The power of God’s promise is compelling: “My Spirit is upon you” (Is 59). To interpret this “breath of God’s spirit living among people” the biblical tradition records a history of words given and words received. It tells the story of what it means to be called and sent by a God who is faithful and who has the power to remember. Disciples are called by the word of truth and love, and sent into the unknown to proclaim the presence of God in all of creation.

Today Jesus’ disciples may readily identify with the familiar scene in the gospel tradition that describes the despairing and fearful followers locked in the upper room. The challenge is to claim as well the power of another equally familiar story: meeting the Risen One and being sent on mission.

Pelican Nebula
Catherine of Siena, Prayers, 20
Stories. They create a direction for how life will be lived in the future. Once a story is noticed and named, perhaps for its learning, perhaps healing, it becomes deeply motivating. Frequent retelling makes it part of the living memory for a person or a culture or a spiritual tradition. This is one way to honor the lives of heroes and mentors who were called and sent. They are a source of inspiration when life’s difficulties seem unbearable.

Dominic was called to seek truth. His Order of Preachers responded to this same call, not for the purpose of attaining status or possessing certainty. Rather, the integrity of being immersed in a spiritual and intellectual tradition of prayer and contemplative study was valued as a necessary preparation for being in the world as a compassionate presence. For nearly 800 years this has meant being grounded in what is at the heart of a Dominican vocation: a desire to preach God’s word and to grow in understanding of it through being attentive to the mysteries of life among God’s people.

For Catholics the rosary is a devotional prayer ritual that keeps alive the memory of events in the life of Jesus the Christ, his mother, Mary, and our lives as well. Remembering the story of Mary leads directly into the mystery of the Incarnation, the true lumen gentium.

Reflecting on the mysteries of life, a beloved practice that provided familiarity and a deeply spiritual understanding of faith, diminished in practice during the latter part of the 20th century. At the same time, there was a new focus on the intellectual and spiritual study of the bible and theology, as well as on formation for active involvement in lay ecclesial ministries.

There is paradox in this “sign of the times.” Even when Catholics are highly educated, professionally literate, and theologically knowledgeable, there is value in a common practice that helps to interpret, understand, and pass on a living faith.

In the 21st century some are re-discovering the practice of praying the rosary in the traditional form. As interfaith conversations become more common there is awareness regarding the use of prayer beads in other religious traditions. A contemporary form of this devotional practice of remembering even incorporates meditations on the mysteries of Earth.

This year the United Nations reports a milestone in human development, similar in magnitude, some believe, to what the world experienced as a result of the agricultural era and, later, the Industrial Revolution. For the first time in human history, more people will live in vast urban centers rather than remote rural settings. What Dominic experienced as the urbanization of Europe in the 13th century is now the urbanization of Earth’s human population.

Obedience demands paying attention to each of these “signs of the times”—loss of culture, identity, and home. Obedience to truth and love makes it both impossible to ignore the implications of these losses and also necessary to respond to them with boldness, confidence, creativity, and hope.

The urgency to act is even greater than it was 40 years ago when Pope Paul VI wrote about development in his encyclical Populorum Progressio. The explosion of information and the technology that broadcasts it reveals the growing economic disparity among nations and further shows how people in the Majority World react when they become aware of privilege in rich nations. The truth of the Gospel can never justify exploitation, the loss of liberty, or the denial of dignity.

God who is faithful also has the power to remember. Both rich and poor are called by the word of truth and love and sent into the unknown to proclaim the promise of God’s love.

**The Preaching Mission Continues**

“... in many ways, we are just like them. Their story is our story. We too are locked in our own little rooms; we too have our fears, which imprison us. The risen Christ also comes to us to open the doors and send us on the way. We too will discover who we are as a Dominican Family, and what is our mission, not by gazing at ourselves, but in meeting the risen Lord. He also says to us: ‘Peace be with you,’ and sends us to preach forgiveness and reconciliation.” Timothy Radcliffe, OP (To Praise, To Bless, To Preach: The Mission of the Dominican Family and To Praise, To Bless, To Preach: Words of Grace and Truth, Dominican Publications, 2004, p. 490).
"The mission to today's world no longer accepts the repetition of structures and discussions and passive obedience. We are challenged as Dominican women to a theological reflection that springs from the same reality as our pueblos, from the questions that come from the communities in which we are integrated and from the opportunities that we might have to capture the thirst of the women and men who surround us. In search of more just and more equitable relationships, we must first break down, then build up, many dimensions of Christian thought and practices." **Gabriela Zengarini, OP** ([Argentina] Building Bridges: Dominicans Doing Theology Together, Dominican Publications, 2005).

"We encounter the risen Christ, so the Gospels tell us, in two ways, in two great signs, each a sign both of the world and of the love of God: the poor and the sacraments. The poor are primarily a sign of the sin of the world . . . The Church and its sacraments, is how we celebrate the coming of the Kingdom of love which contrasts with our world, and into which our world is being transformed." **Herbert McCabe, OP** (God Matter, Templegate, 1987).

"The mission of Dominic is a mission of compassion. This Jubilee of the Order coincides with another important anniversary: forty years from the publication of the document *Populorum Progressio* (March 26, 1967). In the drafting of this encyclical our brother Louis Joseph Lebret (1897–1966) collaborated in a fundamental manner." Re-read this text, wherein are the traces of a profound spirituality of compassion. *(International Dominican Commission for Justice and Peace, January 30, 2007.)*

"The hungry nations of the world cry out to the peoples blessed with abundance. And the Church, cut to the quick by this cry, asks each [person] to hear [this] plea and answer it lovingly." *(Populorum Progressio, 3.)*

**FOR REFLECTION**

How have you been *called by truth and love to be sent to proclaim God's presence?*

What are the stories that capture the *mysteries of your life?*

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**THE ROSARY HAS A PLACE OF HONOR IN DOMINICAN LIFE BECAUSE OF THE REPEATED STORY THAT IT WAS ST. DOMINIC WHO INTRODUCED IT INTO CHRISTIAN PRACTICE. SINCE THE 16TH CENTURY THE CHURCH HAS HONORED THE FEAST OF THE ROSARY ON OCTOBER 7.**
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