

## SESSION IV - PART ONE: APOSTOLATE AND THE LAY DOMINICAN

Mary Sheehy

### *STATEMENT OF GOALS:*

1. To give to others the fruits of our contemplation. "Contemplata aliis tradere." This is the motto of the Order of Preachers.
2. Proposes to demonstrate how our life of study and prayer fuse in the work of the apostolate.
3. Our apostolate is a call to help others find truth which thereby makes it a spiritual work of mercy.
4. Apostolate plays an important role in revealing to us the formation of Christian character.

### *OUTLINE OF PRESENTATION*

- I. Origins:
  1. Divine Mandate.
  2. Personal Prayer.
- II. Characteristics of Apostolate:
  1. Selfish love.
  2. Responds to need.
  3. Balanced activity.
  4. Awareness of being an instrument of grace. (Humility and Docility)
  5. Ability to listen.
- III. Fruits of the Apostolate.

I. ORIGINS:

1. Divine Mandate.

The commandment "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and all your soul, and all your mind... and you shall love your neighbour as yourself" [Mt.22:37-39], is given to us all. The reward is promised to us all, too! "Come, you have my Father's blessing! Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me. I was ill and you comforted me, in prison you came to visit me. Then the just will ask Him: Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you or see you thirsty and give you drink? When did we visit you when you were ill or in prison?" Christ's answer to those present and with whom He was speaking is His answer to us present at this reading and gives all an awareness of being an instrument of grace: "I assure you, as often as you did it for one of my brothers, you did it for me."

This is the commandment of the love of God come full circle. God is unwilling to separate our love for Him and our love of neighbour - they are parent and child! The fulfilment of God's will in our life and the care of our neighbour are one. Jesus shows us the way when He dies out of faithful love for us and in loving dedication to the will of God the Father who ordained it.

2. Personal Prayer.

The active life of the apostolate rests on contemplation. This is the prerequisite. Prayer must always precede and feed the active life of the apostolate. Christ spent 30 years in the hidden contemplative life before He began His ministry. St. Dominic spent 10 years in contemplative silence at Osma before he was called to an active ministry. Catherine of Siena spent 3 years in the solitude of contemplation before she began one of the most colourful apostolates in Dominican history.

Prayer undergirds and gives vigour to the apostolate, thereby making it a divine ministry and saving it from sterile activism. "If I speak with the tongue of men and angels, but am without love, I am a sounding gong or a clanging cymbal. " Love of God is the motive force in all a Dominican does.

## II. CHARACTERISTICS OF APOSTOLATE.

### 1. Selfless love.

In the DIALOGUE of St. Catherine of Siena, Christ says to Catherine: "You cannot give me the kind of love I ask of you. This is why I have put you among your neighbours; so that you can do for them what you cannot do for me - that is love them without any concern for thanks and without looking for any profit for yourself. And whatever you do for them I will consider done for me." And then Christ gives us a test with which to test the quality of selflessness of our love. "So your love should be sincere; you should love your neighbours with the same love with which you love me. Do you know how you can tell when your spiritual love is not perfect? If you are distressed when it seems that those you love are not returning your love or not loving you as much as you think you love them." The love of neighbour is to be without any interest.

### 2. Responds to need.

Jordan of Saxony wrote of Dominic: "God gave him the singular grace of weeping for sinners. He carried their miseries in the sanctuary of his compassionate heart and poured forth his burning love in floods of tears. Spending the whole night in prayer, he was accustomed to pray to his Father over and over again in secret. His frequent and special prayer to God for the gift of true charity capable of labouring for and winning the salvation of all people, since he deemed that he would be a true member of Christ only when he could devote himself entirely to gaining souls, like the Lord Jesus, the Saviour of all, who offered himself completely for our salvation."

In addition, Dominic walked the length and breadth of Europe compassionately searching for these people he prayed for. Dominic's gifts were given for others, to build up the Church. This is the test of love's authenticity. Dominic readily

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demonstrates to us again and again that the gift is not a gift that is hoarded, stingily measured or kept in selfish reserve. Dominic is not shy.

Catherine, too! Her zeal for her Father's house seems fathomless! Sprung from her little room after 3 years of solitary prayer, she poured forth the fruit of her prayers on the whole of her world family, neighbours, and finally Pope, Church and the whole country. Without stint. Without prejudice. She did it in spite of misunderstandings, jealousy, pressures (there is always this pressure to be "conventional" in one's behaviour which Catherine was not exactly), and the mean opinions of her detractors.

3. Balanced activity.

The love of God and our neighbour in God has an order. It is expressed first through and in the family, as the first sin occurred in the family. All of us, priest, brother, nun, sister and lay person, single or married, - come from a family. In the family, the husband is Christ to his wife and the wife is Christ to her husband. Each of them is Christ to their children. The children each take this out with them to their circles. We find Christ in and through our parents, grandparents and other relatives. Gradually, as the children grow and circumstances ease, we move outward to all those in need around us.

4. Awareness of being an instrument of grace.

(Humility and Docility.) For most of us the apostolate can be, in most cases is, selected according to the temperament of the individual lay person. In some cases the soul of the apostolate must be in the core of the work we do to earn our daily bread! So that if I am a meat cutter, it is not just MEAT I cut, but it is meat for each and every Christ who will take it home that day and prepare it for himself or for herself and the family. The apostolate is relational and I am always reaching out to that other. There are many avenues to walk when searching for an apostolate. It may be found in community worker in parish work. It may be found in a soup-kitchen or in teaching CCD.

5. Ability to listen.

Above all we are alert to more than surface appearances and material need. We are looking for what it is God is showing us, listening for what He is saying to us. The one who comes to us hungry may be hungry for peaceful acceptance or basic kindness. In this case, to offer him or her suggestions or criticisms, no matter how well intentioned our proposed "solutions," would be to further distance the one distressed from the response that is really necessary to heal. We need to listen to hear what God is saying about this person to us. We need to put ourselves aside. Sometimes the one who is hungry and naked needs to be fed, warmed and dressed by gentle affirmation. Indeed the joyful outlook of a Dominican can be just the right encouragement to keep someone from the temptation of despair, help another remain sober and reasonable, or to stick with a marriage or religious vocation in time of stress - and we may, probably won't, even know it! The love that smiles in DOMINICAN eyes may give someone the courage to believe they can begin over, take advice, admit error, keep trying, make the best of little, subdue an unruly temper, shoulder a deserved blame, or possibly, recognize the silver lining in their life. In this respect, the apostolate is Everyman, Everywoman, for who knows how we effect those around us a thousand and one times a week with no more than a glance!

If our apostolate is teaching, writing or lecturing, the importance of adequate preparation in study, reflective thinking and prayer can be seen. We must first conform our own thinking and actions to the teaching of the Church. We need to personally assimilate the truths the Church teaches in order to sufficiently communicate them to others.

We may find the meaning of apostolate in a long term commitment to helping a refugee family get settled in this country. Or maybe it will be a short-term commitment helping someone to convalesce from surgery or illness. Maybe it will be a sometime thing such as keeping a protective watch over the children of working parents who live nearby. Perhaps we don't know what our apostolate is. Perhaps we're not sure. Maybe we're not sure about giving of self. Maybe we're not where we can help most. Maybe we're not certain "how" to fit apostolate into our life. We need to pray over it and then pray again.

Honestly. If nothing comes, we can make a gentle search for our milieu and if finding nothing again, then continue to wait in patient openness to God who knows of our groping. It may come to us what we are called to do. But we may need to pray and search again, shortly.

### III. *FRUITS OF THE APOSTOLATE*

The Gospel of St. John tells us: "I am the vine and my Father is the gardener. Every barren branch of mine he cuts away; and every fruiting branch he cleans, to make it more fruitful still. You have already been cleansed by the word that I spoke to you. Dwell in me, as I in you. No branch can bear fruit, unless you remain united with me. I am the vine and you are the branches. He who dwells in me, as I dwell in him, bears much fruit..." [15:1-5]

What is this fruitfulness Jesus speaks of? In Galatians 5 the fruit of the Spirit is clearly defined and as we learned it before Confirmation: love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance and faith. Those who are striving to breathe the same air with Christ bear this fruit. In the end, it is not what we do but how we do it and what we are. The fruits of the Spirit do not concern service, but character. We may not be called to explode on the scene with volumes of ardent teaching about this loveable God of ours as did the great St. Thomas Aquinas. We may not be called to be a firebrand like Savonarola or have the charism of St. Vincent Ferrer. But we are called to "dwell in Christ" in a kind of fusion of presence that He invites and initiates, living in one another (we in Christ) through prayer and the way we relate to those around us.

We are called to be peaceful. Gentle. Good. Meek. Temperate. And joyful! Most of all, a Dominican doesn't take himself/herself so seriously that he/she can't be JOYFUL. Dominicans are a joyful people!

It is this fruit which God uses to draw others to Himself.

*SUMMARY*

Dominican Laity share in the religious and apostolic life of the Order of Preachers. Our Rule tells us: "The object of the Dominican Laity is the sanctification of its members and the salvation of souls." Dominican Laity are called to give hands, hearts and minds to many forms of charitable works and works of Mercy. We are called to help combat moral ills and to offer compassionate assistance to those who are physically ill as well where we can. But most of all our life of study and prayer fuse in the work of the apostolate where we have the most powerful weapon against ignorance, our worst enemy, in proclaiming the Truth. This is very much a spiritual work of mercy.

Wherever we are found, assisting in parish or soup kitchen, our mandate is the Gospel, in the command of Christ and in the example of our holy Father St. Dominic. We do not neglect any of our home duties to take on an outside apostolate, but we do not rest content by simply doing our duty at home. We are habitually alert for the work God may send each day, fielding the apostolate wherever it is found winging in at us, because apostolate is, above all else, an attitude, a way of being in Love.

*QUESTIONS:*

Do I see the relationship in an act of selflessness in apostolate?

Do I see how my circumstances can be areas for my apostolate?

Have I overlooked some of the smaller but more immediate apostolates locally available because they are less glamorous, less attractive or rewarding than what I had in mind?

Do I see how works of mercy and charitable works deepen my faith experience and challenge or expand inner attitudes?

In this presentation, what strikes me as new or different from what I' ve been doing?

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**RESOURCES:**

1. Dominican Spirituality  
William A. Hinnebusch, O.P.
2. Renewal  
William A. Hinnebusch, O.P., pp. 15-17, 19, 20, 33-37.
3. A Word from the Lord: A Word for the World! Mission and Ministry.  
Sr. Ann Willits, O.P., pp. 45-52.

**CONCLUDING PRAYER:**

O Lord, you are the Creator of all life,  
open your arms on the cross  
to painful death for love of me.  
Let me not be cold and indifferent in my love of you.  
Fill me with your spirit of humility,  
simplicity, charity and ardent zeal  
that I may serve those who seek my help with your heart. Amen.



## SESSION IV - PART TWO: STUDY AND THE LAY DOMINICAN

### *STATEMENT OF GOALS:*

1. To present the purpose of study in the life of the Dominican Laity and propose that the whole cloth out of which truth is woven and the substance of our being may become one.
2. Study is not study for study' s sake, as an end in itself, but this study we do is to be a lived reality, enfleshed.
3. Study is a way of life for the Dominican; inseparate from prayer and apostolate, the three fuse in mutual support. Ideally, study, prayer, and apostolate merge to form a whole new way of living and experiencing who I am and who God is. By applying our "minds" to reality we seek truth and dispose ourselves to receive it. And by applying our "hearts" to this known truth, we seek not just to live it but to become it. Truth becomes incarnate.

But the two rest on study. Learning comes before everything - including holiness and experience. It is impossible to fulfil<sup>11</sup> the contemplative and apostolic ends of the Order without study.

4. To show that the element of study is deeply rooted in St. Dominic and the founding of the Order.

### *OUTLINE OF PRESENTATION*

- I. Study as Based on Ordinary Human Experience.
- II. Study as a Response to God' s Revealed Truth.
- III. Study: Dominic' s Pursuit of Truth.
- IV. Study: Our Pursuit of Truth.

"From the visible things around us we learn of the invisible things of God."  
[Heb-11:3, Rom.1:20]

## FORMAL PRESENTATION

### I. Study as Based on Ordinary Human Experience.

Learning so pervades our lives that learning could be called a synonym for living. Human learning includes so many things - problem solving, concept formation, conditioning, stimulus response, learning through association and, of course, there is always the motivation for learning to take into account!

Learning increases our potential. We read a map, find a certain place is due south, and try to use that information to get there. What we learn from reading the map gives us the potential to get there.

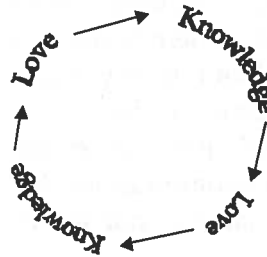
Whatever we study, however we learn, this knowledge produces, or has the potential to produce in us, habits and skills and contributes to the development of attitudes and emotions, rules of conduct and rules of thought. For instance:

Math teaches a logical thought process. English teaches us to have a command of our own native tongue. History, oldest of the social sciences, helps us to know and appreciate all that has happened in the past.

Parents and family roots are of interest because we love them -they are part of our personal, intimate history. (The favorite question of a grandchild to a grandparent, for instance, is: what was it like in the old days?)

The beloved. This person couldn't BE loved until he/she had been introduced. Then we want to know all about this person. What was he like as a boy or what was she like as a girl? What were parents, brother and sisters like? What were his/her hobbies, interests, etc.?

In the natural order we can see that love very easily follows knowledge.



The more intense the love is, the greater the desire for knowledge. Conversely, the greater the desire for knowledge, the more intense the love. It expands itself!

**II. Study as a Response to God's Revealed Truth.**

**III.**

This is much more true in the spiritual realm where it is God who takes over. He is the sacred Teacher who disposes our hearts to desire to know Him more by inducing us to love Him more. He gives the necessary reinforcement as His love motivates and draws us to search for Him. It is He who enlightens the mind and moves the will thereby helping us to move toward Him. The study of God has an inner momentum in it that carries us beyond the search for information about Him or the desire to learn something about Him. This inner momentum carries us, or has the potential to carry us, into prayer and into the presence of God.

There is probably nothing that so disposes us to love anyone as much as the experience of His love for us. A compelling first glimpse of God's love for us can be seen in Scripture at the Nativity - God disarms us and charms us as a little baby, uniting His divinity with our humanity. He becomes Everyman's baby, Everywoman's baby. He is my child and He is your child. He is my Saviour and He is your Saviour.

Another place we begin to discover God's love (and the possibilities in that love for us,) is in the delightful relationships He has had with men, women and children who are His special friends. The Church

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helpfully highlights some of these people for us by calling them Blesseds and Saints. One of these Saints has said "God never comes marching into your life without bringing all His family and friends with Him." This brings additional blessings. Their views excite us. Their lives inspire us. Their heroism and accomplishments are not only our history and our legacy, but point to possibilities beyond mediocrity or "half-growth" in our relationship, our filiation, as children of God. Their personal experiences of God lift our vision above the level of a monotonous, mechanically lived Faith to confront a hidden dynamism that does not and cannot exist with what is static, "fixed" or "secure."

For us as Dominicans, St. Dominic is friend par excellence. He is our spiritual mentor, a wise and trusted advisor, a good and holy friend and Father. He saw that sound knowledge was an essential tool toward the end of the Order. And so, after assembling the first candidates to the Order and setting up a program of prayer and common life, he devoted himself to a program of studies. The importance of study to Dominic' s thinking is so great that he has even made room for it by granting a dispensation in the rule: "Because our Order has been specifically instituted for preaching and the salvation of our neighbor, our study should tend chiefly, earnestly, and, above everything, to all that can be of use to souls." While the primary thrust of the Fathers is precisely the preaching of Truth and refuting heresy so that they are educated thoroughly and have the formal grounding necessary for one who is the designated guardian of the riches of the Faith, Dominican Laity are also called, each in his/her own way, to the quest for the Truth.

As Dominicans, we begin by patterning our lives on the life of St. Dominic, not in the sense of mimicking, but by giving our own unique expression to the Dominican way of life. Throughout the entire history of the Order we can see the spirit and tradition of study shown in different ways. It is shown one way in St. Elmo, the famous seafarer' s patron who is actually a Dominican Blessed by the name of Peter Gonzales! It is shown in the illiterate Catherine of Siena, who is also a Doctor of the Church. Bl. Albert of Bergamo, a simple and pious farmer and very much hen-pecked (he is the patron saint of hen-pecked husbands), certainly never realized study in the same way as Albert the Great, who lived at about the same time. These people of various nationalities who come from several walks of life all have this common: a single-minded attentiveness to God that sought habitually to watch for and learn what it was God might want of them.

III. Study: Dominic's Pursuit of Truth.

The devil always appears under the guise of good. In the very beginning his lie to man and woman in the garden was a promise of good: " ... your eyes will be opened" and "you will be like gods, knowing good and evil."

The heresies and errors of Dominic' s day contained similar half truths and deceptions. Various pious groups rose from time to time to defend the truth, and though they were often good and holy people, faithful in reception of the sacraments and in keeping precept and commandment, generally they failed badly because of a lack of sound knowledge.

It is important to remember that during the period in history when Dominic lived education was a privilege. However, even the aristocracy weren' t always educated. There was a much greater emphasis on the spoken word and much less on the written. It was 200 years after Dominic died that Gutenberg invented printing with moveable type which became the first means of mass communication. Printing put more knowledge in the hands of more people faster and cheaper than ever before. As a result, reading and writing spread widely and rapidly. But by and large, most of the people who studied in university centers during Dominic' s time, late in the 12th century and early in the 13th century, were clerics, doctors and lawyers.

So it was that Dominic cleverly saw that it was important to begin in centres of learning when he founded the Order. He knew you had to remove the "cause" of error to remove error itself and the error stemmed from the university centres. In order to refute skepticism and rout deceit, Dominic' s arguments had to be more learned and more reasonable than his opponents.

IV. Study: Our Pursuit of Truth.

Not everything that men and women are known to devote themselves to mentally represents an improvement in behavior. There is still a tilt in the moral order because the problem of half truths, manipulations

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of the truth, and slick substitutes for the truth continue to exist. Some examples of this are:

- A. Half -truths of Communism and Marxism.
- B. Half -truths of Modernism and Secular Humanism.
- C. Half -truths of Abortion advocates.
- D. Half -truths espoused in some theological circles.
- E. Half -truths of the Press.

This is only a partial list. Since the world appears to have no great bias in favour of truth, now more than ever before is the age of Dominic. We are told that in order for a religious order to continue to exist and not die out, it must adapt itself to the needs of the age. The need for which the Order of Preachers was originally founded still exists.

Dominican Laity share the same vision as the Dominican Priests who are the Preachers of the Order of Preachers, though we can't realize it in the same way. We come from all walks of life, are many ages, nationalities and temperaments. Some of us were relatively spiritually mature when we were called. Some not so much so. Our educational backgrounds are different, too. We are not drawn strictly from nor do we become an intellectual elite and we do not have a monopoly on the truth.

Dominican Laity should, however, be better "informed" than the average lay person.

As a result - the plus! - we have resources available to us that others may not have for reflective reading, thoughtful pondering, to try on, or to help us argue publicly with "conviction", if it should come to that.

Because ... if we don't KNOW IT, LOVE IT, FEEL IT, how can we share it with others.

**QUESTIONS:**

Can study as an aspect of Dominican life further my relationship with God and help deepen it?

Can membership in the Dominican Laity further my relationship with God.

How can I countermand the lack of truth experienced in life today (as related to human rights, hunger, poverty, abortion, the new morality, etc)?

Does this presentation change your idea of study?

**SUMMARY:**

Study for the Dominican is a spiritual quest into all the realities of our life experience. It is the gospel reaching into my life, into my heart as well as my head. It is more than credits and/or degrees, but is much like the words of the poet who wrote: "Feeling out of sight for the ends of being and ideal grace." Study facilitates this groping toward fullness of living, of loving, of growing, of BEING.

Truth demands personal search and sometimes it demands personal risk. Sometimes it is just that we risk finding out we are wrong in holding some opinion. Sometimes the risk is in taking truth to the limit, stubbornly standing by it, and being condemned. For most of us truth and our study is a quiet personal journey.

**RESOURCES:**

1. Dominican Spirituality  
Wm. A. Hinnebusch, O.P., (The Doctrinal Approach/Study and contemplation, pp.16-18; The Source of Dominican Spirituality, p.24; Dominican Life is Doctrinal, all of chp.6.)
2. Early Dominicans, Selected Writings; The Classics of Western Spirituality, pp.61, 75, 107, 294, 466-467.

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3. Renewal

Wm. A. Hinnebusch, O.P., *Dominicana* (chp.7), St. Dominic and the Dominican Educational Apostolate, by Sr. Mary Halpin, O.P., especially pp.76-77.

*PRAYER*

at the conclusion of the presentation on STUDY as an essential part of Dominican life.

O God,  
it is you who move over the abyss  
Hof nothingness to make it  
move and breathe and live.  
You give a spark of your clarity  
to all things.  
All things receive their truth and worth from you.  
You guide the spirit of man and woman  
beyond self to the deep mystery of your love.  
Open my heart to this mystery.  
Guard it, too, from the seduction that may arise.  
Make my conscience secure in your truth  
that at all times it may call the good good  
and know that evil is evil.  
Enlighten my mind and dispose my heart  
to know and desire that which leads to you,  
and keep me from all that leads to error and deceit. Amen.