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THE DOMINICAN TORCH (ISSN 15441075) is published quarterly by the Third Order of Saint Dominic of the Province of Saint Joseph, 3050 Gap Knob Road, New Hope, Kentucky 40052. Periodicals Postage Paid at New Hope, Kentucky, and at additional mailing offices. One-year subscription \$20.00. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Dominican Torch 141 East 65th St New York, New York 10021	<b>Siena Circles: Here They Come!</b> .....6
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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THE GREATEST TREASURE that I received at the DUC IN ALTUM! Third Order Congress in Washington, D.C., on the day of my final profession was given to me by Saint Dominic. As I knelt before his altar in the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, I was very aware of his approval and love. I was overcome with the joy of knowing, for the first time, that he accepted me as his disciple and had faith in my ability to follow him in the service of Christ. This was the greatest miracle and surprise to me. I still can't believe that the Lord has given me a chance to serve Him in this way!

The basilica's larger-than-life statue of Saint Dominic is set in a gorgeous alcove of gleaming black and white mosaic. Above the statue are inscribed the words that state the mission of Saint Dominic: "To Praise, To Bless, To Preach." That word *preach* really hit home. It was the theme of our Congress and the main message of Fr. Sullivan and Fr. Izzo. After study and contemplation, we share the fruits of our faith through preaching!

The statue of Saint Dominic is of a dark charcoal marble-like material and is very imposing, with the arms outstretched and the head bent down. The eyes are intently staring as if into the soul of a convert or heretic, or in my case, as into one of his devout followers.

I know now who I am. I know now what Our Lord and His helper Saint Dominic want me to do, what He wants of us all, as Dominicans. We are called to spread the good news

and truth of the message of Jesus Christ. As our teacher, Saint Dominic makes us a promise that he will be our guide along this happy path!

The special gift I received from Saint Dominic is one he offers to us all — the blessing of knowing with confidence that with Saint Dominic's help we can all be Jesus' disciples. No matter our age, education, or experience, through God's grace, we can be faithful and effective servants. Our love of God will shine forth to all who are hungry for its saving grace. Each of us, in our own way, will be able to fulfill the promise of our Dominican charism. All that is needed is faith. Our Lord and St. Dominic will do the rest. Most importantly, they love us so much for saying yes to our vocation. Rest assured, our efforts will be pleasing to them and very fruitful!

*Carol Marcklinger, T.O.P.  
Immaculate Heart Chapter  
Buffalo, New York*



I want to congratulate you all for the magnificent magazine, THE DOMINICAN TORCH. I read it from cover to cover. My favorite articles are the ones submitted from the Our Lady of Mercy Chapter in Norfolk, Massachusetts. I am a prayer partner for one of the residents there. His letters are so full of goodness, it brings me to tears. Again, many thanks for all you do for the Dominicans.

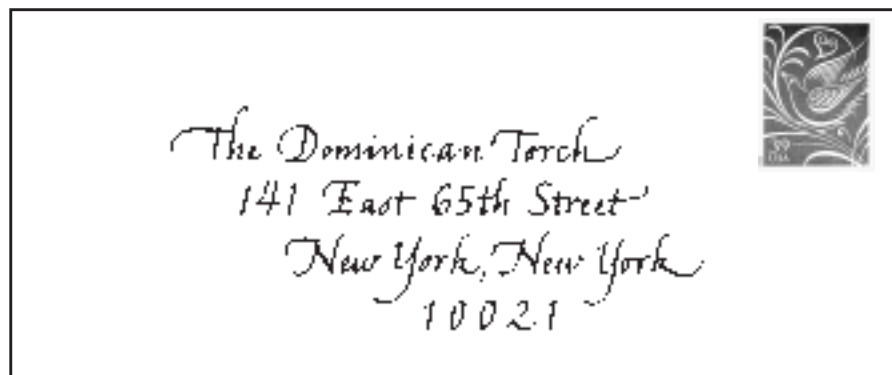
*Elizabeth M. Sullivan, T.O.P.  
Holy Rosary Chapter  
Camden, New Jersey*

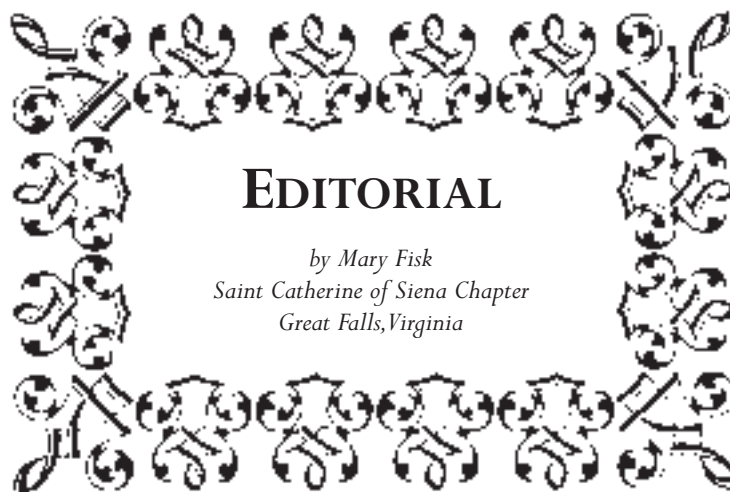


Greetings from the Caribbean! As you see I am writing from Barbados where I have made my home ever since hurricane Ivan. Having no house to live in and not being in good health forced this move upon me. It was a surprise and delight to receive your letter and a copy of THE DOMINICAN TORCH just over a

### Letters to the Editor:

*continued on page four*





## EDITORIAL

by Mary Fisk  
Saint Catherine of Siena Chapter  
Great Falls, Virginia

# THE DOMINICAN TORCH: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

I COME WITH AN APOLOGY and a request.

First the apology. We (few) staff members of THE DOMINICAN TORCH are blessed by our participation in this wonderful endeavor, but at times we are overextended. This was the case in 2005, when we published the extra edition of the magazine for the Bicentennial celebration and thus were not able to complete the Fall 2005 issue on time.

We have worked hard to get back on schedule, and by December 2006 we will be there. Thus, this very tardy Fall 2005 issue is now complete, and we hope you will enjoy the many articles on the last of the four pillars of our vocation that we explored in 2005 — Apostolate.

Second, the request. We have made great progress since our first issue in 2003, aided greatly by the significant contribution of our founding graphic designer, Rose Folsom. She spent many hours creating and then refining a beautiful and classic look that captured the rich heritage of art and perfectly complemented the substan-

tial content of the articles. Father James Sullivan was the magazine's guiding spirit, securing articles that educate and inspire.

As we look forward to 2007, we are excited that we are ready to begin the next phase of our development. We will build on their contributions and expand the content and look in ways that will help members to continue to foster their vocations.

In addition to the solid theological content of our feature articles, we are planning to bring you new regular departments on the pillars of Prayer, Study, Community, and Apostolate, as well as a Saints department. These sections will have shorter articles written by members and offer practical information/advice/experiences in their individual areas.

As part of our diversification of the content, we also are looking forward to bringing you interviews and highlights of individuals and chapters.

Here we come to the request part. Several people have volunteered to take responsibility for some of these new elements, but we need more

help to grow. We need photographers, proofreaders, writers, interviewers, researchers, poets. We need people to send ideas. We need to hear from you what works and what does not, and what you would like to see in the magazine. Finally, we need as many people as possible to pay their dues so we can continue to print and mail the issues to you in a timely manner.

You can write to me at THE DOMINICAN TORCH, 141 East 65<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, New York 10021 or you can email me at [dominicantorch@opfriars.org](mailto:dominicantorch@opfriars.org). Together, as a community, we can help THE DOMINICAN TORCH — and one another — to be all that we can be. ■

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

*(continued from page two)*

month ago. To me it is a source of amazement that my brief reflections on my hurricane experience should have been given wings that carried them to you, *IDI*, and to several parishes served by Dominicans in England. The generous response this has evoked has moved me greatly. [See the appeal in vol. 2, #4.]

And here I wish to thank you and the Third Order members for your handsome gift to the Rosary Priory, Grenada. In gratitude I have already offered a Mass on your behalf. The situation there at the moment is that three of the brethren are living in a rented house while repairs take place. Our hope is that by this time next year a renewed building will be available as a novitiate.

As I conclude this letter I think of those in America who have suffered so much from hurricanes this year. We in Barbados held an ecumenical service of prayer for them.

Your brother in Saint Dominic,  
*Fr. Peter Clarke, O.P.*  
*St. Patrick's Cathedral*  
*Jemmott's Lane, Barbados, West Indies*



*by Dorothy Murphy, Provincial Council President*  
*Bishop Fenwick Chapter, Silver Spring, Maryland*

## APOSTOLATE: LIVING THE DOMINICAN LIFE

EVERY PERSON requesting admission to the Third Order is (or should be) required to complete a form that asks for an affirmation that the candidate will adhere both to the Rule of the Order and to the Magisterium, the teaching authority of the Church. To determine what exactly it is that we are affirming we spend countless hours in formation studying not only this Rule but Scripture, the Fathers of the Church, the greatest of its theologians, and the documents and decrees spanning centuries. Sometimes we are like the disciples who said, "This sort of talk is hard to endure,"<sup>1</sup> but we continue to pray for understanding, the grace to accept, and the will to do. Why then do we have such difficulty understanding, accepting, and doing when it comes to Apostolate?

Each time we recite the Creed (final form approved 381 A.D.) we affirm the apostolic nature of the Church. This expresses our faith in not only the validity of the apostolic succession of the hierarchy but also is an affirmation of and recognition of

the very apostolic nature of the Church, all of the Church. We do not say, "was apostolic" or "just the clergy is apostolic." We affirm the Catechism teaching that "The whole Church is apostolic, in that she remains ... in communion of faith and life with her origin; and in that she is sent out into the whole world. All members of the Church share in its mission."<sup>2</sup> It further states, "Since, like all the faithful, lay Christians are entrusted by God with the apostolate by virtue of their Baptism and Confirmation, they have the right and duty, individually or grouped in association, to work so that the divine message of salvation may be known and accepted by all men throughout the world."<sup>3</sup>

Lest we think this call to apostolate is just a right we have to exercise at our choosing, the Church has some of those "hard words" for us. The documents of Vatican II teach that it is not an option but a duty. "Even when occupied by temporal affairs, the laity can, and must do valuable work in the evangelization of the

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world.”<sup>4</sup> Further, the Church says, “By uniting forces, let the laity so remedy and institutions and conditions of the world when the latter are an inducement to sin, that these may be conformed to norms of justice, favoring rather than hindering the practice of virtue.” In case this might be misunderstood, it was further clarified in *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, promulgated by Pope Paul VI in 1965, with the statement: “For the Christian vocation by its very nature is also a vocation to the apostolate. No part of the structure of a living body is merely passive but has a share in the functions as well as life of the body... indeed, the organic union in this body and the structure of the members are so compact that the member who fails to make his proper contribution to the development of the Church must be said to be useful neither to the Church nor to himself.”<sup>5</sup>

Finally, since we all honor our beloved John Paul II of happy memory, it is time to simply heed his words: “The Church, in fact, lives in the world, even if she is not of the world. She is sent to continue the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, which by its very nature concerns the salvation of humanity and also involves the renewal of the whole temporal order.”<sup>6</sup>

So what is our problem? Why it so hard to understand that as lay men and women, and especially as Dominican men and women, our work is in the World, big “W” here since I don’t mean just the world of our own house, chapter, or parish. These have already, we would hope, been and continue to be evangelized by the example of our daily lives.

We are a couple thousand strong. What impact on the world could we

make if we really understood the power given us by Baptism? Did we not have the same Spirit bestowed on us in Confirmation as that bestowed on those in the upper room? Did not the prayers said over us at profession ask for the same grace to live our vocation as that grace evidenced by our Third Order Dominican saints? Why does our Provincial Promoter have to drag us (some very reluctantly) into accepting a Scriptural apostolate? Why do I read so many chapter and council minutes that seem to dedicate little or, even more discouraging, no time to the apostolate? No discussion of chapter plans, successes, failures, and ideas — nothing? On the other hand, these same chapters often spend a great deal of time discussing “why don’t we get new members” and then “why do the new members leave after a short time.”

It could be that a lot of our chapters exist in places where there is no need for apostolate. Everyone has heard the Good News, adults and children are well schooled in the faith, and no one needs conversion. It could be no one needs spiritual nourishment or spiritual consolation. Maybe there isn’t a constant attack on the family, marriage, and unborn children. Maybe there are no abused children or children doomed to failure by the educational system or families unable to find decent homes/housing in the world of mega mansions and “no children allowed” policies. It could be that there are no prisons where people are warehoused without hope. Maybe there are no lonely people without family or friends living in nursing homes. Maybe the television, theater, music, art, and literature in these areas uplift the soul instead of degrading the human person. It could be that the political

system does not need constant vigilance against bribery, corruption, or enactment of laws that demean human dignity. Wherever this place is, let me know because I surely want to visit as I have not yet encountered it on my visits around this Province.

If there are these needs it is not enough to just pray to God to send someone to address these things. God has already answered this prayer. He has sent us! Why else would we be called into an order that counts apostolate as one of its reasons for being? Our apostolate is in the world — this is our vocation. John Paul said we should have “the greater willingness to live our vocation so as to fulfill one’s mission.”<sup>7</sup> Along with those prayers for vocations to the priesthood and religious life we might add some for the lay vocation, our own vocation. Pray that we affirm it not just by signing a piece of paper but actually living it out in our Dominican life. ■

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1. John 6:60.
2. *Catechism of the Catholic Church, Second Edition*. (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, Inc., 2000, 1997, 1994), 863.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Lumen Gentium*, 36-38.
5. *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, Chapter I.
6. *Christifidelis Laici*.
7. *Ibid.*

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# SIENA CIRCLES: HERE THEY COME!

by David W. Burleigh

Bishop Fenwick Pro-Chapter, Cincinnati, Ohio

WHAT ARE SIENA CIRCLES? How do they work? Why is the Third Order undertaking them? Why do you need to know about them? Many Third Order members have already received answers to these questions, but for those who still are learning the concept, this article provides a summary.

## What Are Siena Circles?

The term “Siena Circles” is shorthand for a new Third Order apostolate in the Saint Joseph Province. The full name is “The Saint Catherine of Siena Circles for the Sacred Page.” Siena Circles were born of a belief that the Third Order would benefit from a focused, guided, and energized Chapter apostolate. Some Chapters have established, thriving apostolates, even multiple apostolates. Others, such as new Chapters, often do not. For those Chapters that are still developing apostolates, are changing apostolates, or are seeking to refine the apostolate component of their Third Order life, Siena Circles offer a means of apostolate that also engages the components of prayer, study, and community.

## How Do They Work?

Essentially, Siena Circles consist of groups of Catholics, under the guidance of fully professed Third Order members, who meet regularly to read, discuss, and contemplate the Word contained in the Holy Scriptures. Siena Circles have been

referred to as Catholic “Bible sharing.” The concept is simple: within a Chapter, four to six fully professed members will undergo detailed, specialized instruction in Catholic Bible sharing. This instruction will help members understand anew what the Bible is, how it should be read and interpreted, and how to conduct meetings at which Circle participants pray, discuss readings from the Bible, and share how the Word is at work in their lives. Having received the training, these members will go out, two by two, from the Chapter to start a Circle. The Circle could be offered to fellow parishioners, members of nearby parishes, or groups of Catholics who specifically seek Bible study and Bible sharing. Eventually, Third Order members would be in a position to offer Circles and training in them to other parishes in a diocese.

Although the participants in a Circle will be Catholic, only a few will be Third Order members. The topics and readings will vary, depending on where the Circle is in the course of study. Some meetings may address one book of the Bible. Other meetings may cover a single theme throughout several books.

To prepare for each session, the participants will be asked to read the Bible text for that session. The text itself will be the first object of prayer and study. In this way the participants will receive an opportunity to listen to the Word of God in, as

Pope John Paul II puts it, “a life-giving encounter in the ancient and ever valid tradition of *lectio divina*.”<sup>1</sup> After reading, reflecting, and praying upon the passages for the upcoming session, the participants may be asked to deepen their understanding by consulting an authoritative commentary — for example, the *Jerome Biblical Commentary* or Fr. Raymond Brown on Saint John. (Where possible, preference will be given to commentaries by Dominicans.)

“One  
contemplates  
the face of Jesus,  
says John Paul II,  
first by knowing  
Jesus in the Sacred  
Scriptures. Hence,  
quoting Saint Jerome,  
the Pope states:  
‘Ignorance of the  
Scriptures is  
ignorance of Christ.’”

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Then the participants will meet and discuss the Bible text in light of their reading, reflections, and insights.

### Whose Idea Was This?

Siena Circles are a joint project of the Third Order of Saint Joseph Province, under the direction of Fr. James Sullivan, O.P., and the National Word of God Institute, located at the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, D.C., and spearheaded by Fr. John Burke, O.P., and Michael Ryman, T.O.P. (Immaculate Conception Chapter). Fr. James and Mr. Ryman finished touring the Province to instruct the remaining regions on Siena Circles. The training involved two publications by Fr. Burke: *Beginner's Guide to Bible Sharing, Vol. I* and *Bible Sharing: How to Grow in the Mystery of Christ*. Both are available for a nominal amount from the Third Order Bookstore. (For additional books, articles, and tapes by Fr. Burke, see [www.wordofgodinstitute.org](http://www.wordofgodinstitute.org))

Why Siena Circles? How do they fit into the "apostolate" component of the Third Order? In the *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity*, issued as part of Vatican II, Pope Paul VI put forth a challenge to the laity: "The laity must take up the renewal of the temporal order as their own special obligation."<sup>2</sup> He noted:

"The Church was founded for the purpose of spreading the kingdom of Christ throughout the earth for the glory of God the Father, to enable all men to share in His saving redemption, and that through them the whole world might enter into a relationship with Christ. All activity of the Mystical Body directed to the attainment of this goal is called the apostolate, which the Church carries on in various ways through all her members.... Since the laity, in

accordance with their state of life, live in the midst of the world and its concerns, they are called by God to exercise their apostolate in the world like leaven, with the ardor of the spirit of Christ."<sup>3</sup>

After explaining how Mary, the chief apostle, exemplifies perfectly the spiritual, apostolic life in the midst of life on earth, the Pope observed, "A true apostle looks for opportunities to announce Christ by words addressed either to nonbelievers with a view to leading them to faith, or to the faithful with a view to instructing, strengthening, and encouraging them to a more fervent life."<sup>4</sup>

Thirty-five years later, Pope John Paul II continued this theme when he noted most astutely, "Like those pilgrims of two thousand years ago, the men and women of our own day — often perhaps unconsciously — ask believers not only to 'speak' of Christ, but in a certain sense to 'show' him to them."<sup>5</sup> The Pope says our own witness to these men and women "would be hopelessly inadequate if we ourselves had not first contemplated his face."<sup>6</sup> One who contemplates the face of Jesus, says John Paul II, first by knowing Jesus in the Sacred Scriptures. Hence, the Pope states: "Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ." Remaining firmly anchored in Scripture, we open ourselves to the action of the Spirit from whom the sacred texts derive their origin, as well as to the witness of the Apostles, who had a firsthand experience of Christ, the Word of life ..."<sup>7</sup>

For Third Order Dominicans, Pope John Paul II's challenge relates back directly to Saint Dominic's own prescription in the earliest days of the Order. "In the record of the Second General Chapter of the

Order we find St. Dominic insisting upon the study of Sacred Scripture as a preparation for saving souls by preaching."<sup>8</sup> By studying and sharing the Bible, we thus continue the Order's tradition, brought forward in Pope John Paul II's language, of contemplating the face of Christ, speaking of Him and showing Him to our contemporaries. In this way we seize "opportunities to announce Christ by words." As we undertake the Siena Circles, we fulfill our "duty of praise," which Pope John Paul II describes as "the point of departure for every genuine response of faith to the revelation of God in Christ."<sup>9</sup> In an Order that seeks "To Praise, To Bless, To Preach," we come to see how our praise of Jesus through studying and joyfully sharing the Sacred Scriptures makes Him known to our contemporaries.

Here, then, are the background, the mechanics, and the purpose of Siena Circles. As Fr. James has said, they offer great promise for the Third Order. Understood diligently and practiced with fervor, they offer every Third Order Dominican a deeper way to live, in the words of the litany to Saint Dominic "in the heart of the Church — and the world." ■■

### References

1. Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Letter, *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (January 6, 2001), 39.
2. Second Vatican Council, Decree On The Apostolate Of Lay People, *Apostolicam Actuositatem* (18 November, 1965), 7.
3. *Ibid.*, 2.
4. *Ibid.*, 6.
5. *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 16.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*, 17.
8. Wilberforce, Rev. Bertrand, O.P. *Devotions to St. Dominic* (Our Lady of Grace Monastery, North Guilford, Connecticut, 1957).
9. *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 4.

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# THE APOSTOLATE OF THE DOMINICAN TERTIARY AND THE NEW EVANGELIZATION: SIENA CIRCLES AT THE EPICENTER

by Michael M. J. Ryman

Immaculate Conception Chapter, Washington, D.C.

WE ALL HAVE A PROFOUND sense that we are called to do God's will as sons and daughters of Saint Dominic, and we all strive to discern that will in our Dominican vocation in the Third Order of Saint Dominic.

This article attempts to briefly describe some complex and challenging issues of the Dominican apostolate in the light of Church teaching, and the Church's call to a "New Evangelization." The issues are complex and challenging because they deal with our specific response as Dominicans to the essentials of our vocation. They deal with discerning the signs of the times, the needs of the Church, our rights, our duties, and our obligations. Siena Circles are an effective means to answer the call of our Dominican vocation.

## The Church Speaks of the Apostolate of the Laity

*The Catechism of the Catholic Church* succinctly and forcefully exhorts the lay faithful to action in the world: "Since, like all the faithful, lay Christians are entrusted by God with the apostolate by virtue of their Baptism and Confirmation, they have the right and the duty, individually or grouped in associations, to work so that the divine message of salvation may be known and accepted by all men throughout the earth. This duty is more pressing when it is only through them that men can hear the Gospel and know Christ. Their activity

in ecclesiastical communities is so necessary that, for the most part, apostolate of the pastors cannot be fully effective without it."<sup>1</sup>

The Second Vatican Council's *Apostolicam Actuositatem* (Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People) speaks with clarity of the "apostolate of evangelization and sanctification," stating:

"The apostolate of the Church therefore, and each of its members, aims primarily at announcing to the world by word and action the message of Christ. The principal means of bringing this about is the ministry of the word and of the sacraments.

Committed in a special way to the clergy, it leaves room, however, for a highly important part for the laity, the part namely of 'helping on the cause of truth' (3 Jn 8). It is in this sphere most of all that the lay apostolate and the pastoral ministry complete each other."<sup>2</sup>

Regarding the spirituality of lay people in exercising the apostolate, the Decree notes:

"This lay spirituality will take its particular character from the circumstances of one's state in life (married and family life, celibacy, widowhood), from one's state of health, and from one's professional and social activity. Whatever the circumstances, each one has received suitable talents and these should be cultivated, as should also personal gifts he has from the Holy Spirit."<sup>3</sup>

"Similarly, laymen who have followed their particular vocation and become members of any of the associations or institutions approved by the Church, aim sincerely at making their own forms of spirituality proper to these bodies."<sup>4</sup>

"Associations are not ends in themselves; they are meant to be of service to the Church's mission to the world. Their apostolic value depends on their conformity with the Church's aims, as well as on the Christian witness and evangelical spirit of each of their members and of the association as a whole."<sup>5</sup>

## The Popes Speak

In the interim between the Second Vatican Council and the pontificate of Pope Benedict XVI, a succession of papal encyclicals, speeches, and other writings have introduced the faithful to the idea of the "New Evangelization." First popularized in the encyclical *Evangelii Nuntiandi* by Paul VI, John Paul II developed the concept further in the encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*. In this exhortation, he presented a new synthesis of Church teaching to meet the needs of the contemporary world.

This synthesis comes to life in the term "new evangelization." "While the notion of evangelization may seem foreign to Catholics, in light of the times we are living in, the changing world scene, the deterioration of western civilization, and the weak

condition of the Church in many parts of the world, John Paul II's urgent call to a new evangelization is imperative. The entire Church must come to embrace this calling and make it a normal part of Catholic life."<sup>6</sup>

Pope Benedict (then Cardinal Ratzinger), when speaking to a group of religion teachers and catechists, remarked: "If we take the Christian message into well-thought-out consideration, we are not speaking about a whole lot of things. In reality, the Christian message is very simple: We speak about God and man, and this way we say everything."<sup>7</sup>

### **The Challenge of Mission and Objective**

A man owned some property that was mostly swamp land. One day he decided to drain the swamp and make it productive. So he hired some laborers and appointed a foreman to oversee the swamp-draining project. He supplied his men with shovels, picks, and axes and sent them into the swamp.

After a short time working in the swamp, the laborers noticed that every now and then an alligator would sneak up on one of them and try to make a meal of him. The man would swat the 'gator on the snout with a shovel, and the 'gator would beat a hasty retreat. However, more and more 'gators came to the site in search of meal, with some success and more and more, the laborers would swat them on the snout and drive them away.

As time went by, the owner began to wonder why it was taking so long to drain the swamp, so he decided to visit the work site. When he got to the site he noticed that the laborers were spending nearly all their time swatting the 'gators instead of actually draining the swamp.

The moral is clear: Faced with the distraction of the alligators, the laborers forgot why they had gone

“Members  
of the  
Third Order  
of Saint Dominic  
are called to their own  
special vocation, not  
in an individualistic  
mode, but in unity  
and full participation  
in the mission, graces,  
and charisms  
of the Order.”

into the swamp in the first place. They were there to drain the swamp! Not to battle alligators! It is a classic management “case study.”

Such are life experiences of all of us. We start out with a mission and focus, and it all seems quite clear, but other concerns interfere with what we are doing and what is to get done. Difficulties, discomfort, distraction often get in the way, obscuring the mission and the necessary focus to accomplish that mission. If we fail to appreciate the essentials of our “mission” and fail to periodically reassess and revisit — in light of new circumstances — why we started out in the first place, we eventually become sidetracked. The story underscores the necessity of knowing three things:

- Where we are

- Where we want to go
- How we want to get there!

Actually, the story contains the predicate information for what usually turns out to be a long discussion, in a learning context, about the importance of mission, means, and objectives in “getting things done through people.” This “drain the swamp” story is illustrative of the very human problem that afflicts all of us — laborers, managers, and missionaries: to be effective, one has to focus on the mission, the effective means, and the intermediate objectives to accomplish that mission.

### **Preaching for the Salvation of Souls**

By far, Saint Paul's life is the quintessential “case study” of mission and objectives in bringing about the Kingdom of God. Saint Thomas always referred to him as “the Apostle.” Unmistakably, he was a man with a mission and a message, “the Good News of Jesus Christ.” In his letters, and in the Acts of the Apostles, we not only learn God's revelation, but we come to know the man himself: a man of mission and action for Christ. Clearly, Saint Paul had a keen sense of where he fit in Christ's plan. He knew where he wanted to go and how he wanted to get there.

In particular, members of the Third Order of Saint Dominic are called to their own special vocation, not in an individualistic mode, but in unity and full participation in the mission, graces, and charisms of the Order. Moreover, Saint Thomas observes that the “graces of the apostolate” are set out in Saint Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 12: 8-10). He notes that they are a means of proclaiming the teaching of Christ. He also observes that these graces are utilized to persuade others to accept

that teaching. "Teaching and persuasion require three things: first, knowledge of the doctrine; secondly, an ability to confirm the doctrine; and thirdly, an ability to propose the doctrine clearly and persuasively."<sup>5</sup>

Our own Dominican traditions tell us much about answering the present call of the Church to the New Evangelization by focusing on our mission. Saint Dominic, from the beginning, comprehended the contemporary needs of Church. He lovingly answered the call to action with a profound sense of the mission, the objectives, and the means.

Our long history gives ample testimony underscoring the Dominican sense of discerning the needs of the times and the Church's call to action. The provident designs of God have blessed our Order in abundance with men and women who have answered the call, each in their own times and circumstances, each with their own talents and gifts. Some are spectacular, like Saint Thomas Aquinas, Saint Albert the Great, Saint Catherine of Siena, Saint Rose of Lima, Saint Bartholomeo de las Casas, Saint Martin de Porres, and many other saints and blessed.

### Siena Circles

Siena Circles are a means for fruitful engagement of the contemplative and active life for Dominican tertiaries. Siena Circles are an energized and directed Third Order Chapter apostolate of study, prayer, and action centered on the Holy Scriptures. Through the training program that provides insight and methods in understanding what the Bible is and how it is to be read, Chapter members will come together on a regular basis to pray, think and talk about the Bible, and share what it means to them.

When "fully equipped" (1 Tim. 3:15-17), members will reach out in

their own time and place to form Bible study/sharing groups, proclaiming "Jesus Christ is Lord," in power and in truth! ❏❏

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- (These are representative graces and not exhaustive.)

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## In Gratitude to Our Holy Father Pope John Paul II

Dear Holy Father,  
When you came to New York you gave us a special reason  
To start now to once more celebrate the Christmas season.

I know you like wrapped gifts and so do we,  
Especially one like you, so very dear,  
For you are wrapped in the Holy Spirit  
And are our special Christmas gift this year.

The rain that came down on us  
Is like the word that rains down,  
But which doesn't go back until it has accomplished  
All it set out to do.  
And you too have accomplished here all that  
You set out to do. Our special thanks go out to you.

You came to New York, raining down the word,  
And we prayed that in the soil of our hearts  
The word will grow and by others be heard.

*Marion Frances Foetsch, O.P., Hawthorne, New York.*  
*Reprinted (with some revisions) from Torch-lites, vol. 31, no. 1 (1996).*

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# GROWING INTELLECTUALLY: SIENA CIRCLES AND THE QUESTIONS OF SCRIPTURE

by Fr. John Burke, O.P.  
*The National Institute for the Word of God  
Washington, D.C*

I AM MORE AND MORE convinced that the demanding research our Dominican tertiaries are doing in Bible sharing is the most important part of Bible sharing. It is only through careful research that we can understand and appreciate the mysteries revealed in the Holy Bible. What is the truth that the Bible is teaching us? Truth, as Dominicans well know, is the motto of our Order. Unless we know the truth, we cannot share the truth, and if we cannot share the truth, we cannot grow spiritually through Bible sharing and our newly proposed Siena Circles.

## Basic Concepts

There are some basic terms and concepts with which every Siena Circle needs to be familiar. The first term is “exegesis.” Exegesis is the art of drawing out of the Scripture texts the inspired meaning of the Bible, using the approved tools of research. The opposite is “eisogenesis,” which means reading into a biblical text what you want it to mean. This happens all too frequently when we do not do proper exegesis. We end up sharing, not the Bible, but our own facile opinion about a text, which may or may not be what the Bible is really saying. The result is not Bible sharing; it is pooled ignorance.

“When Dominicans  
share the fruits  
of their research,  
Dominicans share  
part of themselves  
and their faith,  
the part that has  
seriously pondered  
the Word of God and  
made it their own.”

The basic tool in exegesis is the historical-critical methodology. It seeks to understand when the text was first written and how it developed. By using this tool, we can arrive at the literal meaning of the text, that is, we can know what the author, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, intended when he wrote the text. This meaning, however, can be further refined when it is read in the light of the Resurrection and the Sending of the Spirit. This is called the Spiritual Sense.

The Fuller Sense is the deeper meaning of the text intended by God but not necessarily intended by the author. Patristic exegesis is the method used by the early Church Fathers to understand the Bible as the Word of God. It is particularly rich in allegorical interpretation of texts.

These terms and the tools they represent come from documents of the Church and the writings of scripture scholars and theologians. It has been recommended that you read one document that summarizes many documents of the Church, “The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church” (Pontifical Biblical Commission, 1993). It describes the important tools for every Siena Circle to use. The more you use the tools, the easier the process of research becomes and the deeper the understanding the sharing group will have of the truths revealed through the Bible.

It is inappropriate for any Dominican to shy away from an in-depth analysis of biblical texts. After all, God took many centuries to give the Bible to us; the least we can do is spend some time studying what God has written. When we are reading a very ancient text written by human beings, even under the inspiration of God, we need to “interpret,” to find out how the

ancient text is speaking to us today. St. Jerome summed it up best when he wrote: "If you don't know the Scriptures, you don't know Christ."

However, the research you pursue is not important just for yourself; it is important for your Siena Circle companions. When Dominicans share the fruits of their research, Dominicans share part of themselves and their faith, the part that has seriously pondered the word of God and made it their own, just as Mary did with the evangelists and the apostles.

“ For Dominicans  
to grow spiritually,  
like Mary, we first  
grow intellectually.  
We first understand  
what we believe  
in order to be able  
to believe more  
firmly. ”

### **Mary, the Model For Dominicans**

Mary is the model for how Dominicans should read the Bible. The Gospel of Luke, which we read during the Christmas Season, draws heavily on the memories of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It can only be from Mary that Luke gets the details of Christ's birth: the poor birth in a stable; the manger for a crib; the shepherds' adoration; the angelic voices. Mary also remembers her own acceptance of the divine

mandate to bear the Holy Child. What great mysteries in which she was caught up, and as Saint Luke says: "She treasured every one of these events, and she frequently pondered them in her heart."

Mary pondered and then shared the fruits of her pondering with Luke and the apostles. That is what Bible sharing is, that is what a Siena Circle is: a sophisticated way of pondering the mysteries revealed in the Holy Bible. Even when the Archangel Gabriel first appeared to her, Mary had a question: "How can this happen, since I do not know man?" She did not doubt, but she needed to understand in order to obey the divine will. "Be it done to me according to your word."

Throughout her lifetime with Jesus and the Apostles, Mary grew in her understanding. She became ever more aware of the destiny awaiting her Son. As Christ grew from infant to teenager to mature man, Mary became more and more aware that Jesus was destined to die on the cross. As His mother, there was no question in her heart that she would be with Him in His moment of supreme agony, His sacrificial death on the cross. Together Jesus and Mary would fulfill the will of the Father for the salvation of the world. Together Jesus and Mary would rejoice in Jesus' resurrection.

For Dominicans to grow spiritually, like Mary, we first grow intellectually. We first understand what we believe in order to be able to believe more firmly. Like Mary, we too have to ask questions of the Biblical text. We do not doubt, but we seek to understand. How often I have tried to express a difficult truth and ended up saying, "Well, I know what I mean, but I can't say it." Then I go

back and re-ponder until I really do understand what I mean, and only then can I express in words what I really mean.

### **Another Tool: Record Your Questions**

In the books I have written and in the teachings you have been receiving from such astute teachers as Michael Ryman, T.O.P., and Fr. James Sullivan, O.P., you are already familiar with ways to penetrate more deeply into the meaning of the Sacred Word and its relevance to our lives today.

I would like to suggest to Bible sharers another technique for study that you might find helpful: record your questions as soon as they arise. So often when we start our studies, we have so many questions we do not really know where to begin. As a result, instead of beginning somewhere, we gloss over our misunderstandings and end up in a confused muddle. Every time you have any kind of a question, or a doubt, or a difficulty, write it down. Writing them down actually helps to clarify our problem, and identifying the problem brings us half way to solving it. In fact, some say the answer is already in a clear question. Your efforts to clarify your own thoughts will help others to clarify them when you share your research in your own Siena Circle.

Dominicans teach, preach, and witness. However, before they can do any of that, Dominicans study the Sacred Word. They take it into their minds, so they can take the word into their hearts. May Mary, the Mother of all Ponderers, enlighten your minds and your hearts by calling on her divine Son to be with you always. ❏

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# THE APOSTOLATE: THE LAITY'S RIGHT AND DUTY

by William J. Morris  
and Jennie T. Peternell

*Saint Dominic's Chapter, Washington, D.C.*

WHILE AWAITING the Province's newly revised Third Order formation program and the related Siena Circles, members of Saint Dominic's Chapter, which meets at Saint Dominic Church in Washington, D.C., initiated a study of Paul VI's *Decree on the Apostolate of the Lay People* under the direction of our moderator, Joan Fiske Adams, T.O.P., and with the spiritual guidance of Fr. Vincent Ferrer McHenry, O.P. The objective was to help develop members' knowledge of, understanding of, and increased fervor for the apostolic life. We believe these objectives have been achieved.

All activity supporting the Church's mission is known as the apostolate; therefore, the study began with a consideration of the meaning of the word "apostolate." It is derived from the word "apostle," the name given to each of the twelve sent by Jesus to spread the Gospel throughout the world and thereby offer salvation to all people. Observing that many had begun to idolize temporal things that had become their masters, Paul VI added to the Church's mission the need to penetrate and perfect the thinking of those souls with the spirit of the Gospel.

Paul VI begins his document by highlighting the indispensability of the lay apostolate for the life of the

Church since its beginning, and observes that without it, the Church could scarcely exist and function. Moreover, modern moral and social conditions, especially those resulting from the globalization that has brought the world's people and nations closer together, demand that the lay apostolic effort be broadened and intensified. He makes it very clear that regardless of status and ability it is the right, duty, and "preeminent responsibility" of the laity to participate in an apostolate and to do so with no less zeal than was exhibited in the early church.

Soon after beginning the study our members were reminded that, thanks

"It is the right, duty, and 'preeminent responsibility' of the laity to participate in an apostolate and to do so with no less zeal than was exhibited in the early church."

to their Third Order formation, they were already well advanced in attaining the spiritual life that underpins an apostolic life. A survey of members' activities demonstrated that they had been carrying out a variety of apostolic activities without thinking of them as apostolic acts per se.

Such acts include Chapter members' practice of offering their Friday Masses for the Church, the Dominican family, and the specific needs of individual Chapter members. Other apostolic acts reported by Chapter members involve:

- Being a Permanent Deacon
- Helping to finance and accompany seriously ill persons on pilgrimages to Lourdes
- Heading a fund raising and community action organization to help poor and at risk children
- Offering tutorial assistance to elementary school children
- Serving parishes as an acolyte, choir member, Eucharistic minister, lector, and CCD teacher
- Participating in a parish bereavement committee and various parish community outreach ministries
- Supporting the Parents Television Council, a nationwide campaign to clean up television
- Providing entertainment for nursing home patients and residents of senior housing

- Delivering Meals on Wheels to homebound residents
- Preparing and distributing food to homeless shelters

### **Mary as Model of Apostolate**

The most Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of the Apostles, is the perfect example of the apostolic life. While leading a life common to all here on earth, one filled with family concerns and labors, she was always intimately united with her Son and cooperated in the work of the Savior in an entirely unique way. All should venerate her and commend their life and apostolate to her maternal care.

### **Opportunities for Apostolate**

The apostolate of the Church and of all its members is primarily designed to manifest Christ's message by words and deeds and to communicate His grace to the world. This is done mainly through the ministry of the Word and the sacraments, entrusted in a special way to the clergy. There are, however, innumerable opportunities open to the laity for the exercise of their apostolate of evangelization and sanctification. It is especially on this level that the apostolate of the laity and the pastoral ministry are mutually complementary.

There is an urgent need for the individual apostolate wherever there is a shortage of priests. The laity must do what they can to take the place of priests by teaching Christian doctrine to those around them, training them in a religious way of life and a Catholic way of thinking, leading them to receive the sacraments frequently, and developing in them piety and especially Eucharistic devotion.

### **Spiritual Formation**

A particular form of the individual apostolate, as well as a sign especially suited to our times, is the testimony

of one's own life arising from faith, hope, and charity. It manifests Christ living in those who believe in Him. Then by spoken and written word, which is utterly necessary under certain circumstances, lay people announce Christ, explain and spread His teaching in accordance with one's status and ability, and faithfully profess it. They look for opportunities to announce Christ by words addressed either to nonbelievers with a view to leading them to the faith, or to the faithful with a view to instructing, strengthening, and encouraging them to a more fervent life.

Only by the light of faith and by meditation on the words of God can one see Christ in everyone, whether a relative or stranger, and make correct judgments about the true meaning and value of temporal things both in themselves and in their relation to man's final goal. Those who live in hope aspire to the riches that last forever and generously dedicate themselves wholly to the advancement of the Kingdom of God and to the reform of the temporal order in a Christian spirit.

Impelled by divine charity, the laity do good for all people, thereby drawing them to Christ. Since the works of charity and mercy express the most striking testimony of the Christian life, apostolic formation should also lead to the performance of these works. Such activity will teach the faithful from childhood to have compassion for their brethren and to be generous in ministering to those in need.

The laity should remember that they can reach all men and contribute to the salvation of the whole world by public worship and prayer, as well as by penance and voluntary acceptance of the labors and hardships of life, whereby they become like the suffering Christ.

### **Doctrinal Instruction**

In addition to spiritual formation, a solid doctrinal instruction in theology, ethics, and philosophy, adjusted to differences in age, status, and natural talents, is required for the apostolic life. However, such formation for the apostolate cannot consist in merely theoretical instruction. From the beginning of their formation, the laity should gradually and prudently learn how to view, judge, and do all things in the light of faith and develop and improve themselves along with others, thereby entering into active service to the Church.

With respect to the apostolate for evangelization and sanctification, the members of the laity should be specifically formed to engage in conversation with others, believers or nonbelievers, to manifest Christ's message to all. They should learn doctrine more diligently, especially those main points which are the subject of controversy, and should also witness to an evangelical life in contrast to all forms of materialism.

With regard to the Christian renewal of the temporal order, it is so much the duty and responsibility of the laity that it can never be performed properly by others. The members of the laity, therefore, should be instructed in the true meaning and value of temporal things, both in themselves and in relation to all the aims of the human person. They should be trained in the right use of things and the organization of institutions, attentive always to the common good in line with the principles of the moral and social teaching of the Church. Lay men and women should above all learn the principles and conclusions of the social doctrines so as to become capable of working for the development of

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those doctrines to the best of their ability and of rightly applying these same principles and conclusions to individual cases.

Furthermore, in collaborating as citizens of the world, in whatever pertains to the building up and conducting of the temporal order, the laity must seek in the light of faith loftier motives of action in their families, and professional, cultural, and social lives and make them known to others when the occasion arises. Doing this, they should be aware of the fact that they are cooperating with God the creator, redeemer, and sanctifier and are giving praise to Him.

### **United Apostolate Efforts**

Although the faithful are called to engage in the apostolate as individuals in the varying circumstances of their lives, they should also remember that man is naturally social and that it has pleased God to unite those who believe in Christ into the people of God and into one body. The apostolate of Christian believers, then, happily corresponds to a human and Christian need and at the same time signifies the communion and unity of the Church in Christ, who said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

For this reason, the faithful should participate in the apostolate by way of united effort. They should be apostles both in their families and in their parishes and dioceses, which themselves express the community nature of the apostolate, as well as in the informal groups they decide to form among themselves.

Some groups set before themselves the broad purpose of the Church; others aim to evangelize and sanctify in a special way, or propose to infuse a Christian spirit in the temporal

order, or bear witness to Christ through works of mercy and charity.

Deserving of special honor and commendation in the Church are those lay people, single or married, who devote themselves with professional experience, whether permanently or temporarily, to the service of associations and their activities. Also greatly appreciated are international associations or groups of Catholics.

### **Opportunities for Apostolic Activity**

Paul VI sets forth four specific fields for apostolic activity, and takes special note of the fact that, since women have an ever more active role in the whole life of society in our times, it is very important that they participate more widely in the apostolic fields outlined below. Although he did not specifically mention single persons, obviously they too would be expected to actively participate in that which follows.

**Church Communities.** The laity should work to bring into the Church people who are far removed from it by means of catechetical instruction or by offering any special skills they may have to make the care of souls and the administration of the temporalities of the Church more efficient and effective. They should provide to the extent possible helpful collaboration for every parish apostolic and missionary undertaking and make missionary work one's own by giving material and personal assistance where needed. Finally, they should develop an increasing appreciation of their own diocese and be ready at their pastor's invitation to participate in interparochial, interdiocesan, national, and international activities.

**Family.** Pope Paul emphasizes that the apostolate of married persons and families is of unique importance

for the Church and civil society. Christian husbands and wives should cooperate in grace and witness to their faith for each other, their children, and all others in their household, and communicate that faith to their children. They should educate their children by word and example in the Christian and apostolic life, help them in the choice of their vocation, and carefully promote any sacred vocation that they may discern in them. Further, they should prove by their own way of life the indissolubility and sacredness of the marriage bond, strenuously affirm that it is the right and duty of parents and guardians to educate children in a Christian manner, and defend the dignity and lawful autonomy of the family. They should cooperate with men of good will to ensure the preservation of these rights in civil legislation, and to make sure that governments give due attention to the needs of the family with regard to housing, education of children, working conditions, social security, and taxes, and work to ensure that policy decisions affecting migrants safeguard their right to live together as a family.

Specifically, the family apostolate includes the following:

1. Adoption of abandoned infants
2. Hospitality to strangers
3. Assistance in the operation of schools
4. Helpful advice and material assistance to adolescents
5. Help for engaged couples to better prepare them for marriage
6. Catechetical work
7. Support of married couples and families involved in material and moral crises
8. Help for the aged, not only by providing them with the necessities of life, but also by obtaining for them a fair share of the

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benefits of an expanding economy

9. Offer effective testimony to Christ at all times and especially where the first seeds of the Gospel are being sown, or where the Church is just beginning, or is involved in some serious difficulty, by remaining faithful to the Gospel and by providing a model of Christian marriage through one's whole life

10. Facilitate achievement of the above goals by bringing families together in groups

Adults should engage in such friendly discussion with young people that both age groups, overcoming the age barrier, may become better acquainted and share the special benefits each generation can offer the other. Further, they should stimulate young persons, first by good example, to take part in the apostolate and, if the opportunity presents itself, by offering them effective advice and willing assistance.

**The Social Milieu.** This apostolate is aimed at transforming the social order by infusing a Christian spirit into the mentality, customs, laws, and structures of the community in which one lives. This is so much the duty and responsibility of the laity that it can never be performed properly by others.

The laity fulfill this mission of the Church in the world especially by the following:

1. Conforming their lives to their faith so that they became the light of the world
2. Practicing honesty in all their dealings so that they attract all to the love of the true and the good and finally to the Church and to Christ
3. Promulgating fraternal charity that presses them to share in the

living conditions, labors, sorrows, and aspirations of their brethren with the result that the hearts of all around them are quietly prepared for the workings of saving grace

4. Developing a full consciousness of their role in building up society whereby they strive to perform their domestic, social, and professional duties with such Christian generosity that by their actions they gradually penetrate the whole world
5. Reaching out to all wherever they may be encountered, and especially announcing Christ to their neighbors by means of the spoken word for many may hear the Gospel and recognize Christ only through the laity living nearby

Paul VI calls attention to the fact that a vast field for the apostolate has opened up on the national and international levels where the laity especially assist with their Christian wisdom. In loyalty to their country and in faithful fulfillment of their obligations, Catholics should do the following:

1. Promote the true common good
2. Make the weight of their opinion felt in order that the civil authority may act with justice and that legislation may conform to moral precepts and the common good
3. Participate in accord with their abilities in the administration of public affairs since by doing this in a worthy manner they can both further the common good and at the same time prepare the way for the Gospel
4. Cooperate with all men and women of good will to promote whatever is true, just, holy, and lovable and hold discussions with

them and initiate research on social and public practices that should be improved in line with the spirit of the Gospel

5. Promote an awareness of the increasing solidarity of all people and transform it into a sincere and genuine love of brotherhood
6. Develop a knowledge of the international field and of the questions and solutions, doctrinal as well as practical, which arise in this field, with special reference to developing countries
7. Remember that relations among peoples should be a genuine fraternal exchange in which each party is at the same time a giver and a receiver and that visitors to foreign countries are itinerant apostles of Christ and should act accordingly

## Conclusion

Saint Dominic's Chapter members have concluded that the time and effort devoted to studying and discussing Paul VI's *Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People* was time well spent. It brought to the fore the Church's need for the apostolate and the obligation of not only the Third Order, but all Catholics, to respond positively to the Church's call. Insights gained have stimulated Chapter members' interest in participating to the best of their abilities in the forthcoming revised Provincial formation program, and especially to the Prior Provincial's challenge to become preachers of the Gospel. It is hoped that this summary article will also enhance the receptivity of THE DOMINICAN TORCH readers to that program and challenge. ■■

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# TEACHING AS A DOMINICAN APOSTOLATE

by Fr. David Poulson  
Saint Arnold Jansen Pro-Chapter  
Cranberry, Pennsylvania

I HAVE BEEN A TEACHER for almost as long as I've been involved with the Dominicans. Granted, I only became a Dominican in the Third Order about a year and a half ago, but during elementary school and junior high school I corresponded pretty regularly with the then vocations director for the Saint Joseph Province, Fr. Raymond Hennery, T.O.P. At the same time, I joined the Angelic Warfare Confraternity. Don't ask me why I chose to correspond with the Dominicans, because I had never met one, although I had read some short biographies of Dominicans in my *Lives of the Saints*. Anyway, I started teaching sixth grade religious education (CCD in those days), when I was only in the ninth grade myself. (It was either that, or attend high school religious education classes! I quickly found out that I preferred being behind the teacher's desk to being in front of it!)

I continued to teach religion while in the seminary, including teaching theology at Marymount International School in Rome, while being taught theology myself by the Dominicans at the Angelicum. I taught a little philosophy at Saint Michael's College in Toronto, while doing graduate studies in philosophy at the University of Toronto. Several of my teachers there were Dominican priests at the

Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies. Afterward, I taught philosophy for fifteen years at Gannon University in Erie, Pennsylvania, where Sr. Dominic Twohill, O.P., was my colleague in the Philosophy Department. I have, in short, been learning from Dominicans for as long as I have been teaching.

I can honestly say that Dominicans are "phantastic" teachers. No, that is not a spelling error! What I have learned from Dominicans about how to teach is the importance of phantasms. Some of you might be asking, "What in blazes are phantasms?" Well, you are very familiar with the thing but probably less so with the name. If the word *phantasm* conjures up any association at all, it is probably that of ghost or specter, and that is not too far from the truth.

Good Thomists know that "nothing is in the mind which was not first in the senses." When we let anything in through our five external senses (like the appearance, feel, smell, etc., of this edition of *THE DOMINICAN TORCH*), these sense impressions leave a ghostly image of themselves in our imagination, so that I can more or less vividly recall what the cover looked like, what the paper felt like, and what the ink smelled like, long after I have hopelessly misplaced the thing! When we "imagine" what

something looks, feels, sounds, tastes, or smells like, and that thing is currently not present to the organs of our external senses, we do that "imagining" by means of phantasms. Phantasms are the stuff of which dreams are made, whether those dreams are waking or sleeping ones. Phantasms are a creation of our brain (material), and our mind (immaterial) can't think without them. It is from phantasms in the brain that my mind abstracts concepts. (My concept of dog, which applies universally to all dogs, big or small, of whatever breed, is based upon one or more phantasms of particular dogs like Spot or Fido.) As long as I am alive and my immaterial soul is joined to a material body, my mind cannot make use of abstract, universal concepts without at the same time returning constantly to the concrete, particular phantasms. We all know that angels are defined as pure spirits (that is, they have no bodies), but just try to think of one without imagining a young man with a halo and wings (an "improper" phantasm, by the way!)

By this time, you might be asking yourself, "What does this have to do with teaching?" Well, I will tell you. Human beings (most of them at least) are not telepathic. There is no natural way by which concepts or ideas in my mind can be directly

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“downloaded” into your mind. Remember, “nothing is in the mind which was not first in the senses.” As a teacher, my only access to the minds of my students is through their senses. In order to “pass on to others the fruits of my contemplation,” that is, to achieve the result of ultimately having in their minds the idea that started out in mine, I must through such techniques as verbal description, visual pictures and diagrams, Socratic questioning, and storytelling, contrive to create in them a phantasm from which their mind can accurately abstract the concept I want them to grasp.

One example that Saint Thomas frequently used is that of night birds like owls. The human mind finds it difficult to know God, not because there is so little about God to know, but on the contrary, because there is so much to know. God blinds our intellect the way the light of the sun blinds the eyes of night birds. Hence, the human mind has an easier time knowing things less knowable than God, just as night birds have an easier time seeing things in the dim light of night than they do in the bright light of day. The analogy of the vision of night birds is a phantasm that enabled Saint Thomas’ students to grasp the weakness of the human intellect.

As we carry out — each in our own way — the Dominican apostolate of preaching, we should bear in mind that the success of our efforts depends upon finding the right phantasm that will correctly and accurately communicate our meaning. When we do, we too will be “phantastic” Dominicans. 🍷

*[Father Poulson is pastor of Saint Michael’s Church in Fryburg, Pennsylvania (Diocese of Erie), and Religious Promotor of the Saint Arnold Jansen Pro-Chapter in Cranberry, Pennsylvania.]*

## Thanksgiving Prayer

In our everlasting gratitude to You,  
our Eternal Father,  
for the gifts You have given us,  
foremost of which are  
the Sacrament of Baptism,  
Your Holy Eucharist and  
Eternal Salvation;  
send forth the Holy Spirit  
to inspire us  
further to:

Love more fully.  
Trust more openly.  
Forgive more generously.  
Tolerate more graciously.  
Serve more readily.  
Share more willingly.  
Praise more abundantly.

And by Your Grace:  
Hope more confidently.  
Console more compassionately.  
Meditate more reverently.  
Understand more profoundly.  
Pray more devoutly.  
Amen.

*Paul B. Caruso, T.O.P.  
Queen of the Rosary Chapter  
Rockville Centre, New York*

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## ON EVANGELICAL CREDIBILITY: THE PROOF IS IN THE APOSTOLATE

Brother James Brent, O.P.

DOMINICANS ARE WITNESSES. By our preaching, we witness to the Gospel, witness to the reality of divine love, witness to the new life available in Christ. Now, witnesses need credibility, otherwise their words carry no weight. What makes a witness to the Gospel credible?

Hopefully, most Dominicans grasp that it is love — divinely infused charity — that makes us credible witnesses to Jesus Christ. Yet “love” is so generic a word. More specifically, what sort of love makes for credibility? After studying the lives of many saints, I have come to a conclusion about the essence of apostolic credibility.

The single most powerful, supremely impressive, and deeply moving characteristic of the true Gospel witness — a characteristic that places the witness virtually beyond critique — is a love that suffers for the suffering.

To suffer for the suffering is to love people, despite all costs to oneself, unto the alleviation of their afflictions.

- Saint Paul loved people despite all costs to himself. When he traveled everywhere for the ministry of the Gospel, the cost was “afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, tumults, labors, watching, hunger” (2 Cor. 6:4-5). He endured all this so that those lost in darkness and living in the shadow of death might come to live in Christ and Christ in them.



Photo: The Crosiers / Gene Plaisted, OSC

- Saint Francis of Assisi loved people despite all costs. When he returned his clothes to his father in the public square, the cost was naked humiliation and loneliness. He endured it in order to alleviate the sufferings of lepers, outcasts, and a crumbling Church.
- Saint Dominic loved people despite all costs. When he offered to sell himself into slavery so that another person might go free, the cost was his own liberty. Although Providence prevented the exchange, Dominic could truly say “my heart is ready O God, my

heart is ready” (Ps. 57:7), ready to suffer for the suffering.

- Saint Catherine of Siena loved people despite all costs. When she gave away food, clothing, and other household goods to the poor, it cost her the good reputation she once had in the eyes of her family. She endured their upbraids in order to live with Christ and love Christ in the poor.

- Saint Peter Claver loved people despite all costs. When he spent day after day assisting the Africans in the galley of slave ships, the cost was exhaustion, nausea, illness, sorrow, and the perpetual risk of despair. He endured it all so that the slaves might know the love of Christ and live a higher kind of life — life in the Spirit.

- Saint Maximilian Kolbe loved people despite all costs. When he offered to go into the starvation bunker in exchange for the condemned prisoner, the cost was not only death, but a slow, excruciating, torturous death. He endured such a death so that a condemned man might go free.

- Blessed Teresa of Calcutta loved people despite all costs. When she had her picture taken again and again, and found herself repeatedly in the public eye, it cost her the hidden life — lived with Christ in the poor — for which she so eagerly

yearned. She endured it so that others might see something we can scarcely live without seeing — the light that shines in the darkness.

### Discerning Intent

One warning is in order: it is important to distinguish between a suffering for others that proceeds from a character defect (weak personality, codependency, lack of essential self-esteem) and a suffering for others that proceeds from the perfection of charity. For example, a woman who stays with an abusive husband without expecting him to make substantial changes in his life is not displaying a love that suffers for the suffering. She is not displaying the love that the Saints display. She is displaying instead its counterfeit. Her

“The single most powerful, supremely impressive, and deeply moving characteristic of the true Gospel witness — a characteristic that places the witness virtually beyond critique — is a love that suffers for the suffering.”

choice to remain without demanding that he change looks like charity, but really is something else masquerading as charity, like her own poor self-esteem. It is wisdom to be able to discern between true charity and counterfeit coin. Which sufferings of ours come from charity and which come from our vices or flaws? Spiritual direction, availing oneself of someone else’s more objective eye, is crucial help in answering that question.

Now, in the cases of the Saints — as opposed to the counterfeit cases — the love that suffers for the suffering is most moving and impressive. It strikes the heart and moves the conscience. It disarms. It makes one ask why they do what they do, and prepares one for the answer, i.e., the good news of Jesus Christ. Where did these Saints get such love — the will to suffer for the suffering?

### The Source of Love

They received such love from its source and ultimate example — Jesus. Jesus infuses His charity into us. Our charity is a participation in the charity of Christ. Our participation in His charity is a matter of being fashioned anew in the form of His love. What is the form of His love?

The form of his love is revealed on Calvary when Calvary is viewed through the lens of the famous hymn to charity: “Love is patient and kind, love is not jealous or boastful...” (1 Cor. 13). It is possible, in some parts of the hymn, simply to take out the word “love,” and replace it with the word “Christ crucified.” The result is as follows:

*Christ crucified is patient and kind;  
Christ crucified is not jealous or boastful;  
Christ crucified is not arrogant or rude.  
Christ crucified does not insist on his own way;  
Christ crucified is not irritable*

*or resentful; Christ crucified does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Christ crucified bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

The Saints possess evangelical credibility to the degree that they are made cruciform — united in appearance and reality to the person and work of Christ crucified. They are credible because they are a living proclamation of the saving power of the Cross. They testify to the power of the Cross to save themselves from selfishness and to heal others of their afflictions through their actions. Once we Dominicans become cruciform, the world shall find it increasingly difficult to say no to our witness, even while at the same time it shall find it increasingly difficult to live with our witness. ❧

*[Editor’s note: Brother James Brent, O.P., is currently assigned to the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, D.C., where he is pursuing his theological studies in preparation for ordination to the priesthood. Before entering the Order, Bro. James taught philosophy at Aquinas Institute of Theology and Saint Louis University, both in Saint Louis, Missouri.]*

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# THE BEAUTIFUL GIFT OF CONSECRATED VIRGINITY: AN APOSTOLIC VOCATION LIVED IN THE CHURCH AND IN THE WORLD

by Diane C. Farr  
*Mary, Queen of Apostles Chapter  
Elmira, New York*

I HAVE BEEN A DOMINICAN tertiary for 20 years, and have worked in formation for a long time. I am currently novice mistress for the Mary, Queen of Apostles Chapter in Elmira, New York. I have been greatly enriched in my work of teaching and sharing the ideals of what it means to grow in the interior life with Christ.

I love my Dominican vocation, but there is another calling from God that above everything else forms and directs my entire life. This special grace has helped me greatly in my formation work with other people. This grace is my calling to consecrated virginity lived in the world.

## History of Consecrated Virginity

The practice of women consecrating themselves to a life of virginity and prayer flourished in the very early Church. In fact, consecrated virginity is the oldest form of consecrated life for women in the Church, predating monastic Orders and religious communities. Eventually, consecrated virgins were to be found living in one of two ways: either with their families or in communities. When a woman expressed a desire to give herself

completely to Christ in a life of virginity, prayer, and good works, she would petition the local bishop. After a time of scrutiny and examination, the bishop would consecrate her in an elaborate liturgy that all the faithful could attend. Legend has it that it was Saint Matthew himself who consecrated the first virgin for Christ.



The rite of consecration mirrored the marriage ceremony, for the Fathers of the Church always taught that the virgin thus consecrated truly became the bride of Christ. Saint Ambrose, whose sister was a consecrated virgin, wrote entire works on this subject in the fourth century. He wrote:

“Virginity has brought from heaven that which it may imitate on earth.

And not unfittingly has she sought her manner of life from heaven, who has found for herself a Spouse in heaven. She passing beyond the clouds, air, angels, and stars has found the Word of God in the very bosom of the Father, and drawn Him unto herself with her whole heart.

For who, having found so great a good, would forsake it? For Thy name is as ointment poured out, therefore have the maidens loved Thee and drawn Thee.”<sup>1</sup>

By the tenth century, the rite had fallen into disuse for women living in the world, although it was retained for enclosed nuns. This was especially true of the Benedictine Order. The rite of consecration remained distinct from the profession of the vows. Choir nuns received it on or after their profession.

The rite of consecration was restored for women living in the world in the early 1970s following the Second Vatican Council. There are nearly 100 consecrated virgins living in the United States and many more worldwide. I believe that one reason for this vocation’s growth is its strong emphasis on the nuptial union that the virgin forms with

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Christ. The consecration of virgins is considered sacramental. The commitment is permanent and cannot be dispensed. It can only be received by those who have never been married and who have preserved the gift of physical virginity. A woman must also be sufficiently mature in her faith and her understanding of this great grace.

### **Personal Calling**

I perceived this call to virginal love in my soul at the age of fifteen. At that time, I began to experience Jesus as my loving Spouse in a mysterious and hidden way. It is thus that I have continually come to know Him. At the same time, the Blessed Virgin Mary began to impress upon my heart the exquisite beauty of virginity. I have come to see just how beautiful is the Immaculate and ever-virgin Mary in her intimate union with the Most Holy Trinity.

These graces sustained me through many sufferings, including the death of my older brother at the age of seventeen. While I have had to deal with the difficulties of being legally blind, I believe God has used even this to draw me closer to Himself. Knowing how much Jesus loves me has helped me to be compassionate and reach out to others who are suffering. One of my best friends is a consecrated virgin who has cerebral palsy and needs the assistance of a walker. There are those who do not think that persons with disabilities are called to the consecrated life. This notion, however, contradicts the Gospel ideal of carrying our cross and its role in our sanctification. I am able to read using a powerful handheld magnifier. I have even learned to draw flowers, birds, and butterflies using colored-ink pens.

I originally thought I was being called to a contemplative religious community, but little by little, God showed me He had other plans for my life. When I first learned about the consecration of virgins several years ago, I immediately recognized a spirituality identical to that which I had embraced.

Knowing the challenges, and with the encouragement and support of my parents, I formally pursued this vocation with my diocese in May of 2000. A year later I received a reply informing me that they did not wish to pursue this form of consecrated life at that time. I continued to write letters in spite of my sadness. I began attending retreats sponsored by the United States Association of Consecrated Virgins. I even enlisted the help of their moderator, Archbishop Raymond Burke. The diocese finally sent the chancellor, Fr. Daniel Condon, to see me.

Under Fr. Condon's direction, I began a formal process that included writing about myself and my vocation and collecting letters of recommendation from people who knew me. I had a wonderful meeting with Bishop Clark on August 15, 2004. On February 20, I finally had the great joy of being consecrated as a virgin bride of our Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Flower from the Divine Heart**

The consecrated virgin enters deeply into a life of perfect purity and virginal love lived by Mary Mother of God and Queen of Virgins. She joyfully strives to imitate the Immaculate Virgin, praying to be clothed with her own virtues and dispositions of heart. She asks Our Lady to adorn her for her divine Spouse.

In speaking of the Blessed Virgin, Saint Leander of Seville said, "Blessed

is that womb which was able to bear without being corrupted; blessed that fertility which in bearing filled the world and won heaven as its reward, yet did not lose the veil of virginity." This thought is echoed in the Eucharistic prayer for Christmas. In union with the whole Church, we celebrate that day when Mary, without loss of her virginity, gave the world its Savior.

The consecrated virgin sees the gift of her own virginity in this same context. Saint Faustina calls virginity a flower taken from the divine Heart. The virgin preserves within her heart as well as her body the lily of virginal integrity. It is the divine Gardener who has planted this lily that He may lovingly gather it for himself. When she weds the Word Incarnate, the bride does not suffer the loss of the lily.

It is in her virginity that she finds present the One she loves with all her heart. This is why the beautiful symbols of virginity — the white dress, the veil, and lilies — take on special significance in the consecration of virgins.

### **Day of Consecration**

On the day of my consecration, I processed into the church dressed as a bride, and carrying a fragrant bouquet of white lilies and roses. When the virgin first hears the invitation of the Divine Spouse, she inhales the perfume of the lily that is the sweet fragrance of virginity. Her whole being is transformed by this gift of virginity that has taken on a mystical sense in her life. She knows that Christ has purchased her purity with His own Blood and has gained for her the light to receive this precious grace. The beauty of this wedding in which virginity is consecrated to

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Christ may be summed up in these words of Saint Leander of Seville: "You have in him a Bridegroom to love fair in beauty above the sons of man."

The Mass of consecration to a life of virginity has many steps. After the gospel is read, the choir sings, "Be wise; make ready your lamps. Behold the Bridegroom comes. Go out to meet him." The bishop addressed me at this point, and I stood and sang an antiphon while holding a lighted candle. When the homily was finished, I was asked if I was resolved to accept solemn consecration as a bride of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. I responded, "I am." Then the Litany of the Saints was sung. Placing my hands in those of the bishop, I renewed my intention of virginity. The bishop then recited the prayer of consecration. One of its phrases is, "Those who chose chastity have looked upon the face of Christ, its origin and inspiration. They give themselves wholly to Christ, the Son

of the ever-virgin Mary and the heavenly Bridegroom of those who in His honor dedicate themselves to lasting virginity."

After this prayer the bishop presented me with a simple white lace veil that I will wear henceforth to Mass as a sign of virginal consecration. He then placed a ring on my finger and presented me with the book of the Liturgy of the Hours. One of the antiphons I sang in response is as follows, "I am espoused to Him whom the angels serve. Sun and moon stand in wonder at His glory."

### Virgin as Symbol

The consecrated virgin's life is a beautiful expression of the Church's wedded love for Christ, her heavenly Bridegroom. Reflecting the life of angels, she is an eschatological image of the world to come and the kingdom of heaven. The perpetual nature of her virginal state makes her a sign of resurrected life. She exercises a

spiritual motherhood of souls, praying and working for their salvation. Consecrated virgins are not called to one particular ministry. They serve God and his Church according to their gifts and talents. They meet with their bishop annually to discuss how they are living out their consecration.

I have a good friend who is a consecrated virgin in a Chapter of the Dominican Third Order in Buffalo, and I know another woman from West Springfield who will soon be consecrated.

I will conclude these reflections with the words of a song I composed and sang during the offertory at the Mass of my consecration. (See below: "I Will Follow the Lamb.")

### References

1. Ambrose, Saint. *Three Books of St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, Concerning Virgins.*

## *I Will Follow the Lamb*

*Refrain:* Spouse of virgins, my crown and my joy,  
I will sing a new song known only to You. Gentlest  
Jesus, Your presence I seek. I will follow the Lamb  
wherever He leads.

The Father has drawn me to You, Lord,  
And the Holy Spirit is the bond of our love.  
Our life is in heaven, our work upon earth.  
May I abide in You as You abide in me.

Your immaculate mother will prepare me for You,  
teaching my heart all that it must do.  
Her holiness being my surest guide  
That I might be Your virgin bride.

Chosen to live a life set apart  
To have intimate knowledge of Your Sacred Heart,  
And silent communion with the Bridegroom Divine.  
For You said, "Mine know Me and I know mine."

*Repeat refrain.*

Asked that a part of Your cross I might share  
For the salvation of souls some suffering to bear.  
To be transformed by love into Your very likeness,  
I draw my life from You, gracious King.

My Beloved, come into Your garden fair,  
Where the flowers of virtue bloom under your  
tender care.

Take Your rest among lilies in this garden retreat,  
For You alone may enter its gate.

A heart undivided I offer to You,  
That I may be holy in body and soul.  
I kept myself for You alone.

With lamp alight I will meet my Spouse.

*Repeat refrain.*

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# SAINT MARTIN DE PORRES AND THE EUCHARIST: THE RICHNESS OF HIS POVERTY

by Theo Stearns  
Saint Martin de Porres Chapter  
New Hope, Kentucky

BIOGRAPHIES OF SAINTS often only touch on the subjects' devotion to the Holy Eucharist. Intimate experiences of the Eucharist may seem too hidden or even too routine to recount. This is certainly true of a saint like Saint Martin, whose life is so filled with the extraordinary. A close reading of the accounts of his life, however, reveals that the Eucharist was indeed the "source and summit" of his life and works.

## A Child at Prayer

Martin's Eucharistic devotion was mysteriously initiated and given form in early childhood. Born on December 9, 1579, in Lima, Peru, Martin was born to a freed African slave. His father, a Spanish nobleman, refused to acknowledge Martin until the boy was about nine years old and his mother, Ana, was left to support him alone. She often sent young Martin to shop in the markets, and much to her distress, Martin often distributed some of her hard-earned money to those he considered less fortunate.

Ana had other reasons for concern about the boy. On his outings, Martin discovered the churches of Lima and would arrive home late, claiming that he had been praying. She should not have worried, though, as young children are naturally devout and accept "conversation" with God quite simply. Saint

"Martin's  
Eucharistic devotion  
was Marian —  
a true follower  
of Saint Dominic,  
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to Jesus through  
Mary."

Catherine's vocation was inspired at the age of six by a vision of Christ; from that moment she knew she was made for a life of prayer. Saint Thérèse writes in her *Story of a Soul* of a secret hiding place behind her bed where she learned to commune with God.

So it was with the little boy from the streets who knelt absorbed in prayer before the altar, the crucifix, and the images of the Mary. These early experiences of prayer seem to be at the root of Martin's spiritual life — devotion to the crucified Christ, the Eucharist, and the Blessed Mother. As an adolescent apprenticed to a physician, Martin became more responsible but not less devoted to

the Holy Eucharist. He set out at daybreak so he could serve Mass at the church of Saint Lazarus before classes began and still arrive home on time.

## Martin's Vocation

Martin was about sixteen years old when he asked to be admitted as a simple tertiary at the Dominican Monastery of the Holy Rosary in Lima. Why he chose the Order of Preachers has been a matter of speculation. Often portrayed with a broom and surrounded by mice, Martin hardly fits the typical image of a Dominican. Someone has suggested that it was Martin's love for animals that drew him to the statue of Saint Dominic with a dog. (True, Saint Dominic is frequently shown accompanied by a dog, but only a symbolic one, since there is no evidence that he ever owned one!)

From the evidence of Martin's life, it is more likely that he was attracted by the image of Saint Dominic receiving the Rosary from the Queen of Heaven. Martin's Eucharistic devotion was Marian — a true follower of Saint Dominic, he went to Jesus through Mary. Since Martin left no written spiritual testimonies, it is fortunate that written depositions were taken from those who knew him. From these witnesses we know that, once Martin entered the



Photo: The Crosiers/Gene Platsted, OSC

Monastery, no image of Mary ever lacked an adornment of fresh flowers and candles, and that her Rosary was always in his hand.

It was the chain by which Mary drew him ever closer to Jesus. Tutored in mysteries of the life of Christ by the Blessed Mother, Martin learned to pray unceasingly. Here also is the influence of Saint Dominic who admonished his brethren to speak only to God or about God.

### His Daily Life

The life of a lay brother was one of almost constant menial chores. Martin was janitor, infirmarian, and barber; he washed, mended, and folded laundry, tended livestock, and collected and distributed alms for the poor — among other things. However, all this activity was wrapped around Martin's love for the Eucharist. This was his secret, the theme of his life and the source for all he did, whether ordinary or miraculous.

In the Monastery was a chapel named for the Queen of the Holy Rosary. On its altar was the tabernacle with the Blessed Sacrament. Before sunrise, Martin would greet Mary by ringing the Angelus bell, a privilege he claimed throughout his life. Afterward, the fathers would find him waiting in Mary's chapel, ready to assist at as many Masses as he could. During his working day, Martin would take his free moments to return to kneel before the altar. Even as he made his way along the upper cloister from which he could see the tabernacle, he would fall to his knees in adoration.

The prodigious works Martin accomplished during his life defy imagination. However, he was not an activist, and, although he is frequently honored as patron of social justice or social workers or race relations, he himself would undoubtedly protest. He lived for the glory of God, and his love increased and flourished with frequent Holy Communion, adoration, and silent prayer.

### Devotion to Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament

Lay brothers at this time received Communion only on Sundays and the great feasts of Our Lord and Our Lady. Martin eventually obtained permission to receive every Thursday as well. These, his Eucharist days, he prepared for with Confession; then, after Communion, he would give himself to uninterrupted prayer. In fact, it was told of him that after receiving Holy Communion, he would linger quietly in the chapel, and then simply disappear as one fallen out of this world. His brothers never knew whether he had literally become invisible or was just skillful at hiding. They did know that his hours of absence were given entirely

to thanksgiving and contemplation. Sometimes Martin would reappear miles away, at the monastery's farm of Limatambo, where he would be found caring for the community's livestock.

Martin's overflowing love for the Eucharist was a great witness to his

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brethren. They described his devotion while serving at the altar as contagious like a fire. When receiving Holy Communion, Martin's face was illuminated like a “blazing coal” and, when he spoke of the Sacrament, his words were an “etna of fire.” Seeing Martin in adoration, many a young man realized that he, too, had a vocation.

Martin spent several hours each night in adoration. One night, as he knelt motionless before the altar, a fire broke out. The altar linens went up in flames that spread rapidly to the carpets. Fortunately, some other members of the community were on hand and gave the alarm, while

others ran for water. They pulled the linens from the flames and threw water on the altar and sanctuary. Throughout, Martin remained still, completely unaware of the commotion around him. Oddly enough, no one tried to rouse him from his communion with God or to move him from danger. He continued so for several hours, after which, to the astonishment of the lay brothers who were cleaning the damaged chapel, Martin suddenly looked around, rose, and walked quietly from the chapel.

Martin had great concern for the dying and stayed close to any brother near death, speaking quietly to him about the mercy of the crucified Christ and how, on the cross, He give His body as the remedy for our sins. He would make sure that the last sacraments were received.

Martin felt unworthy of the privilege of receiving Holy Communion every Thursday, and so he received as if it was his Viaticum. At the point of death, he explained, even one as

unworthy as himself should ask for the Living Bread that gives eternal life. The Eucharist was his preparation for death.

During his final days, a small altar was arranged near his deathbed, and on it was reserved the Blessed Sacrament, ready to become his Viaticum. This gave him great comfort, and he told his brothers that “next to the altar there is the Most Holy Virgin Mary, my patron and advocate, and my Father Saint Dominic with Saint Vincent Ferrer and many other saints and angels.” As Martin foreknew the moment of death of each of his brothers, so he knew his own, and indicated when he was ready to receive Jesus in Holy Communion. Afterward, as his suffering was evident, one of the friars asked him to call upon Saint Dominic. Martin replied, “It would be useless to ask him to come; he is already here.” ❧

*Pope John XXIII, who delivered the homily at the canonization of Saint Martin de Porres in May, 1962, said of him:*

“He excused the faults of others. He forgave the bitterest injuries, convinced that he deserved much more severe punishments on account of his own sins. He tried with all his might to redeem the guilty; lovingly he comforted the sick; he provided food, clothing, and medicine for the poor; he helped, as best he could, farm laborers and Negroes, as well as mulattoes, who were looked upon at that time as akin to slaves: thus he deserved to be called by the name the people gave him: ‘Martin of Charity.’”

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## READERS' FORUM

by Jack Falcone  
*Holy Rosary Chapter, Summit, New Jersey*

MY THOUGHTS ON THE IMPORTANCE of contemplative prayer in the lives of Third Order Dominicans are about the same as my thoughts on whether doctors should go to school before they begin their practice. Prayer by its very nature is contemplative. Children recite prayers but do not fully understand the implication of the words spoken. We as adults have grown to understand a deeper meaning in the words, and so, as mature persons, we are affected by those words. We understand words of hate and words of love. Our psyche responds to those words and we react to them. As Third Order Dominicans, we have moved beyond the first plateau of our Catholicism and have entered into a lay vocation of public advocacy. We pray. We talk to God. We listen. God talks to us. We contemplate. Contemplative prayer is a prayer that we can achieve when we bring ourselves into a quiet, peaceful place with no distractions — it is only you and God. And if we do not reach this place of intimacy with God, how can we say we are truly living our vocation as Lay Dominicans?

One night, over 40 years ago, I was sitting in a foxhole off the border of Czechoslovakia, just looking at the stars. It had been some time since the stars had been out. We had had stormy weather for a week and had been living in the wilderness in rain-soaked clothes, eating rain-soaked rations. I had been serving my

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acceptance of  
a life that is  
ever changing.”

country as a soldier, jumping out of helicopters with a machine gun. It was 1964. That night, as I gazed upward toward heaven, I began to think about God for the first time in a long while. The memory of His name had remained always at the back of my mind — a remnant of my youth as an altar boy and my strict up-bringing under the Dominican Sisters who had loved me and whom I had loved as well. But that evening, as I sat there in the mud and cold and saw the brilliance of the midnight

sky, the stars beamed out and occasional clouds drifted by the moon's face, and I started talking to Jesus. “Lord, I prayed, if I don't have to go to Vietnam and I live through all this, I'd like to meet a girl and raise a family. I'd like to meet a girl with long auburn hair and green eyes. I'd like to marry her and be the father to a family. It would be great if we could have a boy and a girl. Wait, You had better make it two boys and two girls. This way in stormy weather they can play in their rooms, the two boys in their room and the two girls in their room. And I will be there for them. I will work hard, and my wife and I will raise these children for You. But, Lord, I'm only a man and cannot protect them from danger all the time, so You will have to protect them for me. After all, You are God. You can do anything...”

That was a conversation I still remember to this day 40 years later. And yes, He gave me all that I asked for that night. Since that time I have lived a turbulent, but joyful life, walking a path toward our Lord and surrendering to a peaceful acceptance of a life that is ever changing. The trip thus far has been bountiful. Now, when I talk to my Lord, I reflect on the many occasions of my asking and pleading with Him. I reflect on why it is hard to sit peacefully and contemplate Him. My mind drifts, to and fro. I catch myself and come back to Him. I plead, and as Johannah Currier, T.O.P., from

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Resurrection Chapter in Maine encouraged us, I try to let go and wait for God to pray in me.

### Waiting for the Lord

So, I stop and wait; as my mind drifts to and fro, I wait. I'm not a waiter. I'm a salesman. My mind is drifting again and so I think about God and how He started. I close my eyes and try to visualize God as a blinding light, a light that does not burn, only warms. A blinding light that engulfs me and gives me strength. It protects me. I try to understand the light's beginning, but after 30 seconds it becomes too difficult to try to imagine God and His beginning. God has no beginning. God has no end. God always was there. How great is our Lord? I am awestruck by Him and His power, His love for me. Me, who had lived in a hole in the ground like a worm, whom He, the blinding light, loves. And now I am meditating on God.

You know, I feel a little drained after this type of prayer because I am not used to it. I feel that I should be praying more, so I can receive more from my prayer. So I wait for the next time, when I will sit and pray. And wait.

Contemplative meditation is an act of love. Waiting for the Lord is an act of love. The essence of God's plan for us now and for eternity is that we love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love our neighbor as ourselves. Our commitment to Christ calls us to this; furthermore, our community as Dominicans is based on our acceptance of the Habit to which we have committed ourselves — a habit of prayer, knowledge, truth, and of contemplation.

### Listening to the Lord

Being a Dominican is a way of life. It is an established custom of underlying principles guiding the way we think and live our lives. As lay Catholics we want to learn and understand more of the truth. A favorite scripture passage of John Paul II is from John 8:32: "If you remain in my word, you will truly be my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

These truths are evident in our prayer. We feel the presence of God and we understand the importance of contemplative prayer. It is not just reciting words; it is immersing ourselves into the meaning of those words, not daydreaming but letting God speak to us. In daydreams, we control the thought. In meditation, we let God control the thought. Our prayer must be more than recitation, more than a monologue. It must be a love story between us and God. That is the heart of contemplation, the fruit of prayer. Taste and see how sweet His love can be. Yes, we as Dominicans must include contemplation in our prayer. ❏

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# IS TIME PASSING US BY?

by Fr. Dominic Izzo, O.P.  
Prior Provincial, Province of Saint Joseph

[Editor's note: The following is the text of Fr. Izzo's remarks at the Third Order Congress of the Province of St. Joseph, Washington, D.C., June 9-12, 2005.]

TIME IS AN INTRIGUING concept. Saint Augustine, in his *Confessions*, writes, "What, then, is time? I know well enough what it is, provided that nobody asks me, but if I am asked what it is and try to explain, I am baffled." Perhaps many of us feel the same way. We know about time, but are unable to explain it to someone else. One proverb captures this feeling, "Today is the tomorrow you worried about yesterday."

Yet, time is all around us. We use it to organize this Congress, save daylight hours, cook a meal properly, celebrate birthdays we would rather forget. We use time in many ways, most of which we take for granted.

There is something frightening about time that causes many people to become fatalistic. When some tragedy falls, we may respond, "Oh, it was his/her time." We shrug our shoulders and go our way. As we walk away, we wonder in the back of our minds, "When will 'my time' come? Things have been going pretty well lately, so 'my time' must be coming soon."

This sense of resignation is due to the "uncontrollability" of time, especially when we face the time of death. It is as if we are only passive sojourners in a temporal continuum.

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We pass through time, and before we know it, life has passed us by. What we do not realize is that time binds us all together equally. Even the poorest of persons, who have nothing, have time. It is something with which all of humanity can identify and with which all of humanity must deal.

### **Chronos and Kairos**

The New Testament has two Greek words for time: *chronos* and *kairos*. From *chronos*, we obtain English words like chronological, chronic, and chronograph. The other, *kairos*, has made its way into the English language unchanged.

The distinction between these two kinds of time is extremely important

in the New Testament, and in our lives as well. In the New Testament, *chronos* is used to move the narrative along. It brings with it a sense of history, but has no bearing on that history. It is a passive bystander signified by the rising of the sun and the moon. Simply, it is a measure of our movement in years, months, days, hours, minutes, and seconds. Time (*chronos*) does not have much of an effect on our lives. It merely tells us whether we are early, on time, or late. It tells us if this bottle of wine is ready or if we have had one birthday too many.

*Kairos* is a different kind of time. It is not something that we pass through unaware; it is a graced moment that significantly passes through us. It is a time (*kairos*) that is permanent and formative. It is permanent because it is of God and therefore of eternity. Throughout the Gospel accounts, Jesus admonishes His hearers to know what time it is. The Gospel of Luke tells us that soon after Jesus entered Jerusalem, He spoke quite harshly: "And when [Jesus] drew near and saw the city He wept over it, saying, 'Would that even today you knew the things that make for peace! But now they are hid from your eyes. For the days shall come upon you, when your enemies will cast up a bank about you and surround you, and hem you in on every side, and dash you to the

ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave one stone upon another in you; because you did not know the time (*kairos*) of your visitation.”<sup>1</sup>

*Kairos* signifies a decisive inbreaking of grace into our rather mundane lives. It presents an opportunity for an action ordained by God. This moment of time is intensified by the need for a serious decision, because there will be no second chance for the hearers of Jesus’ words in the Gospel of Luke. Discernment of this time (*kairos*) is essential, but they will not be given an abundance of time (*chronos*) in which to decide. We are reminded of this earlier in the gospel when Jesus calls the would-be disciples.<sup>2</sup> Each person has an excuse for not accepting the radical discipleship of Jesus. They seem like valid reasons: burying one’s father or saying goodbye to one’s family. Yet, the chapter ends with Jesus saying, “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.”<sup>3</sup>

In the next verse, the first of chapter 10, Jesus calls the seventy-two. The moral of the story is that if we do not answer the call of Jesus, He will ask others who will. They will follow His call and be happy. They will be called blessed because they embraced *kairos* as a time of making a decision and a time of accepting the opportunity God gave to them. It is no wonder that the first words of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark are, “The time (*kairos*) is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel.”<sup>4</sup>

*Kairos* is formative because any experience of God changes lives. Reflect on your vocation as Dominicans: How did it all begin? What has sustained you in your vocation? How are you different now

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than you were when you first began this journey? Your answers to these fundamental questions will mark how you have taken hold of the graced times (*kairos*) of your life. These are easy to ignore. In the Gospel of John, Jesus says to his disciples, “My time (*kairos*) has not yet come, but your time (*kairos*) is always here. The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify that its works are evil.”<sup>5</sup> Jesus knows His appointed time and so He has been testifying against the world and its evil works. The disciples are unaware of the appointed time (*kairos*). They are safe, because they have not yet begun to understand the significance of Jesus in their lives, because they have not yet begun to preach Jesus to others. Only after they have completed the full journey with Jesus, witnessing His death and resurrection, does Jesus breathe on them the Holy Spirit that enables them to preach. They then set out to preach when Jesus says, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you” (John 20:21).

### What Time Is It for Dominicans?

Mindful of this reflection on time, we need to ask ourselves, “What

time is it, both for each one of us and for the Third Order of the Province of Saint Joseph?”

From a chronological point of view, it is a time of celebration. This year marks the 720<sup>th</sup> year since the then Master of the Order, Munio de Zamora, approved of the Rule for “The Third Order of Penance of Saint Dominic” in 1285. What is crucial to note is that this historic event (*chronos*) marked a concrete response to a *kairos* event. As Saint Dominic made a decisive choice to follow Christ in a radical way and to address the needs of evangelization, a new opportunity to enter into divine life was made a reality for others. Saint Dominic’s attentiveness to a *kairos* event attracted groups of lay faithful who followed him, as he followed the will of God. The movement became so large that Pope Honorius IV asked Munio de Zamora to organize their practices into a Rule and integrate them more firmly into the Order of Preachers. This Rule and the fraternity received official Church recognition by the Pope on January 28, 1286.

Many other such events are part of the history of the Dominican Order in the United States. Very early in the formation of the Province of Saint Joseph, Friar Edward Dominic Fenwick, on March 3, 1807, wrote to Luke Concanen in Rome, “I think the Third Order, if I understand it well, might be established with benefit to the pious people and much honour to our Lord.” Although there is no mention of a Chapter of the Third Order in the early documents of our Province or elsewhere, there is mention in the archives of the names of men and women received into the Third Order. The earliest was Betty Wells, who was received at Saint Rose Priory in Springfield,

Kentucky, in 1826. She is followed by George Shock and John Roi in 1829. It is unfortunate that we do not have other accounts of particular people. We do have accounts of the friars, sisters, and tertiaries (“virtuous lay women,” as described by Bishop Flaget) answering the needs of the time by caring for victims of cholera.<sup>6</sup>

In more recent history, we find many other examples of recorded *kairos* events. The displays in the Pryzbyla Center illustrate some of these. Examples include the Siena Circles, the use of radio to proclaim the Gospel (such as WISP 1570 AM in Doylestown, Pennsylvania), new Pro-Chapters and Chapters that answer the needs of the times, works of various kinds of publications, and many others. The Our Lady of Mercy Chapter at the Massachusetts Correctional Institute in Norfolk is an especially powerful witness to our distinction between chronological time and *kairos* time. No matter where you are, you have the time

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(*kairos*) you need to make a difference if you enter into the opportunity God offers. It must not be postponed because, as the Scottish proverb recalls, “What may be done at any time will be done at no time.”

### Changing to Meet the Needs of the Times

The celebration of the good work that God is accomplishing in us and through us cannot be relegated to chronological time. When it is, there is a temptation to passively let our history carry us along. Over time we become complacent, take many things for granted, and unfortunately, we become solidified in a way of doing things that has no room for the newness God offers us in *kairos* events. Against this human tendency toward personal security and fear of change, Saint Dominic organized the Order in such a way that we must look seriously at our legislation’s ability to meet the needs of the signs of the times: the *kairos* events God gives to us. This is done both on the level of the Order in its General Chapters, and on the level of the Province in its Provincial Chapters. Hopefully, this is happening for you at this Congress.

Our Holy Father knew well that for us to truly be itinerant, to enter into the heart of human need, we would have to be flexible. He also knew that once we understood and lived the fundamentals of our life, we would never think of changing them. These fundamentals of prayer, study, community (to include profession depending on one’s state of life), and mission make us who we are.

- Prayer is always to include the Liturgy of the Hours, the prayer of the Church; the Eucharist; and devotion to Mary.

- Study is faith seeking understanding in the example of Saint Dominic, who was always in the middle of the Church (*in media ecclesia*).

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- Community is a place of hospitality where all are welcome. It is not a place of admittance only to those of like minds, but the place to which God has called a particular group of people to grow “in one heart and one mind.”

- Mission is simply to go out into the world and not to stay in the security of one’s own home.

These must always be taken as a whole and kept in a graced balance with their Dominican flavor. They form us in holiness and impel us to serve the needs of evangelization ever present in our communities, families, work places, and with those we do not know. It impels us even to those we would rather ignore.

## Congress as *Kairos* Event

What if we reflect on this Congress as a *kairos* event? In the common celebration of the liturgy and office (prayer), in times of hospitality and recreation (community), and in the talks and workshops (study), where are you being called to evangelization. This Congress ought to be more than a time for prayer, or a time for study, or a time to see one another. It is a time (*kairos*) when all of these come together for a mission.

In the section on the laity in *Lumen Gentium: The Dogmatic Constitution of the Church in the Modern World* of the Second Vatican Council, you are reminded of the essential role you have in the Church. This role is not only one of witness but also of evangelization, as noted in *Christifidelis Laici*, which poses a challenge in paragraph 48: "In a special way it will be necessary to discover ever more fully *the specific vocation of the laity*, called 'to seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God'; they 'have their own role to play in the mission of the whole people of God in the Church and in the world ... by their work for the evangelization and the sanctification of people.'"

What have you discovered about your vocation as laity? What is the specific vocation of the laity as it is intensified by the charism of our Order? *Lumen Gentium* speaks of the laity in a way that Dominicans can understand. It calls you to grow the Church and consecrate the world to Christ. As noted in sections 33 and 34:

"The laity is gathered together in the People of God and makes up the Body of Christ under one head. Whoever they are, they are called upon, as living members, to expend

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all their energy for the growth of the Church and its continuous sanctification, since this very energy is a gift of the Creator and a blessing of the Redeemer.”

“The lay apostolate, however, is a participation in the salvific mission of the Church itself. Through their baptism and confirmation all are commissioned to that apostolate by the Lord Himself. Moreover, by the sacraments, especially Holy Eucharist, that charity toward God and man, which is the soul of the apostolate, is communicated and nourished. Now the laity are called in a special way to make the Church present and operative in those places and circumstances *where only through them* can it become the salt of the earth. Thus, every layman, in virtue of the very gifts bestowed upon him, is at the same time a witness and a living instrument of the mission of the Church itself ‘according to the measure of Christ’s bestowal.’” (Emphasis added.)

“For besides intimately linking them to His life and His mission, He also gives them a sharing in His priestly function of offering spiritual worship for the glory of God and the salvation of men. For this reason the laity, dedicated to Christ and anointed by the Holy Spirit, are marvelously called and wonderfully prepared, so that ever more abundant fruits of the Spirit may be produced in them. For all their works, prayers, and apostolic endeavors, their ordinary married and family life, their daily occupations, their physical and mental relaxation, if carried out in the Spirit, and even the hardships of life, if patiently borne — all these become ‘spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.’ Together with the offering of the Lord’s body, they are most fittingly offered in the celebration of the Eucharist. Thus, as those everywhere who adore in holy activity, the laity consecrate the world itself to God.”

## The Role of the Dominican Laity

There is an essential place where only you can preach. It is a place that only you as laity can reach. How do you preach in that situation? The words of Mother Teresa are apropos: “We cannot do great things, but we can do small things with great love.” This is true. We have all had the experience of being the recipient of small acts of charity that have bolstered us through another day. We are called to be that same charity to others.

How then do you, at this moment, bring together two gifts that you have received: the gift of your vocation to holiness as lay men and women and your profession in the Order of Preachers? As I just noted, our charism is to intensify the Dominican vocation we have

received according to our state of life as nuns, friars, sisters, and laity. This intensification is simply to be on fire with prayer, study, community, and mission. Your web site had a wonderful quote from Saint Catherine of Siena, "If you are what you should be, you will set the whole world on fire." How much fire does it take to set the world on fire?

A *kairos* event is a time of new life. Its manifestation is one that is starkly opposed to elements in the Church that are no longer life-giving. Through the recent history of the Church new lay movements have been manifested in answer to *kairos* events. These, such as the Catholic Worker Movement, Regnum Christi, Focolare, the Cursillo Movement, Communion and Liberation, Neocatechumenal Way, the Charismatic Renewal, and the LAMP ministries, remind us that God is still at work in his Church in ways that all can be included. In 1998, John Paul II called together such groups. Fifty-three of them were represented, along with a quarter of a million people who gathered in Saint Peter's Square where John Paul II called them "a sign of the new springtime of evangelization foretold by the Second Vatican Council."<sup>7</sup>

How do you fit into this "new springtime of evangelization"? What distinguishes you from other lay movements in the Church, as well as in the Order, especially with the advent of the Dominican Volunteers International, the Dominican Youth Movement, and the Dominican Lay Associates? In a general sense, all of these are members of the Dominican Laity, lay men and women who follow the spirit of Saint Dominic. In a specific sense, Dominican Laity is another name for the Third Order of Saint Dominic. In this specific sense, what difference does it make in your

life to have made profession in the Order? Are you satisfied with each Chapter having its own apostolate or should you as a Province have a collaborative mission in the model of The Catherine of Siena Institute of the Western Province? How has this grace of profession intensified your call to holiness, which is "a fundamental presupposition and an irreplaceable condition for everyone in fulfilling the mission of salvation within the Church"?<sup>8</sup>

### **The Need for Contemplative Silence**

These questions cannot be readily answered without some time in contemplative silence that is open to the reality of your present context. In this contemplative silence, God will ask you to take hold of the *kairos* moment at hand. This is not easy. To sit in the silence is to recognize signs of life and dying. Life is the new things God is doing in our present Chapters and mission. Dying is the fading away of Chapters and missions that are no longer answering the needs of the day. It is a silence that calls us to let go of what we think the best course of action is — which is usually to save something that we have put our best effort into but which no longer bears fruit. We cling to our efforts and not to what God wills for us. We are afraid to acknowledge that it has run its course because we instantly feel like failures. How soon we forget that there is a season for everything and that grace never stands still. This is something that we, as a Province of friars, have been coming to terms with over the past years. It is painful, but it is the pruning that will give fresh life.

During this celebration of the 200th anniversary of the Province of

Saint Joseph, we have two models of contemplative silence: Joseph and Mary. Both are models of contemplative silence that find fulfillment in the mission and vocation God gave to them. Since this is the bicentennial of our Province, I would like to focus on Saint Joseph, the just man, who was also an itinerant man of contemplative silence.

Saint Joseph's first struggles were struggles of the heart. They were the struggle between the love of a woman and the laws of a religion. Joseph, before his dream, acted compassionately and decisively. He knew very well what his rights were, but he chose to act for the good of Mary as well as her parents. Scripture

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reminds us, "and her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly."<sup>9</sup>

I am not sure if we fully appreciate this verse. Joseph made a decision

regardless of the opinion or gossip of others. He did what he thought was right. I can imagine the pain this must have caused Joseph. His soon-to-be wife, while still at home with her parents, had been found to be with child. The pregnant Mary, already given in a marriage contract, was a sign of distrust and scandal to many people. How could this be? Did she not take seriously the contract her parents had entered into? Could not Joachim and Ann control their daughter or protect her from others? Joseph would get what he did not bargain for, in more ways than one. Nonetheless, he did not turn to anger in his disappointment; rather he turned to love. The love of Joseph for Mary must have been so great that he could not bear her punishment or the pain it would cause her parents. He decided to divorce her quietly.

The collaboration of Joseph with Mary in this new day of salvation was made possible only by God's intervention, which offered to Joseph a *kairos* moment. Through a dream, which can signify our contemplative calling, wisdom is revealed to Joseph that is beyond human reasoning. Joseph now realizes that he is only a part of a much larger reality, but that his part is essential, regardless of how untold or short it would be. God is the primary agent of His plan for our salvation and works through those whom He calls. Through Joseph, Jesus is born of the House of David,<sup>10</sup> and through Joseph, Jesus is named.<sup>11</sup> Through Joseph, the Holy Family is protected and guided into exile, only to return from exile to a home in Nazareth, a home maintained by the hands of Joseph. Through Joseph, our Province is entrusted to the work of God's

Kingdom. It is a work of compassion and justice.

For Joseph to be a part of God's plan, he had to listen. Perhaps for us it is no small coincidence that Joseph receives his revelation in a dream — while we are asleep may be the only time when we are quiet enough to hear God's voice! Nonetheless, to collaborate with God's plan there has

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to be a special kind of listening. The life of Saint Joseph is a definition of contemplative listening. To listen contemplatively is to be open to changing one's course of action, so that with others the will of God may be accomplished.

Contemplative listening followed by contemplative action in our Order is a listening, as a community, to action that flows from a community. Joseph had already decided a just course of action. This decision was his own and made by him alone. Through contemplative listening, his

heart was moved in obedience to God to make another decision. He took Mary, with child — and with all the gossip of the village — into his quiet house. His was a silent, paternal presence, and he always put first his vocation from God. He did it so well and, with such humility, that his preaching is best signified by the absence of words so as to focus on the presence of the Word. In this same way, taking hold of *kairos* moments means that our lives will never be the same again. When we work with others, we soon realize that our way is not the only way. Yet, it is only in collaboration that we can truly be ourselves, namely, to live with one mind and one heart. This is the work of grace and the humility of self-surrender.

Our listening in contemplative silence as preachers must be rooted in Scripture. Here again, Saint Joseph is a model for us. Joseph's itinerancy was in obedience to God. Each movement of Joseph fulfills a text of Scripture. First, he had to make the most difficult journey of all, the one of faith: a personal conversion to a deeper call of what God was yet to reveal. He was already noted to be a just man. Now God was calling him not to be “just a man,” but to become like God, to be “perfect as [His] Heavenly Father is perfect.”<sup>12</sup> This turning towards God and away from himself was a journey of courage, trust, sacrifice, and silence. It was a life-long conversion, the same to which we are called.

Once this first and most difficult step was taken, Joseph could fulfill his itinerancy that took him outside of himself to embrace Mary and the child Jesus. He embraced God's unknown vocation for him that was rooted in his collaborative relation-

ship with others (Mary and the Child Jesus). He fulfilled the Word of God by following the wisdom he received in a dream to save his family by fleeing to Egypt so that God's prophecy might be fulfilled: "Out of Egypt have I called my son."<sup>13</sup> In another dream, the angel of the Lord told him to return to Israel and so he did. With his family, his most prized possession, he went to make a home in Nazareth. Thus, he once again fulfilled God's prophecy: "He shall be called a Nazarene."<sup>14</sup>

### Casting Out into the Deep

Entering into the *kairos* moment is a collaborative effort, that is, one of being coworkers with God. Listening and action go hand in hand; they are joined in prayer. This can happen when we let go of our presumptions and expectations of one another, or of the way a ministry must be done. The Gospel of Matthew bears this out when, in the Sermon on the

Mount, Jesus says over and over, "You have heard it said, but now I say to you ..." <sup>15</sup> It is a struggle to fight the "Seven Last Words of Man": "We never did it this way before!" They are the seven *last* words because if we do not change, we will not survive. It is even more of a struggle to move from "my way" of doing things to "our way." Working as an individual seems so much easier, faster, and perhaps, more satisfying. Fortunately, this is not the way God works, and this is signified most dramatically in Jesus' call of His disciples and the inbreaking of God's Kingdom, which is accepted through free choice and not imposed simply once for all time. It is embraced only if it is recognized and the risk accepted.

All of this happened because it was of God. It was permanent and formative because it persists into the present. We cannot be bound hand and foot, like Lazarus, by the passing of time (*chronos*). We must listen to the loud cry of Jesus above the louder cries of our security and fears. He calls us to come out. He commands us to be untied and so to be free.

This is indeed a *kairos* moment for you. Christ is calling out to you in a loud voice to "cast into the deep" and to "lead into the deep." If you are what you should be, you will set the world on fire! Be not afraid! Recognize the time (*kairos*) of your visitation! Don't let time (*kairos*) pass you by! ❏

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2. Luke 9:51-62.
3. Luke 9:62.
4. Mark 1:15.
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6. McGreal, Nona, O.P., "Dominicans" in *Encyclopedia of American Catholic History* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Michael Glazier/Liturgical Press, 1997).
7. For more information about these groups

and commentary, see the following web site: <http://www.envoymagazine.com/backissues/article.asp?ID=73>.

8. John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, *Christifidelis Laici*, 17.
9. Matt. 1:19.
10. Matt. 1:1-16.
11. Matt. 1:21.
12. Matt. 5:48.
13. Matt. 2:15.
14. Matt. 2:23.
15. Matt. 5:21, 27, 33, 38, 43.

### Congress Awards

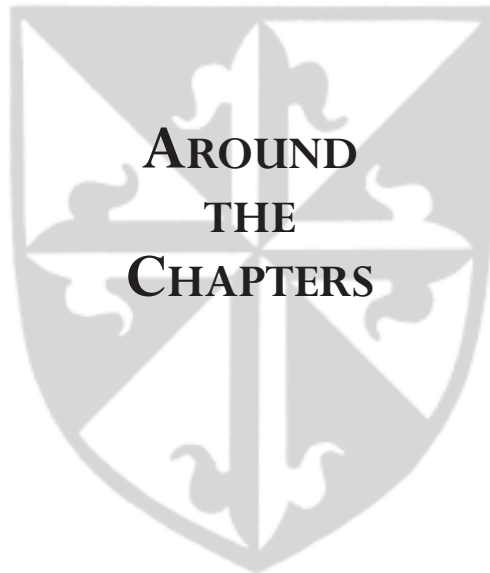
#### *Receiving awards at the Congress were the following members:*

Dominican Friar with Outstanding Contributions to Laity:  
*Fr. Giles Dimock, O.P.*

Outstanding Young Member:  
*George Bell*  
Holy Rosary Chapter  
Camden, New Jersey

Lifetime Contribution:  
*Doris Stukes*  
Saint Martin de Porres Chapter  
Arlington, Virginia

“Entering into the *kairos* moment is a collaborative effort, that is, one of being coworkers with God. Listening and action go hand in hand; they are joined in prayer.”



by Fr. J. M. Sullivan, O.P.

IN AUGUST 2005, I visited the **Queen of Apostles Chapter** in Elmira, New York, and then in September the Fall Regional Meeting for Region Two (New York City) was hosted by the **Holy Rosary Chapter** in Summit, New Jersey, at the Dominican Monastery. **Fr. Carlos Quijano, O.P.**, the Regional Religious Promoter, and **Richard Barbuto, T.O.P.**, from the **Our Lady of the Poor Chapter** in Ossining, New York, gave excellent presentations on the nature of the Sacrament of Confirmation, particularly in giving us the grace and strength to defend the Catholic Faith.

THE FALL REGIONAL MEETING for Region Three (Upper New York State) was held in Canastota, New York, and was hosted by the **Saint Louis Bertrand Chapter** in Syracuse. All of the Chapters sent representatives to be trained in the format to be used for the Siena Circles in that region. **Michael Ryman, T.O.P.**, from the **Immaculate Conception**

**Chapter** in Washington, D.C., led the workshop and ensured that Region Three will soon be off to a great start just as Region Two and Region Four (Pennsylvania) already are.

OF COURSE, THE SUMMER was a great time to recover from the DUC IN ALTUM! Third Order Congress in Washington, D.C. For those of you who attended, I hope that it continued to bear much fruit. For those of you unable to attend, I hope that you can still share in that fruit by listening to the presentations that are available by contacting **Monika Barber**, Conference Coordinator, Saint Joseph Communications, Inc., P.O. Box 720, West Covina, California, 91793, (800) 526-2151; Fax (626) 331-6202; [monica@saintjoe.com](mailto:monica@saintjoe.com).

I HAVE OFTEN SAID that once you have appeared in THE DOMINICAN TORCH there is no telling where you will end up next. Our authors have gone on to appear in *L'Osservatore Romano*, the Vatican newspaper, and

*IDI*, the international newsletter of the Dominican Order. Now we can add another to that list: **Peter Kwasniewski, T.O.P.**, of the **Saint Catherine of Siena Chapter** in Great Falls, Virginia, had his review of David Berger's *Thomas Aquinas and the Liturgy* appear in the September/October 2005 issue of *LayWitness*. This same review first appeared in the Winter 2005 issue of our little magazine. Congratulations to Peter and to *LayWitness*. For more information about *LayWitness* please call (800) MY-FAITH or see <http://www.cuf.org>

THE MEMBERS of the **St. Pius V Pro-Chapter** in Catonsville, Maryland, had a special celebration in honor of the Year of the Eucharist. They had a Rosary, Mass, and Eucharistic Procession in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the month of her Holy Rosary at the conclusion of the Year of the Eucharist. It was celebrated on Sunday, October 2, 2005, at 10:30 a.m. in the Mount de Sales Academy Chapel. Mount de

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Sales Academy is the meeting place for the Chapter and is a school run by the Dominican Sisters of Saint Cecilia Congregation in Nashville, Tennessee.

ANOTHER GREAT EVENT in the area was the exhibit, “A Blessing to One Another: Pope John Paul II and the Jewish People” from September 10 through October 30, 2005, at the Pope John Paul II Cultural Center, Washington, D.C. Two recognized Washington-area artists whose original works were featured in the exhibit were multimedia artist **Phillip Ratner**, and Catholic sculptor **Scott Sullivan, T.O.P.** Scott and his wife, Jem Sullivan, T.O.P., are members of the Blessed Fra Angelico Pro-Chapter in Washington, D.C. The exhibit entitled, “Standing Within Your Gates: Jewish and Catholic Imagery from the Hebrew Bible,” is a unique “visual dialogue” between two artist friends — Jewish and Catholic — as they each give visual expression to similar themes of the Bible from their respective religious perspectives. Scott Sullivan’s works on exhibit included Jonah and the Whale, Jacob’s Ladder, and Moses on Sinai, along with other original biblical art he created for this exhibit. This is all in addition to the beautiful statue of Saint Dominic that Scott gave to me at the end of this summer’s Congress.

ALL OF OUR CHAPTERS and Pro-Chapters have been enriched by those who serve them as Religious Promoters. The most recent appointments made by the Prior Provincial, Fr. Dominic Izzo, O.P., are **Fr. Salvatore Matarazzo, O.P., Mary, Queen of Apostles Chapter** in Elmira, New York (and also Regional Religious Promoter for

Region Three — Upper New York State); **Fr. Joseph Barranger, O.P., Blessed Fra Angelico Pro-Chapter** in Washington, D.C.; **Fr. Kenneth France-Kelly, O.P., Saint Louis Bertrand Chapter** in Louisville, Kentucky; **Fr. John Thaddeus Hemsworth, O.P., Our Lady of the Assumption Chapter** in New York, New York; **Fr. Brian Mulcahy, O.P., Saint Thomas Aquinas Pro-Chapter** in Charlottesville, Virginia; **Fr. Dominic Fields, O.P., Saint Thomas Aquinas Chapter** in Zanesville, Ohio; **Fr. Jacob Restrick, O.P., Immaculate Heart Chapter** in Buffalo, New York (and also Saint Catherine of Siena Chapter in Rochester, New York); **Fr. Peter Girard, O.P., Mother of God Chapter** in West Springfield, Massachusetts; **Fr. Reginald Whitt, O.P., Saint Catherine of Siena Chapter** in Great Falls, Virginia; **Fr. Matthew Morry, O.P., Our Lady of Divine Providence Chapter** in Providence, Rhode Island; **Fr. Matthew Rzeczkowski, O.P., Immaculate Conception Chapter** in Washington, D.C.; **Fr. Ignatius Cataudo, O.P., Holy Rosary Chapter** in Camden, New Jersey; **Fr. Andrew Fornal, O.P., Saint Hyacinth Pro-Chapter** in New York, New York; **Fr. Mark Connell, T.O.P., Siena Pro-Chapter** (Student Chapter) at Mount Saint Mary’s College in Newburgh, New York; **Fr. Clifton Bishop, T.O.P., Saint Louis DeMontfort Pro-Chapter** in Bath, Pennsylvania; **Fr. Roland Nadeau, T.O.P., Saint Dominic Pro-Chapter** in Bangor, Maine; **Rev. Mr. Robert Parenteau, T.O.P., Two Hearts of Jesus and**

**Mary Pro-Chapter** in Biddeford, Maine; **Rev. Mr. Raymond Doucette, T.O.P., Corpus Christi Pro-Chapter** in Portsmouth, New Hampshire; and **Sr. Regis, O.P., Most Holy Rosary Chapter** in Newburgh, New York. Thank you to all of the priests, deacons, and sisters that serve our Chapters as Religious Promoters!

PLEASE REMEMBER that Around the Chapters is for you, so if you have items that would be appropriate for inclusion, please send them to Fr. Juan-Diego.

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## *Te Deum*

*The Te Deum is the Church's song of jubilation. We sing it each Sunday and on all Solemnities and Feasts throughout the year. We sing to the Lord this Te Deum to thank Him for the new members of the Third Order:*

**Father Joseph Viveiros, T.O.P.**  
**Dorothy Sullivan, T.O.P.**  
**Rita Pavao, T.O.P.**  
**Margaret Furtado, T.O.P.**  
**Marina Orosz, T.O.P.**  
**Theresa Rodriques, T.O.P.**  
Saint Rose of Lima Chapter  
Swansea, Massachusetts  
Made First Profession on  
August 6, 2005

**Melodie Reed, T.O.P.**  
Saint Rose of Lima Chapter  
Swansea, Massachusetts  
Made Final Profession on  
August 6, 2005

**Kira Gorman, T.O.P.**  
Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Chapter  
Saratoga Springs, New York  
Received into the Novitiate on  
August 22, 2005

**Molly Towne, T.O.P.**  
**(Mary Rosa Catherine)**  
**Patricia Venditti, T.O.P.**  
**(Esther Anthony)**  
Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Chapter  
Saratoga Springs, New York  
Made First Profession on  
August 22, 2005

**Katherine Towne Sherwin, T.O.P.**  
**(Maria Rosa Dominica)**  
Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Chapter  
Saratoga Springs, New York  
Made Final Profession on  
August 22, 2005

**Kenneth Pillar, T.O.P.**  
**(Isidore)**  
**John Moran, T.O.P.**  
**(John of the Sacred Heart)**  
Saint Thomas Aquinas Pro-Chapter  
Gouldsboro, Pennsylvania  
Received into the Novitiate on  
October 1, 2005

**Ruth Ochs, T.O.P.**  
**(Anna Maria)**  
**Roxanne Christmann**  
**(Theresa Ann)**  
Saint Arnold Janssen Pro-Chapter  
Cranberry, Pennsylvania  
Received into the Novitiate on  
October 23, 2005

**Edwin Christmann, T.O.P.**  
**(Albertus Magnus)**  
Saint Arnold Janssen Pro-Chapter  
Cranberry, Pennsylvania  
Made First Profession on  
October 23, 2005

**Paula Catherine Maina, T.O.P.**  
**Maria Wangeci, T.O.P.**  
**David Lutz, T.O.P.**  
Saint Catherine of Siena Pro-Chapter  
Nairobi, Kenya  
Made First Profession on  
October 30, 2005

**Elaine Masler, T.O.P.**  
**Mary Kay Vargo, T.O.P.**  
Mary, Queen of Apostles Chapter  
Elmira, New York  
Received into the Novitiate on  
November 7, 2005

**Barbara Gagnon, T.O.P.**  
**(Mary Joseph)**  
**Karen Kilpatrick, T.O.P.**  
**(Maria Luisa)**  
**Delores King, T.O.P.**  
**(Mary Dolorosa)**  
**Mary Rose Pinnoti, T.O.P.**  
**(Mary Thomasine)**  
**Joann Yeager, T.O.P.**  
**(Mary Rose)**  
Mary, Queen of Apostles Chapter  
Elmira, New York  
Made First Profession on  
November 7, 2005

te deum

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## *De Profundis*

*As he was approaching death, Saint Dominic begged that he would be brought back to the Dominican Priory. He expressly wished that he might be buried beneath the feet of the brethren. The De Profundis (Psalm 130) is said each day by the Dominican Community for the peaceful repose of the deceased members of the Order.*

**Alice Kraus, T.O.P.**  
Sacred Heart Chapter  
Rahway, New Jersey  
Died: May 7, 2002  
Professed: June 17, 1995

**Mary Margott, T.O.P.**  
**(Christine Marie)**  
Immaculate Heart Chapter  
Buffalo, New York  
Died: March 21, 2005  
Professed: June 8, 1980

**Mary Rose Connelly, T.O.P.**  
**(Mary Theresa)**  
Our Lady of Prouille Chapter  
Elkins Park, Pennsylvania  
Died: June 21, 2005  
Professed: June 21, 1953

**Mary Rapicano, T.O.P.**  
**(Maria Domenica)**  
Caldwell College Chapter  
Caldwell, New Jersey  
Died: July 22, 2005  
Professed: August 4, 1962

**Carlos Caldas, T.O.P.**  
**(Thomas)**  
Queen of the Rosary Chapter  
Rockville Centre, New York  
Died: August 10, 2005  
Professed: June 15, 1965

**William English, T.O.P.**  
**(Louis Bertrand)**  
Saint Louis Bertrand Chapter  
Syracuse, New York  
Died: August 12, 2005  
Professed: April 18, 1937

**Kathryn Orme, T.O.P.**  
**(Catherine Marie)**  
Our Lady of  
Divine Providence Chapter  
Providence, Rhode Island  
Died: September 5, 2005  
Professed: May 18, 1961

**Theresa Demus, T.O.P.**  
Saint Martin de Porres Chapter  
Alexandria, Virginia  
Died: September 18, 2005  
Professed: February 2, 1980

**Frederick Barry, T.O.P.**  
**(Thomas Aquinas)**  
Corpus Christi Pro-Chapter  
Portsmouth, New Hampshire  
Died: September 24, 2005  
Professed: August 31, 1997

*One of the great traditions of the Dominican Order is regular prayer for our dead. A Dominican Priory, for example, is required to offer a weekly Mass for our deceased benefactors and the deceased of the Order. With each issue of THE DOMINICAN TORCH, I would ask that every Chapter and Pro-Chapter have one Mass said for all the deceased members of the Third Order of the Province of Saint Joseph, particularly praying for those listed here in the De Profundis Corridor. I would also ask each tertiary to pray one Rosary (five decades) for that same intention.*

*Please send the names of those who have died to [dominicatorch@opfriars.com](mailto:dominicatorch@opfriars.com) so that they can be included in our continued prayers for the dead. Send any names for inclusion in our Te Deum Chapel as well.*

Fr. Juan-Diego Brunetta, O.P.  
Provincial Promoter

AS WE PRAY for all of the deceased tertiaries of the Province we also need to remember all of those others who have helped in the formation of those tertiaries. Recently, we lost two great promoters of the Third Order, who by their own sacrifices were able to introduce so many to the life of Saint Dominic and the holiness found within the riches of Dominican spirituality. Pray for the repose of the souls of Sr. Mary Antoninus, O.P., and Sr. Mary Francis, O.P., and for all of the deceased nuns and sisters that have aided our Chapters over the years.

**Sr. Mary Antoninus, O.P.**  
Dominican Nuns  
Our Lady of the Rosary Monastery  
Summit, New Jersey  
Died: July 13, 2005  
Professed: August 16, 1937

**Sr. Mary Francis, O.P.**  
Dominican Sisters  
Newburgh, New York  
Died: April 17, 2005  
Professed: June 18, 1939



## DOMINICAN BOOKSHELF

*Fully Human, Fully Divine: An Interactive Christology*  
by Michael Casey, O.C.S.O.  
Liguori, Missouri: Liguori/Triumph,  
2004, 352 pp.

Reviewed by Faith Flaherty, T.O.P.  
Our Lady of Mercy Chapter  
Norfolk, Massachusetts

Michael Casey's *Fully Human, Fully Divine* is based on the humanity of Jesus, as told in the Gospel of Mark. We are meant to mirror Jesus' life. In following Jesus, with the grace of the Holy Spirit, we become sharers in the Divine Nature. This is the central mystery of our faith, the Incarnation of the Word. What this Incarnation means for us is that human nature itself is of such dignity that it is possible for God to live and act through us.

By pondering the humanity of Jesus, we can learn to accept ourselves as human and to admit that by God's grace it is possible for us to live and act as He did, to be perfect as God our Father is perfect.

Half the chapters are about Jesus, and the other half are about us. As we read, we understand Jesus

through our own experiences. It is through awareness of the dynamics of Christ's life that our own lives becomes meaningful. Proceeding through the chapters about Christ's life, we are primed to encounter ourselves in a new way. "I choose to believe that no one is beyond the mercy of God and I am prepared to grant the possibility that one whom I condemn as a sinner may well be holier than I." This is important to remember these days. Is not our Church holy, regardless of the sinfulness of its members? This is a tenet of our faith. We should not judge others. God has that task.

Another feature of the book is Casey's depiction of the preaching style of Jesus. He was an itinerant preacher. The author invites the reader to introduce into our own lives Jesus' "flexibility, frugality, powerlessness, weariness, companionship, trust, self-discovery, and perceptiveness." (p. 187) Mark's Gospel suggests that Jesus' comings and goings have a theological significance. They were not aimless wanderings, but a journey from the familiar toward the unfamiliar, a progression toward the Cross.

*Fully Human, Fully Divine* was not intended to be read in one sitting. It is intended to be spiritual and reflective reading. "I am aware that what I have written will be a challenge for some readers, but I have made it deliberately so because most of us need deeper and sharper concepts if we are to pass beyond the tepid oversimplifications of our faith..." (p. 8) It is not that the language is difficult, nor the style complicated, but the message may take some time to grasp. It is worth the effort.

Reading *Fully Human, Fully Divine* is a personal pilgrimage. The message of the book is an aid for the reader's conversion. Those who use this book as the author intended (spiritual reading) will find that they newly appreciate themselves. Jesus was human, as we are human. Follow Jesus and we will be one with Him. Casey concludes his book with an appropriate prayer: "May the humanity of Jesus inspire us to accept our own humanity in all its present ambiguity, so that through Him and with Him we may become, in a manner that is beyond our imagination, full sharers in His divinity." (p. 313)



***Companion to the Prayer of  
Christians: Reflections and  
Personal Prayers***

by Rev. John Burke, O.P.

Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press

Reviewed by Patricia O'Connor, T.O.P.  
Saint Louis Bertrand Chapter  
Louisville, Kentucky

HERE IS A TREASURE for any Dominican's bookshelf. The postulants may use this book as a study guide to Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer, to enrich their understanding of the psalms in the Divine Office, the official prayer of the universal church. Long-time tertiaries, who may be rushing through their Morning and Evening Prayers due to frenzied daily schedules, will be reminded to slow down, and allow more time to absorb the joy, pain, and beauty within the psalms that are divinely inspired poems.

We each have our private devotions and prayers that help us along our spiritual journeys; however, beginning and ending each day with the same prayers of the universal Church is what makes Christian Prayer so special. The psalms, offered each day in Christian Prayer, are God's own prayers, that evolved over centuries: "All this compiling, editing, and use [of psalms] in worship was the result of the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The psalms that were admitted to the Sacred Canon of the Psalter are, therefore, the inspired word of God," wrote Father Burke. He noted that the psalms connect with

our emotions and understanding of human life, "its pain as well as its joys."

Father Burke has organized his book into four chapters, one for each week of the Divine Office. His approach is easy to follow. He refers to a psalm and gives a brief reflection. In fact, a good way to read the companion book is to have the *Book of Christian Prayer* open and meditate on the entire psalm.

For instance, I wish I had read this book several years ago when another postulant complained that he did not understand parts of the Cantic of Daniel (3:57-88) and found it difficult to pray. The cantic is one of my favorites:

*Every shower and dew, bless the Lord.*

*All you winds, bless the Lord.*

*Fire and heat, bless the Lord.*

*Cold and chill, bless the Lord.*

*Dew and rain, bless the Lord.*

*Frost and chill, bless the Lord.*

*Ice and snow, bless the Lord.*

*Nights and days, bless the Lord.*

*Light and darkness, bless the Lord.*

*Lightning and clouds, bless the Lord.*

*(Daniel 3:64-73)*

"How can dew or fire bless the Lord? How can ice or the night bless the Lord?" my friend asked. My response was that God created these elements and by doing what He wanted them to do, they were blessing and praising Him. Similarly, if we do what God wants, we are blessing and praising Him. Father Burke explains that when the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar threw Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael into a fiery furnace because they refused to worship false idols, the Lord did not let them burn. They sang this cosmic hymn of praise while remaining safe in the fire. Father Burke's commentary notes that they were singing,

"Lord, you created us to praise you. All the things you have created show forth your great wisdom and love. This morning we join with all creation in acclaiming your greatness and the glory of your name."

Some psalmists describe their laments from pain, pending doom or death, and guilt from sin. They ask for God's mercy and forgiveness. The psalms and canticles also remind us of the virtues we need for our spiritual development. Father Burke comments on the cantic from Philippians 2: 6-11 that is prayed in each Sunday Evening Prayer I: "Humility is the bedrock of the spiritual life; without it no one can advance in holiness. Even Jesus humbled himself in order to be exalted by the Father; from being God to being human, even to die. With Saint Paul and his Churches we praise the Risen Jesus." Father Burke says, "How great is the mystery of suffering and death, Lord Jesus. But you drew back the veil of fear when you embraced death for yourself so that you could give life to us. Help us to embrace your death and live your life."

This book guides beginners learning Christian Prayer and adds clarity and meaning for those who have prayed it for years. The *Companion to the Prayer of Christians* also encourages spiritual growth with a more thoughtful and reflective approach to the Divine Office. The more we pray the psalms, the more inspired we are to learn more about the Scriptures, God's own word.



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### *Hannah Coulter's Membership*

by Wendell Berry

Emeryville, California: Shoemaker & Hoard, 2004, 208 pp.

Reviewed by Anne Husted Burleigh,  
T.O.P., Bishop Fenwick Pro-Chapter  
Cincinnati, Ohio

WHEN NATIONALLY ACCLAIMED author Wendell Berry publishes any work, whether fiction, poetry, or essay, it is an event. When he publishes not one — but two — major works of fiction in one year, as he did in 2004, it is a notable contribution to the American literary landscape.

First, Berry issued *That Distant Land*, a collection of twenty-three stories, mostly old favorites, such as “Pray Without Ceasing,” “A Jonquil for Mary Penn,” “Making It Home,” and “The Wild Birds,” but also including four that have never appeared in a collection. Taken altogether, nearly 450 pages, these marvelously unified stories read like a novel.

Then came *Hannah Coulter*, a beautiful, lovable novel that for sheer poetry surely ranks with Berry’s masterpiece, *Jayber Crow*. *Hannah Coulter*, like all of Berry’s fiction, continues the tale of the Port William membership, the interlinking families who compose the little Kentucky community of Port William on the Kentucky River, ten miles from its confluence with the Ohio River. For decades, Berry has been writing of the Port William membership, unfolding the 150-year story of generations of Beechums, Feltners, Coulters, and Catletts, with Penns, Rowanberrys, Branches, and, of course, the barber, Jayber Crow, prominently featured.

Hannah Coulter, one of Berry’s dearest characters but heretofore with a minor role, is the first woman

to receive her voice as the primary character in a Berry novel. We have met Hannah in *A Place on Earth*, an early but major and essential novel, and in short stories, and even poetry. Here, she bursts into life, a beautiful, warm, intelligent, strong woman who pours herself out in love and sacrifice for her young husband, Virgil Feltner, who is lost in World War II; and for her little daughter, Margaret; and then for her second husband, Nathan Coulter, and their two sons and grandchildren; and, finally, for all the members — living and dead — of the Port William membership, whose love, joy, sorrow, and suffering have entwined with hers.

Both in *Distant Land* and in *Hannah Coulter*, Berry elucidates his perennial themes: the indissoluble link between marriage and place; between marriage, the land, and the community; stewardship and the care of one’s place through good work; the tendency of technology to fracture human relationships and to become an idol in itself, when it is allowed to obscure the dignity of the person; the virtue of fidelity and the willingness to see things through to the end without running away from a marriage, a place, or the membership; the fortitude and patience to “wait and find out,” as Berry puts it; and, finally, permeating everything, the redemptive healing power of love and the proper response of gratitude and thankfulness.

Berry’s view of marriage is distinctly Christian and incarnational. Though it is deeply spiritual, marriage is always concrete. It cannot exist without a particular man and a particular woman who forge their particularly unique marriage in a particular place and beget particular, unique children.

At the same time, as an extension of its incarnational reality, marriage properly belongs to a community, a membership, which nourishes the marriage, gives it a framework within which to thrive, a cushion on which to rest, and which holds the marriage accountable. A good membership, Berry firmly contends, not only holds a marriage in place, but it also inspires a man and woman to make a good marriage. Good, in Berry’s view does not mean that every moment is bliss, but rather that a marriage sticks and stays put.

A central question in all of Berry’s work is what the membership really is. What gives it life and breath, and who exactly is in the Port William membership, or in the membership of any community? This question is strikingly clear in *Hannah Coulter*, in which post-World War II changes in technology bear heavily on rural American towns such as Port William, tempting even its inhabitants, like the world around them, to believe that whatever it is possible for man to do, he ought to do. The danger of technology is not the machine but rather the temptation to think that man himself is a machine instead of a person; and therefore that he can and indeed ought to program himself and everything around him just as he wants, as if he were his creator and owner. The temptation of technology is not the machine itself but the hubris of man himself.

The postwar exodus from the American small town thus makes inevitable the question: who is the Port William membership? Burley Coulter, perhaps Berry’s own favorite among his characters, says in jest but yet entirely seriously, “Oh, yes, brothers and sisters, we are

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members one of another. The difference, beloved, ain't in who is and who's not, but in who knows it and who don't. Oh, my friends, there ain't no nonmembers, living nor dead nor yet to come. Do you know it or do you don't? A man is a member of a woman ... A woman is a member of a man ... Oh, beloved, it's all one piece of work."

Port William stands for every authentic community. No one is ever excluded from the membership, not even by death — but people do exclude themselves by leaving, by choosing no longer to be a member of this marriage, or this family, or this church, or this community. In short, they choose to leave; they refuse to be members one of another.

The relationship of education to the integrity of the membership appears in *Hannah Coulter* more poignantly — and troublingly — than in any of Berry's earlier books. Hannah and Nathan, wanting their children to be educated, work hard to send them to college. Yet once the children graduate, they leave. Why? Knowing that parents may have hope, but not expectations for their children, Hannah still ponders why her children left and, as so many parents do, questions whether the education she so wanted for her children was indeed education at all.

"We both wanted to send them to college, because we felt we owed it to them ... It just never occurred to either of us that we would lose them that way. The way of education leads away from home. That is what we learned from our children's education."

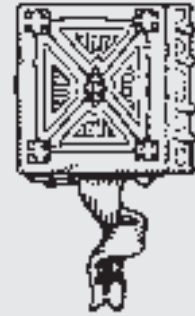
"The big idea of education," Hannah says, echoing Berry's own complaint against the sham that passes for most current college training, "from first to last, is the idea of a

better place. Not a better place where you are, because you want it to be better and have been to school and learned to make it better, but a better place somewhere else. In order to move up, you have got to move on."

Leaving home and Port William to answer a vocation is one thing, and in truth is not leaving at all. Leaving, however, for the sake of restlessness and looking for greener pastures is infidelity. It is the result not of education but of forgetting that we are bound together. It is the way of loneliness.

The heart of the membership, Hannah understands, is love — the "room of love," she calls it, into which people enter and are cherished and remembered. Love by no means precludes suffering; in fact the deeper the love, the more intense the suffering. Yet love transforms suffering into a gift, and for Hannah, as for Berry, the whole meaning of life is that it is a gift. Our response, then, through both love and loss, through joy and grief, is gratitude and thanksgiving, pronounced with the affirmation, "Thy will be done."

"This is the story of my life," Hannah says, "that while I lived it weighed upon me and pressed against me and filled all my senses to overflowing and now is like a dream dreamed. So close to the end now, what do I look forward to? 'Today shalt thou be with me in paradise' ... This is my story, my giving of thanks."



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# THE NEW WORLD ORDER

*This regular feature of THE DOMINICAN TORCH takes us outside the geographic boundaries of the Province of Saint Joseph to see what is happening in the Order throughout the world.*



## The Dominicans in Nigeria: Seeds for Flowers Not Yet Seen

*by Fr. Thomas K. McDermott, O.P.*

THE VAST CONTINENT of Africa consists of fifty-two countries; the Dominican Order is present in thirteen of them. The roots of the Order in Africa are old. The first Dominicans to arrive were Portuguese friars on the island of São Tomé in West Africa at the beginning of the sixteenth century. On the opposite side of the continent, the Portuguese Dominicans also established a presence on the coast of Mozambique in 1537 that lasted until 1835. French Dominicans at the end of the seventeenth century attempted a mission, ultimately short-lived, in present day Benin (Dahomey).

In our own period, Belgian Dominicans established a presence in what today is the Democratic Republic of Congo in 1912, and the Dutch Dominicans arrived in South Africa in 1917. Around the time that

African nations were gaining their independence from the colonial powers, there was a surge of new Dominican foundations: Nigeria (1951), Senegal (1955), Cameroon (1955), Rwanda (1960), Kenya (1962 and 1991), and Angola (1982).

At present, there are approximately 350 Dominican friars in Africa, about half of whom are in basic formation. With the exception of South Africa, the vast majority of the friars are indigenous. The largest concentrations can be found in Nigeria (the Order's only African province), D.R. of Congo, and South Africa (both are general vicariates). Smaller numbers of friars are grouped into five provincial or regional vicariates comprising the Ivory Coast, Senegal, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, D.R. of Congo,

Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and Angola. There is also a small presence of friars on the island of Reunion and in Ethiopia, the most recent foundation.

### **Twentieth Century Growth in Nigeria**

In 1946, Archbishop David Mathew, apostolic delegate to Anglophone East and West Africa, whose headquarters were in Mombassa, Kenya, wrote the Master of the Order requesting the presence of Dominicans in West Africa to "cater to the emerging African elite." (Incidentally, the delegate's brother, Gervase Mathew, was a Dominican of the English Province). The request was referred to Fr. Edward Hughes, O.P., provincial of the Province of Saint Albert the Great in Chicago, founded only

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ten years earlier and without a foreign mission. Archbishop Mathew asked for Dominicans to go to Lagos, Nigeria, with the possibility of a second presence in the extreme northwestern part of the country.

On February 27, 1951, the first three pioneer Dominicans arrived by ship in the Lagos harbor with Fr. Hughes: Fathers Michael Dempsey, Thaddeus Lawton, and Arthur Kinsella. Fr. Dempsey, from Providence, Rhode Island, and Fr. Lawton, from Boston, had been faculty members at Fenwick High School in Chicago. Fr. Kinsella, who presently lives in retirement at Saint Pius V Priory in Chicago, is a Midwesterner. Within a few days of their arrival, the Archbishop of Lagos, Leo Hale Taylor, extended a formal invitation to take over the mission in Yaba, a “suburb” of Lagos on the mainland, to establish the Thomistic Institute for adult catechesis, and to preach retreats in Nigeria and the Gold Coast (as Ghana was then known).

In 1952, the Dominicans accepted the mission territory in northwestern Nigeria. In the following year, the apostolic prefecture of Sokoto was established with Fr. Lawton as the first prefect. Sokoto was a “hardship assignment” in a region that was almost entirely Muslim. Later, Fr. Lawton became the first bishop of the Diocese of Sokoto; Fr. Dempsey became the second bishop of Sokoto in 1967.

The small mission in Yaba consisted of a dilapidated church and school with a resident Irish Father of the Society of African Missions (S.M.A.). The name of the mission was soon changed to Saint Dominic’s Church and was entrusted to the Dominicans by the Holy See *beneplicitum*. In the years ahead, Saint Dominic’s grew

into one of the largest and most popular parishes in the country. A modern church structure was finished in 1994; at present, more than 25,000 people attend six Masses celebrated there every Sunday. A new five-story priory was completed in 1997, which houses approximately twenty friars who minister in various ways in and around Lagos. The chaplaincy at the nearby University of Lagos is also staffed by Dominicans.

### **Dominican Community in Nigeria**

When Dominicans first arrived in Nigeria in 1951, the prevailing opinion was that orders and missionary congregations should refer young men with vocations to the priesthood to the local dioceses. However, this way of thinking was beginning to change around the time of Nigeria’s independence in 1960. In 1968, the Dominicans opened a formal house of the Order with a common novitiate for clerical and cooperator brothers in Ibadan, site of Nigeria’s first university, about eighty miles north of Lagos. In 1970, construction began on what was to be known simply as “the Dominican Community,” a novitiate and studium built in an African architectural style. The first two Nigerian Dominicans were ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Dempsey in 1975.

### **Dominican Institute Founded**

From the beginning, clerical student brothers received their academic formation at the major seminary in Ibadan. However, in 1993 Dominican Institute was born: an institute of philosophy and theology granting degrees accredited through the University of Ibadan, Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and the Angelicum in

Rome. Most of the faculty consists of Nigerian Dominicans with doctorates. Dominican Institute is the Order’s only center of institutional studies on the African continent. Practically from the moment it opened, other religious orders in the country began sending their students to D.I.— the Redemptorists, Capuchins, Discalced Carmelites, and Schoenstatt Fathers. The D.I. is open to lay people and female religious, which in the local context is rather unusual for a “seminary.”

In 1985 the Provincial Vicariate of Nigeria became a vice province, thus independent from the Province of Saint Albert the Great. The first vice provincial was Fr. Callistus Itheme, O.P. In 1992 the Province’s long-serving novice master, Fr. Ayo-Maria Atoyebi, O.P., was ordained bishop of the Diocese of Ilorin, thus becoming, it was said at the time, the second black bishop in the Order’s entire history. In 1993, a formal house of the Order was established in Kumasi, Ghana. In the same year, the vice province of Saint Joseph the Worker in Nigeria and Ghana became the Order’s first (and only) Province in Africa. The Province’s third Provincial, Fr. Ignatius Madumere, O.P., was elected in July, 2005. The provincial headquarters is located at Saint Dominic’s Priory, Yaba, Lagos.

As of 2004, there were 134 friars affiliated to the Province of Nigeria and Ghana. In addition, six American Dominicans are assigned to the Province. Of the 134 friars, there are seventy-five priests, five cooperator brothers, forty-one clerical student brothers, and thirteen novices, all of African origin. The Province consists of eight communities in Nigeria and one in Ghana.

Approximately twenty-three African friars belonging to the Province study or work outside of Nigeria. The majority of these friars have been sent by the Province to do graduate studies in the U.S. or Europe with the intention of teaching at Dominican Institute. Five friars work in the Diocese of Harrisburg (Pennsylvania) and the Archdiocese of Seattle (Washington). The Province has long-standing contractual relationships with these two dioceses to supply priests in return for financial support of its formation program in Nigeria. This arrangement is occasioned by the Province's large number of vocations, Nigeria's poor economy, and the fact that there is no endowment or subsidy.

### U.S. Headquarters Established

In 2001, with the consent of Fr. Norman Haddad, O.P., Provincial of the eastern Province of St. Joseph, the Province of Nigeria and Ghana built, on mortgage, a house to serve as a base for the Nigerian brethren in the U.S. and as a headquarters for its Office of Development and Mission which coordinates funding efforts for the Province's formation program in Nigeria. The house, which is neither a priory nor formal house, is located at 4504 21<sup>st</sup> Street, Mt. Ranier, Maryland, and is under the supervision of the Province's Director of Development, Fr. Dominic Eshikena, O.P. Because of communication difficulties, for several years the Nigerian Provincial has had a personal vicar provincial who is resident in the U.S. to oversee the brethren living in there and in Europe. The vicar provincial is Fr. Paul Oye, O.P., who resides in Columbia, Pennsylvania.

### Dominican Sisters in Nigeria

Two congregations of Dominican Sisters are present in Nigeria: the Dominican Sisters of Gusau (started by the Great Bend, Kansas Sisters) and the Dominican Sisters of Montemario, Rome. The Dominican Sisters of Speyer, Germany run a hospital in Ghana. There are three chapters of the Dominican Third Order in Lagos, Ibadan, and Gusau. The only branch of the Order not represented is that of the cloistered Dominican nuns.

The late Cardinal Maurice Otunga of Kenya once observed that, "African culture possesses seeds for flowers that have not yet been seen." We look forward to the contribution African Dominicans will make in the universal mission of the Order. As Fr. Timothy Radcliffe, O.P. once said when he was Master of the Order, "The Order needs the gifts that its

African brothers and sisters bring: a deep sense of the presence of God, an ancient wisdom, and a joy in the Lord."<sup>1</sup>

*[Fr. Thomas McDermott, O.P., a member of the central Province of Saint Albert the Great, served in Nigeria from 1983 – 2001 and was the Provincial of the Province of Nigeria and Ghana from 1997 – 2001. At present, he is a lecturer in spiritual theology at Kenrick-Glennon Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri with residence at Saint Dominic Priory, 3601 Lindell Boulevard, St. Louis, Missouri, 63108.]* ❏

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1. Radcliffe, Timothy, O.P. Forward to *Dominicans in Africa: A history of the Dominican friars in sub-Saharan Africa*, Philippe Denis, O.P., ed. (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 2003), 8.

## Dominican Call

Call to COMMUNITY is a grace  
Old and young called to place.  
Memory of Jesus and His face.  
Mind and heart and will embrace  
Unity, diversity, and every race.  
Noble example of Trinity trace  
In outpouring of Christ's Gift.  
Together gather and do lift.  
You're in COMMUNITY or adrift.

*Mary Snow, T.O.P.*



### **Saint Martin de Porres Chapter**

by *Mary Frances Musk, T.O.P., Prioress*

CHRIST'S PEACE! Over the past 32 years we have received great blessings from Saint Dominic. We entered the Third Order in 1974, eventually becoming the Saint Martin de Porres Chapter. In the same year, we founded a pro-life organization, Catholics United for Life (CUL). I would like to tell you about our work so that you will pray for us and, perhaps, there will be opportunities to collaborate more with our Dominican family.

I also want to invite you to visit New Hope, which is located near Saint Rose Priory, the original foundation of our Dominican family in the United States. Seeking to work more with our Dominican family is important to us at this time in our history because, while we were once very busy being parents of large families, now most of us are grandparents! We are praying about and discussing how our community and its work might grow in the future as we have grown fewer in number.

Catholics United for Life is a national pro-life apostolate. Its mission is to promote the full teachings of the Church on the dignity of human life, Christian family life, and the virtue of chastity. CUL began sidewalk counseling soon after the *Roe v. Wade*

Supreme Court decision, has offered pregnancy aid, and at present has six affiliates. It publishes pro-life literature in English and Spanish, which is distributed in the United States and Latin America. Pamphlets and books are distributed yearly to prison chaplains and to other organizations. CUL has two projects to advance the cause to defend life: The Center for Law and Justice is an association of Catholic attorneys who advocate for the right to life and defend the rights of pro-life advocates; and The National Pro-Life Center, located on Capital Hill, works with us to provide programs that educate on the teachings of the Church on such issues as abortion, embryonic stem cell research, cloning, etc.

Our chapter has a large printing operation and publishes pamphlets, booklets, and books under the title of New Hope Publications. A growing number of these publications are Dominican subjects. Most recently, St. Martin's and CUL have cosponsored a tremendously successful (very Dominican) annual youth conference, IGNITE YOUR TORCH, and are beginning to sponsor other Catholic conferences in our Archdiocese. We hope to continue with these programs as there is a great thirst here for the truths of our Catholic faith.

For several decades, we have been active in promoting the Confraternity of Angelic Warfare, a Dominican confraternity. Today, we are receiving the good help of our director, Fr. Stephen Hayes, O.P., who recently received eighteen people, youth and adults, into the Confraternity.

Since 1979, we have had our own chaplain and chapel and the blessing of daily Mass. Presently, we are remodeling one of our buildings for a retreat and visitor center, the John Paul II Retreat House. So when I say you are welcome to visit us, we have a place for you to stay! At this time, it is very simple, but comfortable enough.

If you would like more information about our work and/or our community life, and visiting us, you can contact me at (800) 764-8444.

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