

**ACTA
CAPITULI GENERALIS PROVINCIALIUM
ORDINIS PRÆDICATORUM**

CRACOVIAE
A DIE XIX IULII
AD DIEM VIII AUGUSTI
ANNO DOMINI MMXXV

SUB

FR. GERARDO FRANCISCO TIMONER III

SACRÆ THEOLOGIÆ PROFESSORE
TOTIUSQUE EIUSDEM ORDINIS MAGISTRO
CELEBRATI



ROMÆ
EX CURIA GENERALITIA AD S. SABINAM
MMXXV

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LITTERÆ PROMULGATIONIS

Nos

FR. GERARDUS FRANCISCUS TIMONER III

SACRÆ THEOLOGIÆ PROFESSOR

AC TOTIUS ORDINIS PRÆDICATORUM

HUMILIS MAGISTER ET SERVUS

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 transformed him in a profound way. We recall how Dominic spent the night in dialogue 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, hopefully, converted us in different but positive ways. On separate occasions, some friars intimated to me how they were unenthusiastic about coming to the chapter either because they were tired, indifferent, or sceptical 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 conclusion of the Chapter, the capitulars approved the essential content of the letter. To a significant sense, 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.



Gerard Francisco P. Timoner III
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

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fr. Thomas Gabriel BROGL, *Socius pro Provinciis Europæ II*

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fr. Fabian STANISZ, *Provincia Poloniæ, Frater cooperator*

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SIGLAS

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>

CAPÍTULO I

DECLARACIONES

1. Comunicamos que, con carta circular fechada en Roma el día 7 de noviembre del año 2024 en la fiesta de todos los santos de la Orden de Predicadores, el Maestro de la Orden, fr Gerard Francisco Timoner III, OP, a tenor del LCO 413 § II, convocó el Capítulo General de Piores Provinciales, a celebrarse en el Convento de la Santísima Trinidad, en la ciudad de Cracovia (Polonia), a partir del día 18 de julio al 8 de agosto del año 2025.
2. Comunicamos que el Maestro de la Orden, a tenor del LCO 414, nombró a fr. Jakub Bluj, OP como secretario general del Capítulo de Piores Provinciales de Cracovia el día 13 de mayo de 2023.
3. Comunicamos que los siguientes miembros de la Familia Dominicana fueron invitados por el Maestro de la Orden a asistir al Capítulo: fr. Fabian Stanis, OP, hermano cooperador (Polonia); sor Stanislaw Pelechata, OP, monja contemplativa del Monasterio de Santa Ana, en Święta Anna (Polonia); Jacek Zejma, de las fraternidades laicales dominicanas (Polonia); P. Serge Maucq, sacerdote de la diócesis de Malinas-Bruselas (Bélgica), miembro de las fraternidades sacerdotales dominicanas (Toulouse); Cristina Expósito, del Movimiento Juvenil Dominicano (Hispania); Hna. Gracja (Agata) Basiaga, OP, de la Congregación de las Hermanas de Santo Domingo; Agnieszka Kuryś, del Instituto secular dominicano de Orleans.
4. Comunicamos que el Maestro de la Orden invitó a los siguientes miembros de la Curia General: fr. Pablo Carlos Sicouly, OP, Socio para la Vida Intelectual; fr. Juan Manuel Hernández, OP, Socio para la Vida Fraternal y la Formación; fr. Florentino Bolo, OP, Socio para la Vida Apostólica; fr. Pavel Syssoev, OP, Socio para Europa I; fr. Thomas Brogl, OP, Socio para Europa II; fr. Juan Luis Mediavilla García, OP, Síndico de la Orden; fr. Aniedi Okure, OP, Promotor General de Justicia y Paz y Delegado Permanente de la Orden ante la ONU.
5. Comunicamos que el Maestro de la Orden invitó al Capítulo General a fr. Benjamin Earl, OP, Procurador General de la Orden, como perito en Derecho Canónico.
6. Comunicamos que fr. Timothy card. Radcliffe, OP, ex maestro de la Orden, fue dispensado de participar en el Capítulo General, excepto del 23 al 26 de julio.
7. Comunicamos que el día 8 de julio de 2025 el Maestro de la Orden envió una carta al Papa León XIV, comunicándole la celebración del Capítulo General de Piores Provinciales en Cracovia.

Rome, 8 July 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 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 Breaking of 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 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. 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 follow also 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. Comunicamos que el Maestro de la Orden, fr. Gerard Francisco Timoner III, OP, después del Capítulo General de Tultenango 2022 hizo los siguientes nombramientos:

Nombramientos en la Curia:

fr. Benjamin Earl, OP, Procurador General de la Orden (07.11.22)

fr. Jean-Ariel Bauza Salinas, OP, como Secretario General de la Orden (07.11.22)

fr. Pablo Carlos Sicouly, OP, como Vicario del Maestro de la Orden (25.02.23)

fr. Juan Manuel Hernández Hernández, OP, como Socio del Maestro de la Orden para la vida fraterna y la formación (03.09.23)

fr. Fernando Delgado Flórez, OP, como Socio del Maestro para América Latina y el Caribe (03.09.23)

fr. Cristóbal de la Encarnación Torres Iglesias, OP, como Promotor General del laicado dominicano (08.09.23)

fr. Jordan Turano, OP, como Socio del Maestro de la Orden para las provincias de los Estados Unidos de América (17.10.23)
fr. Raúl Gómez Sánchez, OP, como Secretario General de la Orden (08.11.23)
fr. Roger Gaïse N'Ganzi, OP, como Socio del Maestro de la Orden para África (21.11.23)
fr. Pavel Syssoev, OP, como Socio del Maestro de la Orden para las provincias de Europa I (08.09.24)
fr. Thomas Brogl, OP, como Socio del Maestro de la Orden para las provincias de Europa II (08.09.24)
fr. Raúl Gómez Sánchez, OP, como Promotor General de las Fraternidades Sacerdotales (24.06.25)

Otros nombramientos

fr. Florentino Bolo, OP, fr. Franklin Buitrago, OP, fr. Didier Caenepeel, OP, fr. Benjamin Earl, OP, fr. Wenifredo Padilla, OP, como miembros del Comité de revisión de las Normas Procesales del Capítulo General (19.09.22)
fr. Gabriel Samba, OP como Vicario de la Provincia St Charles Lwanga en África Ecuatorial (21.09.22) hasta el primer capítulo provincial de la provincia (septiembre 2023)
Madelen Jaimes Hurtado, como miembro de la Comisión Internacional de Justicia y Paz (28.11.22)
Sébastien Milazzo, como Presidente del Consejo de Laicos Dominicanos de Europa (07.11.22)
Sor Merete Ruud-Christensen, como Delegada de las monjas al Consejo Internacional de la Familia Dominicana (20.12.22)
Sor Mary Catherine of Jesus Perry, Sor Mary Augustine Cruz, Sor María Belén Marín López, como miembros del Consejo Internacional de *Spem Miram Nuns* (20.12.22)
fr. Loïc-Marie Le Bot, OP, fr. Gregory Pearson, OP, fr. Piotr Skonieczny, OP, fr. Nicolas Tixier, OP, fr. Emiliano Vanoli, OP, como miembros de la Comisión sobre el LCO, de acuerdo a ACG 2022 Tultenango 366 (10.01.23)
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 y Hna. María da Silva, OP, como miembros del Consejo Económico de la Orden (07.03.23)
fr. Angelik Kitsula, OP y fr. Privatus Jamhuri Sullusi, OP, como miembros del Consejo Económico Extraordinario de la Orden (07.03.23)
Sr. Theophilus Atmadi, del laicado dominicano del Asia, como miembro del Consejo Internacional del Laicado Dominicano (18.02.23)
fr. Anthony Walsh, OP, fr. Pablo Condrac, OP, fr. Stephen Maria Lopez, OP, fr. Richard Ounsworth, OP y fr. Juan Ubaldo López Salamanca, OP, como miembros del Consejo de *Spem Miram* Internacional (18.03.23)
fr. Carlyle Fortune, OP, como Vicario del Maestro de la Orden para asuntos administrativos económicos en la Vice provincia de Sudafrica / África Austral.
Mariee Belle Baldó Liscano, como miembro del Consejo Internacional de Justicia y Paz (10.08.23)
Cristina Expósito de Vicente y Humberto de Jesús Rico Camacho, como miembros del Consejo Internacional del Movimiento Juvenil Dominicano (IDYM) (14.08.23)

fr. Olivier Poquillon, OP, como Director de la Escuela Bíblica de Jerusalén (15.08.23)
fr. Pablo Javier Coronello, OP, como Promotor para la Formación Inicial y Permanente en América Latina y el Caribe (CIDALC) (02.04.24)
Wilson Domingos Amado, como miembro del Consejo Internacional del Movimiento Juvenil Dominicano (IDYM) (15.08.24)
fr. Daniel Stadtherr, OP y fr. Adam Sulikowski, OP, como miembros del Consejo Económico de la Orden (19.09.24)
Wilson Domingo Amado, del Movimiento Juvenil Dominicano, como miembro de la Comisión de Justicia y Paz de la Orden (09.11.24)
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, como miembros de la Comisión Permanente para la promoción de estudios en la Orden (15.01.25)
fr. Osvaldo Robles, OP, como Promotor para la Formación Permanente en América Latina y el Caribe (CIDALC) (25.02.25)
fr. Manuel Aristides Gonzales, OP, como Promotor de la Vida Intelectual en América Latina y el Caribe (CIDALC) (25.02.25) y miembro de la Comisión Permanente para la promoción de estudios en la Orden (10.03.25)
fr. Juan David Montes Flórez, OP, como Promotor de Justicia y Paz en América Latina y el Caribe (CIDALC) (25.02.25)
fr. Robert Gay, OP, como Vicario del Maestro de la Orden para la Provincia de Santo Domingo en Italia, (27.05.25)
fr. Pavel Syssoev, OP, como Vicario del Maestro de la Orden para el Convento de San Esteban en Jerusalén (28.05.25)
fr. Ivan Attard, OP, como Promotor de Justicia y Paz para Europa (IEOP) (09.06.25)
fr. Thomas Joseph White, OP, como Rector de la Pontificia Universidad Santo Tomás de Aquino, Roma (PUST) (20.06.25)

10. Comunicamos que fr. Gilles Hervé Masson, OP fue nombrado como asistente religioso de la Federación de Santa Catalina de Siena (15.04.25)

11. Comunicamos que el 23 de junio de 2025, fr. Orlando Rueda Acevedo, OP, Prior y Rector del Convitto Internazionale di Roma, murió a causa de una crisis cardíaca. El Maestro de la Orden celebró la Eucaristía de sufragio por su alma en la Iglesia Conventual de los santos Domingo y Sixto, en Roma.

Nombramientos hechos por el Papa/ la Santa Sede

12. Comunicamos que fr. Juan Carlos González Del Cerro, OP fue nombrado como asistente religioso de la Federación “Madre de Dios” de los Monasterios Dominicanos (20.10.22)

13. Comunicamos que fr. Wojciech Giertych, OP fue confirmado como Teólogo de la Casa Pontificia hasta cumplir sus setenta y cinco años de edad (16.05.23)

14. Comunicamos que fr. Giuseppe Marco Salvati, OP fue nombrado Prelado Secretario de la Pontificia Academia de Teología (26.09.23)

15. Comunicamos que fr. Rómulo Vásquez Gaviria, OP fue nombrado como asistente religioso de la Federación “Nuestra Señora del Rosario” de los Monasterios Dominicanos del Perú (27.03.24)

16. Comunicamos que desde el Capítulo General de Tultenango 2022, fueron consagrados obispos los siguientes hermanos: fr. Juan Carlos Huaygua Oropeza, OP, obispo de Coroico, Bolivia (31.01.23); fr. Steven John Maekawa, OP, obispo de Fairbanks, Alaska, USA (12.10.23); fr. Napoleon B. Sipalay, OP, obispo de Alaminos, Filipinas (18.03.24); fr. Xavier Gómez García, OP, obispo de Sant Feliu de Llobregat, España (30.11.24); fr. Emmanuel Ntakarutimana, OP, obispo de Bubanza, Burundi (05.04.25)

17. Comunicamos que fr. Jean-Paul Vesco, OP, obispo de Orán, Argelia, y fr. Timothy Radcliffe, OP, ex-Maestro de la Orden, fueron creados cardenales en el consistorio celebrado el 7 de diciembre de 2024.

Maestros en Sagrada Teología

18. Comunicamos que desde el Capítulo General de Tultenango 2022, el Maestro de la Orden ha promovido el grado de Maestro en Sagrada Teología a fr. Vito Tomás Gómez García, OP, de la Provincia de Hispania (21.11.22); fr. Michał Paluch, OP, de la Provincia de Polonia (21.11.22); fr. Manuel Ángel Martínez Juan, OP, de la Provincia de Hispania (23.02.23); fr. Anthony Akinwale, OP, de la Provincia de Nigeria y Ghana (23.02.23); fr. Alfonso Esponera, OP, de la Provincia de Hispania (25.05.23); fr. Vicente Botella Cubells, OP, de la Provincia de Hispania (25.05.23); fr. Jean-Michel Poffet, OP, del actual vicariato de Suiza (15.09.23); fr. Basil Cole, OP, de la Provincia de San José, USA (17.10.23); fr. Thomas Joseph White, OP, de la Provincia de San José, USA (17.10.23); fr. Gerardo Cioffari, OP, de la Provincia de San Tommaso d’Aquino in Italia (25.02.24); fr. Jorge Alejandro Scampini, OP, de la Provincia de San Agustín en Argentina y Chile (22.11.24)

Erecciones y supresiones

19. Comunicamos que el 7 de noviembre de 2022, Fiesta de todos los santos de la Orden, el Maestro de la Orden promulgó el Decreto de erección canónica de la Provincia Saint-Charles-Lwanga en África Ecuatorial, antiguo vicariato de la Provincia de Francia. De modo que todos los conventos y casas del antiguo vicariato fueron incorporados a la nueva provincia.

20. Comunicamos que el 27 de enero de 2024, el Maestro de la Orden promulgó el Decreto de unión de las provincias de Teutonia y de San Alberto Magno en el Sur de Alemania y Austria, en la única provincia de San Alberto Magno en Alemania y Austria.

21. Comunicamos que el 3 de febrero de 2024, el Maestro de la Orden promulgó el decreto de supresión de la Provincia de Suiza, confiando la misión de la Orden en dicho territorio a la Provincia de Francia. Por tanto, todos los conventos y casas de la antigua Provincia de Suiza fueron incorporados a la Provincia de Francia.

Cartas

22. Comunicamos que el 14 de septiembre de 2022, el Maestro de la Orden envió una carta a todos los priores provinciales y regentes de estudios, así como a todos los frailes responsables de las instituciones académicas de la Orden, y en general a todos los frailes, recordando la necesidad de compartir con el Archivo de la Orden la debida copia de las obras publicadas por los frailes.

23. Comunicamos que el 30 de noviembre de 2022, en la fiesta de San Andrés apóstol, el Maestro de la Orden publicó el nuevo Reglamento sobre las reliquias de los santos y beatos de la Orden referente a la obtención y distribución de las mismas.

24. Comunicamos que el día 25 de enero de 2023, en la Fiesta de la Conversión de san Pablo, el Maestro de la Orden dirigió a toda la Familia Dominicana una Carta sobre el doble Jubileo de Santo Tomás de Aquino, Doctor de la Iglesia, en el que se conmemoró el 7º centenario de su canonización y los 750 años de su muerte. Junto a la Carta, el Maestro compartió también el *rescripto* de la Santa Sede que concedió la Indulgencia Plenaria según las condiciones promulgadas por la Iglesia.

25. Comunicamos que el día 25 de febrero de 2023, el Maestro de la Orden dirigió una carta a toda la familia dominicana invitando y promoviendo la colaboración conjunta de cara a la Asamblea Internacional del Movimiento Juvenil Dominicano (IDYM) en Lisboa, Portugal, a celebrarse del 6 al 9 de agosto del mismo año.

26. Comunicamos que el 1 de septiembre de 2023, el Maestro de la Orden dirigió a toda la Familia Dominicana la carta sobre el Mes Dominicano por la Paz en la Amazonía.

27. Comunicamos que el 8 de septiembre de 2023, el Maestro de la Orden dirigió una carta a la Comisión Internacional de Justicia y Paz animando a dar a conocer a toda la Orden los ya existentes programas y proyectos de justicia y paz que lleva a cabo la familia dominicana en diversas partes del mundo.

28. Comunicamos que el 2 de mayo de 2024, el Maestro de la Orden dirigió una carta al Movimiento Juvenil Dominicano (IDYM) con ocasión de la publicación de las Actas de la XIV Asamblea Internacional del IDYM en Lisboa - 2023.

29. Comunicamos que el 13 de junio de 2024, el Maestro de la Orden dirigió una carta de saludo a los promotores vocacionales con ocasión del I Encuentro Internacional de Promotores Vocacionales en Roma.

30. Comunicamos que el 1 de septiembre de 2024, el Maestro de la Orden dirigió a todos los miembros de la Familia Dominicana una carta sobre el Mes Dominicano por la Paz en Haití.

31. Comunicamos que el 8 de septiembre de 2024, en la Fiesta de la Natividad de la Bienaventurada Virgen María, el Maestro de la Orden dirigió a todos los priores provinciales de Europa y Canadá la carta con la que anunció el nombramiento de los

nuevos socios para Europa y la respectiva distribución de las provincias bajo su responsabilidad.

32. Comunicamos que el 17 de septiembre de 2024, el Maestro de la Orden dirigió una carta a toda la familia dominicana y especialmente a los miembros de las cofradías del Rosario con ocasión de la Fiesta de Nuestra Señora del Rosario y la invitación a rezar el Rosario como preparación al Jubileo de la Esperanza del 2025.

33. Comunicamos que el 8 de octubre de 2024, el Maestro de la Orden dirigió a toda la Orden la carta *Eucharist, Source and Paradigm of Sinodality* con ocasión de la segunda sesión de la XVI Asamblea Ordinaria Sinodal de Obispos.

34. Comunicamos que el 23 de octubre de 2024, el Maestro de la Orden dirigió a todos los priores provinciales y viceprovinciales, y a todos los frailes de la Orden, una carta sobre la oración por las vocaciones, junto a la cual promulgó la oración por las vocaciones a la Orden de Predicadores.

35. Comunicamos que el 7 de noviembre de 2024, en la Fiesta de todos los santos de la Orden de Predicadores, el Maestro de la Orden junto con su Socio para la Vida Fraterna y la Formación, dirigió una carta a todos los priores provinciales y viceprovinciales sobre la institución y el trabajo de la Comisión de Abusos de la Orden (ACG 2022 Tultenango 218).

36. Comunicamos que el 21 de noviembre de 2024, en la Memoria de la Presentación de la Bienaventurada Virgen María, el Maestro de la Orden dirigió una carta a todos los miembros de la Familia Dominicana con ocasión del anuncio hecho por el Papa Francisco de la canonización de Pier Giorgio Frassati, miembro del laicado dominicano.

37. Comunicamos que el 21 de mayo de 2025, el Maestro de la Orden dirigió una carta a todas las provincias y viceprovincias de la Orden extendiendo la invitación a apoyar la misión en la Amazonía del Perú.

38. Comunicamos que el 24 de mayo de 2025, en la Fiesta de la Traslación de nuestro padre Santo Domingo, el Maestro de la Orden dirigió a toda la Familia Dominicana la carta *The Publics of the Preaching of the Gospel*.

Visitas Canónicas

39. Comunicamos que, durante el año 2022, el Maestro de la Orden realizó la visita canónica a la Viceprovincia de Ecuador (24 - 30 Septiembre 2022); a la Provincia del Santísimo Nombre de Jesús (1 - 14 Octubre 2022); al Vicariato de Vietnam en Canadá (15 - 19 Octubre 2022); a la Provincia de Canadá (19 - 30 Octubre 2022); a la Provincia de San Alberto Magno en EEUU (2 - 12 Diciembre 2022).

40. Comunicamos que, durante el año 2023, el Maestro de la Orden realizó la visita canónica a la Provincia de India (17 Enero - 4 Febrero 2023); a la Provincia de Toulouse (20 Marzo - 2 Abril 2023); a los vicariatos de la Provincia de Francia en los

países bálticos y el Vicariato de Polonia en Ucrania (22 Abril – 7 Mayo 2023); a la Provincia de Croacia (28 Mayo – 7 Junio 2023); al Vicariato de la Provincia de Ntra. Sra. Del Rosario en Japón (19 – 29 Junio 2023); al Vicariato de la Provincia de San José en África Oriental (16 – 23 Julio 2023); a la Viceprovincia del Congo San Pío V (25 Julio – 4 Agosto 2023); al Vicariato de la Provincia de Portugal en Angola (24 – 31 Agosto 2023); a la Provincia de Portugal (19 – 23 Septiembre 2023); a la Provincia de Polonia (24 Septiembre – 14 Octubre 2023); a la Provincia San Luis Bertrán de Colombia (18 Octubre – 4 Noviembre 2023); a la Viceprovincia de Bolivia (27 Noviembre – 3 Diciembre 2023); a la Provincia de Santiago de México (4 – 19 Diciembre 2023); a las comunidades de la Provincia de Francia en Irak – Bagdad y Erbil [Ankawa] (24 Diciembre 2023 – 3 Enero 2024).

41. Comunicamos que, durante el año 2024, el Maestro de la Orden realizó la visita canónica a la Viceprovincia Reina de China, Taiwán (13 – 21 Enero 2024); a la Provincia de Francia (8 – 25 Marzo 2024); a la Provincia de Ntra. Sra. de la Asunción de la Santísima Virgen María en Australia, Nueva Zelanda, Papua Nueva Guinea e Islas Salomón (7 – 18 Abril 2024); al territorio de Singapur de la Provincia del Rosario (18 – 19 Abril 2024); al Vicariato de la Provincia del Santo Rosario en Venezuela (23 – 29 Abril 2024); a la Provincia de San Agustín en Argentina y Chile, y al Vicariato de Fray Antón de Montesinos en Uruguay y Paraguay (3 – 21 Junio 2024); a la Provincia de San Juan Bautista del Perú (22 – 26 Junio; 16 – 31 Agosto 2024); a la Provincia San Vicente Ferrer en América Central (27 Junio – 18 Julio 2024); a la Provincia de Hispania (18 Septiembre – 2 Octubre 2024); al Vicariato de la Provincia del Rosario en España (5 – 7 Octubre 2024); a la Provincia de Inglaterra (8 – 20 Octubre 2024); a la Provincia de San Martín de Porres, EEUU (22 Octubre – 6 Noviembre 2024); a la Provincia de Santo Tomás de Aquino en Bélgica y Países Bajos (30 Noviembre – 10 Diciembre 2024); a la Viceprovincia “Filius Mariae” de Pakistán (17 – 22 Diciembre 2024); a la Provincia del Rosario en Myanmar, Macao, Hong Kong y Timor Oriental (18 Diciembre – 8 Enero 2025).

42. Comunicamos que, en el primer semestre del año 2025, el Maestro de la Orden ha realizado la visita canónica a la Provincia de Santo Tomás de Aquino en Italia (15 – 29 Enero 2025); a la Provincia Santo Domingo en Italia (1 Febrero – 28 Junio 2025); a la Provincia Romana de Santa Catalina de Siena (8 – 15 Marzo 2025); a la Provincia de Vietnam (Laos, Tailandia) (30 Marzo – 16 Abril 2025); a los territorios de Trinidad y Tobago (Provincia de Irlanda), Granada y Jamaica (Provincia de Inglaterra) (26 Abril – 1 Mayo 2025); al Vicariato Pedro de Córdoba (Hispania) en Cuba y República Dominicana (1 – 5 Mayo 2025); a la Provincia de San José en EEUU (27 Mayo – 18 Junio 2025); y a la Provincia de San Pío V en Malta (30 Junio – 7 Julio 2025).

Visitas fraternas y participación en otros eventos

43. Comunicamos que, durante el pasado trienio, el Maestro de la Orden realizó visitas fraternas y participó de diferentes encuentros y eventos internacionales, a saber:

Asamblea Provincial de la Provincia San Alberto Magno en Chicago, Illinois; visita fraterna a la comunidad de San José, California (12 – 23 Agosto 2022); Sufragio por

los fieles difuntos de la Familia Dominicana en el Cementerio Verano, Roma (19 noviembre 2022); Asamblea General de Superiores Generales en Roma (23 - 26 Noviembre 2022).

Asamblea Viceprovincial de la Viceprovincia de Sudáfrica (5 - 10 Febrero 2023); Taller para nuevos provinciales en Roma (7 - 16 Marzo 2023); visita fraterna al Convento Santa María *delle Grazie* en Milán (19 - 20 Abril 2023); visita fraterna al IDEO (Instituto Dominicano de Estudios Orientales) (8 - 11 Junio 2023); Programa de estudio común para los frailes de Asia Pacífico en Biên-Hòa y Đà Lạt, Vietnam (1 - 4 Julio 2023); Asamblea General del Movimiento Juvenil Dominicano (IDYM) en conmemoración del 30º aniversario de fundación del Movimiento, en Lisboa, Portugal (5 - 9 Agosto 2023).

Curso de formadores del Asia Pacífico en Filipinas (4 - 12 Enero 2024); visita fraterna a la Provincia de Filipinas (22 - 25 Enero 2024); Eucaristía en la Iglesia de San Andrés en Colonia - Alemania, con ocasión de la erección de la nueva Provincia de San Alberto Magno en Alemania y Austria (26 - 28 Enero 2024); visita a Friburgo, Suiza con ocasión de la proclamación del decreto de supresión de la provincia de Suiza y la erección del nuevo Vicariato de Suiza, de la Provincia de Francia (2 - 4 Febrero 2024); visita fraterna y celebración Eucarística en la Iglesia de *St. Saviour*, Dublín - Irlanda, con ocasión de la celebración de los 800 años de la presencia de la Orden en ese país (9 - 11 Febrero 2024); concelebración en la Misa en honor a Santo Tomás de Aquino en el contexto del Jubileo del Aquinate, en la Abadía de *Fossanova*, Italia (7 Marzo 2024); encuentro con los miembros de IEOP en Bolonia, Italia (2 - 4 Abril 2024); Asamblea General de Superiores Generales (21 - 24 Mayo 2024); conferencia y homilía en la Asamblea Internacional de Novicios de Europa en Caleruega, España (23 - 25 Mayo 2024); visita fraterna a los monasterios en Nueva York, EEUU y encuentro con los frailes que trabajan en las capellanías universitarias en EEUU (26 Mayo - 2 Junio 2024); celebración del Jubileo de los 150 años de la Iglesia de Santo Domingo en California, EEUU (2 Agosto 2024); celebración eucarística con ocasión de los 150 años de la Fiesta de la Coronación de Madonna dell'Arco (6 - 7 Septiembre 2024).

Asamblea de canonistas dominicos en Filipinas (22 Abril 2025); asamblea de IEOP en Malta (24 Abril 2025); asamblea de la Unión de Superiores Generales (USG) (21 - 23 Mayo 2025) y el encuentro internacional de novicios de Europa (29 Mayo - 4 Junio 2025).

Promulgación de decretos de canonización

44. Comunicamos que el 13 de junio de 2025, durante el consistorio ordinario público celebrado por el Papa León XIV, se promulgó solemnemente el Decreto de Canonización del beato Pier Giorgio Frassati, miembro de la Tercera Orden Dominicana, actual laicado dominicano, fijando como fecha para la ceremonia litúrgica el 7 de septiembre de 2025.

45. We report that on July 18, the Master of the Order, fr. Gerard Francisco Timoner III, OP, received Grzegorz card. Ryś, 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 actuaries 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 Stanisiz, 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 Sariago, 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 S. 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 Sariago, 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.

CHAPITRE II

PROLOGUE

« VADE ET PRAEDICA ! »

UN CHAPITRE POUR LA MISSION DOMINICAINE

« Paix à vous ! Comme le Père m'a envoyé, moi aussi je vous envoie. »
(Jn 20, 21)

64. Le chapitre général de l'Ordre a été célébré à Cracovie aux mois de juillet et août 2025. Alors que nous étions réunis en Pologne, l'actualité du monde continuait à se dérouler sous nos yeux, et l'Église fêtait avec enthousiasme le jubilé. Il est peu de dire que ce couvent de Cracovie est important pour l'histoire de notre Ordre, puisqu'il est en effet, avec les couvents de Vienne et de Dubrovnik, l'un des trois lieux où la présence dominicaine n'a jamais été interrompue depuis la fondation de l'Ordre. Aussi, célébrer ce chapitre sur les bords de la Vistule nous invitait à faire le lien entre notre longue histoire de huit siècles – en se nourrissant de ce qu'elle peut nous enseigner de ses beautés et de ses erreurs – et notre époque et ses nombreux défis (sans prétendre ici à l'exhaustivité, et pêle-mêle : les conflits meurtriers et l'incertitude quant à la stabilité politique du monde, la crise environnementale, les questions liées à la montée en puissance de l'intelligence artificielle, l'indifférence religieuse croissante dans certaines régions...) en nous efforçant d'être attentifs aux signes des temps.

65. Sa longue histoire n'est pas la seule particularité du couvent de Cracovie, puisqu'il est aussi bien connu pour abriter en son sein le tombeau de saint Hyacinthe, une figure éminente de l'Ordre, un grand prêcheur. Hyacinthe fut un des frères de la première génération de l'Ordre. Il reçut l'habit dominicain à Rome des mains de saint Dominique lui-même et mena une très intense activité missionnaire. À quelques mètres de son tombeau, c'est de cette mission que le chapitre général a voulu, huit siècles plus tard, se saisir, en faisant l'objet central de son attention.

A. Donner sa vie pour la mission

66. « Donner sa vie pour la mission », tel était le titre d'une lettre adressée par le frère Timothy Radcliffe à l'Ordre tout entier en 1994. Donner sa vie pour la mission, c'est bien sûr le propos de tout l'Ordre et de la famille dominicaine avec lui, prise en ses différentes branches : frères, moniales, membres des fraternités laïques ou sacerdotales dominicaines, sœurs apostoliques, membres des instituts séculiers ou de la jeunesse dominicaine. On dira que le sujet n'est pas nouveau et que, depuis sa naissance, l'Ordre est tout entier animé par ce souci, relayant le cri de saint Dominique venu jusqu'à nous : « Que deviendront les pécheurs ? ». En évoquant la mission, le chapitre a entendu en premier lieu signifier que le champ de celle-ci n'est jamais saturé de ceux qui pourraient y œuvrer. De fait, la moisson est abondante et les ouvriers sont peu nombreux (Lc 10, 2). Le temps de récolter, auquel on a pu être

habitué n'est d'ailleurs pas toujours venu, à la différence du temps des semailles, toujours d'actualité, temps de l'espérance.

67. Il est bien des manières de parler de la mission et, au cours des huit siècles de son histoire, l'Ordre lui-même a réfléchi en maintes occasions sur elle. Ainsi le chapitre général de Bien Hóa insistait-il par exemple sur la synergie vie-mission qui fonde notre vie dominicaine et notre prédication. Sans négliger cet aspect fondamental de notre vie, nous avons voulu cette fois-ci regarder les publics de la mission, autrement dit le peuple immense de celles et ceux qui constituent le monde dans lequel nous vivons aujourd'hui. Notre espérance, que nous voulons affirmer ici, est qu'ils ne demeurent pas nos publics, mais deviennent véritablement les interlocuteurs de notre mission. « Interlocuteurs », le terme a son importance, car on verra dans ces actes que le chapitre n'a pas entendu parler de la mission comme d'une entreprise à sens unique, mais comme une conversation que l'on désire féconde pour tous. C'est une "conversation d'amitié", puisque l'amour de charité - pour reprendre des termes chers à saint Thomas d'Aquin - s'étend à Dieu, à notre prochain, à notre corps et à nous-mêmes (cf. *Summa Theologiae*, IIa IIae q. 25, a. 12).

68. Parler de mission fut d'ailleurs en soi un défi, car évoquer ce vaste champ dont les capitulaires venus des quatre horizons du monde représentaient l'étendue, nécessite d'en relever l'immense diversité, et le travail d'inculturation que la prédication suppose évidemment. On aurait donc pu entreprendre une réflexion par aire culturelle ou linguistique, mais le chapitre a fait le choix de traiter cette mission comme un objet unique, l'objet de notre Ordre, lui-même considéré dans son unicité.

B. Venus pour écouter : une spiritualité de l'écoute pour la mission

69. Que sommes-nous venus faire à Cracovie ? Sommes-nous venus d'abord pour édicter des lois ? Faire un état des lieux de la vie de l'Ordre ? Certes, telles sont les tâches d'un chapitre général, mais c'est d'abord pour écouter, et nous écouter, que nous sommes venus. Cette écoute fut au cœur de ces rencontres : écoute de Dieu sous les voûtes de la vénérable basilique, écoute de récits de frères venus des quatre coins du monde, écoute des capitulaires en commissions, groupes linguistiques, et en assemblée plénière. Cette écoute est, nous le savons bien, fondamentale pour notre mission, et elle apparaît en maints lieux dans ces actes. Elle est aussi au cœur de notre vie dominicaine, s'exprimant dans notre style de vie et dans la profession que nous avons émise un jour. Ne professant à voix haute que l'obéissance, et résumant toute notre promesse à ce mot, nous avons en fait promis d'écouter pour toute notre vie.

70. Pourtant, nous avons fait le constat que l'écoute est un sens qui a été bien souvent négligé dans l'histoire de la prédication de l'Église. Combien d'hommes et de femmes se sont éloignés de l'Église faute d'avoir été vraiment écoutés ? Combien ne se sont pas sentis accueillis et ont préféré se retirer ? Dans sa réflexion sur la mission, le chapitre a dû constater que nous, frères de l'Ordre, nous avons pu, nous aussi, être la cause de tels éloignements. Aussi avons-nous fait le choix de nous interroger longuement sur les méthodes de la mission dans le contexte d'aujourd'hui, en relevant qu'il ne saurait y avoir de prédication authentique de l'évangile de Jésus-Christ, véritable cœur de notre mission, sans cette écoute de nos contemporains

et de leurs besoins, à l'image de Dominique prêcheur conversant avec l'aubergiste de Toulouse. À l'image, avant lui, de Jésus lui-même, se faisant le compagnon des hommes et des femmes rencontrés au gré des chemins. "Saint Dominique disait à ceux qui le suivaient : « À pieds nus, allons prêcher ». Il nous rappelle le passage du buisson ardent, quand Dieu dit à Moïse : « Ôte les sandales de tes pieds, parce que le lieu sur lequel tu te tiens est une terre sainte ! » (Ex 3, 5). Le bon prédicateur est conscient de se mouvoir sur une terre sainte, parce que la Parole qu'il porte est sainte, et ses destinataires le sont aussi" (Pape François, Discours aux participants du chapitre général de Bologne, 4 août 2016)

71. Cette écoute devrait être pour nous, prêcheurs, une vraie conversion, ce que le chapitre a entendu rappeler avec solennité. Nous avons voulu redire notre conviction que nous ne pouvons être le terrain qui annonce la bonne nouvelle que si nous recevons pour nous-mêmes l'évangile que nous prêchons et si nous nous laissons transformer en profondeur par lui. Il n'est pas de prédication vraie qui ne soit la manifestation de cette conversion (ou du désir sincère de cette conversion), de notre représentation de Dieu et de notre représentation de l'autre à qui l'on prétend parler de Dieu. Comment, en effet, annoncer l'évangile au monde si l'on ne s'engage pas soi-même dans cette *métanoïa*, dans la joie d'accueillir dès aujourd'hui le Royaume ? Le chapitre a voulu rappeler d'ailleurs que cette conversion n'est pas qu'une nécessité individuelle, mais communautaire. En effet, c'est tout l'Ordre des prêcheurs qui doit sans cesse se renouveler, se convertir, pour rester fidèle au propos qui est le sien : le salut des âmes.

C. L'urgence de la mission

72. « Malheur à moi si je n'annonce pas l'Évangile ! » Le cri de saint Paul adressé aux Corinthiens (1 Co 9, 16) a rejoint les capitulaires à Cracovie, comme les mots de la finale de l'évangile de saint Matthieu, cher à saint Dominique : « Allez donc, de toutes les nations faites des disciples, les baptisant au nom du Père et du Fils et du Saint Esprit » (Mt 28, 19). Nous remarquons d'ailleurs que ce dernier texte n'a jamais été considéré comme une simple invitation à partir en mission, mais comme un commandement, un ordre donné par Jésus.

73. Il y aurait à craindre, il est vrai, que nous n'ayons plus conscience de l'urgence de la mission. En effet, s'il nous faut réaffirmer que notre vie communautaire est un bien précieux pour notre mission apostolique, nous avons conscience aussi que notre mode de vie peut, si nous n'y prenons pas garde, nous isoler des nécessités du monde, nous prémunir contre sa vulnérabilité, nous couper de ses besoins. Alors nos couvents courent le risque de se transformer en forteresses, et nos débats internes peuvent nous couper des préoccupations du monde qui nous entoure. Bref, habitués à croire, nous pouvons perdre le zèle de la mission. Pourtant résonne toujours l'appel qui pressait les pas de saint Dominique, écho de celui du Seigneur à son prophète : « Mon peuple périt, faute de connaissance ! » (Os 4, 6).

74. C'est pourquoi, nous sommes conscients du danger de ne plus entendre l'appel du Seigneur, de renoncer à le chercher inlassablement comme pourtant il nous y invite. Il n'y va pas de la seule qualité de notre prédication, mais de notre vie

elle-même (« *Car ainsi parle le Seigneur à la maison d'Israël : Cherchez-moi et vous vivrez !* » Am 5, 4). Comme elle est grande aussi la tentation de défendre nos intérêts ou protéger notre confort, oubliant qu'il s'agit pour nous rien moins que de chercher un trésor enfoui dans un champ, une perle de grand prix (Mt 13, 44-46). L'évangélisation repose sur des témoins dont la vie transformée témoigne du Christ. Quel risque pour nous d'oublier Dieu.

75. Si nous l'oublions, qui l'annoncera à ceux qui l'ignorent eux-mêmes ? Car ils sont si nombreux encore ceux qui ignorent Dieu. Ils sont si nombreux aussi ceux qui connaissent l'épreuve, le désespoir, qui subissent le mal chaque jour sans savoir vers qui exprimer leur cri. Ce chapitre fut l'occasion pour nous d'entendre de telles questions, dans l'affrontement au mystère du mal. Rien sans doute ne saurait illustrer ce mal mieux que l'horreur des camps d'Auschwitz et Birkenau où nous sommes rendus ensemble, y méditant sur la folie de l'humanité. Sur la redoutable épreuve, aussi, que ce mal constitue pour notre foi, et notre prédication.

76. Parler de l'urgence de la mission, c'est donc, au commencement évoquer la situation de celles et ceux qui, du fond de l'abîme où ils se tiennent, affrontés à la violence, à la pauvreté, à la maladie, à la corruption, au déplacement forcé des populations, et à toutes les situations de déréliction, attendent, plus que les autres, une parole de consolation. Nous pensons à ces régions du monde où notre famille dominicaine poursuit sa mission avec courage au milieu des horreurs de la guerre en particulier, espérant la justice et la paix. Une veillée de prière tous ensemble et une rencontre émouvante avec des amis venus de l'Ukraine – si proche de Cracovie – nous ont rappelé avec gravité notre responsabilité commune d'être proches de nos frères et de nos sœurs éprouvés dans toutes ces régions. Nous avons la conviction que, tous, dans leurs situations particulières, dans la joie comme dans la douleur parfois atroce, sont un signe concret de la réalisation du Royaume et de son avancée discrète mais certaine.

77. « Pourquoi restez-vous ? » Telle était la question que l'on posait à notre bienheureux frère Pierre Claverie, évêque d'Oran en Algérie, assassiné le 1^{er} août 1996 en même temps que son chauffeur musulman. Cette question en appelait une deuxième : « Pourquoi ne rentrez-vous pas chez vous ? » Et lui de répondre, quelques jours avant sa mort : « *Où sommes-nous chez nous ? ... Nous sommes là-bas à cause de ce Messie crucifié. À cause de rien d'autre et de personne d'autre ! Nous n'avons aucun intérêt à sauver, aucune influence à maintenir. Nous ne sommes pas poussés par je ne sais quelle perversion masochiste (...) mais nous sommes là comme au chevet d'un ami, d'un frère malade, en silence, en lui serrant la main, en lui épongeant le front.* » (Homélie prononcée le 23 juin 1996). Nous, frères, nous nous reconnaissons dans ce témoignage.

D. Prêcheurs dans l'Église en mission

78. Dominique, nous le savons, se hâta de placer son entreprise missionnaire sous la protection de l'évêque Foulques de Toulouse, puis sous celle du pape Honorius. Il est peu de dire qu'il entendit donc, dès le commencement, inscrire son projet missionnaire (dont la fondation de notre Ordre) au cœur de l'Église de son temps.

Aujourd'hui encore, nous affirmons s'il était besoin de le faire à nouveau, que la mission de l'Ordre s'inscrit bien au cœur de l'Église, *in medio Ecclesiae*.

79. S'il semble nécessaire au chapitre de réaffirmer la place de l'Ordre dans l'Église, c'est que nous sommes conscients que l'Église, toute sainte qu'elle soit, a pu montrer un bien triste visage ces dernières années en bien des lieux, marquées par le scandale des abus sexuels et spirituels, dont la longue liste des victimes s'accompagne aussi de la perte de crédibilité de l'institution ecclésiale auprès de nombre de nos contemporains. Elle a pu également provoquer l'incompréhension ou la désaffection de beaucoup du fait de ce qui fut perçu parfois comme une difficulté à écouter les hommes et femmes de notre temps, leur présentant le visage d'une institution alors jugée fermée et peu évangélique.

80. Dans toutes ces situations, grande serait alors la tentation pour un Ordre comme le nôtre d'apparaître comme une sorte d'« Église alternative », lui assurant un auditoire à peu de frais. C'est pourquoi nous voulons affirmer que, si notre mission est bien de rejoindre toutes les personnes - qu'elles se tiennent à proximité de l'Église ou s'en soient éloignées - il nous faut mener cette entreprise en communion profonde avec notre Église, y compris localement, et pas à côté d'elle.

81. Ce service de la communion est d'ailleurs, nous le croyons, au cœur de notre mission dominicaine, alors que nous essayons nous-mêmes - très humblement - de vivre une telle expérience de communion au cœur de nos communautés, en particulier dans notre mode de gouvernement synodal. N'est-il pas essentiel que, dans un monde et une Église polarisés à ce point, nous puissions apporter ce témoignage fondamental ? Nous avons à prêcher cette communion qui suppose une recherche authentique de la réconciliation. En cela, il est permis de dire que notre vie fraternelle est notre première prédication.

E. Les interlocuteurs de notre mission

82. On l'a dit, la particularité du chapitre général de Cracovie a été de s'intéresser moins au portrait de l'Ordre lui-même qu'à dresser celui des interlocuteurs de notre prédication, insistant sur la dimension de réciprocité de notre mission apostolique. Ainsi, on verra qu'à plusieurs reprises est apparue la nécessité d'envisager la mission non comme la seule action du prêcheur, venu enseigner un peuple en attente d'un savoir nouveau, mais plutôt comme la rencontre féconde entre lui et ceux appelés à devenir les partenaires, voire les participants, de sa mission.

83. Dans sa *Relatio*, le Maître de l'Ordre a évoqué l'épisode du discours de Paul à l'Aréopage d'Athènes (Ac 17), figurant le lieu où se tiennent ceux qui n'ont pas connu Jésus. Ainsi que le relève le frère Gerard, nombreux sont ces aréopages dans notre monde contemporain et, à leur manière, chacune des commissions de notre chapitre a eu à en prendre soin, comme une première aventure missionnaire, aux frontières. C'est le cas en premier lieu de celles et ceux qui ne connaissent pas encore le nom de Jésus et attendent (ou n'attendent pas encore) ceux qui seront capables de le prononcer pour la première fois auprès d'eux, comme une bonne nouvelle délivrée personnellement, dans leur langue propre et leur culture propre. C'est aussi le cas de

celles et ceux qui se sont éloignés de l'Église ou se tiennent à ses marges. Blessés ou pas par l'institution, peu concernés par le message de l'Église qu'ils ne reçoivent pas – ou courroucés par lui – ils constituent un autre lieu de mission. Le monde des jeunes a semblé aussi être, à bien des égards, un autre aréopage où l'évangile ne résonne parfois pas encore, en particulier sur les réseaux sociaux qu'ils fréquentent.

84. Mais il a semblé aussi que, même chez celles et ceux qui connaissent déjà Jésus et se reconnaissent pleinement membres de l'Église, il est des territoires de mission, dans la nécessité de conforter la foi et de l'approfondir par un enseignement solide et un accompagnement ajusté. Lorsque les grandes questions de l'existence humaine ou les épreuves de la vie se présentent, en effet, chacun se confronte aux frontières de sa propre foi. Traversant alors les ravins de la mort (Ps 22), aura-t-il les vivres nécessaires pour continuer la route sans craindre aucun mal ? Il est probablement de notre responsabilité, aussi, de l'aider à y répondre.

Conclusion. La vie dominicaine, une mission d'espérance pour un monde blessé

85. *“Proclame la parole, insiste à temps et à contretemps, réfute, menace, exhorte, avec une patience inlassable et le souci d'instruire!”* (2 Tm 4, 2) En évoquant la tâche immense de la mission qui nous incombe, le chapitre a entendu ranimer en nous la flamme apostolique. Nous le savons, la tâche n'est pas facile et, à l'image des prophètes découragés que l'Écriture nous donne parfois à contempler, les prêcheurs que nous sommes peuvent parfois connaître la lassitude ou la désillusion. Nous savons que, pour certains, ce zèle semble un peu éteint et que la flamme vacille. Il nous faut donc reprendre courage, et c'est par-là que s'achèvera ce prologue : des encouragements.

86. D'où ce courage pourrait-il venir ? De nos propres forces ? Peut-être puiserons-nous dans notre volonté et notre enthousiasme quelques provisions pour la route, mais à vrai dire, cela risque de ne pas être suffisant, ajoutant à la fatigue. Plus sûrement nous chercherons dans le Christ lui-même, avec la force de l'Esprit-Saint, le courage que nous attendons, et nous puiserons en lui l'espérance qui ne trompe pas. C'est alors que nous revient l'image de saint Dominique, absorbé dans les longues veilles nocturnes de sa prière. Le premier lieu sans doute de ses combats. Le premier lieu, aussi, de son espérance.

87. En cette année jubilaire, nous voulons affirmer que l'espérance nous anime, comme une conviction très profonde que le Christ est parmi nous et qu'il ne cesse jamais d'agir en nous et autour de nous. Notre espérance ne repose pas, en effet, sur des espoirs, mais sur une promesse : la promesse du salut que Dieu offre à son peuple. Nous n'espérons d'ailleurs pas seuls, et l'expérience-même du chapitre général nous le rappelle magnifiquement. En effet, quel signe d'espérance que d'être ainsi réunis, malgré nos différences, débattant sérieusement et pourtant joyeusement des grandes questions de notre vie dominicaine. Un signe peut-être fragile, mais fort pourtant, dans un monde profondément divisé. Mais nous mettons aussi nos pas dans ceux qui ont vécu de cette espérance avant nous et en ont rendu compte bien avant que nous ne le fassions nous-mêmes. Telle est la beauté de l'Ordre que de nous offrir les visages de toutes celles et de tous ceux qui, ancrés dans cette espérance, ont

tenté courageusement l'aventure enthousiasmante de la mission, comme prêcheurs. N'en évoquant que quelques-uns, nous nous souviendrons de leurs aréopages, de leurs territoires de mission : Jourdain de Saxe, parti en Terre Sainte dès 1236 ; Hyacinthe de Pologne, missionnaire aux confins de l'Europe chrétienne ; Thomas d'Aquin, en dialogue avec les penseurs grecs et arabes ; Catherine de Sienne, engagée dans l'Église mouvementée de son temps ; Montesinos, Vitoria et Las Casas, défenseurs acharnés des droits humains. Et tant d'autres...

88. C'est par l'un d'entre eux, d'ailleurs, que l'on conclura ce prologue : le jeune Pier-Giorgio Frassati, qui sera canonisé le 7 septembre 2025, quelques semaines après la clôture de notre chapitre. Il nous laisse l'enseignement joyeux de son courage missionnaire impressionnant, de son dévouement pour les pauvres, de son engagement politique dans une période troublée. Mais surtout il nous laisse le témoignage de son amitié profonde avec le Christ, nous invitant, ainsi qu'il le faisait aux membres de sa *Società dei Tipi Loschi* (compagnie des types louches), à ne pas vivoter (*vivacchiare*) mais à vivre (*vivere*).

89. Se faisant proche de tous, jusqu'au plus petit, il n'eut jamais qu'un but, que l'on a retenu comme sa devise, et qui résume mieux que tout l'élan qui a animé notre chapitre : "*Verso l'alto !*" (Vers le haut !)

"Espère le Seigneur, sois fort et prends courage ; espère le Seigneur !" (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. [DECLARATIO] 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. [DECLARATIO] 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 Saviour (*kerygma*), beyond historical or cultural boundaries.

92. [DECLARATIO] *‘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. [EXHORTATIO] 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. [GRATIARUM ACTIO] 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. [GRATIARUM ACTIO] 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 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. [DECLARATIO] 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. [COMMENDATIO] 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. [EXHORTATIO] 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. [COMMENDATIO] 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. [ORDINATIO] 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. [EXHORTATIO] 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. [COMMISSIO] 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. [GRATIARUM ACTIO] 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. [DECLARATIO] We declare the Apostolic Vicariate of Puerto Maldonado as the *ad gentes* priority for the Order until the next General Chapter (ACG 2022 Tutlenango 139-143).

105. [EXHORTATIO] 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. [EXHORTATIO] We exhort the provinces of the Order to look for financial support for this mission (ACG 2022 Tutlenango 141).

107. [COMMENDATIO] 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. [COMMISSIO] 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. [COMMISSIO] 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. [COMMISSIO] 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 develop 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. [COMMISSIO] 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.

CHAPITRE IV

MISSION D'APPROFONDIR LA FOI DES CROYANTS

112. [DECLARATIO] « L'Église doit (...) [avancer] vers de nouvelles frontières tant pour la première mission *ad gentes* que pour la nouvelle évangélisation de peuples qui ont déjà reçu l'annonce du Christ. » (Jean-Paul II, *Redemptoris missio*, 30). Notre vocation prophétique a pour but de faire naître la foi ou de lui permettre de pénétrer plus profondément la vie des hommes en vue de l'édification du Corps du Christ (cf. LCO 1 § V; *Relatio* 2025, 20-35). Coopérateurs des Évêques, les frères participent à leur mission de confirmation des fidèles dans la foi (cf. Lc 22, 31-32). Cela comprend une véritable amitié avec le Christ, une vraie connaissance de la foi, des relations fraternelles renouvelées, une responsabilité missionnaire.

A. "The community of believers was of one heart and mind" (Acts 4, 32)

113. [DECLARATIO] 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. [DECLARATIO] 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. [DECLARATIO] 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. [ADMONTIO] 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. [EXHORTATIO] We exhort each province to define the criteria for accepting such a ministry, in accordance with the Dominican charism.

118. [ADMONTIO]: 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. [EXHORTATIO] 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. [DECLARATIO] 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. [COMMENDATIO] In an anonymous urban context, small Christian communities ought to foster sharing, fraternity, formation, and mission. We recommend the creation of such groups, in order to promote effective friendly relationships, the sharing of both joys and personal problems.

122. [COMMENDATIO] 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. "Offre à Dieu le sacrifice d'action de grâce" (Ps 49,14) : liturgie & sacrements

123. [ADMONITIO] La liturgie exprime et transmet ce que l'Église vit et croit. Nous exhortons chaque communauté à soigner la célébration des sacrements et rappelons l'exigence de la célébration de l'office en public (cf. LCO 58).

124. [EXHORTATIO] La confession est un lieu majeur de renouvellement de l'amitié avec Dieu. Les frères expliqueront aux fidèles l'importance de ce sacrement pour leur vie spirituelle. Les confesseurs se souviendront toujours qu'ils sont au service de la réconciliation de l'homme avec Dieu. Ils accueilleront et accompagneront les fidèles avec vérité et compassion évitant à la fois le laxisme et le rigorisme. (cf. François, *Misericordiæ vultus*, 10).

125. [EXHORTATIO] Les sacramentaux, tout comme la piété populaire, sont un patrimoine important, occasion de rencontre avec le Christ comme l'ont rappelé tous les papes, de Paul VI à François. Nous exhortons les frères à accueillir avec sollicitude les demandes des fidèles en respectant le *Directoire sur la piété populaire et la liturgie*.

126. [EXHORTATIO] Le Sanctuaire Saint Dominique de Soriano Calabro est un lieu historique pour l'Ordre comme en témoigne la diffusion de son image à la demande de plusieurs chapitres généraux. Nous soutenons le projet d'une année jubilaire à l'occasion du cinquième centenaire de l'apparition. Nous encourageons la Province Saint Thomas d'Aquin en Italie à entreprendre les démarches utiles au bon déroulement de ce Jubilé.

C. De toutes les nations faites des disciples : baptisez-les au nom du Père, et du Fils, et du Saint-Esprit, apprenez-leur à observer tout ce que je vous ai commandé (Mt 28, 19-20) : Prédication et formation

127. [EXHORTATIO] Nous exhortons les frères à offrir une **prédication solide, doctrinale, nourrie par les** questions de nos contemporains et éclairée par notre contemplation. Cette prédication, qui prend en compte tout ce qui constitue notre humanité, doit s'adresser à tous, y compris les « plus simples », dans un langage accessible. (cf. François, *Lumen fidei*, 36). Une attention particulière devrait être apportée aux néophytes et à ceux qui traversent des périodes difficiles.

128. [EXHORTATIO] L'enseignement (écoles, universités, programmes de formation des couvents, ...) a un rôle essentiel dans l'éveil et l'approfondissement de la foi. Il permet l'acquisition de repères pour la réflexion personnelle, une meilleure intelligence de la foi et un engagement chrétien conséquent. Nous rendons grâce à Dieu pour l'implication de beaucoup de frères dans ce domaine. Nous exhortons chacun à approfondir ses connaissances en particulier dans la doctrine sociale de l'Eglise pour mieux la transmettre (cf. ACG 2019 Bien Hoà 125-175).

129. [EXHORTATIO] Nous exhortons les frères à ne pas négliger la prédication de retraites, de séminaires ou de sessions qui permettent, sur un temps plus long, un approfondissement de la foi et des échanges entre participants. Ces échanges nourrissent aussi la foi du prédicateur.

130. [EXHORTATIO] Les familles sont des lieux privilégiés de la transmission de la foi (cf. François, *Lumen fidei*, 54; *Evangelii gaudium*, 139-140; *Amoris lætitia*, 192, 287, 292). Nous exhortons les frères, dans leur pastorale, à tout mettre en œuvre pour aider les familles à répondre à cette vocation.

131. [EXHORTATIO] Les fraternités laïques dominicaines font partie de l'Ordre. Elles doivent être encouragées et soutenues puisqu'elles permettent l'accomplissement d'une forme de vocation dominicaine. La prédication commune (laïcs-frères) de l'Evangile est bénéfique pour tous dans la société : elle mérite d'être promue.

132. [EXHORTATIO] La *Disputatio* est un héritage dominicain précieux à promouvoir dans un monde fracturé, où les opinions s'opposent violemment (cf. ACG 2007 Bogotá 103; ACG 2022 Tultenango 146). Nous exhortons les frères à encourager cette culture de débats dans un esprit d'écoute, de dialogue, de respect mutuel, particulièrement dans les maisons de formation.

133. [COMMENDATIO] Pour favoriser la créativité apostolique et le renouvellement de notre prédication, nous encourageons les frères à participer aux forums créés par la Curie (cf. ACG 2022 Tultenango 105-106). Nous recommandons aussi, à l'intérieur des provinces, le partage d'expériences entre frères œuvrant dans un même domaine apostolique.

D. « L'étranger qui réside avec vous sera pour vous comme un compatriote et tu l'aimeras comme toi-même car vous avez été étrangers au pays d'Égypte » (Lévitique 19,34) : l'accueil des migrants.

134. [EXHORTATIO] Seigneur nous commande d'aimer notre prochain comme Il nous a aimés (cf. Jn 15, 12). L'accueil des migrants constitue l'une des formes particulièrement expressives de cet amour. Voilà pourquoi nous sommes invités à nous rendre proches de ceux qui ont été contraints d'abandonner leur lieu de vie et à dénoncer les discours qui suscitent la peur et la méfiance envers les migrants.

135. [COMMENDATIO] L'accueil des migrants est quelque chose d'exigeant au-delà des discours. Pour le vivre de manière pleinement évangélique, nous encourageons les frères et tous les membres de la famille dominicaine à se former un jugement prudentiel (cf. Mt 25, 34.38) et à promouvoir les initiatives qui contribuent à l'intégration des migrants et à l'approfondissement de leur foi.

136. [GRATIARUM ACTIO] Beaucoup de migrants sont des croyants fervents et leur foi revivifie les communautés locales aujourd'hui. Nous rendons grâce à Dieu pour les vocations dominicaines qui nous viennent de l'immigration et qui nous permettent de témoigner de l'interculturalité dans nos communautés. Elles nous interpellent à valoriser les caractéristiques de la culture de chaque frère afin de générer des expressions de vie et de mission partagées dans un climat de respect et d'appréciation mutuels (ACG 2022 Tultenango 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. [EXHORTATIO] 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. [EXHORTATIO] The mission addresses 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. [EXHORTATIO] Understanding the culture and needs of the current generation is essential to find the right approach to deepen or awaken the faith of believers.

140. [EXHORTATIO] 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. [EXHORTATIO] Some brothers have written books or produced online content which helps the deepening of 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. [COMMENDATIO] We recommend the establishment of evaluation criteria by communities for their pastoral initiatives

143. [EXHORTATIO] 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. [DECLARATIO] 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. [DECLARATIO] Like Saint Dominic we are called to engage with the reality we live in. We encounter those who do not recognise 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 secularisation and the sense of a loss of meaning or they 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. [GRATIARUM ACTIO] 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. Jésus et sa mission

147. [DECLARATIO] “Un temps viendra où les gens ne supporteront plus l’enseignement de la saine doctrine” (2 Tm 4, 3). Ces paroles sont particulièrement significatives dans notre monde marqué par l’indifférence et l’éloignement de l’Église. C’est précisément pour cette raison que notre vocation de chercheurs et de prêcheurs de la vérité revêt une importance particulière pour nos contemporains. Cette vérité nous rend libres (Jn 8, 32). Thomas d’Aquin relie constamment la vérité à la liberté (cf. *Super Ioannem*, c. 8., l. 4., n. 1199). Bartolomé de Las Casas, dans son ouvrage *De Unico Modo*, rappelle avec insistance la valeur des moyens doux, humbles et empreints d’amour dans la transmission de la foi, « comme l’ont fait le Christ et les Apôtres ». Le service de la vérité dans la charité sert le peuple de Dieu dans son unité, à l’image de la prédication de Jésus, le premier prêcheur.

148. [DECLARATIO] L'Évangile nous présente sa prédication de l'unité de manière paradoxale. En effet, Jésus s'attache à rassembler le peuple de Dieu comme l'illustrent la parabole de la brebis perdue (Mt 18, 12-13) ou la rencontre avec la femme adultère (Jn 8, 1-11), tout en reconnaissant que sa parole sera source de division ("Cette parole est rude ! Qui peut l'entendre ?" Jn 6, 60).

149. [EXHORTATIO] Dans toutes ses rencontres Jésus s'adapte à ses interlocuteurs et se fait leur compagnon, à l'image des pèlerins d'Emmaüs (Lc 24, 18-35). Il s'approche et il marche avec eux. Il les écoute et les rejoint là où leur espoir est blessé. Il les enseigne : c'est par le mystère de la Croix qu'il donne la vie nouvelle (Jn 20, 24-29). Aujourd'hui une telle démarche à la suite du Christ invite ses disciples à une conversion. De fait, il nous faut convertir notre image de Dieu et notre image du prochain, en particulier le prochain éloigné de l'Église. Comme membres d'un Ordre au fondement missionnaire, cette conversion doit être pour nous à la fois personnelle et communautaire, dans l'espérance de l'unité, pour laquelle prie Jésus (« que là où je suis avec toi, Père, eux tous soient avec moi » cf. Jn 17, 20.24).

C. Principles for engagement

150. [DECLARATIO] 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. [EXHORTATIO] 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 polarisation, the indispensable bond between charity and truth, and theological reflection as a specific mission of the Order.

152. [EXHORTATIO] We are living in a time of polarisation 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. [EXHORTATIO] 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. [EXHORTATIO] 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. [DECLARATIO] 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 see what is the truth of God in these situations in which people are leaving the Church. That could result in a 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. [COMMISSIO] 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 of the region to reflect in the upcoming three years on burning issues marginalized persons find themselves in, so that the results would be adapted according 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. La crise des abus

157. [GRATIARUM ACTIO] A la suite du chapitre général de Tultenango une commission interdisciplinaire sur les abus a été mise en place par le maître de l'Ordre (ACG 2022 Tultenango 218). La commission a commencé à remplir sa mission selon le cahier des charges qui lui a été fixé. Nous nous en réjouissons et nous l'encourageons à poursuivre son travail. Nous saluons également le travail accompli par les provinces en la matière.

158. [ORDINATIO] Afin de continuer à promouvoir dans l'Ordre une solide culture de protection des personnes (safeguarding) et de lutte contre les abus, nous ordonnons au Maître de l'Ordre qu'une commission multidisciplinaire permanente sur la protection des personnes (safeguarding) soit établie et qu'elle intègre les expériences de différentes entités et réalités de notre Ordre. Elle présentera son rapport lors de chaque chapitre général.

159. [ORDINATIO] Nous demandons aux prieurs provinciaux d'accompagner la réception dans leurs provinces des travaux de cette commission, avec la pédagogie

requis, et de poursuivre la promotion d'une culture de respect des personnes et de lutte contre les abus. Cette culture doit être promue dès la formation initiale et tout au long de la formation permanente.

160. [COMMISSIO] Nous demandons au maître de l'Ordre, au cours de ses visites canoniques, de veiller à la mise en œuvre des actes des chapitres généraux en matière de lutte contre les abus (ACG 2010 Roma 235, 237; ACG 2013 Trogir 142; ACG 2016 Bologna 255, 348; ACG 2019 Biên Hòa 118-122, 188, 291-296; ACG 2022 Tultenango 175-178, 372-376), et en particulier des ordonnances nn. 159, 161, 171.g, 263, 284, 290, 321-323, 325 de l'actuel chapitre

161. [DECLARATIO] La promotion d'une culture de respect des personnes et de lutte contre les abus suppose d'être conscient de l'implication de la vertu de chasteté dans la prédication. Elle requiert une attention particulière au lien entre affectivité et prédication. Comme certaines situations graves l'ont, hélas, montré, il y a en effet des risques quand on valorise trop la liberté des frères et l'exercice de leurs charismes individuels sans lien réel avec leur communauté. Ou bien quand on utilise la théologie comme instrument pour l'emprise spirituelle. Ou bien encore lorsqu'on recourt trop facilement à la miséricorde au mépris des exigences de la justice et du respect des personnes. Tout cela nous oblige.

Safeguarding

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

162. [ORDINATIO] 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, minimising risks of abuse and responding immediately and appropriately to reports of concern. Furthermore, brothers and those employees and volunteers should attend seminars and workshops on the different areas 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. [ORDINATIO] 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. [ORDINATIO] 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. [COMMISSIO] 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. [ORDINATIO] 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 victimising 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.

CAPÍTULO VI

MISIÓN CON LOS JÓVENES

167. [GRATULATIO] El Capítulo reconoce y felicita el trabajo apostólico de toda la Familia Dominicana con los jóvenes, tanto en las capellanías, parroquias, escuelas, universidades, etc.

168. [DECLARATIO] Declaramos la importancia de reconocer la pluralidad de jóvenes y acoger su diversidad, siendo conscientes de sus distintas realidades, contextos, inquietudes y búsquedas. En este camino, es fundamental mostrar una actitud de hospitalidad, cercanía respetuosa, comprensión, coherencia y testimonio de vida.

169. [COMMISSIO] Encomendamos al Promotor General del Laicado Dominicano y al Socio para la Vida Apostólica, en colaboración con todas las entidades, recopilar y valorar las experiencias en el trabajo con los jóvenes de la Orden para mejorar el apostolado con ellos. Recomendamos además que el Promotor General formule los criterios de evaluación y luego comparta estas actividades a través del foro para la juventud bajo el cuidado del Socio para la Vida Apostólica.

170. [COMMISSIO] Solicitamos al Promotor General para el Laicado Dominicano que, en coordinación con la Comisión Internacional del IDYM, garantice la actualización de la página web del mismo para facilitar el intercambio de los recursos formativos e informativos entre los grupos pertenecientes al Movimiento Juvenil Dominicano (cf. ACG 2022 Tultenango 95, 99).

171. [EXHORTATIO] Exhortamos a los responsables del acompañamiento de grupos de jóvenes y a los promotores locales que, en coordinación con los superiores, fomenten con creatividad la creación de espacios y oportunidades para la acogida de los jóvenes y la participación activa en celebraciones litúrgicas, actividades sociales y proyectos apostólicos de la Provincia (cf. ACG 2022 Tultenango 133).

172. [EXHORTATIO] Reiteramos los recordatorios contenidos en las Actas de Bolonia (cf. ACG 2016 Bologna 139), Biên Hòa (cf. ACG 2019 Biên Hoà 274) y Tultenango (cf. ACG 2022 Tultenango 133-134) para que, en las provincias donde aún no existan grupos de jóvenes dominicos entre las edades de 18 a 35 años con vinculación con el IDYM (cf. Estatuto IDYM, n. 1.4), los priores provinciales y sus consejos se esfuercen por facilitar la presencia y promover la pertenencia de estos grupos de jóvenes a la Familia Dominicana a través del IDYM.

173. [EXHORTATIO] Exhortamos a que los grupos de jóvenes menores de 18 años presentes en todas las regiones estén acompañados por miembros de las diversas ramas de la Familia Dominicana y participen del carisma dominicano.

174. [EXHORTATIO] Exhortamos a los miembros de la Familia Dominicana cuyo apostolado se desarrolla en nuestras instituciones apostólicas y educativas, a que fortalezcan su identidad dominicana y tengan una presencia activa y visible.

175. [EXHORTATIO] Exhortamos a los priores y responsables de la pastoral juvenil, a fomentar comunidades de jóvenes lideradas por los propios jóvenes, acompañadas por miembros de la Familia Dominicana. Es esencial que los jóvenes sean valorados, formados y alentados en su capacidad de liderazgo y participación activa en la vida eclesial, conforme a las exhortaciones de *Biên Hòa* (cf. ACG 2019 *Biên Hòa* 147-148) y *Tultenango* (cf. ACG 2022 *Tultenango* 132).

176. [COMMISSIO] Encomendamos al Promotor General del Laicado Dominicano, en colaboración con la Comisión Internacional del IDYM, la creación de un plan de formación para los jóvenes, en base a las siguientes orientaciones:

a) Que estén arraigados en Cristo, cultivando una relación personal y viva con Él, conociendo el Evangelio no sólo como enseñanza, sino como un estilo de vida encarnado.

b) Que sean discípulos misioneros, capaces de dar testimonio de su fe en los distintos ámbitos de la vida: en la escuela, el trabajo, los entornos digitales y en las periferias donde la presencia del Evangelio es más urgente.

c) Que se formen como personas íntegras, cuya espiritualidad se exprese en una fe unida a la razón, la ética y las decisiones concretas de cada día, arraigada en la contemplación.

d) Que estén presentes en el mundo digital y anclados en lo espiritual, con una presencia crítica, ética y creativa en los entornos virtuales, evangelizando desde la cultura digital sin descuidar la vida interior.

e) Que sean discípulos esperanzados, con una fe firme y reflexiva, comprometidos, profundamente humanos y apasionadamente enamorados de Cristo y de su misión.

f) Que presente la experiencia dominicana de lo humano como soporte de la experiencia religiosa: la vivencia de la libertad, el modo de gobierno, la fundamentación del ser en la gracia, pensamiento crítico, etc.

g) Que todos nuestros jóvenes sean conscientes de su papel en la construcción de una cultura de protección en nuestros ministerios juveniles. Para ello, es fundamental que todos los colaboradores en el ministerio juvenil reciban formación en el reconocimiento y la prevención del abuso, así como en los protocolos adecuados para la denuncia de acusaciones, de acuerdo con las normativas eclesiales y civiles vigentes en cada país, promoviendo el cuidado y la responsabilidad en las acciones pastorales de jóvenes para jóvenes.

177. [EXHORTATIO] Exhortamos a los Socios Regionales, junto a los Promotores Provinciales, a que organicen y promuevan, según sus posibilidades y medios, en colaboración con la Comisión Internacional del IDYM cuando sea posible, encuentros regionales de grupos de jóvenes dominicos con el fin de conocerse, compartir experiencias y proyectos comunes.

178. [ADMONITIO] Recordamos a toda la Familia Dominicana la importancia de seguir promoviendo la dimensión comunitaria de la misión con y para los jóvenes, trascendiendo iniciativas aisladas o individualistas. Reconocemos especialmente la

importancia de formar a quienes están a cargo de y asisten a los grupos juveniles, para que realicen su servicio dentro de la cultura de protección con competencia, humildad, generosidad y espíritu sinodal (cf. ACG 2019 Biên Hoà 180, e).

179. [ADMONITIO] Recordamos a los promotores locales de la juventud que se aseguren que el Movimiento Juvenil Dominicano (IDYM) esté debidamente representado en la Comisión de la Familia Dominicana local, donde exista (cf. ACG 2019 Biên Hoà 273; ACG 2022 Tultenango 179).

180. [COMMENDATIO] Proponemos a la Familia Dominicana promover y dar a conocer la figura de Pier Giorgio Frassati entre los jóvenes dominicos, presentándolo como un modelo a seguir que encarna el tipo de santidad juvenil que la Iglesia desea cultivar en nuestro tiempo: alegre, valiente, comprometida socialmente y arraigada en Cristo, convirtiéndolo en una fuente de inspiración que “nos guía 'hacia lo alto' (*verso l'alto*). Por su intercesión, que todos los dominicos puedan inspirarse y comprometerse a predicar a, con y a través de los jóvenes, que siguen siendo el futuro de la sociedad y la esperanza de la Iglesia” (cf. *Relatio* 2025, 36).

CHAPTER VII

FRATERNAL LIFE, FORMATION, AND INTELLECTUAL LIFE

"I call you friends" (John 15:15)

181. [DECLARATIO] 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. [EXHORTATIO] We exhort the brethren to live deeply their friendship with Christ as consecrated religious, both as clerics and co-operator 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. [EXHORTATIO] 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. [EXHORTATIO] 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*).

Co-operator brothers

185. [GRATIARUM ACTIO] 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. [COMMISSIO] We commission the Permanent Commission for the Co-operator brothers to publish a 'Vademecum' collating the acts of previous general chapters and other relevant documents concerning the co-operator brothers. This should be distributed to the provinces for easy reference and made available online.

187. [COMMISSIO] We commission the Master of the Order to renew the Permanent Commission on Co-operator Brothers ensuring the full representation of the regions of the Order.

188. [COMMISSIO] Encargamos a la Comisión Permanente para los Hermanos Cooperadores que trabaje en estrecha colaboración con los Socios Regionales para asegurar que las disposiciones del LCO, la RFG y la RSG correspondientes a los hermanos cooperadores se apliquen allí donde aún no se hayan implementado. Asimismo, reafirmamos y encomendamos a la Comisión Permanente para los Hermanos Cooperadores las responsabilidades que les fueron confiadas por el Capítulo General de Bien Hoa n. 194 (ACG 2019 Biên Hoà 194).

189. [ORDINATIO] 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. [DECLARATIO] Authentic Dominican government is rooted in shared responsibility and shared commitment. It calls each member to a mature participation in the common good, recognising 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. [EXHORTATIO] It is especially important for convents of formation to model authentic Dominican government to brothers in initial formation.

192. [COMMISSIO] 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. [COMMISSIO] 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. [DECLARATIO] “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. [EXHORTATIO] 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. [COMMISSIO] The Conventual Lector is the local promoter of permanent formation in collaboration with the Prior.

197. [COMMISSIO] 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. [COMMENDATIO] 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. [COMMISSIO] 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. [COMMISSIO] 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. [EXHORTATIO] We recognise 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. [EXHORTATIO] 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. Formación inicial

Formación para la madurez humana

203. [COMMISSIO] La formación para la madurez humana es fundamental para la integridad de nuestra vida religiosa y la salud de nuestras comunidades. Encomendamos a los responsables de la formación inicial y permanente brindar elementos pedagógicos y psicoafectivos y acompañar procesos para promover el desarrollo humano integral de los frailes (ACG 2013 Trogir 134).

204. [COMMISSIO] La realidad familiar influye en la madurez humana y vocacional de los candidatos y de los frailes en todas las etapas de la vida. La familia puede ofrecer un apoyo valioso en momentos de dificultad. Encomendamos a los superiores y a los responsables de la formación mantener comunicación con las familias de los candidatos y de los frailes buscando que comprendan nuestros compromisos de vida y establezcan relaciones sanas que contribuyan a la madurez humana y religiosa de los frailes.

Formación auténticamente dominicana

205. [ADMONITIO] Recordamos que nuestra RFG y los últimos capítulos generales han destacado la obligación de ofrecer a todos los hermanos en formación inicial una auténtica formación dominicana (cf. ACG 2022 Tultenango 208; RFG 59-62).

206. [COMMISSIO] Encomendamos a los priores provinciales y a todos los responsables de la formación inicial en las provincias a continuar implementando la ordenación y los criterios señalados por el Capítulo General de Tultenango (ACG 2022 Tultenango 208-209).

207. [COMMISSIO] Encomendamos al Maestro de la Orden continuar con la implementación de estos criterios y determinar cuándo una entidad no cumple con los mismos para asistirle en la necesaria búsqueda de colaboración con otras entidades (cf. ACG 2022 Tultenango 209)

208. [COMMISSIO] Valoramos el esfuerzo de muchas entidades por ofrecer a sus hermanos una formación auténticamente dominicana y en la aplicación de la RFG a través de sus RFP. Esto ha permitido buenas prácticas de colaboración para la formación. Encomendamos a los socios regionales que, junto al Socio para la Vida Fraternal y la Formación, realicen antes de un año una evaluación e identifiquen las tareas pendientes y los desafíos en este campo, para ser presentados al Consejo General de la Orden y a los consejos provinciales.

Desafíos en la formación de los jóvenes hoy

209. [ADMONITIO] Los jóvenes que llegan a nuestros procesos de formación tienen nuevos desafíos como la diversidad de orígenes culturales, la carencia de una formación religiosa o cristiana, la falta de referentes, la falta de integración humana y emocional o los desafíos propios del mundo digital; recordamos a los responsables de la formación y comunidades de formación estar atentos a cumplir lo señalado en la RFG (83): “Los formadores necesitan estar bien informados acerca de las tendencias actuales y las presiones que viven los jóvenes y tener cierta sabiduría en la comprensión de sus implicaciones para aquellos que entran en la Orden”.

210. [COMMISSIO] Encomendamos a los socios regionales que, con el apoyo del Socio de la Vida Fraternal y la Formación, organicen o den continuidad a los programas o proyectos de formación de formadores en cada región y/o área cultural. Estos programas deben ser sistemáticos y realizarse tomando en cuenta nuestra tradición y valores (RFG 13-32).

211. [COMMISSIO] Encomendamos a los provinciales que liberen a los formadores de otras responsabilidades mayores para dedicarse a la formación como su ministerio principal (RFG 76).

Enfoques para la formación

212. [COMMISSIO] La predicación a los diferentes “interlocutores” requiere formar de manera sistemática a frailes concretos para conocer, comprender y dialogar con cada uno de estos interlocutores. Encomendamos a los provinciales y responsables de la formación que, a partir de una planificación apostólica provincial, identifiquen y preparen hermanos para la predicación a los diferentes interlocutores mediante el aprendizaje de ciertas competencias (lenguas y culturas) y el desarrollo de talentos para el diálogo, brindando periodos de experiencias pastorales guiadas a estos interlocutores (cf. RFG 32).

213. [EXHORTATIO] Exhortamos a los responsables de la formación a buscar que los frailes en formación inicial estén en contacto con las realidades sociales y culturales de su tiempo buscando mantener la apertura y las habilidades necesarias para la predicación a los diferentes interlocutores.

214. [COMMISSIO] Encomendamos a los priores provinciales y los responsables de la formación que tengan presente el carácter universal de nuestra Orden (RSG 31), para que los frailes en formación inicial reciban información sobre la labor apostólica y los recursos académicos de nuestra Orden en diversos contextos y culturas. Recordamos que los frailes deben estudiar al menos una de las lenguas oficiales de la Orden (ACG 2022 Tultenango 248) para estar abiertos a un futuro servicio en otros contextos culturales, recordando siempre que nuestra *comunidad* en Cristo, nos invita a vivir en *comunidades* abiertas y en *comunicación* con el mundo entero.

Cultura vocacional

215. [COMMISSIO] El futuro de la Orden depende de una efectiva promoción de vocaciones. Encomendamos a los provinciales que, con ayuda de sus promotores vocacionales, planifiquen una promoción vocacional creadora de “cultura vocacional” (Juan Pablo II, XXX Jornada Mundial de Oración por las vocaciones, 1993; Obra Pontificia para las vocaciones eclesíásticas, “Nuevas vocaciones para una nueva Europa”, 1997, 13; Francisco, *Evangelii gaudium*, 107) que desarrolle los siguientes elementos:

- a) Promover comunidades dominicanas significativas que vivan de manera visible y coherente todas las dimensiones de nuestra vida (ACG 2016 Bologna 236; RFG 97)
- b) Renovar y fortalecer la vida y vocación de cada hermano (ACG 2022 Biên Hòa 187)
- c) Involucrar a todos y cada uno de los frailes, comunidades e instituciones en la promoción de vocaciones (LCO 165 § II). Es responsabilidad de todos asegurar que la llama de la vida y la misión dominicanas, que hemos recibido, sea transmitida fielmente a la siguiente generación.
- d) Encaminar nuestros esfuerzos a suscitar y formar dentro de la Familia Dominicana animadores vocacionales idóneos.
- e) Impulsar la articulación de la pastoral vocacional con las distintas áreas apostólicas de cada provincia,
- f) Potenciar el trabajo con jóvenes en edad universitaria y en los primeros años de inserción laboral. En la actualidad, esta es la etapa de la vida en la que se toman las decisiones más importantes, por eso, es preciso ensayar nuevos modos de acercamiento a esta realidad (RFG 96)
- g) Cuidar las colaboraciones de pastoral vocacional con la Familia Dominicana y con otras entidades de la misma región (RFG 103; ACG 2016 Bologna 235; ACG 2019 Biên Hòa 182; ACG 2022 Tultenango 183)
- h) Fortalecer nuestra visibilidad e impacto en los medios digitales buscando claridad y unidad en la presencia de cada provincia en la web. Es importante contar en las curias provinciales con asistencia de personal especializado para esta labor (ACG 2022 Tultenango 193.c)
- i) El primer medio para crear una cultura vocacional, y el más importante, es orar por las vocaciones (Mt 9,38; ACG 2022 Tultenango 189-190).

Prayer for vocations (T 190)

216. [ORDINATIO] 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. Vida Intelectual

La predicación como meta de nuestra vida intelectual

217. [EXHORTATIO] Recordamos a los provinciales y a los responsables de la promoción de la vida intelectual en las provincias, la orientación de la vida intelectual dominicana hacia la predicación, como lo afirma nuestra RSG (12): “Además de nutrir nuestra contemplación y fomentar la vivencia de los consejos evangélicos, nuestro estudio está orientado a la predicación de la Palabra de Dios y tiene ésta como su meta.” Los exhortamos a asegurar que todos los hermanos reciban una formación adecuada para la predicación, tanto en la teología como en la práctica pastoral.

218. [COMMISSIO] Encomendamos a los provinciales, a los regentes de estudios y a los responsables de la formación intelectual de los frailes, tanto en los estudios institucionales como en la formación permanente, asegurar que dicha formación los capacite para comprender, dialogar y ofrecer contribuciones significativas en relación con los cuatro tipos de interlocutores incluidos en la misión *ad gentes*, la misión con los que se han alejado de la Iglesia o viven en sus márgenes, la misión para la profundización de la fe de los fieles y la misión con los jóvenes.

Unidad de vida y tradición intelectual dominicanas

219. [ADMONITIO] Recordamos que nuestro LCO, la RSG y los dos últimos capítulos generales han destacado la importancia de hacer accesible a todos los hermanos una formación integral verdaderamente dominicana, incluida la dimensión intelectual (cf. ACG 2019 Biên Hòa 305; ACG 2022 Tultenango 240). Afirmamos la necesidad de continuar avanzando en la implementación de este objetivo. En ese marco, deseamos destacar específicamente los siguientes puntos.

220. [COMMISSIO] Encomendamos a los provinciales y a todos los responsables de la animación de la vida intelectual en las provincias continuar implementando la ordenación de ACG 2022 Tultenango 245, en miras a asegurar una óptima formación intelectual dominicana.

221. [COMMISSIO] Renovamos la encomienda al Maestro de la Orden y al Socio para la Vida Intelectual de continuar colaborando en la implementación de dicho objetivo y seguir asistiendo a las provincias para tal efecto (cf. ACG 2019 Biên Hòa 306; ACG 2022 Tultenango 245).

222. [COMMISSIO] Encomendamos a los regentes de estudios continuar promoviendo el conocimiento de la RSG por parte de los frailes y su implementación (incluidas las adiciones realizadas en conformidad con las ACG 2022 Tultenango 239, destacando especialmente los rasgos de la “tradición intelectual dominicana” y una “visión dominicana de la teología” (RSG 16-23), inseparables de nuestra vida comunitaria y fraterna dominicana.

223. [ADMONITIO] Recordamos que la formación y el cultivo de la tradición viviente dominicana incluyen una apropiada fundamentación bíblica, filosófica y teológica, y el estudio y la profundización en el pensamiento de santo Tomás de Aquino, nuestro “óptimo maestro y modelo” (LCO 82), que nos enseña a pensar. Incluye asimismo el estudio de la historia de la teología en su conjunto y de las

contribuciones de otros doctores, hermanos y hermanas miembros de la Orden (cf. RSG 19, 21).

224. [COMMISSIO] Encomendamos a los provinciales, regentes de estudios y a los lectores conventuales asegurar que los componentes dominicanos estén presentes en la formación intelectual de los hermanos, incluso cuando realizan sus estudios institucionales “fuera de la Orden” (cf. RSG 66-67), y en la vida de estudio de las comunidades.

225. [COMMISSIO] Encomendamos al Maestro de la Orden y al Socio para la Vida Intelectual, con la asistencia de la Comisión Permanente para la promoción de los estudios, implementar las propuestas del *Informe sobre Estudios Filosóficos en la Formación Inicial* (cf. ACG 2022 Tultenango 234), en diálogo con los coordinadores regionales de los regentes de estudios y los regentes de cada provincia, especialmente propuestas específicas para cada entidad en miras a enriquecer dicha formación.

226. [COMMISSIO] Encomendamos a los provinciales, a los regentes de estudios y a los responsables de la formación, acompañar y asistir a nuestros hermanos en su formación inicial y permanente, promoviendo una formación intelectual abierta y capaz de entrar en diálogo fecundo con las diversas corrientes de pensamiento, las diversas culturas, religiones y disciplinas (cf. RSG 22).

Felicitaciones

227. [GRATIARUM ACTIO] Agradecemos a Fray Wojciech Giertych, O.P. por su servicio teológico en la Orden y como Teólogo de la Casa Pontificia.

Centros de Estudios

228. [COMMISSIO] Encomendamos a los provinciales, a los regentes y a los responsables de los centros de estudios existentes en las provincias contribuir en el fortalecimiento de dichos centros (cf. LCO 92; RSG 40), especialmente los centros de estudios teológicos, teniendo presente la importancia prioritaria de contar con un centro de estudios institucionales (cf. ACG 2022 Tultenango 241-242).

229. [COMMISSIO] Encomendamos a los provinciales y los regentes de estudios de aquellas provincias que no cuentan aún con un centro de estudios, establecer uno, en los términos señalados por el LCO 91-92 (cf. ACG 2022 Tultenango 300), antes del próximo Capítulo General.

230. [COMMISSIO] Encomendamos al Maestro de la Orden, al Socio para la Vida Intelectual, con la colaboración de la Comisión Permanente para la Promoción de los Estudios, y a los provinciales acompañar y asistir a los centros de estudios teológicos para que se pueda contar con, al menos, un centro de estudios teológicos de alto nivel académico en cada región de la Orden.

Obstáculos y desafíos para la vida intelectual

231. [EXHORTATIO] La escasez de frailes que conozcan la tradición intelectual de la Orden y dedicados a la docencia e investigación es un desafío en diversas regiones de la Orden. Exhortamos a los provinciales y a los regentes de estudios a tomar consciencia de la necesidad prioritaria de formar frailes docentes y de acompañar a quienes se forman para ello o se dedican a esta labor.

232. [ORDINATIO] Renovamos la ordenación de los capítulos de Biên Hòa (ACG 2019 Biên Hòa 328) y Tultenango (ACG 2022 Tultenango 229) sobre la necesidad de planificar los estudios complementarios con miras a la misión de la Orden y nuestro servicio a las iglesias locales:

“Ordenamos a los provinciales, asistidos por los regentes de estudios, que elaboren, en cada entidad, un plan de estudios complementarios de sus hermanos. (Dicho plan) se presentará al Maestro de la Orden y se actualizará en los tres meses siguientes a cada capítulo provincial. En él se estimará el número y la proporción concreta de hermanos que realizarán estudios complementarios, así como las disciplinas a las que se dedicarán. La ejecución de esta planificación se incluirá en el informe anual de los regentes de estudios y se evaluará en las visitas canónicas de las provincias”.

Instituciones académicas bajo la jurisdicción inmediata del Maestro de la Orden

Universidad Pontificia Santo Tomas (PUST-Angelicum)

233. [GRATIARUM ACTIO] Agradecemos a fr. Thomas Joseph White, O.P., Rector de la PUST y a los hermanos y hermanas corresponsables en la gestión y la docencia en las diferentes facultades e institutos, por el fortalecimiento de la excelencia académica, la creación de nuevos institutos y el esfuerzo en la búsqueda de fondos que ha permitido realizar obras de renovación del edificio, incluida la biblioteca (ACG 2019 Biên Hoà 346), en este último trienio.

234. [COMMISSIO] Encomendamos al Rector de la PUST y a los hermanos y hermanas corresponsables en la gestión y la docencia en las diferentes facultades e institutos, continuar con este proceso de desarrollo de la Universidad y asegurar, a través de un fondo (endowment), su sostenibilidad económica en el futuro.

235. [EXHORTATIO] Exhortamos a los priores provinciales y regentes de estudios a considerar el envío de frailes docentes y estudiantes a la PUST-Angelicum participando en este esfuerzo común según las necesidades de sus provincias y de la Orden.

236. [COMMISSIO] Encomendamos al Rector de la PUST la creación de un programa dedicado a la investigación sobre el Cristianismo Antiguo en África en colaboración con los centros de estudios de la Orden en África. Dicho programa podría transformarse en un Instituto en el futuro.

Convitto Internazionale San Tommaso d'Aquino

237. [GRATIARUM ACTIO] Reconocemos la valiosa labor realizada por fr. Orlando Rueda Acevedo, O.P., de la Provincia de Colombia, recientemente fallecido, al servicio de la Orden, como socio para la Vida Apostólica y como rector del Convitto Internazionale San Tommaso d'Aquino en los últimos años.

238. [GRATULATIO] Nos alegramos por los trabajos de renovación del edificio del Convitto Internazionale San Tommaso d'Aquino para continuar asegurando la acogida de estudiantes en Roma.

Facultad de Teología de la Universidad de Friburgo

239. [DECLARATIO] Valoramos la renovación del acuerdo formal entre la Orden, la Universidad de Friburgo y la Conferencia Episcopal Suiza por diez años de acuerdo con lo encomendado por el pasado capítulo general (cf. ACG 2022 Tultenango 264).

240. [COMMISSIO] Nos alegramos por la creación del Instituto de Estudios Dominicanos dentro de la Facultad de Teología de la Universidad de Friburgo. Encomendamos a su Director y miembros seguir trabajando en la implementación de su misión, haciendo presente en la Universidad la tradición intelectual y espiritual dominicana y la actividad de otras instituciones académicas de la Orden (cf. *Estatutos del Instituto*, Art. 3).

241. [GRATIARUM ACTIO] Agradecemos a los frailes docentes en la Universidad de Friburgo por su labor de docencia e investigación y los animamos a continuar haciendo presente la tradición intelectual dominicana en diálogo con otras disciplinas.

242. [COMMENDATIO] Encomendamos al Maestro de la Orden que, junto con el Provincial de Francia, y en diálogo con las comunidades del Albertinum y del Convento San Jacinto, concluya el proceso de unificación de ambas comunidades con los acuerdos correspondientes (cf. ACG 2019 Biên Hòa 354; ACG 2022 Tultenango 268).

École biblique et archéologique française de Jérusalem (EBAF)

243. [GRATIARUM ACTIO] Agradecemos a los miembros de la Escuela Bíblica y Arqueológica Francesa de Jerusalén (EBAF), y a las provincias que contribuyen a su funcionamiento, por las acciones emprendidas al servicio de la excelencia de la docencia y la investigación, especialmente en este tiempo de guerra.

244. [EXHORTATIO] Reconociendo la importancia de la Palabra de Dios en nuestra vida, exhortamos a las entidades de la Orden a enviar estudiantes a completar su formación en la EBAF y les pedimos colaborar en la formación de frailes para contribuir en la enseñanza de la Biblia, la arqueología y otras tareas relacionadas con su misión.

245. [COMMISSIO] Encomendamos al Maestro de la Orden, a los provinciales, al Director de la EBAF y al Socio para la Vida Intelectual para que, antes del próximo capítulo general, identifiquen a dos hermanos que inicien estudios bíblicos y arqueológicos, con miras a colaborar en la EBAF (cf. ACG 2022 Tultenango 274)

Comisión Leonina

246. [GRATIARUM ACTIO] Agradecemos a los miembros de la Comisión Leonina por el envío al Maestro de la Orden del plan de trabajo editorial para los próximos años y los animamos a avanzar en su implementación (cf. ACG 2022 Tultenango 283). Así mismo, los animamos a continuar la colaboración con las entidades y centros de estudios institucionales de la Orden (cf. ACG 2022 Tultenango 282).

Actividades bajo la supervisión del Maestro de la Orden

OPTIC

247. [GRATIARUM ACTIO] Agradecemos al Director de OPTIC y su equipo por el envío del informe de sus actividades, especialmente en relación con la temática de la Inteligencia Artificial, y los animamos a continuar su labor en colaboración con universidades y otras instituciones dominicanas.

248. [COMMISSIO] Encomendamos al Maestro de la Orden que renueve la declaración de OPTIC como actividad bajo la supervisión del Maestro de la Orden por tres años (cf. ACG 2019 Biên Hoà 372).

Centro para el diálogo con las culturas y religiones en Asia

249. [GRATIARUM ACTIO] Agradecemos al Director del Centro para el Diálogo de las Culturas y Religiones en Asia y al Decano de la Facultad de Teología de la UST por las actividades desarrolladas durante estos años. Los animamos, en coordinación con el Socio para Asia-Pacífico y el Coordinador Regional de los Regentes de Estudio, a desarrollar actividades en las diversas provincias de la región.

250. [COMMISSIO] Encomendamos al Maestro de la Orden que renueve la declaración de la actividad colaborativa del Centro como un actividad bajo la supervisión del Maestro de la Orden por tres años (cf. ACG 2019 Biên Hoà 375).

Instituto para el diálogo con las culturas y religiones en África

251. [DECLARATIO] Valoramos los pasos dados por el Instituto para el diálogo con las culturas y religiones en África para la aprobación de los estatutos en el marco de la *Dominican University* de Ibadan. Animamos al Director, en coordinación con el Socio para África y el Consejero para la Vida Intelectual de IAOP, a organizar actividades en las diversas provincias de la región.

252. [COMMISSIO] Encomendamos al Maestro de la Orden que renueve la declaración de la actividad colaborativa del Instituto como actividad bajo la supervisión del Maestro de la Orden por tres años (cf. ACG 2019 Biên Hoà 378).

Facultad de San Esteban de Salamanca

253. [COMMISSIO] Encomendamos al Maestro de la Orden que declare la actividad colaborativa de la Facultad (o del futuro instituto, cf. ACG 2022 Tultenango 296) San Esteban de Salamanca, dedicada a la investigación y docencia sobre la Escuela de Salamanca y la teología dominicana y abierta a la colaboración con toda la Orden, como una actividad bajo la supervisión del Maestro de la Orden por tres años.

254. [EXHORTATIO] Exhortamos a los provinciales y regentes de estudio a que consideren el envío de frailes para estudiar y enseñar en la Facultad (o futuro instituto) San Esteban de Salamanca.

DOMUNI Universitas

255. [COMMISSIO] Acogemos la petición de los provinciales de Francia y Toulouse para clarificar la relación entre DOMUNI Universitas y la Orden. Encomendamos al Maestro de la Orden, a los provinciales de Francia y Toulouse y a los responsables de DOMUNI Universitas que avancen en esta clarificación y en su correspondiente implementación definiendo los roles y responsabilidades de las partes implicadas.

Red de Universidades de la Orden (NUOP-RUOP)

256. [COMMISSIO] Encomendamos al Maestro de la Orden, a los socios para la Vida Intelectual y para la Vida Apostólica y a los rectores de las universidades e instituciones académicas dominicanas la implementación de la red de universidades e instituciones académicas de la Orden (NUOP-RUOP), a través de un programa orientado a compartir buenas prácticas, formas de colaboración académica y actividades comunes (cf. ACG 2022 Tultenango 290). Este programa deberá ser presentado dentro de los próximos seis meses al Consejo General. Un informe de actividades deberá ser presentado al próximo Capítulo General.

Network for Dialogue with Cultures and Religions in the Order

257. [COMMISSIO] Encomendamos a los responsables de los centros dominicanos que trabajan en el campo del diálogo con las culturas y las religiones (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; Instituto para las relaciones interreligiosas - PUST) que, en diálogo con los socios para la Vida Intelectual y la Vida Apostólica, establezcan un plan de actividades para los próximos tres años (cf. ACG 2022 Tultenango 291).

Artificial Intelligence

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

260. [DECLARATIO] Yet it must be acknowledged that in the last 60 years the Order has halved in number, there is a scarcity of financial resources, and a lack of appropriately skilled brethren for specific tasks. Certain important missions, centres of study, and formation will decline if we fail to co-operate. We recognise, 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 haemorrhaging of skills to another entity within the Order that diminishes a province's capability to carry out its mission.

261. [COMMENDATIO] 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 recognise 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 and 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. [COMMISSIO] 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. [EXHORTATIO] We exhort the Order's varied centres 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 honour our tradition of shared responsibility and ensure that our preaching remains grounded in the highest levels of theological and intellectual excellence.

264. [COMMISSIO] 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. [DECLARATIO] 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. [EXHORTATIO] 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. [COMMISSIO] 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. [DECLARATIO] 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.

CAPÍTULO VIII

GOBIERNO Y ECONOMÍA

A. Gobierno

Gobierno auténticamente dominicano y bien común

269. [DECLARATIO] Reconocemos que el “*gobierno comunitario a su modo*” [cf. LCO 1 § VII] es fundamento de la espiritualidad dominicana y base necesaria para la predicación del Evangelio. Es un patrimonio, vivido durante ocho siglos, único en la Iglesia. La Orden de Predicadores, según el envío de nuestro Señor “de ir de dos en dos” (Lc 10, 1), ha realizado un camino conjunto desde el primer capítulo convocado por santo Domingo, por lo cual tiene mucho que ofrecer a una Iglesia que hoy desea vivir sinodalmente.

En el contexto de crisis de abusos diversos en la Iglesia y fuera de ella, nuestra Orden tiene la responsabilidad de promover formas saludables, transparentes y equilibradas en el ejercicio del gobierno.

270. [ADMÓNITIO] Recordamos a todos los frailes en el servicio del gobierno que deben preocuparse ante todo por el bien común, el bien de cada uno de los frailes y la misión apostólica de la Orden (cf. LCO 299-300, 339). El ejercicio de un oficio es un servicio y una entrega de sí mismo en favor de la comunidad y de la predicación del Evangelio. Nunca debe ser considerado como una fuente de beneficios personales.

271. [EXHORTATIO] Observamos una disponibilidad cada vez menor por parte de los frailes para asumir responsabilidades como superiores. Somos conscientes de que esto se debe, entre otras razones, al aumento de las expectativas (con frecuencia poco realistas) de los hermanos hacia sus superiores, así como al incremento de las exigencias administrativas en muchas regiones del mundo. Exhortamos a los frailes a disponerse a servir en el ejercicio del gobierno en nuestra Orden.

272. [GRATIARUM ACTIO] Expresamos nuestro agradecimiento a todos los superiores de la Orden: al Maestro de la Orden, a los provinciales y a los superiores locales, por asumir este servicio generoso en favor de los frailes y la misión de la Orden. Agradecemos también a los frailes de la curia general por su apoyo al Maestro de la Orden en el cumplimiento de su misión.

273. [COMMISSIO] Somos conscientes del valor del gobierno dominicano, de su relevancia en el contexto eclesial y el mundo de hoy, así como de la necesidad de formar a los frailes para este servicio. Encomendamos a los promotores provinciales de formación permanente que organicen, antes de finalizar el año 2026, encuentros para priores y superiores sobre el modo dominicano de ejercer el gobierno.

274. [EXHORTATIO] Exhortamos a los priores provinciales a que, en sus reuniones regionales, analicen los motivos de las salidas de los hermanos de la Orden en su región después de la profesión solemne, para ayudar a las provincias en la elaboración de programas de formación permanente.

Acompañamiento en el gobierno

275. [COMMISSIO] Considerando que en los últimos 15 años la Orden ha atravesado –y continúa atravesando– intensos procesos de reestructuración (la supresión de vicariatos generales, la erección de vicariatos provinciales, la reducción de provincias a vicariatos, la fusión de provincias y la creación de nuevas provincias), encomendamos al Maestro de la Orden la realización de una evaluación de dichos procesos, cuyos resultados deberán ser presentados al Capítulo General del año 2028.

Dicha evaluación deberá fundamentarse en, al menos, las cuestiones siguientes:

- si en las entidades recientemente erigidas se garantiza la vida, la misión, el gobierno y la formación auténticamente dominicanos;
- si en cada entidad se han establecido mecanismos adecuados de colaboración entre el prior provincial y el vicario provincial;
- si existen mecanismos eficaces de apoyo de la provincia al respectivo vicariato provincial;
- si resulta necesaria una revisión de la asignación de determinados vicariatos a sus respectivas provincias.

Encomendamos, asimismo, que la evaluación incluya:

- un listado de las entidades que, en el corto o mediano plazo, deberían ser consideradas para procesos de reestructuración; (LCO 28, 29)
- y una propuesta de pasos o directrices que deban observarse al llevar a cabo dichos procesos en el futuro.

Provinces, vice-provinces and vicariates not fulfilling the conditions of LCO (cf. BH 278-279; T 380-381)

276. [ORDINATIO] 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 similar lack of fulfilment of these requirements must follow the same procedure.

277. [ORDINATIO] 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 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. [COMMISSIO] Encomendamos al Maestro de la Orden que lleve a cabo una evaluación de los mecanismos de solidaridad entre provincias de la Orden (solidaridad en el ámbito de los recursos materiales y humanos) y presente sus conclusiones en el Capítulo General del año 2028.

El objetivo de dicha evaluación es verificar si en las nuevas entidades y en otras entidades frágiles de la Orden se garantizan efectivamente el gobierno, la vida y misión, así como la formación auténticamente dominicanos.

279. [COMMENDATIO] En relación con los retrasos en la realización de las visitas canónicas, ocasionados por la pandemia de COVID-19 y las restricciones en los viajes, recomendamos al Maestro de la Orden, según considere más oportuno, llevar a cabo una segunda ronda de visitas canónicas mediante sus socios o delegados. (LCO 398 § II)

280. [ORDINATIO] Ordenamos (si todavía no se ha hecho) que la misión del promotor provincial de Justicia, Paz y Cuidado de la Creación, al que el capítulo provincial puede asignar un título alternativo, forme parte de los oficios que tiene que proveer el capítulo provincial. El capítulo debe asegurarse de que el fraile nombrado tenga las competencias y la disponibilidad requeridas para este oficio y que se le den los recursos necesarios para llevar a cabo su mandato (cf. ACG 2022 Tultenango 102)

The Dominican Family

Recognition of groups as part of the Dominican Family

281. [DECLARATIO] 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 recognised 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 recognised as part of the Dominican Family (cf. in particular ACG 1998 Bologna 177). We reaffirm these criteria for evaluation of new groups, and emphasise 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 is determined by its own statutes in such a way that the exercise of authority fosters the unity of our charism.

282. [ORDINATIO] We ordain that, for a group to be recognised 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 recognised 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. [PETITIO] We ask those groups already recognised as part of the Dominican Family to ensure that their statutes comply with these requirements.

284. [DECLARATIO] 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 recognised as part of the Dominican Family. Should the need arise, the authority competent to recognise a group as part of the Dominican Family may declare that a particular group is no longer so recognised.

285. [ADMONITIO] We remind superiors of the Order that they do not have the authority to recognise 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. [ADMONITIO] 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 regularised. He must fully embrace his new canonical status, and avoid any situations which might lead to confusion or scandal.

Appointment of religious assistants to Lay Fraternities

287. [ADMONITIO] 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. [EXHORTATIO] Exhortamos a los consejos provinciales de las fraternidades laicales de Santo Domingo, que aún no lo hayan hecho, a que revisen sus directorios provinciales a la luz de la Regla y de las Declaraciones Generales promulgadas por el Maestro de la Orden el 9 de marzo de 2019. Corresponde al Maestro de la Orden, tras escuchar al prior provincial con su consejo, aprobar dichos directorios (cf. *Declaraciones Generales 2019*, 10 § I).

289. [COMMENDATIO] Recomendamos que la actualización de los directorios provinciales de las fraternidades laicales disponga que la elección del presidente y de los consejeros provinciales requiera la confirmación del prior provincial.

290. [COMMISSIO] Comisionamos a los provinciales, viceprovinciales y vicarios provinciales para que, en sus reuniones regionales dialoguen, con la participación del Maestro de la Orden y/o los socios regionales, sobre el gobierno auténticamente dominicano, identificando temas y aspectos concretos.

291. [COMMISSIO] Comisionamos al Maestro de la Orden para que incluya en la organización y el desarrollo del Capítulo General de 2028 los temas sobre el gobierno de la Orden, identificados en las reuniones regionales.

292. [EXHORTATIO] Exhortamos al Maestro de la Orden a que realice una encuesta en la Orden sobre el gobierno de la Orden, y que presente sus resultados en el Capítulo General de 2028. El Maestro deberá consultar con los provinciales, durante las reuniones regionales del año 2026, la forma y los temas concretos de dicha encuesta.

293. [COMMISSIO] Comisionamos al Maestro de la Orden junto a la comisión organizadora del próximo Capítulo General de 2028 que, en consulta con los provinciales, estudie el modo de optimizar los tiempos y los trabajos del capítulo general, el modo en que se desarrolla dicho capítulo y las expectativas que la Orden tiene al respecto.

B. Economía

294. [ADMONITIO] Recordamos a los frailes que el espíritu de la pobreza apostólica de los comienzos de la Orden debe animarnos también a nosotros, según las formas adaptadas a los diversos tiempos y regiones. Esta pobreza se manifiesta y se vuelve significativa para nosotros y para el mundo de hoy en una correcta administración, por parte de todos los frailes, de los bienes temporales del convento, la provincia y

toda la Orden. (LCO 30, 537, 576-577). La adquisición de bienes personales, o prácticas similares, es incompatible con nuestra espiritualidad y legislación.

Transparencia y solidaridad

295. [COMMISSIO] Comisionamos al Maestro de la Orden para que evalúe el modelo económico de la Curia General, revise los criterios de contribución al presupuesto de la Curia General (cf. ACG 2007 Bogotá 261) y elabore un informe que ha de ser presentado al Capítulo General de 2028.

296. [ORDINATIO] Ordenamos al Síndico de la Orden que continúe organizando reuniones por regiones con los síndicos provinciales (ACG 2019 Biên Hòa 243; ACG 2022 Tultenango 329).

297. [ADMONITIO] En continuidad con los Capítulos de Biên Hòa (Cultura de la transparencia, ACG 2019 Biên Hòa 221-227) y Tultenango (Transparencia y responsabilidad, ACG 2022 Tultenango 311-313) insistimos en los mecanismos que han de garantizar la transparencia y la integridad de la información económica y financiera de nuestras entidades.

298. [ORDINATIO] Ordenamos a las provincias y viceprovincias de la Orden que sometan sus cuentas e informes financieros a auditorías externas en conformidad con la legislación eclesiástica; nuestras Constituciones (LCO 550), el estatuto económico propio y la ley civil, si existiera. El resultado de dichas auditorías será enviado a la Curia General junto con el informe económico.

299. [ORDINATIO] Ordenamos a las provincias y viceprovincias de la Orden que establezcan, en el marco de sus estatutos económicos, un protocolo de intervención en caso de delitos y abusos económicos. (cf. ACG 2022 Tultenango 377).

Economic Mismanagement (cf. BH 227; T 377)

300. [ORDINATIO] 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 in 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. [COMMISSIO] Encomendamos a los priores provinciales que, dentro de los seis meses siguientes a la aprobación del protocolo de intervención, organicen una jornada de formación y actualización dirigida a los priores, superiores y a todos los

frailes y laicos que desempeñen funciones relacionadas con la gestión de los bienes temporales.

Asimismo, encomendamos al Síndico de la Orden ofrecer esta formación a los conventos e instituciones bajo la jurisdicción del Maestro de la Orden.

Administración Económica

302. [ORDINATIO] Ordenamos que no se pague ningún subsidio económico a aquella institución o convento bajo la jurisdicción del Maestro de la Orden cuyo informe financiero no haya sido aprobado por el Consejo General de la Orden nueve meses después de la finalización del año en curso (ACG 2019 Biên Hòa 226; ACG 2022 Tultenango 319).

303. [ORDINATIO] Ordenamos al Síndico de la Orden que establezca de forma contable un único fondo para la Solidaridad denominado: "Fondo de Solidaridad de la Orden", con la suma de los fondos existentes: Solidaridad, Santo Domingo y Formación Inicial.

304. [ORDINATIO] Ordenamos al Consejo de Spem Miram que, antes de un año, reformule y presente al Consejo General para su aprobación, un único Estatuto de Solidaridad con los procedimientos; ha de considerar, para ello, el modelo de los existentes, priorizando la formación inicial de las provincias económicamente más débiles las becas de estudios complementarios y adicionales y los proyectos para la misión de la Orden.

305. [ORDINATIO] Ordenamos que el límite de gastos que el Maestro de la Orden puede autorizar, sin la aprobación de su Consejo, sea de 100.000 euros.

306. [COMMENDATIO] Reconocemos que varias provincias de la Orden soportan una carga financiera considerable relacionada con el pago de compensaciones económicas a las víctimas de abusos sexuales, así como los costes legales asociados. Recomendamos a las provincias que reserven una partida en sus presupuestos para cubrir las compensaciones a las víctimas de abusos, así como para hacer frente a otras situaciones imprevistas y difíciles.

307. [COMMISSIO] Encomendamos al Maestro de la Orden atender las situaciones particulares de las provincias con problemas económicos graves y verificables como consecuencia de la indemnización a las víctimas de abusos o de otras situaciones imprevistas, para ayudar a encontrar soluciones adecuadas; esto puede incluir una reducción de la contribución de dicha provincia o viceprovincia al presupuesto anual de la Curia General.

Informes Financieros y Económicos

308. [DECLARATIO] Declaramos que el Síndico de la Orden, fr. Juan Luis Mediavilla García, OP, en conformidad con LCO 569, presentó al Capítulo General el Informe de Administración Económica de la Curia General correspondiente a los años 2022, 2023

y 2024. En dicho informe están incluidos los informes económicos de los conventos e instituciones bajo la jurisdicción del Maestro de la Orden.

309. [DECLARATIO] Declaramos que el síndico de la Orden, fr. Juan Luis Mediavilla García, OP, presentó al Capítulo General el estado financiero de los diversos fondos gestionados por la Curia General (Fondo del Maestro, Fondos de Spem Miram, Fondo de las Monjas, Fondo de la Comisión Leonina y otros fondos menores).

Contribuciones y Subvenciones

310. [ORDINATIO] Ordenamos que la contribución de cada provincia y viceprovincia al presupuesto anual de la Curia General se determine de acuerdo con las normas del Capítulo General de Bogotá n. 261 (ACG 2007 Bogotá 261), incluyendo las deducciones por gastos médicos y de salud, los gastos de formación institucional y las donaciones a otras entidades de la Orden que no estén bajo su jurisdicción (excluyendo la contribución anual al presupuesto de la Curia General).

311. [ORDINATIO] Ordenamos que la contribución de las provincias y viceprovincias al presupuesto anual de la Curia General no sea inferior a 3.000 euros ni superior al 10% del presupuesto de la Curia (ACG 2019 Biên Hòa 250; ACG 2022 Tultenango 325).

312. [ORDINATIO] Ordenamos que la contribución de los conventos y otras instituciones bajo la inmediata jurisdicción del Maestro de la Orden al presupuesto anual de la Curia General sea del 6% de sus ingresos brutos (ACG 2019 Biên Hòa 252; ACG 2022 Tultenango 327).

313. [ORDINATIO] Ordenamos que el Síndico de la Orden incluya en el presupuesto de la Curia General un subsidio anual a las siguientes instituciones bajo la inmediata jurisdicción del Maestro de la Orden:

- a) Universidad de Santo Tomás (Angelicum) 200.000 euros, de los cuales 150.000 euros serán destinados a los gastos ordinarios de funcionamiento y 50.000 euros para complementar los salarios por la docencia impartida de los frailes asignados *simpliciter* al Convento de Santo Domingo y San Sixto;
- b) École Biblique et Archéologique: 70.000 euros para apoyar las actividades de investigación de los hermanos que enseñan en l'École Biblique;
- c) Comisión Leonina: hasta 180.000 euros;
- d) Instituto Histórico: hasta 150.000 euros.

Otros:

- e) Sede de Justicia y Paz ante la ONU: hasta 180.000 euros

Cada institución que reciba una subvención de la Curia General deberá rendir cuentas de sus gastos. Este informe se pondrá a disposición de todos los capitulares en el próximo Capítulo General.

314. [ORDINATIO] Ordenamos al Síndico de la Orden que, hasta el próximo Capítulo general, no incluya en el presupuesto anual de la Curia los subsidios asignados para las regiones, ya que estas disponen de recursos propios acumulados. Para la región de África, le ordenamos que incluya 50.000 € para el primer año y

150.000 € para cada uno de los dos años sucesivos. Al mismo tiempo, pedimos al Síndico de la Orden que, antes de finalizar el año, presente al Maestro de la Orden un informe que ayude a clarificar definitivamente el origen y la finalidad del fondo denominado “24213 IAOP Fondo”.

315. [ORDINATIO] Ordenamos que el coste del Capítulo General se distribuya de forma equitativa y proporcional entre las provincias. Todos los costes administrativos deberán ser pagados por las provincias en la misma proporción que la contribución al presupuesto de la Curia General para el año 2025. Los gastos de desplazamiento serán divididos de forma equitativa entre todos los capitulares, excluyendo a la provincia anfitriona. Cada vocal debe pagar el coste *per diem*.

CAPITULUM IX

DE LIBRO CONSTITUTIONUM ET ORDINATIONUM

Notæ Præviæ

316. Ad clariorem mutationum in LCO in Capitulo factarum præsentationem, simili modo procedemus, prout iam in Actis Capitulorum Generalium præcedentium factum est:¹

Servatur ordo numericus LCO. Ad omnem numerum signa propria indicant an textus prima, secunda vel tertia vice adprobatus fuerit:

- ★★★ constitutio confirmata (habet tria capitula)
- ★★ constitutio adprobata (habet duo capitula)
- ★ constitutio inchoata (habet unum capitulum)

(nota: cum indicatione ★ vel ★★ notatur si inchoatio vel adprobatio constitutionis “cum ordinatione” facta est.)

- ◆◆◆ ordinatio definitive inserta in LCO
- ◆◆ ordinatio secunda vice votata, abrogans ordinationem præviam
- ◆ ordinatio prima vice acceptata

[A] textus abrogatus

Typis “*italicis*” textus novi imprimuntur.

Attamen cum pro bona interpretatione mutationum factarum necesse sit cognoscere textum præcedentem eiusque historiam, referentiæ ad capitula præcedentia dantur cum sequentibus siglis:

- B Bononiæ, 2016
- BH Biên Hòa, 2019
- T Tultenango, 2022

Hoc capitulum aliquot textus “*technice*” mutavit quin substantia legis mutaretur. Verbum abbreviatum “*Techn.*” signabit mutationes factas sive ad leges nostras CIC accomodandas, sive ad harmonizandos textus cum aliis numeris LCO, sive pro mera mutatione in redactione.

In legislatione nostra quæ dicuntur de conventibus valent etiam pro domibus nisi aliud expresse caveatur (cf. LCO 260 § II).

In legislatione nostra ad mentem LCO 252-256 nomine “*provinciae*” proportionaliter comprehenditur et vice-provinciae.

317. LCO 45 § I (T 338)

◆◆ 45. Ord. – § I. – Frater per aliquod tempus moraturus in territorio alterius provinciae, tempestive moneat respectivum priorem provinciam, salvo semper n. 137. *Ut vero commoratio licite ultra tres menses extendatur, licentia dicti prioris provincialis indiget.*

318. LCO 107 (BH 113 T 371)

◆◆◆ 107. Ord. – § I. – Provincia vel vicariatus... [ut in textu]

¹ Cf. ACG Romæ [1983], n. 307; Abulæ [1986], n. 188; Oakland [1989], n. 208; Mexici [1992], n. 248; Calarogæ [1995], caput IX, pag. 90; Bononiæ [1998], n. 240; Providentiæ [2001], caput X, pag. 149; Cracoviæ [2004], n. 352; Bogotæ [2007], n. 288; denuo Romæ [2010], n. 262; Traugurii [2013], n. 211; denuo Bononiæ [2016], caput VII, p. 45; Biên Hòa [2019], nn. 379-384; Tultenango [2022], n. 337.

§ II. – Ut cultura mobilitatis et vitalitas ministeriorum provinciae sustineantur, prior provincialis cum suo consilio rationem pro successione in apostolatibus provinciae praeparet, quam unoquoque quarto anno recognoscere tenetur.

319. LCO 165 § II (BH 390 T 341)

◆◆◆ 165. Ord. – § II. – *Quaelibet provincia vocationum promotorem nominet quod, si fieri potest, eiusdem munus primum sit.*

§ III. Meminerint tamen omnes... [ut in textu]

320. LCO 199 § I (T 342)

★★ 199. Const. – § I. – Professio simplex facienda est sub hac formula:

“Ego frater N.N. facio professionem et promitto obœdientiam Deo et b. Mariæ et b. Dominico et tibi fratri N.N. magistro Ordinis ~~fratrum~~ Prædicatorum et successoribus tuis (vel: tibi fratri N.N. priori provinciali provinciae...; vel: delegato...; vice fratris N.N. magistri Ordinis ~~fratrum~~ Prædicatorum et successorum eius), secundum regulam b. Augustini et institutiones fratrum Prædicatorum quod ero obœdiens tibi tuisque successoribus ad triennium (vel: ad annum).”

321. LCO 253 § I

★ 253. Const. – § I. – Provincia constat ex tribus saltem conventibus quorum duo ad minus habeant octo vocales *assignatos ibique habitualiter degentes*. Insuper, omnes vocales provinciae saltem sint quadraginta.

322. LCO 297-ter

◆ 297-ter. Ord. – *Vocales non de facili a suffragio determinato abstineant, præsertim de admissione ad professionem, sed tantum ob iustam causam quæ iudicium impedit.*

323. LCO 369 § I

◆ 369. Ord. – § I. – *Præses et consilarii ordinarie in loco celebrationis consilii corporaliter adsint. In casibus tamen exceptionalibus et urgentioribus, consilium per instrumenta telematica celebrari potest, dummodo inter participantes verum colloquium haberi possit et scrutinia fidelia, tuta et ordinarie secreta maneant, servato præscripto n. 455-ter § IV, 3° et 4°. Si nec celebratio telematica fieri potest, quando plures adesse non possunt, sufficit ut præter præsidem consilii adsint saltem duo consilarii.*

§ II. – Quando agitur de rebus ad studium... [ut in textu]

324. LCO 375 (T 346)

◆◆ 375. Ord. – § I. – ~~Ad primum consilium~~ *Tempore primæ sessionis consilii provinciae quod quæ elapso biennio post prioris provincialis confirmationem locum habebit, prior provincialis convocare tenetur ad consilium amplius, præter membra consilii provinciae, vicarios provinciales et priores conventuales stricto sensu; nisi aliud a capitulo provinciali determinatum fuerit quoad vicarios provinciales et priores in dissitis regionibus. statutum autem provinciae determinare potest an vicarii provinciales et priores a dissitis regionibus convocandi sint, necnon alios forte convocandos definire.*

§ II. – In hoc consilio ampliori, quod voto gaudet tantum consultivo, tractanda sunt omnia quæ ad bonum provinciae utilia videbuntur, et in primis inspiciatur an ad praxim reductæ sint ordinationes et exhortationes ultimi capituli provincialis et generalis.

325. LCO 382 (BH 400 T 347)

◆◆◆ 382. Ord. — Prior provincialis habeat archivum secretum in quo servantur documenta secreta, de quorum merito successorem suum certiore reddere tenetur. *Elapsis septuaginta annis* Post mortem fratrum de quibus in documentis agitur, ista comburantur, dummodo hoc fieri queat sine præiudicio erga eos qui adhuc vivunt, *attentis dispositionibus iuris civilis.*

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

◆◆◆ 417. Ord. — § IV. — *In Capitulo Generali, præter linguam Latinam, linguæ de quibus in n. 438-quater adhiberi possunt.*

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

◆◆◆ 438-quater. Ord. — *Documenta in lingua vulgari a Curia Generalitia pro toto Ordine edita in linguas Anglicam, Gallicam et Hispanicam vertenda sunt.*

328. LCO 443 § II (T 353)

★★ 443. Const. — § II. — Quando agitur de electione superiorum, ut quis eligi ~~vel postulari~~ possit, requiritur etiam:

1° ut sit presbyter;

2° ut tres annos habeat a professione sollemni;

3° ut ad audiendas confessiones actualiter probatus sit in Ordine.

329. LCO 481 § III (T 360)

◆◆ 481. Ord. — § III. — *Si prior provincialis intra mensem a devolutionis notitia vicarium provincialem non instituerit, ius providendi ad magistrum Ordinis devolvitur.*

330. LCO 571 (BH 224 T 317)

◆◆◆ 571. Ord. — Superiores conventuum et moderatores institutorum sub immediata iurisdictione magistri Ordinis, eodem modo ut supra nn. 563 et 565 statuto, rationes accuratas a respectivo consilio adprobatas *atque a perito externo congruenter recognitas* mittant ad magistrum Ordinis.

331. LCO 589 (BH 225 T 318)

◆◆◆ 589. Ord. — § I. — *Ea quæ dicta sunt pro ædificiis construendis valent mutatis mutandis pro restauratione et reparationibus notabilibus necnon pro aliis negotiis maioris momenti.*

§ II. — *Curia Generalitia et singula instituta sub immediata iurisdictione magistri Ordinis, quæ bona immobilia possident, in annua ratione præsumpta provisionem opportunam ad futura renovationis opera peragenda faciant.*

332. LCO 601 (T 363)

◆◆ 601. Ord. Cum fratres permanentes apud instituta, opera vel alia huiusmodi quæ ad conventus vel provincias Ordinis non pertinent officium aliquod exercent vel laborem præstant, curet prior provincialis contractum inire in quo omnes condiciones accurate stabiliantur. *Quando officium exercetur in territorio aliæ provinciæ, contractus insuper notificetur priori provinciali loci.*

Authentic Interpretations

333. [DECLARATIO] 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. [DECLARATIO] 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 LCO (ACG 2007 Trogir 241; B 339; BH 434; T 364)

335. [ORDINATIO] 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. [ORDINATIO] 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.

SEDES PROXIMI CAPITULI GENERALIS

337. [DECLARATIO] 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.

SUFFRAGIA PRO VIVIS

338. [ORDINATIO] 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.

SUFFRAGIA PRO DEFUNCTIS

339. [ORDINATIO] 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.

LECTIO ACTORUM

340. [ORDINATIO] Ordenamos que los superiores de todas las provincias, conventos y casas se aseguren de que cada hermano reciba una copia – al menos electrónica – de estas Actas, que las lean y dialoguen en sus respectivas comunidades dentro de los seis meses siguientes a su promulgación y procuren que sean observadas por todos.

PRAYER

341. [DECLARATIO]

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 curiæ generalitiae munitis eadem fides adhiberi ac originali textui debet.


In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti.

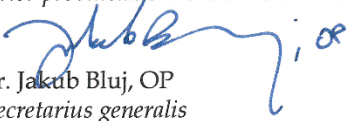
Datum in Cracovia, in conventu SS. Trinitatis, die VIII mensis Augusti a.D. MMXXV.


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 Slovachiæ


fr. Jakub Bluj, OP
secretarius generalis

fr. Olivier Catel, OP
actuarius


fr. Piotr Skibiński, OP
actuarius


Br. Piotr Skibiński

APPENDIX 1

RELATIO DE STATU ORDINIS

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, 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 can 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 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*".² 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 could not anymore 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 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."³ 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*)⁴ 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 for the salvation of souls" look like in our time, in the different provinces and communities of the Order?

² Vladimír Koudelka, *Dominic*, trans by Simon Tugwell (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1997) p. 9.

³ 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.

⁴ 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).

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."⁵*

⁵ Christina Keng, "A Presentation on Pastoral Planning", 2023.

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" (S.Th. I-II, q.1, resp.1). A concise yet comprehensive vision and priorities 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 which 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 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"⁶
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 errors. But it would be interesting if the capitulars could share to 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 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 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 could be made so that we could 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,

⁶ Pontifical Council For Inter-Religious Dialogue, *Dialogue And Proclamation*, 19 May 1991, no., 77.

we are advancing in our mission *ad gentes*”? Or, we are unable to obtain this objective, therefore, we need to rethink our methodology, approach, etc? We must bear in mind “that the root of all evangelization lies not 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”.⁷

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).
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** (do the 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**: “disciple-missionaries” 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 are walking away from the Church, those who are on the same “road” as the two disciples walking away from**

⁷ Benedict XVI, Apostolic Letter *Ubicumque et Semper* (document has no paragraph numbers).

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 Breaking of Bread. (Luke 24:13–32).

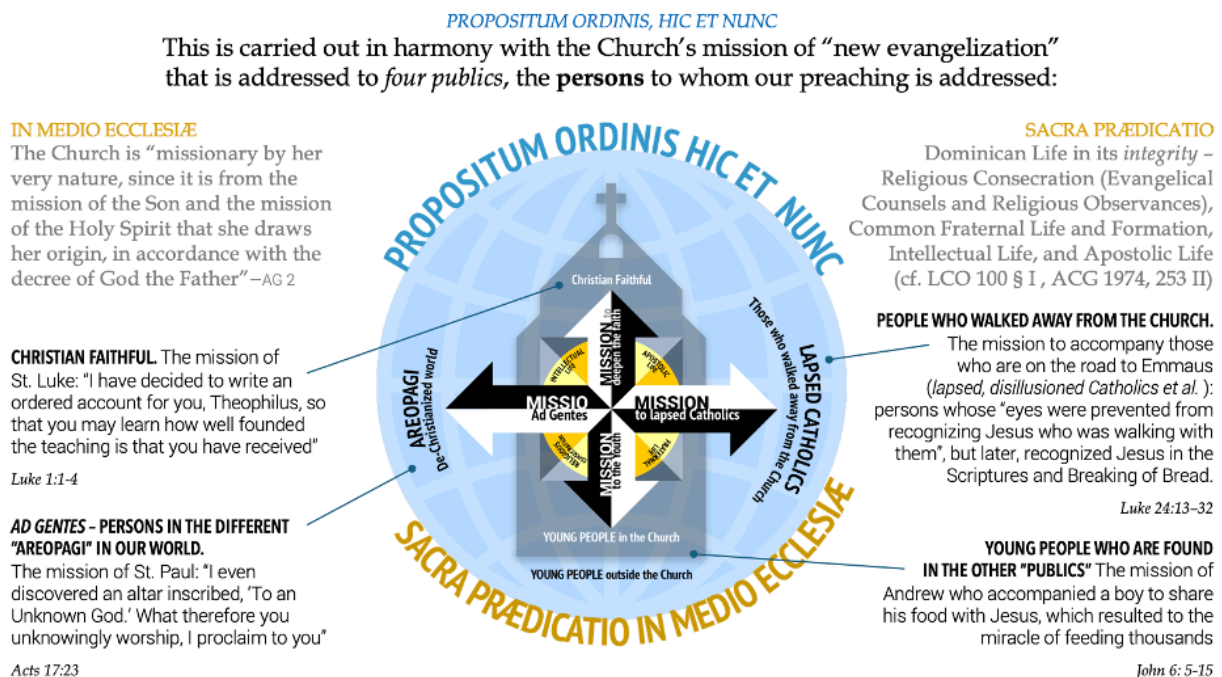
30. Secularization has a lot to do with people who have gradually distanced themselves from the practice of the faith. They have lost that sense to recognize Jesus in Word and Sacrament. How can we engage them and invite them back to see Jesus once again? How can we walk with them, talk with them, sit at a table with them like 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 the 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 which 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** in Asia-Pacific, **17** are in Europe and Canada, **6** 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*.⁸ Thus, the *collective core service (diakonia)* of the General Curia is the promotion of this *trifold mission*, even 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 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

⁸ Jordan of Saxony, *Libellus*, 51. See also fr. Bruno Cadore OP, *Relatio* (2019), no. 25.

General Curia and provides prompt and expert advise 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 reflected on “lights” and “shadows”, and discussed on 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 visitors. 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 which 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.**⁹ 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 who share our vision 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* labourers 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

⁹ Gene Wilkes, *Jesus on Leadership* (Tyndale: Carol Stream, Illinois, 1998) p. 18.

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 labourers into his harvest” (Matt. 9:38), one of our important duties in promoting vocations is to pray. In fulfilment 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 council of formation 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, interrupted during the COVID years, will restart, according to some provincials. Europe has plans to have 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 last years, 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 scholarships 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 studies.

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 these 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, Br. 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 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 the light of their clearly stated common priorities, the brothers will choose the 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 2023, 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 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 studies.
- 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.

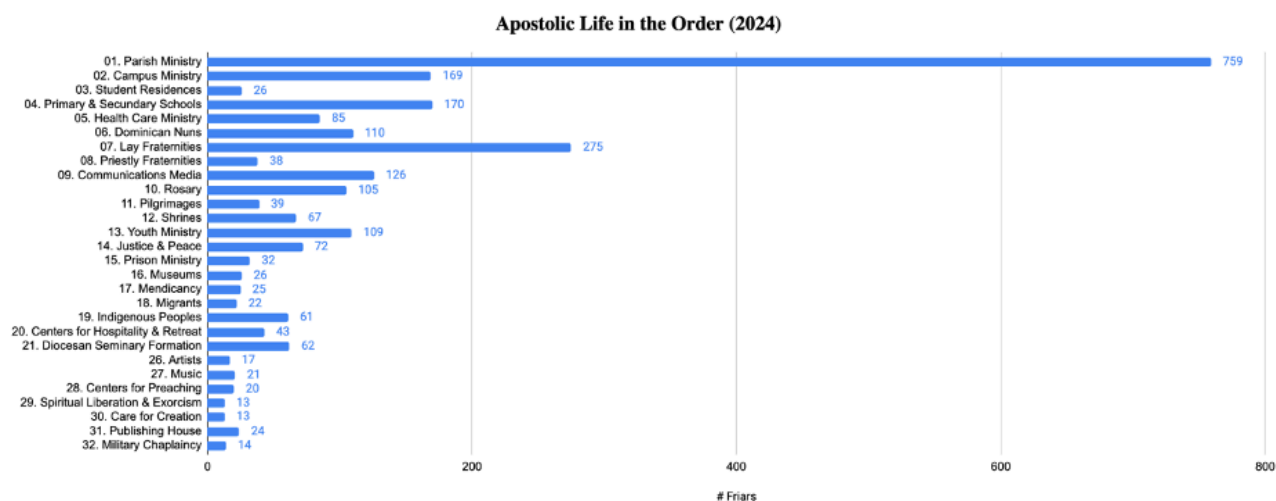
APOSTOLIC LIFE

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 accompany 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 others, 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 on how 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. 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, 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 Blacfriars, 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 natural law. He proffered 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 honor 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, Br. 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

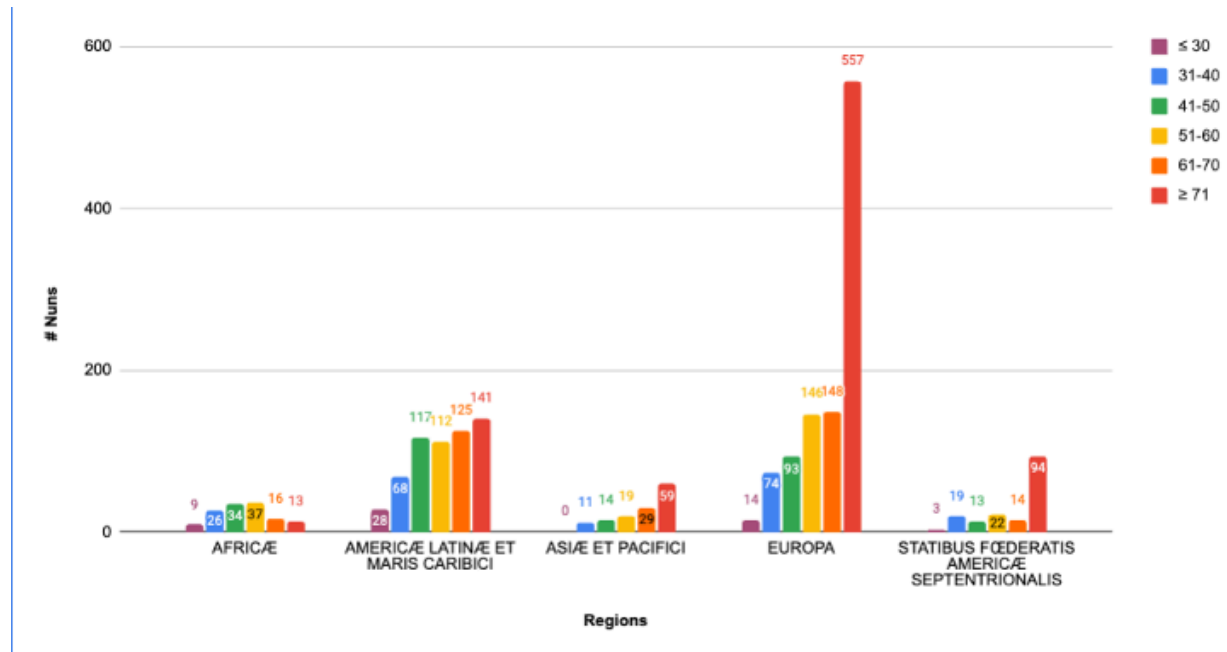
95. In January 2023 the General Promoter for Social Communications conducted a survey among the provincial promoters for communication. The survey showed that the provinces and vicariates of the Order have a total of 49 Facebook pages with approximately 400,000 followers, 19 Instagram pages with over 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 vocation 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 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 Br. 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) 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 co-operator brother and the ordained brother*’. As a communion of both ordained and co-operator 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 co-operator brother’ (ACG 2019 §199), adding that this research should ‘help to deepen our understanding of the specificity of the co-operator 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,¹ 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, that 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

¹ 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.

begin. The un-ordained, or lay, Christian is also a *missionary* disciple, called to live the fulness 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, co-operator brothers, cloistered nuns, lay Dominicans, the priestly fraternity, apostolic sisters, members 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'² 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 these researches might inform our presentation of the two vocations we find among the friars, that of the ordained brother and that of the co-operator 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

² 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.

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 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 identifying 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 from it 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 Co-operator 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 Centre, 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 realise 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 co-operator 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 co-operator 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 organisation 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 co-operated 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 co-operator 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 Prouilhe 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 Prouilhe community was from the beginning called 'The Holy Preaching of St. Mary of Prouilhe'.

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.³ 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 realised 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.⁴ 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 'preacher of grace' and this also characterises the content and style of our preaching. To quote Pope Francis again, the family of St Dominic sought to reach

³ 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.

⁴ *Summa theologiae* III 72 5 ad 2, *potestas publice fidem Christi verbis profitendi, quasi ex officio*

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.⁵
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.⁶ Pope 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.⁷ 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

⁵ 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).

⁶ 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 hope that the Order will be clearer about this distinction and these relations than the Church itself is!

⁷ Note that Vatican II left untreated the question of the priest who is also a religious.

ministry of Dominican preaching was to be a community ministry and each house was a "house of 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 licence 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 organising 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.⁸ 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, therefore, 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?

⁸ Vatican II, *Presbyterorum Ordinis*: Decree on the ministry and life of priests, n.4

16. The dangers going with this mission were highlighted by Humbert's plea to Albert: how 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 proclaim the gospel to the marginalised, 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, 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 co-operate with their brothers and sisters who are formed for other aspects of the ministry of the Word. In a specialised world the Order needs people with specialised 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 will 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 specialisation 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 CO-OPERATOR BROTHER

20. After all that has been said, are we any nearer to glimpsing the “figure” of the Dominican co-operator 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 fulness 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’.⁹
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.¹⁰ 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 emphasised 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 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.¹¹
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 recognised as creative. The

⁹ ACG Quezon City 1977, §62.2-3. See also ACG Tultenango 2022, §78.

¹⁰ *Summa theologiae* II.II 183 2; 183 3; 184 1; 186 1.

¹¹ ACG Biên Hòa 2019, §§91c and 268, and the Master’s letter of promulgation; ACG Tultenango 2022, §82

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 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 co-operator 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 co-operator brotherhood is an urgent challenge.¹² 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 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 analyse 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

¹² Tultenango 2022, §§28, 196

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, 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, recognising 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 co-operator 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, it 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 "co-operator" 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.¹³ 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, co-operator 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.¹⁴
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 go¹⁵. Likewise, the 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).¹⁶ 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

¹³ Note especially the fine text in ACG Quezon City 1977 referred to in the Appendix below.

¹⁴ ACG Biên Hòa 2019, §192

¹⁵ 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>).

¹⁶ 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).

§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 ministries¹⁷ 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 baptised persons and not from an orientation towards the ministerial priesthood. Like the diaconate, these ministries may be received in either a transitional or a 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 centred 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 recognised 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

¹⁷ See note 2 above.

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'.¹⁸

37. It is fitting but not necessary that the co-operator 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 life.¹⁹ 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 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:

¹⁸ ACG Tultenango 2022, *Relatio MO*, §57.

¹⁹ ACG Quezon City, 1977, §63

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.²⁰ 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.

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, councillors, 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.²¹ 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 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

²⁰ AGC Tultenango 2022, §353

²¹ ACG Tultenango 2022, §174

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 realised 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 has testified and continues 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 honoured, 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

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, 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 programme 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, centred 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 summarised 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 analysed 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, 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 programmes.

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 co-operator 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 summarised 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 CO-OPERATOR 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 co-operator brothers at Lima in 2012 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the canonization of St Martin de Porres. The **CO-OPERATOR BROTHERS' STUDY** was finalised 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 *Co-operator Brothers' Study*, help us to recognise 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 CO-OPERATOR BROTHERS STUDY** was to be established and asked (n.230) to prepare a text on the identity and mission of the co-operator 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 co-operator 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 brother's 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 co-operator 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 entirely of LCO 100 §II (Tultenango n.339). Biên Hòa had proposed re-writing 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

“LA MULTITUDE DES CROYANTS AVAIT UN SEUL COEUR ET UNE SEULE ÂME” (Ac 4, 32)

QUELQUES NOTES POUR LA RÉFLEXION SUR UN AUTHENTIQUE GOUVERNEMENT DOMINICAIN

Chers frères,

Réunis en Chapitre général, nous avons pu expérimenter la richesse de l'Ordre, présent en de multiples pays. Le thème général sur lequel nous avons travaillé est celui de la mission. Néanmoins, la question de la crise des abus nous a aussi occupés et vous trouverez, dans les Actes, quelques points. Cette problématique rejoignant aussi, par bien des aspects, celle du gouvernement et de l'obéissance, nous aurions pu l'insérer dans une série d'articles. Nous avons préféré nous adresser à vous par le biais d'une lettre sur un sujet qui nous concerne tous. Le fil conducteur, comme souvent inapparent, est le lien entre le commandement de l'amour mutuel (cf. Jn 13, 34) et l'obéissance. Nous pensons que cette dernière peut en être une expression, au moins dans ce que saint Benoît nomme l'obéissance mutuelle¹. Le Christ, en lavant les pieds de ses disciples, nous en a montré l'exemple. Pour reprendre l'image de la barque chère à Catherine de Sienne, l'obéissance nous permet d'avancer tous ensemble².

Nous gardons à l'esprit les échecs du passé, qu'ils soient dus à une autorité faible ou injuste, à un manque de soutien des prieurs, ou à des frères se sentant exploités. Ils ont laissé des blessures qui rendent aujourd'hui plus difficile la confiance et l'obéissance. Pourtant, nous demeurons convaincus que la fidélité à notre tradition de gouvernement communautaire, unie à une culture d'obéissance authentique constitue la meilleure protection contre les abus et la voie la plus sûre de notre sanctification. A travers cette lettre, nous voudrions vous partager quelques préoccupations et idées afin de vous affermir dans ce que vous avez reçu (cf. 1 Co 15, 1). Cela pourrait-il des réflexions personnelles et communautaires ? Nous l'espérons, intimement persuadés que notre mode de gouvernement, dans lequel nous sommes tous impliqués, est fondamental pour annoncer l'Évangile et remplir la mission qui est la nôtre. C'est une bonne nouvelle qu'il nous appartient de vivre.

1. Un gouvernement communautaire

Nos Constitutions rappellent que « *le gouvernement communautaire est particulièrement apte à promouvoir l'Ordre et à le renouveler régulièrement* » (LCO I, VII). Derrière cet héritage légué par S. Dominique, il y a la conviction que nous sommes tous « égaux dans le lien de la charité et de la profession. » (LCO 4 § 1). Chacun de nous est

¹ Cf. *Regula*, chapitre 71.

² Cf. Catherine de Sienne, *Dialogue*, Traduction J. Hurtaud, O.P., Chapitre V.

responsable du bien commun de l'Ordre et est invité à y participer et à s'exprimer. L'Ordre suit et promeut la règle selon laquelle « *quod omnes tangit ab omnibus tractari et approbari debet* ».

Dès les origines, nous avons cherché l'unanimité bien au-delà de la majorité simple dont les sociétés civiles se contentent. Il est certain que plus un accord est large, plus les décisions seront mieux acceptées et exécutées rapidement (cf. LCO 6). Mais il y a une autre raison bien plus profonde que le Maître de l'Ordre nous rappelait il y a quelques années³: rechercher et trouver un consensus est la marque de l'Esprit Saint qui construit la communion fraternelle de nos communautés. En définitive, nous devons toujours nous rappeler que le gouvernement et l'obéissance aux décisions sont avant tout au service de la charité qui construit l'Église, le Corps du Christ (cf. 1 Co 12, 4-31). Il y a là un trésor qui nous est confié pour que nous puissions en témoigner dans l'Église.

2. L'obéissance

S'il nous apparaît utile de parler d'obéissance par cette lettre, c'est qu'elle est interrogée comme jamais. Est-il encore possible (et souhaitable) d'obéir aujourd'hui ? L'obéissance n'a jamais été facile et ne le sera jamais. Cela prend une acuité plus forte actuellement non seulement en raison de la crise des abus mais aussi de la prégnance de l'individualisme, du subjectivisme ou de la crainte de se donner soi-même y compris dans les projets communautaires. Il est alors nécessaire de revenir aux fondements même de notre vœu, à savoir ce que dit le Christ, homme mûr et parfaitement libre : « Je suis descendu du ciel, non pour faire ma volonté, mais la volonté de Celui qui m'a envoyé » (Jn 6, 38). L'annonce du Royaume, la mission et le sacrifice de Jésus s'inscrivent dans ce mouvement, né de la communion trinitaire. Le Christ, monté au Ciel, nous invite à entrer dans cette dynamique d'une parole écoutée et mise en pratique. Mais parce que, nous ayant fait connaître tout ce qu'il avait entendu du Père, il a fait de nous ses amis (cf. Jn 15, 15), l'obéissance chrétienne et religieuse est éclairée d'un jour nouveau : l'amitié avec le Seigneur en est l'âme. C'est la raison pour laquelle nous y avons vu un chemin de vie le jour où nous avons prononcé le seul vœu qui, en quelque sorte, inclut les autres⁴.

S. Grégoire, écrivait que l'obéissance renferme toutes les autres vertus, notamment théologiques, les imprimant et les conservant dans notre âme⁵. Vertu, l'obéissance a à voir avec le bonheur ! Elle rend bons à la fois les actes et ceux qui les accomplissent⁶. Elle permet le bon fonctionnement de la société que nous formons. Par elle, nous privilégions notre mission commune à nos désirs personnels, nous évitant de devenir l'otage de notre subjectivité aux dépens des requêtes légitimes du bien commun et de nos propres progrès spirituels. Si l'exercice de l'obéissance implique notre intelligence et notre volonté, il faut sans cesse se rappeler que c'est de cette dernière que procède l'obéissance. Notre volonté *propre* doit faire sienne ce que la volonté du supérieur (ou du chapitre) exprime. Cela ne va pas sans combats ou difficultés. Il faut

³ Cf. Lettre du 13 mai 2021.

⁴ Cf. Thomas d'Aquin, *De perfectione Vitae spiritualis*, ch. 11.

⁵ Cf. S. Grégoire, Lib 59 moral

⁶ Cf. Thomas d'Aquin, S.T. I-II, q.55, a.3

de la force d'âme, un apprentissage constant, tant notre intelligence est mise au défi de s'ouvrir à une nouvelle saisie du bien commun ! Heureusement, nombreux sont les frères, d'hier et d'aujourd'hui, qui sont témoins du don de leur vie par cette obéissance. Tous nous renvoient au portrait du Fils de Dieu lui-même, dont l'épître aux Hébreux nous rappelle qu'il « apprit l'obéissance par la souffrance » (He 5, 8). C'est ainsi que, dans la foi, nous pouvons dès lors affirmer que cette voie est, pour chacun de nous, un chemin de vie et de sanctification.

Le jour de notre profession, le livre de nos Constitutions se trouve entre nous et le supérieur. Cela exprime que nous obéissons par la médiation d'une règle, dans le cadre d'un droit qui s'applique à tous. Dans cet acte, gravé dans notre mémoire à tous, nous voyons illustrée la recherche de la pratique de la vertu d'obéissance, qui marquera toute notre vie de prêcheurs. Cette obéissance se manifestera par la mise en œuvre de la demande faite par le supérieur ou « précepte »⁷, instrument au service du bien de tous confié au supérieur. Le précepte est lui-même normé par nos lois qui reposent sur les intuitions de saint Dominique et sur l'expérience accumulée par ses fils au fil des siècles. Tant les excès – l'obéissance déraisonnable⁸ – que les défauts – le vice de la désobéissance – dénaturent la vertu.

L'exercice adulte et sain de la vertu d'obéissance est un chemin de liberté et chacun de nous peut se souvenir des moments joyeux de nos premiers pas dans l'Ordre, où nous étions prêts à tout donner. Nombreux sont nos frères qui témoignent de cette capacité et liberté entretenues au profit de la mission : ils affermissent ceux qui traversent des périodes plus difficiles (cf. Is 35, 3-4) et nous stimulent tous.

3. Ceux qui reçoivent un mandat (gouvernement, officiers...)

Certains, parmi nous, reçoivent à un moment donné et pour un temps limité, une charge de gouvernement. La crise des abus a montré le danger d'une autorité non normée et dénoncée par l'Écriture (cf. Ez 34, 1-7 ; Jér 23, 1-32...). Cette situation doit nous conduire à nous interroger sur la manière, toujours perfectible, dont nous exerçons nous-même l'autorité. Être élu ou institué à une charge constitue un domaine particulier de l'obéissance pour celui qui a été choisi. Recevoir, accepter, une charge implique nombre de renoncements immédiats : quitter des ministères, changer de cadre voire déménager et mettre en œuvre des décisions qui ne viennent pas forcément de nous. Cela fait partie de ce que nous avons choisi librement d'assumer en faisant profession. C'est pourquoi il convient de veiller à ce que les refus soient sérieusement motivés et objectivement exposés à l'autorité qui a désigné ou à celle qui doit confirmer quand c'est le cas. On n'est pas « libre » (au sens moderne) d'accepter ou de refuser une charge : elle nous est confiée et, sauf raison majeure à apprécier avec le supérieur, il faut l'accepter.

L'exercice de la charge comporte aussi quelques difficultés plus « modernes ». Par exemple, sous couvert de combattre l'autocratie, le monde actuel tend à dénaturer l'autorité en lui accolant facilement des soupçons d'arbitraire. Soyons clairs :

⁷ Cf. Thomas d'Aquin, S.T. II-II, q.104, a.2, ad3

⁸ Cf. Thomas d'Aquin, ST II-II q. 104, a.5, ad3

l'existence de dérives autoritaires et de situations d'emprise ne doit pas conduire à l'inverse à savoir l'absence d'autorité par peur, faiblesse, lâcheté ou manque d'unanimité. Un supérieur doit – et cela requiert du courage – décider. La juste réponse, dans le contexte actuel, est le rappel pour tout supérieur de l'importance de la prudence dans le gouvernement, de la nécessité de la consultation ainsi que du bon fonctionnement institutionnel des différents conseils prévus par notre droit. Il va de soi que les supérieurs doivent en outre écouter réellement le religieux à qui l'on demande quelque chose. Ce dernier cherchera de son côté à éclairer le jugement du supérieur sans manipulation.

Un dernier point mérite notre attention. Il arrive que l'on réduise le service de l'autorité à l'organisation de la vie commune. La responsabilité d'un supérieur, si elle comprend cette dimension, est avant tout d'ordonner les frères au bien commun et de faire que celui-ci se diffuse en chacun. C'est pourquoi le LCO 298 précise que l'autorité est *religieuse* et pas seulement de nature juridique car elle concerne tant le *for interne* (non sacramentel : l'exercice des vœux) que le *for externe*. Cela est éclairé par les paroles fortes d'Ézéchiel :

Si tu n'avertis pas le méchant, si tu ne lui dis pas d'abandonner sa conduite mauvaise afin qu'il vive, lui, le méchant, mourra de son péché, mais à toi, je demanderai compte de son sang. Au contraire, si tu avertis le méchant, et qu'il ne se détourne pas de sa méchanceté et de sa conduite mauvaise, lui mourra de son péché, mais toi, tu auras sauvé ta vie. Si le juste se détourne de sa justice et fait le mal, je le ferai trébucher : il mourra. Parce que tu ne l'auras pas averti, il mourra de son péché, et l'on ne se souviendra plus de la justice qu'il avait pratiquée ; mais à toi je demanderai compte de son sang. Au contraire, si tu avertis le juste de ne pas pécher, et qu'en effet il ne pêche pas, c'est certain, il vivra parce qu'il aura été averti, et toi, tu auras sauvé ta vie.⁹

Le Christ nous demande, de prendre soin les uns des autres (cf. Mt 18, 15) et d'exercer la charge de gouvernement à son image et non comme des mercenaires (cf. Jn 10, 12). L'exercice de l'autorité demande au supérieur d'oser, lorsque cela est nécessaire, reprendre les frères, non pas d'abord selon un mode judiciaire, mais bien plutôt en relation au bien commun (LCO n. 54-55).

4. Nous tous qui avons professé l'obéissance

Commençons par un constat : Il est certain que les décisions d'un supérieur ou d'un chapitre (auxquelles le supérieur obéit en les mettant en œuvre) n'expriment pas purement et simplement la volonté de Dieu. Cependant, même en cas de désaccord de jugement sur le bien-fondé des décisions et en dépit de ses imperfections, le supérieur doit être suivi dès lors qu'il a respecté les instances prévues par le LCO et qu'il ne demande aucun péché¹⁰.

⁹ Ez 3, 18-21

¹⁰ Cf. CIC Can. 618 : « Les Supérieurs exerceront dans un esprit de service le pouvoir qu'ils ont reçu de Dieu par le ministère de l'Église. Que, par conséquent, dociles à la volonté de Dieu dans l'exercice de leur charge, ils gouvernent leurs sujets comme des enfants de Dieu et, pour promouvoir leur obéissance volontaire dans le respect de la personne humaine, ils les écoutent volontiers et favorisent ainsi leur coopération au bien de l'institut et de l'Église, restant sauve cependant leur autorité de décider et d'ordonner ce qu'il y a à faire ».

Parmi les difficultés plus modernes, nous relevons celle de la tentation de la contractualisation de la vie religieuse (du type du contrat de travail) voire de la judiciarisation des rapports avec le supérieur. Nous voulons rappeler à chacun combien cela n'est pas conforme à notre état de religieux. La profession que nous avons émise, don de notre vie (même dans le cadre soigneusement défini par le droit, à commencer par nos constitutions) nous engage en effet bien au-delà d'un simple contrat. L'obéissance ne se limite pas aux demandes qui consonnent avec nos désirs ou à notre propre perception du bien commun. Il arrive par ailleurs de plus en plus que le supérieur reçoive, comme objection à ce qu'il demande (le cas le plus classique est celui de l'assignation), les conseils d'accompagnateur spirituel ou même de psychologues. Il est juste et prudent pour le supérieur de tenir compte de ces avis, de consulter largement. Il devrait être clair pour chacun que ces avis extérieurs ne peuvent pas ordinairement s'imposer ni devenir des moyens de se soustraire à ce qui est demandé.

La vie religieuse exige des points réguliers avec son supérieur, la disponibilité à ses demandes et celles du chapitre. Malheureusement, la société moderne, en exaltant le primat du sujet, met le bien particulier au premier plan, au détriment du bien commun. Transformant alors l'obéissance, vertu de la volonté, en « vertu » de sa propre intelligence, de son propre jugement, chacun est tenté de s'accorder à soi-même des dispenses, à privilégier ce qu'il souhaite. Une telle conception sous-estime la dimension communautaire de l'être humain : n'est-ce pas par la vie d'échange avec nos semblables que nous progressons en humanité ? Il sera donc normal que le supérieur intervienne et rappelle à temps et à contretemps les exigences de la vie commune. Pour autant, ce rappel « juridique » n'est pas suffisant : les entorses à la vie communautaire blessent à la fois le bien commun et les liens de charité qui nous unissent. C'est donc au plan des vertus *théologiques* que la charité rend parfaites qu'il faut situer le défi de l'obéissance. On touche ici l'importance capitale de la vie commune : être l'école de la charité, ou selon l'Évangile, une école de « vie en abondance » (cf. Jn 10,10). Une communauté de consacrés est toujours une cellule du Corps ecclésial tout entier dont la vie est *communio*, c'est-à-dire l'union des personnes dans l'amour de charité.

5. La notion centrale et récapitulative : le *bien commun*

La notion de *bien commun* exprime tout ce qui concourt à la perfection humaine d'un groupe et de ses membres. Cela vaut dans notre vie dominicaine où le *propositum Ordinis* s'exprime dans l'Ordre tout entier et dans ses déclinaisons provinciales et conventuelles. Tous, supérieurs comme subordonnés, nous manifestons, quotidiennement, notre obéissance, en contribuant généreusement à tous les éléments de la vie commune, même ceux qui nous conviennent moins.

Cela s'applique à toute société, y compris celle que nous formons. Pour nous, il ne faut pas perdre de vue que, par le baptême, nous avons chacun reçu Dieu comme le plus grand Bien. Il est notre Bien commun et Celui de toute l'Église. Souvenons-nous que dans la vie chrétienne, et spécialement dans la vie consacrée, tout ce qui est reçu et tout ce qui est accompli a sa source, son fondement constant et sa perfection finale

dans la charité qui n'est autre que Dieu lui-même (cf. J Jn 4, 8). La vertu d'obéissance en est transformée : on obéit au supérieur, non parce qu'on est d'accord avec lui, non seulement parce que Dieu le demande mais parce qu'on aime Dieu. On est là au fondement de *toutes* nos relations avec Dieu et entre nous.

Nous voulons le redire : l'obéissance ne saurait se réduire au seul respect des règles. Nous n'obéissons pas uniquement parce qu'un supérieur commande, comme si l'autorité constituait une fin en soi. Nous n'obéissons pas davantage seulement lorsque nous consentons par adéquation avec ce que nous pensons, comme si la vérité se mesurait au consensus ou à la convenance personnelle. Nous avons promis l'obéissance au jour de notre profession parce que nous voulions alors donner notre vie à Dieu. Nous sommes convaincus que cette obéissance n'est donc pas la simple exécution d'une obligation juridique, mais la traduction concrète, qu'elle soit joyeuse ou parfois douloureuse, de ce don. Les années passant, nous courons il est vrai le risque de perdre la mémoire de la source de ce don. Si nous avons choisi de promettre obéissance, n'est-ce pas en effet d'abord parce que nous avons le désir de répondre à l'amour de Dieu qui nous a aimés le premier (cf. 1 Jn 4, 19) ? Lorsque l'amour est notre principe, l'obéissance n'est jamais servile. Elle devient « l'obéissance de la foi » (Rm 1,5), la liberté joyeuse de ceux qui ont trouvé en Christ leur véritable demeure. Alors tombent les chaînes de « l'homme ancien » (Ep 4,22), et s'ouvre devant nous l'immense horizon de « l'appel d'en haut de Dieu dans le Christ Jésus » (Ph 3,14). Nous sommes libérés pour devenir les hommes que nous avons été créés pour être, des frères qui « ne vivent plus pour eux-mêmes mais pour Celui qui est mort et ressuscité » (2 Co 5,15).

L'obéissance mutuelle en se tenant aux côtés de la prudence, nous protège des déformations qui abîment notre vie commune. Toutes deux nous fortifient contre la peur des responsabilités et nous arrachent à la facilité complaisante qui recherche le confort plutôt que le Royaume. Elles sont des piliers de notre bien commun, entendu non comme un idéal vague ou une simple harmonie fonctionnelle, mais comme amitié même avec Dieu (Jn 15,15) – une amitié dans laquelle nous avons été introduits et que, comme prêcheurs, nous sommes envoyés partager. Bien comprise et bien vécue, la véritable obéissance exprime la fidélité persévérante de ceux qui « courent pour saisir » (Ph 3,12) et ne renoncent pas à la mission qui leur a été confiée. D'une certaine manière, n'est-ce pas ce qui ressort de la dispersion des frères par Dominique en 1217 ?

Alternativement appelés à gouverner et à être gouvernés et toujours à vivre de l'obéissance mutuelle, la trame même de notre vie devient proclamation de notre amitié avec le Seigneur et participe ainsi de la mission confiée à l'Ordre. Quand bien même elle comporte une mort à soi-même, la véritable obéissance manifeste la victoire de l'amour sur la peur, de la mission sur le confort. Elle devient témoignage vivant de la puissance de la Résurrection, qui apporte vie nouvelle, espérance nouvelle, et la joie du Royaume.

Chers frères, au moment de conclure cette lettre nous voulons vous assurer chacun de notre grande proximité fraternelle. A l'image de ce chapitre général, magnifique moment de communion, nous ne voulons d'ailleurs pas, à travers cette lettre,

manifester autre chose que cette communion. D'ailleurs, si les supérieurs dans l'Ordre ont à servir la communion des frères confiés à leur sollicitude, il nous revient à tous de veiller sur cette communion, pour le bien de l'Ordre et de sa mission. Nous finissons ces lignes, désirant et priant que le Seigneur veille sur notre Ordre en sa communion. Qu'il soutienne ceux d'entre nous qui peinent sur la route de leur vie dominicaine et nous donne à tous un esprit de charité véritable et efficace pour nous tenir à leurs côtés. Enfin, qu'il nous garde ardents dans le désir de le suivre, inlassablement. C'est ce à quoi nous exhorte l'épître aux Hébreux :

Avançons-nous vers Dieu avec un cœur sincère et dans la plénitude de la foi, le cœur purifié de ce qui souille notre conscience, le corps lavé par une eau pure. Continuons sans fléchir d'affirmer notre espérance, car il est fidèle, celui qui a promis. Soyons attentifs les uns aux autres pour nous stimuler à vivre dans l'amour et à bien agir. Ne délaissions pas nos assemblées, comme certains en ont pris l'habitude, mais encourageons-nous, d'autant plus que vous voyez s'approcher le Jour du Seigneur.¹¹

¹¹ He 10, 22-25.