bruno Cadore called the Order “to strengthen the dialogue among us about and from the preaching mission. This effort touches three principal areas: *Mission Forums* that will allow brothers working in the same apostolic field to dialogue among themselves and to reflect on the pastoral and theological dimensions of their mission; *Salamanca Process* that is trying to promote theological and interdisciplinary dialogue concerning pastoral situations in particularly vulnerable contexts; and the exploitation of *apostolic creativity* in the “new continent” of the *Internet and the world of new social networks.*” (Trogir 2013) All these remain valid and important for the Order until today. **But after considering the contexts, issues, and strategies of the complex mission of evangelization, I call on the Order to focus its attention to the “publics,” the persons to whom we address the Gospel, within the Church’s mission of “new (renewed) evangelization”.** As we try to understand more profoundly the “publics” of our preaching, we should be mindful of the example of St. Dominic who was “converted” after a night-long dialogue with the innkeeper – that experience gradually led him to leave behind a promising ecclesiastical career as a canon of the cathedral of Osma, and chose to be called “Brother Dominic.” (*Libellus*, 21) Evangelization brings with it the grace of conversion, both for the evangelized and the evangelizer. “*The Church is an evangelizer, but she begins by being evangelized herself.*” (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 15)

19. We serve the Church through our charism as friars-preachers. From *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (EN, 1975), *Redemptoris Missio* (RM, 1990), *Ubicumque et Semper* (US, 2010), to *Evangelii Gaudium* (EG, 2013), the Magisterium of the Church has identified areas for a *new evangelization*, which I believe should be systematically and intentionally adopted by the Order as focus or priorities in realizing the *propositum Ordinis*.

20. **I ask the General Chapter to discuss and propose concrete strategies on how to bring the *propositum Ordinis* to bear on the following:**

- I. ***Missio ad Gentes* - to those who have not yet known Jesus** (Acts 17:23)
- II. **Mission to deepen the faith of believers** (Luke 1:1-4)
- III. **Mission to those who walked away from the Church, or those on the margins of the Church** (Luke 24:13–32)
- IV. **Mission to the Young People** (John 6: 5-15)

21. **Mission *ad gentes***, the mission of St. Paul to persons who have not yet known Jesus: **“I even discovered an altar inscribed, ‘To an Unknown God.’ What therefore you unknowingly worship, I proclaim to you.”** (Acts 17:23)

Today, *the place of mission is no longer just the one that is far from home, it is also close to home!* At times, when we leave the convent, we encounter “many men, women, and children who do not know the joy of friendship with Jesus.” Mission *ad gentes* is not just a mission to certain parts of the world, but to all parts of the world!

22. We appreciate the brothers who are in places of *missio ad gentes*, where the Church is in the process of implantation. But the Order has to be intentional also in reaching out to *seekers*, to those who are yet to hear and believe in Christ. Some areas where our brothers are already working are: presence and ministry in universities, preaching in the digital continent, etc. Though written thirty-five years ago, John Paul II's *Redemptoris Missio* is worth revisiting to determine what we can concretely do in our time:

“There are many other forms of the "Areopagus" in the modern world toward which the Church's missionary activity ought to be directed; for example, commitment to peace, development and the liberation of peoples; the rights of individuals and peoples, especially those of minorities; the advancement of women and children; safeguarding the created world. These, too, are areas that need to be illuminated with the light of the Gospel.

“We must also mention the immense "Areopagus" of culture, scientific research, and international relations, which promote dialogue and open up new possibilities. We would do well to be attentive to these modern areas of activity and to be involved in them. People sense that they are, as it were, traveling together across life's sea, and that they are called to ever greater unity and solidarity. Solutions to pressing problems must be studied, discussed, and worked out with the involvement of all. That is why international organizations and meetings are proving increasingly important in many sectors of human life, from culture to politics, from the economy to research. Christians who live and work in this international sphere must always

remember their duty to bear witness to the Gospel” RM, 37).

23. *Evangelii Gaudium* reminds us that in our day, “Proclaiming the Gospel message to different cultures also involves proclaiming it to professional, scientific and academic circles. This means an encounter between faith, reason, and the sciences with a view to developing new approaches and arguments on the issue of credibility, a creative apologetic which would encourage greater openness to the Gospel on the part of all.” (EN, 132)

24. *Missio ad gentes* also involves encounter with people of other religions. Interreligious *dialogue* and *proclamation*, while distinct, are both integral and valid aspects of the Church's evangelization: “true interreligious dialogue on the part of the Christian supposes the desire to make Jesus Christ better known, recognized and loved; proclaiming Jesus Christ is to be carried out in the Gospel spirit of dialogue.”⁵

25. Surveys of religious demography vary sharply across countries and regions in the world. One researcher claimed: “There is a palpable Gen Z religious revival. Those of faith within the 18-24 year age bracket are the most likely to believe in a God, to believe that their God is the only God, and to hold that God shapes their moral values.” Another research claims: “Around one-third of Gen Zers (34%) and millennials (35%) identify as religiously unaffiliated, compared with 25% of Gen Xers, 19% of baby boomers, and 15% of the Silent Generation.” Of course, surveys are just tools and there could be margins of error. But it would be interesting if the

⁵ Pontifical Council For Inter-Religious Dialogue, *Dialogue And Proclamation*, 19 May 1991, no., 77.

capitulars could share with the chapter what they know about the religious demography within the territory of their province. True, we should not be preoccupied with numbers, but preaching for the salvation of souls also means we should use all the available tools we have to help us fulfill our mission.

26. What are the concrete vision and goals the Order must articulate, which will serve as a guide for our brothers in preaching the Gospel *ad gentes*? What will be the criteria which the General Chapter of 2028 can use to determine whether we are advancing in this mission, or not, so that appropriate adjustments can be made so that we can become more effective in our preaching *ad gentes*?

It is said that “not everything that counts can be counted”. Yet we must also have some objective yardsticks or criteria by which we can say, “thanks to God’s grace, we are advancing in our mission *ad gentes*.” Or, are we unable to obtain this objective, and therefore we need to rethink our methodology, approach, etc? We must bear in mind “that the root of all evangelization lies not in a human plan of expansion, but rather the desire to share the inestimable gift that God has wished to give us, making us sharers in his own life”.⁶

27. Mission to deepen the faith of believers, the “mission” of Luke in writing the Gospel addressed to a certain “Theophilus”, a “friend of God” who typifies every believer who opens himself to God and desires to know the Gospel: “I have decided to write an ordered account for you, Theophilus, so that you may learn how well founded the teaching is that you have received.” (Luke 1:1-4)

⁶ Benedict XVI, Apostolic Letter *Ubicumque et Semper* (document has no paragraph numbers).

28. One of the questions I encounter during visitations is “is parish ministry a proper Dominican apostolate?” True, parish ministry ties us to a certain place and makes us less agile and itinerant. However, **taking care of a stable community, walking with its members in their journey of life and faith is also a form of “itinerancy”**. Parish ministry is more than just sacramental ministry. It is about accompanying people in the deepening of their life of faith.

A Dominican parish must be one in which the *communion of brothers shepherds the communion of the parish*. I am happy to note that in a good number of parishes I visited, I have seen how the brothers realize the “Pillars of Dominican Life” within the parish i.e., the sense of **community** among the parishioners, the life of **study** (friars offer conferences, Bible study etc. to the parishioners), **prayer** (i.e., friars pray *with* the community and not just celebrate the Eucharist for them, and finally **apostolate** i.e., forming our parishioners so that that they become not merely passive recipients but **agents of evangelization**: “*missionary disciples*” or “*contemplative-evangelizers,*” etc.

Since the “family is a domestic church” and parents should be “the first preachers of the faith to their children” (LG, 11) we must give special attention to the formation of these “first preachers.” We know that a serious rupture in the transmission of the faith to the next generation happens when parents neglect to bring their children to the Church.

What we say about a parish can be said about the other “stable” institutions under the care of brothers - schools, universities, chaplaincies, etc. The intellectual mission of the

Order is important in engaging “the intellectuals who feel the need to know Jesus Christ in a light different from the instruction they received as children, and for many others.” (EN, 52, *Ubicumque et Semper*) We know, of course, that the mission of deepening the faith of believers should always be open to mission *ad gentes*, i.e., parishes must reach out to the “non-affiliated,” the “seekers; schools must be attentive and welcoming to non-believers etc.

29. **Mission to encounter and accompany those who are walking *away* from the Church, those who are on the same “road” as the two disciples walking away from Jerusalem, the community of faith, towards Emmaus.** Their “eyes were prevented from recognizing Jesus who was walking with them,” but later, they recognized Jesus in the Scriptures and the Breaking of the Bread. (Luke 24:13–32)

30. Secularization has a lot to do with people who have gradually distanced themselves from the practice of the faith. They have lost the sense to recognize Jesus in Word and Sacrament. How can we engage them and invite them back to see Jesus once again? How can we walk with them, talk with them, sit at a table with them like Dominic did with the innkeeper? Are we prepared to be “converted” in our dialogue with them, as Dominic was “converted” when he left a promising “ecclesiastical career” in Osma after that encounter?

31. The two disciples who were walking away from Jerusalem were shocked by the crucifixion, “How can the Messiah die on us?” they must have thought. In our time, we cannot deny that many people are walking out of the Church because they have been scandalized by us, by the different

abuses (sexual, spiritual, psychological) committed by their spiritual brothers and fathers.

32. What are we doing as an Order to invite these people back to the community of faith? What more could we do so that our preaching (*verbis et exempli*) could help them recognize Jesus in his saving Word and in the breaking of the Bread? What should we do so that the wounds that helped Thomas recognize the Risen Lord - "my Lord and my God" - can heal the wounds of broken trust and fractured relationships?

33. As pilgrims walking with the Lord, we realize that we have fellow pilgrims – our brothers and sisters in other Christian churches. Fostering ecumenical dialogue is a concrete way of listening to the prayer of Jesus that "all may be one." (John 17:21) Christian unity is crucial for the credibility of the Christian message - "that the world may believe" in Jesus. (John 17:23) The Hebrew scriptures, which Jesus explained to the disciples on the road to Emmaus, are key to understanding the Messiah. While Jews cannot accept Jesus as Messiah, we continue to read the Hebrew Scriptures together and help one another to deepen our understanding of God's word. (cf. EG, 249)

34. **A special Mission to the Youth, who are found in the aforementioned faith-situations.** Many young people, even in places imbued with a "Christian culture," are not leaving the Church; they have not even "entered" the Church for the first time because their parents decided not to bring them to the Church!

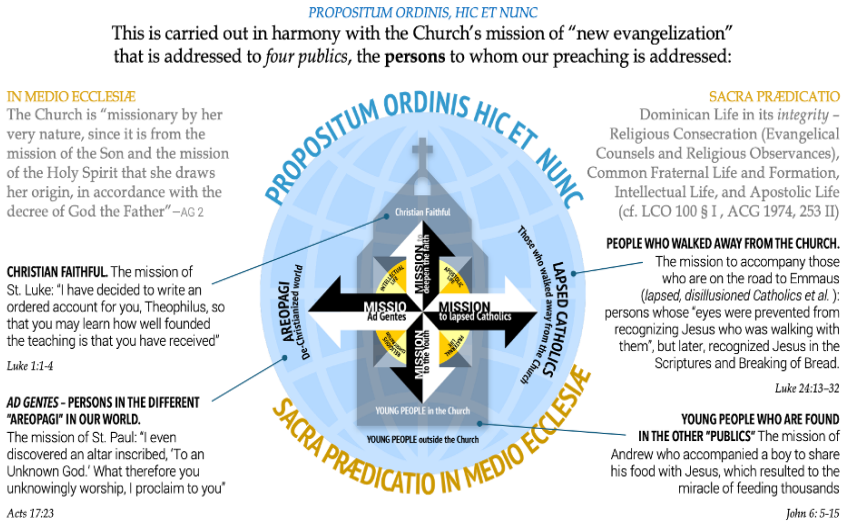
35. Many young people today probably have a similar question as the young man who asked Jesus: "Teacher, what good must I do to gain eternal life?" (Matt 19:16) We should welcome them and engage them in their search for what is true and good. **I believe that our brothers in schools, university chaplaincies or in other forms of ministry to young people in parishes and shrines share a mission similar to that of the apostle Andrew.** In the wonderful story of the multiplication of the loaves and fish (John 6:5-15), Jesus fed thousands, thanks to the boy who generously offered his bread and fish to the Lord, and to Andrew, who wisely perceived that the boy had something to offer. There would be no miracle without the boy, and without Andrew, the boy's offering might not have reached Jesus. The boy was not just hungry for food; he was hungry to do something good for others! We need "Andrews" who can accompany young people willing to share their gifts and talents with the Church! We must give young people opportunities to feel the joy we feel when we serve the people of God.

36. In this jubilee year, a member of our Dominican Family, Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, is set to be canonized. This young person - dubbed as the "man of the eight beatitudes" - offers a most attractive portrait of Dominican life. By his piety and energy, he points us "to the heights" (*verso l'alto*). Through his intercession, may all Dominicans draw inspired breath, and commit to preaching to, with, through the young, who remain as the future of society and the hope of the church.

Summary

37. In a nutshell, here is an infographic that would help us visualize our charism and mission, understand the vision and

priorities of our Order today, and find our place in the realization of the *propositum Ordinis* within the Church today.



THE BROTHERS

38. There are **5,145** professed brothers, according to the 2024 statistics. Of these, **42** are Bishops, **3,995** Priests, **138** Transitional Deacons, **13** Permanent Deacons, **218** Cooperator Brothers, **163** Clerics in Formation Solemnly Professed, **556** Clerics in Formation Simply Professed, and **20** Cooperator Brothers in Formation Simply Professed. We have **170** Clerical Novices and **1** Novice for Cooperator Brotherhood.

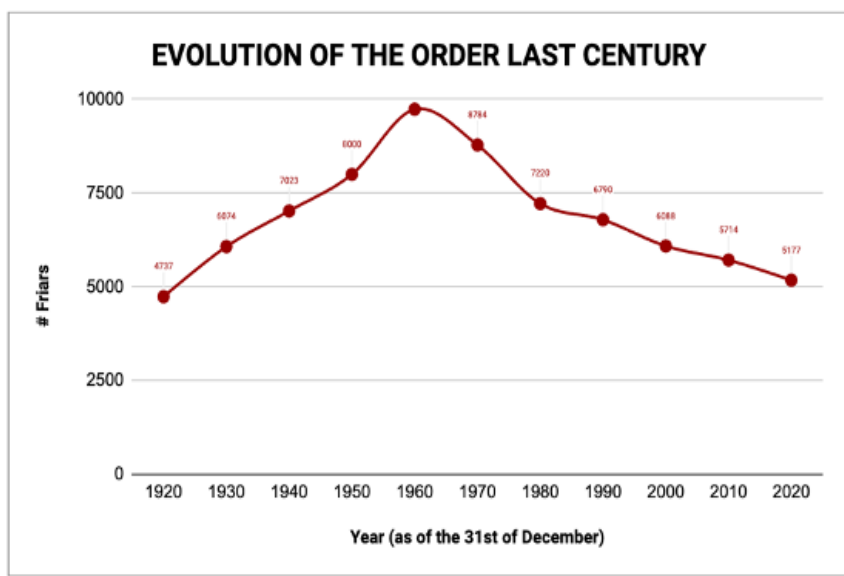
	2022	2023	2024
Bishops	41	41	42
Priests	4052	4032	3995
Transitional Deacons	137	103	138
Permanent Deacons	18	15	13
Cooperator Brothers	230	222	218
Clerics in Formation Solemnly Professed	174	204	163
Clerics in Formation Simply Professed	545	542	556
Cooperator Brothers in Formation Simply Professed	15	16	20
TOTAL PROFESSED	5212	5175	5145
Clerical Novices	165	172	170
Novices for Cooperator Brotherhood	5	1	1

On the same year of 2024, **111** Friars died, **25** Priests left the Order (dispensation and incardination), **5** Solemnly Professed Brothers obtained dispensation and **44** Simply Professed brothers left the Order. There are **45** brothers who are on exclaustation and **87** are reported to be illegitimately absent.

39. Regarding assignation, **76%** of the brothers live in **251** Convents, while **24%** live in **263** Houses. By age groups, **11.3%** are 30 years old and below, **18.4%** are between 31 to 40 years old; **19.3%** are between 41 to 50 years old; **16.9%** are between 51 to 60 years old; **12.9%** are between 61 to 70 years old; and **21.2%** are 71 years old and above.

The brothers are present in **35** Provinces and **6** Vice Provinces. Of these Provinces, 3 are in Africa, 5 are in Asia-Pacific, 17 are

in Europe and Canada, 6 are in Latin America and the Caribbean, and 4 are in the United States of America. Of the six Vice Provinces, 2 are in Africa, 2 in Asia Pacific, and 2 in Latin America and the Caribbean. Ten Provinces have 15 Provincial Vicariates which are present in Africa (3), Asia-Pacific (2), Europe-Canada (7), Latin America (3).



THE GENERAL CURIA

40. The General Curia is a community that *serves* the mission of the Order and *leads* by accompanying the Dominican Family in serving and fulfilling the same mission. The unique mission of the Order, within the Church, is clearly discernible from its foundational moment when Dominic sent the brothers *to study, to preach, and to establish communities*.⁷ Thus, the *collective core service (diakonia)* of the General Curia is the promotion of this *trifold mission*, even

⁷ Jordan of Saxony, *Libellus*, 51. See also fr. Bruno Cadore OP, *Relatio* (2019), no. 25.

if there are members who, according to the title of their respective offices, are entrusted with a specific mission.

41. The **2024 edition of the *Liber Constitutionum et Ordinationum*** has been published and is available online. It contains all the changes made until the General Chapter of Tultenango celebrated in 2022. We are grateful to the Province of Hispania and St. Albert, USA for the updated Spanish and English translations. We hope that the updated French translation being prepared by the Province of France will be published soon. We are very grateful to Br. Benjamin Earl, Procurator General, for seeing to it that the LCO is updated.

Procurator General

42. The Order has a very good reputation in terms of presenting well-prepared documents to the different dicasteries of the Holy See, thanks to the current Procurator General. He conducts business with the Holy, especially in “procuring administrative acts” from the different dicasteries, except the Dicastery for Culture and Education, and the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints, which belong to the scope of work of the Socius for the Intellectual Life and the Postulator General, respectively. The Procurator General serves as “house canonist” of the General Curia and provides prompt and expert advice to priors provincials, prioresses of monasteries, and federal presidents of the nuns of the Order.

Canonical Visitations

43. Canonical visitations are moments of fraternal encounters and an experience of God who “visits all of us.” (Luke 1:68) Due to travel restrictions brought about by the pandemic, I have yet to complete the visitation of the entire Order this year 2025 (visitations continue even in August and

December!). Our canonical visitations of "communities and members" (Can. 628 § 1) have two important moments of dialogue, namely, with the community and with individual friars.

We reflect on "lights" and "shadows," and discussed how to amplify the lights and diminish the shadows on the level of the convent and the province. We also reflected on the present and the desired future or vision for the province. The responses we gather become part of the letter of visitation. Thus, the letter of visitation included the voices of both the visited and the visitators. To a significant sense, the visitation is meant (a) to encourage self-reflection, self-evaluation and continuous improvement in accordance with the Dominican charism, (b) to identify areas for growth and development, and (c) to fortify transparency and co-responsibility among the brothers in living out our communitarian government. When necessary, ordinations are made with deadlines that allow for closer accompaniment by the General Curia through the regional socius. Each regional socius reports to the General Curia in one of its plenary meetings regarding the compliance and progress of the concrete measures to be implemented by the province for its further development. This is to assure the accompaniment of the province during the period between visitations.

The second round of visitation will focus on how the province has achieved the tasks identified in the last visitation and how it has advanced towards the desired future state articulated in the last visitation. In other words, the cycle of visitation is a cycle of self-evaluation and renewal of goals (*re-vision*) according to the province's specific realization of the *propositum Ordinis*.

Servant-Leadership

44. St. Dominic bequeathed the Order with a communitarian form of government (LCO VI). If the brothers were to embrace the apostolic way of life, then they too must adapt the apostolic way for making decisions for the entire Order, “*we have decided, the Holy Spirit and us....*” (Acts 15:28)

Sadly, in some parts of the Order today, some form of patronage / clientelism is at work, which reinforces unhealthy power structures and marginalizes those who are not part of a subtle patron-client network. Some friars have noted how this system adversely affects assignments, appointment of superiors, admission to profession and presentation for ordination, and elections. Clearly, this “patron-client system” subverts our communitarian government.

45. We remind ourselves that we must embrace a form of leadership that is called in recent years as “servant-leadership.” Paradoxical as it might seem, for us Christians, we embrace servant-leadership in response to a call, not to lead, but to follow Jesus who came to serve not to be served. (Matthew 20:28, John 13:1-17) Servant-leadership appears to be an oxymoron, a contradiction in terms. **A servant-leader serves the mission and leads by serving those in mission with him.**⁸ Passion for the mission enables us to lead even in difficult circumstances because we have become servants to a God-given mission. Servanthood in this sense is to do the will of God; “not my will but the will of the one who sends me.” When we see ourselves as **servant-leaders who serve the mission and lead by serving those in mission with us**, then we realize that *we need a team, a community that shares our vision*

⁸ Gene Wilkes, *Jesus on Leadership* (Tyndale: Carol Stream, Illinois, 1998) p. 18.

and mission. Jesus trained and formed his disciples before he sent them to preach the Kingdom. That is why potential candidates for the position do not threaten a servant-leader because the mission remains, even when someone else occupies the position. In fact, the more potential successors we have, the better the mission is served. It is only then that we are assured that the mission continues. Even when we no longer occupy the position, we do not feel “useless” or “jobless” because we continue to serve the mission beyond our term of office.

FRATERNAL LIFE AND FORMATION

46. The institution of the Socius for Fraternal Life and Formation (LCO 425 § II) has been confirmed by the General Chapter of Tultenango. Since this “transversal” socius was added to the General Council, the general curia has paid greater attention to matters pertaining to formation, both initial and permanent.

Cooperator Brothers

47. I am happy to receive the report of the *Theological Commission on the Vocation of the Cooperator Brother in the Order and in the Church* which was constituted in accordance with ACG 2019 Biên Hòa, 199. I believe that the work of the commission is significant and useful, not just for our cooperator brothers but for all the friars and members of the Dominican family. Fr. Vivian Boland, chair of the commission, will present to the capitulars the report. We thank him and the members of the commission for giving us the fruits of their theological reflection.

Promotion and Cultivation of Vocations

48. *And how can they hear without someone to preach?* (Romans 10:14) True, every vocation is a mystery. It is God who *calls* and *sends* laborers to the harvest. But those whom God calls need to “hear more clearly” God’s call. The prophet Samuel needed the priest Eli to know and understand who was calling him. The Socius for Fraternal Life and Formation organized a meeting of all promoters of vocations on June 17-22, 2024, in Rome. They shared their reflections, strategies, and best practices in promoting vocations. To deepen the collaboration among vocation promoters, regional meetings were held in Africa and Latin America. The other regions will hold such meetings with the help of the regional socii.

49. One of the important tasks of every friar, not just of the Promoter of Vocations, is to invite and accompany those whom God calls to be Dominicans so that they may know and understand more deeply the “voice” of God. This presupposes, of course, that we ourselves are familiar with that voice, a “familiarity” that is nourished by the Dominican life we live. We invite people to join the friars (in particular) and the Dominican Family (in general) because we want to share with them the joy of preaching the Gospel, we want to share with them the treasure of the Dominican life.

50. Recent General Chapters have asked that the promotion of new vocations be one of our priorities, and that necessary personal and material resources be allocated for this work. Since the Lord himself tells us “to ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest” (Matt. 9:38), one of our important duties in promoting vocations is to pray. In fulfillment of ACG Tultenango (2022) 189, the Socius for Fraternal Life and Formation and the Liturgical Commission

of the Order have prepared a Prayer for Vocations in the official languages of the Order.

51. I ask provinces to seriously consider the best way to foster a “culture of vocation promotion” among the friars. In the spirit of “sharing of best practices,” I recommend for consideration the program proposed by the formation council of the province of Hispania.

Formation of Formators

52. To provide authentic Dominican formation for our brothers in initial formation, it is necessary to have properly trained formators. (ACG Tultenango, 208) Regional formation courses for formators are regularly offered in Africa, Asia Pacific, and Latin America. The regular meeting of formators from English-speaking provinces on both sides of the Atlantic, which was interrupted during the COVID years, will resume, according to some provincials. Europe has plans to have a meeting of formators. The formators of the French-speaking provinces in Europe hold regular meetings. In October 2024, CIDALC and CODALC started the Dominican School of Formators for the Dominican Family, which offers a three-year program for formators through online meetings and in-person courses. Currently, 228 formators are enrolled in this school for formators.

Ratio Formationis Particularis (RFP)

53. All provinces have submitted their (RFP), revised according to the Ratio Formationis Generalis (2016). Only a few provinces have yet to incorporate the observations from the General Council. We are confident that all provinces will have an approved RFP by July 2025.

INTELLECTUAL LIFE AND STUDY

54. The work of the Socius for the Intellectual Life in the last three years has been focused, as in the previous triennium, on the implementation of the decisions of the last General Chapter in Tultenango. At the same time, the ordinary work related to the documents coming from Dominican academic institutions to be submitted to the Dicastery for Culture and Education was abundant and especially focused on the renewal of the statutes of all affiliated institutes according to the new Instruction on Affiliation. This process is still ongoing in several institutes (both Dominican and those affiliated to Dominican ecclesiastical Faculties).

Database and Regents of Studies Reports

55. We continuously update the database on the website studium.op.org regarding institutions and brothers working in the field of study and intellectual life, in fulfillment of the request of the General Chapter of Biên Hòa. (ACG 2019, 322) In the last year, it was integrated with other areas of the database of the Order, so that the profile of each province, including the area of study and intellectual life, is now accessible to all prior provincials, regents of studies, and provincial secretaries. This is done in collaboration with the Socius for the Apostolic Life and his team. The annual reports of the Regents of Studies, whose questionnaire was updated (ACG 2022 Tultenango 227-228) as well as the provincial plan of complementary studies (ACG 2022 Tultenango 229; ACG 2019, 328) are included in this database, and the information can be updated online by the regents of studies. For the time being, there is also the option of sending the information through a questionnaire to the Secretariat for Intellectual Life,

which uploads the data. Several regional online meetings were held with the regents of studies on this question as well as regarding other matters, which we hope to continue in the future on a regular basis.

Ratio Studiorum Particularis (RSP)

56. All provinces have submitted their (RSP), revised according to the Ratio Studiorum Generalis (2017). Only a few provinces have yet to incorporate the observations from the General Council. We are confident that all provinces will have an approved RSP by July 2025. As requested by ACG 2022 Tultenango, 224, we continue to promote the communal study of the RSG in the formation communities and in the provinces in general.

Philosophical Studies in Initial Formation

57. In accordance with ACG 2022 Tultenango, 233-234 a committee was appointed by the M.O. for the evaluation of the curricula of philosophical studies in initial formation in each province and the regents were asked to submit the corresponding information. This took quite a long time, and in several cases, more information had to be requested, but all responses have been received. The committee produced a report with general criteria and a brief initial proposal for each province. This is a work in progress towards the fulfillment of the request of the General Chapter.

Addenda to the *Ratio Studiorum Generalis*

58. In accordance with the commission of ACG 2022 Tultenango, 239, the Permanent Commission for the Promotion of Studies, some additions were introduced in the

text of the RSG. They were about learning classical languages, “the formation in Catholic social teaching, questions related to justice and peace, human rights (including the right to life) and the care for creation, the contribution of the Dominican School of Salamanca and the methodology of the Salamanca Process,” as well as the theological foundation of mission and the place of canon law among the areas of competence of the Dominican intellectual tradition. (RSG 14; 9bis; 21; 21bis and 22)

Access to Dominican Intellectual Formation: Collaboration and Centers of Studies (ACG 2022, 300)

59. In conformity with the call of the last General Chapter to provide Dominican formation to all brothers (ACG 2022 Tultenango, 240), the Master of the Order and Socius for the Intellectual life have discussed with provincials and their councils, regents of studies and commissions for the intellectual life on how to implement the ordination that “entities unable to provide their students with a Dominican intellectual formation as envisioned by the LCO and the RSG within three years of the publication of these Acts must send their friars in formation elsewhere to obtain a full and authentic Dominican intellectual formation.” (ACG 2022 Tultenango, 245) In some cases, collaboration with other provinces is taking place or about to be implemented.

60. In other provinces, the solution is to provide supplementary Dominican courses for student brothers who are studying in non-Dominican centers of studies. (cf. RSG, 54; 67) An important point on which we have focused is the implementation of ACG 2022 Tultenango, 300: “while not every province can afford its own center of institutional

studies, ... every province [can] have at least one center of studies (as defined by LCO 91-92 and RSG 40 and 54), "in which the Dominican intellectual tradition will be maintained, developed and transmitted to the next generation." (ACG 2004 Kraków 187) Basically, this center of studies must have a minimum of three friar-professors who will teach important aspects of the Dominican spiritual and intellectual tradition in its diverse expressions, sharing them with students in initial formation, the Dominican Family, and others.

Complementary Studies

61. The last General Chapter renewed the ordination of the previous one regarding the provincial planning of complementary studies. (ACG Biên Hòa 2019, 328; ACG 2022 Tultenango, 229) While we are happy that some provinces fulfill this ordination, a few others have yet to comply with this ordination by a General Chapter.

Scholarships

62. An important aspect in the implementation of a program for complementary studies is the availability of scholarships. In continuity with the General Chapter of Biên Hòa (ACG 2019, 332), scholarships for brothers from all regions of the Order, with a certain "special priority to the brothers of the regions of Africa, Latin America-Caribbean and Asia-Pacific," have continued to be a priority. In recent years, the *Spem Miram Internationalis* and generous donors have awarded numerous scholarships for specific programs at PUST-Angelicum. We are grateful to the friars, especially the Rector of the PUST, who through their expertise and diligent efforts have raised funds for scholarships. We are also

thankful to the benefactors who believe that a solid and sound formation of preachers and teachers is an important service to the Church and society. Various scholarships are available from Dominican provinces and institutions, including the DSPT (Oakland, California), the PFIC (Washington, D.C.), the IDEO (Cairo), the EBAF (Jerusalem), and the Albertinum (Fribourg), PUST Angelicum (Rome). Consult the website <https://studium.op.org/news-agenda-scholarships/scholarships/> for more information.

We are deeply thankful to all of them, and we would be happy to have more such scholarship programs applicable to other centers of studies of the Order. Thanks to these scholarships, a good number of brothers from different regions of the Order are currently pursuing complementary studies in centers of study.

Academic Institutions under the immediate jurisdiction of the M.O.

To gain a comprehensive perspective, the following should be read in conjunction with the specific reports submitted by the brothers in charge.

PUST-Angelicum

63. In accordance with ACG 2022 Tultenango 258, new steps have been taken in recent years in the implementation of the process of renewal and reinforcement of the university, through the incorporation of new professors, the establishment of research and scholarship programs, and the Institute for Interreligious Relations in the Faculty of Theology. In collaboration with the Rector and his team, the Board of Trustees (*Consiglio di Amministrazione*), composed of brothers, sisters, and laypeople from various region, plays a

crucial role in enhancing PUST's standing as a leading international Dominican university serving the Order and the global Church. Renewal and strengthening, as described in ACG 2022 Tultenango 256, is ongoing within the Faculty of Canon Law.

64. A good number of brothers from various regions of the Order are pursuing complementary studies at the PUST, which provides our brothers with a rich experience of the intellectual life of the Order and its internationality. This creates a challenge regarding accommodation at the priory; the continued collaboration of the *Convitto S. Tommaso* is extremely helpful. (ACG 2022, 262-263) PUST is creating valuable academic support, especially for Dominican students in complementary studies, to help implement ACG 2019 329.

65. Under the competent leadership of the current rector, fr. Thomas Joseph White, the ongoing development of the PUST, both in terms of its academic excellence and infrastructure, has been sustained by a fundraising campaign which will hopefully lead towards self-sustainability in the long term. The overall infrastructure development plan includes the library (cf. ACG 2019, 346) and the *Convitto San Tommaso*.

EBAF-École biblique – Jerusalem

66. The objectives established for the EBAF (ACG 2022, 273; 275) began to be implemented, and progress should now be made towards their full realization. The organizational chart of the EBAF has been clarified, ensuring a better integration of its areas, especially the biblical and

archeological sections. The harmonization of the Statutes of the EBAF and the Priory of St. Etienne has been fulfilled, and the strategic plan and a retirement plan for brothers working at the EBAF have been approved. A plan for the renewal and reinforcement of the teaching staff remains a challenge. In the French-speaking provinces, one brother has been identified who could study archaeology and perhaps eventually join the EBAF. (ACG 2022, 274) However, this commission to the French and English-speaking provinces should be renewed. To sum up, while the EBAF continues to count on a highly qualified body of professors and researchers, it is important to incorporate some new ones in the coming years. The peace and order situation in that region has affected the number of students, and the financial situation of the EBAF, needs to be addressed, probably including a temporary increase in financial support from the Order during these uncertain times.

Fribourg/Switzerland - Faculty of Theology

67. As recommended in ACG 2022, 264, we have fulfilled the recommendation of the General Chapter of Tultenango (ACG 2022, 264) to renew the Order's formal agreement with the University of Fribourg and the Swiss Episcopal Conference. The agreement was signed on the Feast of All Saints of the Order by Bishop Charles Morerod on behalf of the Episcopal Conference, by the Rectrice of the University, Prof. Astrid Epiney, and by the MO.

68. The Institute for Dominican Studies started organizing some colloquia. Hopefully, these activities will continue to develop in promoting/teaching the richness of the Dominican spiritual and theological tradition in an interdisciplinary

manner within the context of the two languages of the University. In the last three years, three brothers have joined the faculty as ordinary professors. In the coming years, two brothers will retire, and we hope qualified brothers will apply for their chairs and other vacant professorships. The university is facing financial challenges and there might be a reduction of chairs throughout the university. However, we believe that Dominican theological presence in a public and bilingual university remains very important. Incidentally, we expect about five provincials in the forthcoming general chapter who speak French, even if they do not come from Francophone countries, because they studied in Fribourg.

69. As recommended in ACG 2022, 268, the process to have a unified Dominican presence in Fribourg has moved forward, thanks to the brothers of the Albertinum and Saint Hyacinthe who prepared concrete architectural plans for their respective convents as a possible location for the new convent. We hope that the mission and priorities of the “unified community” will be ratified by both communities before the forthcoming general chapter. In light of their clearly stated common priorities, the brothers will choose the most apt location for the unified community. After this step, the provincial of France and his council will be consulted before the final step of the union of the two convents by the M.O. in accordance with the LCO. The implementation phase (e.g. transfer of the library, etc.), which might take time, will then follow.

Leonine Commission

70. In fulfillment of the commission of ACG 2022, 283, the Leonine Commission submitted to the Master “a plan of the

editing work foreseen for the next nine years.” Information regarding its implementation can be found in the report of the president of the Commission. During the canonical visitation in March 2024, the members of the Commission presented to the M.O. their work in the last years. The Commission continues to share its experience and expertise with entities of the Order and academic institutions, transmitting the value of its research on the texts of St. Thomas, favoring a historical approach. (cf. ACG 2019, 361 - 362) A clarification has been made regarding the old fund of the Commission and the nature and amount of the subvention received by the Commission from the Order.

Institutum Historicum Ordinis Praedicatorum (IHOP)

71. The Institute continues to fulfil its mission to research the history of the Order, to present the results of its research in scientific publications, lectures, conferences, and colloquia, to collaborate with Dominican and other scholars who study the history of the Order, and to promote the formation of young Dominican historians.

72. In September 2023, a seminar for Dominican students of history, dedicated in particular to the history of the Dominican missions was held at the Convent of St. Thomas in Ávila, Spain. Twelve young friars from France, Germany, Italy, Myanmar, Poland, the USA, Vietnam, and the Philippines, in their various levels of study from baccalaureate to doctorate, participated in the seminar. The Institute, in collaboration with the Dominican Sisters Europe, conducted a formation course on the “History, Tradition and Spirituality of the Dominican Order” for the novices and junior professed sisters in November 2023 in Rome. The

library of the Institute will be transferred from the PUST to Santa Sabina.

General Archives

73. Though understaffed, the Archives of the Order provides services to many researchers around the world. The Archivist responds to around 350 requests per year and receives around 70 researchers who come in person to Santa Sabina. As noted by the Archivist, the history of the Order remains interesting for many historians. The Archivist also collaborates closely with the Historical Institute of the Order.

Activities under the Supervision of the M.O.

74. According to ACG 2022, 285-286, the following have been declared as "Activities under the supervision of the M.O. : DOMUNI Universitas, OPTIC, the Center for Dialogue with Cultures and Religions in Asia (UST Manila), and the Institute for Dialogue with Cultures and Religions in Africa (*Dominican University, Ibadan*). These collaborative activities continue to implement the objectives established for each of them by the M.O. This process of implementation and development will continue for the second triennium. (cf. ACG 2019, 366)

75. DOMUNI Universitas continues its valuable service of offering online university programs. There has been a renewal in its leadership. It is foreseen that before the next General Chapter, in dialogue with its academic authorities and with the provincials of France and Toulouse, an agreement should be reached on the updating of some institutional aspects (in relation to the civil foundations in Switzerland and Belgium), and on collaboration to make the

service of DOMUNI more accessible to the different regions of the Order.

76. **Some Challenges and Objectives**

a. *Institutional studies*: to continue promoting collaboration in the regions and in the Order, assisting the provinces to provide all brothers with an integral Dominican formation, including intellectual formation. To extend the work of the evaluation Committee for Philosophical Studies (ACG 2022, 233-234) in the initial formation until the next General Chapter.

b. *Complementary studies*: to continue promoting the preparation of brothers in all the regions to assume future teaching and research tasks in centers of studies in the provinces and institutions under the M.O. This dimension of co-responsibility of the provinces and regions is key for the future of study and intellectual life at the service of the intellectual mission of the Order. To include the criteria for planning complementary studies in the RSG, at least as an Appendix.

c. *Centers of Studies*: to propose, with the assistance of the Permanent Commission for the Promotion of Studies, an update and harmonization of the norms regarding the different Dominican centers of studies in LCO, RSG, and the last General Chapters. In this context, ACG 2022, 300, regarding the presence of at least one center of studies in each province, and some specific criteria for new Dominican universities should be included. To enhance the capacity of dialogue and cultural impact of centers of study.

d. *Academic institutions under the M.O.*: to advance in the process of renewal and reinforcement in terms of academic quality, research, and international collaboration. To go forward towards the long-term sustainability of the PUST. To enhance the Dominican presence in Fribourg in interaction between the chairs and the Institute for Dominican Studies in

an interdisciplinary perspective. To develop collaboration between the institutions under the M.O. and Dominican academic presences in the various regions.

e. *Scholarships, sustainability and solidarity*: to develop, through fundraising, new scholarship programs. To find ways of sharing scholarship resources in solidarity with other OP academic institutions through common academic initiatives, as part of a network at the service of the mission of the Order.

f. *Regional meetings of Regents of Studies*: to implement these meetings on a regular basis as a useful instrument to promote collaboration in the regions and the animation of studies in the provinces.

g. *Networks*: to advance in the implementation of the objectives of collaboration through the Network of Universities and academic institutions OP, and of the Network for Dialogue with Cultures and Religions.

h. *Salamanca S. Esteban*: to go forward with the implementation of ACG 2022, 296 with the incorporation of the Faculty to the PUST as an Institute for teaching and research focused on Dominican theology and the School of Salamanca with international projection. This should include collaboration with CIDALC and other Dominican academic institutions.

i. *Academic Engagement Program* of the Order's Delegation at the United Nations and *Salamanca Process Working Group*: to merge both initiatives, so that the SPWG should assume the animation of the AEP.

j. *Libraries OP*: to continue with the implementation of ACG 2022, 305 regarding proposals from the commission of librarians for provinces and centers of studies of the Order.

APOSTOLIC LIFE

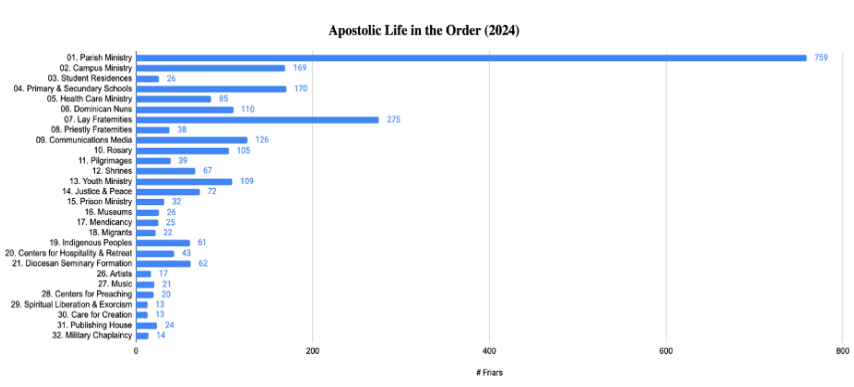
The Socius for the Apostolic Life and the General Promoters constitute the Secretariat for the Apostolic Life and collaborate closely through regular meetings.

Digital Tools

77. After some years of careful construction, we set digital tools in place to facilitate the ongoing task of building the networks of friars. These online instruments continue to facilitate ongoing communication and collaboration through the apostolic forums by providing familiar channels to connect the friars who are working in the same or similar mission areas. (cf. ACG 2013, n. 109) Recognizing the crucial role of the user in relation to the tool, the General Curia hopes that the entities of the Order continue to embrace more and more a spirit of collaborative creativity as we strive to bridge the digital gap and so facilitate greater connection among the friars and eventually the Dominican Family.

78. With the efficient collaboration from Provincial Secretaries and Regents of Studies, the database of the friars is kept up to date, thus yielding valuable information for strengthening the existing forums for apostolic life or developing new ones. Because of this database, we know that more than 700 brothers are involved in parish ministry; more than 200 friars are accompanying lay fraternities, more than 100 friars are engaged in each of these apostolates: campus ministry or university chaplaincy, schools, communications media, rosary promotion, youth ministry, and accompaniment of nuns. These figures show our collaboration with the local church and the Dominican Family, as well as our conscious effort to direct our preaching

to young people, especially in the context of academic institutions.



Forums for the Apostolic Life

79. Regarding strengthening friar networks through apostolic life forums, regional socii have significantly aided in organizing various international meetings regionally and globally. In the USA, friars working in the university chaplaincy gathered for the first time from May 28 to 31, 2024, in Long Island, New York, with the participation of 2 provincials. Similarly, provincial promoters held their first US gathering in Washington, DC on June 3-4, 2024. Similar efforts are underway in the regions of Europe, Asia Pacific, and Africa, especially for friars engaged in educational institutions and the promotion of the Rosary. Promoters of Justice and Peace continue to meet in different regions. These assemblies focus on improving communication and collaboration, including more frequent meetings at provincial and regional levels, sharing of resources and best practices, etc.

80. Following the Tultenango commissions (cf. ACG 2022, nn. 290, 292), the statute of the Dominican Networks of

Universities, Faculties, and Centers of Studies (NUOP-RUOP) has been approved, and the objectives of collaboration that it foresees are currently being implemented. Similarly, existing institutions of the friars are linked together by the Network of Preaching Schools and the Network for Dialogue with Cultures and Religions.

81. The last general chapter acknowledged the crucial importance of a canon lawyer in the province's structure and functioning. (cf.). ACG 2022, n. 249) In support of this very important ministry, the first gathering of all Dominican canonists in the Order will take place on April 22-25, 2025, at the University of Santo Tomas in Manila, Philippines. The assembly aims, among other things, to consider the current needs of the Order in the field of Canon Law, to facilitate better coordination between the entities and the General Curia, and to explore collaborative opportunities, especially among the two institutions of the Order that offer degrees in Canon Law, namely, the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (Angelicum) in Rome, and the Faculty of Canon Law in UST Manila.

82. Within the jubilee year, three international assemblies of the Apostolic Forums are taking place, in coordination with the concerned General Promoters and Regional Socii: On May 14-15, 2025, the Rosary Promoters will hold its international meeting in Rome. Among the agenda of this gathering is to review the latest version of the Rosary Confraternity Handbook. On June 22-25, 2025, the third international assembly of the Priestly Fraternities of St. Dominic will take place in Rome. Aside from providing the opportunity for sharing best practices among the entities of the Order, exploring opportunities for collaboration, and promoting

fellowship among the priests in the fraternities, the gathering aims at electing an international representative to the annual meeting of the International Commission of the Dominican Family in the General Curia. Finally, from July 28 to August 2, 2025, the General Curia is collaborating with the friars' community of Santa Maria sopra Minerva to host the Dominican Youth Jubilee in Rome. During this period, there shall be conferences and fellowships to be organized together with youth groups under the direction of friars coming from different entities in the Order. This will be highlighted by the canonization of a member of the Dominican Family, Pier Giorgio Frassati.

Amazon Mission

83. In keeping with the General Chapter of Biên Hòa (cf. ACG 2019, n. 151, the General Chapter of Tultenango recommended that the General Council commission the Socius for the Apostolic Life and the Socius for Latin America and the Caribbean to help promote the Order's mission in the Amazonia. (cf. ACG 2022, n. 142) In November 2022, the two socii went to Quillabamba, Peru for a preparatory meeting which led to the first meeting of the Dominican Family of Latin America and the Caribbean in the Apostolic Vicariate of Puerto Maldonado on July 3-8, 2023.

84. In harmony with the Pastoral Plan of the Apostolic Vicariate, the participants discussed and sought ways in which the Dominican family can participate according to the five thematic areas of Kerygma (announcement), Koinonia (communion), Diakonia (service), Liturgy (celebration), and sustainability of the mission entrusted by the Church to the Order. One of the fruits of this assembly is the decision to focus the Dominican Month for Peace in 2023 on the

Dominican mission in the Amazon. Currently, the steering committee, under the direction of the Province of St. John the Baptist in Peru, coordinates all efforts to advance the mission.

Collaboration

85. Recognizing how the recent General Chapters have stressed the importance of collaboration (cf. ACG 2019, n. 81), the chapter of Tultenango recommended the promotion of fruitful exchanges taking place in the Order, that is, through an evaluation of the activities of collaboration and the identification of criteria that encourage it and the aspects that hinder it. (cf. ACG 2022, n. 168) Thus, the General Curia began the task of obtaining information from all the entities where these mutual interchanges take place through activities of collaboration. We thank all those who responded to our inquiries and we hope these evaluations can guide us to improve the way we work together as an international Order.

86. To foster collaboration among provinces, a platform is essential where provinces can share their needs for "human resources" (friars) in specific apostolates, enabling other provinces to respond. The Socius for Apostolic Life started such a list, which is found on the Order's website with access restricted to friars only.

Justice, Peace, and Care for Creation

87. The Dominican Month of Peace provides the Dominican family with an opportunity to be in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in the Order who are situated in difficult and challenging situations. Since the last general chapter, the focus countries were Myanmar (2022), the Amazon, especially the territory of Puerto Maldonado (2023), and Haiti (2024).

88. The Apostolic Nuncio, who is also the Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations in Geneva, collaborates with the Dominicans for Justice and Peace at the United Nations for various initiatives that advance the Catholic Social Teachings. Our delegation also actively supports various justice and peace projects around the world. In 2024, The Holy See recognized the handbook “Climate Change and Human Rights Education for Youth” (<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/church/news/2024-09/philippines-dominicans-climate-rights-handbook.html>) as an important contribution to the understanding of the social teachings of the Church.

89. We have brothers and sisters who continue to suffer the consequences of conflicts around the world: Ukraine, Russia, Haiti, Venezuela, Myanmar, Congo, and other countries, which I cannot mention to protect our brothers and sisters who continue to serve God’s people in a low-key way. Often they face two choices: either denounce injustice and then face immediate expulsion from the country, or serve the people in “silence”, hoping that the people will understand more profoundly that our dignity as God’s children is the foundation of a moral vision for society.

90. During visitations, I have discovered important contributions of our brothers to justice and peace. I appreciate the outstanding projects of our brothers, **MOSAICO** in Angola (<https://mosaiko.op.org/en/10624-2/>) and **Songhai** (<https://songhai.org/en/>) in Benin. I was delighted to see in Blackfriars, Oxford that the Aquinas Institute is right beside the Las Casas Institute! This is one of the excellent examples that theological reflection and working for Justice and Peace go together.

91. Last year 2024, we celebrated the 750th anniversary of the death of St. Thomas Aquinas, the *Angelic Doctor*. While Aquinas did not explicitly write about human rights as we understand them today, he wrote on various fundamental aspects of human dignity and justice. Aquinas taught that human dignity is grounded on the Christian teaching that human beings are created in the image of God (*imago Dei*). This tenet underscores the intrinsic worth of every person, a key principle in the concept of the universality of human rights. He believed that there is a natural law discoverable by reason, which is universal, and therefore applies to all human beings regardless of their cultural or religious background. We also celebrated last year the 500th anniversary of the beginning of Francisco de Vitoria's teaching career in Salamanca. De Vitoria applied Thomistic principles and taught that the indigenous peoples of the Americas had rights to their lands and self-governance. He opposed the view that they could be subjugated merely because they were non-Christians, or perceived as "uncivilized." In dialogue with his missionary confreres in the Americas, de Vitoria laid the groundwork for modern concepts of international law by asserting that there are laws governing the conduct of nations, based on the natural law. He proposed the idea of a community of nations bound by common legal principles. For this reason, he is acknowledged as the "father of international law." The United Nations honors his contribution by naming a big hall at the UN in Geneva, *Salle de Vitoria*.

Promotion of the Rosary

92. The General Promoter of the Rosary participates in the different rosary apostolates of the provinces of the Order. He also organizes international events like the Dominican Family participation in the World Rosary Day on 7 October 2024,

which was a response to Pope Francis's call for a day of Marian prayer in preparation for the Jubilee of Hope 2025. There will also be an international gathering of Rosary Promoters in Rome on 13-18 May 2025. The General Promoter is preparing a Handbook of the Rosary Confraternity, which will be a sound basis for any form of Rosary apostolate in the Order. Various consultations have been done and hopefully it will be ready for presentation to the Order by October 2025.

Santa Maria Maggiore

93. The convent of Santa Maria Maggiore is a college of penitentiaries. The brothers, whose main ministry is to keep open the "door of mercy," do an important service of the Order for the Church. We have a complete number of penitentiaries, though we will need new brothers to take the place of our elderly penitentiaries who have faithfully accompanied countless persons in the sacrament of reconciliation and opened the door of God's mercy for them. Their preaching, which is addressed directly and personally, is an important form of preaching. To date, we have brothers who can confess in Italian, Spanish, French, English, Polish, Dutch, Slovak, Hindi, Mandarin and Indonesian.

Convitto Internazionale San Tommaso d'Aquino

94. This residence for priests and for non-clerical, male religious and male lay students who are doing their second or third cycles at the Angelicum or at a Pontifical Institute or University in Rome has seen many improvements, thanks to the dedicated friars working at the *convitto*, led by its rector, fr. Orlando Rueda. Due to the lack of space at the Convent of St. Dominic and Sixtus (Angelicum) and other Dominican convents in Rome, the *convitto* has accommodated friars who are studying in Rome.

Media

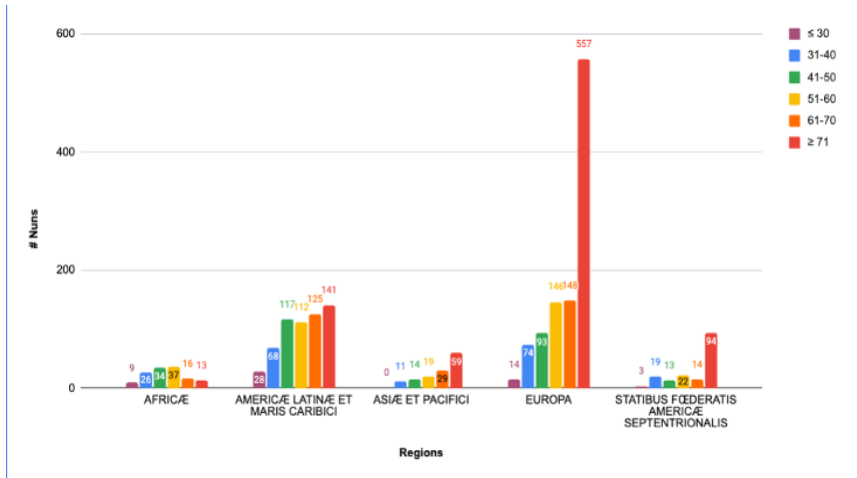
95. In January 2023 the General Promoter for Social Communications conducted a survey among the provincial promoters for communication. The survey showed that the provinces and vicariates of the Order have a total of 49 Facebook pages with approximately 400,000 followers, 19 Instagram pages with over 86,000 followers, 25 YouTube channels with 300,000 subscribers, and 13 Twitter channels with 50,000 followers. The survey also showed that these entities have 17 Newsletters, 14 Magazines, 10 radio stations, 4 newspapers, 2 Podcast channels and a television channel. These show that different platforms are available for preaching and vocational promotion.

96. The General Promoter of the Media is active in maintaining the visibility of the Order in social media networks. Nevertheless, a significant portion of the Order's diverse online presence is sustained globally by brothers and sisters who manage podcasts and other online initiatives. The brothers in France have done very creative preaching in the digital continent. It is noteworthy that their various creative projects are managed by teams. Moreover, they invite the persons who subscribe to their online projects to in-person meetings in convents and monasteries of nuns.

Members of the Dominican Family

Dominican Nuns

97. There are 2,030 Dominican nuns in January 2025 (there were 2,055 in 2024, 2,512 in 2021) living in 180 Monasteries in 46 Countries. At present, there are 16 federation of nuns and 2 associations.



The table shows that except for Africa, the biggest age-group of nuns in all the regions are above 70 years of age. This means that even with 52 novices and 49 postulants in the year 2024, we will see some decline in the number of nuns and, consequently, further restructuring of monasteries.

98. After the foundation of a new monastery in Ilorin, we have two new foundations in Fort Portal, Uganda and in Guatemala. These are signs of hope for the Dominican contemplative life in the Order.

99. The Spem Miram Nuns Internationalis established by fr. Bruno functions well and helps the Master in giving financial assistance to monasteries in accordance with the Constitution of the Nuns. The General Curia will assist the International Commission of Nuns in preparing a workshop for prioresses, which is like the workshop for new provincials.

Dominican Laity and Youth Movement

100. The lay fraternities of St. Dominic have been growing in different parts of the world. There is a growing interest

among young adults in the United States, Canada, France, and other countries in the Dominican charism lived out by the laity, and new fraternities are beginning to emerge in very diverse social and cultural contexts. As of December 2024, the Order has 2,307 fraternities and the Dominican laity all over the world has grown to 137,571 members. The number shows that the majority of “Dominican preaching” today is “lay-preaching.” I am happy to note that during visitations, I have encountered some members of the fraternity who were installed to the ministry of catechist in accordance with *Antiquum Ministerium* of 2021. I believe that this lay ministry is one of the important forms of lay preaching in the Church today.

101. The “common curriculum” for the formation of the Dominican laity is yet to be completed. The Province of the Holy Name has founded the Catherine of Siena Institute (CSI), which is “making evangelization and apostolic formation resources available to lay Catholics and developing new resources as needed”. I believe our brothers must do something similar for the Dominican laity.

102. As of December 2024, there are 1,940 members of the International Dominican Youth Movement who belong to 122 groups in 30 countries. These young people are accompanied by friars and sisters who serve as promoters of the youth.

Priestly Fraternities of St. Dominic

103. Since the last General Chapter of Tultenango in 2022, the Priestly Fraternities of St. Dominic grew from 419 to 481 members. Today there are 37 friar promoters and collaborators in 29 entities of the Order, 31 canonically erected fraternities, and 11 groups on the way to being canonically

established. Fraternities in the Order continue to gather its members regularly with occasional rites of admission or profession of the priests.

Dominican Sisters International

104. The Dominican Sisters International Confederation (DSIC) is a structure of collaboration among the Dominican apostolic sisters worldwide. It was officially recognized by the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life in February 2019. It has its office in Santa Sabina, Rome. The current membership of the DSIC includes approximately 17.822 sisters representing 144 Congregations in 109 countries. The generalates of these congregations are present in all the regions: 6 in Africa, 22 in Asia-Pacific, 80 in Europe, 19 in Latin America and the Caribbean, and 20 in North America.

General Postulation

105. The Postulator General, on the basis of the norms established by the Church (Norms for Postulators, 11 October 2021) and our Constitutions (LCO 434), is in charge of the preparation of Dominican causes in their different phases, from the diocesan to the Roman phases, to beatification and canonization. To accomplish this task, the postulator has collaborators in the General Curia and in the different countries where there are active causes.

106. At present, the Order counts 389 officially recognized blessed and saints. Of these, 74 are saints and 315 are blessed. The Postulator General is currently working on 90 causes. Some of these causes are accessible at this website <https://ordo-praedicatorum.notion.site>. The website does not

include causes which are currently in their early phase of investigation.

107. The General Postulation has no budget for the promotion of active causes and relies on the generosity of benefactors and the *Actor* for each cause. Ordinarily, the *Actor* assumes moral and financial responsibility for the cause. Ecclesiastical law entrusts the management of relics to the Postulator General. To avoid simony, superstition and other possible abuses, the Order has adopted a special Regulation of Relics, signed by the Master of the Order on 30 November 2022.

Conclusion

108. The reports of the members of the General Curia, Commissions, and the Institutions under the Master of the Order are, to a significant sense, integral parts of the present *relatio*. I am grateful to the members of the General Curia, the brothers of Santa Sabina, the members of the different councils and commissions who provide important service to the Order.



fr. Gerard Francisco Timoner III, OP

Master of the Order

Santa Sabina, Rome

8 March 2025

APPENDIX 2

The Vocation of the Cooperator Brother in the Order and in the Church

*Report of the Theological Commission for the General Chapter of
Krakow 2025*

I. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

In promulgating the acts of Biên Hòa (2019), the Master of the Order noted that ‘there seems to be a need for further theological reflection on *both the cooperator brother and the ordained brother*’. As a communion of both ordained and cooperator brothers, ‘what could our Order offer to the Church’, he asked, ‘which is an ordered communion, and whose priests are called to be “united in themselves in an intimate sacramental brotherhood”?’ Observing that there is a profound longing for brotherhood among priests, both diocesan and religious, Brother Gerard recalled that St Dominic wanted to be called Brother Dominic, ‘a theological title because it preaches, pointing to the coming Kingdom of God where everyone is a ‘brother’ and a ‘sister’, for there is only one Father who is in heaven’. One of the chapter’s recommendations to the master was that he appoint ‘suitably qualified friars’ to undertake ‘theological research on the vocation of the cooperator brother’ (ACG 2019 §199), adding that this research should ‘help to deepen our understanding of the specificity of the cooperator brother vocation in the Order and in the Church’. The Master of the Order duly appointed such a commission and this is its report.

1.1 *The Terms of Reference of this Report*

Unlike the tasks set for earlier commissions,⁹ this time the General Chapter's request pointed us explicitly *to the Church*, not just to the Order, requesting that the theological research consider also the brother's vocation in the Church. It was not necessary to repeat the excellent work done by earlier commissions and it seemed important that there should be a fresh starting point to the research and reflection. If we think of the Order offering the Church some help in relation to understanding and living its ordered communion, it is not strange to think of the Church offering the Order some help in relation to the same question.

A fresh starting point, therefore, was to consider how the Church, itself an ordered communion of many vocations, gifts, and ministries, has been speaking in recent times about that diversity. This is what is new about our approach compared with earlier reports: we looked first to the Church in order to find the Order within the Church and to learn from what is moving in the Church as a whole. This helped us to appreciate again the great variety of vocations within the Dominican family. The idea that every Christian is a missionary disciple seemed like a good place to begin. The un-ordained, or lay, Christian is also a missionary disciple, called to live the fullness of the Christian vocation in an appropriate way. The Order, and the Dominican Family more widely, reflects the ordered communion of the Church, since we have presbyters, cooperator brothers, cloistered nuns, lay Dominicans, the priestly fraternity, apostolic sisters, members

⁹ In an appendix to this report, we list the more substantial considerations on the cooperator brotherhood to be found in the acts of the general chapters since 1968, as well as noting other important developments in the Order's reflection on the brothers' vocation during the same time period.

of secular institutes, deacons ... each is called to live their missionary discipleship in an appropriate way, giving that discipleship a further specification from their profession in the Order of Preachers.

So, rather than first looking again at ourselves, at our own history and what we consider to be our mission, the theological commission decided to look firstly at the Church, at its current needs in relation to evangelization, the ministry of the Word, and preaching; to look at what it regards as the contribution of different groups of the faithful to these tasks; and to see how we might find ourselves anew, whether we are ordained or un-ordained brothers, within the context of the Church's mission received from Christ. The report from the Synod of October 2023 stated that to say "the mission (of Christ) has a Church" is better than saying that the Church has a mission. Likewise, it is better to say that "the mission of Christ in the Church has an Order of Preachers at the service of the preaching of the Word for the salvation of souls".

The terms of reference given to our commission were therefore the following:

1. To consider how the Church in recent times has been speaking of evangelization, of the ministry of the Word, of the preaching of the Gospel and of the particular needs and challenges these encounter today
2. To consider how the Church has been speaking of the contribution of different sections of the Church in responding to these needs and challenges – presbyters, religious, and in particular, lay people
3. To consider recent Church teaching concerning the ordained priesthood and the ministry of the Word

4. To consider the development of 'baptismal ministries'¹⁰ in the Church and their significance for members of the Order
5. To prepare a text that will help us to deepen our understanding of how Dominicans can participate in the mission of the Church today, whether we call that contemporary mission 'new evangelization' or 'missionary discipleship'
6. To suggest ways in which the outcome of this research might inform our presentation of the two vocations we find among the friars, that of the ordained brother and that of the cooperator brother.

In view of the proposed terms of reference, it seemed clear that the commission should include not only friars but members from other branches of the Dominican family with relevant theological expertise. It seemed reasonable also to think firstly of theologians working in the areas of ecclesiology, ministry, religious life, and sacramental theology. The commission appointed by the Master of the Order on 2 June 2021 therefore consisted of friars Anthony Akinwale (Nigeria, presbyter), Vivian Boland (Ireland, chair, presbyter), Franklin Buitrago Rojas (Colombia, presbyter), Andrew Hofer (St Joseph USA, presbyter), Felicísimo Martínez (Rosary Province, presbyter), Francis Nguyen Van Nhut (Vietnam, presbyter) and Joseph Trout (St Albert in the USA, cooperator) along with Sr Hedvig Deák (Hungary, Congregation of St Margaret of Hungary, apostolic sister) and

¹⁰ The expression 'baptismal ministries' has come to replace 'lay ministries' as a way of referring to those ministries in which members of the Church may be instituted either transitionally, in the case of men preparing for priestly ordination, or permanently, in the case of lay men and women. It presumes that Catholics so instituted are fully initiated members of the Church, i.e. have received the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and the Eucharist.

Erik Borgman (The Netherlands, Lay Dominican). The Commission's liaison person on the general council was the Socius for Fraternal Life and Formation (firstly Mark Padrez, then Juan Manuel Hernández).

1.2 Methodology

The terms of reference invited the commission to take a fresh approach to questions that have been considered at length over many years. Rather than looking first at our own history and legislation, the Commission felt charged to look first outside the Order, at the Church as a whole, with its particular preoccupations at this time in its history. We took as a given starting point the vision of the Church presented in *Lumen Gentium* with its positioning of religious life as a gift of God to the Church to strengthen its service of the mission of Christ. What is the Church thinking and saying now about the universal call to holiness, missionary discipleship rooted in baptism, common and ordained priesthood, baptismal and ordained ministries? The hope was that by exploring these themes we would see more clearly the importance of the brother's vocation for the Church and so too for the Order.

Important additions from our first round of meetings were that the needs of the Church vary from region to region and this needs to be kept in mind; that there is a diversity of social and cultural realities that is relevant; that the consecrated life is another state alongside lay and ordained Christians; and that there are also permanent deacons in the Dominican family whose particular ministry in relation to our charism has never been specifically considered.

At its first meeting, online, in July 2021, the Commission agreed to work initially in four sub-groups concerned with what the Church is saying about

1. evangelization, ministry of the Word, preaching: their needs and challenges today
2. the contribution of different sections of the Church in responding to these needs and challenges
3. the ordained priesthood and the ministry of the Word
4. baptismal ministries and their significance for the Order

Each group was to identify the most important points to consider in relation to each of these topics, as well as identify resources that might help us in researching them further. A dossier on each point was put together, drawing mainly on documents of the Church and the Order, especially the teachings of Vatican II and the recent Popes, as well as work by theologians specialized in these areas.

This dossier was then subjected to a series of ‘distillations.’ In an online meeting held in November 2021, we extracted 33 points connected with these four main areas that seemed to be the points of greatest importance for our task. Our hope was to bring those points to an in-person meeting at which we could also receive the assistance of people expert in canon law, pastoral theology and ecclesiology.

This was finally possible in November 2022 when we held an in-person meeting at Santa Sabina, attended also by brother Ignatius Perkins, the chair of the Permanent Commission for the Vocation of the Cooperator Brother. We thank the experts who contributed to our work by speaking at that meeting: Benjamin Earl OP, the procurator general, Donna Orsuto, director of the Lay Center, Rome, Paul Bednarczyk CSC, superior general of the ‘mixed’ congregation of Holy Cross, and Dario Vitali, professor of ecclesiology at the Gregorian University (later appointed by Pope Francis as coordinator of the expert theologians attending the Synod of October 2023).

The work of distilling further the main points of our reflection was greatly helped by the input we received at the November 2022 meeting and by the conversation we shared in a further online meeting in June 2023.

In November 2023, we were able to realize an ambition we had from the beginning, namely to have a joint meeting of the two Commissions appointed after the 2019 general chapter: the Theological Commission and the Permanent Commission. It was agreed that this meeting should receive contributions from brothers and others living and working in the different branches of the Dominican family, that the question of Dominican permanent deacons should also be considered, and that we should, if possible, have a contribution from one of the Dominican nuns about their particular vocation. So we received input from Benoît-Dominique de la Soujeole on the diaconate and the place of deacons in the Order, from Cristóbal Torres, the general promoter of the Dominican laity, from Brother Michael McAward SM, a Marianist brother and member of that congregation's general council, on the vocation of the 'religious brother' in the Church, from Juan Manuel Hernández, socius for fraternal life and formation, on his responsibility towards the cooperator brothers, from sister Breda Carroll, prioress of the Dominican Monastery in Drogheda (Ireland) and from the Master of the Order, giving us an update on his experience relative to our task.

Our report has been further distilled in view of the presentations and conversation at the November 2023 meeting. Further online meetings took place in May 2024 and December 2024 during which the final version of this report was agreed.

II. THE REPORT

2.1 DOMINICANS:

DISCIPLES, PREACHERS, MISSIONARIES

1. Dominicans serve the Church through preaching the Word of God. It is more than a particular charism for it is an activity that is at the heart of the gospel and of the life of the Church. Preaching does not simply mean giving liturgical homilies for it includes preaching to the city and not just to congregations already gathered. It means announcing the Word in the many forms that can take: celebration of faith, testimony of life, the service of charity, witness, listening, sharing, human promotion, commitment to justice, as well as liturgical preaching also of course. LCO speaks of it as the ministry of the Word, undertaken in all the different modalities in which that happens in the Church: kerygma and first evangelization, catechesis and Christian formation, mystagogy and continuing faith formation, the way of beauty. It might seem that evangelization is now a better term for all this, but we believe it is important to retain and, if necessary, to renew the term 'preaching'. The mission of the Church always requires the preaching of the Word and everything the Order of Preachers does flows from its call to respond to that need.

2. The first Dominicans preached from a shared evangelical life so that the building of community and the living of communion were always essential to the way in which they were preachers. Our particular way of serving the Word of God requires a common life lived in fraternity, the Word received through contemplation and study, the Word celebrated in liturgy and prayer, the Word proclaimed through teaching and witness. Writing to the Order in 2021, Pope Francis praised St Dominic for his life spent

‘proclaiming the Gospel by word and example so as to build up the Church in fraternal unity and missionary discipleship’. The Pope recalled also that from the beginning the Order of Preachers had embraced all the states of life in the Church, enabling the charism of preaching to overflow to all the branches of the Dominican family. As the Church itself is an ordered communion, so the Dominican family is an ordered communion. Our fraternity will always mean living in unity the diversity of personalities, gifts, experiences and responsibilities that are ours.

3. Brothers and sisters of the Order share in its task of preaching according to the diversity of their states and gifts. It is always undertaken within a particular culture, in particular conditions of time and space. At any time, there are regional differences, but there are also temporal or historical differences, as priorities, preferences and possibilities change from one generation to another. The mendicant movement emerged in response to just such a series of cultural changes that had social, intellectual, economic and political aspects. The history of the cooperator brother in the Order witnesses to just such realities, as this particular vocation was, and is, understood and lived in different ways, in different parts of the Order, at different times.

4. The Order began in a moment in which the Church made a radical change in the organization of its preaching mission. The Lateran Council of 1215 called on bishops to find men (*sic*) suitable for carrying on the work of preaching when the bishops themselves either could not or would not engage effectively in the task. In the following years, Pope Honorius III frequently recommended the preachers to the bishops of the Church and soon came to designate it as not just an order of preachers but an order of confessors, with the related task

of celebrating the sacrament of penance and reconciliation, another pastoral concern of the Lateran Council in 1215. This link with the authority of bishops and the celebration of the sacraments explains why the Order is clerical from the beginning. For many of the friars, their baptismal grace, completed by confirmation, and made concrete through religious profession, needed also ordination as presbyters if the preachers were to fulfil the mission entrusted to them by the Church.

5. Like Dominic, Dominicans sought to live *in medio ecclesiae*, that is, through preaching, to be at the service of the entire community of believers. This was to be their way to holiness. Not all friars became ‘pulpit preachers’, not even all the ordained friars, but all cooperated in the common mission. Some did this through ministries internal to the community – domestic and liturgical, administrative and formational – whereas others took on external ministries – pastoral, educational, missionary. Just as there is a variety of gifts and ministries among the ordained brothers of the Order, and among the nuns, sisters and laity, it seems reasonable that variety will be found also among the cooperator brothers – that some will be community brothers, others involved in education, some pursuing professional activities, still others preaching more explicitly.

6. St Dominic had already seen the necessity for the engagement of women in the work of the ‘holy preaching’. The communities at Prouille and San Sisto, for example, were communities of nuns supported by teams of friars, the nuns in turn supporting the friars through their prayers and friendship. So, the Prouille community was from the beginning called ‘The Holy Preaching of St. Mary of Prouille.’

2.2 DOMINIC'S 'INSTITUTIONAL CHARISM'

7. The phrase 'institutional charism' comes from brother Guy Bedouelle in his account of the beginnings of the Order and it is a happy one as it helps to warn us against setting up any dualistic opposition of prophetic and priestly, lay and clerical, female and male, baptismal and ordained ministries.¹¹ The kind of community established by St Dominic – an ordered communion of friars, ordained and lay, along with nuns – was a factor giving credibility to its preaching as it already partially realized the communion of the Church itself.

8. Profession in the Order of Preachers publicly recognizes and makes official the gift and obligation to be involved in its ministry of preaching. Thomas Aquinas says that this is true already of any fully initiated Christian: confirmation empowers him or her to witness by their words to their faith in Christ and to do it publicly and, as it were, officially.¹² Our profession gives this Christian responsibility a particular specification, integrating us in a community for which the preaching of the Word is its being and purpose.

9. For us, preaching is linked with praise and blessing, and is undertaken in the first place to glorify God, confessing God's grace in the wonders God has done in creation and in history. The first Dominicans show a marked sense of joy in proclaiming the gospel and in seeking to live it together, something to which the whole Church has now been recalled, each Christian having a place in communicating the joy of the gospel (*Evangelii Gaudium*). We address St Dominic as

¹¹ The phrase is intended to indicate that the strength of Dominic's project lay in its combination of charismatic inspiration and institutional collaboration, a strength it would not have had if it had relied on just one of these without the other.

¹² *Summa theologiae* III 72 5 ad 2, *potestas publice fidem Christi verbis profitendi, quasi ex officio*

‘preacher of grace,’ and this also characterizes the content and style of our preaching. To quote Pope Francis again, the family of St Dominic sought to reach every periphery of our world with the light of the gospel and the merciful love of Christ.

10. Any form of evangelization includes, sooner or later, the explicit proclamation of the Gospel, and this is a priority objective for the members of the Order of Preachers. The many ways of serving the Word facilitate the preaching vocation of all the brothers and sisters of the Order. Yet throughout our history, most of the friars have been ordained to the presbyterate for the celebration of the sacraments that are directly related to the fruits of preaching, in particular reconciliation and the Eucharist.

11. St Dominic several times refused to become a bishop. It seems that this was not just out of humility but because he did not want to preach the Gospel with hierarchical authority alone. He wanted to preach it with the strength of his own faith experience and the testimony of an evangelical life. Evangelical poverty is one essential credential of Dominican preaching, as Humbert of Romans makes clear in his concerns about Albert the Great becoming a bishop.¹³

12. A letter from the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith in 2016 seems to have strengthened the distinction between hierarchical and charismatic gifts in the Church.¹⁴ Pope

¹³ Humbert’s letter to Albert is found in Rudolph of Nijmegen, *Legenda Alberti Magni* (ed. H.C. Scheeben, Cologne 1928, pp.154-56). An English translation is given by Simon Tugwell OP in *Albert & Thomas: Selected Writings* (The Classics of Western Spirituality, Paulist Press 1988, pp.16-18).

¹⁴ Letter of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith *Iuvenescit Ecclesia: On the Relationship between hierarchical and charismatic gifts in the life and mission of the Church* (2016): while the hierarchical confirms the charismatic, the charismatic moves the hierarchical. We cannot

Francis frequently appeals to this distinction in making decisions about new movements, for example. Rather than beginning with the distinctions between us, however, it is better to consider our common ground first, the communion and mission of the Order which is shared by all the brothers and sisters, and then to consider distinctions according to the particular gifts that are found among us. The ordained Dominican brother, for example, is in the first place a Dominican friar, and so he is not only a presbyter. We understand our ministerial priesthood, therefore, within the communion and mission of the Order as it serves the communion and mission of the Church.¹⁵ The identity of the cooperator brothers is defined in relation to their profession as consecrated religious, which places them in the charismatic dimension of the Church's life as *Iuvenescit Ecclesia* understands it.

2.3 WE ARE PREACHERS

13. For some historians of the Order, it was the papal bull of 21 January 1217 which finally confirmed what St Dominic wanted, an order that would be called, and would be in fact, an order of preachers. It was in that bull that the brothers were first referred to as "preachers" and not simply as brothers who preach. It is, therefore, something we are and not just something we do. We know also that the term *praedicatio* in the early days referred to the entire project of Dominican common life and obedience: prayer and study, community life and preaching. The ministry of Dominican preaching was to be a community ministry and each house was a "house of

hope that the Order will be clearer about this distinction and these relations than the Church itself is!

¹⁵ Note that Vatican II left untreated the question of the priest who is also a religious.

preaching." Not all the friars preached individually, not even all the friars who were ordained. In fact, the first generations were very strict in determining which brothers had received "the grace of preaching". This later gave rise to problems and the expression "grace of preaching" was removed from the Constitutions. But the fact that Dominican preaching is a community mission, and that the "preaching" is in the first place the Dominican community itself, means that all members of the community carry out this mission. Dominic entrusted the ministry of preaching to the community in order to guarantee the continuity and permanence of that ministry and to support and accredit the preaching with the witness of the evangelical life of the community. Today, it is rightly repeated that preaching is not something we do, it is something we are: "we are a preaching".

14. A major concern of the Church from the Middle Ages onwards was the license to preach: who has the authority to preach the gospel? The *Fourth Lateran Council* (1215) changed things significantly:

... bishops are to appoint suitable men to carry out with profit this duty of sacred preaching, men who are powerful in word and deed and who will visit with care the peoples entrusted to them, in place of the bishops, since these by themselves are unable to do it, and will build them up by word and example (Canon 10).

We see in this decision that the mission of the Church required an important development in organizing the ministry of the Word. By the time of the Second Vatican Council, it was clear and uncontroversial that the first task of all priests as co-workers of the bishops is to preach the Gospel

of God to all people.¹⁶ Might the mission of the Church require further significant developments today or in the future? Undoubtedly. God constantly brings new things to birth in his Church, Honorius III wrote to St Dominic.

15. At the same time, Humbert of Romans pleaded with Albert the Great not to accept a bishopric: how can you preach from a base of poverty if you accept such a position of power? That base is a necessary foundation for preaching as St. Dominic wanted to do it. He had scattered his brothers to various parts of Europe in order to study, to preach, and to found convents. The credibility of Dominican preaching was founded on two things: on the one hand poverty and the simplicity of a shared evangelical life, on the other hand study, contemplation and scholarship. The poverty of the mendicant orders was not an end in itself. It was essential in order to give credibility to their preaching, in imitation of Christ's lifestyle and that of the apostles as he sent them out to preach. Scholarship was the other essential foundation for their preaching. Our traditions of scholarship are being well maintained, but what about our poverty/mendicancy today? What about the joy and fruitfulness which, we are told, followed on the preaching of Dominic and his first brothers? What about the contemplative dimension, which is always part of our approach to study? What about the holiness of life, which gives authority to those who witness to the Word?

16. The dangers of going with this mission were highlighted by Humbert's plea to Albert: how to preach the gospel effectively from a position of power? The Church looks to consecrated religious not only as examples of fraternal life lived in communion but also as men and women ready to

¹⁶ Vatican II, *Presbyterorum Ordinis: Decree on the ministry and life of priests*, n.4

proclaim the gospel to the marginalized, to live and work with those who, in various ways, are on the periphery of society and of the Church. Often it has been the co-operator brothers who have served this aspect of the Order's mission best, working with people at the margins, people who, for one reason or another, are not 'in focus', not being concerned about institutional power so as to be closer to those who are without power.

17. From the beginning, the Order defined itself as clerical and the motives are quite clear in the origins of the Order. As well as the connection with the celebration of the sacraments and the link with episcopal authority, doctrinal preaching was only allowed to those who were ordained. It meant preaching the central mysteries of the Christian faith, namely the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Redemption, the Resurrection, and the action of the Holy Spirit. Non-ordained people were allowed to give moral exhortation, to preach on the virtues and against vices. Today, no baptized person is prohibited from announcing the mysteries of the Christian creed and we have all known compelling and effective lay preachers.

18. We live in a time of increasingly rapid change. Only becoming accustomed to the internet, the world is now faced with the challenges and possibilities of artificial intelligence. These are developments at least comparable to the invention of the printing press and offer possibilities for communication which are clearly relevant to the work of preaching. There is a great need for men and women skilled and formed in the use of these technologies and ready to cooperate with their brothers and sisters who are formed for other aspects of the ministry of the Word. In a specialized world, the Order needs people with specialized knowledge and expertise, not just in the area of theology but also in the many areas relevant to the

work of preaching today. The early chapters of the Order insisted that men wanting to be cooperator brothers should have certain skills and expertise that would contribute to its mission and provide what that mission requires. The brothers continue to bring to the Order the gifts they have been given to put them to work for the mission of preaching. As specialization increases, so too does the need for collaboration and co-responsibility. It is important that the experience of all the brothers and sisters is shared across the Dominican family and that the responsibility to preach in whatever ways are open to us is taken seriously by each of us.

19. First and last, however, we are effective preachers only if we are also contemplatives of the Word, loving servants of the Word in receiving it, celebrating it, living it and proclaiming it. Whatever technological developments may mark our lives in the future, it is the life-giving Word which is our subject, a Word we wish to share with all people, helping them to join us, whatever their vocation or state in life, in contemplating it and sharing with others the fruits of that contemplation.

2.4 THE COOPERATOR BROTHER

20. After all that has been said, are we any nearer to glimpsing the “figure” of the Dominican cooperator brother? We know that it is a particular state of life present in the Order from the beginning and across the centuries, necessary, as the general chapter of Quezon City says, if the fullness of the Order’s identity is to be manifested: ‘where presbyter and cooperator

brothers are seen to be present and working together the Order is truly and fully present'.¹⁷

21. As professed friars, the brothers are also preachers: service of the Word is their being and life also. From the common priesthood of all who are fully initiated in the Church (LCO 1 §VI), further specified by their profession in the Order of Preachers, springs the brothers' co-responsibility for the life and mission of the Church within the preaching of the Order. Profession in the consecrated life and, in particular, profession in the Order of Preachers constitutes the specific identity of the vocation of the brothers.

22. Aquinas wrote that religious life adorns the Church, adding to its beauty. Its purpose in the first place is not to undertake particular tasks but simply to glorify God and to sanctify those who are called to it, things that are clearly good in and of themselves.¹⁸ Consecrated life itself proclaims hope in the Resurrection. Lived well, it reveals the beauty of Christ to the world and draws people into the Divine Life. This is essential but not unique to the vocation of the brother. If our common life ceases to adorn the Body of Christ and praise his goodness, we are 'noisy gongs and clanging cymbals'. Something which has been emphasized strongly in recent years in magisterial and theological teaching is that the 'way of beauty' is an essential modality of the ministry of the Word today. It is also why the contemplative dimension is always prized in consecrated life.

23. The preaching of the cooperator brothers can be a healthy prophetic stimulus within the Order. This type of preaching

¹⁷ ACG Quezon City 1977, §62.2-3. See also ACG Tultenango 2022, §78.

¹⁸ *Summa theologiae* II.II 183 2; 183 3; 184 1; 186 1.

depends entirely on the quality of a brother's spiritual and evangelical life. We must think firstly about the brother's spirituality rather than about his work. This "preaching without ordination", in the many ways in which it is done by the brothers, is an important contribution of the brothers' vocation to the rest of the Order. Recalling the charismatic basis for their preaching should help to avoid the temptation to "clericalize" the brothers and distort their vocation. At the same time, recent general chapters have reminded us of the need to renew our appreciation of the Dominican presbyterate, re-thinking its meaning by, for example, recovering the sense of spiritual paternity.¹⁹

24. The charismatic aspect of the Church's life is prophetic, which sometimes means "disruptive", challenging an institutional arrangement that can all too easily become complacent. Linking the charismatic with the prophetic, religious life is a voice from the periphery. The Church asks religious to be with the very poorest and to represent them, calling the Church to live again from the creative power of love, which may at times seem chaotic before it is recognized as creative. The brother's vocation is disquieting because it calls us to appreciate the non-instrumental, the non-functional, the human reality simply for itself, in its beauty and its neediness. Religious life serves as a "mirror and memory" for the Church, reflecting and reminding it of what it is called to be. The brother's vocation is the vocation to religious life, which is a particular way of manifesting the beauty of Christ and of drawing people to Christ. The empowerment of lay people in the Church means that young men and women will now be attracted to our life not in order

¹⁹ ACG Biên Hòa 2019, §§91c and 268, and the Master's letter of promulgation; ACG Tultenango 2022, §82

to do certain things, which they could just as well do outside the Order, but to take up the preaching mission specifically as consecrated religious. Without a sense of religious life as desirable in itself, talking about the ways a brother can do internal or external ministries will do nothing to promote his vocation. The desire to reveal Christ to the world through the 'holy preaching' is what everything comes back to.

25. The mendicant vocation was prophetic also in obliging those who lived it to be out and about, in the world and engaging with the world. This was not only for the purposes of seeking economic support but in order to identify the presence of the Spirit moving also in the world. Yves Congar OP, in *True and False Reform in the Church*, stressed that the Church needs to listen to the world, that the world also, we might say, can serve as "mirror and memory" for the Church. We can understand it as the kind of prophetic critique which, under God's providence, calls us forward. Often it is the cooperator brothers who have been closest to the people and more aware of their concrete situations and circumstances. The cooperator brother is often at the periphery, perhaps therefore in the vanguard, of the Church as it engages with the world.

26. Promoting vocations for the cooperator brotherhood is an urgent challenge.²⁰ There are divergent views across the Order about the future of the cooperator brother's vocation and clearly it cannot be promoted and sustained where the necessary conviction about it is not found. If vocations are to be promoted effectively, the Order must recover conviction about the brother's vocation. To what extent are we convinced

²⁰ Tultenango 2022, §§28, 196

about the truth of this statement: *the Order responds more effectively to the needs of preaching the gospel today when it is made up of cooperator brothers also?* In places where this is accepted, everything should be done to support the formation and engagement of the brothers in the life of the communities and to share the experiences of such places with the Order as a whole. In places where social and cultural traditions militate against the promotion of the brother's vocation, extra effort needs to be put into understanding, explaining, and promoting this vocation. Provinces need to analyze their own commitment to our mission and the ways that they are drawing young men to participate in it. We believe that the testimony of individual brothers concerning their vocation and how they are living their lives is the most powerful way to present this way of life and to promote this vocation.

27. We have cooperator brothers, therefore, so that the gospel can be preached by us in all the ways in which it can be preached. All members of the family are essential. The Order can offer men a way of living their Christian lives which is neither that of ministerial priesthood, married life or the single lay life. In discerning vocations to the brotherhood, as for the formation of brothers, their inclination to the Church's mission and their sense of co-responsibility in regard to that mission, must be a fundamental criterion.

28. Thinking about the brothers obliges us to think about our motivation in promoting *any* vocations to the Order. Why do we do it? Is it to keep up numbers? Is it to maintain a supply of presbyters for the Church? Do we need to construct a new story about ourselves, not just about the brothers, if we are to be free from thinking in categories too long established and if we are to find fresh energy and enthusiasm in responding to new missionary needs? Perhaps a more radical change is

needed, a fresh vision rather than simply seeking new methods for old wineskins? The process of 'synodality' coincided with the period in which our commission was working. We do not yet see what implications that process might have for consecrated religious and for the brothers in particular, except that all members of the Church are called to embrace the 'synodal way'. It means in the first place ensuring that all Dominican brothers and sisters appreciate the 'synodal' form of self-government which St Dominic gave to the Order and that all are enabled to participate as fully as possible in the workings of that form of self-government.

29. It is important to respect the mystery and grace of vocation in the life of each individual person. A vocation means a call by the Lord to a particular way of life. It is essential that aspirants to the Order are inserted first in the life of the Church, recognizing the dignity of baptism and of all Christians, appreciating the universal call to holiness as well as the particular call for each person. It may be that promotion of the lay vocation in the Church has lessened esteem for religious life while the need for ministerial priests remains clear. But the cooperator brother witnesses to the grace of a consecrated life, the gospel lived radically in a life given completely to God, in poverty and simplicity, from a desire to take on the cost of discipleship. It is essential, therefore, that a friar who believes himself called to be a cooperator brother should receive the support of his brothers and sisters in pursuing this call and in living it. Younger brothers speak of being discouraged by their clerical brethren from continuing to pursue the vocation they believe is theirs. A brother who addressed our commission said that the brother's vocation is not for the faint-hearted today; those called to it need discipline, integrity, transparency, and maturity. It might be

helpful to reflect that the vocation of the brother is similar to that of the Dominican nun in being simply about the religious life and not in the first place functional for some particular activity. If there is no God, the brother's way of life, like the nun's, is pointless, but if there is God, then he deserves everything (Sr Breda Carroll OP).

30. The cooperator brother's vocation is often spoken of as having a representative or 'quasi-sacramental' function and there is a temptation to find its *raison d'être* entirely in some such representative function: it reminds us of fraternity or poverty, of simplicity or availability. In doing this, the Order seeks to express its appreciation of the brothers: their presence reminds us that we are not only presbyters, but it also reminds us of important aspects of our spirituality. But we value each other in the first place for who we are in ourselves and for what each of us brings to the Order, not just for representing things for us. In fact, the most important structural or institutional contribution the cooperator brothers make comes simply when they live their consecrated religious life well. In this they are not only representatives but witnesses. The Master of the Order puts it very well when he says that 'one brother in a community is enough to bring us back to our fraternity.' We must, however, first appreciate the brother for himself in order to see the deeper value of the Master's statement.

31. Much time has been given to discussing the best name for the brothers, particularly at the general chapter of Biên Hòa (2019). Many within the Order dislike the term "cooperator" and it can be difficult to explain to outsiders. There are practical difficulties because it is a clunky title and unhelpful for communication within the Church at large, since no other

religious order or congregation uses this term. Efforts to find a better way of naming the brother and his vocation have proved fruitless. Their name, like that of all members of the Order, is brother (*frater*) as it is sister (*soror*) for women members of the Order. All are equal in dignity.²¹ At certain times, it will be necessary to speak of a brother's or sister's specific vocation or status within the Order: nun, apostolic sister, lay Dominican, priest brother, or cooperator brother. But where it is not necessary to make any distinction then it is enough to speak of the brothers and the sisters of St Dominic. The present situation is that in official documents the term 'cooperator brother' continues to be used while provinces are free to use other terminology if the circumstances of their region or the needs of external communication make that advisable and/or helpful.²²

32. If the name cooperator brother is maintained, the term "cooperator" must be understood in the sense of co-responsibility in the evangelizing mission of the Church, which the Order is called to serve (LCO 219 §II). Even if it is awkward in some ways, it has a solid theological foundation within the Order, where some distinguishing title will always be necessary. In 2009, Pope Benedict XVI spoke of the co-responsibility of all members of the Church: they are not just collaborators with the clergy, he said, they are co-responsible for the Church's life and mission. But he also said that in this regard, the Church still has a long way to go²³. Likewise, the

²¹ Note especially the fine text in ACG Quezon City 1977 referred to in the Appendix below.

²² ACG Biên Hòa 2019, §192

²³ Benedict XVI, *Address at the Opening of the Pastoral Convention of the Diocese of Rome on the Theme 'Church Membership and Pastoral Co-responsibility'*, 26 May 2009 (available in various languages on the Holy See's website at <https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en.html>).

cooperator brothers are not defined simply or even primarily as cooperating with the presbyters. Rather are they co-responsible in the evangelizing mission of the Church as it is undertaken within the Order of Preachers and in line with their particular vocation within the Order (LCO 100 §II).²⁴ The first use of the term “cooperation” in LCO is actually in regard to the ordained friars who, as cooperators with the episcopal order by reason of their ordination, have a prophetic responsibility for the preaching of the Gospel (LCO 1 §V). The brothers who are not ordained cooperate in this same mission on the basis of the common priesthood which, as Dominican friars, they exercise in a particular way (LCO 1 §VI). We are all cooperators, therefore, in the mission of Christ as carried on by the Church, and we do it in many and varied ways. Even more, we are called not only to co-operate but to be co-responsible for the Church’s life and mission.

2.5 OTHER MINISTRIES, BAPTISMAL AND DIACONAL

33. Baptismal ministries²⁵ are not ‘minor orders.’ Formerly referred to as ‘lay ministries,’ and since 2021 open also to women, they are based in baptism. When cooperator brothers are instituted in one of these ministries it is on the basis of their being baptized persons and not from an orientation towards the ministerial priesthood. Like the diaconate, these ministries may be received in either a transitional or a

²⁴ The text of LCO 100 §II referred to has now been abrogated by the general chapter of Tultenango (ACG Tultenango §339). The previous general chapter had already removed the specific reference to the cooperator brothers (ACG Biên Hòa 2019, §388). As noted at the end of the appendix to this report, this text served to structure the report prepared by the Madonna dell’Arco Commission for the general chapter of Quezon City (ACG Quezon City 1977, §62).

²⁵ See note 2 above.

permanent way. But there remains a danger of clericalizing these ministries, as there is also of clericalizing religious generally, e.g. by assuming that if consecrated people are present, they are the ones who should be asked to take on liturgical functions.

34. It is a question for individual provinces as to whether all friars in formation are instituted in the baptismal ministries of lector and acolyte. It is not necessary that cooperator brothers should be so instituted, although there is nothing to prevent it. The danger already mentioned, of ministries being clericalized, needs to be guarded against, however, since at the present time the term 'ministry' seems more and more to imply a service of the Church community that is internal, liturgical and quasi-clerical. The term 'apostolate' on the other hand refers to a service of the Church community and of the world that is external, pastoral and engaged in the life of men and women beyond the walls of the church building.

35. Yet all ministry in the Church includes apostolic outreach. The ministry of *lector* involves not just reading at Mass but includes a broader ministry of proclaiming and teaching the Word, having a real apostolate to the Church and to the world centered on the Word of God. The ministry of *acolyte* is more internal, focused on liturgical services, but is understood also as including a broader ministry of preparing people for the reception of Holy Communion, bringing the Eucharist to the sick, and so on. Requirements remain as for any ministry: to live a spiritual life appropriate to the ministry one exercises, to receive the necessary formation, and to be appointed to the task by the Church.

36. Now that the *catechist* is recognized as a specific ministry, and not just a task linked with the lector, it may well be that some of our brothers will be formed and instituted as catechists, a ministry which many of them already carry out. The catechist seems to be the ministry that holds most potential for Dominicans since it is concerned directly with the formation of people in the faith. We note what the Master of the Order says in his *relatio* to the General Chapter of Tultenango, ‘with the institution of the ministry of catechist ... it seems opportune to encourage lay Dominicans, especially those who have the charism of teaching, to be instituted as catechists’.²⁶

37. It is fitting but not necessary that the cooperator brothers be instituted in one or other of the baptismal ministries. They are already apostolic through their profession as Dominicans even where they are not instituted formally in one of these ministries. Their vocation is, in the first place, to witness by their spirituality to the religious life itself, the gift of themselves to God and to Christ as the Word of God. As professed friars of the Order, they are preachers in their particular way, even without any formal institution in a ministry.

38. While debate continues in the Church on the role of the deacon, permanent diaconal ministry is coherent with our mission though it constitutes, in fact, a third type of friar – neither presbyter nor cooperator brother. The conditions required for Dominican diaconal ministry are the same as for other brothers, namely a full living of Dominican fraternal

²⁶ ACG Tultenango 2022, *Relatio MO*, §57.

life.²⁷ The deacon is ordained to service of the charity of Christ which has its sources in the Word (hence the deacon preaches) and in the Cup (hence the deacon is typically the minister of the chalice). This is always with a view to the common good of the community he serves. The sacramental witness to charity on the part of the deacon is distinct from the charismatic witness to charity in the life of, for example, Martin de Porres who was neither presbyter nor deacon and whose service of charity was rooted simply in his personal holiness. This helps to clarify the distinction between the hierarchical or sacramental and the charismatic: one belongs to the order of signification, the other to the order of personal holiness.

2.6 RECURRING QUESTIONS

39. A number of particular issues continue to surface whenever the brothers' vocation is considered. One is *our use of the term 'cooperator'*: can we find a better way of naming this vocation? What was decided at Biên Hòa seems to be the best solution possible at the present time: see §§31-32 above. It is important to remember why the brothers themselves are unhappy with this designation: it seems to imply that they are simply cooperators in the ministries of the presbyters and exercise no ministry independently, or even that they are secondary to the mission of the Order. Resistance to changing the designation and calling all friars simply "brothers" may arise from a fear that this will have implications for the clerical status of the Order and further confuse the issue considered in n.40 below. At the same time, it should be noted that recent general chapters have removed all references to the

²⁷ ACG Quezon City, 1977, §63

distinction between clerical and cooperator brothers except where it is necessary to refer explicitly to one or other of these.

40. Another issue is *the question of passive voice* in the election of superiors concerning which there have been some relevant developments in the Church in recent years: a rescript of 18 May 2022 concerning un-ordained superiors in clerical institutes, and the Apostolic Constitution on the Roman Curia of 19 March 2022, *Praedicate evangelium*, regarding the link between ordination and jurisdiction, a link that was strengthened after Vatican II.

The *rescript of 18 May 2022* allows a general superior with his council to appoint a non-cleric as a local superior. Were a non-cleric to be elected as a major superior or appointed as his vicar this would require the permission of the Dicastery for Consecrated Life (a permission given already in the case of the Congregation of Holy Cross). It is not a change in the underlying law but a change to the Church's procedure for making exceptions under certain circumstances. Nor does it envisage local superiors being elected by their communities and so the language does not quite match that of LCO. While the requirements of LCO for electing a superior remain in place, the general chapter of Tultenango inchoated a change to LCO 443 §II to clarify that those requirements do not apply to postulations; postulation is itself a means to seek dispensation from requirements.²⁸ As always, there needs to be just cause for a postulation and it is also important not to move towards defining the cooperator brother in clerical terms.

²⁸ AGC Tultenango 2022, §353

The *Apostolic Constitution of 19 March 2022* returned to the pre-Vatican II situation where ordination and jurisdiction were further apart. But the kind of power involved, in presiding over a Dicastery for example, is always “vicarious” whereas our superiors exercise proper and not vicarious authority. But the concerns of *Praedicate evangelium* are relevant to the involvement of un-ordained brothers in our government more generally, as diffinitors, councilors, and so on. Our last general chapter encouraged provinces to invite a cooperator brother to attend the provincial chapter where there is no brother among the elected members of the chapter.²⁹ Likewise, the various councils of the Order are strengthened by the presence of cooperator brothers, an arrangement which manifests the fulness of the Order and keeps the brothers’ vocation in the minds of the brothers generally.

It is interesting that in speaking to our commission, Brother Michael McAward, SM informed us that his congregation, from its foundation a ‘mixed’ congregation of ordained and un-ordained members, chose to be designated, like ours, as a clerical religious institute because this gave them greater autonomy. At the same time, they have always enjoyed particular derogations on account of their unique origins.

41. A third recurring issue is the question of *preaching during Mass* or at other liturgical celebrations: must this always be restricted to the one presiding, to another presbyter or to a deacon, and so never possible for student brothers or cooperator brothers, for sisters and lay people generally? While recalling the links between preaching and ministerial priesthood which are outlined in LCO I §§IV-VI (see also LCO §57), and recalling also the more general sense given to the

²⁹ ACG Tultenango 2022, §174

term “preaching” in recent legislation of the Order, we make two suggestions. One is to be aware of the possibility offered by Canon 766: ‘The laity may be allowed to preach in a church or oratory if in certain circumstances it is necessary, or in particular cases it would be advantageous, according to the provisions of the Bishops’ Conference and without prejudice to Can.767 §1’. (Canon 767 §1 says the homily itself is reserved to a presbyter or deacon.) Our second suggestion is to consider the many other ways in which preaching may be undertaken: within para-liturgical or devotional settings, during novenas and moments of retreat especially in the ‘high seasons’ of the year, as well as the many possibilities offered by the internet and modern media, possibilities already being realized in many ways by brothers and sisters of the Order.

42. One might ask: why does the question of the authority to preach the homily come up. Countless opportunities to proclaim Christ are available to the non-ordained in the Church. Have we allowed the emphasis on this particular moment of preaching to distract us? As if we were the order of homilists and not the order of preachers? The more we talk about brothers and others giving homilies, the less we pay attention perhaps to other needs and opportunities. We may also be overvaluing the homily. Without going as far as saying we should drop this question, we need to consider whether it has become a distraction from our mission.

CONCLUSION

There is one Dominican vocation lived in different ways by the men and women who belong to the different branches of the Dominican Family. We can identify easily some of its main characteristics, all of them focused in some way on the

loving service of the Word of God. We receive the Word in preaching and in prayer, in study and in contemplation. We celebrate the Word in liturgy as well as through the arts, music, literature and so on. We live the Word in the common life we share together. And we seek to preach the Word through teaching and works of mercy, responding, as Pope Francis put it in his talk to the general chapter of 2016, to the cry of the flesh of Christ, the cry of the poor.

Our aim has not been to give a definition of the brother's vocation but to highlight its goodness to which the lives of so many brothers have testified and continue to testify. To translate that vocation into words proves difficult for many reasons, social, cultural and theological. It is also difficult because there are different ways in which the vocation of the brother is being lived in different parts of the world and in different provinces of the Order. While we did not find a 'definition' of the cooperator brother, we believe that this is not a difficulty: the brothers are here and we know what they mean to our communities when they are present. We sought to be motivated not by anxiety and fear about the disappearance of the brothers but rather by the desire to appreciate anew the good that they are for the Order and for the Church. One of the conclusions at which we arrived was seeing more clearly that the work of understanding the brother's vocation is the work of understanding religious life itself in the Church today. For that reason, the Order's concern about the brothers is a concern not just about that particular vocation but about the integrity of the Dominican vocation as a whole. We can apply Saint Paul's comment here: 'if one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it' (1 Corinthians 12.26).

At the same time, if we are to present the vision of a striking way of life to a new generation it is urgent that we find both conviction and expression regarding the brother's vocation. How to do that in a way that is not exclusive or negative and yet catches something of the specificity of this way of living the Dominican vocation: this has been the challenge for chapters and commissions of the Order for many years now. But it seems clear that finding conviction about it is the main challenge: where that is found, the necessary words will come.

What we have given here may be described as a snapshot of where we are at this moment in the life of the Church and of the Order. The Appendix which follows reveals how the dynamics of the brothers' mission within the Order has evolved in recent decades. We hope of course that our work will shed some light on the task of understanding and promoting the brothers' vocation as we look to the future. We cannot end without expressing our admiration and gratitude for the brothers of the Order, living and deceased, who have inspired us in how they live our common vocation, in brotherhood and humility, in prayer and mutual service. As the Master of the Order expressed it in meeting with our commission, "one brother in a community is enough to bring us back to our fraternity".

APPENDIX OF THIS REPORT

Here we note the more substantial statements about the cooperator brothers in the acts of general chapters since 1968, we note the reports of earlier commissions charged with considering aspects of the brothers' vocation, and we record some important events relevant to the brothers' place in the

Order's life and mission. Besides the longer statements, commissions and reports, there is a series of changes to LCO across these years which reflects the Order's concerns regarding the integration of the brothers in the life, ministry and government of the Order, dealing with issues such as extending passive voice, removing reference to the distinction of cleric and cooperator where it is not necessary, and strengthening the formation of the brothers.

1968 River Forest – promulgated the revised LCO under which all subsequent general chapters have been held.

1974 Madonna dell'Arco - This chapter commissioned the Master to set up a **commission** on the nature and current role of the brothers so as to illuminate and strengthen their Dominican life (n.207) as well as considering the question of their passive voice (n.222). This **MADONNA DELL'ARCO COMMISSION** reported in 1977 in time for the Quezon City chapter and the fine treatment of the brothers in the acts of that chapter (a reflection on LCO 100 §II) relies heavily on the commission's report.

1977 Quezon City - This chapter anticipated substantially what subsequent chapters and commission reports have said about the cooperator brothers. Its texts on the brothers (§62) and on the Dominican family (§65) remain valuable as fine statements about the equality and dignity of all members of the Dominican family. It expresses strongly the conviction that to lose the brothers would mean losing something essential to the Order's life. It says that the clerical status of the Order does not mean that non-clerical members – brothers, nuns, laity – are less Dominican than its priests. The diversity is not founded on any inequality but on the fact that

the mission of the Order needs to be served by diverse ministries that are mutually complementary.

A significant change is made to LCO 219 §II: the brothers are 'cooperators in the mission of the Order' whereas before it said that they were 'cooperators of the priest brothers.'

1983 Rome – this chapter (n.126) commissions the Master to set up a **commission** to clarify further the status of the cooperator brothers, a commission that should include cooperator brothers.

1986 Avila – this chapter (n.168) commissions the Master to study the status of the brothers, especially in relation to the possibility of assuming the office of superior

1989 Oakland – in his report to the chapter, the Master notes that Avila did not follow up on Rome n.126 but asked instead that the Master continue to study the possibility of electing brothers as superiors. He notes that it is a concern shared by other congregations and at the same time that the number of brothers is decreasing and the variety among the brothers is increasing (clerical brothers who do not desire ordination, brothers who remain deacons or become catechists, brothers serving in traditional roles) all of which requires attention and flexibility in formation.

The chapter itself included a general statement about the brothers in its acts (Chapter III 1.4).

****1984-1992** - Edward Van Merrienboer was the first cooperator brother to be a member of the general council of the Order. As Socius for Apostolic Life he was charged particularly with exploring possible new foundations especially in Asia and for assisting emerging vice-provinces (at that time Nigeria, India and Central America). Damian

Byrne's approach was twofold: encourage implementation of the Quezon City acts and encourage brothers to be more integrated into their local communities and ministries based on their abilities and formation.

1992 Mexico City – It includes (Common Life, 1.4) a fine presentation of the place of the brothers, saying that the work on LCO which had been done since Madonna dell'Arco and Quezon City had clarified their vocation: by profession they partake in the apostolate of the Order, enrich our common life, and everything in our legislation is also about them except where a distinction of cleric and cooperator is necessary.

The chapter repeated the commission to the Master (n.44) to be attentive to signs of change in regard to their status and passive voice, maintain contact with others interested in this question, and consider benignly any petition for dispensation of a cooperator brother (elected a superior, presumably) and forward it to the Holy See.

1995 Caleruega – in his report, nn.120-121, the Master spoke of petitions to the Holy See from mendicant orders regarding brothers being superiors, expressed appreciation of the brothers, and says there is need for a vision of how they participate in the mission of the Order.

In its acts this chapter speaks (n.100.3) of the need for plurality in formation, especially in the formation of cooperator brothers.

1998 Bologna – the acts of this chapter devoted a full chapter (Chapter IV, nn.135-145) to the cooperator brothers' participation as preachers in the life and ministry of the Order, and to their formation. Three provinces had been

asked by the Master to prepare papers on the cooperator brothers in preparation for this chapter. The brothers remind us that we are all religious brothers; they reach people in circumstances that priest brothers do not, and they help us to see that our belonging to each other is founded on our solemn profession. In regard to what they do, there are different 'models' (again a reference to LCO 100 §II), the range of their apostolic activities is much broader than it was in the recent past, and the question of dropping the term 'cooperator' is raised. Provinces should be ready to receive cooperator brothers by having a program of studies in place for them: philosophical and theological studies, professional and technical formation, according to the capacities of each and the needs of the province.

2001 Providence – this chapter built on what had been said about the brothers at Bologna. It asked (n.289) that a **commission** of experts, with cooperator brothers, be established to prepare a text with proposals for possible changes in LCO. This was necessary because the ecclesiology of Vatican II, centered on communion, participation, and equality in a diversity of ministries, obliged the Order to study more profoundly its clerical character. It was to develop a profile of the 'friar preacher' and its methodology was to include a questionnaire to all brothers of the Order. This chapter encouraged the Master (n.290) to continue to request dispensations where brothers are postulated as superiors. It also spoke (n.292) of the different kinds of permanent deacon in the Order (clerical brothers choosing not to be ordained priests, clerical brothers who for various reasons are not ordained priests, cooperators ordained deacons but remaining cooperator brothers (cf. Congregation for

Religious, 15 May 1979)) but says that this is not sufficiently widespread to require changes to our legislation.

In his report to the Chapter, the Master offered a fine reflection on 'becoming a brother', expressing the fear that with the decline in the number of brothers the Order is becoming more clerical (perhaps he means 'clericalist'). The call to re-value the cooperator's vocation coming from Bologna 1998 will help us to renew our self-understanding that we are all brothers and to construct communities that are 'holy preachings'.

The **PROVIDENCE COMMISSION** reported in 2003, in time for Krakow 2004. Its considerations were historical, legal and theological. It summarized changes in LCO since River Forest, recalled the teaching of Vatican II on religious life, and noted the contributions of earlier general chapters, especially Quezon City (1977), Oakland (1989), and Bologna (1998). The report also analyzed the responses to the questionnaire sent to all the brothers of the Order (response rate 31%, 1893 of 6210 friars responded). The responses focused on the promotion of vocations, the name 'cooperator' (still preferred by a majority of the respondents), the ministries of the brothers, their formation, leadership roles, the source of Dominican identity (profession, preaching, community, ministerial priesthood). The challenges identified concern the clerical character of the Order, jurisdiction and passive voice, common and ministerial priesthood, and the mystery of the vocation of the cooperator brother. Among the practical proposals to the general chapter is a recommendation that a study of the cooperator brothers in our history should be published for use in the formation programs.

2004 Krakow – Following the report of the **PROVIDENCE COMMISSION**, this chapter, while appreciating the work of the pre-chapter commission (n.259), asked the Master of the Order 1) to appoint **another commission** (n.257) to study the history and precise meaning of our status as a clerical order, and 2) to promote theological research to arrive at a deeper understanding of the role of the cooperator brother (n.258).

This **KRAKOW COMMISSION** consulted many brothers who were expert in history, canon law and theology, and reported in 2007. Once again it summarized historical, legal, and theological aspects of the questions that had been set for it and it presented 14 recommendations to the general chapter.

2007 Bogotá – this chapter affirmed what had been said at Bologna (1998) and Krakow (2004): we are all co-responsible, all cooperators in the one mission. In n.212 it encouraged provincials and formators to take account of LCO 217-220 and to ensure that the RFP and RSP reflect the singular character of the brother's vocation and ministry within the same identity which he shares with the priest brothers. Once again it said that promoters of vocations are to promote the brothers' vocation (n.213), where possible, assisted by a brother.

2010 Rome – repeated what had been said at Bogotá n.212, referring again to LCO 217-220 as well as to Krakow nn.248-259. It called for a congress of the brothers (n.218) in order to re-envision and renew the vocation and ministry of the Dominican cooperator brother for our time. In his report to this chapter the Master noted how recent general chapters had reflected extensively about the vocation of the cooperator brothers, that there had been successive commissions, and

that some provinces had responded with renewed efforts to promote and cultivate vocations to the brotherhood.

Following this chapter the Master decided that before a congress could be held it was necessary to undertake a serious study of the life and mission of the cooperator brother within the whole Order. In 2011 he established a **COMMISSION OF COOPERATOR BROTHERS** to oversee this study which involved regional meetings of all the brothers of the Order as well as feedback from others on a set of key questions concerning the vocation, formation and ministries of the brothers, respecting the historical and cultural diversity of the situations in which the brothers live and work. The work of this commission was encouraged by a gathering of cooperator brothers at Lima in 2012 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the canonization of St Martin de Porres. The **COOPERATOR BROTHERS' STUDY** was finalized in September 2013, just after the general chapter of Trogir. It was translated into the official languages of the Order and circulated to all the provinces. It included many proposals about the promotion of the brother's vocation, his formation, his participation in the life of the Order and his ministry.

2013 Trogir – recent developments, including the *Cooperator Brothers' Study*, help us to recognize the cooperator brothers as fully preachers (n.150); all especially vocation promoters and formators are to value, welcome and promote this vocation (n.151); with a view to the Jubilee of 2016 the Master is to encourage the writing of the history of the cooperator brothers in the Order so as to know and appreciate this vocation and the different ways of living it (n.152); provincials and formators are to take account of the rich legislation of the Order concerning the formation of cooperator brothers (LCO 217-220; Bologna, Krakow, Bogotá).

2016 Bologna - This chapter proposed a model of the cooperator brother based on three things in which the brothers are engaged: 1) contemplation, 2) preaching and study, and 3) service (n.129). A **COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR IMPLEMENTING THE DOMINICAN COOPERATOR BROTHERS STUDY** was to be established and asked (n.230) to prepare a text on the identity and mission of the cooperator that might be included in LCO. This it did in preparation for the general chapter of 2019. This committee included some ordained brothers, one of whom was the newly instituted *Socius for Fraternal Life and Formation* (nn. 306-308). The institution of that Socius was partly due to earlier reflections on the cooperator brother's vocation: a proposal had emerged that there should be a general promoter or even a socius for the brothers, and the link was made with fraternal life, seeing the brothers' contribution to our life and mission, particularly in relation to our brotherhood.

****2017 Augustine Thompson Book** - In response to Trogir n.152 the Master commissioned Augustine Thompson OP to write a history of the brothers in the Order. This work was published in 2017 under the title *Dominican Brothers: Conversi, Lay, and Cooperator Brothers* (New Priory Press). A Spanish translation was published in 2020 (*Hermanos dominicos: Conversos, legos y frailes cooperadores*, published by Universidad de Santo Tomas (USTA), Colombia) and a French translation in 2023 (*Frères en Saint-Dominique: Frères convers, frères coopérateurs*, published by Les Éditions de Cerf, Paris).

2019 Biên Hòa - The text proposed by the Coordinating Committee at the request of Bologna n.230 was substantially included in the acts of this chapter (nn.189-193) but the

chapter decided not to add it to LCO. Other petitions from the commission were accepted, however, including the proposal that there be a *PERMANENT COMMISSION* for the vocation of the cooperator brother. After Biên Hòa, the Master of the Order established this permanent commission whose tasks had already been outlined in n.194 and n.197 of its acts. In responding to n.199 of the same general chapter he appointed a *THEOLOGICAL COMMISSION* to undertake the research requested by the chapter.

2022 Tultenango – In his report, the Master gave an update on the work of the two commissions appointed after Biên Hòa (nn. 27-28). Tultenango was concerned about the need to present a more positive understanding of the priestly role of our ordained friars (n.82) stressing that reflection on the brother must be paired with reflection on priesthood (loc.cit., also n.78). Other concerns were familiar – publishing about the brother’s vocation (n.196), having a brother at the provincial chapter (n.174) and ensuring the brothers receive an authentic Dominican formation (n.207). The most radical development was the deletion in its entirety of LCO 100 §II (Tultenango n.339). Biên Hòa had proposed rewriting this paragraph to remove the specific reference to cooperator brothers (Biên Hòa n.388), whereas Tultenango has removed it entirely.

It brings this appendix to an unexpected end since it was on the basis of LCO 100 §II that the commission of 1976-77 developed its very fine presentation of the cooperator brother’s role in the life and ministry of the Order. The stream of development initiated by Quezon City is thus led to this strange conclusion, the deletion from LCO of the text which stands at the source of that stream! So it is that the Spirit moves among us, quietly but unmistakably: when nothing

much seems to be happening, things are moving underneath in ways that, we trust, serve to strengthen us in the life and ministry that is ours as Dominican friar preachers.

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APPENDIX 3

“The community of believers was one in heart and mind.” (Acts 4:32)

Some notes for reflection on authentic Dominican government

Dear Brothers,

Gathered together in General Chapter, we have been able to experience the richness of the Order, present in many countries. The general theme on which we have worked is that of mission. Nevertheless, the question of abuse crisis has also occupied us, and you will find some points on this in the Acts. We could also have inserted a series of articles on government and obedience, since the issue of abuse touches on those questions in various ways. We preferred, however, to write you a letter on this subject that concerns all of us. The common thread, as is often the case, is the link between the commandment of mutual love (cf. Jn 13:34) and obedience. We believe that the latter can be an expression of the former, at least in what St. Benedict calls “mutual obedience.”³⁰ Christ showed us the way by washing the feet of his disciples. To use

³⁰cf. *Regula*, chapter 71.

the imagery of the boat dear to Catherine of Siena, obedience allows us to move forward together.³¹

We keep in mind the failures of the past, whether due to weak or unjust authority, a lack of support from the priors, or brothers who felt exploited. These failures have left wounds that make trust and obedience more difficult today. Yet we remain convinced that fidelity to our tradition of community government, united with a culture of authentic obedience, is the best protection against abuse and the surest path to our sanctification. Through this letter, we would like to share with you some concerns and ideas in order to strengthen you in what you have received. (cf. 1 Cor 15:1) Maybe these could serve as food for personal and community reflection? We hope so, deeply convinced that our form of government, in which we are all involved, is fundamental to proclaiming the Gospel and fulfilling our mission. This is good news that we are called to live.

1. A Communal Government

Our Constitutions remind us that *“community government is particularly suited to promoting the Order and renewing it frequently.”* (LCO I §VII) Behind this legacy handed down by St. Dominic is the conviction that we are all *“equal in the bond of charity and profession.”* (LCO 4 § 1) Each of us is responsible for the common good of the Order and is invited to participate and to express himself in it. The Order follows and promotes the rule according to which *“quod omnes tangit ab omnibus tractari et approbari debet.”*

³¹cf. Catherine of Siena, *Dialogue*, ch. 158.

From the beginning, we have sought unanimity far beyond the simple majority with which civil societies are content. It is certain that the broader the agreement, the better the decisions will be accepted and quickly implemented. (cf. LCO 6) But there is another, much deeper reason, as the Master of the Order reminded us a few years ago: seeking and finding consensus is the mark of the Holy Spirit who builds the fraternal communion of our communities.³² Ultimately, we must always remember that government and obedience to decisions are above all at the service of charity, which builds up the Church, the Body of Christ. (cf. 1 Cor 12:4-31) This is a treasure entrusted to us so that we may bear witness to it in the Church.

2. Obedience

If we feel it is useful to speak of obedience in this letter, it is because it is being questioned as never before. Is it still possible (and desirable) to obey today? Obedience has never been easy and never will be. This is even more acute today, not only because of the abuse crisis, but also because of the prevalence of individualism, subjectivism, and the fear of giving oneself, including community projects. It is therefore necessary to return to the very foundations of our vow, namely, what Christ, a mature and perfectly free man, said: "I have come down from heaven, not to do my will, but the will of Him who sent me." (Jn 6:38) The proclamation of the Kingdom, the mission and sacrifice of Jesus are part of this movement, born of the Trinitarian communion. Christ, who ascended into Heaven, invites us to enter into this dynamic of listening to the Word and putting it into practice. But because, having made known to us all that he had heard from the

³²cf. Letter of May 13, 2021.

Father, he made us his friends (cf. Jn 15:15), Christian and religious obedience is seen in a new light: friendship with the Lord is its soul. This is why we saw in it a way of life on the day we pronounced the one vow that, in a sense, includes all the others.³³

St. Gregory the Great wrote that obedience contains all the other virtues, especially the theological virtues, imprinting them and preserving them in our souls.³⁴ As a virtue, obedience has to do with happiness! It makes both actions and those who perform them good.³⁵ It enables the proper functioning of the society we form. Through obedience, we prioritize our common mission over our personal desires, avoiding becoming hostage to our subjectivity at the expense of the legitimate demands of the common good and our own spiritual progress. While the exercise of obedience involves our intelligence and our will, we must constantly remember that it is from the latter that obedience proceeds. Our *own* will must make its own that which the will of the superior (or of the chapter) expresses. This does not come without struggles or difficulties. It requires strength of soul and constant learning, since our intelligence is challenged to open itself to a new understanding of the common good! Fortunately, there are many brothers, both past and present, who are witnesses to the gift of their lives through this obedience. They all point us to the image of the Son of God himself, whom the Letter to the Hebrews reminds us “learned obedience through suffering.” (Heb 5:8) Thus, in faith, we can affirm that this path is, for each of us, a path of life and sanctification.

³³cf. Thomas Aquinas, *De perfectione Vitae spiritualis*, ch. 11.

³⁴cf. St. Gregory, Lib 59 moral.

³⁵cf. Thomas Aquinas, S.T. I-II, q.55, a.3.

On the day of our profession, the book of our Constitutions is placed between us and the superior. This expresses that we obey through the mediation of a rule, within the framework of a law that applies to all. In this act, engraved in the memory of all of us, we see illustrated the search for the practice of the virtue of obedience, which will mark our entire life as preachers. This obedience will be manifested in the implementation of the request made by the superior or “precept,”³⁶ an instrument at the service of the good of all entrusted to the superior. The precept itself is regulated by our laws, which are based on the insights of St. Dominic and the experience accumulated by his sons over the centuries. Both excesses—unreasonable obedience³⁷—and defects—the vice of disobedience—distort the virtue.

The mature and healthy exercise of the virtue of obedience is a path of freedom, and each of us can remember the joyful moments of our first steps in the Order, when we were ready to give everything. Many of our brothers bear witness to this capacity and freedom maintained for the sake of the mission: they strengthen those who are going through more difficult times (cf. Is 35:3-4) and inspire us all.

3. Those Who Receive a Mandate (Government, Officers...)

Some of us, at a given moment and for a limited time, receive an office of government. The abuse crisis has shown the danger of unregulated authority, which is denounced by Scripture. (cf. Ezek 34:1-7; Jer 23:1-32) This situation must lead us to question the way, which can always be improved, in

³⁶cf. Thomas Aquinas, S.T. II-II, q.104, a.2, ad3.

³⁷cf. Thomas Aquinas, ST II-II q. 104, a.5, ad3.

which we ourselves exercise authority. Being elected or appointed to a position is a special area of obedience for the one who has been chosen. Receiving and accepting a position involves a number of immediate sacrifices: leaving ministries, changing jobs, even moving house, and implementing decisions that do not necessarily come from us. This is part of what we have freely chosen to take on by making our profession. This is why it is important to ensure that refusals are seriously motivated and objectively explained to the authority that appointed the person or to the authority that must confirm the appointment, where applicable. We are not “free” (in the modern sense) to accept or refuse a position: it is entrusted to us and, unless there is a serious reason to be considered with our superior, we must accept it.

The exercise of office also involves some more “modern” difficulties. For example, under the guise of combating autocracy, today's world tends to distort authority by readily accusing it of arbitrariness. Let us be clear: the existence of authoritarian abuses and situations of undue influence must not lead to the opposite, namely the absence of authority due to fear, weakness, cowardice, or lack of unanimity. A superior must—and this requires courage—make decisions. The right response in the current context is to remind all superiors of the importance of prudence in government, the need for consultation, and the proper functioning of the various councils provided for by our law. It goes without saying that superiors must also listen attentively to the brother from whom something is requested. The latter, for his part, will seek to enlighten the judgment of his superior without manipulation.

One last point deserves our attention. Sometimes the service of authority is reduced to the organization of community life. While this is part of a superior's responsibility, his primary responsibility is to direct the brothers toward the common good and to ensure that it is diffused in each one. This is why LCO 298 specifies that authority is *religious* and not merely juridical in nature, since it concerns both the *internal forum* (non-sacramental: the exercise of the vows) and the *external forum*. This is illuminated by the powerful words of Ezekiel:

If I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, in order to save his life, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand. But if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, or from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you will have saved your life. Again, if a righteous man turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall die; because you have not warned him, he shall die for his sin, and his righteous deeds which he has done shall not be remembered; but his blood I will require at your hand. Nevertheless, if you warn the righteous man not to sin, and he does not sin, he shall surely live, because he took warning; and you will have saved your life.³⁸

Christ asks us to take care of one another (cf. Mt 18:15) and to exercise the office of government in his image and not as hirelings. (cf. Jn 10:12) The exercise of authority requires superiors to dare, when necessary, to reprimand their

³⁸ Ezek.3:18-21 (ESV).

brothers, not primarily in a judicial manner, but rather in relation to the common good. (LCO nos. 54-55)

4. All of Us Who Have Professed Obedience

Let us begin with an observation: it is clear that the decisions of a superior or a chapter (which the superior obeys by implementing them) do not purely and simply express the will of God. However, even in cases of disagreement about how well-founded decisions are and despite their imperfections, the superior must be followed as long as he has respected the procedures laid down by the LCO and does not ask for any sin.³⁹

Among the more modern difficulties, we note the temptation to *contractualize* religious life (in a manner similar to an employment contract) or even to *judicialize* relations with superiors. We wish to remind everyone how much this is contrary to our religious state. The profession we have made, the gift of our lives (even within the carefully defined framework of the law, beginning with our Constitutions), commits us far beyond a simple contract. Obedience is not limited to requests that are in line with our desires or our own perception of the common good. Moreover, it is increasingly common for a superior to receive, as an objection to what he has asked (the most classic case being that of assignation), advice from a spiritual counsellor or even a psychologist. It is right and prudent for the superiors to take these opinions into

³⁹cf. CIC Can. 618: “Superiors are to exercise their power, received from God through the ministry of the Church, in a spirit of service. Therefore, docile to the will of God in fulfilling their function, they are to govern their subjects as children of God and, promoting the voluntary obedience of their subjects with reverence for the human person, they are to listen to them willingly and foster their common endeavor for the good of the institute and the Church, but without prejudice to the authority of superiors to decide and prescribe what must be done.”

account and to consult widely. Nevertheless, it should be clear to everyone that these external opinions cannot normally be imposed nor become a means of evading what is requested.

Religious life requires regular meetings with one's superior and availability to respond to his requests and those of the chapter. Unfortunately, modern society, by exalting the primacy of the individual, puts the particular good at the forefront, to the detriment of the common good. By transforming obedience, a virtue of the will, into a "virtue" of one's own intelligence and judgment, each brother is tempted to grant himself dispensations and to give priority to what he wants. Such a conception underestimates the communal dimension of the human being: is it not through our interacting with our fellow human beings that we progress in humanity? It will, therefore, be normal for superiors to intervene and remind us, in season and out of season, of the demands of community life. However, this "legal" reminder is not enough: twisting community life harms both the common good and the bonds of charity that unite us. It is therefore at the level of the *theological* virtues that charity makes perfect that the challenge of obedience must be situated. Here we touch on the crucial importance of community life: being a school of charity, or, according to the Gospel, a school of "life in abundance." (cf. Jn 10:10) A community of consecrated persons is always a cell of the entire ecclesial Body, whose life is *communion*, that is, the union of persons in the love of charity.

5. The Central and Recapitulative Notion: the Common Good

The concept of the common *good* expresses everything that contributes to the human perfection of a group and its members. This applies to our Dominican life, where the *propositum Ordinis* is expressed in the entire Order and in its provincial and conventual forms. All of us, superiors and subordinates, manifest our obedience daily by contributing generously to all aspects of community life, even those that are less to our liking.

This applies to every society, including our own. We must not lose sight of the fact that, through baptism, we have each received God as the greatest Good. He is our common Good and that of the whole Church. Let us remember that in Christian life, and especially in consecrated life, everything that is received and everything that is accomplished has its source, its constant foundation, and its final perfection in charity, which is none other than God himself. (cf. 1 Jn 4:8) The virtue of obedience is transformed by this: we obey our superior, not because we agree with him, not only because God asks us to, but because we love God. This is the foundation of *all* our relationships with God and with one another.

We want to repeat this: obedience cannot be reduced to mere respect for rules. We do not obey simply because a superior commands us, as if authority were an end in itself. Nor do we obey only when we consent in accordance with what we think, as if truth were measured by consensus or personal convenience. We promised obedience on the day of our profession because we wanted to give our lives to God. We are convinced that this obedience is not simply the fulfillment of a legal obligation, but the concrete expression, whether joyful or sometimes painful, of this gift. As the years pass, it is true that we run the risk of losing the memory of the source

of this gift. If we chose to promise obedience, was it not first and foremost because we wanted to respond to the love of God who loved us first? (cf. 1 Jn 4:19) When love is our guiding principle, obedience is never servile. It becomes “the obedience of faith” (Rom 1:5), the joyful freedom of those who have found their true home in Christ. Then the chains of the “old man” (Eph 4:22) fall away, and the immense horizon of “the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil 3:14) opens up before us. We are freed to become the people we were created to be, brothers who “no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.” (2 Cor 5:15)

Mutual obedience, together with prudence, protects us from the distortions that damage our common life. Both strengthen us against the fear of responsibility and rescue us from complacent ease that seeks comfort rather than the Kingdom. They are pillars of our common good, understood not as a vague ideal or mere functional harmony, but as friendship itself with God (Jn 15:15) — a friendship into which we have been introduced and which, as preachers, we are sent to share. Properly understood and lived, true obedience expresses the persevering fidelity of those who “press on to make it [their] own” (Phil 3:12) and do not give up the mission entrusted to them. In a certain sense, is this not what emerges from Dominic’s dispersal of the brothers in 1217?

Alternately called to govern and to be governed, and always to live in mutual obedience, the very fabric of our life becomes a proclamation of our friendship with the Lord and thus participates in the mission entrusted to the Order. Even though it involves a death to self, true obedience manifests the victory of love over fear, of mission over comfort. It

becomes a living witness to the power of the Resurrection, which brings new life, new hope, and the joy of the Kingdom.

Dear brothers, as we conclude this letter, we wish to assure each one of you of our great fraternal closeness. In the image of this General Chapter, a magnificent moment of communion, we wish to express nothing other than this communion through this letter. Moreover, if the superiors in the Order have to serve the communion of the brothers entrusted to their care, it is up to all of us to watch over this communion, for the good of the Order and its mission. We end these lines, hoping and praying that the Lord watch over our Order in its communion. May he sustain those of us who struggle on the path of our Dominican life and give us all a spirit of true and effective charity to stand by them. Finally, may he keep us ardent in our desire to follow him tirelessly. This is what the Letter to the Hebrews exhorts us to do:

Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.⁴⁰

⁴⁰Heb 10:22-25 (ESV).

