God's love is meant for all. It's as simple as that. The truth is that it's not always easy to share this message in a way that everyone really gets it. Imagination helps. More importantly, if the message of the preacher is to reflect the Truth of the Word it helps to be grounded in contemplative prayer and study. Why? The more a preacher learns about God, the easier it is to see the connections, to focus on keeping words and actions and values clear, and to communicate the great gift of God's love! God is faithful in promising to be present – always. So, people need to be faithful in trusting that promise – always.

When Dominic founded the Order of Preachers in the 13th century he had one primary goal in mind: a way of preaching that would be effective enough to make a real difference in the souls of others. His desire was to help people hear God's word wherever they were, and within the context of their own reality. To make this happen he believed that devotion to prayer and study was the necessary preparation. Why? Dominic believed that this was the only way to insure that the words of a preacher would reflect the Truth of God's Word. Dominic's approach and his commitment to truth stood out at a time that was a lot like our own. There are lots of persuasive religious teachers and movements capturing the attention of people who are eager to believe and to belong. Too often they also present them with distorted interpretations of the gospel, and offer them short cuts and guarantees.

Where do you experience the preaching of God's love? Okay, sometimes in church. What about other places that are just as sacred? Conversations and relationships are the stuff of everyday life. They're also where more words are spoken each week than from any pulpit, and where people stand up for what they believe, promise to be there for one another, mourn losses and celebrate joys. It's probably true that this is how most people hear the gospel. They listen to the words and
observe the deeds of believers who have taken the gospel to heart and show in their lives that they are following the way.

Today humanity is literally bombarded with words and images 24/7. Music, video, art, advertising, tattoos, symbols, labels, political slogans; access the internet and it's truly never ending. Even if we don't listen carefully or seem to be paying attention, these things make an impression. And when we do pay attention the messages are definitely confusing!

It's obvious that the 21st century is different from the 13th century that Dominic lived in. At the same time it's also amazingly similar. How? Because most of the people who long for the message of good news that the gospel teaches never make it to a church to hear preaching! And sometimes, the people who do make it there on Sundays hear words that don't sound like they promise justice and mercy and love. Preachers have to find ways to make this message known. This is the task facing every preacher today: to create ways for people to encounter the gospel message wherever they are, so that it can support them in living with personal and social integrity.

Energy and imagination give the preaching mission new and creative forms in every generation. This is what gives it the power to speak to the hearts of hearers, and when that happens the heart of the preacher gets new life as well. Artists have often been great preachers, touching hearts and opening minds and inspiring consciences. Using language, color, texture, music, sound and movement, artists can create and artists can reveal, helping others to see, and evoking insight, conversion and faith. The power of technology can magnify and fuel the energy, taking it to new heights. Staying faithful to the truth of the gospel is what makes it trustworthy.

Preaching is a gift. In simplicity it tells the story and shares the memory, the presence and grace of God, the Living Word and Life-giving Spirit. At its best, it is also a sign of God's peace. Peace is God's desire for all of creation. The rhythm in the practice of preaching begins in simplicity and ends in grace. First the preacher breathes in the Word of God, and then, like breathing out, offers the truth of God's justice and love. Not just in words; in deeds and relationships, too, whether with individuals we know or others we may not know but who share life with us on planet Earth.

Nations and peoples co-exist today in uneasy and fragile alliances. That's not new; they always have. What is new is the awareness of these global relationships. In almost unbelievably rapid ways information, movements, money, fads and power get passed around the planet with an instant and amazing and, sometimes, destructive impact on the lives of nations and peoples. In almost no time, small economies can be devastated, morale depleted, freedom threatened and vast numbers of people suffocated by poverty and despair. At the same time a privileged few are able to prosper.

The gospel is clear in pointing to this as a violation of human dignity, and in truth and love preachers are required to name it so. The courage to be this honest and direct helps people feel empowered to resist injustice and to act by engaging their voices in the dialogue about justice in the world.

The future of the preaching mission is beyond present comprehension. It may even be beyond anyone's wildest imagination! Is there a medium that works for you? Art? Graffiti? Drama? Poetry?
Music? Whether it's simple or complex, emotional or inspiring, if it challenges others to a deeper awareness, it's got the potential to be a powerful form of preaching.

That's why the spirit of Dominic urges the use of imagination. Every talent, skill and voice is needed for the preaching mission, to bring the truth of the gospel to meet people wherever they are.

Youth and Young Adults

**At The Heart of Dominic’s Charism**

- Community Helps us Pay Attention
- Prayer Is About Staying Connected
- Study...Who Knows Where It Can Lead?
- Preaching Takes Imagination, Simplicity and Grace
- Catholic and Dominican Means Bringing the Gospel to Life

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