Solidarity is a sign of hope. It is also evidence of a commitment to the common good. "... be doers of the word, and not hearers only..." (James 1). Doers of the word are called first to let that word be written on their hearts — to dwell in the word, and to let that word dwell in them. When God’s Word has taken root, it calls forth a radical kind of hope in the promises of God contained in that word. The Word takes “flesh and blood in our lives and words,” writes Timothy Radcliffe, OP.

Solidarity and hope do not always seem compatible in the 21st century. International alliances too often demonstrate how some nations benefit from this apparent solidarity, while others, many others in the majority world, are burdened. Economic security depends on the willing participation of individuals and institutions. It is simply impossible to ignore the fact that the prosperity enjoyed by a privileged minority among Earth's community is only possible because of the poverty imposed on the majority. Almost every economic measure demonstrates how this divide is widening.

Spiral Majesty on Pices
Catherine of Siena, Prayers, 19
The Dominican tradition teaches that fidelity to carrying out a spiritual mission requires being practical and concrete. Nothing is more practical than protecting life and whatever is required to sustain it with dignity. This has long been the central principle of Catholic Social Teaching. Even with a rich modern history, it became common in the late 20th century to think of this tradition of social teaching as “our best kept secret.”

Church leaders have long identified a “complex interdependence” as one of the principal characteristics of our age (Mater et Magistra). This matrix binding together peoples and practices can no longer be ignored. “The world’s present and future depend on the safeguarding of creation.” Simply said, Earth and its environment are vulnerable. A growing convergence of world opinion supports this view, resisted perhaps only by the politics of a profit motive that drives certain industries to refute this truth.

Belief is demonstrated in action. This has practical and concrete implications for Earth and its community and is revealed in attitudes toward plant life and other planetary creatures. Those who do live in hope as “doers” of the word can no longer tolerate the divisions between peoples and nations and continents and hemispheres. All of creation has dignity; all of creation is vulnerable; all of creation has a claim on resources that were once assumed to be limitless and now recognized as dangerously at risk.

An abundance of information and statistics about everything in the world can, paradoxically, contribute to a numbing that actually prevents effective action. When preaching is undertaken by creative and artistic doers of the word, who have a talent for translating that information into images, it can inspire a profound awareness that reaches even deeper than intellectual understanding. When passion is stirred up in this way it can lead to action and solidarity, genuine sources of life-giving hope.

Those accustomed to security face a new uncertainty. What do generations coming of age today think of themselves and their future? How do those who benefit from the “digital age” factor privilege into their standing in the world? Does solidarity have practical and concrete implications related to opportunity? How is an absence of hope reflected in the growing number of nations that have an alarming suicide rate among both the young and the elderly, among workers as well as the unemployed?

The seeds of solidarity and hope grow when doers of the word witness to the truth of human experience seen in the light of God’s love. At the very heart of the Gospel, from its initial invitation to metanoia to its final account of the passion, death, and resurrection, there is an expectation of discipleship. Those who choose to follow the way, the truth, and the life are those who “love one another” in the same way that God loves: unconditionally, mercifully, justly.

THE PREACHING MISSION CONTINUES

“The 1971 Synod of Bishops saw in the struggle for justice and the participation in the transformation of the world a ‘constitutive dimension for the preaching of the Gospel for the redemption of humanity and its liberation from every oppressive situation.’ It seems to me that the Order ought to promote justice in three ways: ‘charitable works,’ the word, and, finally, the study of causes and means to be taken to change the situation. To denounce some abuse in a concrete way (because generalities and abstractions lead in practice to nothing) often causes a ‘political repercussion.’ (This is the way the world is!) But that does not mean one is ‘involved in politics’ in a partisan way.”

Vincent de Couesnongle, OP (The Four Priorities of Quezon City and Walberberg, To Praise, To Bless, To Preach: Words of Grace and Truth, Dominican Publications, 2004).

“To be open to be taught by the Word of God, and by any fragment of truth and beauty found around us, is the process of studying theology in contemplation . . . the task of being aware of the challenges of our time, understanding the profound theological meaning of these challenges and of historical events in the light of the Gospel, through a discernment made with the help of the Holy Spirit.” Therese Pham Thi Bach Tuyet, OP ([Vietnam] Building Bridges: Dominicans Doing Theology Together, Dominican Publications, 2005).
"Because it is a preacher's vocation, the Dominican vocation is, in its essence, a dynamic vocation. It is shaped not only by its own pre-established laws and constitutions, but by the demands of history and the needs of the hour. And thus, in contrast to a life of monastic enclosure, it has the right and even the duty not to be always consistent or predictable in its activity. In the preacher's life, the pattern of religious observance is never static or fixed, but always forms part of a life lived in response to the needs of others and to the demands of the Gospel at any given moment."


"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 principle of free trade, by itself, is no longer adequate for regulating international agreements. It can work when both parties are about equal economically; it stimulates progress and rewards effort. It is quite different when the nations involved are far from equal. Market prices that are freely agreed upon can turn out to be most unfair."

*(Populorum Progressio, 58.)*

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**FOR REFLECTION**

**What can be done to protect life and sustain its dignity?**

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**How can the privileged minority of Earth's community promote justice in the majority world?**

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**DOMINICANS HONOR PETER VERONA (1205–1252) ON JUNE 4 FOR MANY THINGS: HIS PREACHING, WHICH CATHERINE OF SIENA SAID "CAST LIGHT ON THE DARKNESS" OF HERESY, HIS DEDICATION TO FORMATION OF THE LAITY, TO DOING THE WORKS OF MERCY, AND FOR BEING THE FIRST CANONIZED MARTYR OF THE ORDER.**
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