

## THE SPIRIT OF DOMINICAN MENDICANCY

We are to apply the spirit of St. Dominic's poverty by:

1. Not being unreasonably attached to material goods;
2. Not giving undue importance to acquiring wealth;
3. Being more interested in the material common good of the community for which we are responsible than for our own;
4. Working for the advancement of those who are today's mendicants, i.e. the marginalized, the poor, the destitute, by:
  - a. Direct almsgiving, including to the missions;
  - b. Studying the social teachings of the Church;
  - c. Working for the implementation of these teachings in the world, and especially in our own areas of competence, and supporting those who are so laboring;
  - d. Informing others about the Church's social teachings.
5. Avoiding unnecessary material luxuries and ostentation;
6. Trusting that God will provide;<sup>1</sup>
7. Exercising a preference for the poor in our ministry,<sup>2</sup> especially in the spiritual works of mercy,<sup>3</sup> and in our socializing.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Note that the motto of the Western Dominican Province is "Deus Providebit," "God Will Provide." It is in this same spirit that we are reminded civilly not to base our hope on money by the government's printing, right on our currency, the motto, "In God We Trust".

<sup>2</sup>That the poor have the Gospel preached to them is singled out by Jesus as a sign of his authenticity (Lk. 4:18, 7:22). St. Paul informs us that the apostles approved of his preaching, "the only stipulation was that we should be mindful of the poor -- the one thing that I was making every effort to do." (Gal. 2:10) The Dominican spirit of mendicancy both arises from such scriptural texts and inclines us to implement them. St. Dominic's last will and testament has come down to us thus: "Behold, my children, the heritage I leave you: Guard humility, have charity one for the other, make your treasure out of voluntary poverty." Current Church documents, based both on scripture and on the needs of our contemporary world, speak of her "preferential option for the poor". Given our Dominican heritage, we are called to be good examples of this.

<sup>3</sup>All Christians are called to perform the all 7 corporal and all 7 spiritual works of mercy. The Dominican charism however is to focus more on the 7 spiritual works of mercy because they are more directly related to preaching: to admonish the sinner, to instruct the ignorant, to counsel the doubtful, to comfort the sorrowful, to bear wrongs patiently, to forgive all injuries, and to pray for the living and the dead. The 7 corporal works of mercy are: to feed the hungry, to give drink to the thirsty, to clothe the naked, to visit the imprisoned, to shelter the homeless, to visit the sick, and to bury the dead. (For the corporal works of mercy, see Mt. 25:35-40. For all 14, see: *The New St. Joseph Baltimore Catechism, No. 2*, nos. 191 and 192, where the list is exactly as it is here; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 2447, which gives the Scriptural bases for most of the works of mercy; *Modern Catholic Dictionary* by Fr. John A Hardon, S.J., R.I.P., which lists our 14 works of mercy; and *The Catholic Encyclopedia* by Robert C. Broderick, which combines visiting the imprisoned and visiting the sick as one corporal work of mercy, and then adds another, namely to ransom the captive.

<sup>4</sup>Rom. 12:16: "...do not be haughty but associate with the lowly....