

Pillar of Preaching

An Explanation of Expected Outcomes

GOAL: Commitment to Preaching According to the State of the Laity

The preaching of the "Good News" is the fundamental mandate of all the disciples of Christ: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations." (Matt. 28:19)

Imitating the Lord Himself is a Spirit-led and a Spirit-driven mission. Christ applied to Himself the words of Isaiah: "*The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because He has anointed Me to bring glad tidings to the poor...* Today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing." (Luke 4:18-22)

As a preacher/evangelizer, Christ first proclaims: "Seek first the kingdom (of God)." (Matt: 6:33) This is so important that by comparison all else "will be given you besides." (Matt: 6:33) The centerpiece of this proclamation is salvation. Salvation is the freedom from the chains of sin and death and the gift of seeing and knowing God: living the new life in the kingdom. This kingdom and salvation, which are the center of the preaching of Jesus, are available to all through grace and mercy. These are obtained through that internal renewal, that radical change of heart and mind that is metanoia -- conversion.

St. Dominic founded an Order of Preachers whose evangelical spirituality promotes, fosters and supports the Dominican charism of preaching with a life of intense prayer and study and a community of charity. For over 800 years the Dominican Order has proclaimed the Gospel to all people, cultures and ages.

To be effective preachers of the Word of God we must prepare and constantly make use of the grace of preaching, which is given to us by the Spirit through our commitment to prayer and meditation, study and community. The call to preach is a call to holiness, to contemplation, to sharing the fruits of our contemplation, to deepening our spirits, and to living the Beatitudes.

The goal of the Pillar of Preaching in the first year formation program is to develop an understanding and experience of what preaching means for the Lay Dominican.

Specifically, at the conclusion of their first year of formation Inquirers should be able to demonstrate the following outcomes or competencies relative to preaching:

1. Knowledge of the role of the Lay Dominican in the Dominican mission of evangelization
2. Demonstration of an understanding of preaching in daily life.

Competency: Knowledge of the Role of the Lay Dominican in the Dominican Mission of Evangelization

History and Purpose

Simon Tugwell, OP states, "...through St. Dominic and his companions, we are invited to contemplate, from a particular point of view, the example of our Lord ... who went about tirelessly proclaiming the gospel of the Kingdom of God."

The Dominican Order was born in the 13th century, a time not unlike our own, one of change and evolution towards new social, economic and cultural order. The beginning of the new century saw the culmination of a process of change already set in motion in the previous centuries. The old feudal system was collapsing as economic changes drew people to the cities. An emerging class of merchants sought new products, such as spices and silk, which were introduced to Western Europe by the crusaders returning from the Holy Land and the wars in Spain. Contact with the Arabs led to the rediscovery of new sources of learning: Aristotle, mathematics, Greek science and philosophy, as well as many of the Greek fathers of the Church. This is the era of the decline of the cathedral and monastic schools and the birth of the future universities of Paris, Oxford, Naples and Padua.

In the life of the Church there were new needs. First, was the need to find ways to confront the spirit of the times with a renewal of the world in which she accomplishes her mission. Second, as is often the case in times of radical changes in socio-economic and cultural structures, there was a need to maintain basic values while meeting new challenges. Third, there was the need to preach to those whose Faith was contaminated. Fourth, there was the need to evangelize heretics to provide proper education for the clergy. Fifth, given their cloistered life, the religious orders of the time were also limited in influence. Sixth, lay groups were developing that desired a return to the Gospel spirituality of apostolic times.

It was the genius of St. Dominic to see a solution to the problems of these times.

Dominic conceived of an order of itinerant preachers who would be able to reach the furthest ends of Europe and beyond. He recognized the fundamental importance of preaching the Gospel by those learned in doctrine, rooted in liturgical and private prayer, and living a personal life of poverty and holiness.

Dominic gave the Church an Order of Preachers which consists of friars, nuns, sisters and laity. They share in the mission of preaching and teaching sacred truth.

Learning Activities

1. Ask Inquirers to read and to write in their journals their reflections on one of the following:
 - A. *The Lay Members of Christ's Faithful People: Apostolic Exhortation of John Paul 11*
-- specifically one of these three:
 - ◆ Introduction and Chapter One: I Am The Vine and You Are the Branches: The Dignity of the Lay Faithful in the Church as Mystery
 - ◆ Chapter Two: All Branches of a Single Vine: The Participation of Lay Faithful in the Church as Communion
 - ◆ Chapter Three: I Have Appointed You To Go Forth And Bear Fruit: Co-responsibility of Lay Faithful in the Church as Mission
 - B. *Mission of the Redeemer: The Encyclical Letter of John Paul 11*
-- specifically:
 - ◆ Chapter Three: The Holy Spirit: Principal Agent of Mission
 - ◆ Chapter Six: Leaders and Workers in the Missionary Apostolate, Sec. 71 and 72:
All the Laity Are Missionaries by Baptism
 - ◆ Chapter Eight: Missionary Spirituality
2. Ask Inquirers to read and to write in their journals their reflections on the *Bologna Document of 1983*.

Evaluation/Assessment Activities

1. Ask inquirers to discuss insights or impressions from their readings.
2. Ask inquirers to write a reflection paper on one of the following:
 - A. Preaching the Gospel
 - B. How the other three Dominican pillars -- prayer, study and community -- support and prepare them for preaching
 - C. The essential elements of evangelization, giving concrete examples from their own experience or that of the others they know.

3. Ask inquirers to share their experience of teaching/preaching/evangelization.

Competency: Demonstration of an Understanding of Preaching in Daily Life

Sometimes preaching is too narrowly understood by the Laity. Although proclamation of the spoken word is very necessary, equally as necessary is the witness of an authentic Christian life. It is primarily by one's conduct and life in relation to God and neighbor that we preach.

The Dominican Order has, in its long history, consistently produced saints in all its branches who have led not only lives of radiant sanctity but also have drawn others to seek to imitate them. Their witness of life has been their foremost testimony of God's grace and mercy.

We can and should preach at every opportunity, wherever we are and in whatever we are doing. At home we can evangelize in all we do for others, by attending church together regularly, and by loving, supporting, trusting and forgiving each other. At work, in the office, or the classroom, in the field or on the assembly line, we can spread the Gospel by the loving way we relate to others. Even at leisure many opportunities present themselves -- visits to neighbors, social ministries, hospital visits, helping to feed the poor, etc.

Learning Activities

Ask inquirers to read and reflect on one of the following in their journals:

1. *On Evangelization in the Modern World: The Apostolic Exhortation of Paul VI*
2. *The Mission of the Redeemer: The Encyclical Letter of John Paul II*
3. Review the lives of at least one of the following Dominican Exemplars of commitment to prayerful preaching:

St. Dominic Guzman, OP St. Antonius, OP

Bl. Margaret di Castello, OPL

St. Vincent Ferrer, OP (Missions to Jews and Muslims)

Eric Gill, OPL

Thomas Cardinal Howard, OP

Henry Dominic Lacordaire, OP (Preacher of Notre Dame Paris, Founder of Dominicans in France 1835)

Fr. Vincent McNabb, OP
Jerome Savonarola, OP, 1452-1498
Bishop Fulton Sheen, OPL
St. Catherine of Siena, OPL, 1347-1480

Evaluation/Assessment Activities

1. Based on their journals, ask inquirers to discuss insights or impressions from their reading.
2. Ask inquirers to write a reflection paper on the life of one of the Dominican Exemplars.
3. Ask inquirers to share their experience of preaching/teaching/evangelization.

PILLAR OF PREACHING - BIBLIOGRAPHY

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The Lay Members of Christ's Faithful People: Apostolic Exhortation of John Paul II, Chapters 1, 2 and 3 (Boston, MA: St. Paul Books and Media)

The Mission of the Redeemer, The Encyclical Letter of John Paul II, Chapters 3, 6 and 7 (Boston, MA: St. Paul Books and Media)

Bologna Document 1983

2. Demonstration of an Understanding of Preaching

On Evangelization in the Modern World: The Apostolic Exhortation of Paul VI (Boston, MA: St. Paul Books and Media)

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