

Excerpts from the Acts of the General Chapter of Trogir, 2013 and the General Chapter of Providence, 2001

Celebrating a Dominican Jubilee

From the Acts of the General Chapter of Trogir, 2013

Accessed from <http://www.op.org/sites/www.op.org/files/public/documents/fichier/fulltrogir2013-13.pdf>. p. 23-27.

Sent to Preach the Gospel

In 2016, we will celebrate the eighth centenary of the confirmation of the Order by Pope Honorius III. A Jubilee for the people of Israel was a time of joy and renewal when “you shall return, every one of you, to your property and every one of you to your family” (Lev 25:10). If our Jubilee invites us to return to the origins of the Order, paradoxically it is so that we will remember how St. Dominic sent out his first friars from their house, their family, and their nation so as to discover the joy and freedom of itinerancy. Our mobility means more than moving from one place to another. As disciples of Christ, we are sent to preach the Gospel. By sharing the life of the One who, sent by the Father, breathes out his Spirit upon us, we acquire the interior freedom that alone makes us attentive to the appeals of our human sisters and brothers.

The Charism of Preaching

In celebrating eight centuries of existence, we are invited more than ever *to laudare, benedicere et praedicare*. It is above all God whom we praise for the grace that he gave to Dominic, whose charism of preaching continues to be expressed in and for the world, *in medio Ecclesiae* (in the midst of the Church). This ministry of preaching that we share with the whole church is still vital and urgent today so that the Gospel may ring out from one end of the world to the other. . . .

Preaching the Word of God

Preaching means making the mystery of the Incarnation present to men and women today. “The Word became flesh” to teach us the Truth of God and the truth about our humanity. To fulfill this service of the Word well, like St. Dominic, we have to be seekers of the Truth rooted in the life of Christ. The renewal of our Dominican life begins with the unification of our whole existence through attentive listening to the Word—a life of prayer and contemplation in silence and study. . .

The Fruitfulness of Study

As we know, St. Dominic sent the friars to study in the universities and to be formed there in contact with the new sciences. Today, more than ever, the complexity of the human condition and the major changes that affect people’s lives invite us to seek to understand the world in which we live that “God loved so much” (John 3:16). Today St. Dominic would send his brothers and sisters to be right in the middle of these transformations so that they

could address the questions being posed there and enter into dialogue with those seeking to build a more human world. Nourished by our own traditions, we will be able to bear humble service to the Word of truth, to show how theology is no stranger to any of these contemporary questions, and to offer a biblical and Christian vision of humanity, of human dignity, and of the incommensurable value of what is truly human. For us, study is not just a stage in formation but a way of being: it nourishes our whole life and makes it fruitful. Nourished by the Word of God that we must learn to listen to, read, meditate, and study with renewed vigor, we will be able to address the questions of our world that are really just so many new opportunities for Friars Preachers. Indeed our Jubilee gives us the occasion to consider creatively, in cooperation with the nuns, the sisters, and the lay members of the Order, the ways of consecrating ourselves anew to study for the sake of preaching.

***Misericordia Veritatis*, “The Mercy of Truth”**

From the Acts of the General Chapter of Providence, 2001, Chapter III: “The Intellectual Life”

Accessed from: http://www.op.org/sites/www.op.org/files/public/documents/fichier/acts_Providence2001_en.pdf

104. Thanks to St Dominic’s innovative spirit, study ordered to the salvation of souls was involved intimately in the purpose and regular life of the Order. St. Dominic himself led the brethren to places of learning in the largest cities so that they might prepare for their mission. “Our study must aim principally, ardently, and with the greatest care at what can be useful for the souls of our neighbors” (LCO 77,1). From then on, study would be linked essentially to the apostolic mission of the Order and to preaching the Word of God.

105. Within the Order, study should not be considered in a pragmatic way, as if it were only an apprenticeship for a trade. Rather, study belongs to the contemplative dimension of our Dominican life, a vital part of its cognitive aspect. And yet, while drawn first toward contemplating God and God’s works, theological wisdom comes to share with the Spirit’s gift; of wisdom the love of God and of God’s works, a holy joy in the contemplation of their fullness as well as a holy sorrow at any wounding of their being.

106. ... Sapiential study thus unfolds itself necessarily as intellectual compassion: a form of compassion which presupposes insight (*intellectus*) gained or developed by study; and a form of insight which leads to compassion. “For even as it is better to enlighten than merely to shine, so is it better to give to others the fruits of one’s contemplation than merely to contemplate” (STh II-II 188, 6 co.), Thus, even though God’s mercy and compassion are made available to the world in a multitude of ways, through the Dominican charism it is available through study and the consolation of truth.

107. Our constitutions point out the contemplative dimension of study by calling it a meditation on the multiform wisdom of God. To dedicate oneself to study is to answer a call to “cultivate the human pursuit of truth” (LCO 77,2). One could say that our Order is born of this love for truth and of this conviction that men and women are capable of knowing the truth. From the start, the brethren were inspired by the innovative audacity of St. Dominic who encouraged them to be useful to souls through intellectual compassion, by sharing with them the *misericordia veritatis*, the mercy of truth. Jordan of Saxony states that Dominic had the ability to pierce through to the hidden core of the many difficult questions of their day “thanks to a humble intelligence of the heart” (*humili cordis intelligentia: Libellus*, No. 7, MOPH XVI, Roma 1935, pg. 29).