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MO'S & Socius' letter to the Dominican Family in Iraq on the occasion of the papal visit 2021



Prot. 50/21/094 MO Message Iraq

Rome, 3 March 2021

Msgr. Youssif Thomas Mirkis, Archbishop of Kirkuk and Sulaimanya
 Msgr. Michael Najeeb, Chaldean Archbishop of Mosul and Akra
 Sr. Clara Nas, Superior General of the Sisters of St. Catherine
 Sr. Bernadette Youssef, Vice-Provincial of the Middle East of the Sisters of the Presentation
 Br. Rami Simon, Superior of the House of Epiphany in Baghdad
 Br. Najeeb Sarmad, Superior of Saint Dominic's House in Erbil
 Members of the Dominicans Fraternities in Iraq

Dear brothers and sisters in Iraq,

A few hours before the visit of our beloved Pope Francis to Iraq, we would like to reaffirm to you our commitment to pray for all the inhabitants of your country. In this Jubilee Year of the *dies natalis* of Our Father Saint Dominic, we entrust more particularly to the intercession of the founder of the Order of Preachers you who are assuming important responsibilities in Iraq, in your capacities as Archbishops and Superiors of our Dominican communities, and you, brothers, sisters and lay people of the Dominican Family in Iraq who through your witness are striving to be builders of peace for those whom you meet.

Together with the brothers in Santa Sabina, we pray that this visit will be an opportunity for fraternal encounters that can contribute to laying new foundations for reconciliation and lasting peace in your country, so scarred by violence. We pray with Pope Francis asking the Lord *“to prepare our hearts to encounter our brothers and sisters, so that we may overcome our differences rooted in political thinking, language, culture and religion. Let us ask Him to anoint our whole being with the balm of his mercy, which heals the injuries caused by mistakes, misunderstandings and disputes. And let us ask him for the grace to send us forth, in humility and meekness, along the demanding but enriching path of seeking peace”* (Fratelli Tutti, 254).

The prophet Isaiah was already rejoicing: *“How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, ‘Your God reigns!’ ”* (Is 52:7-8). May the Lord accompany our Pope, messenger of peace, good tidings and salvation during his visit. May this witness of ecclesial communion bring you lasting hope and joy! May the Lord bless you abundantly, with all his mercy and wisdom, for accompanying the people of Iraq on the path of Justice and Peace. Fraternally and in communion with you, especially during these days. ■

Br. Gerard Francisco Timoner III, O.P.
Master of the Order of Preachers

Br. Alain Arnould, O.P.
Socius of the Master of the Order

cc: Br. Nicolas Tixier, O.P., Provincial of
the Province of France

Decree granting the gift of the Plenary Indulgence on the occasion of the 800th anniversary of the Dies Natalis of Saint Dominic



MOST HOLY FATHER,
Brother Gerard Francisco Timoner III, O.P., Master General of the Order of Preachers, on the occasion of the Holy Solemnities that will be celebrated for the 800th anniversary of the birth of St. Dominic in Heaven, from 6th January 2021 to 6th January 2022, offers Your Holiness the affection of due obedience and filial veneration and asks:

I.- Plenary Indulgence under the usual conditions (Sacramental Confession, Eucharistic Communion and prayer for the intentions of the Supreme Pontiff), obtainable once per day by the truly repentant faithful, animated by charity (this indulgence may be applied to the suffrage of the souls of the faithful who are still in Purgatory):

a) each time they devoutly visit the Basilica of Santa Sabina on the Aventine Hill or the Tomb of St. Dominic in the Basilica attached to the Patriarchal Convent of Bologna, and address humble prayers to God in these places, for an appropriate period of time, for fidelity to the Christian vocation, for the gift of vocations to priestly and consecrated life, for the conversion of sinners and the growth of the Kingdom of Christ in the world, concluding with the Lord's Prayer, the Creed and the invocations to B. V. Mary, Our Lady of the Rosary ;

(b) each time in the right spirit they attend a celebration in honour of St. Dominic held in churches or oratories of the said Order, in particular on 6th January 2021 and 2022, when the Jubilee celebrations will open and close, on 24 May 2021, in memory of the Translation of St. Dominic which took place in the time of Pope Gregory IX (1233), and on 4th August 2021, the day of St. Dominic's birth in heaven.*

II. - The faculty for those Prelates invested with cardinal or episcopal dignity, during the most solemn Jubilee celebration, to give the Papal Blessing together with the Plenary Indulgence on one occasion, that can be enjoyed by the faithful, who, disposed as indicated above, devoutly receive that same Blessing. Etc.

VIII DECEMBER 2020

THE APOSTOLIC PENITENTIARY, by virtue of the faculties conferred upon it by the Sovereign Pontiff, the Holy Father Francis, graciously grants requests, recommending the observance of the ceremonial prescriptions concerning the blessing. The elderly, the sick and all those who, for grave reasons, cannot leave their homes may also obtain the Plenary Indulgence, having expressed the resolution to detach themselves from all sin and the intention to fulfil, as soon as possible, the three customary conditions, if they are spiritually united to the celebrations or pilgrimages, by offering their prayers, sufferings or the hardships of their lives to the mercy of God by the hand of Mary. In order that pastoral charity may spread more easily, in order to obtain divine forgiveness by means of the keys of the Church, this Penitentiary asks with great solicitude that the priests of the Order of Preachers offer themselves with ready and generous hearts to the celebration of the Sacrament of Penance and always administer communion to the sick. This letter is valid for the entire Jubilee Year. Notwithstanding any provision to the contrary. ■

CARD. MAURO PIACENZA
(Major Penitentiary)

KRZYSZTOF NYKIEL
(Regent)

* N.B.: THE DECREE REFERS TO THE LITURGICAL FEAST OF DIES NATALIS, CELEBRATED BY THE CITY OF

BOLOGNA ON AUGUST 4, ACCORDING TO THE LITURGICAL CALENDAR BEFORE 1969. IN THE ROMAN CALENDAR AND IN THE CURRENT CALENDAR OF THE ORDER, THE LITURGICAL FEAST OF ST. DOMINIC IS PLACED ON AUGUST 8. THE FATHER OF THE PREACHERS DIED ON AUGUST 6, 1221, THE DAY OF ST. SIXTUS, AND LATER THE FEAST OF THE TRANSFIGURATION. THE INDULGENCE IS GRANTED BY POPE FRANCIS ON THE DATES WHEN THE DIES NATALIS WILL BE CONCRETELY CELEBRATED IN 2021 (4 AUGUST IN BOLOGNA, 8 AUGUST IN THE WHOLE ORDER). ■

Meeting of the Dominican novices of Latin America and the Caribbean



Invited by the coordination team of the Interprovincial Conference of the Dominicans of Latin America and the Caribbean (CIDALC), the novitiates of the region met on February 26 at 3:30 p.m. Rome time through the virtual platform Zoom. The fraternal meeting with the novices of Mexico, Central America, Colombia, Peru, Brazil and Argentina included a reflection on formation presented by Brother Felicísimo Martínez, of the Province of Hispania. The theme was «Learning Dominican spirituality through family contagion», inspired by the reflections of Fr. Edward Schillebeeckx.

It is interesting to dwell on some of the concepts expressed by the speaker:

The most decisive part of our Dominican formation is through family or community contagion. In fact, in religious communities, it happens like in families. Each one has his identity, his charism, his lifestyle,

his habits. It is a mistake in formation and in life in general to hide behind the bad examples of one's elders to justify one's own mistakes. Family anecdotes, the sometimes repetitive and tedious stories of grandparents, the stories of the past are important. Humbert de Romanis, the fifth Master General of the Order, quickly realized this and instructed all communities to collect the anecdotes and stories of the first generations. The result was this wonderful written testimony by Gerard de Frachet, *Vitae Fratrum*, The Life of the Brothers. It is very instructive and at the same time very entertaining to read. Do not finish the novitiate without reading it.

Schillebeeckx's first conclusion: «We cannot give a definition of Dominican spirituality, a definitive judgment on it, because Dominican history is still being made and told. This conclusion is essential because it invites us to harmonize tradition and creativity, what today is called «creative fidelity». The Order is already founded, but it is necessary to always update its charism, taking into account the needs and sufferings of the Church and the world of today.

The second conclusion is formulated by Father Schillebeeckx in rather critical terms: «Dominican spirituality is a particular way of serving the Church: following Jesus in the footsteps of Dominic. But sometimes this thread of fidelity broke, because of blindness. And as a result, it was a non-Dominican spirituality that was written. He refers to those moments when the Dominican family forgets the founding project, the true tradition of the Order, the family identity. These moments have always been accompanied by a deep crisis in the Order.

The third conclusion that Father Schillebeeckx draws is that «the background music of Dominican spirituality is the history of the response to the counter-movements of society and of the Church». And he analyses some examples of Dominican history: St. Dominic was attentive to the counter-movements of the time, he drew a truth from them and incorporated it into his founding project: poverty and preaching, a feeling of belonging to the Church. To live in the style of the apostles to give credibility to Dominican preaching.

From the beginning, the «original grace» of Dominican spirituality consists in a critical fidelity to

the past and a critical evaluation of the present. Creative fidelity must always go a little against the grain, against what is politically correct in society and in the Church.

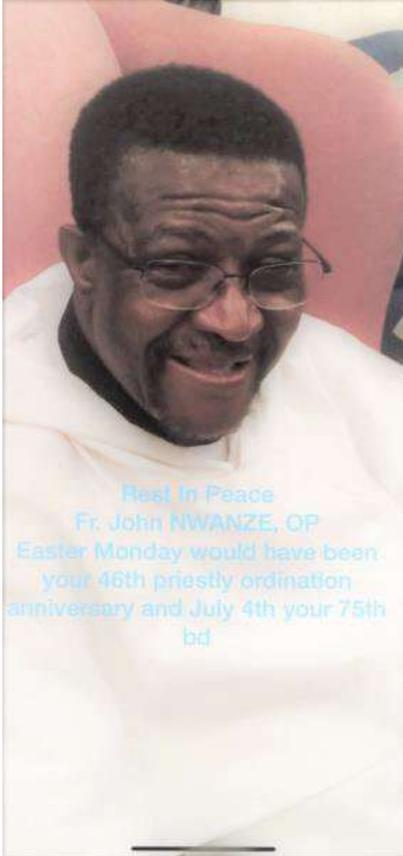
The participants in the meeting were the following and they presented their greetings to the novices: fr. Gerard Timoner, Master of the Order, fr. Mark Padrez, Socius for Fraternal Life and Formation, fr. Pablo Sicouly, Socius for Intellectual Life, fr. Ubaldo López, General Promoter for the Laity, fr. Christopher Eggleton, Socius for the USA, fr. Fernando García, General Promoter for the Nuns, fr. Carlos Cáceres, Provincial of the Province of St. Vincent Ferrer of Central America. ■

The first Nigeria Dominican Priest Returns to his Maker



Brother John Nwanze, O.P., was born in Lagos in 1946 and grew up under the tutelage of Dominicans. He was among the early altar servers the first American Dominicans that arrived Nigeria groomed in the 1950s. He started his seminary studies in St. John Vianney Seminary, Jos, in Northern Nigeria, however, the outbreak of the Nigeria-Biafra civil war forced him to move back to the Southern part of the country in 1967. As the Dominican Vicariate of Nigeria began to accept vocations to the Order in the late 1960s, he joined the Dominican Order and was received into the novitiate on February 2nd 1968. He made simple vows on Feb. 3 1969 and Solemn vows on Feb. 2 1972. Following his ordination to the priesthood on Easter Monday, 1975, he was assigned to St. Dominic, Yaba, Lagos. He left for studies in 1977 and received a Master's Degree in Communication

from the University of Windsor, Ontario, Canada, in 1981, specializing in radio, television and film production. On his return to the country in 1981, he served both the Catholic Church and some national media organizations in Nigeria.



He was transferred to Sokoto Diocese 1982; there, he founded the Catholic Communications Sokoto. He became the president of the Association of Communication Directors of the Kaduna Ecclesiastical Province. He was the producer of the radio program, "Christian Question Time" for several years. He also lectured at the Media Service Center, Kaduna. In 1989, he was reassigned to St.

Martin de Porres House, Agbor-Obi, Delta State, as parochial vicar of St. Patrick Parish.

I lived with Brother John during the first five years of my priestly life, 1989-1994. He became the pastor of St. Patrick from 1991-1995. He was a jovial, hard-working priest, always on the move. I remember one spectacular Easter Vigil experience in 1994 when he scheduled the Christian Initiation of Adults on Easter Vigil with over 530 candidates for Baptism, Confirmation and first Holy Communion. The Vigil Mass lasted 7 and half hours from 8pm to 3.30am with only the two of us officiating. At the end, we got so tired and slept very deeply that we were two hours late for the 6am Masses of Easter Sunday in the outstations. The people they sent to check on us woke us up from our deep slumber. Brother John had a special interest in the education of young women. He believed that education would emancipate them and empower them to a more productive life. Consequently, he founded and

directed the Dominican Center for Women's Education, Agbor-Obi.

In 1995, he was sent on mission to the Archdiocese of Seattle, USA. He worked at Immaculate Conception Church, Seattle. In 1996, he was transferred to St. John Bosco Church in Tacoma where he organized the African-Americans of his parish to form the Catholic Community Gospel Choir. In 1997, he was transferred to the SE cluster of parishes, Saints Edward, George and Paul as parochial vicar. There he started the Charismatic Prayer Group. In 1999, he was again transferred to the SE Tacoma Cluster of parishes, St Ann, Sacred Heart and St. John of the Woods as parochial vicar where he developed an interest in Hispanic ministry.

Towards the last few years of his life, he served the Church in Anchorage, Alaska, he was Chaplain to some Nigerian religious sisters while helping out in some parishes. As his sickness intensified, the Nigerian Vicar Provincial and another brother visited and anointed him. They stayed with him for some days. On March 15, 2021, three days after their departure, he slept in the Lord.

May the soul of Brother John Nwanze and the souls of all the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace. ■

Br. Charles UKWE, O.P.

Online meeting of the International Commission of Nuns



The International Commission of Nuns, which now gathers 18 representatives of the different Federations of Monasteries of Dominican Nuns, was convoked by the Promoter General, Brother Fernando García, O.P., on February 18, 2021. The Covid-19 pandemic led to the cancellation of last year's assembly. This year, however, the meeting was conducted via the online platform with nuns participating from four continents, namely, Africa, America, Asia and Europe.

Following the opening prayer led by Br. Orlando Rueda, O.P., who was also translating for the meeting, the Master of the Order, Br. Gerard Francisco Timoner, O.P., greeted the participants with words of thanks and encouragement for the life of the nuns. He underlined how important they are for the Order. The Procurator General, Br. Benjamin Earl, then explained that work on the revision of the Constitutions of the Nuns has already begun through an *ad hoc* Commission, which would carry out the update based on the documents *Vultum Dei quaerere* and *Cor Orans*.

The Presidents responded by giving their opinion on what they expected from the Commission. Likewise, all the sisters, including those of the sub-commissions "*Monialibus*", "*Spem Miram*" and "Justice and Peace", did the same. The Master of the Order took the floor again before concluding by thanking and asking for information on the statistics of the Order. He thanked God for the success of the meeting which represented a good start for the work

of the Commission. Another meeting would be convened soon. ■

In the prison of Ittre (Belgium) a Dominican fraternity lives and preaches



"One of the characteristics of Dominican spirituality is to work with people who, in one way or another, live on the peripheries of society, whether they be students or prisoners", explains Ludovic Namurois who is in charge of the Dominican lay fraternities in Belgium. "Without much planning or goals, we simply get on with things. It is about being available for pastoral needs. When one challenge presents itself, then we see how to resolve it."

That's exactly what happened at the prison of Ittre, south of Brussels, where the Dominican friar Patrick Gillard (Convent of Louvain-la-Neuve) was working as chaplain. The weekly Eucharists were well attended and there was a flourishing prayer group. It emerged that prisoners found much strength in their praying. Some prisoners expressed the desire to deepen their prayer and to know more about Dominican spirituality. Albert Rondelet, one of the lay members of the chaplaincy team expressed something similar and wanted to join a Dominican lay fraternity.

Ludovic Namurois continues his story. "One day, when I was visiting the prisoners, I was impressed by the quality of their prayer life, as well as by their longing to be connected with others, within and

outside the prison walls, and with something which transcends their daily life. At the same time, Bruno Cadoré, the then Master of the Order of Preachers, suggested to erect a lay fraternity at the prison of Iltre, following the example of then only Dominican lay fraternity in a prison environment, in Norfolk (US). Under the protection of Our Lady, and with the consent of Philippe Cochinaux, provincial of Belgium, a small fraternal group was set up within the prison walls of Iltre. In a first phase, we offered the participants a Christian initiation course and taught them elements of the Dominican tradition. They learned to pray vespers and were in contact with the lay fraternity in Norfolk. In October 2018, ten prisoners and the lay chaplain made their first commitment. Each year they are invited to renew their promise. Since then, some have committed themselves for life. In October 2019, the Belgian provincial erected the fraternity, which became the second Dominican lay fraternity in a prison environment in the world.”

Ludovic Namurois further shares: “The prisoners who we accompany have the impression that, just as cloistered monks or nuns, they can contribute through their prayers to offer a real support to others, to the Order of Preachers and to the world within or outside the prison. To pray is to preach. They experience that their prayers can weigh on life. This is very important for them.”

Brother Patrick confirms that “to be part of the lay fraternity makes clear to them that, even after grave acts, there is still a way to search for God. They are no longer dependent on each other for everything but they take care of their own religious formation and can preach in the prison. While they were deprived of rights and excluded from society, they had a voice in the 2019 provincial chapter of the lay fraternities. This helped them to regain a sense of responsibility. They felt recognized in their human dignity.”

“During the meetings of our lay fraternities, we study the Bible and we prepare prayers for all the prisoners, such as the stations of the cross or the rosary. It is our way of preaching”, says Steven, one of the detainees who is a member of the fraternity. “We are at the beginning of our journey but we believe in it and we pray in union with all the Dominican fraternities worldwide. There may be

iron bars in front of our windows, but our hearts are wide open.”■

The table of “St Dominic at table with his brethren” in the Church of Santa Maria della Mascarella in Bologna



The table kept in the Church of Santa Maria della Mascarella in Bologna is an invaluable testimony of the history of the Order of Preachers. This is the first depiction of St Dominic ever painted, or at least the oldest that has come down to us. Dominic is shown with a halo, facing the viewer, seated at a lavishly laden table with 48 brethren.

This extraordinary iconographic value is accompanied by another, of a cultural nature: according to a 15th-century Bolognese tradition, the table in question is to be identified with the refectory table at which St Dominic sat and multiplied loaves of bread for his brethren.

The miracle of the loaves was recalled by Br Rudolph of Faenza at the Process of Canonisation in Bologna (1233): “Item, he said that whenever the house ran short of bread, wine or any item of food, the witness used to go to Dominic and say: ‘We have no bread – or wine.’ He would answer: ‘Go and pray, for the Lord will provide.’ So the witness would go to the church to pray, often followed by Brother Dominic. God heard them, for they always had enough to eat. Sometimes, at Dominic's command, the witness took the little bit of bread they still had and put it on the tables, and the Lord supplied the lack”, and in the hagiographies of Dominic.

According to the most popular version, two friars were sent out to beg, but they came back to the convent without having collected anything. So St Dominic prayed to the Lord, and two angels appeared in the refectory, carrying two cloths loaded with bread: this is recalled by Constantine of Orvieto, Humbert of Romans, Jacopo and Blessed Cecilia.

Thus the Mascarella Table can be considered a relic of contact, touched by the body of the saint and by the miraculous bread brought by the angels.

Iconography and physical history

On the basis of style, the Mascarella Table can be dated between the fourth and fifth decade of the 13th century. It may have been painted after St Dominic's canonisation (1234) as a form of tribute to the saint, who died in Bologna in 1221.

A somewhat troubled physical history has caused the loss of the original appearance of the work, but this can be reconstructed. It was originally extraordinarily long, at 5.76 metres. Its height, in contrast, has remained almost unchanged, and is about 44 centimetres. Moreover, there was once an inscription, now lost, along the lower edge of the wood. Lastly, there must have been forty-eight friars originally shown together with St Dominic, but today there are only forty.

The painting shows St Dominic and his brethren at a table richly laden with loaves and various objects such as plates, knives, pitchers and wine glasses. A series of abundantly decorated arches and columns frames the friars in groups of two, with the exception of St Dominic, who alone occupies the space shared by a pair of friars. St Dominic does not emerge forcefully among the other friars: his figure is differentiated only thanks to the greater dimensions, the central position and the halo.

In this oldest portrayal we have of St Dominic, he is shown as one character in a narrative scene, not as an isolated iconic figure. The fact is that the Mascarella Table seems to celebrate the Order of Preachers as a whole, rather than its founder. In this sense, Dominican iconography is clearly distinguished from its Franciscan equivalent, which is designed to exalt Francis as an extraordinary

individual. In contrast, Dominic is often portrayed among the other friars, as a *primus inter pares*.

In 1332, the Mascarella church was to some degree refurbished, and on this occasion the Table was re-painted. The 13th-century painting was covered and in consequence forgotten, while a new image was painted on the reverse of the wood, which had till then been left unadorned. The 13th-century image shows a general, convivial scene, whereas the 14th-century image portrays the miracle of the loaves narrated by the hagiographical sources.

St Dominic is sitting at table surrounded by twelve friars, while two angels bring the loaves. This iconography recalls the pictures of the Last Supper, where the twelve apostles are shown at table with Christ. In this way, the Dominican community of the origins is associated to the apostolic community, and St Dominic is likened to Christ. The original image merely suggested this parallelism, presenting, with Dominic, forty-eight friars (a multiple of twelve).

The 14th-century re-painting answered a demand for updating in not only iconographic but also stylistic terms. The linear, fluid forms of the new representation are in contrast with the monumental nature and the seriality of the 13th-century original. In its new version, the work came closer to the taste of 14th-century Bologna, which had been formed on the fashions of contemporary Gothic art.

The history of the table as a sacred object

The first occasion on which the table is identified with that of the miracle of the loaves is to be found in the *Cronaca* (report) by Jerome Albertucci de' Borselli, prior of the Bologna Dominican community (1497). On 14 November of that year, the Bolognese friars attempted to steal the Mascarella relic and take it back to their own premises. Fileno della Tuata, the Bolognese chronicler who lived at the time of this episode, writes of a dispute between the friars and the parishioners of the Mascarella, who retrieved the table and carried it back to their church in procession.

The attempted theft, paradoxically, confirms that the table was considered a relic. Later Bolognese sources vouch for its religious value, giving rise to a solid local tradition. It may be that the friars of the

local convent of San Domenico were moved by a desire for centralisation: the Mascarella Table was the only Bolognese relic of St Dominic not to be kept in their basilica, where the saint's body lay.

The Basilica of San Domenico and the church of the Mascarella are the two main points of local Dominican geography. At the beginning of 1218 the original Bolognese Dominican community had been established in Mascarella, but in Spring 1219 they moved to the convent of San Domenico, then known as San Nicolò delle Vigne. The Church of the Mascarella is a commemorative location linked to the Bolognese history of the Order, while the Basilica is a holy place in that it holds the bodily relics of Dominic.

It is only in the Bolognese sources that the miracle of the loaves is situated in the Church of the Mascarella, in the firm belief that this table was the one on which the miracle took place. In order to overcome the contradiction with the hagiographies, some local sources distinguish between two miracles that occurred in Bologna: they say that in Mascarella the angels brought loaves, whereas in San Domenico they brought bread and figs. Vincenzo Spisanelli's predella in the Choir of the Basilica of San Domenico bears witness to this belief with a single iconographic image: the painter shows the miracle that occurred at San Domenico showing four angels, one of whom is carrying a basket of figs.

Prior to the attempted theft, that table hung in the church from a beam, as Leandro Alberti testifies in his 1541 *Historiae* of Bologna. Later, it was laid against the wall in a chapel dedicated to Our Lady and to St Dominic, placed on the right in the presbytery and protected by a grating.

In 1823 the table was moved to the second chapel on the right, dedicated to the Assumption of Mary. On that occasion, it was sawn into three parts of equal size folded on one another, the intention being to divide off the 14th-century painting of the miracle of the loaves. This resulted in the tripartition of the 13th-century convivial scene, painted on the opposite side and at that time hidden from sight.

On 19 December 1881 the table was temporarily transferred to the room which housed the Confraternity of the Most Holy sacrament in

Mascarella. In 1912, the table was moved to the chapel of St Dominic, built to the left of the main altar. In 1923 the two surfaces with their paintings were permanently separated: the tripartite 14th-century painting was transferred to canvas, while the 13th-century image remained on the original wooden surface.

The Table today and its possible theological meaning

Because of its status between work of art and sacred object, the physical history of the Mascarella table proves to be particularly complex. The 14th-century painting is in the third chapel on the left in Mascarella: on the wall hang the three canvases that resulted from the subdivision of 1823 and its transfer on to canvas in 1923.

The 13th-century painting has been reduced to six pieces. Two of the three parts that resulted from the 1823 operation are kept with the three canvases in Mascarella, one above the other as altar frontal. This, in the original state of the work, was the central part, in which St Dominic is depicted, and the part to the observer's right.

The left-hand part is divided in four. The first, showing five friars, hangs in Mascarella with the other three canvases. The second, which bears no image but originally was painted with eight friars, has been in San Domenico since 1931, in the cell of the Master Moneta. The third, with two friars, has been held since 1961 by the Museum of the Basilica of Santa Sabina in Rome. One last fragment, bearing the image of a single friar, has been lost.

As stated earlier, The Table shows, in the centre, St Dominic with his halo, with on either side a series of niches with pairs of friars preachers, all sitting at the table, overflowing with loaves. As they are portrayed by the anonymous artist, the friars seem to come from all over Europe: perhaps the painter had seen them on the occasion of a General Chapter (at that time the General Chapters were held alternately in Bologna and Paris). The meaning of the painting may have been inspired by the Prologue to Pietro Ferrandi's *Legenda*, inspired in its turn by the Bull of Dominic's canonisation, *Fons Sapientiae* (1234, Rieti):

“Once God, in various places and in many ways inviting his chosen ones to an eternal banquet, in the last days, or at the eleventh hour, sent his servant to tell the invited ones to come, for everything now was ready. In St Gregory the Great’s interpretation, this servant is an Order of preachers, who must be sent, in the last times, to warn the souls of men of the imminent arrival of the Judge. Scripture in fact preannounced that there would be a new Order of preachers, and clearly expressed that [this Order] must be sent at the end of the world, saying: ‘He sent his servant at the time of the banquet’. The time of the banquet is the end of the world, that is, in the last days. [...] These are the Preachers: divine Providence foresaw their Order for the perils of these last times, so that, while judgment is approaching for the one to whom, in humiliation, judgment has been denied, the number of witnesses may increase.”

This, then, is the oldest image of what, at the time of St Dominic’s canonisation, may have been his own understanding of their mission within the Church on the part of the Order of Preachers. ■

The birth of "Selvas Amazónicas", the Dominican magazine of missionary reflection.



- The missionary outlook of the Dominicans towards the most vulnerable

- First issue of the publication on indigenous peoples.
- A well-designed presentation for this new publication of missionary reflection.

Madrid, 4 March 2021. Selvas Amazónicas - Misioneros Dominicanos is launching a new magazine format to show and analyse the reality that is lived in the different places where Dominicans are present among the poorest and most vulnerable..

The publication, which will have a print run of three issues per year, will release its first issue in March. With a careful layout, it aims to offer readers a better knowledge of the social and cultural reality of indigenous peoples and other deprived human groups.

Thanks to its formative character and the Order of Preachers' great anthropological experience in the field, the magazine is particularly interested in defending the dignity and rights of the most disadvantaged in the reality of life in the missions. It thus contributes to the construction of a more solidary, committed and fraternal citizenship, sowing the seeds of dignity. The publication therefore aims to bring the reader closer to the cultural worlds of other continents where a large number of missionaries, religious and lay, are present: Uruguay, Paraguay, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Equatorial Guinea, etc.

First issue: Indigenous Peoples

Each issue will have a monographic theme. The first issue of Selvas Amazónicas is dedicated to indigenous peoples. It includes in-depth articles, drawn from the experience of accompanying these peoples in different places, especially in the Amazonian forest. It includes the testimony of a Guatemalan Dominican woman from the Mayan Quiché people, an interview with the Peruvian indigenous leader Jovita Vásquez, a reflection on the cosmovision of the indigenous people of Paraguay and the rationale behind one of the projects carried out by Selvas Amazónicas.

Fr. Francisco Faragó, OP, director of the magazine, explained that "the new publication replaces the bimonthly bulletin, whose objective was to give an account of the reality of the Dominican missions and

their projects in a brief and informal way. This project, which is more in-depth, intends to show, in the words of Pope Francis, "a Church that serves, that goes out of its homes, that goes out of its temples, that goes out of its sacristies, to accompany life, to support hope, to be a sign of unity [...] to build bridges, to break down walls, to sow reconciliation". Fratelli tutti n° 276/ *Homily, Minor Basilica of the Shrine "Virgen de la Caridad del Cobre", Santiago de Cuba, Tuesday, 22 September 2015.*

The magazine will be free for all members of the Dominican missionary entity, who will receive the paper edition in the next few days. At the same time, on the occasion of the new launch, Selvas Amazónicas is offering free of charge to anyone interested the possibility of receiving the digital version of the first issue of Pueblos Originarios through its web page.

Selvas Amazónicas - Misioneros Dominicos is entirely financed by its collaborators. To help the Dominican missionaries by becoming a member or by subscribing to the new magazine, you can contact the central office of Selvas Amazónicas in Madrid. The price of the annual subscription, which includes three issues, is 15 euros for shipments within Spain and 18 euros for international shipments.■

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Péric

The Profound Simplicity of Brothers



In the Acts of the General Chapter of Florence in the year 1321 we read the following words: « Because it was said to the first preachers: "do not let yourselves be called *rabbi*, for one is your Master and you are all brothers," we strictly forbid, that a brother of our Order who is a Master in Theology, when called by another brother by his proper name, be called "Master" without saying "brother," so that one says "Master Peter" or "Master John," and so for others; such a denomination is vain, it is the way used by seculars in their world. But one must call himself "brother" so that one says "Brother John" or "Brother Peter," as other brothers are called. Moreover, all Masters in Theology, bachelors or lectors, whenever they are spoken of in an official document, let them never be named with the titles of dignity, but in the same way as one speaks of simple brothers. » (*Monumenta Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum Historica*, vol. 4, p. 132).

Again, this is in the year 1321 when the Order already had many Masters in Sacred Theology promoted to the University of Paris, even more bachelor's students, and hundreds of lectors in individual convents. Obviously, the Order had to face the problem that some members of the intellectual elite of the Order were too aware of what they were to lack humility. Perhaps the friars at the General Chapter realized that, 100 years after the death of St. Dominic, many friars were no longer following the ideal of a humble friar exemplified by the Founder.

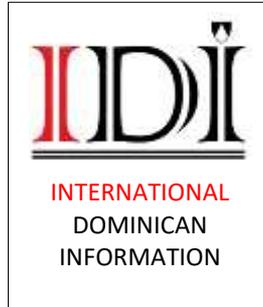
In Matthew 23:1-12, the theme of humility is addressed. Jesus clearly disapproves when

someone exalts himself above others and believes that others are there first and foremost to serve him and to satisfy his desires. But that's not all. In the context of the entire passage, we see that a lack of humility undermines a person's role and mission. The mandate of the Saducees and Pharisees was to teach, that is, to be teachers of the people. The problem, however, was that they used their particular position for their own profit. And then I would say that they were convinced that they were fulfilling their role by talking a lot, demanding a lot from others, and if others did something wrong, that they would simply pillory them for it. That was their idea of how to preserve order and fulfill God's law. However, this did not match Jesus' concept: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat; therefore, do whatever they teach you and follow it; but do not do as they do, for they do not practice what they teach." He, the ultimate teacher of the law, fulfilled his role in a very different way. He taught with words. But not only that, he also did a lot for the people who came to him, things that I would say were the practical lessons. Nevertheless, his *lectio magistralis* was the one on Calvary. As St. Augustine said in his commentary on the Gospel of John (Homily 119): "The wood of the cross to which the limbs of the dying man were confined became the chair of the teacher who teaches." St.

Augustine's expression was also later referred to by St. Thomas Aquinas in his own commentary on John (c. 19, 4), also in the Summa Theologica (STh III, q. 46, a. 4). Master Jesus who in the greatest humility teaches the way of charity.

Jesus' words denouncing the scribes and the Pharisees in Mt 23:1-12 were spoken in Jerusalem, a few days before his death. It seems that he was preparing his disciples to understand well this *lectio magistralis*. It is likewise an invitation to entrust ourselves to the Master *par excellence*. On the cross he gave up the privileges of his office of teaching, but not the mission to teach. This is why he is so credible. This is why it is worth paying attention to him, our Lord, our Master, who has become our brother. ■

By Brother Viliam Štefan Dóci, O.P.



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