



# **ACTS OF CONGRESS**

## **THIRD INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF LAY DOMINICAN FRATERNITIES**

**FATIMA 2018**



Rome December 22, 2018

Dear brothers and sisters

The moment has come to send you the Acts of the Congress. I must therefore call a number of important ideas to your attention as you receive these texts:

- Some of the Proposals of the Congress have been changed. I was obliged to listen to the advice of the Procurator of the Order to ensure that they were in accord with the Rule and with Canon Law.
- One proposal made at the assembly does not remain in the text because after due reflection, it was not possible to apply it.

I should like to thank once again those people who worked to allow us to have this text before Christmas: the Master of the Order for all his attention and for the letter that accompanies these Acts; the Procurator of the Order for his juridical aid; Isaura from Brazil who worked on the translation of the texts; Ruth Anne who also worked on the translations; and Edoardo for his help in formatting and preparing the final text.

Fr. Rui Carlos Antunes e Almeida Lopes OP

THIRD INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS  
OF  
DOMINICAN LAY FRATERNITIES



Rome December 12, 2018

To the laity of the Order of Preachers

*Prot.73/17/810 ICLDF*

Dear sisters and brothers,

It is with joy, that I write these lines to accompany the publication of the Acts of the International Assembly of Dominican Lay Fraternities that was held in Fatima last October. Even if we cannot assimilate them with the Acts of what could be a «general chapter of lay Dominicans» that would formulate decisions, they reflect the richness of the reflection that was conducted by your representatives and formulate guidelines that in my opinion are very important for the coming years. I therefore invite you all not only to read them, but also to study them in fraternities and regions, so that, according to the specificities of each province, these orientations contribute to strengthening, ever more, communion among all.

Such an assembly is certainly the moment when everyone can become aware of both the place of the concern for communion in our common purpose of evangelization following Saint Dominic and the diversity of cultures, socio-political and ecclesial situations of one another. For this reason, this type of assembly, like the provincial chapters of the laity, always invites us to put into practice this patient democratic research of the unanimity that characterizes the tradition of our Order. The challenge of dialogue at the heart of this diversity, which is a true richness of the Order, is precisely to make sure that the orientations which we take together do not hold their value first because they represent a majority opinion but because they have been discerned by all as steps to be taken together. Thus our diversities may humbly recognize that they all have to draw from the same first source of communion. At a moment in time when the universal Church emphasizes synodality, the Order of Preachers, in its different branches and in the synergy between them, offers a style of synodality which is all the more relevant because it is tuned to evangelization and to the proclamation of the approach of the Kingdom. It seems to me that the assembly of Fatima was marked by this conviction.

The orientations that have been formulated constitute a sort of roadmap for all of us, and especially for the International Council of Fraternities and the General Promoter of the Dominican Laity. I invite them, as well as those in charge of the laity of the Order on provincial level and the councils, to establish their programme of animation, promotion and accompaniment from the study of these orientations. Here we have a beautiful and demanding programme aimed at stimulating the Dominican lay vocation and at carrying out the service which this vocation wishes to bring to the Church and to the local Churches. I am convinced our time opens a page of the history of the Church where the essential role of the laity in the mission of evangelization of the Church will increasingly be recognized, valued and called on. With its available means, the Order would like to contribute to this renewal of evangelization through the commitment of its laity and through the synergy between all the branches of an Order which is know to proclaim the friendship of God through the double evangelical and apostolic witness of its fraternities and communities.

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The assembly of Fatima did not fail to highlight the apostolic horizon of the Order. The theme which was the thread of these days of meeting, Justice, Peace and Care of Creation, made it possible to know more about the richness of the current commitments of each other. It also led to the identification of certain challenges to be met, of mobilizations to be reinforced, of solidarities to be deployed, of theological themes to be deepened, of misunderstandings to be lifted. Above all, the study of these questions has led to emphasize how much this field was a privileged theological place to make the teachings and the wisdom of the Church in matter of social doctrine better known, while at the same time explaining their theological foundations. This is beyond doubt a privileged path for evangelization. In doing so, the assembly did not neglect to address the other dimensions of the participation of the laity in the proclamation of the Gospel, either through proposals specific to the Order, or through participation in the life and mission of the local churches. This theme of the proclamation of the Gospel once again proved the most accurate horizon for speaking of the Dominican family, of the vocation of the Order as a whole, and of reciprocity in the apostolic responsibility which must be the leaven of unity, development and joy.

As you read these Acts, you will find that the theme of the initial and permanent formation, particularly caught the attention of the assembly. I am particularly pleased with this because it seems to me that through this priority given to formation and study, it is a question of really giving top priority to the promotion of each one's proper Dominican vocation. Formation should not be reduced to the sole dimension of study but should as much as possible be all encompassing, as a way of saying today what was Dominic's concern: may his brothers not «do» the preaching but let them «be» preachers. May their desire to live for the proclamation of the Gospel guide their whole life, individual and community, may they learn to live from the mystery they proclaim and truly become what they are called to become. In the end, could one better say what the Church is?

In the service of this Dominican lay vocation, the Order has put in place a Rule, various structures and modes of accompaniment. The assembly studied a certain number of issues in these areas, for example by asking for the establishment of a manner of communication that best serves the unity and synergy of all, clarifying the content of the function of religious assistant, proposing some amendments to the Rule. It is in this sense that, in accordance with what is expected of the Master of the Order, I will promulgate a new more synthetic version of the ordinations of the Rule. I will present the few amendments envisaged in the Rule to the Holy See for approval, so that it is closer to the reality of the life of the fraternities.


Two more points to conclude. The first is the importance that the Order must continue to give to the development of «International Dominican Youth Movement » Of course, for some young people of this movement, their commitment will be a great preparation to join the Fraternities when time comes. But, above all, this Dominican youth movement must be considered by all of us as the way in which the Order, drawing on its long tradition, wishes to contribute to calling young people and to accompanying those who, during the years of their youth, wish to live the mystery of their baptism by proclaiming the Gospel. The second is the attention that the assembly has given to the reception of people who live in difficult personal, family, marital situations and, sometimes, far from the discipline of the Church. It does not take them away from faith, nor does it separate them from the fraternity of the Church, It is the duty of the Order, which is the Order of Mercy, to bear witness to this.

The vitality of the Dominican laity is a grace for the whole Order and for the radiance of its vocation to proclaim the approach of the Kingdom. I would like to conclude this letter in expressing my deepest and most sincere gratitude. This vitality must call on the whole Order to continually immerse further

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into the world, in order to immerse ever deeper into the mystery of this God-with-us whom we will be celebrating very soon. With all of you, I entrust this vocation to Our Lady, Mary, Mother of Preachers.

Your brother in Saint Dominic

  
fr Bruno Cadore, o.p.  
Master of the Order of Preachers

## List of Participants

Josefa Librace; Argentina  
 Salvador Librace; Argentina  
 Silvia Beatriz Molina De Guillen;  
 Argentina  
 María Teresa Tenti; Argentina  
 Robert Bautista; Australia  
 Stephen Peterson; Australia  
 Ludovic Namurois; Belgique  
 Maria De Lourdes Lear Dos Santos; Brasil  
 Bogdan Penev; Bulgaria  
 Fr. Aristide Basse; Cameroun  
 Cecile Pierre Elise Chatap; Cameroun  
 Kouossu Clementine; Cameroun  
 Felix Foko; Cameroun  
 Elise Constance Lessako Noah; Cameroun  
 Bridget Ngam; Cameroun  
 Charlotte Ngougni Epse Fovop; Cameroun  
 Margaret Nubia Fofung Epse Fogam;  
 Cameroun  
 Joseph Sama (Dr); Cameroun  
 Severine Tchoula Tameko; Cameroun  
 Emma Visas Ngwe; Cameroun  
 Gisele Blanette Yaka Nyamsi; Cameroun  
 Benoît Des Roches; Canada  
 Catherine Halstead; Canada  
 Konrad Hanz; Canada  
 Paulina Rosa Arroyo Henriquez; Chile  
 Teresa De La Mercedes Pino Mendez;  
 Chile  
 Diva Amparo Moreno Triviño; Colombia  
 Sehinabou Yolande Doukoure; Cote  
 D'ivoire  
 Aya Alphonsine Kouassi-M'bengue; Cote  
 D'ivoire  
 Guillermo García Bregado; Cuba  
 Fr. Rui Carlos Antunes e Almeida Lopes;  
 Curia  
 Fr. Vivian Boland; Curia  
 Fr. Bruno Cadré; Curia  
 Fr. Michael Deeb; Curia  
 Fr. Miguel Angel Del Rio; Curia  
 Sr. Cecilia Espenilla; Curia  
 Sr. Marie-Teho Manaud; Curia  
 Fr. Krzysztof Poplawski; Curia  
 Fr. Luis Javier Rubio; Curia  
 Fr. Orlando Rueda Acevedo; Curia  
 Fr. Gerard Francisco Timoner Iii; Curia  
 Fr. Charles Emeka Ukwe; Curia  
 Sr. Letizia Youchtchenko; Curia  
 Ivan Bok; Czech Republic  
 Eva Fuchsova; Czech Republic  
 Fr. Hyacint Ullman; Czech Republic  
 Melba Marzia Hurdado De Rendon;  
 Ecuador  
 Melba Del Carmen Rendon Hurtado;  
 Ecuador  
 Luke Loquen; France  
 Klaus Bornewasser; Germany  
 Margarete Burkart; Germany  
 Melanie Delpech; Germany  
 Hans Gasper; Germany  
 Fr. David Michael Kammler; Germany  
 Volker Nebel; Germany  
 Leonor Aguilar Orellana; Guatemala  
 María Guadalupe Celis-Hecht Evans;  
 Guatemala  
 Leonor Mercedes Chocano Aguilar;  
 Guatemala  
 Fr. Ferenc Máté Barna; Hungary  
 Hilda Kőrösiné Merkl; Hungary  
 Joan Geraghty; Ireland  
 Patrick Hickey; Ireland  
 Paula Hickey; Ireland  
 Damien Mcdonnell; Ireland  
 Fr. Antonio Cocolicchio; Italy  
 Ruth Anne Henderson; Italy  
 Edoardo Mattei; Italy  
 Anisoara Tatar; Italy  
 Joseph Karanu; Kenya  
 Jean-Claude Loba Mkole; Kenya  
 Elisabeth Nyembo Aziza (Mrs Loba);  
 Kenya  
 John Odhiambo Magambo; Kenya  
 Caren Onyango; Kenya  
 Catherine Sonye; Kenya  
 Inga Maria Ilarienė; Lithuania  
 Vilija Marija Semetiene; Lithuania  
 Lazaro Gomez; Mexico

Guillermo Rojas; México	Maria Cardenales Rodriguez; Puerto Rico
Karin Bornhijm; Netherlands	Hector Marquez; Puerto Rico
Fr. Gerard Braks; Netherlands	María Auxiliadora Come Rodriguez;
Fr. Moses Arung; Nigeria	Republica Dominicana
Callistus Carlton Okwudili Iлека; Nigeria	Beatriz Santaella; Republica Dominicana
Nkechinyem Esther Nwaezeamaka;	Rihanna Dada Mukola Lutama;
Nigeria	Republique Democratique Du Congo
Anthony Obi; Nigeria	Genevieve Kantareme; Ruanda
Fr. Joseph Osunde; Nigeria	Duncan Maclaren; Scottish
Jan Frederik Solem; Norway	Eva Zudorova; Slovakia
Elva (Susana) Brittos; Paraguay	Delores Rose Hartzenberg; South Africa
Marina Duarte; Paraguay	Frederick Philip Hartzenberg; South Africa
Roque Jorgelina Maldonado; Paraguay	Khunjulwa Pearl Petrus; South Africa
Elianny Martínez; Paraguay	Maposholi Tabile; South Africa
Dario Rogelio Recalde Gamarra; Paraguay	Fr. Juan Carlos Cordero; Spain
Ilce Tongshi Quispe Rojas; Peru	IDYM Monica Marco; Spain
Carlos Teran; Peru	Antonio-Jesus Rodriguez Hernandez;
Gerardo Zamora Herrera; Peru	Spain
Fr. Giuseppe-Pietro Arsciwals; Philippines	Jose Vicente Vila Castellar; Spain
IDYM Benz Rodil; Philippines	Cynthia Donnelly; Usa
Estrella Jona Tabayoyong; Philippines	Denise Harvey; Usa
Małgorzata Kopczyńska; Poland	Michael Harvey; Usa
Jacek Zejma; Poland	Cosette D Heimann Heimann; Usa
Cristina Busto; Portugal	Marianne T Jablonski Jablonski; Usa
Mariana Teresa Cardoso Ary Portocarrero	John Thomas Charles Keenan; Usa
De Almada De Sousa Cardoso; Portugal	Joseph Komadina; Usa
António José. Carlos; Portugal	Jonathan Stabhl; Usa
Maria Fernanda Carlos; Portugal	Fr. Gerald "Jerry" Stookey; Usa
Sr. Celina Laranjeiro; Portugal	Joaquin Wong; Usa
Maria De Lurdes Santos; Portugal	Wiliy Rivero; Venezuela
Gabriel Silva; Portugal	Maria Hoang; Vietnam
Sr. Conceição ; Portugal	Rosa Nguyen; Vietnam
Sr. Lissette Avilés-Ríos; Puerto Rico	



## Commissions and Chairs

### Government, Rules and Statutes

- Chair: Hector L. Marquez, OP
- Co-Chair: Rev. Fr. Honorato C. Castigador, OP

### Communications & Finances

- Chair: Klaus Bornewasser, OP
- Co-Chair: Edoardo Mattei, OP
  - Member: Pedro Torres, OP

### Study and Formation

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- Co-Chair: Catherine Masson, OP

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- Chair: Felix Foko Fovo, OP
- Co-Chair: Gabriel Silva, OP
- Member: Marcus Kejungki, OP

### Justice and Peace and Care of Creation

- Chair: Joseph Komadina, OP
- Co-Chair: Catherine Neugebauer, OP
  - Supporting Co-Chairs: Duncan MacLaren, OP
  - Rev. Fr. Michael Deeb, O.P.

### On Relations with the Church and the Dominican Family

- Chair: Teresita Tenti de Volta, OP
- Co-Chair: Susanna Brittos, OP

### On Promoters

- Chair: Rev. Fr. Rui Carlos Lopes, OP

ACTS  
OF THE  
CONGRESS



FRATRES ORDINIS PRÆDICATORUM  
CURIA GENERALITIA

Rome, September 12, 2018

To fr Rui Carlos Antunes e Almeida Lopes, o.p.  
General Promotor of Laity for the Order

To Hector L. Marquez, l.o.p., President

To all the participants of the International Assembly of Dominican Laity

*Prot. 73/17/810/ICLDF*

Dear fr Rui,  
Dear fr Hector,  
Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Now is the time for the meeting of the international assembly of the laity of the Order and, with this letter, I wish to join you all who are in Fatima for this meeting. I express the wish that these days, for all of you, might be days of deep joy, days of healing for the vocation of each and every one of us, days also for strengthening our conviction to be sent as preachers to the world with a common apostolic responsibility to serve the mission of Christ through all forms of evangelization.

I planned to participate in most of this assembly. Unfortunately, I will not be able to do so because I was elected as one of the ten religious superiors who are members of the synod for young people. I will only be able to join you for one weekend, and I apologize for that, as I thank the organizers for agreeing to change the schedule so that we can better work together during these two days. It is indeed important for the Master of the Order to have this time to listen to the concerns of the laity of the Order, and to discern with them the directions that should be promoted and implemented for the good of preaching.

In the letter I sent to the laity of the Order at the beginning of this year, thinking of the assembly you are holding these days, I wrote that the latter would be the « celebration of the grace that is made to the Order, to have lay sisters and brothers as active members of its mission ». It is really the conviction that occupies me. It seems to me that it is a time of profound change for the Church itself, as well as for the way in which the Church is in the world. Evangelization is increasingly understood as being the proper work of the ecclesial communities, testifying by friendship and fraternity, to the will of Christ to « live familiarly with mankind, thus inspiring trust in all who go to him ». From this affirmation of Thomas Aquinas, which I like to quote because it seems to me to express the vocation of the Order of Preachers, I think we can retain some points of particular attention. The first is the reminder that the Order's vocation is to serve the mission of Christ. We always risk forgetting this by letting ourselves get locked into the sole consideration of our structures, our organizations, our own achievements and projects, our internal difficulties and sometimes our pride. But our vocation is above all to serve Christ's desire for familiarity with men and women.

The term familiarity emphasizes a second point of attention: there are steps to be taken to be really familiar with the world, there are displacements to effect, agreeing to let go of certain certainties. Christian culture is no longer familiar to people in many places and often we lament it without noting well that it is up to us to open new paths to the truth with those we would like to join, to build new bridges, to find new forms of friendship.

And this leads us to a third point of attention: « May all have the confidence to go to him ». In evangelization, it is a question of an exchange of trust: trust of Christ, trust of people; confidence of the Church, confidence of the world!

The body of the preachers, in the diversity of their states of life, in the complementarity of their vocations, must be the place where we teach each other, awakening to these three attentions: to the primacy of the mission of Christ, to the requirement of putting the proposal of the familiar friendship of God at the heart of preaching, to trust in the name of God. My letter at the beginning of the year expressed the eminent role of the laity of the Order in calling us to this.

To call the entire Order to this. This is how, I believe, we must today discern the specific vocation of the laity within the vocation of the Order of Preachers to evangelization. The subjects I mentioned in my letter (the sign of fraternity, the gospel of the family, the worlds of youth, faith in dialogue, the accompaniment of life) indicate so many areas in which the laity of the Order are undoubtedly essential « protagonists » to respond to our common vocation for evangelization. It means both their creativity, as is asked of all other members of the Order, and dialogue between us, so that the specific experience of the laity, in the diversity of their human, social, professional, ecclesial and cultural rootedness, might be a stimulant of the common apostolic responsibility to which we are all called. We must seek the most appropriate means to make this happen, to strengthen fidelity to our vocation, so as to consolidate continually our service to the mission of the Church.

As I wrote in that letter, I therefore again wish that your assembly will be an essential part of this concern for the Order's own vocation to evangelization. Saying this, I do not want to encourage you to hold theoretical or idealistic discourses on what the evangelization of the Order should be. I would rather recall that it is this vocation, this determination to put our lives at stake on account of evangelization, which is the essential criterion of all that we can organize within our Order. It is the service of the mission of Christ that must guide the way to offer programmes of initial or permanent formation to the new laity who join us. It is the willingness of the witness of fraternity that can enlighten what we have to implement in terms of communication. It is solidarity in a single fraternity that provides benchmarks for the management of our finances in justice and equity. It is the contemplation of Christ the preacher that is the foundation of a spiritual life that can be the source of preaching. It is the very prayer of Christ sent by the Father that gives us confidence in our own ability to keep us in unity. This is to say how much the workshops that are planned during this assembly will have the task of proposing orientations for our « structures » so that these offer the best conditions for the realization of the lay vocation within the Order and the Church.

The general assembly that you constitute will certainly be a wonderful experience of the Order's richness and diversity in the world. It will also be a great opportunity to experience the « sign of fraternity » through which the Order of St Dominic wishes to be a servant of the communion that is at the heart of Jesus' prayer. At our meetings, one of the manifestations of this fraternity is the quality of our dialogues, as well as listening to each one with respect, trust and charity. Such an « ethics of the word exchanged » between brothers and sisters is demanding. But it is the pledge of our common conviction that through our diversity of opinions, of the interpretation of situations and what is at stake in them, of the identification of the priority challenges for evangelization, and of visions of the

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**Third International Congress Lay Dominican Fraternities  
Fatima 2018**

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world, the fraternity that is given to us is the path to the common search for this truth that makes us free. May the Lord give us the grace of such an experience!

Once again, I apologize for not being able to be with you for the whole duration of your meeting. Nevertheless, I am looking forward to the two days during which I will be able to join you and, until that time, I assure you of my fraternal friendship, entrusting you to the intercession of Mary, Mother of Preachers, of Saint Dominic, and of all the saints of the Order.

Your brother in St Dominic,

  
fr Bruno Cadore, o.p.  
Master of the Order of Preachers

**WELCOME WORDS FROM HÉCTOR L. MÁRQUEZ, O.P.  
COORDINATOR OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF DOMINICAN LAY FRATERNITIES**

Good morning, dear brothers and sisters in Saint Dominic!

Welcome to Fatima, Portugal, and to the Third International Congress of Lay Dominican Fraternities.

We have come here from all continents, answering the call to gather that the members of the International Council did, under the slogan: "Justice, Peace, and Care of Creation", sheltered under the protective mantle of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima and the inspiration and intercession of our Father Saint Dominic, who every day fulfill that promise he made to his brothers with his last breath, that after his death would help us more than he did in life.

With this protection and inspiration, during the next seven days we will meet in various committees, in addition to the plenary sessions, to discuss topics of common interest related to the different aspects of our fraternal life and how to improve our Organization, reaffirm our identity and belonging to the Dominican Family in general, but particularly our membership of the Order of Preachers, as one of the three traditional branches of this meritorious Order founded by our Holy Father Dominic, and what this implies for the lives of each and every one of us and our fraternities.

On Sunday we will join our brother and General Master of the Order Bros.

Bruno Cadorè who, in according our rule, «as the successor of Santo Domingo and head of the Dominican Family presides all the fraternities of the world. »

Today we are accompanied by several members of the General Curia of the Order, namely, Bros. Miguel Ángel del Rio, Vicar of the Master, Bros. Orlando Rueda, Socius of the Master for Apostolic Life, Bros. Vivian Boland, Socius for Fraternal Life and Formation, Bros. Javier Abanto, General Promoter of Social Communication, Bros. Michael Deeb, General Promoter of Justice and Peace and Permanent Delegate for the United Nations, and, of course, our Bros. Rui Carlos Antunes e Almeida Lopes, Promoter General of the Laity who, as such, represents the General Master in all fraternities.

There are so many brothers and sisters who have helped us to make this Congress a reality that it would be impossible to name them all. However, I have to highlight the tireless work of the Secretary General of the Congress, our sister Belén Tangco of the Philippines, who started her work from the same day we decided on the place and date of the Congress at the meeting in June 2016, and still continues. To her our gratitude and the deserved applause of this Assembly.

Personally, to conclude my service to the Order and the Laity as Coordinator of the International Council of Lay fraternities Dominican, I thank God and the intercession of our Father Saint Dominic, the unexpected opportunity to know and share with so many brothers and sisters, laity, nuns, sisters of Apostolic Life, and friars from all over the world, who have

enriched my life and contributed to reaffirming my Dominican vocation. Everyone, including you, will always carry you in my heart.

It is these international meetings that allow us to appreciate in all its grandeur the nature, scope and spiritual richness of our beloved Order, and to strengthen the bonds of brotherhood that unite us. I therefore urge you, when you return to your home countries, to share this experience with the brothers and sisters of your fraternities, regions, provinces and countries, and "fall in love", so that in our next international Congress multiply the number of participants.

Before concluding these brief words, I urge you to hug the brother or sister you have at your side and tell you: how good is to be Dominicans!

With these words I declare formally opened the work of this Congress, imploring the blessing of God, the Blessed Virgin Mary in her dedication to Our Lady of the Rosary, and our Father Santo Domingo.

Thank you for being here.

**OPENING ADDRESS**  
**FR. RUI CARLOS ANTUNES E ALMEIDA LOPES, O.P.**  
**PROMOTER GENERAL OF LAITY**

Dear brothers and sisters

It is a great joy for me to welcome you all. So that we can have an idea of who is present at the assembly, I would like you to stand up when your region is called:

- Africa
- North America: United States and Canada.
- Latin America
- Asia Pacific
- Europe
- Curia.

I especially want to greet all those who live in regions with difficult situations, and if I may I want to welcome especially our brother who lives in Venezuela, a country torn by suffering and extreme poverty. There are difficult situations also in Cameroon, which is well represented here, and let us think of the Dominican Family in countries with very unstable situations such as the Central African Republic and of course Iraq. I ask you all to remember them in your prayers.

As Promoter I want to thank especially the Master of the Order and the Curia for all their support of this initiative.

I want to thank the management of the Steyler Hotel in the person of the manager and my good friend P. Jose Augusto Leitão and Catarina Neves who has devoted so much attention to preparation of the Congress.

I thank the Province of Portugal and especially the Dominican Laity of Portugal for all the readiness to help and fraternal spirit they have shown. I thank the Nuns of the Pius XII Monastery and the Congregation of the Dominican Sisters of Saint Catherine of Siena (my sisters) for their support of this Congress.

There are people who are the soul of this Congress: certainly the International Council of the Laity with a special mention for the Secretary General of the Congress: Belen Tangco - for three months with about fifteen emails and messages per day we worked together; another for our dear Klaus who has done wonders with the restricted funds available. And again a word of thanks for two people: Edoardo Mattei, our webmaster: every week we had a meeting to evaluate the situation and we thank him for all his work on the website for registration and information. Not having a staff in Rome for all this, Edoardo has been invaluable throughout the preparation. And I thank Ruth Anne for her willingness and efficiency in all that was asked of her.



Inevitably, at an event like this there are shortcomings, for which I apologize, but I appeal to your sense of brotherhood: we are in our family here, so please cast a fraternal eye even on what is not perfect.

This is where I would like to begin my talk: the sense of fraternity. Over the last few years, I have had the opportunity to meet many lay Dominicans all over the world: what beautiful experiences I have had and shared! The Dominican Laity really does wonderful things and these really testify to their spirit as preachers.

There are, however, great challenges: recent history does not show openness to the Order as a whole. For the first time in history, at the time of the Congress on the Mission of the Order at the end of the Jubilee, the Laity appeared in the Dominican Family at this international level as a body: at that congress 60% of the participants were members of the Laity. And let's be clear: the religious had financial support that the Laity did not have: that says a lot.

But I must admit that the Laity has not yet reached a perfect awareness of what it means to be a member of a family on a universal scale. Our view is still too narrow: my fraternity, at most my Province, is the horizon. Joint activities and sharing of information are not yet felt as an urgency and a priority: we need to grow in this spirit of communion. I hope that this congress can be a privileged moment to build this communion. All the work of the commissions tends in this direction.

Let us now think of what Congress is proposing. You know that the Congress has a theme: Justice, Peace and Care of Creation. Certainly, with the help of the speakers, we want to sensitize the Laity to the urgency of this subject, but that is not the only reason we are here: we did not come to reflect on the various aspects of the life and mission of the lay fraternities of the Dominican Order. This is why you will be in various commissions to share, reflect and propose to the assembly paths for the next few years: it is your proposals that will be the richness of the assembly. The Laity is a branch of the Order called to live its independence, of course in communion with the Master of the Order and the Provincials, but as protagonists of their own life choices.

Your proposals will be voted on and I will present them to the Master of the Order for promulgation. This assembly must be the highest expression of the independence of the Laity and the expression of the full maturity of their Dominican vocation.

In the letter from the Master of the Order, which we have just heard, Bro. Bruno appeals to your ability to debate matters: that is, with respect and acceptance of other points of view. I am convinced that we will talk about situations of fracture in the Church; you know we feel that even in the various Episcopal Conferences: let us not be afraid of difference, it is a treasure, but please, always safeguard fraternal charity.

You know that we, the brothers and sisters here, are present to help you, but not to make decisions - that is your job. The proposals will be voted on by those who formally represent the provinces or countries.

How should we proceed in this work?

Each commission must find its own way of working: we do not have interpreters for the commissions, we only have them for the plenary sessions. I thank Sr Marie Théo, Sr Laetitia and Ruth Anne for this precious service. So each commission must find its way of working: to divide according to languages, etc. They must find a secretary who every day

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must meet with the other secretaries and with the general secretary. I ask you to write your texts on a computer: your text will be read and projected on the screen. The texts can be in French, Spanish and Italian.

The text, which should not be of more than 7 pages per commission, should have a preamble to frame the reflection, and short, precise sections so that we can identify what is significant and vote. We will vote section by section. Please take care: precise sections with concrete proposals.

We will have a motion presented by Belgium which must be discussed: this discussion must be prepared by the first commission.

We will vote section by section. Please give the texts to our interpreters as well. The richness of the congress depends on your shared reflections.

One more thing that is very important in the Dominican way of government: there will certainly be different views at the beginning, but after the vote, if the decision does not contradict the Magisterium of the Church, it must be wholeheartedly accepted: it is the sense of consensus, so important in our Dominican vision. Well, we cannot propose or vote things that contradict the teaching of the Church. This point is very important: we will not say 'they decided' but 'we decided'; accepting the decisions of the assembly is an act of spiritual maturity.

I leave you a set of questions that I would like you to discuss in the commissions:

#### Broad topics for work in the commissions

##### 1. Commission on Government, Rule and Statutes

- a) Analysis of the proposals of the Curia for the Rule and declarations of the Master of the Order.
- b) Evaluation of the structures of government: international council and regional councils and indications for their working.
- c) Welcoming people in special situations: divorced and remarried, people with different sexual orientations, etc.
- d) The meaning of the lay promise; which terminology would be most appropriate: profession, commitment etc.
- e) Search for lay language for fraternities: postulate, novitiate, change of name, etc., etc.
- f) External signs of belonging

##### 2. Formation Commission

- a) Development of a formation plan for at least the first stage of formation
- b) Seek how to do formation at all levels: human, spiritual, theological, and formation for preaching. I am aware of a lack of formation specifically for preaching.
- c) The profile of the lay formation officer.

3. Communication and Finance Commission
  - a) How to keep the database updated
  - b) Participation in information at the general level
  - c) Privacy policy and evaluation of content exchanged
  - d) Financial collaboration of the fraternities: there should be a meeting of Promoters and religious assistants or formation officers and we cannot afford it. What can be done ?
4. Commission on the Dominican Family and Relations with the Local Church
  - a) How we live the relationship with the other branches: meetings, shared mission, structures ...
  - b) Recognition of fraternities in local churches
  - c) Church delegation to preaching
5. Preaching and Spirituality Commission
  - a) What lay preaching is. Lay models or clerical models
  - b) Forms of preaching and urgency of preaching
  - c) Preaching and fraternity
  - d) A spiritual life that can feed this lay preaching
  - e) Seeking a spirituality suited to lay life
  - f) Formation on personal prayer
6. Justice and Peace Commission
  - a) Provincial structures of justice and peace for the Laity
  - b) How to engage the Laïcat in these areas of J and P
  - c) Presence of J and P in the stages of formation
7. Promoters Commission
  - a) The profile of Promoters and Religious Assistants
  - b) Clarification of their functions
  - c) Dialogue of the Provincial with the fraternities in the nomination of the Promoters and religious assistants.

All this work will not be possible without a great openness to the Spirit of God. The discussions must be rooted in prayer: every day from 6.30 to 8.30 we will have Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. You can freely spend a moment of personal prayer in the chapel. But you also have to have breakfast, so everyone must get organized to be prepared for Mass according to the shared program. This is prepared in fraternal meetings throughout the day: take the time to get to know other people, other realities, to build a Laity that is really a branch of the Order with fraternal links among those who live the same vocation.

Yesterday in Rome the Synod of Bishops on Youth began. The Holy Father urged the bishops to ardour and evangelical passion. In addition to reflecting on the relationship of the

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Fraternities with young people, I would also like us to reflect on this: this assembly should give us all the ardour and the evangelical passion that stirred St Dominic and the many Dominican male and female religious and lay people through the centuries and which one day inflamed us too.

And here in Fatima let us entrust all our concerns to the Virgin Mary, Mother of Preachers.

**HOMILY OF BR. MIGUEL ANGEL DEL RIO**  
**FEAST OF SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI**  
**04 OCTOBER 2018**

*Gal 6, 14-18*  
*Mt 11, 25-30*

The holiness of the "Francis" of Assisi is characterized by an intense and universal light, capable of attracting the attention and desire of the heart towards the noblest aspects that our humanity is capable of expressing. The greeting that even today their friars, scattered to all over the world, they direct to each person they encounter – "peace and Well" – synthesizes a found harmony, with themselves, with others and with the world, that it is not only possible to experience but also to transmit to others. As Pope Francis wanted to remember in his visit to Assisi at the beginning of his pontificate, this peace cannot be superficially understood as a romantic inner peace: "The Franciscan Peace is not a syrupy feeling. Please: this San Francisco does not exist! And it's not even a kind of monotheistic harmony with the energies of the cosmos... Nor is this a Franciscan, but an idea that some have built. The peace of Saint Francis is that of Christ, and he is found by the one who "burdens" with his "domination", which is to say his commandment: Love each other as I have loved you, , so you must love one another (cf. Jn 13, 34; 15, 12). And this "domination" cannot be carried with arrogance, with presumption, with pride, but can only be carried with meekness and humility of heart (homily of the Holy Father Francis, Plaza Saint Francis of Assisi, October 4, 2013).

Otherwise, the same San Francisco could react to any reductive reading of his human and Christian experience with the words of St. Paul: "Brethren, it is for me, May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. (Gal 6, 14). The world that for the "little poor man" of Assisi has been crucified is that medieval society – so far away and, at the same time, so close to ours – in which he has been able to embody with determination all the poverty of spirit indicated by the Gospel of Christ until he is "New Creature" (6, 15). A similar path has not been for Saint Francis a sudden simplification of living. Like any human being who is seriously measured with the "burning and sweet strength" of God's grace, Francis had to lose many battles with himself before he came to receive the Lord Jesus as the only Lord to serve and to learn the secret of a poor life. Though full of his natural need, feel gratuitously loved: "All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him." (Mt 11, 27).

None can accept to live the radical logic of the Beatitudes without having understood before the word of the cross as absolute and extreme manifestation of the love of God for each one of his creatures. On the other hand, you can not experience this love if it is not through a daily and incessant reception of the limits and others, which leaves in our bodies the signature of a alliance lived, until we can say without boasting: I carry the marks of Jesus in my body" (Gal 6, 17). Francis has experienced that living like this, assuming reality as the only place where to be happy and the others as the only chance to love and be loved, transforms the weight of days into a sustainable lightness. With the delicate and unbreakable strength of the meek of heart, the "little poor man" has ignited in the world and delivered to

humanity the nostalgia of an existence inspired by freedom and the joy of the Gospel, where the dream of fraternity is not impossible for people who find willing to express with confidence their own need.

We end this reflection with the prayer of St. Francis for the world: "Your supplication, then, my Lord Jesus Christ, Father of all mercy, that you do not remember our ingratitude, but bear in mind the inexhaustible clemency you have manifested, that it may always be Place and dwelling of those who truly know you and glorify your name, blessed and Glorious, for centuries of centuries. Amen. "(Mirror of Perfection, 124; FF, 1824)

## THE DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF FORMATION IN THE DOMINICAN ORDER VIVIAN BOLAND OP

### INTRODUCTION

I am honoured to be invited to address the congress, I am very happy to be here, and I am happy also to share with you some thoughts about the different aspects of formation in the Dominican Order today.

As I am sure you know, a new *Ratio Formationis Generalis* for the friars was promulgated by the Master of the Order on 22 December 2016. This *Ratio* is a statute, or a set of norms and principles, which are given to the Order to guide the work of formation. For us that work is guided in the first place by the Constitutions and it is the Constitutions themselves that ask for a *Ratio Formationis Generalis*. They speak about it as follows (LCO 163):

*There shall be a Ratio Formationis for the whole Order, approved by the general chapter or by the Master of the Order, and revised from time to time. It should lay down general spiritual principles and basic training norms for forming the brothers, leaving the provinces to develop their own norms as time and place demand.*

It is to be revised from time to time, and because the previous version had been promulgated in 1987, the Jubilee Year of 2016 seemed like an appropriate time for a substantial revision of the *Ratio Formationis Generalis*.

I would like to speak about three things. In the first place I will say what is new about the *Ratio Formationis Generalis* of 2016 so as to see what are the aspects of formation that are given special emphasis today. Then I would like to say something about how the Dominican Laity might use the *Ratio* of the friars in thinking about their own formation. And finally, I want to refer to two recent letters of the Master of the Order which speak about the priorities for our mission today and specifically the role of the Dominican Laity in that mission. Formation is always for the mission of the Order and so in any particular place and time our formation must get some of its character and content from the missionary emphasis of that place and time. Because these letters of brother Bruno give direction for the Dominican mission today they ought also to guide our thinking about Dominican formation today.

### THE 2016 RFG

If asked to identify what is new in the revised *Ratio Formationis Generalis* I pick out three things in particular.

There is an emphasis on the **role of the community** in the work of formation which was not present in the old *ratio*. When the new document speaks about those responsible for formation it speaks firstly of the community itself. The individual brother has his own special responsibility to develop his vocation and to live it as well as possible. He is helped by masters or formators who have responsibility for the novitiates and studentates of the Order. They in turn are helped by councils and chapters of the brothers, especially by formation councils established in each community of initial formation and for the province

as a whole. But a place of priority is given to the formation community itself, so that everybody who is part of it is asked to share the responsibility of providing the best possible context for forming new brothers in the life and mission of the Order. In a recent symposium at Oxford about vocational discernment, a symposium that involved Benedictines, Jesuits and Dominicans, it was striking to see how much responsibility is given by our tradition to the chapters and councils of the communities when it comes to discerning and forming the new friars.

A second thing that is new, and in this the Order is simply thinking with the Church, is to consider **four basic aspects of formation**, the aspects of human formation, religious or spiritual formation, intellectual formation, and apostolic or pastoral formation. This distinction is first found, to the best of my knowledge, in *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, the apostolic exhortation from John Paul II in 1992 following a synod of bishops dedicated to priestly formation. But it has become common as a way of thinking about formation and we find it again in the most recent church document dedicated to priestly training, the *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis*, which was published in December 2016. One might debate some aspects of this distinction, and already I have been involved in a number of conversations in which certain aspects of it have been questioned. But it is a useful starting point, to consider formation in this holistic or integral way, involving these four aspects.

The third new element in our *Ratio Generalis* is that for the first time the Order has a ratio for **permanent formation** and not just for initial formation. This is another emphasis that is shared across the Church, a growing acceptance of the need for priests and religious – but we can add for all Christians too – to accept that discipleship means being forever in the school of Jesus. The Order was slow to accept this new emphasis. Earlier efforts at general chapters to give greater prominence to permanent formation were not successful. The chapters preferred to deal with it as a kind of appendix to initial formation. Many things have conspired to help us to change our minds about this, good things like a better understanding of human psychology and development, or a deeper appreciation of the challenges that come with the different stages and experiences of life, but also not so good things such as the sexual abuse crisis which is disturbing the Church so profoundly and which raises fundamental questions about human and spiritual maturity. So our recent general chapters have been happy to begin their consideration of formation by speaking about permanent formation and then seeing initial formation within that broader context. We are forever being formed in our following of Jesus and we are forever growing into our following of Dominic. It is not just aspects of our own nature and personality that require this. It is also the need to respond to changing situations and fresh challenges that come to anybody engaged in preaching the gospel today.

These are what I would pick out as the key new emphases of the 2016 *Ratio Generalis*: a stress on the role of the community in formation, a recognition of formation as holistic or integral involving human, spiritual, intellectual and apostolic aspects, and a recognition of the permanence of formation within which the years of initial formation have a special character but do not exhaust all that we must now say about formation.

#### THE NEW RATIO AND THE DOMINICAN LAITY

I hope that the new *Ratio Generalis* will not only be of interest to the Dominican Laity but will also be of help when you are thinking about your own formation. Our work of



drafting a new *Ratio* was greatly facilitated by a very simple and clear statement with which the acts of the general chapter of Rome in 2010 began its consideration of formation (n.185):

*The aim of our formation is the making of a Dominican preacher. Distinctive Dominican preaching must be the creative reference point of all other aspects of formation, human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral. The common zeal to share the fruits of contemplation of the Word of God provides the environment in which we all grow as preachers, a culture of mission.*

So a first question, perhaps even a challenge, to yourselves is to ask how you would articulate the goal of your formation as Lay Dominicans? How would you express it? You might want to borrow from the sentences just quoted but you still need to qualify them in some way to bring out the specific character of your way of being Dominicans. What is the 'end product' that you wish, by God's grace, to be brought about through the work of formation? What kind of animal is the Lay Dominican? What are the characteristics of this animal when it is living well and flourishing as the kind of animal that it is? Your answers to those questions will already give you clear indications about what kind of formation you need to be thinking about.

When I quoted LCO 163 about the *Ratio Formationis Generalis* you will have noticed that it ends by saying that it is left to the provinces to develop their own norms as time and place demand. So in these years each province is engaged in producing a *Ratio Formationis Particularis* which adapts the general principles and fills out the basic structures of the *Ratio Generalis* for the context of each province.

Perhaps we could think of the Lay Dominicans doing something analogous to that. You could use the *Ratio Generalis* as a starting point but then adapt it, contextualise it and supplement it in accordance with your own particular way of living Dominican life and of participating in the Order's mission. An appendix to the *Ratio Generalis* gives guidelines for how a *ratio particularis* is to be drawn up. Decisions about certain matters are left to the discretion of each province. The general chapter of Bologna in 2016 also gave some guidelines for adapting the general principles and norms for formation to the needs of the individual provinces. It is interesting that these guidelines (AGC Bologna n.245) give special emphasis to the apostolic plan or 'community project' of each province. The process of formation needs to keep this provincial plan in mind and be established in such a way that the brothers being formed are being formed for the mission of the Order as it is contextualized in this or that part of the world.

So to continue the analogy, we can imagine the Lay Dominicans using the *Ratio Generalis* of the friars but adapting it to the apostolic plan or 'community project' of the fraternities. It would mean putting a second set of questions to yourselves, questions such as: what are the apostolic priorities of the lay fraternities in your province? How are the Lay Dominicans engaged in the life and mission of your province? How do we begin to contextualise the formation offered here or there in order to prepare Dominican laity well for their participation in the life and mission of a particular province?

It will also mean carrying through this reflection and revision of your formation programmes guided by the new emphases which I spoke about under the first point: the place of the community in formation, the different aspects of formation if it is to be integral, and the fact that we are asked now to think always in terms of permanent formation and not just of initial formation.

### **Priorities For Mission And Formation Today**

So for what mission, for what project, are lay Dominicans being formed today? What are the current priorities and preoccupations of the Order for help with which it looks to its lay members? I suggest that we find a very good answer to these questions in two recent letters of the Master of the Order, his letter after the Mission Congress which brought the Jubilee celebrations to an end, and his letter to the Dominican laity in preparation for this congress in which we are now participating. The first letter is dated 25 March 2017 and the second is dated 25 January 2018. How are lay Dominicans to be formed today for the Order of Preachers whose mission is currently orientated in the ways indicated after the Mission Congress? How are lay Dominicans to be formed today so as to respond to the challenges shared with you by the Master in his letter in preparation for this Fatima Congress?

When the goal is clear it becomes easy to talk about the human, spiritual, intellectual and apostolic formation that is required to achieve it. This is what the general chapter of Rome helped us to do in relation to our formation as friars of the Order. My proposal, humbly submitted, is that the Laity should undertake a similar exercise. Your formation, both initial and permanent, should prepare you to take your place in the mission of the Order as it is conceived today. In order to do that your formation, both initial and permanent, needs to be guided by the goals and priorities outlined in these two letters from brother Bruno.

#### *From the Mission Congress*

The letter after the Mission Congress summarised all that had been presented during the days of the Congress and identified three main convictions that had emerged about the Order's mission today: a conviction about **preaching**, a conviction about **fraternity**, and a conviction about **encounter**. These are some central guiding realities to inform any fresh thinking about formation and they come not just from the Master of the Order but from the more than six hundred members of the Dominican family who took part in the Mission Congress and whose work the Master summarised in his letter. Remember that the largest single group at the Congress were the lay members of the Order.

So preaching, fraternity and encounter. A focus on preaching is not a surprise for an Order whose heart is given to the loving service of the Word of God. But the Mission Congress did not wish simply to re-assert the Order's central mission but to identify those aspects of it that need renewal among us: a lifestyle that supports preaching, a generous, courageous and creative service of the Word, a concern for the different languages in which we are called to communicate about the Word (language meaning also things like music and art).

The focus on fraternity was particularly on the experience of friendship which we carry for the Church and for the world, a friendship being strengthened between us on the basis of the friendship of God that is the subject matter of our preaching: God's friendship towards us, God's call to us to share in the friendship that he is, the life we share together as friends of the Bridegroom, calling others to come and share in the joy of our Lord.

And encounter is the form our preaching must take, today more than ever, following the example of Jesus and Dominic as we see them meeting people, listening, questioning, giving time and attention, staying with people as they face their difficulties and as they search for truthful ways of living. One of the most powerful moments of the Mission Congress was

that dedicated to reflecting on Jesus' conversations with the Samaritan woman in John 4 and with the disciples on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24.

Preaching, fraternity, encounter: we learn these things in the first place from God's way of communicating his Word to us, from God's way of bringing us into His friendship, from God's way of establishing and sustaining dialogue in His encounter with His people. The Mission Congress also presented us with many experiences of restlessness, of communities, places and situations where people are restless and to which we are particularly called to speak a word of healing, reconciliation, peace and mercy, to be preachers of grace in all those ways. The world needs the Word that builds communion and the work of preaching the Word of God's grace is inseparable from the work of building communion. As his letter unfolds, the Master speaks about the importance for this of theology, the need for fresh study to which our preaching will inevitably send us and from which we are then sent back to preaching. He speaks of permanent formation, already mentioned. He speaks of the Order as a family in the heart of the Church, a point to which I shall return. He speaks of moving forward in the mission of the Order while doing so in the path of tradition, handing on to a new generation what we ourselves have received. And he speaks about the Salamanca process, an approach which asserts very clearly the human dignity of all persons and which works to defend and promote that dignity, and the rights that go with it, particularly in situations where these are under threat.

Finally the Master comes to some concrete priorities for the Order's mission today: the worlds of young people, digital culture, migration, and study as a mission of the Order.

It might seem as if I have asked the Master to write my talk for me! But what I want to stress is the importance of aligning our formation, both initial and permanent, with the apostolic concerns of the Order of Preachers today. The aspects of formation being underlined in the Church and in the Order are those I mentioned earlier – the role of the community or fraternity, the need for permanent formation considering our own development in response to the changing demands being made on us, and the need for a holistic or integral formation that will take account not just of religious and intellectual aspects but of the human and the apostolic aspects as well. The letter after the Mission Congress articulates the mission of the Order as it is understood by us today and the formation of all branches of the Order ought to be guided by that articulation.

#### *Towards the International Congress 2018*

The letter of brother Bruno to the laity of the Order in preparation for this Congress makes concrete for the Dominican laity the challenges and priorities already identified for the whole Order. Not surprisingly the first place is given to the **sign of fraternity**. This is a first task for the mission and therefore for the formation of lay Dominicans also. You are to be a sign in the world that humans carry within them the ability to live as brothers and sisters. Within the fraternities you are called to establish relations which, even with all your diversity, unite you in the same relationship with God and in the same desire to be sent as witnesses of the Word of life and grace.

Another term we must use is the term **family**. We are accustomed to speaking of the Dominican family in order to include all the branches that belong in some way to the Order of Preachers. It is even more specific in your case because many, though not all, lay Dominicans live their vocation in the context of family life, as husbands or wives, as fathers or mothers. Pope Francis has spoken often about the gospel of the family and how the family

is to be an agent of evangelization. This is something the Order looks to you to teach the rest of us, how the life of families can be supported and strengthened through your membership of the Order and how families in their ordinary reality can be bearers of the grace of the Lord and witnesses in the world to that grace.

Continuing the theme of preaching as **encounter and dialogue**, there are many places and situations other than family life itself, that are accessible to the lay brothers and sisters of the Order in ways that they are not accessible to the friars, nuns or sisters. Brother Bruno speaks about how the lay Dominicans are in the front line in many areas of professional life, where important issues of ethics, justice and meaning arise. In medicine and law, in communications and ecology, in education and business: in all cases there are encounters with people, there is working together, there is a shared search for meaning, truth and goodness. Some of the questions that arise in these areas will send us back to study, to learn more and to understand more about the many questions humanity is facing and about the light to be shed on these questions from the Word of God. From our tradition we can engage with these concerns and make a contribution to finding solutions for them.

**Ecumenical and interreligious dialogue** is an area of particular importance which gets special mention in the Master's letter. Because of your immediate and daily contact and interaction with people of other faiths and religious beliefs, lay Dominicans are on the front line in this matter also in ways that other members of the Dominican family are not.

The **worlds of youth** get special mention, a point that had already been emphasised in the Mission Congress. The Synod of Bishops devoted to this is just beginning in Rome and it is a moment to renew our commitment to promoting the participation of young people in the preaching mission of the Order. One particular issue that needs to be thought about is how to facilitate the transition of younger people from the various youth groups attached to the Order to a lifelong participation in the lay fraternities of the Order.

Returning at the end of his letter to the question of the family, brother Bruno speaks about the welcome, discernment and accompaniment needed where lay brothers and sisters are in irregular situations. It is a question that has exercised the whole Church since the last two synods on the family and it is one that arises in many of the lay fraternities. How are we to honour the reality of being signs of fraternity in a world and in a Church that are marked by brokenness and imperfection? How are we to be preachers of grace and mercy not just in word but also in practice? Brother Bruno made a specific request to all the provincial officials of the Dominican Laity about this. From the point of view of my theme, aspects of formation in the Dominican Order, you can see once again the need for permanent formation in order to understand well, to respond well and to continue building the signs of fraternity that we want to be.

## CONCLUSION

To conclude: the formation of the Lay Dominican in the way of Saint Dominic needs to be integral, a formation in human, religious, intellectual and apostolic maturity. It needs to be permanent, a formation that builds constantly on what was received in the time of initial formation. And it needs to be undertaken in community since it is the community that confirms the promptings of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of each one.

I have stressed that it is a formation for the mission of the Order because the end of the Order is an apostolic one: we are all at the service of the proclamation of the Word of

God, to evangelise in the world the name of Jesus Christ. Lay Dominicans have a particular role and contribution in this mission. They are formed by and for life in the family, in the Order, in the Church, and in the world. Having their own experience of these different circles of life – the family, the Order, the Church, the world – lay Dominicans are in a very good place from which to allow each of these circles to illuminate the others.

In this third part of my talk I have presented the main lines of the Order's understanding of its mission today. I have done so because our formation is always for our mission. So my final question to you is this: how can the Order best help and equip you, through the initial and permanent formation it offers you, to play your part in responding to these contemporary challenges?

**THEME: ECOLOGY AND CARE OF CREATION**  
**SR. LISSETTE A. AVILÉS-RÍOS, OP**

Good morning, I extend them an eco-friendly greeting, a renewable blessing and a sustainable embrace. I thank the organizers, especially to Héctor Márquez, for the invitation to accompany them in this third International Congress.

The theme or reflection that I will share, I have been developing from 3 moments or 3 looks. These "looks" are only the form of the Church in Latin America and the Caribbean addressing the reality of seeing, judging and acting; And that from the integral ecology we call it 3 looks: to see/lovingly the reality with its lights and shadows; Judge/carefully in the light of the Word of God, the documents of the Magisterium and any other document, which carefully help to awaken the third glance, the act/hopefully. The first glance, will be an invitation to see or look lovingly at the place where we are, from where we simply came to see the reality of our planet. The second glance or second moment, will be to have a careful look of the creation from the lenses of the encyclical *Laudato Sí*. And, a third moment will be an invitation to a hopeful look of our Dominican spirituality to achieve an integral/holistic ecology that helps in the care of creation.

**Let's take our first look**

I invite you to recall something from your place of origin and remember some scenery or place that you like very much; You have 3 seconds for this (pause of 3 ' '). Then remember your trip here to Fatima, and try to recover some landscape that drew your attention; You have 3 more seconds (3 ' ' pause). Now you have 1 minute to share in a low voice or whisper (so we say in Puerto Rico), with the closest person, these places or landscapes of which you like or who call your attention. (1 ' pause)

I hope that before you share the favorite landscape and if you didn't know the person next to you, you asked her name or both have introduced yourself. Also, I wonder if the images or landscapes you shared, which are your favorites, include people or just trees, birds, mountains, sea, river... And it is very natural that in front of an exercise like this, we only think of a beautiful landscape, absent from people or buildings. My favorite place is the following (image of the Bay of St. John, has in the background part of the old Saint John, view of Catanho, specifically, the convent, where I live, Saint Vicent Ferrer Convent).

Now, I invite you to ask yourselves, if your relationship with God, from the charism and spirituality of the Dominican spirituality is reflected in dealing with other people, whether believers or not, is reflected in the deal with you, and is reflected in the treatment or the way you take care of your environment. In other words, if I had the opportunity to walk with you, without being seen, could I see your love and relationship with God, reflected in the way you relate to yourself, to others and to your environment?

Retaking their favorite places, it is common to think of natural landscapes, excluding people or buildings, believing that speaking of ecology, only refers to what is created by God.

This term, ecology, is granted to the zoologist, Ernst Haeckel, who already in 1869 used it to refer to the interrelations of organisms with their environment or their surroundings. If we seek the origin of ecology, it comes from the Greek word *oikos* meaning

home. Today, this concept has already spread to all manifestations of life or the biosphere. What is meant by biosphere or life is that it is composed of a diversity of ecosystems/systems of houses that interact with each other. And here it includes us as human beings, for what it's worth asking, how do we relate to our environment with our oikos, with our house?

In this loving gaze (and loving means the ability to see reality with its lights and shadows; loving look like that of a father or mother does, when he speaks of his sons and daughters. He or she knows how much "good" or how "terrible" is your son, but still does not cease to love him), we must acknowledge the reality of our great *Oikos*/house, or how Pope Francis encourages us to call it, Our Common House. Let's look at some data from our common house, some realities that are suffering or live in some rooms, regions or countries. I share with you that when I listen to the common house, I cannot help but imagine myself on the planet, like a house of several floors or plants, or an immense house, type mansion with a diversity of rooms. Each room represents a country. But let us look at some realities of this House and, above all, our performance in it...

In 2014, the World Fund for Nature reported that in the first 8 months of this year, 2014, the human being "ate" or used the natural resources that the planet takes a year to produce. And he sentenced that the human being, of the current lifestyle, of accelerated technological changes, until the year 2050 or perhaps before, will need 3 planets to supply his "apparent needs". I use the expression "apparent needs" because if we look at the proportion of what we are "Christians" in the world, no matter to which denomination we belong, we are 1 third of the world's population. And one assumes that a Christian chooses and distinguishes himself by having a simple life, in the style of the Master, of our Lord Jesus Christ, so the title of Christian, or "another Christ". This does not count the large number of people, who have had a basis of Christian faith and who are now agnostics or belong to another religion and I hope that something good has inherited from our faith.

In 2017, it was recorded that the human being had generated an approximate total of 10 billion tons of garbage since 2012. This means that, daily and in those five years, we generated 228,000 tonnes per hour and that 30% of these residues were not collected or treated. Lest we forget, the decomposition time: a plastic bag takes 150 years to decompose, the batteries or batteries about 1000 years to decompose (think of all that we, the Puerto Ricans had to use last year because of the loss of electric energy, due to the impacts of the Hurricanes Irma and Maria), and glass or crystal take about 4 years. There is an Internet page, "Waste Atlas", in which the production of garbage is recorded by countries. Without doubt, we can express, as Pope Francis did in number 21: "The land, our house, seems to become more and more a huge deposit of crap." Of course, the most developed rooms or countries generate a greater amount of garbage or waste. In addition, these wastes will sometimes stop in the least developed quarters or countries, or the raw material is extracted from them. The effect of production of these wastes affects climate change, as these are not only plastic, metals, papers, but also gases that produce the greenhouse effect, which reheats our home. This, not to mention that many of these residues do not remain in any "room", but, they go to the courtyard of the whole common house, in the ocean where are already registered floating islands of garbage. I encourage you to watch the documentary, "Waste Atlas" in which the production of garbage is registered by countries. Without any doubt, we can say, as Pope Francis made it in Figures 21: The Earth, our house, seems to become increasingly a huge waste depot. Of course,

the most developed rooms or countries generate a greater amount of garbage or waste. In addition, these wastes sometimes go into less developed rooms or countries, or the raw material is extracted from them. The effect of the production of this waste affects the climate change that waste is not only plastic, metals, papers, but also the gases that produce the greenhouse effect, which warms our house. This, besides many of these wastes do not stay in any "room" but, they go to the courtyard of the whole house, to the ocean where they already register floating islands of garbage. I encourage you to watch the documentary "A Plastic Ocean".

Pope Francis is right to emphasize that in the world there are no two crises, environmental and social or human, but that is a unique crisis to socio/environmental. That what is harmful to nature affects society, especially the most vulnerable, and vice versa, what affects society has repercussions on the environment, be aware or not.

### **Second glance, Judge carefully**

What I sketched is very brief, but "how a preview, one button is enough," the saying goes. With these data, I look for, as does the Pope, in *Laudato Sí* number 19: "to lead the painful conscience to transform in the personal pain of what happens in the world to contribute with significant changes." Lifestyle changes are urgent, not only between Catholic Christians, but across the entire human race.

*Laudato Si* is directed to all people, believers and non-believers, so that we acknowledge that the planet is Our Common House and that is, the House of the human being and of each creature for less or that we do not know it exists. That the planet Earth is our mother, our sister. I know that there are people, Dominicans from about 39 countries, who have made a choice of a simple life, or because their culture helps them to maintain a connection with creation or because their conversion process, accompanied by the spirit of Saint Dominic de Guzman encourages them. That in their search for truth, they contemplate the creation as a whole, which are aware of the interconnectivity that exists between the human being and creation. Who are able to read the history of salvation that is updated day by day in nature and are seen as part of it and not superior to it.

But we cannot deny that, we have others to whom, possibly, our Christianity and Dominicanism, do not reflect in the same way this love or this relationship of respect to God, to the others or to the environment.

When I find people, who in their way of acting seek good for both another human being and for nature, I cannot help but confirm that the gospel of creation becomes evident. What do I mean by the Gospel of Creation? It is nothing more than to be able to interpret the scriptures of Genesis, which speak to us of the creation of our world and of the human being, not feeling like the owners and lords of all that the creator has given him. On the contrary, they acknowledge with their responsible actions that the care of what is created by God is the task of the Believer, who as caregivers of creation or as some call it, they are butlers of creation.

I think of our Father Saint Dominic. It is said that he spoke with God or of God, and that in one of his prayer postures, in which he integrated the body with the spirit, he has contemplated and integrated the creation to then give the fruit of the contemplated. What would he tell us today, about the reality of Our Common House? How would you describe God, in what you contemplate in creation? It is curious, in the iconography with our Father



founder is the puppy, sign of fidelity, with the torch in the mouth to illuminate the world. I wonder, what will be the iconography of each of the present here? With which animal or element would you describe us in order to reflect hope in the world?

Let me share with you what my star sign is, not because it is exactly like them, but it helps me to be better human and better Christian. My sign is the sea turtle. Because they are turtles, they are considered slow, this influenced by the tale "The Hare and the Turtle." But they are slow outside their environment, but who had the opportunity to see them at sea, knows that following their pace of swimming is not so easy. Just give them several fins and leave us behind with ease. Its slowness is present when, after passing through the process of fertilization, the female goes to the coast of some beach, which possibly visited at other times and where there is no contamination of artificial light, to deposit their eggs. When it comes out of the water, its weight makes it move slowly, but firmly. By reaching the proper height of the beach, it will turn on itself and start digging with its rear fins, a hole of almost one meter deep. When it feels that the nest is deep enough and safe, it will start depositing the first eggs slowly, until a moment comes in that enters "bliss". It knows that this moment has come, because it begins to tear and is there the moment of complete delivery, and it is when scientists can approach to measure them or identify them. Nothing, no one will interrupt you in your process of leaving its fruits.

Once the placement of the layer is finished, it will cover the nest with sand and slowly begin its return to the sea. After a few months, the offspring will come out of their egg by finding the exit to the surface by the small bag of air, which forms inside the eggshell and, which indicates where is the exit of the nest. Once on the surface will begin your adventure to the sea. Your mother will not receive them on the coast, but after several years, possibly they will share the same beach where it all began.

I recognize that in my life, I have had moments of great agility, strength, security and, that happens when I am in my environment. In these pastoral experiences working with people, giving the fruit of the Contemplated. But... I also recognize the moments when my walk became slow. These moments when the experience with God and with others, makes me leave my comfort zone to give the best of me, to witness the experience of God in my life amid the difficulties. These experiments where I had to look into my life and see where they reflect the project of the kingdom. On other occasions, I had to dig too deep to make life possible, at these times when full trust in God is what sustains me. There, where the itinerancy takes shape and after doing what I was competing for, I went out to another place, without necessarily seeing or understanding the fruits of the mission and starting again to contemplate life. I thank God the Father/Mother has created the sea turtles and has deposited in them his wisdom, to teach me.

### **Third glance, act hopefully**

Is it worth asking, how can our spirituality and charism contribute to caring for the created of God, both of human beings and of nature? For this, we must apply several r ("R s ") that in integral ecology propels us. The best known are recycle, reuse, recollect, rebuild, among many others. But there is one that must be paramount to me, and I'm rethinking.

Rethinking the lifestyle we have to assume or opt for. Not only for the economic aspect of the question of achieving a simpler lifestyle. But recognizing that we have no other planet, that there are no or no more 3 planets available to use their annual production in less

than a year. That we are responsible for other generations to enjoy this Common House and make possible the project of the kingdom.

Rethinking at the time of acquiring a product, whatever, and seeing the use that will be given to it, is justified to its acquisition as to the energy cost it will entail. Rethink who we're affecting so we can enjoy this product.

Rethinking the use of fossil fuels used to travel from one place to another, or to produce energy. When we do the exercise of rethink we realize that there are other possible ways of energy and we will be able to demand from our governments what is opted for that.

Rethinking that water coming out of the tap or water register, whose principle is drinking water, the water that can be ingested, is the same that is used in most places to wash clothes, dishware, to unload the bathroom, to wash the cars... And we should not forget the number of people and organizations, for which it becomes increasingly difficult to access this element that feeds life.

Rethinking how to integrate the theme of the care of creation within the formation, prayer, life of the community and the mission. It is urgent to collaborate in this Common House to discover the truth hidden in each creature, to discover the wisdom that God has deposited in his creation to live in a coherent way to our humanity Dominican.

Rethinking how to continue cultivating the ability to contemplate the truth beyond the books, perhaps as our father did, who, when he contemplated hunger in his time, sold his books to give life. Let us rethink what hunger is today: The hunger for a sense of life, the hunger of the existential emptiness that leads to filling with things and grow apart ourselves from the simple of life. It is this quest to fill this emptiness, which distances us from seeing God reflected in the other human being, distances us from seeing God in everything created.

In these days, I had the opportunity to contemplate the greatness and importance of the Dominican spirituality for the church and for our Common House. And looking for an image that helps to value and animate our preaching mission, I recently shared a reflection with a group of fathers and mothers of families in a chapel near the village in which I live, I contemplated with them the choral brother. For all those of us who live in tropical or subtropical coastal areas, we know how valuable and important they are; Also, how fragile and susceptible to temperature changes and how much affects contamination or sediments. But we get closer to what they are and what we can learn from them.

The first thing is to recognize that they are animals and not plants, in addition to living communally or collectively. Its growth is estimated at 1.5 cm per year, yes, slow growth, but each time it grows, it is not that each organism becomes larger in itself, but it grows in volume of calcium. It is this rock that is underneath and that by having a healthy coral, it will form a natural barrier that has several functions among them.

Serves as a barrier or breaking the waves, which helps to protect the back from erosion before the shocks or the flow of waves of the seas.

It serves as habitat or home for other beings creating the reefs, providing them with safety and food.

Now imagine Saint Dominic as the first being, who sought to form community and that after more than 800 years, created and left the formation of reefs in many places of

our Common House. Leaving a footprint of how to live the Gospel of the Kingdom. And yes, we had moments of difficulty, of challenges, of discouragement, but still, the Dominican spirituality has been home to many, safety for others, food for all.

May our spirituality and charism make us rethink and opt for an evangelical style and that we may express it with coherent words and actions. So, God help us and St Dominic de Guzmán continue interceding for the Dominican family. A supportive embrace and renewable blessings. Thanks!

**A DOMINICAN VIEW OF INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT:  
THE AGENDA FOR THE LAITY  
DUNCAN MACLAREN OP,  
GLASGOW LAY DOMINICANS, SCOTLAND  
MEMBER, INTERNATIONAL DOMINICAN COMMISSION  
FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE.**

**1. Introduction**

Thank you for the invitation to the Congress. I must admit from the beginning that the group of Lay Dominicans which I belong to and which I co-founded over thirty years ago, is not a fraternity but is placed directly under the Master of the Order. Bro. Bruno mentioned the specialised lay Dominican groups in his address. The co-founders of our group were relatively young people then who wanted to come together as a group which expressed the charism of the Order as lived by laypeople, but also with an emphasis on justice and peace. We also thought that, as lay people, our lives could change rapidly and we might have to devote ourselves to babies, elderly parents or anything else life could throw at us. That discernment led us to decide to renew our commitment every three years rather than for life. That has enabled us to be active members while in the group because, for us, what was most important was the solid commitment to prayer, study, discernment and action to “transform the world” - or at least a little bit of it

**The Problem**

Let me start with what I regard as the problem of indifference or even animosity towards justice and peace as a concept within the Order. As a member of the International Dominican Justice and Peace Commission, I represent the laity with my colleagues, Teresita and Dimitri from Argentina and Guatemala respectively, with Dimitri representing the IDYM. At my first meeting in 2015, I was surprised at the reports from the friars and sisters in Europe, North America and Australasia - that they had difficulties finding promoters and that many young friars and sisters thought justice and peace old fashioned and dismissed the concept as a fad of the Sixties and Seventies. It was different in Africa, parts of Asia and Latin America. My fear is that it may be the same for the laity. Trying to elicit information about justice and peace activities from Lay Fraternities has proven very difficult for my contacts throughout the world and for me, partly because there is no reliable database of the lay groups involved in justice and peace and maybe partly because it seems too political - or old fashioned. I am grateful to those who did reply but, with some activities, I wonder where the justice element is.

The Catechism states, “Charity [by which is meant ‘love’] is the greatest social commandment. It respects others and their rights. It requires the practice of justice, and it alone makes us capable of it”.<sup>1</sup> Note that the word ‘charity’ is linked inextricably with justice in the teaching, not with being nice, kind or pious, even generous, but being just. And the

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<sup>1</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994) (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1994) par. 1889.

Church, through Catholic Social Teaching, offers a system which “proposes principles for reflection; it provides criteria for judgment; it gives guidelines for action”, summed up in the Cardijn dialectic as ‘see, judge, act’.<sup>2</sup> They are guidelines for action, not dogma as theory. You can’t be dogmatic about the pains of the world. So, in terms of justice and peace, the Church has very clearly indicated what our mission should be – to transform the world by promoting justice and to save it by promoting peace.

In this presentation, I want to make four points. The *first* is how justice and peace thought and action is central to the Gospel and the lay Dominican charism of preaching it. The *second* is to suggest what this implies in general terms for Lay Dominicans domestically. The *third* is to explain the new term “Integral Human Development” since Pope Francis changed the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace into the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development. What is it and what does Pope Francis call us lay people to do? The *fourth* is to suggest some practical initiatives we can undertake to be more effective in the call to act on issues of integral human development. Bro. Bruno in his letter to the Congress reminds Lay Dominicans what their mission is in the words of *Lumen Gentium* – to be “sharers in their own way in the priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ...and [who] play their part in carrying out the mission of whole Christian people in the church and the world”.<sup>3</sup>

I, however, don’t want you to be passive listeners for an hour but active participants. I would like you to talk to your neighbours after the presentation and give us your opinion about the points made and the justice and peace actions which you feel your fraternity should undertake domestically and internationally.

## 2. Point One: Justice and Peace is central to the Gospel and the Dominican charism to preach it

Let’s start by reminding ourselves of the three central tenets of the Catholic faith, that is, the principles which we, as Catholic Christians, hold are true:-

**Kerygma** – (a Greek word meaning ‘proclamation’ - Word) preaching the word of God, not just in Sunday homilies or sermons but with our lives. The great Flemish Dominican theologian, Edward Schillebeeckx OP, said we write a fifth Gospel with our lives. We preach a faith based on the Reign of God which begins here on Earth among the messiness of our lives and our societies, national and international. That means preaching on the homeless on our streets; pointing out that when hurricanes take lives, they take more in so-called developing countries than they do in the so-called developed whose lifestyle caused the increase in crazy weather in the first place; denouncing economic experiments such as structural adjustment programmes in the past which may help bankers in the West but cost lives and misery in the poorest nations. As Dominicans, we are called to denounce what is wrong with the world; we are called to action which takes the sides of the poorest; and in that way we witness to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

**Leitourgia** – (Greek for ‘public service’ - Worship) worship and it’s obviously where we derive our term ‘liturgy’ from. Worship is important. The sacraments and prayer take us beyond ourselves so that we can love others, not just ourselves. Timothy Radcliffe, the

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid. par. 2423.

<sup>3</sup> Dogmatic Constitution of the Church (*Lumen Gentium*) in Austin Flannery OP, *Vatican Council II: The Basic Sixteen Documents*, Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1996) 1-95, par. 31.

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former Master of the Order, wrote “I discover what love is when I let her be the centre of the world and not myself”.<sup>4</sup> When we are no longer the centre of our world but other people *are*, then we ‘put on’, as St Dominic said, not just truth but the mantle of solidarity. Solidarity isn’t, as Saint John Paul II wrote, “a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people”. No, “it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all”.<sup>5</sup> The common good has been characterised by our South African brother, Albert Nolan OP, as “whatever is best for the whole human family, or the whole community of living beings or the whole universe in its grand unfolding”.<sup>6</sup>

And the last tenet of our faith is *diakonia*,

**Diakonia** – (Greek word for ministering - World) the ministry of serving society, human dignity and human rights. Ministering to the world is not on the margins of the faith (as often can seem the case) but central and this is where justice and peace as a concept prefiguring the Reign of God is brought together, not just as ‘projects’ but as a life choice. As Pope Francis says in *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel), quoting the Latin American bishops, “the mission of proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ has a universal destination. Its mandate of charity encompasses all dimensions of existence, all individuals, all areas of community life, and all peoples. Nothing human can be alien to it”.<sup>7</sup> Equally, *Gaudium et Spes* taught us to be more positive towards the world where the laity above all have to read the signs of the times and act to transform the world.

Though *diakonia* specifically has a focus on building a just society, the other two central tenets, as I have tried to illustrate, are also radically social because the Gospel is radically social. It is permeated with stories about transforming ourselves to serve others and transforming our society to be more just.

As for the Order, if we ask whether Dominic was a justice and peace activist from the beginning of his mission, the answer is probably ‘no’. He preached God’s mercy towards sinners, calling them back to the Catholic faith. But St Dominic, as the Glasgow Lay Dominican constitution states, was also so moved by the terrible poverty he saw around him that he sold his beloved books to feed the people, saying “I could not bear to prize dead skins when living skins were starving and in want”. And it is St Thomas Aquinas who tells us to embrace justice and peace as legitimate Dominican issues in his discussion of justice in the *Summa* as being “a particular virtue disposing us to give others their due as God’s creatures and our neighbours”.<sup>8</sup>

To conclude on this point about the centrality of justice and peace to our faith and our charism as Dominicans, it is clear that justice and peace is not just part of *diakonia* but is central to *kerygma* and *leitourgia* also yet it is so often sidelined in parish life. You know the situation - the *real* Catholics attend the prayer groups while the others form justice and peace groups, and there is little dialogue between the two. We need to go on a rosary procession as we did the other night here in Fatima to pray for ourselves, the Church and the world – and go on a march for peace in the world. We need to do both, as Pope Emeritus Benedict

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<sup>4</sup> Timothy Radcliffe OP, *I Call You Friends*, (London: Continuum, 2001) 50.

<sup>5</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1987), par. 38.

<sup>6</sup> Albert Nolan OP, *Jesus Today: A Spirituality of Radical Freedom*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006) 188.

<sup>7</sup> Pope Francis *Evangelii Gaudium*, (London: CTS, 2013), par.181.

<sup>8</sup> From Richard Finn OP, “Early Voices for Justice” in John Orme Mills OP (ed.), *Justice, Peace and Dominicans 1216-2001*, (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 2001) 19-30, 23.

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XVI indicates in Caritas in Veritate. For our faith to be lived authentically, we need all three tenets of the faith to come together in an integrated whole in our lives, as individuals and as members of Dominican fraternities and other lay groups, and in our living out of our faith in the world.

Let me turn to point two.

### **3. Point Two: If Justice and Peace is central to the preaching of the Gospel, how should Lay Dominicans act in a domestic context?**

Let me give you my take on this question. First, we have to be most concerned about the world where people made in the divine image live, especially the most marginalised. The injustices they suffer constitute the agenda which the mission of the Church calls us to transform. Solidarity demands that we look at the injustice through the eyes of those suffering the injustice. As Timothy Radcliffe said in his letter to the Order, 'Vowed to Mission' (1994), "you get a different view of the world depending if you're looking at it from the seat of a Mercedes or the seat of a bicycle"<sup>9</sup> so we have to take the option for the poor seriously.

For that reason, I would suggest that the modern manifestation of St Dominic's selling his books to feed people is to work to change the economic, social and political structures that cause such poverty and marginalisation in the first place. Today's Good Samaritan is a political lobbyist for justice.

Various General Chapters of the Order have indicated what preaching justice should look like. Oakland said that actions for justice and peace must meet three criteria:- they must be communal, specifically integrated into local, provincial and regional projects; they must be well thought out and based on a serious analysis of the social reality and be rooted in strong Biblical and theological foundations; they must ensure the support of brothers, sisters and the laity to participate actively - even to the point of risking their lives - in associations and movements for the promotion of human dignity.

Bro. Bruno in his letter to this Congress<sup>10</sup> mentions groups of people and areas which should be at the centre of our concern as Lay Dominicans in link with the Order as a whole. He mentions, first, refugees, asylum seekers, migrants and stateless people, human beings among the 66 million forced to leave their homes, countries and citizenship through war, conflict, dehumanising poverty or oppression. The Master of the Order talks about families, interestingly, particularly those which are dysfunctional, rather than the rather romantic view held by the official Catholic imagination. Allied to that, he mentions how we should be active in welcoming and integrating those in so-called "irregular" relationships since, as Pope Francis says, "No-one can be condemned for ever because that is not the logic of the Gospel".<sup>11</sup> Bro. Bruno mentions human rights in all its forms as a site for our action and compassion and we have the reports of the Congress in Salamanca of 2016 as outstanding resources for us. Lastly, the Master mentions participation in interreligious dialogue and ecumenism with our

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<sup>9</sup> Timothy Radcliffe OP, "Vowed to Mission" in (no editor) *To Praise, to Bless, to Preach: Words of Grace and Truth*, (Dominican Publications: Dublin, 2004) 327-347, 342.

<sup>10</sup> Bruno Cadoré OP, *Letter to the Laity of the Order of Preachers*, 25<sup>th</sup> January 2018. Retrieved from [http://archive.fraternitiesop.com/810\\_17\\_73\\_ICLDF\\_English\\_01.25.18.pdf](http://archive.fraternitiesop.com/810_17_73_ICLDF_English_01.25.18.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia (The Joy of Love)*, (London: Catholic Truth Society, 2016) par. 297.

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fellow Christians, both in terms of understanding one another and working together with them on all the other issues.

We also have a distinct, Gospel-based methodology - an extension of 'see, judge, act' called the pastoral spiral. We should first observe the injustice through experience and human encounter; second, we should analyse the causes and consequences of the injustice to the dignity of human lives; third, we should theologically reflect on the result of this analysis to discern our response in the light of the Gospel and Church social teaching; and, finally, we must act based on the first three steps to plan, set goals, determine strategies and share tasks; and then, before beginning again with a new subject, evaluate what we have done.

Let me give two examples of what this methodology can lead to. When I met members of a Lay Fraternity in a town in Cameroun, they told me that through their discernment to assist the poorest, they decided to focus on that part of their population living with HIV/AIDs, and found themselves not only accompanying the people, but also in trying to persuade the community to get rid of the stigma and embrace their suffering brothers and sisters. This, too, is a modern instance of St Dominic's selling his books for the poor except for our Cameroonians brothers and sisters what they are giving is their time and loving presence, resulting in increased self-esteem for the most marginalised Other.

In my own city of Glasgow, the Lay Dominicans discerned that we should work with young drug addicts from our deprived areas. We stayed overnight with youngsters at a house halfway between the prison they had just left and the professional drug rehabilitation centre they were going to. Our task was to be welcoming, make them at ease and listen to them talk about their experiences - chat which often went on till dawn. We Dominicans brought our concern, loving presence and listening skills as well as humour to kids some of whom felt they had ruined their lives at 17 years old.

In both examples, we agreed that, in the way of the Gospel, the poor changed us, took us to the depths of our compassion and strengthened our commitment to the preferential option for the poor, and to advocate to change the perception of people towards those living with HIV and AIDs and drug users in two very different scenarios. In Bruno's list or in your own social analysis of your town, village or area, you'll be able to discern what you can do as Dominicans to bring justice and the love of Christ to others. Remember the Congress on Human Rights in Salamanca in 2016 where we committed ourselves to "embrace as an integral part of our Dominican charism, the mission of justice and peace as constitutive to the preaching of the Gospel".<sup>12</sup> Let us as Lay Dominicans strengthen that commitment at this Congress.

#### **4. Point Three: From Justice and Peace to Integral Human Development**

Pope Francis is adept at, as we say in colloquial English, "throwing a spanner in the works", that is, changing our perspectives about matters to draw us further into the heart of the Gospel and away from our complacencies about the faith. When he announced he was not only changing the name of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace in the Vatican but

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<sup>12</sup> Final Statement of the Salamanca Congress on Human Rights, 2016. Retrieved from <http://www.op.org/en/content/final-statement-salamanca-congress-human-right-2016>.



putting the dicasteries (the Vatican equivalent of ministries in a Government) for charitable works, health, migration and the care of creation into the new Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, there was a sharp intake of breath in the corridors of the Curia. What was coming now from this prophetic Pope?

Maybe he changed the name of the dicastery because he thought the phrase 'justice and peace' had run its course. Maybe he thought that the new name, with its origins in Blessed Pope Paul VI's 1967 encyclical on development, *Populorum Progressio* ("The Progress of Peoples"), emphasised the human at the centre of a development which had to cover not just economics but all life, including the transcendent; that it had to be understood in the light of the Gospel; and had to be aimed at maintaining the dignity of the human person in all circumstances.

I suspect he also thought that 'justice and peace' had become a process whereby the poor were becoming the object of someone else's idea of how they should be developed rather than that they should be the subjects of their own development, incorporating their cultural and religious values and allowing them to be, the agents of their own destiny.

In his address<sup>13</sup> at the fiftieth celebration of *Populorum Progressio* in April 2017, Pope Francis explained what he meant by integral human development: that this type of development is about integrating the peoples of the Earth by ensuring that the gap between the rich and the poor lessens; about offering practical models of social integration, ensuring no-one is excluded; about integrating the individual and communal dimensions, and shunning selfish individualism, as can be seen in parts of the Western world by the rise of the new right in politics which wants to bar distant strangers fleeing violence, oppression and poverty or which seeks to build walls between people rather than bringing them down; that this development model is about integrating body and soul, taking into account the transcendent aspect of people's lives, and integrating Catholic Social Teaching into our thoughts and actions on the social and political aspects of living in our present world. The term does not supplant 'justice and peace' but makes it, in my view, more concrete in our context and makes the faith element much more visible.

And so we come to our last point

## **5. Point Four: Acting as Lay Dominicans on Integral Human Development Issues Beyond our Shores**

John Orme Mills OP has a chapter in *The Grace and Task of Preaching* in which he says that we should remind people that "our lives as Christians are bound up not only with our inner hopes, fears and temptations, and not only with the people around us but also with those huge global issues".<sup>14</sup> We must show how those big issues of integral human development, being an interdependent world, are intimately linked to the way we live, vote and build up society, and that we are co-responsible for the social sins that beset our planet. We should not just relegate them to the prayers of the faithful.

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<sup>13</sup> Pope Francis, "Address on the 50th Anniversary of the Encyclical *Populorum Progressio*", 4<sup>th</sup> April 2017. Retrieved from <https://zenit.org/articles/popes-address-to-vatican-conference-on-50th-anniversary-of-populorum-progressio/>.

<sup>14</sup> John Orme Mills OP, "Preaching on the Wider World" in Michael Monschau O.P. (ed.) *The Grace and Task of Preaching*, (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 2006) 314-328, 314-315.

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These big issues can seem daunting. Under the leadership of Margaret Mayce OP at the UN in New York and Mike Deeb OP at the UN in Geneva, we have the information, agendas and networks which will enable us to tackle these issues at the international level as the Dominican family. The UN may not be perfect but it is the only international secular moral voice we have to act for justice and peace in our world. What they lack is hearing the voice of the poorest from the grassroots and that is what we can provide along with other congregations (as well as Caritas) who live and suffer with the poorest.

In Caritas, Archbishop Odama of Gulu in the north of Uganda pleaded with Caritas Uganda to tell the world about the brutal civil war where children were abducted, brutalised and forced by the ironically named Lord's Resistance Army to kill their families and friends. They contacted us in Caritas Internationalis in Rome and we alerted our delegate in the UN in New York and the Archbishop was invited to address the Security Council. Six months later, there was a fragile ceasefire because Archbishop Odama could talk of named people whose children had been taken from them and describe what happened to them. Not all politicians in the UN have hearts of stone, and even those who do might be persuaded by such witness to change their mind.

The Dominican Order is international, found at the grassroots and has active networks which can make the voices of those who have no voice heard all the louder so that a bit more justice may enter our world. All it takes from us is passion to start, passion to analyse and discern, and passion to act.

Let me give you two concrete possibilities for collective action. The Order has already adopted the month of December as the "Dominican Month for Peace", when we are urged to pray for peace in a designated part of the world, offer solidarity to a particular 'project' and highlight the plight of the people. Last year, it was Colombia, and this year the focus will be the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) where the Church has been on the streets supporting the people in their thirst for democracy in a country which is rich in resources and has some of the worst poverty and appalling conflict in the world. Information will be sent out soon to the Order and it is beholden on us after this Congress to undertake whatever solidarity actions are asked of us to accompany and assist the suffering people of DRC.

The second possibility is that, just as in the past the Order launched a Dominican Family project for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), so it is likely the Commission will recommend to the Master and his advisors that all branches of the Order should work together to campaign on the MDGs' successor, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They are an agenda of seventeen universal goals to improve our world from 2016 to 2030, and are directed to all countries, not just the so-called 'developing' countries. The National Director of Caritas Kenya, Stephen Kituku, said of the Goals, that he hoped they would differ from the MDGs which were created through a top-down, closed-door process that did not engage people living in poverty. In other words, the very opposite of an integral human development approach. Stephen stated, "This is our generational chance to make it right".<sup>15</sup> It is a wonderful opportunity for the Dominican Family internally to cooperate together on a project that, if successful, will rid our world of dehumanising poverty, improve the situation of women and children especially, and bring climate change, as Pope Francis suggests in *Laudato Si'*, into the centre of our actions to save the planet.

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<sup>15</sup> For details of what all the members of Caritas Internationalis are doing about the SDGs, see the website [www.caritas.org](http://www.caritas.org).

Let me conclude. I started by pointing out our problem about justice and peace in the Order. Hopefully I have outlined how it is central to Church teaching as well as having been practice in the Order since our beginnings. I have mentioned how I think we can act – and, indeed, have been acting for many centuries – to this Gospel call for action about saving our planet and ridding our world of dehumanising poverty; and how we have a distinct methodology for serving humanity and making sure our promises of positive change become true. I have tried to express why Pope Francis now prefers the term 'Integral Human Development' in which justice and peace find their place by narrowing the gap between the rich and the poor, the included and the excluded; by putting community before individualism as seen in the principle of the common good; by integrating body and soul by ensuring that all belief systems and culture find their central place in any development process; where the poor and marginalised are empowered and participate in deciding how they and their community should spearhead their own idea of what 'being developed' means as opposed to the western model so tainted by neo-liberal capitalism; and that we can all learn from the example of the empowered poor. I ended with two examples of how we can work together with the other branches of the Order as the Dominican Family on the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the Dominican month for peace in DRC.

As we all sadly know, our Church has, in the past decade, lost a great deal of credibility through the sexual scandals which continue to blight us. We are in crisis but a crisis presents us also with an opportunity. An opportunity to put the integration of our intellect, spirituality and praxis to work for humanity. We can no longer say that we are perfect – but we never were; we can no longer claim to be saints – but only very few of us were. We can claim, however, to listen, to contemplate and to share the actions arising out of our contemplation with those in, as the soon-to-be Blessed Pierre Laverie OP said, the 'fractures' of a broken world. That is what being involved in integral human development means, and that is the truth that we can bring. As our sister, St Catherine of Siena, said, "Preach the Truth as if you have a million voices. It is silence that kills the world". Let us, in the tradition of our Order, raise our voices for peace and justice in Cameroon, Venezuela, the Dominican Republic and anywhere else where humanity suffers at the hands of evil. In the Congress, we have talked a lot about faith *in* Christ but let us now also follow the faith *of* Christ, and bring mercy and compassion to others and help transform our world to be just so that everyone, but especially the poorest, may flourish.

Thank you.

## CHRIST IS OUR PEACE (EPHESIANS 2:17)

BY FR. JERRY STOOKEY, OP

### 1. WE BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST.

After a ten-year moratorium on executions in the United States, the U.S. Supreme Court reinstated the death penalty in 1976, amid a diversity of protest campaigns. I was on the staff of the Justice and Peace Commission of the Archdiocese of Denver, Colorado, and participated in a state-wide coalition effort to prevent possible enactment on this new ruling.

At an initial planning meeting, representatives from political, civic and religious organizations each presented themselves and the reasons they were opposed to the death penalty. The rationale for opposition was justifiably long. For example: overwhelming racism in the arrests and incarceration of criminals; higher sentencing of the poor class who could not pay for proper legal defense; and the danger of executing innocent victims who received unfair trials.

When it came time for the Catholic Archdiocese to present its participation in the coalition, my boss, Auxiliary Bishop George Evans, stated: "We agree with most of the arguments that the rest of you have presented against the death penalty, and certainly we can work in coalition with you. However, our Catholic reasons go even further. We are not in favor of capital punishment under any circumstances, *even if* you can end discrimination in the police department and the court system. We are not in favor of the death penalty *even if* poor and rich get equal treatment under the law. And *even if* we could guarantee that the criminal to be executed is absolutely guilty, we would still be opposed to capital punishment. For we believe that every person is created in the *image of God*, even criminals, and that only God has the right to give and take life. With true compassion for the victims of crime, we believe in the forgiveness and love of Jesus Christ, even for criminals."

His statement created a loud silence over the group. Even so, a year later, we lost our campaign to stop the death penalty when Gary Mark Gilmore became the first to be executed on January 17, 1977. That day Bishop Evans arrived at our office in tears to report the sad news. Since then, at the time of this writing, the United States has executed 1,483 prisoners, with 2,743 prisoners presently on what is called "death row". Nevertheless, I have never forgotten the profound impact that Bishop Evans' words had on everyone in our campaign, primarily because of the clarity of the Christian position, as he stated it to us.

### 2. THE IMPORTANCE OF ASKING WHY?

Bishop Evans' words inspired all of us on the Archdiocesan Justice & Peace Commission to keep before us always *WHY* we work for justice and peace. It is an important question for all of us at this Congress dedicated to the theme of Justice & Peace & the Care of Creation. Do we know why we are doing this? Do those of us who are committed to justice and peace and the care of creation keep before us the core mission and the purpose behind all our efforts. Perhaps much opposition to justice and peace is due to lack of clarity of purpose on our part.

Many of us have read Viktor Frankl's *Man's Search For Meaning* (1946), which I read during my university days, describing how he survived the Nazi concentration camp because

“those who have a 'why' to live, can bear with almost any 'how' .” If we know why we are Dominicans and why we are for justice and peace, then we will be able to put up with any opposition.

Translated into many languages, Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* (1865) is one of the world's favorite fairy-tales. Do you recall where the Cheshire Cat wisely advises Alice that “If you don't know where you are going, then any road will get you there”? If we are going to spend a lot of time, effort and money working for justice and peace, we better know where we want to go.

In his book *Start With Why: how great leaders inspire everyone to take action* (2009), Simon Sinek warns: “When a WHY goes fuzzy, it becomes much more difficult to maintain the growth, loyalty and inspiration that helped drive the original success”. Jesus and Dominic knew their *Why* and their “original success” over 2000 and 800 years ago continue to inspire us and many others, so long as we don't let it “go fuzzy”.

Sadly, many individuals in the world have no idea what they are doing or where they are going. They live an “unexamined life”, as Socrates would say. Some lack hope and are suicidal because they have no **Why**, no meaning, just going down any road of fuzzy existence. On the other hand, we encounter others who know exactly what they want and where they want to go, but whose **Why** is in direct opposition to ours. They can easily “out-organize” fuzzy thinkers and clueless actors. So, although it may seem elemental and pedantic, it behooves all Dominicans, especially at this International Congress, to reflect again and articulate plainly our **Why**, our initial call. Then we will inspire others to act with us, hopefully because of the greater clarity of our proposition. Don't agonize; organize—and know the *Why* behind what we are and do.

### **OUR WHY:**

Of course, Jesus and Dominic, you and I, we all find our first and foremost *Why* to be God. Like the *Creed*, we begin with “I believe in God...” Great minds try to articulate faith in God in a rational way, but it almost always falls short of words, which makes explaining our primary *Why* to opponents very challenging.

St. Thomas Aquinas writes in his *Summa Theologica* (I q.9a,1) that “there is some First reason called God”. St. Anselm says that God is “that than which nothing greater can be thought.” For many of us, the very existence of anything brings us to faith in God. Playing on Descartes, “If I exist, therefore God exists”--for who of us knows how to create a universe? The greatest good, perfect love, the most merciful and compassionate, wisest and spiritual being, this is what we mean by God and who gives us believers our starting *Why*.

Of course, not everybody believes in God, as we know. In fact, it seems the battle about the existence of God has never raged so strongly as in our modern times. There is no end to Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, Andrew Flew, Carl Sagan, Christopher Hitchens, Stephen Hawking and the long litany of modern atheists, agnostics, and secular and scientific humanists. They are organized and demand that we state *WHY* we believe in God and also *WHY* we are working for justice and peace and the care of creation. If you haven't met them yet, you soon will!

We believe, as Aquinas says, that there is something supreme, something spiritual, something perfect that is NOT material, greater than mathematics, greater than human

reason or consciousness. God is the meaning and center of our life, our first and foremost *Why* to everything.

If we do not personally have God as our primary *WHY* as Dominicans for justice and peace, we will “go off the rails”, take any road to who knows where, and end up misunderstood, and rightfully accused of simply playing politics or fomenting social revolution. We will not inspire others if they do not understand “where we are coming from”-from our belief in God. Then we would fail to teach, as the Jesuits say, “the faith that does justice”, or as Dominicans, we would neglect to clarify that we are “preaching the just Word”.

So let's not be cowardly but rather let our *God-Why* be known and apparent to the world, and in a particular way to fellow, resistant Christians, and yes, even to resistant Dominicans, who accuse our ministry of justice and peace to be nothing more than faithless foolishness.

### **JESUS: “THE FATHER AND I ARE ONE” (John 10:30).**

For us Christians, the best example of God's existence is Jesus of Nazareth, God's only Son. God is not abstract. Jesus the Christ is God-with-us. As St. John writes “God so loved the world that he gave us his only begotten Son” (John 3:16).

I am a bit surprised at how little we Dominican preachers talk about Jesus if he is our primary *Why*. How can we preach One whom we do not know? Who do you say that Jesus is *for you personally*? I'm sure we don't all see Jesus the same. So let me offer some of my own reflections about Jesus, in light of His being our *WHY* for preaching justice and peace and caring for creation.

Jesus of Nazareth, being faithful to Torah and his Jewish tradition, referred to God as his “Father”--that's who he said that God is for him . He totally identified his life with God, saying “the Father and I are one” (John 10:30). Jesus believes His God as *Abba* is pure love, who loves and cares for us like a good Father. Jesus says that God showers us with good things and takes care of us, as he does the sparrows, and will never abandon us. Despite the bad times in which Jesus lived, he offers surprising hope and joy in his teaching, simply because of God's love for us. There's a kind of “invincible” belief in goodness in Jesus' teachings, reminding us constantly not to worry, not to be afraid, to be at peace, to forgive one another. For, God loves us, forgives us, treats us with compassion, and considers all of us to be God's children. Jesus' God has a particular concern for the oppressed, poor and down-trodden. His prophetic condemnation is primarily for those who are unjust, oppressors, abusers of their wealth and titles. Most of his Good News seems to be directed especially to “those at the bottom”. For the rich, it's actually bad news.

The modern search for the “historical Jesus” is controversial as you can read in *The Historical Jesus: a comprehensive guide* by Gerd Theissen and Annette Merz (1996), and *What Are They Saying About the Historical Jesus* by David B. Gowler (2007). Some interpretations of Jesus in the past and still today are clearly erroneous and are proven to be nothing more than a “domesticated Jesus” to fit the time, culture, and biases of a particular preacher, Christian group, or hostile enemy of Christians. At times, what Jesus said and did are intrinsically left open to interpretation, like his parables, as noted in *The Parables After Jesus: their imaginative receptions across two millenia* by David B. Gowler (2017), which presents a fascinating array of how Jesus' parables were variably received throughout history, such as in art and music. That's how parables are! How do justice and peace advocates interpret Jesus' parables?

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Apart from theological interpretations, as a sociologist I cannot ignore the “sociological” aspects about Jesus of Nazareth, that are interesting in light of our justice and peace ministry:

- he is Jewish and studied Jewish Scriptures;
- he is poor and he experienced extreme poverty all around him;
- he is from a minority group in Galilee, Palestine;
- he lived in the first century Mediterranean world;
- his country was occupied by the Roman Empire with its strong-armed soldiers and governors;
- he lived amidst a great deal of political and theocratic unrest and rivalries (Herodians, Essenes, Pharisees, etc.);
- he was known as the son of a carpenter;
- his parents were refugees to Egypt in order to save his life;
- his family included his mother who was named, Mary; his father who was named, Joseph; his relatives, Elizabeth and Zachary, and their son, John;
- possibly he was a disciple of John, and was baptized by him;
- he emerged as a prophetic, wandering, charismatic preacher at around 30 years old;
- he was known as a healer, teacher, rabbi, miracle-worker who associated with the poor, sinners, sick, outcast; hungry; excluded;
- he is a layman, not a priest from the Temple;
- he formed a “new school” of wandering disciples, with a core group of Twelve;
- a good number of his Twelve were originally fishermen, also economically poor;
- he and they walked a lot, up and down Palestine;
- he had no permanent home to call his own;
- he had close friends who cared for him like Mary Magdela, Mary & Martha, Lazarus.
- he repeatedly broke with Jewish tradition especially purity and sabbath laws;
- he broke with social custom on relating to women, foreigners, non-believers;
- enemies tried to kill him several times, and eventually succeeded;
- he was betrayed and “played off” between religious and political authorities;
- he was detained, tortured and executed by the Roman Empires' infamous death penalty: crucifixion.
- He died quite young at around 33 years old.

These human “biographical facts” of Jesus, apart from the fact of His Divine Resurrection, help us understand much of what he said and did, in light of justice and peace. Jesus' *personal identities* indicate that God sent him under these human conditions with a

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very specific message to the world. This Jesus from Nazareth, the Christ, is *THE WHY* we preach and act for justice, peace and creation.

### **JESUS FOR JUSTICE:**

Some years ago I taught at Regis University in Denver, Colorado USA, in the Peace and Justice Studies department. At the very beginning of the Introductory Course on Peace and Justice, I asked the students to list some of their favorite figures in history who they admire as heroic supporters of justice and peace. Of course, many agreed that Mahatma Gandhi was a great pacifist. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was also at the top of their list as a non-violent defender of civil rights for African-Americans. Some included Abraham Lincoln, the American civil war president who opposed slavery. Dorothy Day, the foundress of the Catholic Worker Movement in my country was named over and over. Bartolomé de Las Casas, the Dominican defender of the American Indians was acknowledged. Some mentioned Catholic saints: Francis of Assisi, lover of creation and the poor and promoter of peace; Martin de Porres, patron of social justice; Mother Teresa of Calcutta, pro-life advocate of the unwanted and untouchables. Who are your favorite saints, heroes and heroines for justice throughout history? Well, the curious thing is: no students ever listed Jesus of Nazareth! Perhaps we Christians ourselves do not think Jesus is for justice and peace? We not only need to talk about who Jesus is for us, but what we mean by justice.

Very common among us is the perception that working for the poor, doing charity, helping others, is the same thing as working for justice. While they are definitely related, I think we can make some Dominican distinctions between social services or charitable works and our efforts for social justice and non-violent change. St. Vincent de Paul Society, Catholic Charities, Catholic Relief Services, Red Cross, Caritas International are essentially emergency relief and social outreach organizations to help the poor, although many of them include some effort to *advocate for* the poor too. They are very important in helping with victims of injustice, war, emergencies, natural disasters. All Christians should support them and I have rarely heard arguments against Christians doing charity. However, I would like us to consider a difference of Justice and Peace individuals and organizations that are essentially working to change unjust laws and social structures, getting at the causes of so many poor victims, defending human rights, social action, and advocacy to correct injustice. Dom Helder Camara of Brazil once said "When I give food to the poor they call me a saint; when I ask why they are poor they call me a communists". That why some don't like justice and peace--they simply don't like the questions we ask.

There is a famous story that is told to help us understand the distinction between Charity and Justice efforts:

Once two friends were walking along a river praying the rosary, when one of them noticed a baby drowning in the river. They both jump in and save the baby. Then they noticed another baby in the water, and then another. An emergency response team was set up, which eventually included an orphanage and pediatric field hospital. They got volunteers and donations of food and clothes for the poor babies. As this went on for some time, one of the them started to leave the emergency situation at the river. The other cried out "Hey, where are you going? Don't you see we have babies drowning in this river here?" The other friend replied "Yes, and we need to keep saving them. But now it is time for some of us to get together and go upstream and stop whoever is throwing them in and to stop them."



If I exaggerate this story in light of our Congress theme, I would say the first friend who stays at the river helping out charitably is a Franciscan. The one who goes upstream to study whoever is throwing the babies into the river, preaches against it, and act for justice for the babies is a Dominican. Dominicans, if anyone, should be the ones who preach justice. Even with this simplistic distinction between Charity and Justice, some Christians will never be for justice and peace, or going upstream to try and change things. They may fear it. It's scary.

Most definitions of social justice have to do with how society ought to provide access to materials and services in a fair way. Who gets what stuff, how much do they get, and who decides what they get, what structures and systems are needed to provide it? This is what is called **distributive justice**.

In some cases, it is simply an equal distribution of things like water, electricity or sanitation, or an equality in basic rights such as the right to life, to eat, to breathe, etc. **Equality in distributive justice** is found in Scripture, as we believe everyone is created equal in the eyes of God (*imago Dei*) and that God's grace falls equally on the just and the unjust, like rain or sunshine falling equally on the good and the bad alike. Jesus feeds 5000 hungry people equally, not asking the disciples to separate out the deserving or worthy poor from those who had eaten earlier or those who had money on them. He fed them all. In this miracle, Jesus distributes bread in a way that is **equal justice for all**.

The dilemma arises where our needs are not equal, and so we are called to provide **distributive justice based on needs**. "From each according to his ability, to each according to his/her need", as Karl Marx stated it, curiously borrowing from Acts 4:35. For example, those living in Lithuania need more heat and clothing than those in the Dominican Republic. Equal distribution would be unfair when we encounter such a *needs-based* situation. Jesus told the Parable of the Day Laborers who all got the same pay although they worked different hours? So it was not really the same pay but very "unequal" pay. Perhaps Jesus knew that the last to go to work has great need of a full day's salary too. The Prodigal Son had greater need of forgiveness and celebration upon his return, even though the older son had been more responsible throughout his life. So in another context, Jesus' sense of justice allows for those who have greater needs than others, and *in that need, not all are equal*.

The complaints of the hard workers and older sons is precisely what leads some to invent a **distributive justice system based on merit**. They say it is unfair if they have worked harder. This merit-based justice can be un-Christian and drives the heated debate about helping only the poor who are "worthy". The unworthy poor do not try hard enough to "pull themselves up by their own bootstraps". Jesus the carpenter's son, and his fishermen disciples, were all poor, who preached and acted as though all the poor were worthy. I do not see Jesus supporting such a merit-based distribution of justice that has to be earned.

The American philosopher, John Rawls, calls for "justice as fairness" in his writing *A Theory of Justice* (1971). He says we are certainly equal in our basic rights, but must support those who are disadvantaged, often beyond their control, like your place or status at birth. He says that the playing field is uneven from the start; some more privileged, others disadvantaged. I was born in the United States and had no trouble getting into Portugal, while many others in Bolivia or Philippines could not even get a visa to come! And don't forget that I am also an American who is a white, older male, with academic degrees, also a Catholic Dominican priest, all of which probably shows up somewhere in my file! If you recall the biographical data we mentioned regarding Jesus of Nazareth inside Palestine, he would not

have gotten a visa to attend here either! I have unfair merits and privileges. So, there needs to be **fairness in distributive justice**.

Rawls developed what he called the “original position” or starting point for doing justice. That is, think about what kind of society we would like *if* you didn't know what your original position in that society would actually be. Try it on yourself: What sort of justice would you like to be “born into” *if* you didn't really know beforehand what your original position in society would be? Would you choose to be born into a poor family in a ghetto, black or white, a male or a woman, a despised foreigner, a leper, or with a deformed hand? A Palestinian Jew from Nazareth? Could you just pull yourself up by your bootstraps and make it? What if we lucky Americans and Europeans at this Congress were not born in our countries but rather in violent Honduras, Syria, or Myanmar today? Think about justice as this “original position”, putting yourself in someone else's shoes. Then, if you are really honest, you will choose the fairest distributive justice system possible for all, once you dare to imagine that you would get the unequal starting position in life! What good Christian can be against justice knowing this?

Jesus version of fairness in justice is evident in what we call the Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you (Matthew 7:12). How could he say such rules and treat all the down-trodden accordingly and not be for justice?

Another aspect of justice is regarding punishment. Instead of Distributive Justice as we just saw, they call this **Retributive Justice**. Like criminal justice, it asks: what shall we do about wrongdoers, those who violate the Rule of Law, those who have made others suffer? Who shall punish truly evil persons and how? What if the laws themselves are unjust? Can you resist, disobey or break any law in civil disobedience? Wasn't Jesus known as a law-breaker? Was his punishment justifiable? You can see the dilemma about retributive justice.

Although Christians ignore Jesus on this, he does NOT approve of the Law of Retaliation or Lex Talionis, an ancient principle found as early as the Hammurabic Code, from the Babylonian god of justice. Jesus says clearly that you have heard of “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, but I say turn the other cheek” (Matthew 5:38-42). If someone steals your coat, give him your shirt as well and do not sue him or demand it back. (Luke 6:29). Jesus is not for reciprocal punishment as retributive justice as we see, like: executing drug users less more become drug users, or imprisoning and killing a certain ethnic group in their own homeland, or ignoring drowning “boat people” seeking refuge, or imprisoning attempted-immigrants to make them learn a lesson, or make them an example for deterrence.

Instead, Jesus supports justice that makes amends, and restores peace by forgiveness and by healing instead of punishing. This is what is called *restorative justice*. If you make a mess, yes, you will have to help clean it up, not so much as punishment as restoration. There's a difference. Jesus' teaching and practice indicates He is more attuned to Restorative Justice than Retributive Justice. Jesus' relationship with sinners and wrongdoers, even the wealthy, like Zacchaeus, restores them to society, heals them from their evil ways, and results in them “paying back” voluntarily 4 times more than what they caused in harm. Restorative justice is like conversion, i.e. personal or social change rather than punishment.

None of us can “opt out” of the struggle for justice, and pretend we don't live on planet Earth. All of us share in the injustices and evils that are sadly part of this sinful reality. Jesus seems to uphold an obligation to do something, whenever we do it for the least of our brothers and sisters (Matthew 24: 40).

There are many more concepts of justice that we cannot share today. But the kind of justice Jesus is for is not based on merits or retribution, but is primarily **fairness in distribution and restorative**. And as great as justice is, Jesus always pushes us onward toward another virtue that is even greater. As Thomas Aquinas wrote: “of all the virtues which relate to our neighbor, mercy is the greatest” So then, Jesus is not only for justice but also for mercy.

### **JESUS FOR PEACE:**

I will never forget how inspired I was when I first read Pope Paul VI's World Day of Peace Message on January 1, 1972, titled *If You Want Peace, Work for Justice*. In it, Paul VI united Peace with Justice in a way that we all now realize is essential.

Personally, I have devoted a lot of my ministry to justice and peace and still do. I worked full time for justice and peace organizations, including Catholic justice and peace offices. I was once the Justice & Peace Promoter in my province. I learned organizing skills and founded non-profit organizations for human rights struggles. I went straight into war-torn countries like Nicaragua and El Salvador as a missionary. I have marched for peace and justice causes most of my life, even ending up getting arrested at non-violent protests. I tried to preach Christianity on the frontiers in places like communist Cuba. Some of my own family accuse me of being a revolutionary Christian, though I wish it sounded more prophetic. In light of Pope Paul VI's message, I wanted to apply the principle: if we want peace, we have to work for justice. And of course, that principle is still very true today.

But lately, my thoughts turn more to Peace than to Justice, and how much I have neglected Peace work. Peace seems to have been left “in the back seat” while we are so busy working on what we think are the more important social justice issues! As if Pope Paul had meant, “forget about Peace; Justice is what we need first”. Without getting competitive about it, I think Justice and Peace ministry today is sorely lacking in giving proper attention to Peace.

There have been 51 World Day of Peace messages by the popes. But it does not seem to me that Peace and non-violence are seen as core values of Catholics and the other Christians. It is doubtful that non-Christians of the world think of Christianity as a peace religion. Nor do they see Jesus as a pacifist, despite all the evidence. The Christians do not appear to lead the peace movement.

There is a Big Lie today that blurs the truth about Peace. Governments rename their soldiers Peacekeepers. The Nobel Peace Prize is awarded to lovely individuals like Barack Obama and Aung San Suu Kyi, although they haven't done anything significant to work for peace or non-violence. We depict pacifists and war protesters as hippies or communists.

The world has never been so armed to the teeth, so dangerously violent, yet you hear almost not a word regarding peace and non-violence from preachers. With several simultaneous wars going on, there seems to be no peace movement in our countries. The only word we get is from Pax Christi and the Pope on World Day of Peace. So, if you think Justice is unpopular, I daresay Peace is even moreso, even among us Dominicans.

I have another version of Paul VI's slogan, which is equally true: “If you want justice, work for peace”. How are justice advocates going to achieve any social change in the middle of war? One cannot even do Charity work, except in refugee camps, as long as war continues. Why try to build a school or a clinic which will be destroyed tomorrow? How can we achieve any restorative or distributive justice, defend any human rights, reestablish a free press and

just court system--while killing continues and the bombs fly overhead? If you want justice, stop the war so we can get some.

It is worse. Christians have justified war and justify the use of violence. Our dear saints Augustine and Thomas Aquinas have fooled Christians and the official Church with their Just War Theory, ignoring everything that Jesus said and did. Did he say shoot back or turn the other cheek? Did he say kill or love your enemy? Did he fight back or let them crucify him? Did he even curse them or instead heal the enemy's wound and forgive them. That Jesus is not a pacifist is the biggest Christian lie that we continue to tell. Or at least, the most deafening silence. Jesus was never for war or for the use of violence, and we all know it.

Truth-telling is never easy today, but especially for those who work for peace. Governments and their military will denounce pacifists as naive, because you can't show how to make peace. But there is nothing more naive than to keep thinking that war works. It doesn't. It should be outlawed, so that we can work on justice issues. In fact, killing the enemy seems to indicate failure of governments and militaries in coming up with anything other than annihilating the problem at hand. So peace is accused of being impractical, but violence isn't? After they tire of their war games, having destroyed all the people, environment and civilization, but won't admit that the whole thing was a failure, these false peacemakers finally come to their senses, sign a peace accords with no victors, then call for a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to be established, obliging the true peacemakers to try and put things back together. Too late they say unite the destroyed people and nation, get on with rebuilding a just society, attempt to heal those raped and traumatized. Thousands of deaths later, thousands of refugees, after they have bombed the hell out of everything, killing more civilians than soldiers (but rarely the rulers who direct the wars from far away). Yet they tell us war is necessary because peace and non-violence doesn't work. Well, it is obvious that war doesn't work either. It is a failure for solving problems and establishing justice and they know it. It is a Big Lie. It's simply more arms production and big sales profits for military-industrial corporations.

We know in our hearts that Jesus is for peace. Love of enemy is the hardest teaching He gives us. Like our work for justice it is scary. But we ought not neglect the challenge of working for peace, studying how to build a more peaceful world, and how to communicate non-violently. Christ is our Peace (Ephesians 2:17) so let us make every effort to do what leads to peace (Romans 14:19).

### **JESUS CARES FOR CREATION:**

After hearing the presentations on the Care of Creation by Sister Lissie and Fr. Aristide, and knowing that my presentation was already too long, I cut this section of my paper which was about how Jesus not only is for justice and for peace but also loves and Cares for Creation!

### **CONCLUSION:**

In conclusion, let us be clear about *WHY* we are working for justice and peace: Jesus, God-with-us, who is our first *WHY*. Jesus, who is for justice as fairness for the poor and the afflicted, and whose justice restore rather than condemns, by forgiveness and mercy not retribution and vengeance. Jesus, who is our Peace and who rejects violence while loving his enemies, is our *WHY*. Jesus who loves the birds of the air and the lilies of the fields and

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recycles left over bread. This Jesus is *WHY* we are working for justice and peace first and foremost. May He guide and protect all Dominicans in this exciting, prophetic mission of working for a more just and peaceful and sustainable world, working joyfully in His reign already begun on planet Earth.

## CLOSING STATEMENT RUTH ANNE HENDERSON OP

I have been asked by the International Council to present a final impression of this Congress, on the theme, "Our Future: Justice, Peace and Care of Creation". In due course we will all have a copy of the resolutions proposed by the various Commissions and adopted by the voting assembly. Here, let us look at some questions that our time here will help us to answer.

1. *What were the objectives of the Congress?*

- to experience fraternity across nations and across cultures through our direct daily contact and interaction;
- to find space for silence and for personal prayer: this was achieved by the possibility of Adoration every morning in the chapel, before the Blessed Sacrament;
- to foster, not uniformity, but unity: we are very different in so many ways, but we are one in our being Dominicans.

2. *What positive aspects, in particular, emerged?*

- the presence of many friars, including a number of members of the Curia Generalizia: the Master of the Order, finding a space for us despite being currently involved in the Synod on Youth; his Vicar, Br Miguel Ángel Del Río; the Socius for the Apostolic Life, Br Orlando Rueda Acevedo; the Socius for Fraternal Life and Formation, Br Vivian Boland; and many more. There were also many Promoters from various Provinces around the world, who never dominated our discussions nor imposed their points of view, but listened to us and were unfailingly supportive;
- the confirmation that communication, whether direct or digital, is fundamental to everything we do or hope to do;
- an increased awareness of our place as lay Dominicans in the Order of Preachers;
- fruitful, peaceful discussion in the Commissions: we may sometimes have disagreed, but always in a climate of fraternal exchange and collaboration.

3. *What new objectives have emerged?*

- the need for more regular and more open communication between fraternities, Provinces, countries and regions;
- the need for greater uniformity in formation: Hectór Marquéz, for example, told us that, on his visits within his own region, it became apparent that some have little or no formation while others are too rigid and too severe, and this is true worldwide;

- the need to find a balance between extreme, excessive clericalism in some countries and excessive secularism in others.

4. *What do we need to clarify?*

- the distinction between the Rule and “regulations”, between the essential guidelines for all lay Dominicans and an exaggerated rigidity that is contrary to the spirit of St Dominic himself, who insisted that failure to observe the Rule is, yes, a flaw, but not a sin;
- the financial situation: Klaus Bornewasser, the ICLDF treasurer, tells us that if even one third of Provinces paid the fixed contribution regularly (€1.50 per person per annum), the Congress could be held free of charge for all delegates.

5. *What problems emerged?*

- above all, the “Tower of Babel” effect: we speak many languages, and what seems clear in one language may not be so in another; we did not have the anticipated full team of interpreters and several people stepped in to fill the gaps. And of course, there are “false friends”: words that resemble each other from one language to another, but in fact have different meanings. All this demands vigilance, and the collaboration of people whose language skills allow them to solve at least some of these problems.

6. *What about the immediate future?*

- in the next few weeks there will be an opportunity to participate in online, anonymous evaluation of this Congress;
- there will also be a complete online list of participants: name and surname, country, gender, status (religious or lay), with email addresses and telephone numbers.

7. *And finally, our thanks:*

- to the Dominican Family in Portugal, and especially to Cristina Busto and Gabriel Silva, for doing so much to make everything run smoothly;
- to the Sisters in Fátima;
- to the hotel staff for their cordiality, patience and efficiency;
- to the interpreters, those invisible angels;
- to all those who animated the liturgy in various ways;
- to the members of the ICLDF, Belen Tangco, Hectór Marquéz, Joe Komadina, Klaus Bornewasser, Felix Foko;
- to the celebrants and preachers;
- to the speakers – a special mention here to the only lay speaker, my fellow-Scot Duncan MacLaren;
- to the many friars who took part;
- to digital Superman Edoardo Mattei;
- to the two former Promoters General who were with us, Br Jerry Stookey and Br David Kammler;

- and of course to our current, greatly loved and respected Promoter General, Br Rui Carlos Antunes e Almeida Lopes, for his tireless work with us and for us.

Thank you, and God bless you all.



PROPOSALS  
OF THE  
CONGRESS

**COMMISSION: GOVERNMENT RULES AND GENERAL DECLARATIONS**

1. That fraternities/chapters be open to the accompaniment of the divorced and remarried, who desire full communion with the Church. Chapters may discern to guide them on their journey to "an awareness of their situation before God"(AL).

An individual seeking membership in a fraternity must demonstrate "humility, discretion and love for the Church and her teachings" (AL).

For this discernment to happen, fraternities are to conform with the Magisterium of the Church. If the local ordinary has expressly and in writing admitted a named individual back to the sacraments, the "special situation" need no longer be considered an impediment to reception and profession as a lay Dominican.

2. According to the tradition of the Order and the spiritual meaning of the word Profession, which expresses better the nature of the link of the laity to the order of St Dominic, we recommend that the Order use the word Profession when relating to the Lay Fraternities of Saint Dominic.
3. With respect to different traditions there should be no confusion in the clothing worn by Lay Dominicans and a religious habit.
4. That the Province of the Assumption (Australasia) be transferred from the Asia Pacific Region to the North America Region.
5. We recommend that rules 20c and 21b be amended to allow that Fraternity members and Provincial delegates or eligible voters can directly elect their respective presidents.
6. In order to assist the ICLDF fulfil its mission statement we recommend that each Provincial Council/Vicariate annually submits before 31 May to the ICLDF and the Regional Council a report containing the following information; Name and location of fraternities, number of members and the stage in their profession within the fraternity, activities for the year, contact person with email address and telephone number. Statistical data aggregated from these reports will be published on the Lay Fraternities website.
7. That, for future Congresses, clearer guidelines be provided to commissions that will empower them to develop discrete and concise proposals.
8. We recommend that the provincial council promote an increased awareness of the importance of the work done by the ICLDF and the Regional Councils with the aim of improving communication with, and support of these councils and thus helping all Fraternities to work together as one body. The knowledge of these structures must be included as part of formation.
9. We recommend that it is the responsibility of each Provincial or Vicariate council to report to the Regional Council their contact person.
10. Propose to amend Section I (B) (5) of the Statutes of the ICLDF to read as follows:  
"5) -The Council shall elect from among its members a Coordinator. The Coordinator will be elected by the affirmative vote of a majority of its members present at a

meeting where a quorum is present, and shall serve for a non-renewable period of three (3) years. The Coordinator shall also represent the Dominican Laity in the Board of the Dominican Family. If the Coordinator cannot be present at a Council meeting, he/she shall appoint another Council member to represent him/her, who shall have the Coordinator's proxy voting authority".

11. In the event that the Coordinator's term as Regional representative expires before his/her term as ICLDF Coordinator, he/she shall continue to serve as ICLDF Coordinator for the remainder of his/her term. He shall no longer represent his/her Region and the newly appointed Regional representative shall then represent the particular Region".
12. We recommend that Provincial/Vicarial Directories allow the Fraternities to grant partial dispensation from the initial formation during the period preceding the temporary profession, to those aspiring members coming from the International Dominican Youth Movement (IDYM) who can verifiably demonstrate to have received equivalent Dominican Formation.

**COMMISSION: GENERAL FORMATION PROGRAM FOR THE DOMINICAN LAITY**

**INTRODUCTION**

This commission worked on the subject concerning Study and Training, developing three fundamental points:

- 1) Training
- 2) Dimensions of the training
- 3) Lay Former

Now, considering the resolutions emanated from the International Congress of Argentina in 2007 and the Rule of the Lay Fraternities of Santo Domingo in number 13, we made five proposals:

13. The main sources of Dominican formation are: - The Word of God and theological reflection. - The liturgical prayer. - The history and tradition of the Order. - The contemporary documents of the Church and the Order. - The study of the signs of the times.

PROPOSAL NO. 1:

Prepare a Study and Training program in 2019 considering the resolutions of the International Congress of Argentina held in 2007.

PROPOSAL NO. 2:

**TRAINING LEVELS:**

1. Admission
2. Temporary profession
3. Perpetual profession: with it the definitive incorporation into the secular branch of the Order is made.

The different Directories must determine, among other things: a) The requirements for admission to the Fraternity. b) The times of test and profession or promise

(GENERAL DECLARATIONS TO THE RULE)

PROPOSAL N ° 3:

**DIMENSIONS OF TRAINING**

**A) HUMAN TRAINING**

Each fraternity is a small community of faith where human formation takes place, manifested through:

Growth in self-knowledge, discovering talents and limitations, learning to dialogue by listening and responding to others. Working together respecting diversity, exercising evangelical compassion, and experiencing and spreading Christian joy.

**B) SPIRITUAL FORMATION**

It consists in caring for the personal and communal prayer of the Word of God that challenges us to study it, contemplate it and preach it (Cf. Rule No. 10.)

**C) THEOLOGICAL TRAINING**

To give reason for their hope, the Dominican laity must have:

Solid theological training and knowledge of the Catechism of the Catholic Church

Good knowledge of the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas

**D) APOSTOLIC TRAINING**

The preaching is exercised in the daily encounter with the person, within the fraternity and in the fields of life and action, listening, sharing, and practicing compassion and mercy. Mainly promoting Justice and Peace and care for Creation and "the unity of Christians and dialogue with non-believers". (Rule No. 12)

**PROPOSAL NO. 4:**

**TRAINER PROFILE**

1. It must be a lay brother or sister
2. Of perpetual profession
3. To be elected by the council for 3 years and may be re-elected
4. Possess good doctrinal preparation and knowledge of the Order
5. Demonstrate prudence in human relationships
6. Ability to value the person
7. Sensitivity to the problems of the candidate
8. Humility and capacity for listening and empathy

**PROPOSAL N ° 5**

**INSTITUTE THE FIGURE OF THE PROVINCIAL FORMATOR WHO MUST BE CHOSEN BY THE RESPECTIVE COUNCIL.**

**COMMISSION: FINANCE AND COMMUNICATION**

Communication

1. we recommend that all regional and provincial councils appoint someone in charge of communications.
2. we propose electronic mail as the preferred form of communication. alternative digital platforms can be used to communicate with our brothers and sisters and with the curia.
3. we recommend: that all provincial council officers use electronic mail to communicate with the regional ICLDF representative and with the promoter general of the laity.
4. we recommend that all changes to the provincial council officers be promptly communicated to the regional council, the regional ICLDF representative, and to the promoter general of the laity.
5. we encourage all provinces to send information such as the life of the fraternity to [webmaster@fraternitiesop.com](mailto:webmaster@fraternitiesop.com) and to the general promoter for communication to [press@curia.op.org](mailto:press@curia.op.org)
6. we recommend that key activities of the fraternities are to be communicated and reviewed regionally and shared internationally.

Finance

1. the annual contribution to the ICLDF is to cover the cost of the annual international council meeting, other meetings, if needed, and to keep the cost of the international congress as low as possible.
2. the ICLDF treasurer will produce an annual report of finances for the preceding year by february 15 of the current year. this report will be sent by the icldf webmaster to the provincial presidents and treasurers, whose emails should be provided.
3. since we are a non profit organisation, surplus funds may be utilized to support dominican family projects in need of funds.
4. we recommend to keep the annual contribution to the ICLDF at 1.50 euro per member per year, due not later than june 30.

**COMMISSION: DOMINICAN FAMILY**

**NUNS:**

- Urge the Fraternities to have frequent encounters with the monasteries;
- Organize activities, share moments of formation, study and prayer.
- Require their intercession for particular needs of the Order, country and / or the world;
- Contribute to their needs.

**FRIARS:**

- Discuss frequently, communicate news, request respect for lay autonomy.
- Require accompaniment to the Fraternities and inclusion in pastoral and missionary programs.

**RELIGIOUS:**

- Engage in a fraternal dialogue with the religious and lay people involved in their works.
- Open to mutual participation in spaces of formation, prayer, community and mission.

**YOUTH.**

- Respect differences with institutions, movements, groups and promote mutual inclusion.
- To build bridges to form a community, to urge spaces of common mission.
- Encourage the laity to be, as Pope Francis asks, the Church on the way out, preventing them from nesting in convent houses and / or sacristy.

**GENERAL PROPOSALS.**

- Organize vocational networks with participation of all branches.
- Propose common missions of preaching, where community life and the experience of the pillars of the Order are facilitated.
- Participate in councils and/or Secretariats of Family OP, propose their creation where they do not exist.

**RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CHURCH**

- Become aware of the eminently ecclesial character of the Order.
- Actively join the parishes, lay organizations and spaces of the local Church.

**COMMISSION: PREACHING AND PRAYER**

[*Declaration*] Lay Preaching aims at introducing Jesus and sharing the Gospels into our world, in the context of family, friends, neighbors, people at work, in the social media and other contexts.

Lay Preachers should be able to listen, to try to understand and to truly love those they preach to.

Lay Preaching is not only about teaching, but about listening and learning and being present.

Clerical Preaching and Lay Preaching do not exclude one another.

[*Declaration*] The compassion of Jesus for all humanity and our compassion urge us to preach.

Lay Preaching can take on many forms depending on the gifts given to us by God, for example singing and making music and other contributions to an attractive liturgy, art, writing, publishing and film making, listening and spiritual guidance, works of charity, advocacy for the marginalized, the ability to serve, and more.

We should be able to talk about the gospel, our personal faith and the teachings of the church.

The way we live our lives is also a way of preaching. How we live our lives should make other people curious about our faith.

Preaching requires that we learn to listen, to understand the signs of our times and to react to them.

[*Commendation*] We should be praying for occasions to preach.

[*Commendation*] Social media and other forms of modern technology need to be used in order to reach out to people in the modern world.

[*Commendation*] During formation, members should be encouraged and supported by their fraternity to investigate and develop their individual form of preaching according to their gifts.

[*Declaration*] We belong to lay fraternities in the Order of Preachers because God called us to them. Our fraternities should be places of healing, compassion and joy and also places of prayer. Our fraternities should be places of ongoing formation on our way to being preachers. They should be places in which we share our experiences and in which we receive support.

The life in our fraternities should reflect Jesus' words in John 17,11: "that they may be one, even as we are one", thus making our fraternities into a way of preaching.

[*Commendation*] We recommend that each fraternity should look for common preaching projects. Making use of the individual charisms of its members, such projects help the fraternity in its development as a fraternity. Community projects encourage new ideas, release energy, creating new life and new commitment within the fraternity. (Compare Acts of General Chapter in Bologna 2016, article 126)

[*Declaration*] Number 10 of the Lay Dominican Rule offers us a list of spiritual sources which help to nourish and support our contemplative and apostolic vocation.



[*Commendation*] We propose that the fraternities meet from time to time to reflect upon and discuss with one another their spiritual growth with the intention of renewing their commitment. This may require help from outside.

[*Commendation*] In the present situation of great upheaval in the Church (problem of child abuse by priests, discussion about marriage and divorce and about homosexuality) we recommend that Lay Dominicans should deepen their understanding of and renew their relationship to the Sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation.

[*Declaration*] As Lay Dominicans our personal prayer and the sources mentioned in Number 10 of the Rule should enlighten our work, family life and social activities.

Through our fraternities we are connected to God and the Church. This connection should be of primary importance to all members.

Being in the world, but not of the world (see Joh 17,14), we are called to sanctify the world with the help of God.

[*Commendation*] We encourage the fraternities to help their members to develop their personal prayer.

**COMMISSION: JUSTICE PEACE AND CARE OF CREATION**

Background:

As Church teachings and all the general chapters of the Order in the last 50 years have affirmed, work for Justice and Peace is a constitutive dimension of evangelization.

As counselled by the Master of the Order at this Congress,  
we propose

Resolution:

That lay fraternities everywhere reflect on where injustices are present in our own personal and communal relationships and structures and address them, so that we can be credible preachers of Justice and Peace.

Background:

Given that justice and peace is an integral part of our vocation as lay Dominicans;  
inspired by the two witness statements from Venezuela and Cameroon;  
and since the International Dominican Commission for Justice and Peace consists of all 5 branches of the Dominican Family,  
we propose

Resolution:

That each local community (chapter, fraternity, group etc) shall have a clearly defined contact person responsible for communication and activity on issues of Justice and Peace.

Background:

Given that friars and sisters have structures for Justice and Peace at every level, and  
That it is necessary to have a means of communication related to Justice and Peace between local, national and international levels of the Dominican laity and with the Dominican Family  
We propose

Resolution:

That every level of Dominican Laity in addition to the local fraternity (e.g. provincial/national, regional, international) include an identifiable Justice, Peace and Care of Creation contact person responsible for interaction among the levels and with the Dominican Family.

Resolution:

That a database of the contact people for Justice and Peace in the chapters/fraternities be established and maintained by the Lay Provincial Council.

**Resolution:**

That the Lay Dominicans on the International Dominican Commission for Justice and Peace (IDCJP) send information and alerts through the International Council of Lay Dominican Fraternities (ICLDF) to enable local fraternities to consider ways to show solidarity with Dominicans in difficult situations.

**Resolution:**

That all lay fraternities be made aware that our Order has a presence at the United Nations centers in Geneva, New York, Vienna and Nairobi to facilitate evangelization at the global level. Our UN delegations engage with governments to support the actions of Dominicans for justice and human rights at the ground level.

**Resolution:**

That Lay Dominican formation integrate Justice, Peace and Care of Creation through all aspects of holistic Gospel-based formation (Human, Spiritual, Intellectual and Pastoral/Apostolic) and all stages of formation from initial to ongoing.

**Resolution:**

That intellectual formation includes Catholic Social Teachings and Dominican resources on Justice and Peace.

**Resolution:**

Equipping Lay Dominicans with skills to engage in conflict resolution, peace-building and combatting injustices should be undertaken in close collaboration, whenever possible, with Justice and Peace coordinators in other branches of the Dominican Family and other relevant organizations.

**Background:**

In 2017, the Master of the Order initiated an annual Dominican month for peace from the first Sunday of Advent until the Church's World Day of Peace on January 1. The focus in 2018 will be on the Democratic Republic of Congo.

We propose

**Resolution:**

That all Lay Dominican chapters / fraternities include activities for the Dominican Month for Peace in their annual planning.

**COMMISSION: PROMOTERS AND ASSISTANT**

**I. The Profile of Promoters and Religious Assistants**

**A. Provincial Promoter**

The Provincial Promoter is a Dominican friar under full jurisdiction of his Prior Provincial who serves as a liaison between Lay Dominicans and the Prior Provincial. He is appointed to a four (4) year term by the Prior. He is a non-voting member of the Lay Provincial Council and other councils as identified by the Lay Provincial President. The Provincial Promoter collaborates with the Promoter General of the Laity to support the mission and vision of the Lay Dominican fraternities specifically in the areas of Justice, Peace and Care of Creation.

**B. Religious Assistant**

The Religious Assistant is one of the following: a Dominican friar, Dominican nun, Dominican cooperator brother, Lay Dominican permanent deacon, perpetually professed lay Dominican (male or female), a sister of the Dominican Family, a secular priest, or a religious of another Order/Congregation that assists an individual fraternity in spiritual and theological matters. If a Religious Assistant is not a member of the Order of Preachers, s/he must obtain authorization from her/his superior and ensure that s/he is duly prepared on Dominican history and spirituality. The Religious Assistant is a non-voting member of the fraternity and is appointed for a three or four year term by the Prior Provincial.

**C. Common to Both**

The Provincial Promoter and Religious Assistant follow the example of 2 Corinthians 1:24: "It is not that we are trying to rule over your faith, but rather to work with you for your joy".

**II. Clarifications of Their Functions**

**A. Provincial Promoter**

1. The Provincial Promoter should possess an affability, an interest in, and an enthusiasm for in the Lay Dominicans and be capable of listening to and interacting with members of the Laity on all social and academic levels, fostering participation of Lay members in the preaching work of the Church as well as in established ministries of the Province.
2. The Provincial Promoter should be available to render advice and provide support to the Lay Provincial President and Lay Provincial Councils. The Promoter visits fraternities with the Lay Provincial President and/or designee from among the Lay Provincial officers as scheduled. He works in concert with the Lay Provincial

Council to identify and evaluate fraternities' and members' needs and/or interventions to strengthen community life and the individual Lay vocation. The Provincial Promoter further collaborates with the Lay Provincial President in developing reports on the Laity for submission to the Prior Provincial and his Council.

3. The Provincial Promoter reviews and processes to the Prior Provincial those recommendations submitted by the Lay Provincial President or Council relating to status changes of members or fraternities. He promptly notifies the Lay Provincial Council in writing of the determination made by the Prior Provincial that includes justification of the decision. This includes, but is not limited to, the appointment or removal of a Religious Assistant, the petitions to extend a term of office in service, the erection or suppression of a fraternity, etc.
4. The Provincial Promoter openly communicates with the Province by informing the Lay Council of matters or concerns issued from the friars' General and Provincial Chapters, the Order and Province, and those specific matters related to the Laity. He facilitates communication between the Lay Dominicans, friars and religious to enhance the mission of the Laity and Order in general. The Provincial Promoter also ensures that Lay Dominicans are invited to events (e.g. meetings, talks, special celebrations, etc.) taking place on a Provincial level.
5. The Provincial Promoter encourages and identifies friars and religious to serve Lay Dominican fraternities as Religious Assistants and/or to provide theological, spiritual, and pastoral lectures/ workshops for the fraternities.
6. The Provincial Promoter fosters initiatives by Lay Dominicans on Justice, Peace and Care of Creation.
7. The Provincial Promoter provides insight on Dominican spirituality, history, theology, and Church teachings appropriate to lay vocations. He contributes written articles for a Lay Province's newsletter or Dominican provincial periodical on a regular basis.

#### **B. Religious Assistant**

1. The Religious Assistant attends fraternity and council meetings when possible to encourage and promote the evangelical and apostolic works of the members and the Fraternity.
2. The Religious Assistant recommends study topics and provides spiritual and theological commentary to aid a fraternity's formation and study as needed, providing advice to those members who are presenting the materials.
3. The Religious Assistant assists the fraternity's Council in the discernment process of a member's advancement in the Order and assists the fraternity's President with the Rites of Reception and Profession.
4. The Religious Assistant may recommend lay speakers or priests (as required) for days of recollection, retreats, spiritual direction, etc.

5. The Religious Assistant prays for an increase of Lay Dominican vocations and for the members' spiritual growth, mission, apostolic activities, and attentiveness to the goals of the Church.
6. The Religious Assistant communicates with the Provincial Promoter on a regular basis.

**III. Dialogue with the Provincial and with the Fraternities in the nomination of the Promoters and Religious Assistants**

**A. Provincial Promoter**

1. The Lay Council President receives recommendations of potential candidates from the Council members and performs due diligence before submitting to the Prior Provincial a recommended list of three (minimum) friar candidates for Provincial Promoter.
2. The Prior Provincial presents the Laity's recommendations to his Council for selection and communicates the result to the Lay Council President.
3. In the event that the candidate is deemed not suitable, the Lay President notifies the Prior Provincial and presents justification for the decision.

**B. Religious Assistant**

1. The Fraternity Council President receives recommendations of potential candidates from the members and performs due diligence before submitting to the Provincial Promoter a recommended list of three candidates for Religious Assistant with a summary of the Fraternity's due diligence.
2. In the event that the candidate is deemed not suitable, the Fraternity President notifies the Provincial Promoter and presents justification for the decision.

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