



**ORDO PRÆDICATORUM  
CURIA GENERALITIA**

***Relatio of the Master of the Order  
to the General Chapter of Tultenango  
July 2022***

*Prot. n. 50/20/485 Tultenango 2022*

**A Time of Grace**

1. I write this *relatio* (LCO 417 § II, 3<sup>o</sup>) within the graced horizon of the 8<sup>th</sup> centenary of the *dies natalis* of St. Dominic. We give thanks to God for the gift of St. Dominic of Caleruega, for the blessed life and unique mission which the Lord bestowed on him. Just as Pope Benedict XV wrote the encyclical *Fausto appetente die* on the occasion of the 7<sup>th</sup> centenary of the *dies natalis* of St. Dominic in 1921, so Pope Francis wrote a letter to the Order (24 May 2021) this jubilee year. The Holy Father noted that “among the titles attributed to St. Dominic, *Praedicator gratiae*, preacher of grace stands out for its consonance with the charism and mission of the Order he founded (PG 1).
2. Closely connected with the jubilee of St. Dominic is the commemoration of the 8<sup>th</sup> centenary of the first General Chapters celebrated at Pentecost in the years 1220 and 1221. We know that St. Dominic wanted the brothers to embrace the apostolic way of life, including the *apostolic way* of making decisions: *We have decided, the Holy Spirit and us*<sup>1</sup>... (Acts 15:28), for the entire Order. This communitarian form of government (LCO VI) which Dominic gave to the Order is also a gift to the Church, for the mission of the Order is to help build the Church, the body of Christ. The Holy Father acknowledged that our form governance is “synodal [which] enabled the Order to adapt its life and mission to changing historical contexts while maintaining fraternal communion” (PG, 6). This statement becomes more significant at this time when the Synod of Bishops (2021-2023) is being celebrated with the theme “For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission”.

**A Time of Challenges, Opportunities, and Hope**

3. Yet this *relatio* also covers a period marked by unforeseen and unprecedented challenges. The pandemic has disrupted our lives and disturbed our plans. We found ourselves asking: *How do we preach in a time of pandemic? How do we preach God’s closeness to us while keeping our safe distance from one another? How do we preach God’s nearness to people in isolation? After providing people with spiritual nourishment by online means, how do we invite them back from virtual to real community, to celebrate faith and sacrament in person? How do we preach hope in a time of despair?*

---

<sup>1</sup> Though a more literal translation is “For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials”, the Greek text conveys a Spirit-led discernment and decision by the apostles, which is rendered a bit loosely yet clearly as “we have decided, the Holy Spirit and us...”

*In many homes and communities, including some of our own convents, we have seats and spaces now empty, reminding us of loved ones we have lost in these last two years. How do we preach the joy of the Gospel in the midst of loss?*

4. In these trying times, we have seen manifold ways of preaching. Our brothers and sisters tried their best to feed the “hungers” intensified by the pandemic: hunger for the Eucharist (and sacraments), hunger for solidarity and compassion, hunger for food and drink. There are members of the Dominican Family who raised funds for the needs of the sick and those who take care of the sick. There are brothers and sisters who offered words of encouragement and hope through phone counselling. Most of the brothers and sisters preached and prayed with the people through various digital initiatives. There are friars who braved the danger of contamination by ministering to the sick, while observing necessary precautions in order to prevent viral transmission within their communities. Our brothers from all over the world have published theological and biblical reflections on the different facets of the pandemic, liturgy guides for the celebration of the Paschal Triduum at home, guidelines for a safe and worthy celebration of the sacraments etc. A few with medical and scientific background even lent their expertise to giving medical care or developing low-cost and shelf stable vaccine. We recall what fr. Timothy Radcliffe wrote in *The Wellspring of Hope*<sup>2</sup>: “To study is itself an act of hope, since it expresses our confidence that there is a meaning to our lives and the sufferings of our people. And this meaning comes to us as a gift, a Word of Hope promising life.” The intellectual mission of the Order and its mission to preach *Veritas* is an important antidote to another pernicious pandemic --- fake news and half-truths which are in fact half-lies.
5. But COVID 19 is not the only pandemic afflicting our world. The Church, the mystical body of Christ, is wounded by divisions. *How do we preach God’s friendship at a time when we hear people fomenting fractures and divisions? How do we preach in a time of the pernicious pandemics of indifference, clericalism, divisions, fake news, hopelessness?*
6. **“We want to see Jesus”** (John 12:21). This is the desire of people who listen to our preaching, who come to our shrines and churches, who sit in our classrooms, who read our books, who visit our websites and listen to our podcasts, who join fraternities and groups under our care, and who show interest in joining the Order. *“We want to see Jesus”*, this, we believe, is the implicit desire of people of every place and time, including our own. By our apostolic life and work (*vita apostolica*) - we strive, as the apostles did, to accompany them to encounter the Lord.
7. **“They have taken my Lord, and I don’t know where they laid him”** (John 20:13). Sadly, Mary Magdalene’s complaint could very well be the words of people who have drifted away from the Church, or who are indifferent and are not at all interested with the Church. Our brother Francisco de Vitoria’s analysis of the evangelization of his time sounds so contemporary: “I hear of many scandals and cruel crimes and acts of impiety. Hence, it does not appear that the Christian religion has been preached to them with such sufficient propriety and piety that they are bound to acquiesce in it. Although many religious and other ecclesiastics seem both by their lives and example and diligent preaching to have bestowed sufficient pains and industry in this business, had they not been hindered therein by others who had other matters in their charge.”<sup>3</sup> Vitoria implies

---

<sup>2</sup> Letter to the Order, November 21, 1995 (Analecta 103, Fasc. III, Nov-Dec. 1995, pp. 385-405).

<sup>3</sup> Francisco de Vitoria, *Relecciones sobre los indios y el derecho de guerra* (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1975, 3<sup>o</sup> ed.), pp. 77-78. “Tengo noticias de muchos escándalos, de hechos inhumanos y de actos de impiedad perpetrados en esas regiones. No se ve, en consecuencia, que les haya sido predicada la religión de Cristo lo bastante piadosa y convenientemente para que estén obligados a asentir. Pues si bien es cierto que muchos religiosos y eclesiásticos,

that those who persist in their unbelief cannot be blamed when the Gospel is not preached in a convincing way.

### **Restructuring, Synergy of Life and Mission**

8. How do we preach in a convincing way in our time? To be sure, our previous general chapters have done so much to help the Order preach the Gospel effectively, to provide measures that, put together, help us accompany people to an authentic encounter with the Lord.
9. Since 2010, the Order embarked on restructuring for the sake of improving our life and mission. Since then, there have been fusions and unions of entities. The positive experience and lessons learned from these restructuring provide guidance for other entities which are taking similar paths. As the Order contracted in some places, it also grew in others. Since 2010, we have seen the birth of new provinces and vice provinces. At present, we are carefully accompanying brothers on the path of becoming a vice province with the criteria set by the General Chapter (ACG Biên Hòa, 275).
10. Another important component of the restructuring of the Order is the *internal* restructuring that is provided by the revised *Ratio Formationis Generalis* (2016) which envisions the *integral formation* of a preacher in the apostolic life *as a continuous path from initial to permanent formation*; and the revised *Ratio Studiorum Generalis* (2017) which seeks to promote the “rich intellectual tradition of the Order that understands study as contemplative, synthetic, grounded in the real, and reliant upon reason informed by faith”.
11. The renewal of the external and internal structures for a more effective and renewed evangelization is a continuous process. The last General Chapter in Biên Hòa sought to continue and build upon these accomplishments by reflecting on and finding ways on how to fortify the **synergy** (συνέργια) of Dominican life and mission. As noted by the capitulars: “*In Dominican life there is a close relationship between life and mission, such that there hardly exists a border between the one and the other. Life and mission are two faces of the same coin. They both mutually condition and influence the other. When mission is alive, the lives of the brothers and the communities are animated.* (ACG Biên Hòa 2019, 58-59). Br. Bruno stressed that the strength of a province is not solely based on its glorious history or venerable tradition, on the number of its brothers, but more importantly on all of these “in synergy with the witness of a fraternal evangelical community, often intergenerational” (Relatio 2019, 15).

### **Vision and Tasks for the Future**

12. What more should we do? Indeed, restructuring, formation and mission, synergy of the contemplative and apostolic dimensions of our life are unending tasks. But where should we go from where we are right now? **How do we envision the Order, in its service to the Church and the world, in three or six years from now?** Clarity of vision is a necessary condition to give *unity* and *purpose* to the decisions that we will make in the General Chapters of 2022 and 2025. (We recall that “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). This vision or goal will determine our itinerary, the path we will take in the coming years. It will give coherence to the

---

con su vida y ejemplos y diligente predicación hubieran consagrado a esta tarea el trabajo e industria necesarios, no pudieron hacerlo, estorbados por otros cuyos intereses son muy ajenos a eso.” English translation from James Scott Brown, *The Spanish Origin of International Law* (New Jersey: Lawbook Exchange, 2000), p. xxx.

programs and projects we will undertake. *It will give us an objective basis for evaluation whether the decisions we made and the measures we adopted are helping us obtain our goal, or we need to revise or do something more.*

13. The present *relatio* and even the past general chapters, speak about the brothers and the structures and policies that affect our Dominican life and ministry. **In other words, these documents are more about our life and mission and the conditions for their possibility, but not about the subjects of our preaching, the people we minister to, or about the effectiveness of our witness and preaching.** Certainly, “not everything that can be counted, counts”, but it would surely help “policy-makers” – provincial chapters and general chapters – to have a “system of evaluation” that takes into serious account the *subjects* of our preaching. It would make a lot of difference, I believe, if we “**intentionally**” minister or preach to our people so that they too become **actors**, or **agents of evangelization themselves** (cf. ACG Biên Hòa 2019, 140). For the sake of illustration, we could look at how the pews of our conventual or parish churches are filled with people (quantity) or we could look at how the people who come to our churches grow in their faith and become “disciple-missionaries” themselves. Or, we could look at how the number of students in our ecclesiastical faculties, schools and universities have increased in the last few years, which is a sign of reputability; or we could, at the same time, focus on how our program and curriculum contribute to the formation of graduates who are credible preachers of the Gospel themselves. **This is not to advocate a sort of “Copernican revolution” i.e., a shift in focus from ourselves to the people we minister to but an invitation to give due consideration to two foci: ourselves and the people we serve.**
14. The unchanging goal of our preaching is salvation of souls. The goal of the Christian formation we offer in our schools, parishes, apostolic centers and other preaching ministries is the formation of Christ in all of us: “*donec formetur Christus in vobis [nobis]*” (Gal 4,19). But it would surely help us give clear direction to our preaching, curriculum in schools, programs and projects in our apostolic endeavors, if we specify further a goal i.e., what we hope would become of our parishioners, students, etc. so that they become not merely passive recipients but **agents of evangelization**: “*disciple-missionaries*” or “*contemplative-evangelizers,*” etc.
15. We know that we do not need to “re-invent” the Order each time we celebrate a general chapter. True, it would be interesting to “sing a new song”; but sometimes, we probably just need to sing the same song on a “different key”, or with greater harmony. We need to find new perspectives in preaching the same Gospel in changing contexts and cultures. It has been 44 years since the General Chapter identified the **Four Priorities of the Order** (Quezon City,1977); 35 years since the General Chapter defined the five **Frontiers of Evangelization** (Avila, 1986); 11 years since the General Chapter elaborated the **Mission Mandates** (Rome, 2010) which evolved to the current **Forums (fora) of Apostolic Life**. Is it time to review and update the Priorities of the Order? Or perhaps, we just need to remind the Order the these remain our priorities, thus, must be seriously considered in our different apostolates. How are these priorities integrated as “priorities” in each of the Forum for Apostolic Life? For instance, the priority of Justice and Peace is clearly at the heart of the forum on Salamanca Process, but how is it a “priority” in the forum on Parish Ministry or Artists etc.? How about the “frontiers of evangelization” – are they still relevant today? Are there new frontiers which keeps coming up in general chapters which we have not explicitly identified as a “frontier”? In many parts of the world today, *the place of mission is no longer just the one that is far from home, it is also close to home!* By crossing the threshold (“frontier”) of our convents, we already encounter “many men, women, and children who do not know the joy of friendship with Jesus”.

## The Brothers

16. There are 5.117 professed brothers, according to the 2020 statistics. Of these, 737 are clerical student friars, 116 transitory deacons, 15 permanent deacons, 245 cooperator brothers, 4.023 priests, and 41 bishops. We have 164 cleric-novices and 5 novices for cooperator brotherhood.
17. On the same year, 155 friars died (42 of them due to COVID 19), 15 priests left the Order (dispensation and incardination), 12 solemnly professed brothers obtained dispensation and 38 simply professed brothers left the Order. There are 49 brothers who are on exclaustation and 59 are reported to be illegitimately absent.
18. Regarding assignation, 78% of the brothers live in 257 convents, while 22% live in 281 houses. By age groups, 11% are 30 years old and below, 18% are between 31 to 40 years old; 19% are between 41 to 50 years old; 15% are between 51 to 60 years old; 13% are between 61 to 70 years old; and 24% are 71 years old and above.
19. The brothers are present in 37 provinces and 6 vice provinces. Of these provinces 2 are in Africa, 5 in Asia-Pacific, 20 are in Europe (9 in Iberian Peninsula, Italy, Bohemia, Croatia, Malta, and Slovakia; 11 in Northwestern Europe, Canada, and Poland), 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 18 provincial vicariates which are present in Africa (4), Asia-Pacific (4), Europe-Canada (6), Latin America (4).
20. In 1921, on the 7<sup>th</sup> centenary of St. Dominic, the *Analecta* records **4.737 friars** (*in hac summa solummodo sacerdotes, clerici novitii necnon conversi computantur*) and **946 cooperator brothers** (*conversi*). Our numbers did not change dramatically in the last hundred years. What changed was the geographic distribution of the brothers, from Europe and Americas to Africa and Asia Pacific.
21. Anent the change in the geographic distribution, I was asked a few times about the possibility for provinces with greater number of brothers to help provinces with less friars in maintaining Dominican presence and preaching in their territories. I pointed out that LCO 391, nn. 5 & 6 (interprovincial convents and “providence” assignation) provide the conditions for this possibility. However, careful preparation of the brothers who will be involved in these collaborative projects must have adequate preparations in terms of language and in *interculturality* i.e., the capacity and willingness to cross-over boundaries, to become “estranged” from one’s cultural habits and to have the opportunity to know the cultural-other better, to be willing to integrate oneself fully in the life and mission of his community of assignation. Interculturality is first of all marked by respect for each other’s cultures, but should go further towards *conviviality* and *reciprocity*. *Conviviality* refers to a *modus vivendi* of mutuality and reciprocity that leads to the flourishing of common fraternal life in the midst of diversity. Reciprocity means that we must be generous enough *to give*, yet humble enough *to receive*.

## The General Curia

22. 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*.<sup>4</sup> 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.

23. In order to ensure its proper functioning the Curia completed the **Administrative Manual** which brings together the various *statutes, policies, and procedures* used by the general curia over the years; and adds the organigram (see appendix), job descriptions, and other related documents that define the scope of work and areas of collaboration among the members of the curia. It is meant to be a *vademecum* that will hopefully help the members of curia carry out consistently and effectively its service to the Order. It is also meant to facilitate the handover of responsibilities between an incumbent and incoming member. The **2021 edition of the *Liber Constitutionum et Ordinationum*** has been published. It contains all the changes made until the General Chapter of Biên Hòa celebrated in 2019.
24. In his *relatio* at the conclusion of his mandate, Br. Bruno Cadoré indicated the need to review the distribution of regional *socii*. The provincials of Europe were consulted during their IEOP meeting in 2020. They proposed the reduction of the number of the *socii* for Europe from three to two and requested to have further discussion on how the two *socii* might share responsibilities for Europe. In order to move into the general direction proposed by the provincials of Europe, no regional *socius* for Central and Eastern Europe was appointed at the end of the mandate of fr. Krzysztof Popławski; fr. Alain Arnould and fr. Miguel Àngel del Rio remain as the two *socii* for Europe, with additional provinces entrusted to their care.
25. One of the windows of opportunity which opened during the pandemic is the possibility of conducting meetings on either purely digital or hybrid platforms. To be sure, in-person meetings remain the best way to discuss and make decisions. However, some meetings of commissions and other structures of collaboration can be done effectively on digital platforms which help reduce expenses and carbon footprint, without sacrificing efficiency. The regional meetings of novices of all the regions are unprecedented; they were unimaginable before the acceptability of online meetings.

### **Fraternal Life and Formation**

26. One of the important decisions taken by the last two general chapters was the institution of the *socius* for Fraternal Life and Formation, which I strongly recommend for its *confirmatio* by the forthcoming general chapter [LCO 425 § II (B 306), LCO 427-bis (B 307) and LCO 429 § II (B 308)].

### **Cooperator Brothers**

27. In accordance with ACG 2019 Biên Hòa, 199, the *Theological Commission on the Vocation of the Cooperator Brother in the Order and in the Church* was constituted. The commission will focus its theological reflection on the specific vocation of the branches of the Dominican Family within the broader context of the Church which is an *ordered communion*. This shift in focus will avoid repetition of significant studies on cooperator-brothers undertaken by previous commissions. More importantly, it will look at how the richness of the Dominican vocation, exemplified in distinct ways by the different branches of the Family, serve the Church and the world. fr. Vivian Boland, chair of the commission has written

---

<sup>4</sup> Jordan of Saxony, *Libellus*, 51. See also fr. Bruno Cadoré OP, *Relatio* (2019), no. 25.

the “Terms of Reference for the Work of the Commission” though the commission is expected to finish its work after the General Chapter in Tultenango, Mexico.

28. The Permanent Commission for the Vocation of the Cooperator Brother ACG 2019 Biên Hòa, 194 has had several meetings with the socius for Fraternal Life and Formation who has been following the task given by the general chapter. In their meeting with provincial vocation promoters, it became clear how promoting new vocations to the cooperator brotherhood has been neglected due to a number of factors, one of which is the preference for vocations to Dominican priesthood due to a need for ordained brothers in the apostolates of the provinces.

### **Permanent Formation**

29. In the spirit of “sharing of best practices”, the Commission for Permanent Formation (ACG 2019 Biên Hòa, 100) has gathered programs and policies from some provinces on how to handle brothers who “subvert the fraternal life by their dysfunctional behavior, alcoholism, etc.” and on healing and reconciliation (ACG 2019 Biên Hòa, 96, 97). The materials will be translated into the official languages of the Order and will be offered to the provinces soon. The program for “facilitating communication within communities and among the brethren” is next on the agenda of the commission.
30. I strongly believe that the next task of the Permanent Commission for Formation is to look at the best practices of provinces regarding no. 18 of the *Ratio Formationis Generalis*: “At each stage of initial formation, and from time to time in permanent formation, there is to be serious reflection and sharing on affective life and maturity, sexuality, celibacy and chaste love (Bologna 1998, n.90). The general chapter of Providence gave a fuller context for this (Providence 2001, nn.348-349) and the general chapter of Trogir endorsed it (Trogir 2013, n.142)”. I believe that there should be a regular reflection on these human formation themes for all the brothers in permanent formation that is suited to their age groups, that takes into account “transitions in life” e.g., a permanent formation for cooperator brothers after 10, 20, 30 years of solemn profession, or a permanent formation on a theme like “from ageing to **sage-ing**” for brothers in their seventies, etc.
31. How do we accompany brothers who pass through moments of “acedia” which St. Thomas, citing Damascene, describes as “a sort of heavy sadness . . . that presses down on a man’s mind in such a way that no activity pleases him” (S. Th. II-II, q. 35, a. 1), or which John Cassian calls as “noon-day demon” (or the so-called “mid-life” transition)? The Church acknowledges that with “the help of psychology, illumined and completed by the contribution of the anthropology of the Christian vocation and, therefore, of grace”<sup>5</sup> vocational and religious maturity can be achieved. Some provinces have integral permanent formation programs along these lines. The socius for Permanent Formation is working on how to provide means for the “sharing of best practices” among provinces. But this requires also a certain openness to share and receive on the part of provincial promoters of permanent formation, in particular, and the brothers, in general.

### **Collaboration in Initial Formation**

32. Every brother the Order accepts for formation has the right and duty to experience a full Dominican life that will, hopefully, lead to his perpetual commitment to this life. We were

---

<sup>5</sup> Congregation for Catholic Education, “Guidelines for the Use of Psychology in the Admission and Formation of Candidates for the Priesthood” (29 June 2008), no. 9.

taught in formation how the elements of Dominican life, common prayer, common fraternal life, communitarian government, etc., are constitutive elements of our identity and mission. We know that the number of brothers in a convent alone does not guarantee a full Dominican life, but the number of brothers living habitually in the same convent is an important condition for the possibility of the way of life of a preacher. I believe that providing such condition is, to some significant extent, a question of justice --- every brother we accept for formation has the right to receive authentic Dominican formation.

33. How can we provide an authentic Dominican formation if one or more elements of the Dominican life are lacking? How can a novice experience the richness of our common liturgical prayer if the novitiate community does not have enough friars? How can a solemnly professed clerical brother experience a fuller communitarian government if he lives not in a convent but a house where the superior is appointed and not elected, where the chapter is the same as the council? How can student friars be immersed in the rich Dominican philosophical and theological tradition if they study the ecclesiastical disciplines in faculties that do not belong to the Order? According to the statistics for the year 2020, of the 737 clerical students we have, 498 are studying in centers of studies under the care of the Order, which means that 309 student friars are minimally benefitting from the intellectual tradition of the Order. For this reason, it is necessary to have centers of formation within the regions. Collaboration in formation is, I believe, one of the best practices in Africa which other regions can emulate. Should not a province, which cannot provide, within two years, the elements a formation house ought to have, send its brother/s in initial formation to other houses of formation (cf. LCO 254,2), as a *matter of obligation*?

### **Liturgical Commission**

34. The Liturgical Commission, in addition to its mandate to promote the liturgical and prayer life in the Order, has been tasked to collaborate with the General Postulator in providing the Order with the proper liturgical texts for new saints and blessed like St. Bartolomeu dos Mártires (Bartholomew of Braga), Blessed Jean-Joseph Lataste *et al.*, and discuss with the postulator the essential steps that must be taken to achieve this end.
35. The Liturgical Commission is assisted by a Sub-Commission for music whose main task is to assist the Liturgical Commission in promoting the rich diversity of Dominican music throughout the Dominican Family, and with the particular task of coordinating with the French-speaking provinces, in order to safeguard and promote the "Liturgie Chorale du Peuple de Dieu" of fr Andre Gouzes (ACG 2019, n. 102).

### **Intellectual Life and Study**

36. A comprehensive information on the life of Study and the Intellectual Life in the Order is now accessible online at <https://studium.op.org>. Thanks to the work of the socius for the Intellectual Life, one can find (a) information on the Centers of Studies and Academic Institutions of the Order (b) directory of those working in the animation of the intellectual life in the different instances of the Order (Permanent Commission for the promotion of studies in the Order, secretariat for the intellectual life, regents of studies, moderators of the centers of institutional studies, professors, brothers preparing for teaching, and brothers who have received the title of *magistri in sacra theologia* (c) collaboration within the regions, (d) scholarships (e) publications, etc. Part of the website is devoted to announcements on vacant teaching positions for the information of interested and qualified friars.

37. The Dominican Universities Network had its first online meeting on 27 and 28 July 2021. The results of the meeting and the responses to the questionnaire were presented to the General Council. The **Members of the Working Group of the OP Universities Network (UNOP-RUOP)** were subsequently appointed with the following tasks: (a) to review and refine the draft of the **Statutes of the Network**, which will be submitted as soon as it is ready (but no later than 11 February 2022) to the Master of the Order and the General Council for approval (*ad experimentum* for 5 years); (b) to identify the **Main Areas of Collaboration** of the members of the network and formulate the basic system/procedure for implementing collaboration for each area.

At present, the Order has 12 universities, 11 faculties of Theology (8 of which are *sui juris*), 7 institutes of higher studies, and 9 institutions of academic research.

### **Academic Centers and Houses Under the Direct Jurisdiction of the Master**

38. Pontifical University of St. Thomas (PUST Angelicum)

The revised statutes of the PUST were approved by the Holy See and promulgated and entered into force on 14 September 2021. On the same day, the new Rector of the University, fr. Thomas Joseph White, formally assumed his office after making the profession of Faith. New members of the *Consiglio di Amministrazione* were appointed according to the new statutes.

The development projects initiated by fr. Bruno are bearing fruits and have inspired a renewed confidence in the University. This academic year (2021-2022), there are 58 friars enrolled at the University. They come from 22 provinces and vice provinces from all over the world. Since 2019, five Dominican professors have been assigned to the Angelicum.

In its strategic planning the Angelicum aims to develop and strengthen its role as a center for academic excellence in teaching, research and spiritual formation in keeping with the Dominican tradition. Its offer of scholarship grants is geared towards contributing to the building up of the particular Churches and entities of the Order in the various regions of the world by forming their future leaders, teachers and ministers so that they may be able to develop their mission of evangelization and fruitful dialogue with cultures and religions.

39. École Biblique et Archéologique Française (EBAF)

Since 2019, two Dominican professors have been assigned to the EBAF. The École started its Strategic Planning, which we hope to review during the canonical visitation in January 2022. The EBAF continues to be a renowned center of Scripture studies and provides inspiration and support to brothers who are specializing in Biblical studies.

40. Albertinum/Faculty of Theology Fribourg

Since 2019, 1 Dominican professor was assigned to the Albertinum, with the possibility of assigning one more once the university appoints the brother concerned as chair. The project for a Dominican Institute to be established within the Faculty of Theology is gradually taking shape, and, will hopefully, receive approval from the authorities concerned.

#### 41. Leonine Commission

Since 2019, 1 friar was appointed as new member of the Leonine Commission. A memorandum of collaboration of the Commission with the Historical Institute of the Order is underway. The Leonine Commission will work on establishing greater linkages with Thomistic Institutes from some provinces.

#### Apostolic Life

42. The Secretariat for the Apostolic Life, composed of the general promoters and the socius for Apostolic Life as chair, is collaborating closely through regular meetings.

The Forums for the Apostolic Life are being reanimated through various regional meetings of brothers involved in each forum. The objective of the forum is to encourage apostolic activity through sharing of experiences among the friars involved, bringing to bear on these apostolic activities the Order's specific tradition, and to stimulate dialogue among pastors and theologians of the Order (cf. *Relatio* MO, ACG Bologna 2016, n. 104). At present, there are 13 apostolic forums. The process of building networks among friars in the Order who are working in the same or similar mission areas is in progress. This is in response to the commission of the General Chapter of Trogir in 2013 (n. 109). The socius for Apostolic Life and the regional *socii* continue to organize a series of online meetings of friars who work in the field of media communication, the Dominican fraternities, promotion of the Rosary, and parish ministry.

43. The arduous task of creating a detailed apostolic profile of the entities in the Order is in progress. From the information provided by the Provinces and Vice Provinces to the General Curia, i.e. through the catalogues, newsletters, and other means of communication, a database of persons and structures is under construction, which would serve as a fundamental tool for the networks of friars and the institutions through which they exercise their ministry. Moreover, platforms for ongoing communication and collaboration (workplace, google suite) are currently used by the forums on (1) Rosary, Shrines and Pilgrimages; (2) Promoters of the Lay Fraternities; (3) Parish Ministry; and (4) Promoters of the Media. This will be followed by the other forums in the coming months.
44. I believe that an important aspect in the further development of the apostolic forums is to consider seriously how our charism enriches a particular apostolic forum. For instance, what makes a parish entrusted to our care truly "Dominican"? Is it about the visibility of Dominican symbols in the parish church or the celebration of Dominican feasts by the community? Is it not possible to imagine that the community of brothers to which the parish priest belongs is the community "shepherding" the community of the parish (cf. ACG Rome 2010, n. 183; ACG Bologna 2016, n. 114)? In this regard it is important to consider the instruction *The Pastoral Conversion of the Parish community in the Service of the Evangelizing Mission of the Church* published by the Holy See: "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."<sup>6</sup> This acknowledgment of the importance of religious charisms in enriching parish ministry is very significant because there are many parishes entrusted to the care

---

<sup>6</sup> Congregation for the Clergy, "The Pastoral Conversion of the Parish community in the Service of the Evangelizing Mission of the Church" (29 June 2020), no. 84. Emphasis mine.

of the Order, 30 parishes in Africa and 80 parishes in Asia-Pacific (the data from the other regions are currently being determined by the socius for Apostolic Life).

### Justice, Peace, and Care for Creation

45. Witnessing to Christ's love and mercy through works of Justice, Peace and Care of Creation is part of evangelization, which requires "organization". We recall that when St. Dominic was moved with compassion for those who suffered during a famine, he did not only sell his precious books, he "established a center for almsgiving..." which inspired others to do the same (*Libellus*, 10). It is in the same spirit that "The Role of the Promoters of Justice, Peace and Care for Creation in the Order" was promulgated as requested by the ACG Biên Hòa, 175.
46. The "Coordinator of the Academic Engagement Programme" of the UN Delegation was appointed to serve as member of the working group identified in ACG Biên Hòa 2019, 317 and to inform Dominican institutions and academics about the work of the Order in the UN and to encourage them to produce reflections, individually and collectively, that will strengthen the possibilities of overcoming the polarization arising from the conflict of rights, and other questions of human rights, in the light of the Salamanca Process.
47. The recent Social Encyclicals clearly point out the *nexus* between the promotion of Justice, Peace and Care of Creation: "Just as human virtues are interrelated, such that the weakening of one places others at risk, so the ecological system is based on respect for a plan that affects both the health of society and its good relationship with nature. (*Caritas in Veritate*, 51). Thus, "a true ecological approach *always* becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear *both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor*" (*Laudato Sii*, 49). **One of the main challenges of the promoters is how to promote Justice, Peace and Care for Creation *within* the Order.**
48. Yet, it seems that some Dominicans do not find the work for Justice and Peace attractive. Is it because we do not find the "joy of the Gospel", *Evangelii gaudium*", in the preaching of justice and peace? Clearly, situations of injustice unsettles us, provokes negative thoughts and feelings, even incites anger or indignation in our hearts. Unfortunately, there were religious and clergy who, in their pastoral solicitude for people who suffer terrible injustice, have been consumed by anger. Perhaps, this negative prospect of an anger that could overwhelm the joy of the Gospel makes us hold back from getting involved in working for the restoration of justice and the attainment of true peace in our world.
49. Another "misgiving" that some Dominicans probably have about getting involved in the work for Justice and Peace is that it inevitably leads one to the "streets", to a messy and secular world that could bring us away from our conventual life. While it is true that there have been a few regrettable instances of friars who have given in to "activism" and consequently distanced themselves from common life, one could not simply consider working actively for justice and peace as opposed to contemplative life. It is interesting to note that the iconic figures of our Order's work for justice and peace, the friars who went to Hispaniola in 1510, "came from the *Observants* of the Castilian province who had been combating secularization since 1450, and who wanted to restore the original charism of the Order"<sup>7</sup>. Clearly, those friars have a strong conventual life, faithful to religious

---

<sup>7</sup> Mariano Delgado, *A Stumbling Block: Bartolome de las Casas as Defender of the Indians* (Adelaide: ATF Publishing, 2019) p. 7.

observances, but they were not closed in on themselves. They were very much aware, involved, and affected by the sufferings of the people.

### **Promotion of the Rosary**

50. The general promoter of the Rosary holds online meeting with promoters of the rosary from different provinces. He is actively promoting the growth of Rosary Confraternities and has received positive responses from North America. About a 100 people join him online in his weekly live rosary prayer. He recently published a book on praying the rosary with sacred art.

### **Santa Maria Maggiore**

51. The convent of Santa Maria Maggiore is also 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. A brother will be assigned to the convent by the end of the year 2021, and, hopefully, two more will be added in the coming year.

### **Media**

52. The visibility of the Order on the internet through its website has improved a lot in the last year. Resources and links on the website provide useful and relevant information about the Order. The promoter is collaborating closely with an Editorial Committee, following a clear set of editorial guidelines for consistency in the Order's communication platforms. The general promoter of the Media is also active in maintaining the visibility of the Order in social media networks. However, a huge part of the Order's online presence is maintained by brothers and sisters all over the world through preaching podcasts, live streaming of liturgical celebrations, online lectures, and the like. Can we imagine greater collaboration among the brothers and sisters who preach in the digital continent? (Needless to say, “Providence assignation” is not necessary for this kind of collaboration.)

### **Members of the Dominican Family**

53. In *Praedicator Gratiae* the Holy Father acknowledged the branches of the Dominican Family: “the members of that great family, which embraces the contemplative lives and apostolic works of its nuns and religious sisters, its priestly and lay fraternities, its secular institutes and its youth movements (PG, 1)”. In the same letter, the Pope paid tribute to “the quiet witness given by the many thousands of Dominican tertiaries and members of the Dominican Youth Movement, who reflect the important and indeed indispensable role of the laity in the work of evangelization” (PG, 7).

### **Dominican Nuns**

54. There are about 2,512 Dominican nuns living in 185 monasteries; and a total 63 novices and 69 postulants who feel called to the monastic life. On 26 June 2021, the youngest monastery of the Order was established in Ilorin, Nigeria with the solemn profession of 11 nuns, and simple profession of 4 nuns. The new monastery, whose formal establishment was initiated by Br. Bruno, is a sign of hope for the Dominican contemplative life, especially when we consider that, since 2017, the Holy See has issued decrees of suppression of 13 monasteries. The Commission for the Revision of the Book of Constitutions of the Nuns (LCM), chaired by Br. Benjamin Earl, has submitted the draft to the monasteries for consultation. The revision is meant to update the LCM, especially in

the light of *Cor Orans*, the implementing instruction of the Apostolic Constitution *Vultum Dei Quaerere*.

### **Dominican Laity and Youth Movement**

55. According to statistical information as of June 2021, there are 2.212 lay Dominican fraternities with 128.287 members in 75 countries. Compared to 2020, there is an increase of 32 fraternities and 749 members for the year 2021. In Europe, there are 5.377 Dominican laity who belong to 372 fraternities which are present in 25 countries; in Latin America and the Caribbean, there are 1.862 members who belong to 156 fraternities, present in 23 countries; in United States and Canada, there are 2.749 members who to belong to 164 fraternities, present in 2 countries; in Asia Pacific, there are 117.749 members who belong to 1.491 fraternities, present in 12 countries; and in Africa, there are 550 members who belong to 29 fraternities, present in 13 countries.
56. There are 4.010 members of the International Dominican Youth Movement who belong 144 groups in 27 countries. These young people are accompanied by friars and sisters who serve as promoters of the youth.
57. Members of the lay fraternities are called to be communicators of the truth of the faith. With the institution of the ministry of catechist (*Antiquum Ministerium*, 2021), it seems opportune to encourage lay Dominicans, especially those who have the charism of teaching, to be instituted as catechists. The Apostolic Letter instituting the ministry describes those suitable for the ministry a “men and women of deep faith and human maturity, active participants in the life of the Christian community, capable of welcoming others, being generous and living a life of fraternal communion” (AM, 8). Are these not the very same qualities of lay Dominicans?

### **Priestly Fraternities of St. Dominic**

58. There are currently in the Order 410 members of the Priestly Fraternities of St. Dominic who are present in 22 countries. These diocesan deacons, priests and bishops belong to 19 provinces, of which 15 have 34 established fraternities or emerging groups, while 4 have individual priests without an organized local group. In this jubilee year, two Cardinals, one diocesan bishop and one member of the Roman Curia, joined the fraternity. Fraternities in the Order have continued to gather its members regularly with occasional rites of admission or profession of the priests. However, these activities have been disrupted since the onset of the global pandemic. With in-person assemblies severely affected by travel restrictions and health protocols, the regular encounters of the members of the fraternities were either put on hold or migrated into an online platform.

### **Dominican Sisters International**

59. 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 DSIC includes 19.407 sisters who are present 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

60. Thanks be to God, source of all holiness, two members of the Order have been raised to the altar of Saints in the last three years: *St. Bartolomeu dos Martires*, “the Holy Bishop of the Council of Trent” on November 10, 2019 in Braga, Portugal (approval of equipollent canonization on 5 July 2019); and *St. Margherita of Castello*, patroness of the blind, of persons with disabilities (PWDs), on 19 September 2021 in Città di Castello (approval of equipollent canonization on 24 April 2021).
61. To date, the Dominican Family counts 74 saints (of whom 51 are martyrs) and 315 blessed (of whom 222 are martyrs); thus the saints and blessed of the Order total 389. Our liturgical calendar is almost full of feasts and memorials, so why do we continue to promote causes for sainthood? We do so because, as br. Bruno Cadoré and Br. Gianni Festa, former Postulator General, remind us: “the holiness of these brothers and sisters is a visible sign of the vitality and relevance of the Order!” The canonization of new saints represents for all of us a renewed confirmation that *Dominican life*, in all its fullness and richness, is truly a *path to holiness*.

## Conclusion

62. This *relatio* is in continuity with the comprehensive *relatio* which my predecessor, fr. Bruno Cadoré, sent to the Order at the conclusion of his mandate. This is also complemented by the reports of the socii and general promoters submitted to the General Chapter. Impeded by travel restrictions, I and the members of the General Curia could not do the usual visitations which would have given us an opportunity to know the brothers and their apostolate more deeply. Certainly, this limitation affected the comprehensiveness a report ought to have.

  
brother Gerard Francisco Timoner III, OP  
Master of the Order

Santa Sabina, Rome  
*Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception*  
8 December 2021