

**Relatio of 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*".¹ Thus, our founder's vision is realized in the preachers who formed his Order. Our mission is who we are (preachers), not primarily what we do (preaching). We are preachers even when we are old or sick and 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*

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

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

Vision and Priorities to Realize the *Propositum Ordinis*

13. The *propositum Ordinis* (LCO I and II), “preaching for the salvation of souls”, remains unchanged, yet it is concretized in diverse ways in the living tradition of the Order through time and space, through the march of history and the expanse of geography. The preaching of Dominic with the innkeeper, the preaching of Thomas Aquinas in the university of Paris, the preaching of fra Angelico in Florence, the preaching of Catherine of Siena in Italy, the preaching of Antonio Montesinos in Hispaniola, the preaching of Martin de Porres in Lima, etc. are concrete realizations of the same *propositum*, yet they are not exactly the same in terms of form and, sometimes, content. But all are directed to the same end: preaching for the salvation of souls. But how does “preaching for the salvation of souls” look like in our time, in the different provinces and communities of the Order?
14. *Without a vision the people will be lost!* (Proverbs 29:18). We trust in God’s *providence*; He provides (*pro-videre*) for our needs. But we are also called to participate in that providence i.e., to “foresee” the need and to envision the most appropriate response to such need. In this sense, to envision concretely how we intend to realize the *propositum Ordinis*, according to our concrete circumstances is to participate in God’s *providence*.
15. Certainly we have a “sense” of a common **vision** and **priorities** of the Order and our Provinces, but often, we do not articulate them clearly so that all brothers know and feel they are truly working together for the realization of such vision and priorities. Thus, some brothers think that their province or some convents have no “culture of long-term planning”, or that they are simply in “maintenance mode”. The articulation of a vision, for example, “where we want the province to be in ten years” - is important because it will serve as a reference point in making decisions that, cumulatively, will bring about its realization. When a clearly articulated vision and priorities are lacking in our community projects, we miss the fundamental elements that give coherence to our communal task, we fail to grasp where we are going, and we lack the criteria to evaluate whether we are progressing or not.
16. The vision and priorities will help a province in the formation and complementary studies of the brothers who will carry out the vision and serve in the priorities of the province. Our vision and priorities should guide our decisions in opening or closing a Dominican presence. At times, our decisions are influenced by opportunities that open up e.g., a bishop is friendly to us or there is a benefactor who will donate a property for the use of the Order etc. But would such a decision help us obtain our vision and stated priorities

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

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

or simply be a distraction? Certainly, an important criterion in setting the priorities of a province is to discern and decide where the charism of the Order can serve better the needs of the Church (cf. LCO 106 § I).

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

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

One begins with the end in view. “The end is last in the order of execution, yet it is first in the order of intention” (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

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

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), *Ubi cumque 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 the Church's evangelization: “true interreligious dialogue on the part of the Christian supposes the desire to make Jesus Christ better known, recognized and loved; proclaiming Jesus Christ is to be carried out in the Gospel spirit of dialogue”.⁵
25. Surveys of religious demography vary sharply across countries and regions in the world. One researcher claimed: “There is a palpable Gen Z religious revival. Those of faith within the 18-24 year age bracket are the most likely to believe in a God, to believe that their God is the only God, and to hold that God shapes their moral values.” Another research claims: “Around one-third of Gen Zers (34%) and millennials (35%) identify as religiously unaffiliated, compared with 25% of Gen Xers, 19% of baby boomers, and 15% of the Silent Generation.” Of course, surveys are just tools and there could be margins of 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, we are advancing in our mission *ad gentes*”? Or, we are unable to obtain this objective, therefore,

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

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”.⁶

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

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

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.

PROPOSITUM ORDINIS, HIC ET NUNC

This is carried out in harmony with the Church's mission of "new evangelization" that is addressed to *four publics*, the **persons** to whom our preaching is addressed:

IN MEDIO ECCLESIAE

The Church is "missionary by her very nature, since it is from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she draws her origin, in accordance with the decree of God the Father" –AG 2

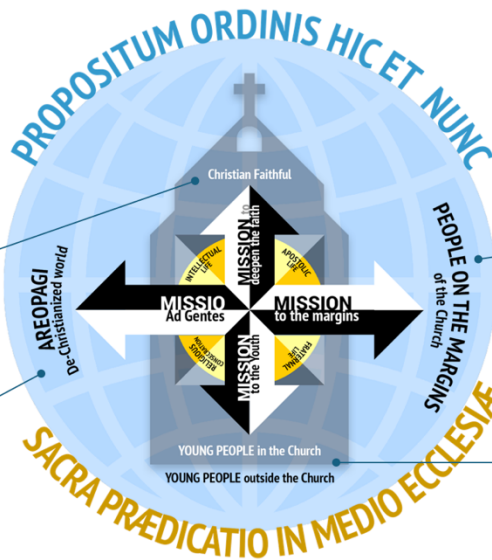
CHRISTIAN FAITHFUL. The mission of St. Luke: "I have decided to write an ordered account for you, Theophilus, so that you may learn how well founded the teaching is that you have received"

Luke 1:1-4

AD GENTES - PERSONS IN THE DIFFERENT "AREOPAGI" IN OUR WORLD.

The mission of St. Paul: "I even discovered an altar inscribed, 'To an Unknown God.' What therefore you unknowingly worship, I proclaim to you"

Acts 17:23



SACRA PRÆDICATIO

Dominican Life in its *integrity* – Religious Consecration (Evangelical Counsels and Religious Observances), Common Fraternal Life and Formation, Intellectual Life, and Apostolic Life – cf. LCO 100 § 1, ACG 1974, 253 II

PEOPLE ON THE MARGINS OF THE CHURCH.

The mission to accompany those who are on the road to Emmaus (*lapsed, disillusioned Catholics et al.*); persons whose "eyes were prevented from recognizing Jesus who was walking with them", but later, recognized Jesus in the Scriptures and Breaking of Bread.

Luke 24:13-32

YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE FOUND IN THE OTHER "PUBLICS"

The mission of Andrew who accompanied a boy to share his food with Jesus, which resulted to the miracle of feeding thousands

John 6: 5-15

THE BROTHERS

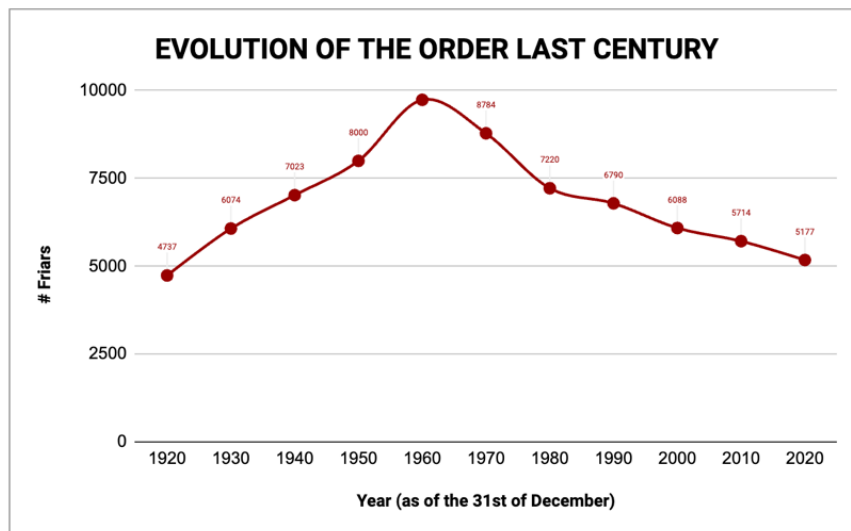
38. There are **5,145** professed brothers, according to the 2024 statistics. Of these, **42** are Bishops, **3,995** Priests, **138** Transitional Deacons, **13** Permanent Deacons, **218** Cooperator Brothers, **163** Clerics in Formation Solemnly Professed, **556** Clerics in Formation Simply Professed, 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 exlaustration 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*.⁷ 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 Provinces of Hispania and St. Albert, USA for the updated Spanish and English translations. We hope that the updated French translation being prepared by the Province of France will be published soon. We are very grateful to Br. Benjamin Earl, Procurator General, for seeing to it that the LCO is updated.

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

Procurator General

42. The Order has a very good reputation in terms of presenting well-prepared documents to the different dicasteries of the Holy See, thanks to the current Procurator General. He conducts business with the Holy especially in “procuring administrative acts” from the different dicasteries, except the Dicastery for Culture and Education, and the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints, which belong to the scope of work of the Socius for the Intellectual Life and the Postulator General, respectively. The Procurator General serves as “house canonist” of the General Curia and provides prompt and expert 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**⁸. Passion for the mission enables us to lead even in difficult circumstances because we have become servants to a God-given mission. Servanthood in this sense is to do the will of God; “not my will but the will of the one who sends me”. When we see ourselves as **Servant-Leaders who serve the mission and lead by serving those in mission with us**, then we realize that *we need a team, a community 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 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.

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

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

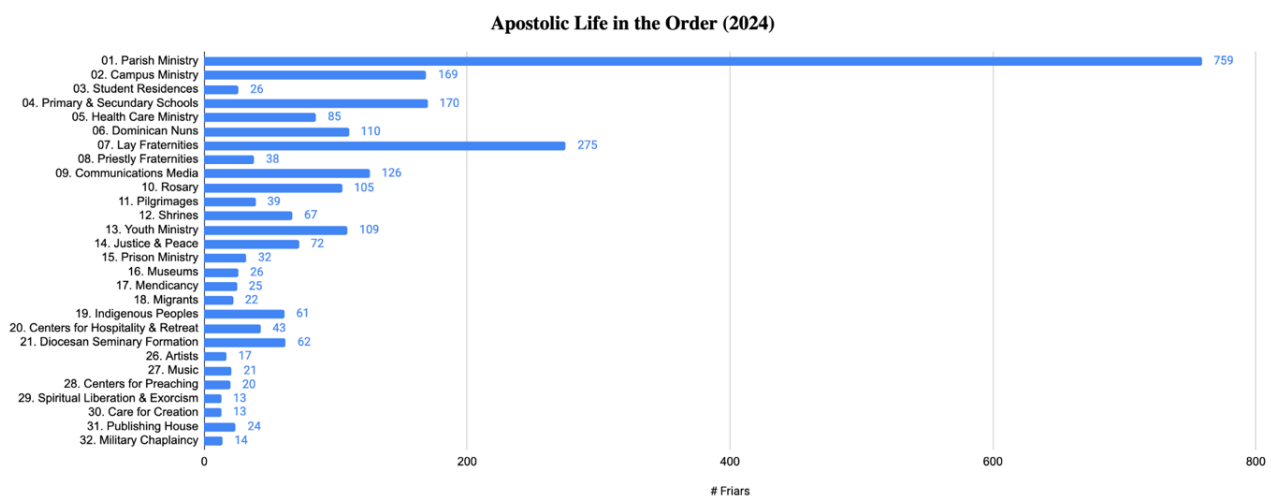
The Socius for the Apostolic Life and the General Promoters constitute the Secretariat for the Apostolic Life and collaborate closely through regular meetings.

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 are 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

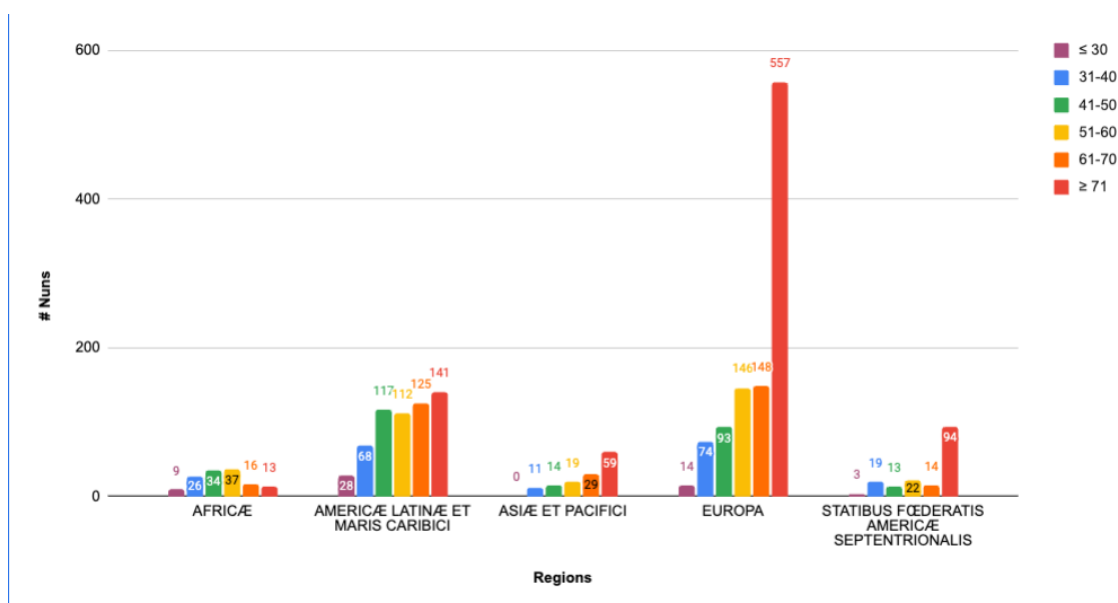
95. In January 2023 the General Promoter for Social Communications conducted a survey among the provincial promoters for communication. The survey showed that the provinces and vicariates of the Order have a total of 49 Facebook pages with approximately 400,000 followers, 19 Instagram pages with over 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