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LETTER FROM THE MASTER OF THE ORDER

Solemnity of St. Dominic

Rome, 8 August 2020

ORDO PRÆDICTORUM
CURIA GENERALITIA

Christus in vobis, spes gloriae
Colossenses 1:27

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

O Spem Miram! O Wonderful Hope! This is our hymn to St. Dominic, the father and first brother of our Order.

The usual images that evoke hope are a new-born baby, a brilliant dawn, flowers and fruits of spring time, depictions of new life and new beginnings. In this time of a global pandemic, perhaps the image that would surely spell hope would be a vetted vaccine for COVID 19! Thus, it might seem strange to others that our song of hope commemorates the moment when Dominic passed from this world, a time when the brothers have tears on their eyes instead of a smile on their lips -O spem miram quam dedisti mortis hora te flentibus. Dominic stirred hope in their hearts because he promised to continue to be helpful to the brothers and sisters, he vowed to intercede for us, and, therefore, to abide with us by his prayers. But this is just one side of the story. The presence of the praying brothers at the hour of his death must have also given hope to Dominic. At that final moment of human finitude, Dominic was not alone. The presence of the brothers and Dominic's promised presence beyond death gave each of them hope and consolation. “The Latin word con-solatio, ‘consolation’... suggests being with the other in his solitude, so that it ceases to be solitude” (Spe Salvi, 38).

The quarantine and lockdowns we experienced or continue to experience at different times and varied modalities threatened to bring us to despair and isolation. They seemed to contradict our pastoral instincts to be with the people. But we observed these measures for sound scientific and ethical reasons. Yet even with these restrictions, I am glad to hear of the creative ways by which we tried “to be together” and be “with our people”. Surely, there is no substi-
tute to personal presence, but we found other means to be present to others. We, in the general curia, were able to meet with the provincials from all regions, regents of studies, and some commissions without the hassle of passing through airport security! Our professors and students completed the academic year through virtual means. For many of our educational institutions, the coming semester will see the implementation of a blended learning system i.e., combination of personal and virtual presence in lectures. I saw a photo of friars in one university priory who were trying their best to be proficient with the Blackboard Learning Management System. The heroic efforts of these professors (some of whom are not so young) to become competent “digital migrants” for the sake of their students are a sign of hope!

There are friars who braved the danger of contamination by ministering to the sick, while observing necessary precautions in order to prevent viral transmission within their communities. Our brothers at Santa Maria Maggiore here in Rome continued, as a college of penitentiaries, to celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation even during the first phase of the lockdown. Br. Chris Gault, a medical doctor before he joined the Order, was given permission by his superior to go back temporarily to medical practice to lend a hand to weary doctors treating covid-19 patients. There are brothers and sisters who offered words of encouragement and hope through phone counselling. I was on a phone conversation with frère Bruno Cadoré on his birthday last April 14 when he gently told me that we had to end our conversation because, as a volunteer counsellor, he would soon receive calls redirected by a counselling hotline in France. Most of the brothers and sisters preached and prayed with the people through various digital initiatives. Indeed, moments of crisis can become occasions of grace and moments of creativity. It was during the time of the Italian plague (1629-1631) that friar Timotheus Ricci (†1643) established the Bussola del ora perpetua del Rosario at the Dominican convent in Bologna in the year 1629.¹ The perpetual rosary devotion was born in the midst of pestilence. I am grateful to you all for joining us in the International Dominican Family Rosary last 29 April 2020 organized by fr. Lawrence Lew, Promoter General of the Rosary.

Our brothers from all over the world have published theological and biblical reflections on the different facets of the pandemic, liturgy guides for the celebration of the Paschal Triduum at home, guidelines for a safe and worthy celebration of the sacraments etc. We recall what fr. Timothy Radcliffe wrote in The Wellspring of Hope: “To study is itself an act of hope, since it expresses our confidence that there is a meaning to our lives and the sufferings of our people. And this meaning comes to us as a gift, a Word of Hope promising life.” The intellectual mission of the Order and its mission to preach Veritas is an important antidote to another pernicious pandemic - fake news and half-truths which are in fact half-lies.

You, dear brothers and sisters are a sign of hope for the Church and the human family as you strove to feed the “hungers” intensified by the pandemic: hunger for the Eucharist (and sacraments), hunger for solidarity and compassion, hunger for food and drink. There are members of the Dominican Family who raised funds for the needs of the sick and those who take care of the sick. Our brothers and sisters in many countries are struggling to alleviate the suffering caused by the pandemic and, like in Brazil, to discern the social ills that exacerbate the spread of the contagion.

We have lost brothers and sisters in this pandemic. In “normal” times, we gather around the bed of a dying member. A young friar shared that he was sad and shocked that they were unable to say goodbye to a brother who was about to die in the hospital. Our hearts are torn with the thought that while we were able to be present to the dying and their kin; now, we are unable to do the same for a brother and a sister due to medical restrictions. Yet we remain hopeful. **Hope is grounded on the certainty that God will never abandon us.** Hope is the assurance that God abides in the “mysteries of joy, sorrow, glory and light” of our lives. A priest told the bereaved family of a teen who was murdered: “If you want to know where God is when such tragic things happen to us, I can only say He is there weeping, suffering, and dying with you”. Pope Francis reminds us: “Hope does not expire, because it is based on the fidelity of God”. **Hope is Christ in us (Col. 1, 27).**

**O Spem Miram!** Dominic boldly promised to be useful to us because he had great hope that he will be closer to Christ, in the communion of the blessed. We will celebrate next year the 800th anniversary of that promise. The difficulties we currently face prompted us to revisit the plan we sent last January 2020. We hope to communicate the revised one later.
Yesterday we celebrated the feast day of St. Dominic de Guzman, the founder of the Order of Preachers, more widely known as the Dominican Order. Although he died almost 800 years ago, his spirit remains alive in the world through the Dominican priests, brothers, contemplative nuns, sisters, lay tertiaries, and priestly fraternities.

But what kind of creatures are these Dominicans? To answer the question, let me share with you this origin myth, inspired by the late Erma Bombeck’s classic piece about moth-ers.

When Dominic decided to establish the Order of Preachers, he did not want followers who are distressingly ordinary, so he begged God to create Alpha men and women imbued with excellent qualities and abilities

God told Dominic: “The Dominicans you want seem difficult to create. First, you want them to be motor-mouths who can talk sensibly and eloquently at 180 words per minute without losing their voice or their enthusiasm. Then you expect them to have a brain that can understand the most sublime and profane ideas, break these down into parts, then put these all together again in simple terms for people to understand.”

God continued: “You also want me to invest them with charisma and eloquence that will leave their listeners spellbound. They will tirelessly preach the message of salvation to all, and yet they will still find time for assiduous study, considered by many as an unrewarding and dry-as-dust enterprise. They must possess a hard-knuckle intellect able to distinguish between things that appear similar but are actually poles apart, like price and value, power and authority, necessary and urgent, and satisfaction and fulfillment. They must be a moral lightning rod that can defuse the blazing power of evil and error. They must have limitless energy for work,
overwhelming compassion for others, and an unquenchable thirst for solitude and prayer.

God looked at Dominic in the eye and said: “If I put all those qualities and abilities in a person, he will become your clone. I don’t create clones, only individuals with their unique abilities and idiosyncrasies.

Dominic humbly replied: "I am sorry dear God. I leave it to You to mold a Dominican as You see fit."

After a few days, while in prayer, Dominic saw God putting the finishing touches of a mold that will serve as the model of the first Dominican. He touched it and said: “Lord, this creature is too soft and fragile.” God replied: “Only on the outside. It is very tough inside. You cannot imagine what this creature can endure.”

St. Dominic looked at the creature’s face. He was surprised to see drops of water falling from the left eye. He called God's attention and said: “Dear God, This first Dominican is terribly flawed. There is a leak in the eye.”

God replied: “There is no leak. Those are teardrops—for joy, sadness, triumphs, failures, betrayals, guilt, regret, loneliness, disappointment, fulfillment.”

St. Dominic said: “How wise of you to place those teardrops there.” To his surprise, God replied: “No, I did not place those there. Those teardrops prove that the heart of this creature works. That’s how I want your followers to be: HUMAN.”

Author: fr. Rolando V. de la Rosa, OP
Dominican Province of the Philippines
Penance & Prayer
with the whole Dominican Family
4 October – 7 October 2020

The Master of the Order invites the Dominican Family to undertake a “triduum of penance” from 4 October - 6 October 2020. Each community is asked to determine the form of communal penance they will do together.

On 7 October 2020, the feast of the Holy Rosary, the Dominican Family is called to pray the Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary at 8:00pm in their local time, and to livestream this if possible.

“We offer to God these days of penance and prayer for these intentions: in suffrage for those who died during the pandemic; for the intentions of their bereaved families; for those who continue to suffer the effects of the pandemic, and for those who work to alleviate their suffering.”

– Fr Gerard Timoner, O.P.
Master of the Order of Preachers

Questions and more information, contact Fr Lawrence Lew, O.P.: rosarium@curia.op.org
On this day of the Assumption, patronal feast of our monastery, we are happy to give you some echoes of the intense weeks that we have just experienced.

Like every year, the feast of Saint Dominic, August 8, was for us an opportunity to celebrate and share with members of the Dominican Family and friends of our community. Even if there are fewer people than the usual number, the health crisis was not an obstacle to this gathering. As the sun was out, we were able to make the meal outside. The feast even had a special blessing of having the presences of three of our Dominican friars coming from Rome where they work with the Master of the Order: Fr. Orlando, from Colombia, Socius for Apostolic Life, whom we know well and who has presented the Vicar of the Master of the Order for our community, Fr. Fernando, from Mexico, Promoter of the Nuns, and Fr. Juan Ubaldo, Colombian, Promoter of the Laity. This visit was an opportunity for us to reflect together on our life and our projects: for example, the ongoing renovation of our hotel and the internationality of our community; as a cradle what is our specific mission at the service of the Order? Projects are maturing; we will tell you about it.

Our brothers were especially active and creative in preparing for this feast. They first undertook a “grooming” of the cloister garden by creating small beds around the shrubs and cleaning the alleys, while a unit of Rover Scouts who camped on our property, left the small wood for a time and, equipped with buckets, scrubbing brush and rags, washed the windows of the cloister, transforming it within two days into a veritable “Ice Palace.”
But the biggest surprise was the arrangement of the Basilica for the feast day: magnificent candleholder angels drawn from the treasures of our sacristy, statues with floral arrangement as a nun’s memory had never seen, an altar that was three times in size, repositioned benches.... joy of celebrating in this space. The entrance for Vespers I was solemn; at the bell, sisters and faithful assembled in front of the square of the Basilica, at the foot of a Saint Dominic found in a shabby condition by Fr. Orlando, and he completely restored it.

A meditation read by Fr. Orlando made the link between the emergence of the light in the churches in the 13th century and the light that Saint Dominic brought to the Church by the preaching of the Gospel. Amidst the wind swaying with our candle lights, we, led by Sr. Marie, entered the Basilica in a joyful and luminous procession, to the sound of the bagpipes!
The emotion was felt when at the height of these Vespers, our prioress, Sr. Marie-Josephine, renewed in the hands of Fr. Orlando her profession pronounced almost 30 years ago in her monastery in Japan. A beautiful path covered under different skies, linked however by the love of God and of Saint Dominic.

And the next day, we welcomed with joy our Bishop, faithful to this annual meeting, to preside over the Eucharist. It was also a joy to encounter sisters, brothers and friends whom confinement had kept away for several months.... The homily was given by our brother Eric Pohle who had prepared us for this feast by three days of very beautiful daily meditations- open to friends of the community- helping us to contemplate the face of Dominic, at the school of Saint Augustine and Fra Angelico.

After a joyfully shared meal, we met in the Basilica to listen to our three brothers from Rome, present their respective missions in the Order, at the service of apostolic life, of the nuns, and of the laity. After a time of sharing and some songs to Saint Dominic (in Spanish) composed and sung by our brother Orlando, a “local artist” gave us the benefit of her musical talents: thank you, Marie Noelle for this wonderful moment! The office of Vespers II brought together those who had been able to remain in fervent thanksgiving.
We ended this day of fraternity by spending a moment after the evening meal with the Rover Scouts who were leaving us the next morning. The recognition was mutual. The next day, others were also sleeping on the way. Accompanied by Br. Eric, fifteen pilgrims in the footsteps of St. Dominic would journey across the area for three days, braving the heatwave! We accompanied them by prayer, meeting them every evening for Compline and Vigil, tired but happy...

The Vespers of Saint Claire, on August 11, completed this adventure, and sent each one on a mission in the heart of everyone’s life.

Thank you, Lord; thank you, Saint Dominic; thank you, everyone for these days of shared joy, full of hope.

_Prioress Sr. Marie-Josephina de Jesus, OP and Community_  
*(Traduction by Belen L. TANGCO)*
THE NEW PAINTING OF SAINT DOMINIC

This new and original painting which has been recently inaugurated and blessed in the Refectory of the Dominican Priory at Rabat, Malta.

The painting is the work of Maltese artist Anthony Calleja and it aims to show that Saint Dominic was a man of great synthesis, action and prayer, a fraternal life that was at once Christ-centered, apostolic and communitarian. He was a great imitator of Christ who sent forth his disciples to preach the good news to the whole world, while inviting them to build communities and to be of loving service to each other. Christ invited his disciples to prophetically break bread in his name. Also, he confounded his disciples when he washed their feet and commanded them to do the same. Moreover, Christ's one true priesthood is sacramentally participated by the Church's ministers and more generally by all the baptized in every age. This painting picks up all these motifs and integrates them into a dynamic relationship between our Lord Jesus Christ, the prototype and savior of humanity and St. Dominic who, along with his brethren strove to follow Christ faithfully and truly. A happy coincidence for us is the Order's 800th Jubilee from St. Dominic's death (1221-2021) and which has taken as its theme one of the lovely miracle-events that occurred in the ancient Convent of Saint Sixtus in Rome, namely, the providential supply of bread to the community of friars at St. Dominic's intercession.

Anthony Calleja's painting has remarkably woven all these elements into one single scene, thus showing us the inseparable Johannine connection between koinonia – communion – and diakonia – service, that is at the heart of the Eucharistic mystery, both rooted in the very person of Christ, at once High Priest and Spiritual Food for humanity. As we celebrate liturgically and keep living...
memory of that ‘Last Supper’ we are confronted by the true salvation Christ Jesus brings and the means by which we may attain it now. In this sense we are all summoned to be another Christ, an alter Christus, until Christ "will be all in all" (Col 3:11).

The painting was blessed by the Provincial, Fra Francis Micallef OP on Thursday 23rd July 2020.

Fraternally,

Fr Christopher Caruana OP
Prior

Curia Generalizia – Fratres Ordinis Prædicatorum

15
In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless wasteland, and darkness covered the abyss, while a mighty wind swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. God saw that the light was good ... And God said, “Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.

Our ancient scriptures are sacred, earthy and beautiful: “In the beginning... God saw that it was good.” Our ancestors had an innate sense that this gift called ‘earth’ is our ‘Common Home,’ an image that Pope Francis uses frequently. How is it possible that some people learn to love and care for our world and its inhabitants, while others see it only through the lens of greed?

As was true with ancient Israel, the early indigenous tribes of South America reached out to the people who came from across the waters. Together they shared their lives and food, their thatched-roof huts and berries, their songs, and hopes. The sharing of Christian hymns and indigenous prayers was a way of building communion and trust, the preamble to evangelization.

I suspect that all of us have seen the beautiful and powerful movie, The Mission, the story of the Portuguese Jesuit missionaries who journeyed into the jungles of what today is called Brazil in search of the rest of God’s creation, or perhaps in search of the face of God. Those early missionaries set off with dreams and hopes, with faith and the willingness to take new risks.

Not only did they stumble upon beautiful lands and rivers; they encountered other human beings, children of the same living and loving God. Little by little they came face-to-face with each other, sharing gifts and greetings, fruits and seeds, stories, songs, and dance. The Church of
the Americas, in communion with Pope Francis, has been pondering these images, recalling the great “encounter” that happened when East and West met in dug-out canoes in the Amazon. I have had the wonderful opportunity to have lived for several months among the “peoples of the Amazon” at two different times, the second being last year, just as the Synod on the Amazon was beginning its work, focused on evangelization within the encounter of diverse cultures. Little by little, and thanks to REPAM (The Pan-Amazonian Ecclesial Network), I began to glimpse more and more of Pope Francis’ vision of a multi-cultured Church, a Church in which everyone is involved in the new evangelization. I think that the Holy Father has discerned correctly; he is calling us to be a bridge between North and South, between rich and poor, between the Christian faith and the rest of the world.

At the beginning of the work on the Synod, REPAM coordinated more than three hundred listening sessions throughout the Amazonian region, in-
volving about 22,000 people directly involved in territorial assemblies. Another arm of REPAM helped to organize smaller dialogue groups, through which another 65,000 people participated through their parishes.

Peruvian Cardinal, Pedro Barreto, S.J., who steered this project of a renewed evangelization from the moment that Pope Francis called on him to take the helm, reminds us that, “The Synod, has deep waters. The blueprint is Pope Francis’ encyclical, ‘Laudato Si,’ which invites all of us to take action, because the Earth, and the poor are crying as the earth is dying.”

Pope Francis has sounded the alarm, calling on those in power to stop the illegal mining that pollutes the pristine rivers of the Amazon region. The same goes for the greed that is destroying South America’s virgin forests. Every day in the small town of Puerto Maldonado, where I lived for half of last year, I would take a walk in the afternoon. And like clockwork I would watch as 20-30 huge logging trucks, filled with 40-60 enormous trees, barreling down the road, on the two-lane highway that leads towards the border of Brazil. Finally, one day I asked somebody: “Where does all of the lumber go that is cut and hauled away in these huge trucks every day?” The person looked at me as if I were stupid, and said, “To China, where else do you think it would go?” The illegal cutting and burning of forests in the Amazon has already destroyed more than 20% of the lung of the planet.” The Holy Father is trying his best to prevent any further damage.

Pope Francis described ‘Laudato Si’ as “the deep strength of the Synod ... the deep waters of God and what God is asking of us for the evangelization of the Amazon region.” It is time to stop building weapons, to lay down our arms, and build a world of bridges and schools instead of petroleum rigs and gold mines. We are being called to preserve our forests and care for our polluted rivers. This will happen only if we who call ourselves Christians are willing to choose the path of justice, mercy, and peace. We must let the Truth show us the way, the Truth that St. Dominic used as his compass. The past centuries have left way too many trails of tears and wounds. It is time to heal those wounds and to remember that we are sisters and brothers, children of the same God – seeking ways together to build a world of justice and peace.

At the final Mass of the Synod Pope Francis sadly recognized that some of the enemies of the Synod did all they could to make the Synod fail. As he said: “They despise their traditions,
erase their history, occupy their lands, and usurp their goods. How much alleged superiority, transformed into oppression and exploitation, exists even today!” he said sadly. “The mistakes of the past were not enough to stop the plundering of other persons and the inflicting of wounds on our brothers and sisters: we have seen it in the scarred face of the Amazon region,” he said.¹

Says Pope Francis, “Those who criticize (our outreach to the poor) are on the shore. They are not in the boat. The boat is the Church, headed for an ocean of love, justice, and the peace of Christ. Those who stubbornly remain on the shore,” he says, “want a ‘static Church’ where nothing changes.”

In his closing address at the end of the synod, Pope Francis noted that the Amazon synod had offered a pastoral, spiritual, cultural, and ecological diagnosis of the region. The final document takes conversion as its theme, says Pope Francis. The document describes the Amazon as ‘a wounded and deformed beauty’ at risk, due to increased mining and deforestation, which is increasing the threat of global warming. The future of the Amazon is linked to the future of our world. The ecological crisis is so deep that Cardinal Czerny went so far as to say, “If we don't change, we won't make it.” Pope Francis has urged the media to keep their eyes on the big picture, warning against ‘elites’ in the Church who obsess over one small part of the Synod message. “Because they don't have the courage to be with the world, they think they are with God,” he says.²

¹ Pope Francis leads a Mass to close a three-week synod of Amazonian bishops at the Vatican, October 27, 2019.
² 20 October, at the Catacombs of Domitilla

by Fr. Brian Pierce, O.P.
POPE’S PRAYER INTENTION FOR SEPTEMBER: RESPECT FOR THE PLANET’S RESOURCES

Pope Francis releases a video message accompanying his prayer intention for September, which this month is for respect for the planet’s resources: that we “take care of Creation responsibly”.

In his prayer intention for September 2020, Pope Francis asks everyone to pray that we learn to respect the planet’s resources.

It has become the custom of Pope Francis to release a video message detailing his prayer intention for each month.

The full text of the prayer intention is below:

We are squeezing out the planet's goods. Squeezing them out, as if the earth were an orange.

Countries and businesses from the global north have enriched themselves by exploiting the natural resources of the south, creating an “ecological debt.” Who is going to pay this debt?

In addition, this “ecological debt” is increased when multinationals do abroad what they would never be allowed to do in their own countries. It's outrageous.

*Today, not tomorrow; today, we have to take care of Creation responsibly.*

Let us pray that the planet’s resources will not be plundered, but shared in a just and respectful manner.

No to plundering; yes to sharing.

Each year, the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation is observed on September 1. The international celebration marks the beginning of the Season of Creation, which extends to 4 October, the feast of St Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of ecology.
The Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network of the Apostleship of Prayer developed "The Pope Video" initiative to assist in the worldwide dissemination of monthly intentions of the Holy Father in relation to the challenges facing humanity.

*By Vatican News*
TESTAMENT OF ST. DOMINIC

Sr. Maria de la Trinidad Li, O.P.

Andant

Con sentimiento

Tened caridad Guardad la humildad Abrázad la po-

Con sentimiento

Tened caridad Guardad la humildad Abrázad la po-

1.

breza voluntaria.

2.

Tened voluntaria.

breza voluntaria.

Tened voluntaria.
Agenda of the Master of the Order

August 7, 2020

Gerard Francisco Timoner,
Master of the Order of Preachers,
pilgrimage to the
Sanctuary Madonna del Arco
and visit to the Community of the friars.
Domenicani Province San Tommaso
Calendarium Liturgicum
Ordinis Prædicatorum
“Who’s going to pay that ecological debt?”

(Pope Francis)
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