

DOMINICAN LAITY

- AND THE YEAR 2000 -

Anthony Dao Quang Chinh, O.P.

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Mary, Mother of Preachers,
Pray for Us.

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Introduction

THROUGHOUT the tradition of the church, lay persons have been strong witnesses to Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. Today's laity, as inheritors of that treasure of fidelity, must make their ministries more meaningful and visible. We have, among the faithful, a beautiful Catholic Action group possessing both the strength and vitality of laity, and the charism of followers of St. Dominic. They are lay Dominicans.

It has been my dream, these many years, to see a renewal and expansion of the lay Dominican movement. Many of us think of lay Dominicans as a sleeping giant that one day will awaken to become a weapon for evangelization. It is realistic to arouse the giant through prayerful, thoughtful leadership extended by all of us who are committed to the spirit of St. Dominic. Dominican Fathers, Brothers, Sisters, and involved laity must act together to stimulate the latest talents and potential unique to this "giant". We will find the answer to our quest forthcoming from our collective deliberations concerning:

- The role of the laity in today's Church;
- The spirit of St. Dominic;

- The charism unique to Dominican laity; and
- Visions of contributions to all the People of God, potentially possible within this movement.

It is my intention to begin these deliberations with you, to provoke thought and stimulate discussion in support of the Dominican laity. I fondly hope that this modest text will only be a beginning, and will be followed by more substantial contributions from our Dominican Order for the benefit of our Catholic Action Dominican Laity.

I am most grateful to Fr. Paul Philibert, O.P., Provincial of the Southern Dominican Province; Fr. Louis Every, socius; and the Provincial Council for their confidence in permitting me to participate in this beloved ministry.

Being Provincial Promoter of the Dominican Family in the South gives me many opportunities to speak with and listen to lay Dominicans. I offer my thanks to God for the zeal and the openness of all the Dominican family; especially for that of the delegates who went to New Orleans to attend the Lay Provincial Council meeting. The members of the Provincial Council of the Laity deserve our special recognition and prayers. Under their leadership, over the next few years, I know that our dreams will at least partially come true.

I must acknowledge the generous assistance of my parents, who are lay Dominicans; of Fr. Victor Brown, O.P., and Sister Rose, O.P., who have offered many helpful suggestions; and that of Dr. Marjorie Bourne and Father William Somerville, for their help with- my first edition; of Tom and Marcia Potempa for the second edition. I am thankful to all others who have assisted me in this effort.

Anthony Dao Quang Chinh, O.P.

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CHAPTER 1

LAITY AND REALITY

IN less than three years, the world will welcome the year 2000. It is exciting to look to the future. Just the number 2000 and the term millennium impress many of us. Together with potential benefits, this new era can be expected to bestow a number of concerns upon our society. Within the last thirty years, we have seen a change of pace unmatched in the previous one hundred years. Man's dreams have been realized in this period. Human beings have already landed on the moon, and are now looking toward Mars. The moon is no longer a place beyond our reach or comprehension. It is part of our reality affording us problems, opportunities, and beauty. Within this period, we have seen the introduction of computing systems which magnify man's abilities, permitting one man to accomplish what one hundred men could not do sixty years ago. Such technological change inevitably is accompanied by changes in our society: in the way in which men and women organize themselves to accomplish tasks, and in the ways in which we relate to each other as people. These societal

changes demand that we acknowledge another issue. This issue is not new, for, since 1960, the documents of Vatican II have discussed it. Yet it takes on different dimensions every day. I am referring of course to the general question:

“What should be the role of the laity in the church for the next few decades of the third millennium?”

Similarly, as members of the Dominican Family, we must ask ourselves:

“What are our visions of the Dominican Laity?”

In the last thirty years, the Church has suffered problems caused by both the liberals and conservatives alike. Most of these extremists would have us believe that only they understand the needs of our time and the meaning contained within Vatican II's documents. If they can not find a source within the Bible or from the tradition of the Church, they cite “inspiration” of the Holy Spirit as the authority from which their works proceed. Unfortunately, the Holy Spirit does not always speak. Thus, His Name continues to be abused. Coincidentally, should the Pope and the authority of the Church endorse the same side of an issue, these extremists show no appreciation. When opposed, they are prone to criticize the Pope as being either a conservative who still lives in the time before Vatican II or as a liberal who is leading the Church toward Protestantism. Some such radicals picture themselves as heroes and martyrs who are speaking on behalf of the silent majority.

The result of these disruptive dialogues leads to confusion among the faithful. Typically, a parishioner will tell me that whenever he finishes reading The National Catholic Reporter, he is left with the impression that those such as Hans

Kung, Charles Curran, or the nuns who signed the letter supporting abortion, are courageous representatives of those who are oppressed. Perhaps only through their efforts will the Church become more open and democratic. Alternatively, reading other Catholic publications, such as The National Catholic Register, Souls, etc., he finds the same individuals portrayed as rebels whose efforts are leading to the destruction of the Church. Similarly, if one reads only the magazine of Msgr. Lefebvre's group, he may be persuaded that Lefebvre is a savior sent by God to redeem the Church, and that the existing schism is the fault of the Church of Rome.

What should we do? How can we find the right path? By what means are we to follow the principal suggested by St. Thomas Aquinas; that of *virtus in medio stat* (virtue is in balance).

We must accept that we are living in a new era, in the midst of a world in change. The time when only Rome, the Bishops, and priests can preach, teach, and administer is over. The time when the laity's duties were merely to pray, to pay, and to obey has long since passed. We must look for a new integration, a new sharing, through which every one can contribute to the exercise of our collective duties and responsibilities, as one's vocation in life permits. In the search for a new system of sharing, two opposing philosophies appear. The first movement argues that lay people are capable of performing all functions required within the Church and Her ministries. Priests and sisters are no different than lay people. A priest is merely an employee, neither more nor less, who, like other employees, works from nine to five each day. This suggests that clergy have no special vocation. They should not live apart in an ivory tower, separated from others. Religious must be prepared to reach out to average persons, to understand them, and to more effectively help them. Above all, the clergy are reminded that they are merely human

beings, like all other humans. This “humanism” seeks to diminish the value of the roles of all religious in our lives. Those of the opposing movement reason that the faithful are best characterized as “sheep”, and the priest as “shepherd”. This view contends that laity must follow blindly wherever the pastor leads, should obey whatever the pastor instructs, and are bound to do anything the pastor orders. Only through the priest can genuine dogma be preached and taught. In the parish, the ministry of permanent deacons, readers, Eucharistic ministers, catechists, etc., are seen as only “adornments” symbolically adopted to provide the appearance of participation, as opposed to reflecting the “real” renewal of the Church. All those holding these views see themselves as being moderate and reasonable, and find their security within the tradition of the Church.

Once again, we ask:

“What standards should we follow?”

We are called members of the Catholic Church. Thus, the standards, that all must accept, are based upon the definition of the Christian Faithful which includes one’s duties and prerogatives. The Code of Canon Law 204 defines:

The Christian Faithful are those, who, in as much as they have been incorporated in Christ through baptism, have been constituted as the people of God; for this reason, since they have become sharers in Christ’s priestly, prophetic and royal office in their own manner, they are called to exercise the mission which has been entrusted

to the Church to fulfill in the world, in accord with condition proper to each one.¹

The Church emphasizes the phrase: Lay people are the “sharers in Christ’s priestly, prophetic, and royal office in their own manner.” How should they exercise their “shared office”? The Church explains more fully:

1. The Christian Faithful, conscious of their own responsibility, are bound by Christian obedience to follow what the sacred pastors, as representatives of Christ, declare as teachers of the faith, or determine as leaders of the Church.

2. The Christian Faithful are free to make known their needs, especially spiritual ones, and their desires to the pastors of the Church.

3. In accord with the knowledge, competence and preeminence which they possess, they have the right and even at times the duty to manifest to the sacred pastors their opinion on matters which pertain to the good of the Church, and they have a right to make their opinion known to the other Christian Faithful, with due regard for the integrity of faith and morals and reverence toward their pastors, and with consideration for the common good and the dignity of persons.²

We are instructed that laity should not separate themselves from the clergy. Together with the clergy and religious, they form the body of Christ. Their relationships

and the interdependence are most clearly exemplified within the parish. The pastor, who receives a formal assignment from the Bishop, is the leader of the parish. The pastor is responsible, not only to the Bishop, but also to the congregation. The pastor must constantly remind himself that, as head of the body, he must lead God's people. Yet, as head, he can do little without the active help, support, and participation of the other parts of the body. Team-work is essential to the viability of a parish and must be practiced by pastor and parishioners alike. Each must recognize and respect their individual roles within the parish and within the Church-at-large, bearing in mind that not all parts of the body have the same functions. All faithful are members of the Church and all are called to work for the coming of God's kingdom, according to the diversity of their situation, charism, and ministry. This diversity and variety is linked to differences of sex, of age, and of endowed natural gifts. Represented diversity makes the Church vital and blessed. St. Cyril of Jerusalem, inspired by the letter to the Corinthians, said that the effects of the Holy Spirit's accidents are many and marvelous even though He never changes. The Spirit allows one to be a teacher of divine truth, inspires another to prophesy, gives another the gift of healing, the power of casting out devils, and enables others to interpret Holy Scripture. The Spirit strengthens one man's self control, teaches another how to help the poor, and leads another to a life of asceticism. His actions are different, but He is always the same. In each person, the Spirit reveals His presence in a particular way for the common good.³

Each of the faithful shares the same grace but in different manners. Through the Sacrament of Baptism, all are called Christians, the ones who belong to Christ: and as Christ is the Priest, the Prophet, and the King, those who belong to Him can function as priest, prophet, and king.⁴

NOTES

¹Code of Canon Law, Canon Law Society of America (Washington, D.C., 1983), n. 204.

²*ibid*, n. 212.

³John Paul II, The Lay Members of Christ's Faithful People, ed. the Daughters of St. Paul (1988), n. 20.

⁴St. Paul, 1 Cor., 12: 12-26 - St. Cyril of Jerusalem, from a Catechetical Instruction, "*De Spiritu Sancto*", 1. 11-12.

CHAPTER 2

THE THREEFOLD MISSION OF LAITY

TRADITION, Canon Law, and Vatican II affirm a three-fold mission of the laity in God's plan of salvation, referring to each as Priestly, Prophetic, and Kingly; in acknowledgement of ministries devoted to sanctifying, preaching, and governing.

PRIESTLY MINISTRY

The first ministry of the faithful is the Priestly Ministry, the mission of sanctifying. For St. Thomas Aquinas, the office of those who exercise the priestly ministry has three functions.

- To bestow Sacred things on people
- To offer the prayers of people to God
- To make, in some manner, satisfaction for the people's sins¹

Vatican II reaffirms that definition in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church. All the faithful, through the sacrament of baptism, anointed by the Holy Spirit, form a new people, a kingdom of priests. The works of these Christians, both spiritual and physical, are sacrifices offered to God. That is the proclamation of one's effort to be perfect. Through these works, the laity shares the priestly ministry with Jesus.

Imitating the Savior, the offered sacrifice, lay persons dedicate themselves to God. Thus they become both sacrifice and offerer. They bear witness to Christ everywhere they go. Through their lives, the living Gospel, a reason for hope of eternal life is seen.

There is more than one way to exercise priestly ministry. Participation can be expressed in many different ways. The faithful exercise the priesthood of Jesus by the reception of sacraments, by praise, by prayer, by thanksgiving, and by active charity.

As Jesus meditates between God and human beings, any peace maker who reconciles people to one another, or one who brings consolation to his neighbors, is performing Jesus' priestly ministry. It is appropriate to mention here, the blessings on the mountain, the standards for those who are called "members of the priestly kingdom."²

- Happy are the poor in spirit; theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.
- Happy the gentle; they shall have the earth for their heritage.
- Happy those who mourn; they shall be comforted.
- Happy those who hunger and thirst for what is right; they shall be satisfied.
- Happy the merciful; they shall have mercy shown them.
- Happy the pure in heart; they shall see God.

- Happy the peace makers; they shall be called sons of God.
- Happy those who are persecuted in the cause of right; theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.³

The priestly ministry of the laity is mentioned many times in the new Code of the Canon Law. Lay persons may be ministers of baptism;⁴ they may preside at the Liturgy of the Word, and distribute the Eucharist;⁵ they may be authorized to carry out the rite of burial on behalf of the Church.⁶ The role of the laity is more evident when the preparation for, and the initiation of, the sacraments are mentioned. Preparation for baptism begins even before the birth of a child.⁷ The qualified lay person may carry on this function of training.⁸ In special cases, qualified persons may give instructions to an engaged couple, and may perform the marriage liturgy.⁹

Concerning acts of divine worship, lay ministries take on special significance. The two ministries that people are more familiar with are that of the lector, who reads, and that of the acolyte, who serves during the Eucharistic service.¹⁰ Here, the *Ministeria Quaedam* of Pope Paul VI should be recalled. It states that episcopal conferences could request a formal recognition of other ministries, such as that of music ministers, commentators, etc. Lay persons are advised about principles and norms of sacred arts.¹¹ They can also make a vow to God.¹²

Even in this priestly function, lay persons can perform their prophetic mission. In many places, the laity are in charge of the R.C.I.A., C.C.D., and C.C.E. programs. They are asked to perform the mission entrusted to the Church in sanctifying through the priestly ministry. Through the prophetic ministry, in addition, lay persons participate more fully in the three-fold mission of the Church.

PROPHETIC MINISTRY

The Prophetic Ministry embraces the mission of preaching. St. Thomas Aquinas said that prophetic knowledge preaches the truth and announces timeless things.¹³ With the prophetic ministry, the faithful bring the paschal mysteries of Jesus to the world. Preaching Jesus' life is expressed in three forms: words, deeds, and life. Preaching of the Word, itself, can be expressed through: preaching, catechetical instruction, missionary work, other educational endeavors, and in social communication. In each of these areas, the laity are called upon to exercise their unique duties and responsibilities.

The Code of Canon Law sees preaching of the Word as the principal means of ministering to God's people. The ministry of the Divine Word seeks to convey the message of God, and the mysteries of Jesus, which are grounded in Scripture, Tradition, liturgy, the magisterium, and the life of the Church.¹⁴ Laity are allowed to preach in a church or oratory in cases of necessity, or in instances where utility recommends itself according to prescriptions determined by the episcopal conference.¹⁵ A permanent deacon is empowered to deliver a homily as part of the Liturgy. Today, along with theological topics concerned with God's relationship to all Christians, many themes preached by the Church focus directly upon the life of the laity.

- On the dignity and freedom of human beings
- On the unity and stability of the family
- On obligations toward others
- On the correct ordering of temporal goods
- On fair sharing between rich and poor people

In the domain of catechetical instruction, all faithful, before teaching others, must have an adequate formation in

doctrine and the experience of Christian life, so that the faith of believers becomes living, manifest, and fruitful.¹⁶

Among the faithful, parents are to have the primary responsibility, in word and example, to form their children in faith and in the practice of Christian living.¹⁷ The pastor is bound to provide for catechetical formation of all members of his parish, including the mature, young adults, and children. He is to have recourse to many persons, particularly to lay catechists, to assist him in this ministry.¹⁸ The catechists must know fully the teachings of the Church, and learn, theoretically and practically, the proper tools of religious education.¹⁹

The Church emphasizes that missionary activities of the Church are properly the responsibility of all the faithful, since the whole Church is missionary by nature, and evangelization is a fundamental duty of God's people.²⁰ Canon 784 explicitly states that lay persons may be chosen as missionaries,²¹ particularly for the role of catechists whose tasks are to explain the teachings of the Gospel, to organize liturgical services, and perform charitable works.²² After receiving a suitable formation, catechists can be commissioned to teach on behalf of the Church.²³

Schools are of great importance for teaching the faith. This forum is certainly one of the primary duties of committed lay Christians. parents should cooperate with school teachers, to whom they entrust their children's education²⁴, so that these children may receive religious and moral education both at home and at the school they attend.²⁵ The aims of Catholic education are to help the young harmoniously develop their physical, moral, and intellectual endowments; acquire a better sense of responsibility and the correct use of freedom; and prepare them to take on active roles in society.²⁶ These objectives extend to Catholic universities, whose responsibilities include the initiation of laity in the study of theology.²⁷

The role of the laity is most important in the arena of social communication. Laity, particularly those with special expertise, are called upon to make use of the media, the press, film, radio, and television, in assisting the pastoral works of the Church.²⁸ The Decree on the Means of Social Communication, *Inter Mirifica*, in acknowledging the vital importance of social communication, recognizes that laity have more influence over the media than the Church's pastoral leaders. The Church asks those who are involved in the arrangement and use of media to lend their special talents to the Church's concern for media morality and its positive cultural impact. Their assistance is also sought in determining ways the media may be effectively employed to serve the Church's teaching mission.²⁹

Frequently these days, we find those among us who wish to limit priests or the laity to a single form of preaching. When we have many means at our disposal to preach the Good News, why do we debate with one another about the time or the manner in which the message is delivered? A congregation appreciates a homily because of its contents rather than because of the title the homilist carries. None can dispute that the best homily a person can preach is the homily of life.

A lay Dominican student told the following story:

“The student had recently moved from California to Houston. On the second day of his arrival, it rained heavily, and the area in which he lived was flooded. There was a big hole in the street in front of his apartment. A motorist's car landed right in that hole, causing a good deal of damage to the vehicle and some injuries to the passengers. Neither the student nor his roommates could think of anything to do other than to report the accident to

city authorities. Their neighbor, Mr. David, took positive action. He stood very close to the hole, one hand holding an umbrella, and the other hand waiving a flag to warn approaching motorists away from the hazard. Through hard rain and wind, Mr. David maintained his post for more than two hours. Because of his service to others, many cars avoided an accident in rush-hour traffic.

That student was very impressed by Mr. David's actions. He was even more impressed when he learned that Mr. David was seventy-two years old. Mr. David seemed to him to be even more courageous than Hemingway's character in "The Old Man and the Sea". The following day, the student visited him to express his admiration and gratitude. They talked of many things, and learned much about each other. Mr. David invited the student to go with him to his church the next Sunday.

"What is your church," he asked?

Mr. David replied: "I am a member of the Second Baptist Church."

When the student told his priest this story, he concluded: "I am a Catholic, and I do not want to be anything else. But, just imagine if I were searching for a religion; what better choice could I make than a faith that produces a caring man like Mr. David!"

KINGLY MINISTRY

Together with the priestly and prophetic Ministries, the laity serve the Church in sharing the kingly Ministry,

the mission of governing. The 1917 Code of Canon Law restricted the exercise of this faculty to clerics alone. But, since 1971, Pope Paul VI opened a door by allowing laity to serve as judges in church courts under certain conditions. The new Code of Canon Law recognizes that lay persons are able to exercise ecclesiastical governance, although in some instances the lay person's role is more consultative than decisive. In other instances, they share in the decision-making process. Book 7 of the new Code of Canon Law provides an abundance of new positions for the faithful. Lay persons are enabled by the code to become advocates, notaries, defenders of the bond, promoters of justice, auditors, assessors, and even judges.³⁰

In the executive branch, a lay person can serve the Church through the diocesan pastoral and economic councils. The pastoral council has the duty to over-see various pastoral activities in the diocese, and to propose ways and means to improve the over-all programs. There are pastoral and economic councils in most of the dioceses of the United States.

The economic council is consulted before any taxes are levied and major financial transactions are undertaken.³¹ The council must give its consent for certain acts of alienation.³² The bishop is no longer considered the sole administrator of the diocese. He shares this responsibility with laity who serve in the administrative office. Further, at the diocesan level, many functions are now available to lay persons, including those of diocesan treasurer and bur-sar.³³ The position of chancellor may also be vested in a qualified lay person.³⁴ As of this time, at least two archdioceses, San Francisco and Louisville, already have been served by sister-chancellors. We hope that in the near future we shall see a lay person empowered as chancellor. For us to see that day, the laity must be properly prepared.

On the parochial level, the bishop may give permission to follow the same system of shared responsibility adopted by the diocese, and the faithful of the parish are to be part of such a group.³⁵ They may assist the pastor in promoting pastoral activities, and in the pastoral direction of the parish.³⁶

NOTES

¹Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, IIa, Q. 22; a. 1, 2.

²Apocalypse, 1: 6; 5: 9-10.

³Matthew, 5:3-12.

⁴Code of Canon Law, n. 861.

⁵ibid, n. 230.

⁶ibid, n. 19.

⁷ibid, n. 867.

⁸ibid, n. 851.

⁹ibid, n. 1112 & 2.

¹⁰ibid, n. 230.

¹¹ibid, n. 1216.

¹²ibid, n. 119.

¹³Summa Theologiae, IIa. IIae, Q. 171, a. 3.

¹⁴Code of Canon Law, n. 756 through 761.

¹⁵ibid, n. 766.

¹⁶ibid, nos. 773, 774 & 1.

¹⁷ibid, n. 774 & 2.

¹⁸ibid, n. 776.

¹⁹ibid, n. 780.

²⁰ibid, n. 781.

²¹ibid, n. 784.

²²ibid, n. 781 & 1.

²³ibid, n. 785.

²⁴ibid, 796 & 2.

²⁵ibid, n. 799.

²⁶ibid, n. 795.

²⁷ibid, n. 811.

²⁸ibid, n. 822 & 3.

²⁹Decree on the Means of Social Communications, *Inter Mirifica*, 1963, nos. 1, 2, & 13.

³⁰Code of Canon Law, n. 1437, n. 1435, n. 1428, n. 1424, n. 1421.

³¹ibid, n. 1263, n. 1277.

³²ibid, n. 1292.

³³ibid, n. 494, n. 1276.

³⁴ibid, n. 482.

³⁵ibid, n. 563.

³⁶ibid, n. 517, n. 529, n. 537.

CHAPTER 3

ST. DOMINIC: THE SIGN OF HOPE

SOME may say that they can be saved without being a lay Dominican. So, why must they join the Dominican laity? The Rule of the Lay Chapter of St. Dominic shares that view saying:

“Among the Christian faithful, men and women living in the world, in virtue of their Baptism and Confirmation, have been made partakers in the prophetic, priestly, and royal mission of our Lord Jesus Christ. They are called to make Christ present to the people so that the divine message of redemption may be heard and welcomed by all everywhere.”¹

The Rule further explains:

“Some of these Christian faithful, moved by the Holy Spirit to live according to the spirit and

charism of St. Dominic, are incorporated into the Dominican Order through a special commitment according to their appropriate statutes. They have a distinctive character in both their spirituality, and their service to God and neighbor. As members of the Order, they share in its apostolic mission through prayer, study, and preaching according to the state of the laity.”²

Prayer, study, missionary works, and contemplation are the characteristics of Dominican apostolic action. These characteristics flow from the life and spirit of St. Dominic, who was both a reformer of the society of his time, and of the Church. Like Jesus, who “comes not to abolish the laws, but to fulfill them,”³ Dominic and his brothers did not destroy traditions and customs of the Church. Rather, they brought a breath of new life into the Church.

PREACHING OF THE WORD

Preaching is the principal charism of the Dominican Order, and it makes one of the faithful “Dominican”. Today, all priests and deacons preach. It was not so in the 13th century. Dominic saw the needs of his time and his people.⁴ People wished to hear the Word of God more often, but only Bishops could preach at that time. When Dominic wanted to establish a new congregation of preachers, he was asked:

“Do you want to found a congregation of Bishops?”

Such was not his intention. He wanted to help God’s people hear and live God’s Word consistently, and his dream came true. The Dominicans are called Preachers: The Order of Preachers. Pope Honorius III addressed Dominic and his

brethren as Friars Preachers, and entrusted them with the mission of preaching. In the bull *Gratiarum Omnium*, the Pope described Dominic and his friars as the ones who had given themselves to the proclamation of the Word of God, preaching the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ throughout the world. In his own name and that of the Holy See, the Pope recommended the Friars-Preachers, praised their preaching and mandated to the entire hierarchy -- archbishops, bishops, abbots, priors, and prelates -- to assist the Dominicans who are preaching the Word of the Lord.⁵

For a Dominican, salvation of the people means proclamation of God's Word. The Dominican laity can, and must, share this charism. The Rule looks at preaching as the duty of any lay Dominican:

“Every Dominican must be prepared to preach the Word of God. This preaching is the exercise of the prophetic mission of the baptized, strengthened by the sacrament of Confirmation. In the present world, the preaching of the Word of God involves the defense of the dignity of human life, the family, and the person.”⁶

The preaching of the Dominican laity helps people make connections between the reality of their lives and the realities of the Gospel. The birth of Jesus and the Paschal mysteries must be the principal events occupying the thoughts of each Dominican. Dominican laity help their neighbors see how Jesus Christ has entered and identified Himself with the human realities of pain and happiness. In order to make such connections, each Dominican has to be a listener before he is a speaker. It means openness to the Lord's voice, not only in the Bible, but in the events of daily life.⁷

The Church has delegated the Dominicans to preach and to teach sacred truth. Preaching and teaching are interchangeable as means of instruction of people in the doctrine of faith. To fulfill that mission, all Dominicans -- friars, nuns, sisters, and laity -- must enrich their knowledge of what they preach about through study.

STUDIES

Nemo dat quod non habet (Nobody gives what one does not have). To preach means to give. How can a Dominican give what he does not have? To have what he should give, a Dominican studies doctrine. He must study throughout his life. St. Dominic was the first founder of a religious Order to bring study into daily religious life. He put study of sacred truth in a place that monks had reserved for manual labor for years. For him, to study means to serve God and God's people.

The Book of Constitutions of the Order states:

“St. Dominic included study, ordained to the ministry of salvation, as an essential part of his plan for the Order; and this was no small innovation. He, who himself always carried with him the Gospel of St. Matthew and the Epistles of St. Paul, directed the brethren to schools, and sent them to the major cities to that they might study, preach, and establish a convent.”⁸

Dominic himself was studious. He asked the brethren to study theology as a daily duty of the community. To be an example, he humbly led his first Dominicans to the lecture of Master Alexander Stevens in the cathedral school of Toulouse. The purpose of their studies aimed at preaching and acquiring knowledge through meditation. Stud-

ies help Dominicans to be more profound in their ministry and in their unity with God. What Dominic wanted to see in his first brethren is what he wanted to see in all Dominicans. Of course, not all Dominicans learn the same things. The Rule suggests in more detail what lay Dominicans should learn.

- The Word of God and theological reflection
- Liturgical prayer
- The history and tradition of the Order
- Contemporary documents of the Church and the Order
- Awareness of the signs of our times⁹

The Truth: “Veritas”

St. Dominic wanted his brothers and sisters to use all possible means to come to the knowledge and possession of the Truth. We should remember that Dominic is called: “Light of the Church, Doctor of the Truth.”

What Dominic was, all Dominicans -- friars, nuns, sisters, and lay persons -- must be. If we study and preach the truth, then we too shall be “lights of the Church”.

MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES

Dominic put studying and preaching the truth in the framework of missionary activities. At the beginning of his priestly life, he was a member of the Augustinian Canon at Osma.¹⁰ His dual obligation consisted of choral office and teaching the truth of God. His cloister solitude was disturbed when the bishop asked him to go on a diplomatic mission. As they traveled through France, they were challenged by the teachings of the Albigensian heresy. Unfortunately, many people believed in that heresy. Dominic, in dialogue with people of good heart who had been led astray, believed that there must be preaching missions projected to them. A group of nine women heretics,

whom he was instrumental in converting, formed a convent. They assisted in the works of the brethren through their prayers. Dominic wanted to go further than that. He decided to organize a group with papal commission to preach. Besides these admirable nuns and friars, many laymen and women identified with his objectives and willingly lent their talents to further his efforts. Originally, the lay Dominican movement was the product of the lay penitential movement termed "Militia of Jesus Christ". Under the leadership of Dominic and his brethren, these men and women adopted the Dominican spirit into their lives. Although lay Dominicans walked along with Dominic from the very beginning of his mission, the earliest known Rule was edited between 1221 and 1228. These first lay Dominicans sought a life of Christian perfection and penance while continuing the normal pursuits of the laity. Many vowed themselves to celibacy, and wore a religious habit similar to the habit of the friars. The Dominican friars organized them into chapters of active religious helpers. In 1405, in the bull *Apostolicae Sedie*, Pope Innocent VII gave canonical approval to the Third Order. Indirectly, lay Dominicans contributed their best to the missionary activities of the Order. In the 16th century, the Third Order was taken by Dominican missionaries to many countries in Asia, including Japan, China, Vietnam, and the Philippines. Most recently, among 117 Martyrs canonized in June, 1988, there were ten lay Dominicans, and two Dominican priests. Twenty-five others were members of the Rosary Confraternity. With fifty-nine newly canonized martyrs, the Dominican Order has seventy-seven martyrs!

THE NEED OF TIME

The gifts of Dominic were not limited only to administration within the life of the Church and of the Order.

Dominic was also personally dedicated to society. He saw the needs of his time, and he knew how to use preaching, study, and missionary activities as weapons to win the hearts of all people. He was a canon-regular. He knew the power of both prayer and of apostolic works. While the parish priests were limited to the activities of their parishes, the religious of the military Orders and the Order of Ransoms -- Knights Templars, Hospitallers, Teutonic Knights, Trinitarians -- sought the perfection of their members through apostolic works of soldiering, almsgiving, housing of pilgrims and ransoming of captives. The monks of the contemplative Orders, such as the Benedictines and Cisterciens, devoted themselves entirely to divine worship in lives separated from the world, hidden in monasteries. Dominic combined the best of monasticism with the best of apostolic life. The life of the Dominican Order sanctifies both the friars and the congregation. Later on, St. Thomas Aquinas was to produce an often cited formula on the interrelationship between the two:

“Neither contemplation alone, nor action alone, is the highest form of Christian life, but contemplation in action.”

Contemplation in action: *Contemplare et contemplata allis tradere* (to contemplate and to bring to others the fruit of our contemplation). The life of any Dominican is a mixed life, a blend of the active and the contemplative. Somehow it is not dualistic; it is one. They are *sine qua non*, like body and soul. The *contemplata allis tradere* themselves are active works. When they spring from contemplated sacred truth, they become contemplated activities. The *contemplare* itself is more or less the process of arriving at the truth. Somehow, when that found truth is

expressed through active works, it becomes active contemplation. St. Thomas said that contemplation is better than activities, but the best is the combination of both. He wrote:

“...the work of the active life is twofold; one proceeding from the fullness of contemplation, such as teaching and preaching.... And this work is more excellent than simple contemplation for it is better to enlighten than merely to shine, so it is better to give to others the fruits of one’s contemplation than merely to contemplate. The second work of the active life consists completely in outward occupation, such as almsgiving, receiving guests, and the like, which are less excellent than the works of contemplation, except in cases of necessity. Therefore they hold the highest place in religious Orders who are committed to teaching and preaching, who moreover are nearest to episcopal perfection. Orders directed to contemplation hold second place; those occupied with external things hold the third.”¹¹

Thus contemplation leads everyone to God’s love. When lay Dominicans have God’s love, they will be led to apostolic action in active works among neighbors. Life of the lay Dominicans reflects the life of which the bishop says in the ceremony of the ordination of priests:

“You must apply your energies to the duty of teaching in the name of Christ, the Chief Teacher. Share with all mankind the word of God, believe what you read, teach what you believe, and put into practice what you teach.”¹²

Lay Dominicans, inheriting the treasure of St. Dominic and his brethren, enriched by the Dominican saints, bring meditation and its fruits into reality. That treasure is a call that invites laity to deeper prayer and contemplation. They are called to immerse themselves in God's love. After being strengthened by God's divine love, they are responsible to serve God in their families, friends, ministries, works, and society.

NOTES

¹The Rule of the Lay Chapters of St. Dominic, trans. Southern Dominican Province (January 28, 1987), n. 1.

²*ibid*, nos. 2, 4.

³Matthew, 5:17.

⁴In Dominic's time, Albigensiasm was a strong heresy. The name was derived from a city in Southern France called Albi. Albigensiasm reflected a dualistic view of the world. A good God created man in His own image, and an evil God corrupts this image. It denied the Holy Trinity and repudiated the sacraments, especially marriage.

The members of that sect promoted sexual promiscuity and were vegetarians. Because of their simple appearances, they attracted some unsophisticated persons. Dominic saw the need to preach the Truth to these people, including the heretics themselves. Dominic began to gather with him a group of priests to preach against the heresy. They traveled in evangelical style, without horse or money. They brought many heretics back to the Church.

⁵William Hinnebusch, The History of the Dominican Order. New York: Alba House, 1965. p. 53.

⁶The Rule of the Lay Chapters of St. Dominic, n. 12.

⁷The Province of St. Martin de Porres states: "Preaching the Word is the first priority of the Southern Province. Each individual is actively involved in preaching. It is an awesome responsibility; to presume to be knowledgeable enough in matters of the heart and spirit to preach to others. Only through listening to the self can a preacher learn to listen to the congregation, a congregation comprised of a wide variety of individuals with widely varying needs."

⁸Book of Constitutions and Ordinations of the Order of Friar Preachers. General Curia (Rome, 1984), n. 76.

⁹The Rule of the Lay Chapters of St. Dominic, n. 13.

¹⁰A canon is a priest whose principal task is fulfilling of solemn liturgical ceremonies. If a canon is a secular priest, usually he is associated with a cathedral; if he is a religious priest, he belongs to a special community of a canon which is an independent monastery, or which can be located next to a cathedral and takes care of the liturgy for the cathedral. Dominic took care of the cathedral of Osma, and after a few years, he became prior of this community.

¹¹Summa Theologiae, IIa IIae, Q. 188, a. 6.

¹²The Rite, Vol. 2, (New York: Pueblo Publishing Company, Inc., 1980), p. 62.

CHAPTER 4

VISIONS OF FUTURE LAY DOMINICANS

THE Master General of the Dominican Order, in his letter of November 23, 1987 to all members of the Order, wrote:

The awakening of the laity to ministry and ecclesial co-responsibility is a sign of the times with a deep theological significance. The declarations of the Council and Synod are only the reflection of an historical event which is taking place everywhere in all the local churches. It is an event of the universal church.¹

The Dominican laity live in this world sharing its environment. Willingly or unwillingly, lay Dominicans must share the problems of this era, and participate in their solution. Like any living being, the lay Dominican movement has its successes and its failures. It is a shame that, when the Church has recognized the role of the laity, our Dominicans did not immediately respond to the invitation

to active participation. Some priests, sisters, and lay persons still look upon the Dominican laity as a pious fraternity of elderly individuals. Others think that lay Dominicans are only interested in personal sanctification and not in doing apostolic work. There are more negative than positive judgments about the Dominican laity. The Avila General Chapter wants to correct these misleading attitudes by recommending that Dominican students be given information and instruction about the lay Dominican movement. Recently, in Montreal, Canada, some sixty delegates, representing 200,000 lay Dominicans in the world, assembled to look for new, positive, and updated direction. All delegates agreed to look zealously toward the future.

Problems of the past must be avoided. Lay Dominicans have not sufficiently adjusted to the needs of their changing society and properly identified opportunities for their ministry. In other words, today, as they look toward the future and prepare a plan, they must see the needs of their times as manifest in the anxieties of their local society. All ministries must serve the needs of the people, not those of the ministers. Observation of a variety of ministries in society is merely a reflection of the many needs and requirements of its people. Among those who need help, there are some who deserve to receive more care and love. In many documents, the Dominican friars in the South mention their special concern for the poor, undocumented, and underprivileged people:

- for those who are treated unfairly, because
 - they do not have the same skin color,
 - they do not speak the same language.
- for the plight of women;
- for fairness to workers;

- for whose imprisoned;
- for all refugees.²

Besides these problems, evangelization is a pressing concern. The South is called “the Bible Belt”. But, in fact, it is the Bible Belt of our Protestant brothers and sisters. The Catholic Church in the South has fallen well behind in its current contribution to Southern faith. Most of our Black brethren are not Catholic. There is still a large gap between this African-American community and the Catholic Church. Nationally, among the fifty-three million Catholics of this country, more than one-third do not attend Mass every Sunday. In the South, the percentage of those failing to attend is much higher. Many young men and women are heard to say: “I am a Catholic, but ...,” or, “I was reared as a Catholic, somehow...” The Church is losing many of her members. Twenty years ago, nearly all Hispanic speaking people were Catholic. Today, the number has decreased to 70 percent, suggesting a loss to other religions or individuals with no religion at all. The statistics among Asians are no better. Many refugees and immigrants, sponsored by the Protestant churches, have now become Protestants and deny their former faith. Many ecclesial communities or sects aggressively evangelize through various means such as door-to-door visitation and direct recruitment campaigns. A number of religious groups form welcoming committees to greet all newcomers into their communities. These committees are working very successfully! We must not blind ourselves to these movements. Someday, we must again preach the Good News to our brothers and sisters who are Catholic! Do not forget them. They are the images of Jesus in the world. Remember what our Savior said in Matthew:

When I was hungry, you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you welcomed me; I was naked and you clothed me; I was sick and you visited me; I was in prison and you came to me.³

Listen to a letter from Peter S. in Huntsville, Texas:

“To begin the story of how we got started as a Dominican laity group, I will have to begin with the day I arrived on the Ellis I, Unit I of the Texas Department of Correction in 1985. One of the first things I did was to go to the chapel to try and find information about Catholic activities. I was informed that there were none in the Unit, and there was not a Catholic chaplain.

...I became excited when getting information about the Dominicans. As I read about Dominican Saints and their lives, I knew I had to know more. The (laity) people from the Southern Dominican Province got in touch with me and wanted to help. I did not know how to begin or what to do next. We were in prison. We had no chaplain. I prayed. We all prayed. I prayed each night for help to start a Dominican laity group, and to get a chaplain.

Did God hear our prayers? Yes. He did. We got a new chaplain, and I found out that this new chaplain was also a lay Dominican. When God answers a prayer, He does us much more justice than we deserve. Deacon Potter, our new chaplain, was excited that we wanted to form a Dominican laity group. He wrote and got permission and was appointed chaplain. We now have nine active members.⁴

Some may argue that working with the poor, workers, imprisoned, marginated, or homosexuals cannot be considered as characteristic of the South. Yet, in the South, the problem of the undocumented, the Black, the Hispanic and the Asian refugees, the poor, the underprivileged and the marginated people are really principal issues. Pope John Paul II, during his trip to the United States, said in his homily at the typical southern city of San Antonio:

“People of different races and languages, colors and customs, have come to this land to make it their home. Together with the indigenous people of these territories, there are the descendants of those who came from almost every country in Europe: from Spain and France, from Germany and Belgium, from Italy, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia, from Ireland, England and Scotland. And even from my own native Poland - for it was to Texas, and Pana Maria, that the first Polish immigrants came to the United States. There are the descendants of those who came in chains from Africa; those from Lebanon, the Philippines and Vietnam, and from every Latin American country, especially from Mexico.”⁵

With such a situation, we must have an open attitude in reaching out to those in need. We can help only if we understand. The recommendation of the Acts of St. Martin de Porres Province can be applied to all lay Dominicans in the South:

We recommend that the brothers continue to experience and learn the multicultural richness of the various peoples present in our province: e.g. Afro-

American, Hispanic, Native American, and Vietnamese by:

- a. associating with and listening to the spiritual leaders in these communities;
- b. learning about the various liturgical and pastoral experiences of these cultures;
- c. learning and supporting the special social justice issues that affect these communities;
- d. learning their literature, history and cultural expressions to preach more effectively in these communities;
- e. specifically setting aside time, funds and effort to learn the appropriate culture and language;
- f. recognizing popular piety as a valid and rich expression of Christian spirituality and supporting this in our multi-cultural communities.⁶

Furthermore, there are people who live in rural areas and in transitional cities whose needs are uniquely different from those of other places. Most cities in the South have just undergone explosive growth in the last twenty years. People come and go, leaving behind them many problems and wounds. Two out of five marriages result in divorce within two years of their wedding. The cultural legacy of this life style is one of abortions, drugs, alcohol, youth gangs, and an immoral life style. All are visible scars arising from these Southern cities.

Facing these needs, lay Dominicans cannot just remain passive. They must engage themselves in the world. Lay Dominicans should follow the example of Dominic, who balanced his contemplative life to his active life. The beginnings of meaningful apostolic activities can be found in the Dominican laity who possess a firm and stable interior life.

Together, let us focus upon some visions of the individual and chapters of lay Dominicans, as servants in God's plan of salvation for all people.

DOMINICAN PRIESTLY MINISTRY (or Contemplare)

Lay Dominicans, following the charism of their founder, imitate Christ the Priest in the exercise of spiritual leadership, primarily through prayer, sacrifice and sacramental celebration. When they live the first part of their motto, *contemplare*, they also live the priestly ministry. The contemplative life of a lay Dominican is nourished and strengthened through union with God. Bible meditation, sacraments, prayers, study, retreats, devotions to saints, community life and living the Rule are the means to directly deepen one's love of God.

1. Bible Meditation

"Ignorance of the Scripture is ignorance of Christ." This statement of St. Jerome, the translator and composer of the Vulgate, was repeated in the "Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation" of Vatican II.⁷ The Bible, particularly the New Testament, describes Jesus. If one does not know the Bible, how can one know Jesus? The faithful deepen their knowledge about the sacred truths by frequent reading of the divine Scripture. The liturgy of the Word in the Mass plays an important part. Jesus is present in His word, since it is He who speaks when the Holy Scriptures are read.

Somehow, we should remember that listening to the Scripture in daily Mass is good, but not enough. Lectures are too short, and sometimes they are not continuous. Catholics should spend more time reading and studying the Bible. Each lay Dominican should have a Holy Bible at home, and he should read it as often as he can. A good lay Dominican is nourished by both Holy Scripture and the sacraments.

Lay Dominicans do not only study the Bible. They meditate upon what they learn. The heart of meditation is not words about God, but God Himself. For years, biblical meditations have emphasized thinking of the meaning in the Bible. Thinking, reflection of God's love and salvation, is the basic procedure for gaining understanding of God. Priests and religious have been familiar with this form, but not lay persons. We Catholics do not read the Bible as much as do our Protestant brothers and sisters. We should not blame anyone but ourselves. The Holy Scripture is translated into many different languages, and the language style is simple, so that anyone can read it. A biblical scholar complains:

“A computer student must study computer science everyday to update one's knowledge and to be called a computer student; but, a Catholic does not read the Bible every day to update and extend his/her own knowledge about God, about what makes him/her Catholic.”

How many Catholics have their own Bible? How many Catholics, who have their own Bible, read the Bible everyday? How many read the Bible everyday and practice what they read? Laity should return to the time when the Latin translation of the Bible was called the Vulgate, meaning common and popular. Meditation on the Bible should be popular and simple. All Catholics should meditate on the Bible often.

The Holy Scripture is most important for lay Dominicans. It is important, not only because of its fruitfulness for our interior life and our communion with God, but for our charism, our lives and our preaching. We Dominicans, the ministers of the Word⁸ who engage in preaching, should immerse ourselves in Scripture, so that when we preach and teach, we do not preach our own words, but

God's words. Remember that St. Dominic always talked with God, in God and about God. He always carried the Gospel of St. Matthew and the epistles of St. Paul.

2. *Sacraments and Daily Liturgy*

Biblical meditations complement reception of the sacraments. The union of a lay Dominican with God must be strengthened daily by the sacraments, particularly the Eucharist. The Eucharist is called the sacred liturgy, the model for all priestly activities. All activities of the Church and of lay Dominicans must flow from this sacred liturgy and be directed to the liturgy. Vatican II calls the mystery of the Eucharist the center of the entire life of the Church.⁹ Since the goal of all Catholics is communion with Jesus, what better means can there be than through reception of Holy Communion? Jesus nourishes the faithful ones with His Body and Blood. These faithful people then become the Bread of the World.¹⁰ For, "... the partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ has no less effect than to change us into what we have received."¹¹

Besides the Eucharist, lay Dominicans have a special reverence for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.¹² The Son of God became flesh to reconcile human beings to God and to each other. He gave the world two orders in one statement: "Turn away from sins and believe in the Good News".¹³

Lay Dominicans receive this sacrament, not only because it is a precept of the Church, but because it represents their self-discipline and conversion of heart. Reconciliation is a practice of evangelical penance.

3. *Prayers*

Conversion of heart is confirmed through prayers. Therefore, lay Dominicans must be the people of prayer. While most of the world religions are man-centered, Christianity is God-centered. We pray to God. Prayer is the

raising of the mind, heart, and soul to God. By purpose, there are four types of prayer: adoration, praise, thanksgiving, and petition. By the manner of expression, there are four types: private prayer, public prayer, mental prayer, and vocal prayer. Public prayer is said in a group or in the name of society together. The public prayer that the Church asks all the faithful to say is the Divine Office. The Constitution of Sacred Liturgy reads:

Because it is the Public Prayer of the Church, the divine office is a source of piety and nourishment for personal prayer. Therefore, priests and all others who take part in the divine office are earnestly exhorted in the Lord to attune their minds to their voices when praying it. The better to achieve this ideal, let them take steps to improve their understanding of the liturgy and of the Bible, especially the psalms.¹⁴

Among the method of vocal prayer, the Rosary is mentioned very often. Although it is most popular, “saying” the Rosary is only one of several ways of its prayerful expression, which include:

- Scriptural Rosary
- Pray the Rosary
- Say and Sing the Rosary
- Meditate the Rosary

Unfortunately, some look upon the Rosary as only a bad symbol of tradition. They seldom pray the Rosary. They have forgotten that the Rosary is a strong weapon in support of faith and hope.

An officer in Vietnam told his friends this story:

“It was in 1975. Many officers and I were sent to labor camps. My life became harder day by day. Our hope to be released was dimmer and dimmer. No one knew when or if we would be freed. Food was limited. We had less than a handful of rice as a daily portion. We were forced to work eight hours a day to ‘show our repentance to the people’. We were considered ‘enemies’ of the people. The new government said that religious freedom was to be respected, but we were to find that what the government meant was much different from what we thought of the term. Religious freedom meant ‘freedom from all religion’. Therefore, we could not pray or publicly celebrate any religious ceremony. Some of us decided to die, rather than to be ‘red’. Some tried to escape, but most were caught. Some were killed or committed suicide. Life became more miserable. The only prayer I could remember by heart was the Rosary. I must confess that I had gone to church only because my family went to church. In the labor camp, I was without hope. My only hope was in God and in Our Lady. I began to say the Rosary. I counted my fingers for five decades. One of the ‘bugs’ among us reported my activities to the guards. They punished me for disturbing the rules of the camp and forbade me from doing it again. I began to move my toes in counting the number. Again I was asked to cease. Finally, at night, looking at the stars, I counted ten stars for ten beads. The Rosary gave me strength to hope that I might be re-united with my family.”

In the West, today, there are at least twenty-four categories of prayer, and Eastern meditation is highly thought

of and valued. Every Dominican should remember the nine ways of prayer of St. Dominic and practice them.¹⁵ All lay Dominicans should know more about these ways of praying: bowing humbly, prostration, discipline, genuflection, standing erect with hands raised, standing erect with hands and arms outstretched as in the form of a cross, standing erect stretching the whole body toward heaven with hands open, and sitting or walking (see Appendix D).

Jesus is the example for all who pray. He prayed to God the Father at all moments of His life, especially at critical times. Vatican II looks upon prayer as the discovery of intimacy with God, the experience of Christian holiness.¹⁶

If a lay Dominican is a person of prayer, then each house of a lay Dominican is a house of prayer. Dominican laity should revive the spirit of early Christianity, when the home altar served as a sacred place for the family and for prayerful gatherings of neighbors.¹⁷ The “house-church” is a familiar place to pray for all members who share the same food, joy, love, and faith. Each family meal should be an excellent preparation for the Lord’s Supper.

Prayer must be consistent. Dominic united himself to God consistently. He frequently prayed throughout the night. Prayer was his food and rest. Sister Beceda, a nun of the Holy Cross, described Dominic:

“I often prepared a bed for him, but he never used it; in fact, in the morning I would find it still made just as I had left it. And, this was true even when he was sick. Indeed, I threw covers over him, but when I returned, he would be in prayer, either standing or prostrate on the ground.”¹⁸

4. *Study*

Following St. Dominic, Dominicans pray in study and study in prayer. Traditionally, they study revealed truth in the

light of faith, as it is presented in Theology, Holy Scripture, and Philosophy. Theology is a science, and therefore both methodical and systematic. It helps Christians to understand God and to find ways to reach out to God. Theology speaks about God. Thus, it shows a knowledge of God through reason and through revelation. To understand the method and system in theology, one should know philosophy. Philosophy has been considered as the handmaid of theology.

Facing a new era, Dominicans now study new sciences related to sacred truth. Courses of study concerning Ethics and Theology, natural sciences and Sacred Scripture are much valued. However, requirements for lay Dominicans must be more flexible and encompassing. By leading lives involving contacts with all levels of society and its preoccupations, the Dominican laity recognize, perhaps more than others, that one must know both sacred Truth and also its relationship to society as it impacts and as it is expressed in all natural and social sciences. History confirms this necessity. The General Chapter of 1232 discouraged the study of “pagan philosophies and the secular sciences” among Dominicans. Within twenty years following this decision, the Order saw the need for using some kinds of social sciences, such as those of social psychology and comparative religion, to more effectively serve the Church’s mission of evangelization. Therefore, a subsequent Chapter reversed the decision of 1232. Whatever science related, either directly or indirectly to God, it must, of necessity, be considered in the light of Sacred Truth.

Lay Dominicans love study, not merely for the sake of wisdom, but rather to know more of God. For, when more is known of Him, He is more loved.

5. *Retreats*

Another way to deepen our knowledge about God, along with study, is through the experience of a religious

retreat. During a retreat, lay Dominicans engage in prayer, meditation, devotion, and spiritual exercises, for the purpose of advancing spirituality leading to an amendment of life. There are several systems or formats for retreat today, including Parable Retreats, spiritual Exercise of St. Ignatius, Search, etc.... However, the essential requirements in any retreat program consist of solitude, silence, and prayers accompanied by a series of spiritual talks or conferences. The attendee takes the time to hear God's voice speaking to him, and to search for a way to respond to God. All lay Dominicans are encouraged to make a religious retreat at least once a year.

In addition to religious practice, study, and retreat all Dominicans adopt customs of imitating Jesus's life through reverence of the lives of the saints, especially the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary: *Per Mariam ad Jesum* (Through Mary to Jesus).

6. *Devotion of the Saints*

Traditionally, the Blessed Virgin Mary has been the special focus of reverence for the Dominican Order. The Catholic should put the role of Our Lady in the proper perspective. Several years ago, many Catholics looked at Mary as the requirement *sine qua non* for Jesus' salvation. The unsophisticated people prayed to Mary instead of to Jesus. They had forgotten that the atonement came from Jesus. In the last thirty years, under the influence of some Christian denominations, some wish to strip away all titles and merits of Mary. Both sides are too extreme. Mary is the Mother of Jesus, the Mother of God. She shares with Jesus the redemption, but she is not the Savior. All merits and titles she has must come from Jesus, and must serve Jesus' glory.

It has been said that Our Lady gave the habit of the Order to Blessed Reginald of Orleans, when he was very

seriously sick, in 1218. Besides that habit, he received another gift: he was cured. The habit became a sign of Our Lady's stamp of approval. Prior to the giving of habit, Mary gave instructions to Dominic on how to say the Rosary. Dominicans close the day with compline, ending with their dedication to the Blessed Virgin Mary in the "Salve Regina" procession. In looking toward Mary as the patroness of the whole Order, lay Dominicans merge their lives with the lives of St. Dominic and the Dominican family of saints, exemplifying St. Catherine, St. Thomas, St. Martin de Porres, our brothers and sisters.

St. Catherine is the patroness of the Dominican laity. She was born on March 25, 1347, and was one of a family of twenty-five children. She received a solid religious home training, and she responded whole-heartedly to it. She had no formal education and she could not even read. After seclusion at home, she began an apostolate to the needs of others: giving food to the poor, nursing the sick, performing miracles for their benefits, encouraging criminals to repent, counseling all in their path toward heaven. She worked as a peacemaker between the nobles and revolutionaries, between Florence and the papal states. She advised the popes and eventually induced Pope Gregory XI to leave the papal residence in Avignon, France and to return to Rome. She wrote her dialogue Treatise on Divine Providence. She gave lay Dominicans the examples of:

- outstanding sanctity on the world;
- courage before great problems;
- prudence in one's own life and in guiding others;
- magnanimity to accomplish great deeds;
- love for mankind and zeal for the Church.

While St. Catherine, one of first two female doctors of the Church, is the example of our divine activities in the

world, St. Thomas Aquinas guides us on the intellectual life. He is the patron of Catholic schools. He was born in 1225 (four years after the death of St. Dominic) near Aquino, Italy. He joined the Dominican Order although his parents did not approve. He studied with St. Albert the Great and became a famous teacher. He gave many lectures in Scripture, philosophy and theology. The greatest of his works is the Summa Theologiae. He died in 1274 while on the way to the Council of Lyon. Pope Pius V proclaimed Thomas doctor of the Church. Thomistic writings are still the basis for Catholic doctrine. Both recent popes and the documents of Vatican II have reaffirmed the importance of his solid principles. He is the example of intense love of the truth, of humility despite his obvious gifts, of complete chastity, and of devotion to prayer and study.

It would be incomplete if we forget to mention St. Martin de Porres. St. Martin is the patron of personal charity and social justice. He was born in Lima, Peru on December 9, 1579. He was the illegitimate son of Don Juan de Porres, a knight and adventurer, and his mother was a slave. When Don Juan deserted the mother and children, the family had difficulties in obtaining even daily meals and shelter. Although very poor, Martin shared or gave away the family food to those who were poorer than they. At the age of fifteen, he asked the prior of the Holy Rosary community in Lima for permission to be a tertiary helper. Nine years later, the prior ordered Martin to be a lay brother. Because of his zeal in serving the needy, Martin was given permission to specifically help the sick, the poor, the dying, and the miserable. He is an example for all people of love of the poor and underprivileged. His humility moved all who were in touch with him. Martin is also the patron for inter-racial justice and works of charity. The Southern Dominican Province is under his patronage.

Read about their lives. They are great saints of the Order because their lives were a splendid realization of the Dominican way in living the Lord's way in excellence.

7. Community Life

Lay Dominicans strengthen both their own interior lives and each others's through community. Each group and chapter must be a resource where all can share their problems, anxieties, and prayers; where all members come to heal and to be healed. In community, all lay Dominicans live the same spirit, charism, and prayer. Any chapter/group gathers together as a true family in the Lord's name. Lay Dominicans are brothers and sisters of the same family, enjoying the presence of one another. The community of faith and love is seen in such a true family of God, for love sums up all the laws, and is the bond that achieves Christian perfection. Unity, collaboration, prayers, meals and hobbies in the same group are symbols of Jesus' love and a source of apostolic power. It is ideal to have meetings twice a month. Through commitment to, and engagement in the community, one becomes more Dominican.

Once the contemplative life of a Dominican is strong, each must reach out to their neighbors. Through ministry to them, the prophetic and kingly missions of the lay Dominican may be fulfilled.¹⁹

As the contemplative life of a Dominican is supported by his/her active life, the activities of lay Dominicans, in the priestly mission, are supported by the prophetic and kingly ministries. This mutual support strengthens and balances one's life.

DOMINICAN PROPHETIC MINISTRY (or *Contemplata Aliis Tradere*)

In their prophetic ministry, Dominican laity make use of preaching teams, the mass-media, and catechetical instruction as means and weapons to evangelize.

1. Preaching Teams

The Dominican laity should always remember that their charism is preaching of the Word. The shared goal of all Dominicans is to see, over the next few years, formation of preaching teams. Friars, sisters, and lay Dominicans will jointly participate in such an arrangement. Through this means, congregations will have an opportunity to hear presentations, not only from religious, but also from those who share their same life situation, conditions, and anxieties. Moreover, lay Dominicans may see what the friars and sisters cannot see; may feel what others cannot feel. Thus, their preaching potentially may add new dimensions. In other words, the presence of laity in preaching teams will serve both the needs of the congregation and of the teams themselves.²⁰

2. Mass-Media

Another dream in which lay Dominicans must be involved is in preaching through mass-media. Since the event of Bishop Fulton Sheen, there has been no other Catholic preacher to so effectively use the power of mass-media.²¹ Communication has become increasingly important. People spend too much time watching unnecessary -- and often harmful -- programs. We need gifted speakers who will preach the Good News, and partake in missionary activities utilizing film, television and radio programs. Movies such as Ten Commandments, Jesus of Nazareth, Pan et Vino, Going my Way, along with Mother Angelica's T.V. channel presentations, are effective as images and means to evange-

lize. Do not think that only “movie stars” are able to perform in this fashion. We have many unrecognized and underdeveloped talents. Even if we are not directly involved in these fields, at the very least, we should attempt to promote and support worthy efforts of others. Fr. Vincent de Cuesnongle, former Master General said in his address to the Order that the modern Dominicans, in evangelizing the world, must be equipped with the Gospel, The Summa Theologiae, and the mass-media.

3. *Classes of Catechism*

As members of the Order of Preachers, lay Dominicans use whatever occasions arise to preach and to teach the Truth. Educational programs, such as C.C.E., C.C.D., and Marriage Engaged Encounter, are splendid opportunities to participate and to sharpen one’s talents as a lay teacher. Teaching in preparation for baptism, confirmation, and marriage is appropriate for all lay Dominicans. Christian doctrine needs to be taught by those exposed to, and well trained in, advanced theology. Teaching is so appropriate for lay Dominicans whose motto is *Veritas -- The Truth --* and whose charism is preaching.

Dominican laity must always be conscious of those people who do not go to church. The terms “churched” and “unchurched” are but simple classifications. There are many categories within these extremes. Many go to church once in a while. Still others do not join any group. A good way to bring the latter group into the church is by reaching out to them. Living in this anonymous society, where one does not know his neighbors, the faithful must resist the inclination to be passive, and exert themselves to go forward to become lay ministers of the Word. The door-to-door ministry must be the ministry of the future.

DOMINICAN KINGLY MINISTRY (or *Contemplata aliis tradere*)

The last of the threefold ministries in the Dominican charism is the kingly mission. To follow Christ the King is to serve each person as brother or sister. To imitate Jesus, the servant-king, is to care for the basic bodily and spiritual need of all, including those of one's enemies. There are many social services and out-reach programs in parishes and dioceses. In some parishes, there are full-time social ministers who organize different programs to more effectively serve the poor, the homeless, and those in need.

1. Service in the Parish and Diocese

In helping the universal Church, the family, a domestic church, must also be service-minded. Pope John Paul II asks all families to go out to those in need, especially to those brothers and sisters who have drifted away from the faith through indifference or injury. To relieve these pains, lay Dominicans must be active and involved in the activities of both parish and diocese. They should be the light of the world. They must exercise their kingly service as members of the choir, lectors, altar servers, and as visitors to the sick, the poor, the elderly, the unemployed, and the refugees. All are waiting for their extension of love and a helping hand.

Lay Dominicans should, by no means, separate themselves from the activities of their local parish and diocese. Pope John Paul II instructs:

“The parish offers an outstanding example of the apostolate on the community level in-as-much as it brings together the many human differences found within its boundaries, and draws them into the universality of the Church.”²²

Lay Dominicans look upon parish and diocesan programs as the means through which they live their kingly ministry. At the same time, they must prepare themselves for the future. With the shortage of priests and religious, laity must be the great helpers of the Church. The Detroit archdiocese, in 1989, was forced to close more than twenty churches. Perhaps in the future, the laity can perform as administrators of parishes, thereby freeing priests to fulfill other needs. Meanwhile, the laity should participate more fully in the administration of the parish and diocese, and in that of the Dominican province. Some lay Dominicans in Hackberry, Louisiana and Beaumont and Orange, Texas have been members of their parish council for years. The Provincial of the South hopes that, within next few years, a lay Dominican will serve in the Provincial Administrator's office. At the present time, a lay person is an assistant to the Provincial Steward.

2. Ministry in Universities and Retreat Centers

Another Dominican charism, worthy of further development, is ministry to universities and colleges. At the beginning of the Order, St. Dominic sent his first sixteen students to colleges either to study or to work. The university level has always had a special appeal for Dominicans. For lay Dominicans, it is an untouched horizon. In the spirit of these times, various positions in institutes of higher learning are available and appropriate for lay Dominicans, for example, campus ministry, counseling, teaching, administration, etc.... Many universities are in need of lay campus ministers. A dedicated, qualified lay person can become a director of campus ministry. Through active engagement in campus ministries and involvement in educational administration, it may be possible to attract more young men and women into St. Dominic's family.

As lay Dominicans, we should give some thoughts to the conduct of religious retreats. As in the case of preach-

ing teams, retreat teams may provide worthy means to evangelize, to minister to, and to nourish, deep seated needs of the human soul. While this is viewed as novel in this country, in Europe, many retreat centers are run by members of various lay communities.

Lay Dominicans are called by God to live in the ordinary circumstances of family and social life. They are destined by God to bring Jesus' salvation to its fullness. As Jesus sanctified the world, Dominican laity, as individuals and as groups, will sanctify society.

NOTES

¹Damian Byrne, *That They May Increase* (1987), p. 1.

²The Province of St. Martin de Porres reflecting the spirit of her patron, declares:

We have a variety of ministries in the South. Our ministries are as varied as our preachers. Some are administrators in leading universities, and some are activists. We are establishing a presence throughout the province, and are showing special concern for the undocumented and the poor; for women, blacks, homosexuals, workers, and the imprisoned.

³Matthew 25: 25-37.

⁴The Southern Dominican Laity, Vol. 6, 1988, Peter S. Through May, 1989, there are nineteen members in this group.

⁵Homily at San Antonio, September, 1988.

⁶Province of Saint Martin de Porres, Acts of the Provincial Chapter (1988), n. 4.

⁷Vatican II, *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation*, n. 25.

⁸Vatican II, *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation*, n. 24 teaches: "Pastoral preaching, catechetics and all forms of Christian instruction, among which the liturgical homily should hold pride of place, it healthily nourishes and thrives in holiness through the Word of Scripture."

⁹Vatican II, *Eucharisticum Mysterium*, n. 6.

¹⁰Vatican II, *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, n. 26.

¹¹Unfortunately, today, some do not look at the Eucharist as the communion with God. No paraliturgy can replace this sacrament.

¹²It was called the Sacrament of Penance. The new name “Sacrament of Reconciliation”, is more meaningful. We do not only repent, we reconcile to God, to the Church, to ourselves, and to our neighbors.

¹³Mark 1: 15.

¹⁴Vatican II, *The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, n. 90.

¹⁵See *Appendix D*.

¹⁶Vatican II, *Renewal of Religious Life*, n. 43.

¹⁷Acts, 2: 42-47.

¹⁸William Hinnebush, The History of the Dominican Order (New York: Alba House, 1965), p. 43.

¹⁹The Rules of the Lay Dominicans gives this guideline: “To advance in their vocation, a union of action and contemplation, the Dominican laity have as their principle sources:

- a. listening to the Word of God and reading the Sacred Scripture, especially the New Testament.
- b. daily participation if possible, in the celebration of the liturgy and the Eucharist;
- c. frequent celebration of the sacrament of Reconciliation;
- d. celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours with all the Dominican family and private prayer, such as meditation and the Rosary;
- e. conversion of heart through the spirit and practice of evangelical penance;
- f. assiduous study of revealed truth and reflection on contemporary problems in light of Faith
- g. devotion to the Virgin Mary, according to the tradition of the Order, to our Father St. Dominic, and to St. Catherine of Siena;
- h. periodical spiritual retreats.

²⁰In 1989 when this book was published for the first time, there were four preaching teams in the South. As of yet, only friars and sisters are members of the teams. In 1996 we have a preaching team of seven members that includes four committed (professed) lay Dominicans, three friars and sisters. They have been preaching in different parishes. Members of this Dominican Missionary Preaching Team in Austin, Texas have been instrumental in the formation of a retreat team of laity who specialized giving retreats to business and commercial people. In Raleigh, North Carolina, the friar preachers also invited

lay Dominicans to share with them this Dominican charism in preaching the good news. These efforts are commendable.

²¹Some T.V. evangelists are abusing mass-media. They use these means simply to criticize the Catholic Church.

²²John Paul II, The Lay Members of Christ's Faithful People, p. 70.

CHAPTER 5

VISIONS OF CHAPTERS AND GROUPS

THE disciples of Jesus were commissioned as a community, not as individuals, to bring the Good News to the whole world. The responsibilities for evangelization belonged primarily to the community. Jesus did not choose some apostles to receive the Holy Spirit, but rather The Spirit was sent to all of them, who in turn were bound together in one heart and one faith.¹ From the first instant, the Church, as a community, has been commanded to evangelize. Dominican laity, as a community, unite their collective activities with the Church. Their role is expressed, most obviously, through their responsible participation as a group in the life and mission of the Church.

Pope John Paul II observes:

“In some ways, lay associations have always been present throughout the Church’s history as various confraternities, third Orders, and sodalities testify even today. However, in modern times, such

lay groups have received a special stimulus, resulting in the birth and spread of a multiplicity of group forms: associations, groups, communities, movements. We speak of a new era of group endeavors of the lay faithful.”²

The new era of group endeavors of the Dominican laity can be expressed through various forms of evangelization. Through these activities, lay Dominican chapters/groups live their priestly, prophetic, and kingly vocation more fruitfully. The chapters/groups live these ministries on both local and universal levels. On the local levels, each chapter can be both an intellectual center and an organizational conduit for Dominican Catholic charities. Together, lay Dominicans recruit vocations for the Order and for the Church, and engage collectively in mutual chapter support and collaboration. On the universal level, collaboration takes on special significance as the entire Dominican family may be prepared to unite with other groups to promote Catholic action, and to support ecumenism.

INTELLECTUAL CENTER

Each lay Dominican chapter should be an intellectual center that initiates or sponsors social, theological, philosophical, and biblical lectures and seminars. The similarity between people of this era and those of Dominic’s time, is that they are eager to hear God’s Word. Today, there are Bible classes and workshops everywhere. Somehow, the Catholic Church has not effectively used Bible studies as a weapon for evangelization. Our Protestant brothers and sisters have already gone further than we in this field. Besides Bible studies, there are many subjects of interest which are of concern to both society and the church. Society is in the midst of change, and so too its way of thinking has changed. Thus, the ways of describing and pre-

senting the Truth must be updated to match the comprehension of those who listen. In these days, topics of social justice, of relationships between the Bible and natural sciences, ethics and medicine, society and morality, family disturbances, vocational crisis, and so on, are principal issues of extreme concern. Congregations do not tend to become bored with the Truth, but, rather, with the ways in which the Truth is expressed. They wish to learn of means to cope, interpreted in the light of their experience, and that is their right. If those who address them merely repeat what they learned as relevant many years ago, how can those speakers interest and stimulate today's listeners, especially the young.

It is sad to hear that some Dominicans no longer want to study Thomism. They argue that the ideas of St. Thomas are out of date. They forget that Thomism has had an enormous influence on theology for more than 600 years, not only because Thomas explained the truth, but because of his system of thinking. He taught people HOW to approach God. Of course, many of his ideas do not specifically fit the needs of today's society. He wrote his books 700 years ago for his contemporary audience, but he wrote them also for FUTURE generations, that means, for us. On one hand, the duties of all Dominicans, who have inherited that treasure are to look for new ways of expressing Thomas' realism to the world. On the other hand, Dominicans, possessing his theology as a foundation, should go beyond his presentation, so that the truth will be seen and be served in different dimensions.

Dominican laity can ask a parish to co-sponsor these programs. A monthly or trimesteral presentation is practical. The presenters can be priests, sisters, or lay persons who, each in his/her own way, share the purposes of the Dominican Order. Through these talks and workshops, lay Dominicans will nourish their neighbors, and they,

themselves will become more aware of the needs of the Church and of our society.

DOMINICAN CATHOLIC CHARITIES

Lay Dominicans, serving the world with spiritual food, are conscious of its need for physical support as well. Catholic Charities can also be a focus for chapter activities. We have the poor, but we also have those who are generous and willing to serve. If they do nothing, it is because most of them are not aware of the needs to be addressed, or because they do not know what they should do. If they know and see the goals and objectives, they will help. We should not hesitate to invite friends and relatives to take part in our plans. Many of them are eager and willing to serve. To serve is a need as strong as the need to be served. Many are passive because they have not received an invitation.

...[A]nd about the eleventh hour, he went out and found others standing; and he said to them: ‘why do you stand here idle all day? They said to him: ‘because no one has hired us.’ He said to them: ‘you too go into the vineyard’ ... and they went.³

Since the works to be performed in God’s vineyard are so great, there is no place for idleness. Repeat His invitation: “You too go into the vineyard.” As we are called by God to serve, we must also call our brothers and sisters to share in God’s service. It is a splendid idea to have a Dominican Catholic charity. Let us look at the activities of the lay Dominicans in Beaumont, Texas:

The Dominican Catholic Charity was founded on January 15, 1985, by the Dominican Laity of

Beaumont, Texas. The Dominican Catholic Charity is specifically designed and inaugurated to represent the Catholic Church in the Beaumont Diocese with information, referral and services rendered to the poor and needy. Our service is a statement made in the name of the Catholic Church.⁴

There are at least twenty-four types of services provided by this charity, including housing, medical care, food, clothing, job interviews, maternity care, counseling, adoptions, burial and language interpretation.

FOSTERING VOCATION

Lay Dominicans share the anxieties of the world and the needs of the Church. Acknowledging the fact that the number of seminarians and priests grows smaller everyday, an increase in vocations is one of the biggest concerns of the Church. Each Dominican chapter must foster vocations through support and research. Enabling religious vocations is not limited only to priests and religious. It is the duty of all the faithful. Lay Dominicans begin intensive fostering of vocations within their own families, and subsequently within the parish. Lay Dominican parents should nurture and develop religious vocations in their children by educating them in Christian virtues. According to many trustworthy surveys, more than 60 percent of religious vocations come from the support or suggestion of the family involved.

Together with the Church, lay Dominicans will bring more vocations to the world. An annual retreat or seminar about religious vocations could materially and spiritually help. Remember the story of Blessed Jordan of Saxony. He went to a center governed by the Dominicans and listened to a talk given by Blessed Reginald. Moved by the presentation, Jordan decided to enter the new Order. He had worn the habit only two months when he was sent as a delegate to the General

Chapter in Bologna. The following year, he was elected Provincial of Lombardy. When St. Dominic passed away, Blessed Jordan succeeded him as Master General. During his sixteen years of preaching, he had drawn more than one thousand novices to the Order. Among them were two future popes, two canonized saints, many blessed and venerables, numerous teachers and intellectual lights of the world. How many times have we missed other Reginalds?

COLLABORATION AMONG DOMINICANS

Collaboration among Dominican lay groups, sharing common background and geography, can be most important. Jeanne Zink, a member of the chapter at St. Dominic's parish in New Orleans, suggested to her moderator:

“Why not sponsor, jointly with other neighboring Dominican parishes, a sharing time between the people in ministries among prisoners, homeless, runaways, unwed mothers, distressed families, elderly, etc., to explain how they got involved, exchange any helpful information, challenges and rewards? It seems knowledge would dispel our fear in further apostolates.”⁵

This cooperation may help lay persons go beyond the needs of their local chapter/group, to become aware of and address regional and national strife. What Jeanne observes is most important. When lay Dominican chapters/groups work collectively, they have less concern for man-power. Thus they will be more confident. The shortcomings of one group will be more than offset by the strengths of another. Inter-chapter activities with neighboring groups promotes strength and vitality.

COLLABORATION IN CATHOLIC ACTION

Lay Dominicans, as members of the Church, are one of the Church's many Catholic Action resources. Each individual Catholic action group possesses its own goal, objectives, and charism. Yet, at one and the same time, all Catholic action groups compliment one another. Catholic action groups, including our Dominican family, are witnesses of Jesus' life, and are members of Jesus' body. Therefore, unity with solidarity, not competition, is and must be our policy. We promote faith and love, and express them through cooperation in good purpose extended to all. Through cooperation, Jesus' love is recognized more clearly. Pope John Paul II said:

“All of us, pastors and lay faithful, have the duty to promote and nourish stronger bonds and mutual esteem, cordiality and collaboration among the various forms of lay associations. Only in this way can the riches of the gifts and charisms that the Lord offers us, bear their fruitful contribution in building the common house.”⁶

ECUMENISM

Lay Dominicans are uniquely qualified and possess opportunities of position to advance the work of ecumenism. Religious diversity does not pose an insurmountable obstacle forming firm friendships between our laity and those of other faiths for inter-faith lay persons share many common bonds. Ecumenical unity is one of the wishes of Vatican II, and its accomplishment will depend, not only on the efforts of Rome, but also through the mediation and prayerful involvement of the faithful. Lay Dominicans are most sensitive to this issue, since they recognize that religious discrimination is not only a sin; it is a crime.⁷ Jesus is the Head of the Universal Church and the Church is His Body. His physical body received five wounds

2,000 years ago, and Christians of modern times are adding a sixth. This last wound, added to Jesus' suffering, is the division of many Christian denominations. All Christians have a duty of love to heal that wound by living His message of love and forgiveness, and by bringing Jesus' wish to the people who share in His Name. All expressions, judgments and actions leading to misunderstanding must be avoided. Positively, whenever a common prayer can be made, lay Dominicans should support it. Through common prayer, Christians come to understand one another better. At the same time, information about the Church's activities should be given. Many Protestant brethren still look upon the Catholic Church as the Church of the 17th century. Make the prayer of Jesus real:

That they may be one, as you, Father, are in me,
and I in you. I pray that they may be one in us,
that the world may believe that you sent me.⁸

NOTES

¹Acts 2:2.

²John Paul II, *The Lay Members of Christ's Faithful People*, p. 70.

³Matthew 20: 6-7.

⁴The one who initiated the program was Mrs. Fertitta, who is presently the Provincial Moderator of the Dominican Family in the South. She received strong support from her group, from Father Steve Smither and Sister Davidica Nelson, co-promoters of the group. The local Bishop has been very pleased with their program.

⁵Jeanne Zink to her moderator, letter dated January 8, 1989. It also explains why we have prepared this book.

⁶John Paul II, *The Lay Members of Christ's Faithful People*, p. 77.

⁷Religious discrimination causes no less killing and problems than racial discrimination. People label one another to persecute each other.

⁸John 17: 21.

CHAPTER 6

THE RELIGIOUS PROMOTER AND THE DOMINICAN LAY CHAPTERS/GROUP

HISTORICALLY, the Dominican friars have been assigned as directors of the Dominican laity. The function of the directors has been to assist the lay brothers and sisters to live lives of Christian perfection, and to bring the spirit of St. Dominic to the world. In this manner, laity lived under ecclesiastical surveillance. In the earliest days, the laity founded communities near the community of friars to facilitate their guidance by Dominican priests. In Cologne, thirty-nine houses were founded, with seven of them located on the same street as the Dominican convent. In 1286, Pope Honorius IV gave special permission to the Dominican Master General to grant Dominican laity the right to attend divine services and receive the sacraments during the interdict then imposed.¹ Prior to the granting of special permission, the Master General had permitted tertiaries, who were attached to Dominican churches, to share in such spiritual benefits as were proper to the Order. In 1405, Pope Innocent VII officially approved

the Rule of the Brothers and Sisters of Penance of St. Dominic, which was the name of the tertiaries at that time.

Beginning with the time of Master General Munio Zamora in 1285, the Master General, or the Provincial, appointed a friar and delegated to him supervisory powers for guiding lay groups. In some instances, the rules imposed were so strict that a tertiary required permission of both the friar director and the group prior to leave his/her home town. Each lay group elected a prior or prioress who was responsible for seeing that the group remained faithful to the Rule. The friar director had the power to expel incorrigible members after consultation with senior members of the chapter. Furthermore, in 1490, the Order promulgated a new rule which included the governance of laity, entitled "Rule and Ordinances for the Third Order". Under the guidance of the friars, many women elected to live a community life. Communities of these sisters were not obliged to live within monastic enclosures. In addition to their own religious exercises, they frequently attended the divine office. In the world, they dedicated themselves to works of charity, especially helping the poor and caring for the sick. The Dominican Order supervised these Third Order foundations in the same manner as it did its Second Order communities. The Council of 1509 defined that individuals or community tertiaries, who took vows of chastity and wore the Dominican habit, would be under the Order's jurisdiction. Usually, the prior of a nearby convent, or his vicar, was appointed as their director and to be their confessor.

Following Vatican II, many terms applying to the Dominican family and their meanings have been changed. The term tertiary is no longer used. The new term "Dominican family" is more meaningful and theologically correct. Within the Dominican family, we include friars, nuns, sisters and the laity. Really, we belong to the same family by

virtue of our shared tradition, culture, and spirit. Instead of referring to the religious priest or sister as its director, that office is now termed “promoter”. The name is fitting, in that the function is more to promote than to direct. The former office of prior or prioress is now called moderator. The moderator, together with the promoter, provide lay Dominicans with the opportunity to live the call of God according to the teachings of the Church and of the Dominican Order of this century. The structure and government of the Dominican family and of the chapter have been made more flexible. It allows the laity to more effectively adjust their activities to the needs of the world.

The new Rule of the Lay Chapters of St. Dominic, approved by the Congregation for Religious and Secular Institution, and promulgated in January 1987, is very important. It not only provides direction to the laity, but it also defines many positions and works of the chapter. Concerning chapter jurisdiction, the Rule instructs:

- The local chapter is governed by a Moderator with a Council, who are fully responsible for its government and direction.
- A religious brother or sister assists the members in doctrinal matters and the spiritual life. This religious promoter is appointed by the Provincial after consultation with the Provincial Promoter and the local Council of the Laity.²

Previously, the function and relationship of the religious promoter to his/her lay chapter were not clear. On occasion, a promoter would also fulfill the role of moderator. There were different and extreme reactions to both positions and roles. If a chapter’s lay leaders chose to be passive, all activities and governance fell on the promoter. In the promoter’s absence, nothing happened. If lay leaders were

too aggressive or active, the promoter was ignored. Sometimes, a power struggle could arise.

With the new Rule of the Lay Dominicans, the roles and relationships between chapter/group and promoter is more clearly stated. We are reminded that the term “promoter” itself defines the role of the religious: to promote - and not to direct - the chapter/group. The relationships between promoter and chapter/group are best illustrated in these three areas: spiritual, pastoral, and administrative.

A. In the spiritual area, a promoter should care for the religious progress and activities of the chapter/group through:

- Biblical meditations
- Theological, Philosophical, and Biblical studies and discussion
- Prayer and practices of prayer
- Individual counseling and teaching

B. In pastoral direction, the promoter provides sacramental presence, especially through:

- Eucharistic celebration
- Sacrament of reconciliation

C. In administrative exercise, the promoter provides:

- Promotion of lay leadership
- Fostering of lay participation
- Support and empowerment of group activities
- Collaboration with plans formulated by the laity
- Assistance to all to live according to the Rule and the Directory of the Province

SPIRITUAL CARE

Promoting religious life and extending pastoral care are the primary responsibilities of a promoter. S/he helps a group and its members to grow in intimacy with God, who calls them to live in the Dominican style. Union with God is the goal of both individual and group. Under the promoter's guidance, the laity are able to pay heed to God's call as it may be manifest to an individual or to the group. In His call to them, they experience the presence of God in them, in the community, in their family and in their ministry. Our faith tells us of God's love for us through His constant creative power which sustains our existence, and also of His redeeming us through acts and grace. God gives Himself to us even when we do not know that He is doing so. God protects each individual, as He does the group at the critical moments of their collective lives and in their activities. Perhaps all of us still remember the story of "Footprints".

One night a man had a dream. He dreamed he was walking along the beach with the Lord. Across the sky flashed scenes from his life. For each scene, he noticed two sets of footprints in the sand: one belonging to him, and the other to the Lord.

When the last scene of his life flashed before him, he looked back at the footprints in the sand. He noticed that many times along the path of his life there was only one set of footprints. He also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and saddest times in his life.

This really bothered him and he questioned the Lord about it.

"Lord, you said that once I decided to follow you, you'd walk with me all the way. But I have noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life, there is only one set of footprints. I don't under-

stand why when I needed you most you would leave me.”

The Lord replied:

“My precious, precious child. I love you and I would never leave you. During your times of trial and suffering, when you see only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you.”³

God does not leave us alone and the virtue of faith in the *contemplare* helps laity to recognize God as He reveals Himself, and upon reflection, to recognize their responses and reactions to God. Then, the *contemplata aliis tradere* helps the laity to bring that meditated and experienced God to their neighbors. It is through this interaction that we realize why prayer, study, and Bible meditations are so important to lay Dominicans. The four Gospels themselves are four different expressions of faith. The more one knows of the Gospels, the better one can listen to the voice of God. The more one is aware of the depths of his/her soul, the more God’s Word can penetrate it.

Although the desire for perfection is an individual characteristic, the decision-making process is the work of more than one person. The promoter’s responsibilities are to simultaneously help each person in the group to develop this desire and process, and advance in knowledge of and intimacy with God. The promoter will not hesitate to give clear assignments to members of the chapter/group and to ask that they follow some consistent discipline in the engagement of practices intended for their spiritual growth. Practical examples include a thirty minute daily meditation, journal keeping, a daily rosary, and weekly visits to those confined to hospitals and nursing homes are considered proper. Both the individual and group should develop short- and long-term plans for spiritual growth. Toward these collective ends, a promoter should:

- provide the exposure and atmosphere to selected spiritual and religious disciplines, especially methods of prayer and discernment;
- provide opportunities for deeper personal integration and understanding of relationship to God in each member as well as within the life of the group;
- provide a contemporary theological and biblically based forum, concerning values, essence and nature of God, through lectures, seminars, readings, and discussion;
- provide an opportunity for the group and its members, to probe their souls, to explore and discuss the nature of the vocation to which God, and the Church, is calling them;
- provide inspirations and teachings on matters relating to doctrine and systems of the Church, especially the new published documents of the Pope or of the Holy See concerning the works and activities of the laity.

PASTORAL CARE

Pastoral care concerns itself with lives of lay Dominicans. This life is characterized by the transformation to the life of Jesus. In this transformation, the sacraments of the Eucharist and of Reconciliation are principal factors leading the Dominican laity to God. A promoter must, of necessity, function as a spiritual director, leading the people to unity with God through the sacraments.

Reconciliation lies at the very heart of Christian life, for it is an experience of being set free from oppression, and of

being reconciled to God, to neighbors, and to self. Reconciliation is the beginning of the journey of peace with God.⁴ The purpose of Jesus' death is to restore peace and love to the world. In the sacrament of reconciliation, a strong sense of solidarity among members of the group forming Jesus' body is revealed. If one suffers, all suffer.⁵ Reconciliation is therefore not only an activity of the individual. It is of the community. Under the pastoral care of the promoter, it is both a duty of the entire chapter/group and becomes the power of Dominican chapters/groups. The essential action of all preaching is closely related to the sacrament of reconciliation. It is not only accomplished through sermons of sins and forgiveness, but also must be seen in the context of God's vehicle for forgiveness and love. It is most appropriate to include time for the rite of reconciliation within the group's monthly meetings.

The central focus of the ministry of reconciliation is the celebration of the Eucharist. While the sacrament of reconciliation brings peace to the individual through penance and forgiveness, the Eucharist gives peace and joy to people through love, thanks, and praise of God. In receiving the Body and Blood of Jesus, people are transformed. This transformation empowers their love for one another, for the family, for the Church, and for the world. Thus, if it is possible, each meeting of Dominican laity should begin or end with the Eucharistic celebration where all brothers and sisters share the joy of their Dominican family.

ADMINISTRATIVE CARE

The role of the religious promoter in the administrative area is very sensitive. While s/he can be the visible leader of the group in spiritual direction, he should be seen to promote and to support in administration, but not to direct. A promoter has the tendency to follow the Rule and the system of his/her convent. When brought and applied to

the group directly, it may be inappropriately rigorous, seemingly making the laity into mini-religious. Instead of competing with lay leaders, he promotes them. He is not only the promoter of the group and its members, he is also the promoter of its leaders. The promoter assists the lay leaders to govern the chapter/group. To do this, effective communication and collaboration play a most important role.

Communication and collaboration are recognized as two-way streets: both the laity and the promoter mutually exchange these gifts. The promoter works with and for the laity at the request of the community. In appreciation for the efforts of the promoter, the laity should be sensitive to the needs of both the promoter and his/her community. This mutual sensitivity is a beautiful manifestation, symbolizing Christian support and collaboration. When relative importance of collaboration among chapters/groups versus within chapter/group is questioned, cooperation and support within chapter/group must receive first attention.

Lay chapter/group leaders require the active support of the promoter on various occasions. Although the main purpose of the Dominican family is to serve the lay person, it is service through religious unity expressed in the Dominican family. In civic groups, the roles of priests and sisters are not always explicit, nor is their leadership ever assumed. In that civic participation, clergy and religious may be in leadership positions. In such instances, the role is in virtue of some talent or contribution they make, apart from their title or vocation as religious men and women. In the Dominican family, in some respects, religious promoters are leaders. However, if they assume too many responsibilities, they may transgress on areas proper to the lay leaders and unintentionally give offense. It is only human for a chapter's membership to evaluate their lay leaders in terms of the support shown to them by the promoter. Therefore, the promoter must never hesitate to demonstrate his/her support of the lay leaders, recognizing that

they are commissioned by the chapter, and approved to serve by the Provincial Promoter.

Together with its leaders, the promoter empowers the activities of a chapter. Laity feel blessed when they see the active participation of the promoter in the chapter's plan. Some of the laity feel that religious intentionally limit themselves to activities within the Church itself. When they see their promoter working actively at their side, sharing the same tasks, there is a greater opportunity for mutual understanding and intimacy to develop. Following the program, "A brown bag for the poor," at a local Newman Center, a student decided to join the group. Questioned of his reason for joining, the answer was simple. He felt moved by the presence of the promoter as he observed the priest giving a bag of beans to the poor:

"I am used to seeing him in the church, giving homilies or explaining the Bible. When I see him covered with dust, I am moved."

In a real way, the presence and activities of the religious promoter empower the chapter.

MUTUAL TRUST

The promoter recognizes that s/he does not guide the chapter by his own power, but by the light of the Holy Spirit and the direction of the Church. The promoter provides a readiness for the coming of the Holy Spirit into the chapter and into each member. Responding to this obligation, he must be willing to plan and to prepare his presentation, and to gain understanding of his group through listening. In listening attentively to the needs, problems, and joys of the members and the chapter/group, the promoter builds a mutual trust. In this trust, the promoter is aware of each member's unique gifts, vocation, and limi-

tations. At the same time, in sharing charism, all members share the inter-relationships that form the dynamics of the chapter. The chapter, its leaders and promoter aim to be instrumental in achieving the intentions of the Holy Spirit and of the Church. Together they require strong leadership, extended in a flexible manner. Flexibility signifies mutual trust and cooperation. The following are useful suggestions for a promoter's reflections:

- Trust in the guidance of the Holy Spirit manifest in the promoter, lay leaders and the chapter.
- Care for the chapter through physical presence.
- Be flexible.
- Be aware of chapter/group dynamics.
- Maintain respect for different ideas, inspirations, as well the uniqueness of the chapter/group.

NOTES

¹William Hinnebush, The History of the Dominican Order (New York: Alba House, 1965), p. 400.

²The Rule of the Lay Chapters of Saint Dominic, n. 21.

³"The Story of Footprints", author is unknown.

⁴Romans 5:15; Ephesian 2:12-15.

⁵1 Cor. 12:16.

CHAPTER 7

DOMINICAN LAITY AND REALITY

THESE thoughts that we have discussed are not new or novel. Many people have shared these visions for quite some time yet they remain only dreams. What must we do for our dreams, our shared visions, to become a reality in the service of God? Let us now consider the logical dimensions of the lay Dominican identity, the capacity of the movement, and the needs to which the movement can address itself, together with the practical questions of how and where to begin.

WHO ARE LAY DOMINICANS?

Lay Dominicans, together with all others, search for their identity amid changing times within a society in apparent chaos. Everything around the world is typified by change: from politics to public morality, from culture to tradition, from religion to a philosophy of life.

Lacking permanence, a compass and/or a standard of conduct to indicate direction, people become confused.

Priests, Religious, and Laity share the same fate. Therefore, to rediscover their identity, lay Dominicans must return to fundamentals, to their source, to their real vocation, to the roots from which they grew.

Obviously, lay Dominicans are not religious, nor are they to be viewed as mini-religious. Priests and religious follow their own standards, dictated by their ways of living and their vocations. Lay Dominicans are laity, specifically Dominican laity, living in the twentieth century. They are members of the Church, who receive different graces from the Holy Spirit as a response to the varied needs of their state and of the Church, within this important period of our history. The diversity of gifts among the faithful are manifest in:

- those who speak of wisdom, and others who possess knowledge;
- those with gifts of faith, and others with special gifts of healing;
- those who are given the working of miracles, and others to prophesy.¹

All of these gifts come from the Holy Spirit, who gives different charisms for use by the community of faith in building up the Church. In turn, those same charisms insure the well being of humanity and enable mankind in society. As lay Dominicans, they do not minister to God's people alone; they work in union with friars, sisters, and nuns. They live the vocation of Catholic Dominicans by assisting the Church in spreading faith, hope, and love, and making these gifts available for others to believe in Jesus.

WHAT TO DO?

The Holy Spirit gives the faithful different gifts, since within the Church and in the world there are various min-

istries, offices, and roles which the laity can fulfill. Moreover, many roles in the world are suitable only to the laity. Lay Dominicans are not limited only to ministries within the Church. The importance of their positions and roles extends beyond. Lay Dominicans must renew and apply both their *contemplare* and their *contemplata aliis tradere*. From the depths of their spiritual lives comes knowledge and direction to manifest their love of God through their actions in the world. They must be engaged in perfecting their interior lives, and together with the Church, must live the Evangelii Nuntiandi. Evangelii Nuntiandi reminds the laity of their rights and responsibilities in preaching the Gospel, through word and example, in this vast and complicated world of politics, economics, culture, science, and mass-media. The laity must be engaged in all facets of national and international life as a means to help others to appreciate the values of human love, family, country, educating the young, the dignity of all who work, and compassion for all who suffer. The more laity engage themselves in these realities, with Christian conscience and energy, the more these realities will be at the service of God's kingdom.²

The fields in which laity can minister are vast, as are the vineyards of God. Lay Dominicans, recognizing their identity, will perceive opportunities to contribute by way of act and example. Of course, no one individual or group can do everything. All people must be cooperative and patient in the establishment of both their goals and objectives. Patience is called for in determining what is possible given their social, political, economic, and religious circumstances. Religious issues should not be separated from the other matters of life. The laity best understand the particular circumstances in their society. The lay Dominicans should take charge and decide what should be done. All chapter/group members must share the same

direction, recognizing that while a major project may lead to frustration and depression, some more modest task could be willingly initiated and confidence obtained through accomplishment. We do well to remember the maxim:

“It is better to light one candle than to curse the darkness!”

As Catholics, all lay Dominicans do whatever they can to bring the Church into a more perfect state. As lay Dominicans, nothing is more appropriate to this end than preaching the Good News by word and example.

WHEN TO BEGIN?

Do not wait! The time is now! If we wait, nothing will be done. With identified goals and objectives, the time is appropriate for all Dominican laity to begin their mission and the spiritual renewal of their Dominican lives. The need for their charism, indeed for their existence, was never more evident. Fr. Schillebeeckx, in June 1960, said of the Dominican family that we already missed a golden opportunity to renew the life of the Dominican laity. The renewal should have been done thirty years ago. Vatican II was a manifest call for renewal of all Third Orders, including the Dominican laity. The Dominicans can make the last years of the second millennium and the beginning of the third millennium, a period of opportunity to elevate the world to a more perfect state. Vatican II was a demonstration of the energy of the Church to revitalize the community of faithful to deal with inherent and emerging problems in this new and changing world of ours. Lay Dominicans must extend themselves to seize this opportunity to re-establish their identity in the charism of St. Dominic.

I share the anxieties of those members who feel that we need the vigor of many young men and women, especially

students, in our ranks before we can become an effective force. Yet, our first efforts must be made, not in recruitment, but in works. For it is only through our works and living example that young Catholic men and women will be called to identify with the charism of St. Dominic. We must recognize that the will to minister is more important than the age or the number of a dedicated group. It is a blessing to have quality and quantity in membership, but to begin to re-establish ourselves, indeed to survive, we, like the small cat, must catch a small mouse.

HOW TO APPLY THE RULE?

The General Chapter in Montreal emphasized the need for flexibility. The Rule was formulated in a most general way to permit each individual and chapter/group the greatest possible latitude within which to develop their own apostolate.

All Dominicans need flexibility, but lay Dominicans require more than do the friars, sisters, and nuns, since the lives and situations of laity are more varied. St. Dominic recognized the need for accommodation. He freed his brothers from the tradition of stability that bound monks to their monasteries. Alternately, he dedicated his brothers to the obedience of their superiors who, in turn, could send the friars to wherever needs were manifest. Although he asked the friars to take a vow of poverty, the purpose of the vow was to enable them to better serve the needs of God's people. He recognized vows as means to an end in God's service, and not as a purpose in themselves. So also, lay Dominicans, in recognition of their identity, must reflect with flexibility on the needs of the Church as Christians belonging to the Universal Church and sharing in the resurrection of Christ's body. Together, as one, we are building Jesus' coming Kingdom.

WHERE TO MINISTER?

Upon renewal of their lives in commitment to *contemplare*

et contemplata aliis tradere, the first focus of ministry is their family. Each lay Dominican does not sanctify him/herself alone. Rather s/he does what Jesus said:

“Go out to the whole world and proclaim the Good News to all people.”³

The lay Dominican does this by giving the family the fruits of Dominican charism. It is within the heart of the family that the Church lives, and it is through the family renewal that the parish derives benefit. The parish is called the ecclesial community, and we must never mistakenly think of it in terms of a building or territory. Lay Dominicans should accustom themselves to work within the parish community, under the direction of their pastors, making themselves available to serve the apostolic and missionary needs of their ecclesial family. There must always be a relationship of spirit and cooperation between lay Dominican chapter/groups and parish clergy. The chapter/groups who distance themselves from the parish can only expect to lose the active support of their parishioners and their parish priests. Once established in service to their local parish, Dominican laity may choose to extend their ministries to inter-parochial and inter-diocesan fields of endeavor. Activities in the parish are essential to the spirituality of lay Dominicans, and will complement, rather than interfere with larger plans and programs a chapter/group may envision.

NOTES

¹1 Cor 12:10; 12:4-6; 20-31, Romans 12:6-8.

²Paul IV. *Evangeli Nuntiandi*, AAS 68, 1976.

³Mark 16:16.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

AS Dominican laity, we have been compared to a sleeping giant. We must rouse this giant from its slumber. The power of the laity is immense providing that it can be stimulated, inspired to action, and focused as an instrument for the good of all people and of the society in which we live.

Whenever I have an opportunity to travel upon the sea, I am in constant awe of both the beauty and the power of ocean waves surging to and fro. The ocean's power seems limitless. If we could but harness it, as a natural energy resource, surely the world would be different. We need not concern ourselves with coal and oil. We would have the capacity to bring light and the power of nature to all poor countries of the world who live under primitive conditions, lacking the basic benefits of civilization. Perhaps this invention will be the first step in waking the ocean, as a sleeping giant, to bring happiness and security to the world. In the future, we may not only continue to admire

the ocean's beauty, but also be actively working with this wonder of nature to meet the needs of mankind.

So too can we compare and contemplate the power and energy of the laity. Once the laity are awakened, the Church no longer need to be concerned with the shortage of vocations in priestly and religious life. This limitless resource will provide more missionaries to be sent to the harvest of God.

“Jesus made a tour through all the towns and villages, teaching in the synagogues, proclaiming the Good News of the kingdom, and curing all kinds of disease and sickness. When He saw the crowd, He felt sorry for them because they were harassed and dejected, like sheep without a shepherd. Then He said to His disciples: ‘The harvest is rich, but the laborers are few; so, ask the Lord of the harvest to send laborers to his harvest.’”¹

In these times, there are many people who are poor, underprivileged, margined, suffering, and harassed both physically and spiritually. Laborers working among them, including lay Dominicans, are insufficient in number to meet manifest needs. More than any others, lay Dominicans must be a SIGN OF HOPE, of an awakening in time. St. Dominic, during his lifetime, ignited the flame of Truth and passed that torch to his people. Dominican laity, inheritors of that treasure, must use it to enlighten the whole world. Together with the friars, nuns, and sisters, Dominican laity are at the service of the whole people of God. Faithful to their heritage, they will be successful.

The Church needs still more dedicated people who will fulfill Jesus' mission on earth. We are not doing enough. The vineyard of the Lord numbers more than

four billion people and is increasing every day. Only a few hear the Gospel message, and they await the works of all the faithful, especially those of lay Dominicans.

The third millennium is coming. The ocean is moving to be of service to mankind. Will the Dominican laity be the next “wave” to come to the aid of the people of God?

NOTES

¹Matthew 9:35-38.

APPENDIX A

THE DIRECTORY (OR PARTICULAR STAT- UTES OF THE DOMINICAN LAITY). SOUTHERN DOMINICAN PROVINCE U.S.A.

I. MEMBERSHIPS

1. ELIGIBILITY FOR MEMBERSHIP

In order to make a temporary commitment¹ for membership in a lay Chapter or Group, a person must be a practicing² Roman Catholic, 21 years or older. In order to have been accepted for candidacy leading to temporary commitment for membership, the person must have been recommended for acceptance by a priest or by a member of the Dominican Laity, who has already made a permanent commitment. (cf. Rule n. 5)

2. MEMBERSHIP STATUS

- a. Membership requires at least a temporary commitment to live according to the spirit of St. Dominic and according to the way of life prescribed by the Rule.³

Making a temporary commitment involves an introductory phrase (a period of inquiry) and a subsequent discernment period (continuing formation) that allows a determination of whether a candidate is truly ready and fitted for the membership in the Dominican Laity. (cf. Rule n. 10)

The time requirement for the introductory phase is suggested to be a period of six-months. It is anticipated that the determination period, prior to making a temporary commitment, would be a minimum of one year beyond the introductory phase.

- b. Temporary commitment extends for a period of three years. It may be renewed or a permanent commitment may be made following the temporary commitment. More guidance regarding commitment is provided in The Rule of the Lay Chapter of Saint Dominic, Nos. 16 & 17.

- c. The Moderator (previously named prior/pri-
oress) and the local Council will consider and approve the petition of the candidate for admission/membership in the Dominican Laity. (cf. Rule, n. 17)

3. ADVANCEMENT OF INQUIRERS AND CANDIDATES

Qualification for advancement of inquirers and candidates must be flexible and adaptable to the varying circumstances of the lay vocation for each individual. Judgement by the Moderator and the Council should be tempered, in the spirit of St. Dominic -- by love, compassion, and care. Criteria for advancement should include the following:

- a. Attendance at and participation in Chapter/Group's meetings and activities. (cf. Rule n. 15)
- b. Individuals should take the initiative in contacting the Chapter/Group councils for further advancement. The preferred way is by letter.
- c. Membership in the Dominican Laity should be motivated by the desire to live the lay vocation according to the spirit of St. Dominic and to the way of living prescribed by the Rules, i.e., by prayer, study, and contemplation; by preaching the Good News of Jesus Christ in word and action; and by concrete active involvement in ministries which serve other people, and in communion with the whole Church (especially with our brothers and sisters who make up the whole Dominican Family). (cf. Rule, n. 10)

4. ADMISSIONS FOR THOSE COMPLETING THE INQUIRY PHASE

This admission should be simple and emphasize certain essentials. These include:

- a. An oral statement by the Chapter/Group community regarding its acceptance of the inquirer into the Dominican Laity. In this initial period, the inquirer should grow in understanding of the charism of the Dominican Order.
- b. The oral statement should recognize the desire of the inquirer to learn more about the Dominican Order, and about the formation.

5. FOR THOSE MAKING A TEMPORARY OR PERMANENT COMMITMENT

This Rite should be both solemn and joyful, also incorporating certain essentials. These include:

- a. Substantively, the content of the commitment formula is cited in The Rule Of The Lay Chapter of Saint Dominic, n. 14.
- b. The essence of the Dominican Laity, the distinction of being members, and the lay vocation should be emphasized. (cf. Rule n. 4)
- c. The joy of dedicating our lay vocation to the preaching the Good News by our words and actions should be the focus. (cf. Rule n. 5)
- d. The joy of knowing that the candidate is a part of the Dominican Family and that all members, i.e. friars, nuns, sisters, compliment one another should be mentioned. (cf. Rule n. 3)

e. The community aspects of the Chapter/Group, which both give and receive, spiritually and humanly, in the on-going formation of all members should play an important part in the ceremony. (cf. Rule n. 10)

II. THE LIFE OF THE LOCAL/PROVINCIAL CHAPTER/GROUP

6a. CHAPTER

a. CHAPTER is the basic entity of the Dominican Laity. CHAPTERS must have at least five (5) members who have already made permanent commitment as Dominican Laity. Chapters, which as a result of attrition, e.g. death, relocation, have less than five (5) members who have made permanent commitment, may retain Chapter status for two years, if there is expectation that the number of members having made permanent commitment will again reach five (5) by the end of that period of time. Such an expectation is acceptable if there are members in the process of continuing formation (at the temporary commitment level), who can be expected to have made a permanent commitment by the end of the two years period. Chapters' secretary have the responsibility of informing the Secretary of the Provincial Lay Executive Council immediately of the reduction by attrition. Notification must also be given when the number of permanently committed members again reaches five (5). (cf. Rule n. 15)

6b. GROUP

b. GROUPS are those having less than five (5) members who have made permanent commitment as Dominican Laity. A group may have as few as three (3) or as many as fifteen (15) participants. Groups must meet certain memberships qualifications in order to have representation and a vote on the Lay Council. Clearly, Groups exist for the purpose of aiding and promoting the advancement of its members to a level of becoming permanent members in the Dominican Laity. The appropriate means for this purpose is the continuing formation.

7. PETITION FOR STATUS-CHANGE FROM “GROUP” TO “CHAPTER”

When groups have the required five (5) permanent commitment members, petition to become a Chapter should be made to the Lay Provincial Executive Council of the Southern Dominican Province, via the Secretary of the Executive Council. The Secretary, in turn, will notify the entire Executive Council regarding this petition. If the Executive Council agrees, the petition is in order to be proceeded. The Council, in turn, will petition the Provincial Promoter of the Laity to seek approval of the request. The Promoter will contact the Provincial for his agreement; and, if the latter concurs, he will inform the local Bishop (of the Diocese where the Chapter-to-be exists). This final approval will be communicated in the reverse

order, so that the Group will receive the information in appropriate time from the Secretary of the Executive Council.

8. ELECTION AND FUNCTIONS OF THE LAY PROVINCIAL COUNCIL

a. A Provincial Council must be convened each third year (beginning October 1992) to elect the Executive Council; to establish policy; to provide guidance to the Executive Council regarding substantive matters to be handled during their terms of office; and to discuss the priorities with which each office should be treated. Policy and priority must be established by the Provincial Council before the new election of officers takes place. (cf. Rule n. 20)

b. The term of office for each officer shall be three years. The election meeting shall be held at the Provincial Council meeting of each third year.

c. An interim meeting of the Provincial Lay Council - without elections - for the purpose of reviewing progress and direction of the matters being handled by the Executive Council since the last regular meeting, shall be held, if possible, approximately mid-way in the period between triennial Council meetings. Changes in priorities may also be enacted and other essential matters handled.

9. VOTING REQUIREMENTS

a. Each Chapter and each Group meeting the requirements, will send the Moderator of that Chap-

ter/Group as the appropriate voting delegate to the Provincial Council. These, in turn, become members of the Council for the convened meeting and for ensuring three years period. In the event the Moderator of the Chapter/Group is not able to attend the convened Council meeting, the Chapter/Group Vice Moderator shall be sent as the appropriate voting delegate.

Although the delegate from each Chapter/Group should be prepared to speak openly about the views of the Chapter/Group on issues, and even on qualifications for an office, as well as for candidate for an office, no voting delegate shall attend the Provincial Council meeting with an “instructed” vote. All voting must be undertaken on the basis of an informed conscience. Open discussion of topics by all delegates is encouraged. “Lobbying” by an individual or a group is prohibited.

b. “Observers” from each Chapter/Group are welcome to attend the triennial or interim Provincial Lay Council Meeting. They may attend the discussion of topics, except at those parts of the meeting specifically designated for “voting delegates”.

c. All “voting delegates” to the Provincial Council must have made a PERMANENT commitment to membership in the Dominican Laity.

10. CHAPTER/GROUP REQUIREMENTS

- a. Regular Chapters do not need any special requirements to send voting delegates to the Lay Provincial Council, since their qualification as a Chapter already satisfies the Rules and the Directory. Chapters which have less than five (5) members, who have made permanent commitment, must have been “validated” by the Secretary of the Executive Council as described before.
- b. Groups must have at least three (3) members, who have made permanent COMMITMENT in the order to send an eligible voting delegate to the Provincial Council meeting.

11. QUALIFICATIONS OF OFFICERS

- a. Only members of the Dominican Laity from the Southern Province, who have made permanent commitments are eligible for holding office on the Provincial Executive Council.

Officers are to be elected by the voting delegates, based on the harmony and the required vision and the competence that each candidate could bring to the Executive Council and to the Dominican Family. Candidates will have an opportunity to discuss their qualifications and objectives following their nominations. This procedure will allow delegates to vote with an informed conscience.

- b. Any member present who has made a permanent commitment to the Dominican Laity may be nominated for and hold office.

12. NOMINATIONS FOR OFFICE ON THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Nomination for the offices will be made from the floor.

13. OFFICERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

- a. The officers are Provincial Moderator, Vice Provincial Moderator, Provincial Secretary, and Provincial Treasurer. No officer may succeed himself/herself for the same office more than once consecutively, i.e., there must be an intervening three years period after serving in a given office for two consecutive terms.
- b. A person may be elected for an office other than the one vacated, even after serving two consecutive terms in the office.
- c. The Provincial Promoter of the Dominican Laity and the retiring Moderator will be *ex-officio* members of the ensuing Provincial Council with full voting privileges.
- d. The Executive Council works on behalf of the Provincial Council in carrying out the policy and priority established by the Provincial Council

14. VOTING FOR OFFICERS

- a. Voting for officers will occur no earlier than twenty-four (24) hours after the meeting is convened.
- b. Each of the current officers of the Executive Council shall have voting privileges.

15. VOTING PROCEDURE

- a. The Provincial Moderator will appoint a Counting Committee of three people from among the voting delegates, which have not been nominated for the office for which the votes are being counted. A new Counting Committee shall be appointed as necessary.
- b. Voting will take place by secret ballot. Ballots will be prepared for each office independently. All improper votes and ballots will be removed.

The Counting Committee will count the votes and present them to the Moderator, who will announce the results.

- c. A person must win the office of Moderator by a simple majority. If no such majority occurs, a second ballot will take place after an open forum with the candidates. The forum will last no longer than one-half hour. A similar procedure should be kept for all the ballots.
- d. If no candidate is elected after five ballots, the Provincial will make a selection from among the list of nominees for this office. Normally, the elec-

tion of the Moderator shall be successfully finished before the elections for other positions proceed. (If the selection for the office of Moderator must be made by the Provincial, the nominees for Moderator cannot be considered for another office, unless anyone chooses to have his/her name withdrawn from the list. Under such circumstances, that person may be nominated for the other subsequent office.)

e. In sequence, voting for the office of Provincial Vice Moderator shall be completed, then Provincial Treasurer, and finally Provincial Secretary. A simple majority is all that is required for these positions. Any persons can be nominated from the floor.

16. FILLING A VACANCY IN ANY OFFICE

a. In the event a vacancy shall occur in any office by death, resignation, or incapacitation, the office shall be filled by an appointment by the Provincial Moderator with the approval of the Executive Council. Concurrence or rejection of the appointment must be made in writing by the Executive Council within two weeks after a recommendation has been made by the Moderator. In the event of a vacancy in the office of Moderator, the Vice Moderator shall immediately fill the vacancy, and, in the role of Moderator, shall appoint a vice Moderator. All appointments shall be approved by the Provincial.

b. Participation in an office as a Moderator's appointee, or as an automatic successor to the Mod-

erator, for a period of thirty (30) months or more, shall be considered a “full term of office”

17. GOVERNANCE IN CHAPTER/GROUP

a. Each Chapter/Group shall elect a Council from among its members. Depending on the size of the Chapter/Group, the Council may have as many as five Councillors or as few as two. The Chapter/Group Council will elect a Moderator and other officers from among its members. (cf. Rule n. 21, b)

b. The elected officers shall be Moderator, Vice Moderator, Treasurer, and Secretary. The term of office of all officers is in three years. Officers may be re-elected for two consecutive terms.

c. Increasing the number of officers and Councillors from less than the maximum to the full Council membership level (5) may be done anytime, if new conditions justify it and a majority of the Chapter/Group approves it.

d. The filling of a vacancy in any office may be accomplished in the same manner as it is with a vacancy on the Provincial Lay Council. (cf. *)

18. QUALIFICATIONS FOR ELECTION TO OFFICE IN CHAPTER/GROUP

a. In order to be elected to the office of Moderator, the Chapter/Group member must have made a permanent commitment in the Dominican Laity.

b. To qualify for the office of the Vice Moderator, Secretary, and Treasurer, a member must have made a temporary commitment in the Dominican Laity.

19. OTHER CHAPTER/GROUP FUNCTIONS

One of the more experienced and enthusiastic Concillors should be appointed by the Moderator, with the approval from the majority of the Council, to be Formation Director of the Chapter/Group. To assure the growth of the Chapter/Group in the charism of the Dominican Order, other appointments such as Coordinators of Liturgies, Rites, Special Ministries, etc., should be considered. These appointments may be for one-year periods.

20. PRIVATE OR ISOLATED MEMBERS

As of January 1989, new “private or isolated” membership is discouraged.

All existing private or isolated members are to become associated with a nearby active Chapter/Group. The Moderator of the nearby Chapter/Group is responsible for inviting that member to join the Chapter/Group. In communicating information, the Moderator must consider that person as a member of his/her local community.

21. RELIGIOUS PROMOTERS OF CHAPTER/ GROUP

- a. The Religious Promoter is appointed by the Provincial Promoter, after consulting with the Provincial and the local Chapter/Group Council. (cf. Rule n. 20, b)

- b. S/he assists the members in doctrinal matters and in the spiritual life. A promoter may be a priest (religious or diocesan), religious brother, sister, or deacon. They are *ex-officio* members of the Chapter/Group Council. Term of office for the Religious Promoter is three years. (cf. Rule 21, c)

IV. CHANGES OR ADDITIONS TO THESE PARTICULAR STATUTES (DIRECTORIES)

Amendments, changes, or additions to this directory may be made by

- The Master General
- The Prior Provincial of the Southern Dominican Province
- A simple majority of the Executive Council, or
- A simple approval at the Provincial Lay Council Meeting

APPROVAL OF THESE PARTICULAR STATUTES

This Directory will be used officially after approval by the Prior Provincial and the Master of the Order.

Originally revised August 13 1989; again October 30, 1989; and on March 21, 1990. Approval of the March 21, 1990 text was given by the Prior Provincial of the Southern Dominican Province, and by the Master of the Order in May, 1990.

¹"Commitment", either temporary or permanent, has been called a "profession" in the past.

²The most commonly accepted description of a practicing Roman Catholic is one who receives the sacraments regularly, faithfully and attempts to direct his/her life according to the laws of God and the doctrines of the Church.

³The Rule of the Lay Chapter of Saint Dominic, promulgated on January 28, 1987.

APPENDIX B

THE RITE OF ADMISSION

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The ceremony should generally take place within the context of the Eucharist following the Liturgy of the Word and homily. It should be the community celebration.
2. Family, friends, and relatives should be invited to the celebration.
3. The moderator of the chapter/group should carry out the admission ceremony with the religious promoter present. (Rule 16) In some cases, the promoter could substitute for the moderator.

PRESENTATION:

While the moderator is standing before the altar, the vice-moderator (or a member of the chapter/group council) calls the name of the candidate and presents him/her to the community.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, the chapter/group (name of the chapter/group) joyfully presents to you our bother/sister(s) who have (has) fulfilled their requirements of the novitiate period, and now are ready for the admission.

The moderator asks the candidate(s):

My brother/sister(s)... what do you request?

Response by the candidate(s):

To be admitted into the Dominican family.

The moderator:

Dear brother/sister(s), by your own choice, you seek to enter the Dominican family. With us, you will share all the rights, benefits, charism, and responsibilities. Always remember that as a member of the Dominican Order, you participate in the apostolic mission of the Order through your constant prayer, study, and preaching according to the state of the laity.

The moderator hands the Rule and the Directory to the candidate(s) saying:

(Name)...., receive the book of Rule and of Directory. They are the sign of your willingness to live the life of a lay Dominican.

The moderator then gives a Dominican pin to the candidate(s):

As a sign of your commitment, accept this pin which you may wear as the external manifestation of your commitment to this community and to the Dominican Family.

The moderator and the candidate exchange a sign of peace.

(The Eucharist would proceed as usual.)

RITE OF TEMPORARY COMMITMENT

Instructions are the same as in the rite of admission.

PRESENTATION:

While the moderator is standing before the altar, the vice-moderator (or a member of the chapter/group council) calls the name of the candidate and presents him/her to the community.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, the chapter/group (name of the chapter/group) joyfully presents to you our brother/sister(s) ... who have (has) fulfilled their requirements of the inquiry phase, and now are ready for the temporary commitment.

The moderator asks the candidate(s):

My brother/sister(s), what do you request?

Response by the candidate(s):

To make a commitment in the family of St. Dominic.

The moderator:

Dear brother/sister(s), by your own choice, you seek to make perpetual profession in the family of St. Dominic. With us, you have shared all the rights, benefits, charisms, and responsibilities. Always remember that as a member of the Dominican Order, you participate in the apostolic mission of the Order through your constant prayer, study, and preaching according to the state of the laity. With God's help, you must live with your mind and your heart, the counsels in the Gospels, the Rule, and the Directory of our Dominican Family.

The candidates for temporary commitment using the formula in the Rule #14:

To the honor of Almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit and of St. Dominic, I (name) before you the Moderator of this chapter and (name) the religious promoter, representing the Master of the Order of Friars Preachers, promise to live according to the Rule of the Dominican Laity for three years.

The scapular is then blessed by the religious promoter if it has not been previously blessed:

Let us pray:

Lord Jesus Christ, You commission your apostles to always preach the Good News to all the world. In your love and providence, our Father St. Dominic founded the Order of the Preachers. We ask you to bless these scapulars, a sign of our dedication to you, to the Church and to the Order.

After the blessing, the Moderator places the scapular on the shoulder of the candidate and says:

My brother/sister(s), receive this scapular. Always wear it and let it remind you to live the Dominican charism, to preach the message of Jesus' love through your thoughts, words, deeds, and life.

If the religious promoter is present, the following blessing should be added (the whole Dominican family can recite with the promoter):

(Blessing over the candidates)

Father in heaven, source of holiness and true purpose, together with these brothers and sisters, we praise you. We dedicate them to you. May they be faithful in working with all the Dominican friars, nuns, sisters, and lay people in glorifying your Name. May they be the living gospel of our Lord, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

RITE OF PERPETUAL COMMITMENT

Instructions are the same as in the rite of admission.

PRESENTATION:

While the moderator is standing before the altar, the vice-moderator (or a member of the chapter/group council) calls the name(s) of the candidate(s) and presents him/her to the community:

Dear Brothers and Sisters, the chapter/group (name of the chapter/group) joyfully presents to you our brother/sister(s) (name) ... who have (has) fulfilled their requirements of the temporary commitment, and now are ready for the perpetual commitment.

The moderator asks the candidate(s):

My brother/sister(s) what do you request?

Response by the candidate(s):

To make perpetual profession in the family of St. Dominic.

Moderator:

Dear brother/sister(s), by your own choice, you seek to make perpetual profession in the family of St. Dominic. With us, you have shared all the rights, benefits, charism, and responsibilities. Always remember that as a member of the Dominican Order, you participate in the apostolic mission of the Order through your constant prayer, study, and preaching according to the state of the laity. With God's help, you must live with your mind and your heart, the counsels in the Gospel, the Rule, and the Directory of our Dominican Family. Make your life reflect your voca-

tion and your dignity. You are chosen by God to be more closely united to Himself and to be dedicated to the service of the Church and of human beings through your Dominican commitment.

The candidate then kneels before the altar. The litany of the Dominican Saints should be sung at this time:

Lord have mercy.

Lord have mercy.

Christ have mercy.

Christ have mercy.

Lord have mercy.

Lord have mercy.

Holy Mary, Mother of God,

Pray for us.

St. Joseph,

Pray for us.

St. John the Baptist,

Pray for us.

Holy Angels of God,

Pray for us.

St. Peter and St. Paul,

Pray for us.

St. Francis,

Pray for us.

St. Dominic, our Father,

Pray for us.

St. Catherine,

Pray for us.

St. Martin de Porres,

Pray for us.

St. Thomas,

Pray for us.

St. Albert,

Pray for us.

St. Rose of Lima,

Pray for us.

All Dominican martyrs,

Pray for us.

All Dominican holy men and women,

Pray for us.

Then the candidates for perpetual commitment using the formula in the Rule #14:

To the honor of Almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and of St. Dominic, I (name) before you the Moderator of this chapter and (name) the religious promoter, representing the Master of the Order of Friars Preachers, promise to live according to the Rule of the Dominican Laity for my whole life.

The moderator presents the Bible to the candidate(s) and says the following invocation over the candidate(s):

(Name), receive this book of Holy Scripture. Practice what you read. This book is your personal companion who will journey with you through every day of your life. Guided by the teachings of Jesus, take the responsibilities of a lay Dominican to proclaim the Word of God. Bring the message of salvation to those who have not yet received it. This is the charism of Our Order, blessed by the Church.

A lit candle should be given to the candidates at this time.

The moderator:

Receive the light of Christ. As St. Dominic was the light of Christ of his time, be the light of our time.

If the religious promoter is present, the following blessing should be added (the whole Dominican Family can recite with the promoter):

(Blessing over the candidate)

Let us pray:

Lord God, source of all goodness and light, You sent Your only Son, the Word of life, to reveal to humankind the mystery of Your love and salvation. Bless our brothers and sisters, who have chosen to serve you and the Church in the Dominican family. Grant that as they live your teachings, they will grow more deeply in your love. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

(The Eucharist will proceed as usual.)

SUGGESTED READINGS:

From the Old Testament:

1. Proverbs 2:1-9
2. Proverbs 4:7-13
3. 1 Samuel 3:1-10
4. Song of Songs 8:6-7
5. Jeremiah 31:31-37

From the New Testament:

1. Acts 2:42-47
2. Acts 4:32-35

3. Romans 6:3-11
4. Romans 12:1-13
5. 1 Cor. 1:22-31
6. Philippians 2:1-4
7. Colossians 3:12-17
8. 1 John 4:7-16

Responsorial psalm:

1. Psalms, 24, 27, 33, 34, 40, 45, 63, 84, 100.

Gospel:

1. Matthew 11:25-30
2. Matthew 16:24-27
3. Matthew 19:3-12
4. Matthew 19:16-26
5. Mark 3:31-35
6. Mark 10:24b-30
7. Luke 9:57-62
8. Luke 10:38-42
9. Luke 11:27-28
10. John 12:24-26
11. John 15:1-8
12. John 15:9-17

APPENDIX C

I. THE FUNDAMENTAL CONSTITUTION OF THE DOMINICAN LAITY

(Laity in the Church)

1. Among the Christian faithful, men and women living in the world, in virtue of their Baptism and Confirmation, have been made partakers in the prophetic, priestly, and royal mission of our Lord Jesus Christ. They are called to make Christ present to the peoples so that the divine message of redemption may be heard and welcomed by all everywhere.¹

(Dominican Laity)

2. Some of these Christian faithful, moved by the Holy Spirit to live according to the spirit and charism of Saint Dominic, are incorporated into the Dominican Order through a special commitment according to their appropriate statutes.

(Dominican Family)

3. Gathered together in their communities, with the other groupings of the Order, they constitute one Dominican Family.²

(Distinctive Character of Dominican Laity)

4. They have a distinctive character in both their spirituality and their service to God and neighbor. As members of the Order, they share in its apostolic mission through prayer, study, and preaching according to the state of the laity.

(Apostolic Mission)

5. Supported by their fraternal union, in the example of St. Dominic, St. Catherine of Siena, and our predecessors, who have enlightened the life of the Order and the Church, they witness their own Faith, attentive to the needs of people of their time and serving the Truth.

6. Zealously attending to the particular goals of the contemporary Church, they strive in a special way to evidence authentic mercy toward all suffering, to defend freedom, and to promote peace and justice.

7. Animated by the special charism of the Order, they are conscious that their apostolic activity has as its source, an abundance of contemplation.

II. THE LIFE OF THE CHAPTERS

(Life of the Chapters)

8. Let them strive, to the best of their ability, to live in authentic communion in accord with the spirit of the Beatitudes. This is done in all circumstances, performing works of mercy, sharing in good works with the members of the chapter, especially toward the poor and the sick, and praying for the dead. In this way they will be of one heart and one mind in the Lord. (Acts 4:32)

9. Collaborating with all their brothers and sisters in the Order, the laity should participate actively in the life of the Church, ready always to work with other apostolic groups.

10. To advance in their vocation, a union of action and contemplation, the Dominican laity have as their principal sources:

- a. listening to the Word of God and reading the Sacred Scripture, especially the New Testament;
- b. daily participation, if possible, in the celebration of the liturgy and the Eucharist;
- c. frequent celebration of the sacrament of Reconciliation;
- d. celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours with all the Dominican Family and private prayer, such as meditation and the Rosary;

- e. conversion of heart through the spirit and practice of evangelical penance;
- f. assiduous study of revealed truth and reflection on contemporary problems, in the light of Faith;
- g. devotion to the Virgin Mary, according to the tradition of the Order, to our father St. Dominic and St. Catherine of Siena;
- h. periodical spiritual retreats.

(Formation)

11. The object of Dominican formation is to form adults in the Faith, capable of accepting, celebrating, and proclaiming the Word of God. Each province is to establish a program of:

- a. formation in stages for new members;
- b. ongoing formation for all, even isolated members.

12. Every Dominican must be prepared to preach the Word of God. This preaching is the exercise of the prophetic mission of the baptized, strengthened by the Sacrament of Confirmation.

In the present world, the preaching of the Word of God involves the defense of the dignity of human life, the family, and the person. The promotion of Christian unity and dialogue with non-Christians and non-believers are part of the Dominican vocation.

13. The sources of Dominican formation are:

- the Word of God and theological reflection,
- liturgical prayer,
- the history and tradition of the Order,
- contemporary documents of the Church and Order,
- awareness of the signs of our times.

(Profession)

14. To be incorporated into the Order, members must make profession, which consists of a formal promise by which they propose to live according to the spirit of St. Dominic and according to the way of life prescribed by the Rule.

This profession is either temporary or perpetual. The following or a substantially similar formula is to be used for making profession:

To the honor of Almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of Saint Dominic, I (name) before you the Moderator of this Chapter and (name) the religious promoter, representing the Master of the Order of Friars Preachers, promise to live according to the Rule of the Dominican Laity for (three years or my whole life).

III. ON THE STRUCTURE AND GOVERNMENT OF THE CHAPTERS

15. The Chapter is the appropriate means to nourish and develop each person in his or her own vocation. The schedule of meetings varies according to the different chapters. The degree to which each member attends meetings is a sign of his or her own fidelity.

(Admission)

16. Observing the prescriptions of the Directory as to qualifications for persons and time of admission, the admission of candidates is committed to the responsible layperson. Once a decisive vote of the Council of the Chapter has been given, this layperson carries out the admission according to the rite determined in the Directory, with the religious promoter present.

(Profession)

17. After the period of probation determined by the Directory and with a favorable vote of the Council of the Chapter, the layperson responsible, together with the religious promoter, receives the profession, either perpetual or temporary.

(Jurisdiction and Autonomy)

18. The Chapters of the Order are subject to the jurisdiction of the Order. They do, however, enjoy the autonomy proper to the laity according to which they govern themselves.

(Jurisdiction in the Whole Order)

19. a) The Master of the Order, as successor of Saint Dominic and head of the entire Dominican Family, presides over all the Chapters in the world. It is his responsibility to preserve intact the spirit of the Order and to establish practical norms according to the demands of the circumstances of time and place, and to promote the spiritual good and apostolic zeal of the members.
- b) The Promoter General represents the Master of the Order to all Chapters and transmits their proposal to the Master of the Order or the General Chapter.

(Jurisdiction in the Province)

20. a) The Provincial presides over the Chapters in the territory of his Province and with the consent of the Local Ordinary, establishes new Chapters.
- b) A Provincial Promoter, brother or sister, represents the Provincial and is an *ex officio* member of the Provincial Council of the Dominican Laity. The Promoter is appointed by the Provincial Chapter or by the Provincial with his Council, after consultation with the Provincial Council of the Laity.
- c) A Provincial Council of the Laity is to be established in the territory of the Province. Its members are elected by the Chapters and it functions according to the norms of their Directory.

This Council elects the Provincial Moderator of the Laity.

(Jurisdiction in Chapters)

21. a) A local Chapter is governed by a Moderator with a Council, who are fully responsible for its government and direction.
- b) The Council is elected for a determined term and in the way established by the Directory. The Council elects a Moderator from among its members.
- c) A religious brother or sister assists the members in doctrinal matters and the spiritual life. This religious promoter is appointed by the Provincial after consultation with the Provincial Promoter and the local Council of the Laity.

(National and International Council)

22. a) Where there are several Provinces of the Order within the same country, a National Council may be established according to the norms formulated in the particular Directories.
 - b) Likewise, if judged opportune, there may be an International Chapter. The Chapters of the whole Order are to be consulted on this matter.
23. Councils of Chapters may submit requests and petitions to the Provincial Chapter of the Friars; Provincial Councils and National Councils may submit them to a General Chapter. Members of the laity Chapters should be invited to these chapters to deal with matters that pertain to the laity.

(The Statutes of the Chapters)

24. The statutes which govern the Dominican Laity are:
- a) The Rule of the Dominican Laity (Fundamental Constitution, norms of life and government of the Chapters).
 - b) General declarations of the Master of the Order and General Chapters.
 - c) Particular Directories.

This translation of The Rule of the Lay Chapters of Saint Dominic intended for use in the Southern Dominican Province, U.S.A. is based on the Latin definitive text approved by the Congregation for Religious and Secular Institute on January 15, 1987 and promulgated by the Master of the Order on January 28, 1987, replacing the previous rule.

¹Apostolicam Actuositatem, 3.

²LCO, 141.

Appendix D

The Nine Ways of Prayer of Saint Dominic

Preface

The holy teachers Augustine, Leo, Ambrose, Gregory, Hilary, Isidore, John Chrysostom, John Damascene, Bernard and other devoted teachers, both Greeks and Latins, have spoken extensively about prayer, recommending it and describing it, telling us how necessary and useful it is, how to do it and how to prepare for it, as well as indicating the obstacles that may arise. In addition to these, the renowned and glorious teacher, brother Thomas Aquinas and brother Albert of the Order of Preachers in their books, and brother William in his treatise on the Virtues, have expounded the subject nobly and systematically, devoutly and attractively.

However, what we must say something about here is the way of praying in which the soul uses the members of the body in order to rise more devoutly to God, so that the soul, as it causes the body to move, is in turn moved

by the body, until sometimes it comes to be in ecstasy like Paul, sometimes in agony like our Saviour, and sometimes in rapture like the prophet David. The blessed Dominic used often to pray like this.

We find, in fact, that the holy men of the Old and New Testaments sometimes prayed like this. This manner of praying stirs up devotion, the soul stirring the body and the body stirring the soul. Praying this way used to make St. Dominic dissolve utterly into weeping, and it so kindled the fervour of his good will that his mind could not prevent his bodily members from showing unmistakable signs of his devotion. So, by the sheer force of his mind at prayer, he sometimes rose up in petitions and entreaties and thanksgiving.

Apart from the common ways of prayer in the celebration of the Mass and in the prayer of psalmody in the canonical Hours, which he practised very devoutly both in choir and when he was travelling, and during which he often seemed suddenly to be caught up above himself to speak with God and the angels, his ways of praying were as follows.

I

First of all, bowing humbly before the altar as if Christ, whom the altar signifies, were really and personally present and not just symbolically. As it says, “The prayer of the man who humbles himself pierces the clouds.” He used sometimes to say to the brethren the text from Judith, “The prayer of the humble and meek has always been pleasing to you.” It was by humility that the Canaanite woman obtained what she wanted, and so did the prodigal son. Also, “I am not worthy to have you come under my roof.” “Lord, humble my spirit deeply because, Lord, I am utterly humbled before you.” So the

holy father, standing with this body erect, would bow his head and his heart humbly before Christ his Head, considering his own servile condition and the outstanding nobility of Christ and giving himself up entirely to venerating Him.

He taught the brethren to do this whenever they passed before a crucifix showing the humiliation of Christ, so that Christ, who was so greatly humbled for us, should see us humbled before his greatness. Similarly he told the brethren to humble themselves like this before the whole Trinity whenever the *Glory be to the Father* was recited solemnly. This way of prayer was the beginning of his devotion: bowing deeply.

II

St. Dominic also used to pray by throwing himself down on the ground, flat on his face, and then his heart would be pricked with compunction, and he would blush at himself and say, sometimes loudly enough for it actually to be heard, the words from the gospel, “Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner.” And with great devotion and reverence he would recite the words of David, “It is I who have sinned and done unjustly.” He would weep and groan passionately, and then say, “I am not worthy to look upon the height of heaven, because of the greatness of my sin; I have provoked your anger and done evil in your sight.” He would also say, emphatically and devoutly, the verse from Psalm 43.25, “My soul is laid low in the dust, my belly is stuck to the earth.” And again, “My soul is stuck to the floor, make me come alive according to your word.”

Sometimes, wanting to teach the brethren with what reverence they ought to pray, he would say to them, “The Magi, those devout kings, entered the house and found the child with Mary his mother. Now it is certain

that we have found him too, God and man, with Mary his handmaid, so come, let us fall down and worship before God, let us weep before the Lord who made us.”

He extorted the young men too, saying to them, “If you cannot weep for your own sins, because you have none, still there are many sinners to be directed towards mercy and love, for whose sake the prophets and apostles groaned in distress, and for their sake too Jesus wept bitterly when he saw them, and similarly the holy David wept and said, ‘I saw the half-hearted and I pined away.’”

III

For this reason, rising up from the ground, he used to take the discipline with an iron chain, saying “Your discipline has set me straight towards my goal.” This is why the whole Order determined that all the brethren, out of respect for the memory of St. Dominic’s example, should take the discipline on their bare backs with sticks of wood every ferial day after Compline, saying the *Miserere* or the *De Profundis*. They were to do this either for their own sins or for those of others whose gifts supported them. So no one, however innocent, should withdraw himself from following this holy example.

IV

After this, St. Dominic, standing before the altar or in the Chapter Room, would fix his gaze on the Crucifix, looking intently at Christ on the cross and kneeling down over again, a hundred times perhaps; sometimes he would even spend the whole time from after Compline till midnight getting up and kneeling down again, like the apostle James, and like the leper in the gospel who knelt down and said, “Lord, if you will, you can make me clean,”

and like Stephen who knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord do not hold this sin against them." And a great confidence would grow in our holy father Dominic, confidence in God's mercy for himself and for all sinners, and for the protection of the novices whom he used to send out all over the place to preach to souls. And sometimes he could not contain his voice, but the brethren would hear him saying, "To you, Lord, I will cry, do not turn away from me in silence, lest in your silence I become like those who go down into the pit," and other such words from sacred scripture.

At other times, however, he spoke in his heart and his voice was not heard at all, and he would remain quietly on his knees, his mind caught up in wonder, and this sometimes lasted a long time. Sometimes it seemed from the very way he looked that he had penetrated heaven in his mind, and then he would suddenly appear radiant with joy, wiping away the abundant tears running down his face. At such times he would come to be in an intensity of desire, like a thirsty man coming to a spring of water, or a traveller at last approaching his homeland. Then he would grow more forceful and insistent, and his movements would display great composure and agility as he stood up and knelt down.

He was so accustomed to genuflecting that, when he was on a journey, both in a hostel, after the toils of the road, and on the road itself, while the others were sleeping or resting, he would return to his genuflexions as to his own special art and his own personal service. This way of prayer he taught more by the example of his practice than by what he said.

V

Sometimes, when he was in a convent, our holy father Dominic would stand upright before the altar, not leaning on anything or supported by anything, but with his whole body standing straight up on his feet. Sometimes he would hold his

hands out, open, before his breast, like an open book, and then he would stand with great reverence and devotion, as if he were reading in the presence of God. At such times he seemed to be savouring the words of God in his mouth and, as it were, enjoying reciting them to himself. He had made his own the Lord's practice which we read about in Luke 4.16, "Jesus went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, as he was accustomed to do, and stood up to read." And it says in Psalm 105.30, "Phineas stood and prayed and the pestilence stopped."

At other times, he joined his hands and held them tightly fastened together in front of his eyes, hunching himself up. At other times he raised his hands to his shoulders, in the manner of a priest saying Mass, as if he wanted to fix his ears more attentively on something that was being said to him by somebody else. If you had seen his devotion as he stood there erect in prayer, you would have thought you were looking at a prophet conversing with an angel or with God, now talking, now listening, now thinking quietly about what had been revealed to him.

When he was traveling, he would steal sudden moments of prayer, unobtrusively, and would stand with his whole mind instantaneously concentrated on heaven, and soon you would have heard him pronouncing, with the utmost enjoyment and relish, some lovely text from the very heart of sacred scripture, which he would seem to have drawn fresh from the Saviour's wells.

The brethren used to be greatly moved by this example, when they saw their father and master praying in this way, and the more devout among them found it the best possible instruction in how to pray continuously and reverently, "as the eyes of a handmaid are on the hands of her mistress and as the eyes of servants are on the hands of their masters."

VI

Sometimes, as I was told personally by someone who had seen it, our holy father Dominic was also seen praying with his hands and arms spread out like a cross, stretching himself to the limit and standing as upright as he possibly could. This was how he prayed when God restored the boy Napoleon to life at his prayer at San Sisto in Rome, both in the sacristy and in the church during Mass in which he rose from the ground, as we were told by that devout and holy sister, Cecilia, who was present, with a great crowd of others, and saw it all. Like Elijah when he raised the widow's son, he stretched himself out over the boy's body.

He also prayed in the same way when he rescued the English pilgrims near Toulouse when they nearly drowned in the river, as has been related elsewhere.

And this was how the Lord prayed when he hung on the cross, his hands and arms stretched out, when, with great cries and weeping, his prayer was heard because of his reverence.

The holy man of God, Dominic, did not use this kind of prayer regularly, but only when, by God's inspiration, he knew that some great wonder was going to occur by virtues of his prayer. He neither forbade the brethren to pray like this nor did he encourage it.

When he raised the boy from the dead, praying standing with his arms and hands stretched out like a cross, we do not know what he said. Perhaps he used the word of Elijah, "Lord my God, I beseech you, let the soul of this boy return within him," just as he followed his manner of praying. But the brethren and the sisters and the cardinals and the rest who were there were paying attention to his manner of praying, which was unfamiliar and remarkable to them, and so they did not take in the words he spoke. And afterwards they

could not ask the holy and extraordinary man, Dominic, about it, because in this deed he had shown himself to be an object of awe and reverence to them all.

However, he did sometimes recite, seriously, deliberately and carefully, the texts from the Psalms which refer to this manner of praying: "I cried to you, Lord all day long I have stretched out my hands to you, my soul is like soil without water before you, speedily hear me, Lord" (*Ps 142.6-7*).

This makes it possible for any devout man of prayer to understand the teaching of this father, praying in this way when he desired to be extraordinarily moved towards God by the power of his prayer, or rather, when he felt himself being moved by God in a particularly expansive way, through some special grace for himself or for somebody else. He can base himself on the teaching of David, the symbolic expression of Elijah, the love of Christ and the devotion of Dominic.

VII

He was also often found stretching his whole body up towards heaven in prayer, like a choice arrow shot straight up from a bow. He had his hands stretched right up above his head, joined together or slightly open as if to catch something from heaven. And it is believed that at such times he received an increase of grace and was caught up in rapture, and that his prayer won from God for the Order he had founded the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and, for himself and his brethren, such delight and enjoyment in putting the Beatitudes into practice, that each one would consider himself blessed in the most profound poverty, in bitter grief, in severe persecution, in great hunger and thirst for righteousness, in all the cares and worries of mercy, and that they would all consider it a pleasure to observe the commandments with devotion and to follow the evangelical counsels. At such times the holy father seemed

suddenly to enter the Holy of Holies and the third heaven. And so after this kind of prayer, he bore himself like a prophet, as is related in the *Miracles*, whether he was rebuking or dispensing or preaching.

So the holy father did not remain long in this kind of prayer, but returned to himself as if he were coming from far away, and at such times he seemed to be a stranger in the world, as could easily be seen from his appearance and his behaviors. While he was praying he was sometimes clearly heard by the brethren saying, as the prophet did, "Hear the voice of my supplication while I pray to you, and while I lift up my hands to your holy temple."

And the holy master taught the brethren to pray like this both by his words and by his example. He quoted the verses from Psalm 133.2, "At night lift up your hands to the holy place," and Psalm 140.2, "The raising of my hands like an evening sacrifice."

VIII

The holy father Dominic also had another beautiful way of praying, full of devotion and grace. After the canonical Hours and the grace which is said in common after meals, the father would go off quickly on his own to a cell or somewhere, sober and alert and annointed with a spirit of devotion which he had drawn from the divine words which had been sung in choir or during the meal; there he would sit down to read or pray, recollecting himself in himself and fixing himself in the presence of God. Sitting there quietly he would open some book before him, arming himself first with the sign of the cross, and then he would read. And he would be moved in his mind as delightfully as if he heard the Lord speaking to him. As the Psalm says, "I will hear what the Lord God is saying in me." It was as if he were arguing with a friend; at one

moment he would appear to be feeling impatient, nodding his head energetically, then he would seem to be listening quietly, then you would see him disputing and struggling, and laughing and weeping all at once, fixing then lowering his gaze, then again speaking quietly and beating his breast. If anyone was inquisitive enough to want to spy on him secretly, he would find that the holy father Dominic was like Moses, who went into the innermost desert and saw the burning bush and the Lord speaking and calling to him to humble himself. The man of God had a prophetic way of passing quickly from reading to prayer and from meditation to contemplation.

When he was reading like this on his own, he used to venerate the book and bow to it and sometimes kiss it, particularly if it was a book of the gospels or if he was reading the words which Christ had spoken with his own lips. And sometimes he used to hide his face and turn it aside, or he would bury his face in his hands and hide it a little in his scapular. And then he would also become anxious and full of yearning, and he would also rise a little, respectfully, and bow as if he were thanking some very special person for favours he has bestowed. Then, quite refreshed and at peace in himself, he would continue reading his book.

IX

This way of prayer he used to observe when he was going from one country to another, especially when he was in a lonely place. He disported himself with his meditations in his contemplation. And sometimes he would say to his travelling companions, "It is written in Hosea, 'I will lead her into the wilderness and speak to her heart.'" So sometimes he went aside from his companion or went on ahead or, more often, lingered far be-

hind; going on his own he would pray as he walked, and a fire was kindled in his meditation. And a curious thing about his kind of prayer was that he seemed to be brushing away ashes or flies from before his face; and because of this he often defended himself with the sign of the cross. The brethren thought that in this kind of prayer the saint acquired the fullness of sacred scripture and the very heart of the understanding of God's words, and also a power and boldness to preach fervently, and a hidden intimacy with the Holy Spirit to know hidden things.

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