

On the Preaching of the Dominican Brothers in the Asia Pacific Region

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Gerard Francisco P. Timoner III, O.P.

Socius of the Master of the Order for Asia-Pacific

Past Provincial of the Province of the Philippines

Member of the International Theological Commission

On behalf of Br. Bruno Cadoré, Master of the Order, I wish to thank and congratulate Br. Clarence Marquez, the convener of this colloquium, Br. Winston, Director of the Institute of Preaching, and the brothers who initiated the gathering of Institutes of Preaching, Br. Gregory Heille of the Aquinas Institute of Theology, USA and Br. Andreas Bordowski of the Institute for Pastoral Homiletics, Germany.

We ended our meeting yesterday with vespers and the heartfelt preaching of Br. Christopher. When Pope Francis visited this university last January 2015, a little girl, Glyzelle Palomar, a street-child under the care of *Tulay ng Kabataan* (“Bridge for the Youth”) asked the Holy Father a simple but difficult question: “why is it that innocent children like us suffer?” She cried and could not continue addressing the Holy Father. Pope Francis was stumped and told the audience: Glyzelle showed us the way, *sometimes we can only see clearly through eyes cleansed by tears*. Br. Christopher has cleansed his eyes as he preached. Our professor in homiletics told us: *the best preaching we could deliver is the one that converts us*—at least we are sure one got converted; and if it has converted us, there is a great chance it would have the same effect on others. What Br. Christopher did yesterday is, for me, a fine example of the preaching of the brothers in the Asia Pacific Region. So, I guess I have already done the task assigned to me this morning! Sr. Bernadette Kiley told me the other day that she has some reservations about calling our sharing and reflections in this colloquium as “keynote addresses”. I fully agree with her. I have some notes for this morning’s reflection, but I am not sure whether these notes would serve as a “key” to open some doors. For those of you who have been with me for retreats, I am sorry I have no power-point presentations; but I am nervously praying that the points I will share with you would not end up as powerless points!

The Order of Preachers as Text of Dominic’s Preaching

One of the questions that intrigued, even vexed me since I was a novice was how come the founder of the Order of Preachers has left us no written or recorded homily or preaching? Surely, this was not due for lack of writing materials because we can still read today the beautiful homilies of St. Augustine who lived centuries earlier. All we have are three short letters Dominic wrote: one was addressed to the nuns and two are about converts from the Albigensian heresy. Some say that Dominic is a preacher, not a writer. (For the Dominicans who are here and who are yet to finish their thesis or dissertation, when your superior asks you about your thesis, you could use the same excuse, I am a preacher, not a writer like St. Dominic!) Yet the question remains, how come no one bothered to write even a few notes about Dominic’s preaching? Was it because no one listened and observed him closely? But Blessed Cecilia paid close attention to Dominic that she was able to accurately describe Dominic, in such a manner that one would suspect she had a crush on Dominic! Here is her description:

This was St Dominic's appearance. He was of middle height and slender figure, of handsome and somewhat ruddy countenance, his hair and beard of auburn, and with lustrous eyes. From out his forehead and between his eyebrows a radiant light shone forth, which drew everyone to revere and love him. He was always joyous and cheerful, except when moved to compassion at anyone's sorrows. His hands were beautiful and tapering; his voice was clear, noble, and musical; he was never bald, but kept his religious tonsure entire, mingled here and there with a few grey hairs.

Why did she describe the face and not take note of what he said? I think there must be a good reason for the absence of any recorded preaching of Dominic. *Probably the absence is meant to highlight the theological truth that for Dominic, the Order he founded is his only "preaching".* He called the first convents not as a house for preachers but Holy Preaching itself. *We are all the preaching of St. Dominic in our world today.* We are part of the ever-expanding text of his "homily". The word *text* comes from the Latin verb *texere*, "to weave". The *text* of Dominic's preaching is a weaving together of the life and witness of those who are captivated by his spirit, by his passion for the truth and compassion for humanity. And in our life and ministry (both ordained and lay ministry), we bring our stories and histories to be woven together, *texere*, in the ongoing preaching of Dominic. I invite you sisters and brothers to use in today's reflection what David Tracy calls as the *analogical* or *catholic imagination*¹, a model of theological reflection that was useful since the time of Anselm and our brother Thomas Aquinas. In general terms, this mode of theologizing begins with a humble acceptance of the finitude of human knowledge; God transcends our language and knowledge², and so our theological knowledge is always partial and incomplete, but we can have a real and true understanding of God in analogous ways. Thus, when Jesus, the Second Person of the Trinity, taught us to address God as *Abba*, He revealed to us the mystery of God *as parent*; yet while we know that God's love must be similar to that unconditional love a father and mother would have for their child, God's love is infinitely much more. I believe that preaching is at the service of helping people know, understand, and experience the loving presence of God in our world. Preaching involves the use of the analogical imagination. *But what I wish to do is to invite you to use that same imagination and try to see how the Order of Preachers, the Dominican Family could be the "enduring preaching" of Dominic for eight centuries.*

As we imagine ourselves to be part of Dominic's preaching, *I invite you to consider where you are in the text*³ *of St. Dominic's homily.* Are you right in the middle, in big bold letters? Are you a boring, insignificant footnote at the bottom of the page? Are you a footnote that nobody reads but they really should, because if they did, they would find out something interesting; that gives a whole new understanding of the text that sends you in new insightful directions? Are you a note on the margins, reflecting on, critiquing the text? Maybe you are at the margin, barely hanging onto the page, yet whose marginal existence marks the boundaries of the text and provides the world in which the text has its existence. And what does this text say? What do you, the text, have to say for yourself? *We are the only but enduring preaching of Dominic in our world today. We are all part of the ever-expanding text of Dominic's preaching.* The eloquence or lack of it in the preaching of Dominic, today, in our Asia Pacific Region, depends so much on us.

If the Order is the text of Dominic's preaching, perhaps we could use, analogically, three categories for understanding the Sacred Scriptures, namely: the world *behind* the text or the *world of*

¹ David Tracy, "Presidential Address: The Catholic Analogical Imagination," *Catholic Theological Society Proceedings* 32 (1977) 234-244.

² Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, Q. 3.

³ Adapted from Karen Soos, "The Etymology of Hope" *LOGOS* Fall 2004 Vol. XVII No. 2

the author, the world *of* the text, and the world *in front of the text* or the world of the reader and audience (I hope the biblical scholars here would forgive me for doing this!).

The World *Behind* the Text

In Biblical studies, the world *behind* the text involves historical criticism, redaction criticism, textual criticism and source criticism. These are different methods of determining how the world of the author provides him with the socio-cultural worldview and intellectual resources that shape the writing of the sacred text. Here, the text is regarded as a “window” through which one could see the world that “produced” the text.

St. Francis and St. Dominic lived at a time when the Church, very much like the Church of today, was in dire need of a *new evangelization*. Pope Innocent paints a clear picture of the church at that time in a Bull dated January 29, 1204:

The pastors who feed themselves first do not provide nourishment for the flock of the Lord; they have no solicitude to strengthen what is weak, to nurse what is sick, to bind up what is bruised, to search for what has strayed. They keep their sword in the scabbard and negligently celebrate the opus Dei. There is a famine in this land, the little ones cry for bread; and there is almost no one to break it for them.⁴

Innocent’s letter to all the abbots of the Cistercian Order, assembled in general chapter indicates a program of preaching for a “new evangelization”:

We rejoice and we give thanks to the Giver of all good gifts, considering that in your Order there are a great number of men filled with an enlightened zeal for God, powerful in work and word, and ready to give to whoever asks it a reason for the faith and the hope in which we abide; men in whom, we believe, charity grows strong to prepare them to give their lives for their brethren, if the needs of the Church demand it; who are so much more fitted to confound the fabricators of false doctrines as they are above the least reproach from a jealous adversary; they enjoy a good reputation even among people at large, because in them the holiness of their lives is in harmony with sound thought, and their life vivifies their teaching so that their word is living, efficacious, and more piercing than a two-edged sword; their teaching penetrates their life so that *people can read in their manners what their sermons explain*.⁵

In order to provide for the hunger of the people for the truth of God’s Word, the Pope sent men to engage in “preaching and teaching”. Bishop Foulques assigned this task in 1215 to Dominic and his companions when he revived the *Sancta Praedicatione* in his diocese.⁶

That is the world of St. Dominic, the world *behind* the text of Dominic’s preaching. If one wishes to know more about the world *behind* the text, one could read again the *Libellus* by Jordan of Saxony, the *Life of the Brethren* by Humbert of Romans and similar documents.

⁴ Pierre Mandonnet, OP *St. Dominic and His Work* trans. by Sr. Mary Benedicta Larkin, OP (St. Louis MO: B. Herder Book Co., 1944) p. 385.

⁵ Ibid. Emphasis mine.

⁶ Ibid.

The World of the Text in Asia Pacific

In Biblical studies, the world *of* the text pertains to the “world within the text itself”, that is the *literary elements* that include genre, word study, philology, grammar, syntax etc. The Bible is written in different literary forms, psalms and proverbs, prophecy and parables, sermons and epistles; expressed in the thought forms of Hebrew, some Aramaic, and Greek.

If the Order of Preachers is, analogically, the “text” of Dominic’s preaching, what are the genres or “literary forms” of this preaching?

The intellectual apostolate of Thomas Aquinas, Albert the Great; the mysticism of Catherine of Siena and Meister Eckhart; the heroic love and compassion of Rosa de Lima, Martin de Porres, and Juan Macias; the passion for Justice and Peace of Francisco Vitoria and Bartolome de las Casas; the courageous martyrdom of Peter Martyr and countless martyrs; the quest of Fra Angelico for the Divine that is revealed in beauty --- these are well known genres of preaching in our history. Similar forms of preaching have taken root across history and cultures, but I would like to turn now to the forms of preaching of the brothers in the Asia-Pacific Region, the main task assigned to me in this colloquium. More could be added to the “genres” of preaching I present here, for they are not exhaustive. I must note, however, that these forms of Dominican preaching are not restricted to the ordained brothers. A wise brother has reminded us that we are an “Order of Preachers” not an “Order of Homilists”!

As of December 2016, the Asia Pacific Region has 1,221 brothers: 799 priests, 41 deacons, 263 student brothers, 67 cooperator brothers and 51 novices. They are sons of 5 provinces and 2 vice provinces, residing in 34 convents and 68 houses, in 2 continents --- Asia and Australia and the sub-continent of India --- living and doing ministry in 21 countries. The Dominican Laity mention the Master in their profession, hence they are under the care of the priors provincial. In our region, we have about 130,000 Dominican laity, over 115,000 of them are in Vietnam!

a. Community Life as Preaching

Since March 2017, I have accompanied Br. Bruno, the Master of the Order in two canonical visitations of two provinces which are present in 10 countries. On several occasions Br. Bruno began the conversation with the brothers with the question: “*how is the Dominican preaching here in this country?*” In response, a few brothers would describe how liturgical preaching in their parish or shrine attract people, or how many brothers are involved in the teaching and retreat ministries. Br. Bruno would clarify that he meant to inquire not just about the ministry, but also the life of the brothers that support such ministry. The Master wanted to remind the brothers that in the beginning, the community of preachers were called *sancta praedicatorio*.

Our brother Edward Schillebeeckx reminds us: “The life of the religious is a *basic apostolate* in the strict sense...”⁷ Thus, we could rightly say that *for a Dominican, to live in community is the first apostolate!* Our first Dominican communities were not called “conventus” or convent but *sancta praedicatorio*, holy preaching, the task around which we were gathered. The first apostolate is to live in community, thus even our retired or sick brothers remain active in this *apostolate*. The unanimity of heart and mind of the church remains its most eloquent form of preaching. It is important to keep in our minds and hearts that *we are not just together for the mission; Being Together is part of our mission to preach Jesus who calls us to unity* (John 17:1).⁸

⁷ Edward Schillebeeckx OP quoted by James Thuline, OP “St. Dominic and the Spirit of Community” in *Renewal in the Spirit of Dominic*, ed. by Robert Pelkington, OP (USA: Dominicana, 1968)

⁸ Bruno Cadoré OP, Message to the newly elected priors provincial, March 2013.

b. Evangelization as the Greatest Act of Charity

Pope Benedict XVI, in his Lenten message a few days before he resigned, said: “*The greatest work of charity is evangelization...* There is no action more beneficial – and therefore more charitable – towards one’s neighbors than to break the bread of the word of God, to share with them the Good News of the Gospel, to introduce them to a relationship with God”.⁹ This insight was incorporated in the prologue of the General Chapter in Bologna in 2016. Evangelization, preaching the Gospel, is a work of charity. Think about that, to prepare and preach a good homily is a work of charity (otherwise, our listeners become less charitable). Similarly, charitable works, like the spiritual and corporal works of mercy, are both works of charity and preaching. The brothers in India who take care of the street children in Nagpur, the brothers in Pakistan who care for the tribal minorities, the brothers in Vietnam, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and East Timor who care for the poor and marginalized, either directly or through their collaborators in parishes and schools --- they all proclaim by their deeds, the love and mercy of our compassionate God. Assiduous study in preparation for teaching and preaching are works of charity. To build a strong school and parish community is no mere pastoral ministry; it is a work of charity for it is a work of evangelization.

c. Evangelization through Education

The brothers serve as administrators, faculty members and chaplains in many schools in Australia, East Timor, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Macau, Myanmar, Pakistan, Philippines and Taiwan. In the Philippines alone, the brothers have about 65,000 students, 3,045 faculty members and 1,323 employees under their care. These students are required to devote some of their time to community service in accordance with their proper training e.g., students of the Conservatory of Music provide free music lessons during the summer break, Architecture and Engineering students provide assistance in housing projects, students of the Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Pharmacy and College of Nursing and Rehabilitation Sciences participate in community health care and medical missions. The students of our Letran College help in the mission islands of Camiguin during the summer months. Here we see how our forms of preaching create ripple effects of preaching love and care for one’s neighbour.

The brothers are also involved in the formation and education of diocesan seminarians and religious sisters in the various schools of theology and seminaries in India, Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, Australia, Papua New Guinea, Pakistan, Macau and Taiwan.

We saw yesterday Br. Joemar’s project that help school children in Camiguin island. I wish to share with you what I saw in the mission school in Hatudo, East Timor. Hatudo is over 150 kilometers away from Dili. From the airport, Br. Ruben, the superior in Dili, drove Br. Bruno and me straight to Hatudo. We were warned about getting dizzy on the winding road. But we never expected the heavy and thick mountain fog that suddenly set in, blurring everything outside our window, and reducing road visibility to zero! Br. Ruben promptly stepped on the brake and exclaimed: *where is the road?!* After a few seconds, a man from the road construction company came close and told us, “the road is a few meters to your left!” Difficult questions are posed to the Master during canonical visitations, but that is one question I could never forget: “where is the road?!” *Where is the road that will get us to people on geographic and existential peripheries?* (I have heard similar questions on the visitation in Australia. A senior brother met us at the airport. He was beaming with a smile when he met us, but after a few minutes, I saw the smile turn into a nervous frown, then he asked: “where did I park the car?!” Of course, a similar question was posed by Br. Bruno himself. We were waiting to board a connecting flight in Sydney to Canberra. But the Master opened a topic

⁹ Pope Benedict XVI, Message for Lent 2013, no. 3.

that drew our undivided attention, we became oblivious to the world around us, until he asked me: “where is the plane!?” We missed our plane and I felt like the innkeeper who spent the night in conversation with Dominic. As we waited for the next flight, I told Dominic’s successor: “please do not talk to me minutes before boarding time!

But I digress, so back to East Timor. Hatudo is literally on the *periphery*, but it is good to witness how its people is *central to the ministry* of our brothers. It is inspiring to meet on the road many young students in their school uniforms who resolutely walk several kilometers on rugged roads every day to attend classes. Yet it is saddening to know that they do not get the quality of education they need or deserve to improve their lives and build their country that has recently gained independence. Here we see the tremendous importance of offering quality education in the schools entrusted to us. Non-government organizations from Australia volunteer to build school buildings in Hatudo because they see the good work of the brothers.

d. Preaching Through Different Art Forms

Like Fra Angelico, talented brothers preach through painting, theatre, music and the like. Let me share with you a video clip of the concert of *Inggó 1587*, the band of Dominican brothers (both ordained and non-ordained) who eloquently preached against the Extra Judicial Killings here in the Philippines in their concert at the UST Central Seminary last August 26, 2017 with their song *wake up*:

“WAKE UP”

by Giuseppe Pietro Arsciwals OP

You said you wanna have peace, You wanted peace that would never cease
But you can never have that peace, Until you learn to listen, To the cries of people, dying in the streets

You said you wanna be free, And put an end to life's misery
But you can never be truly free Until you learn to speak, For them whose voices have been Silenced and stilled
Refrain

So everybody now, Wake up, wake up, wake up, wake up, From your delusions,
Your promised world is an illusion, Killing’s never gonna be the solution
Stand up, stand up, stand up Fight this confusion, The world is waiting for an
absolution, Not another bloody execution

You said you're looking for love, What everybody's been dreaming of,
But you can never find that love, Until you find forgiveness, Show some kindness, mercy, And compassion
Bridge

They cry for mercy, They cry for justice, They ask forgiveness, They cry for love
(Repeat)
(*Chorus 2X*)

At a time when voices of conscience are easily dismissed and labeled as “politicking”, perhaps music could find another inroad into dulled consciences. When Fra Angelico seemed to doubt whether painting could truly be in accord with his vocation as a Dominican, Lawrence of Ripafratta encouraged him: “You will be nonetheless true Friars Preachers if you cultivate your painting for it is not only by preaching that we persuade people, but also by the arts, especially by music and painting. Many who will turn a deaf ear to preaching will be won by your pictures which will continue throughout the ages to preach.”¹⁰

e. Preaching Through Martyrdom

Ordained and lay brothers have preached the Gospel eloquently when their voices were silenced by martyrdom: Lorenzo Ruiz of Manila and his Dominican companions, Vicente Liem de la Paz and his companion martyrs in Vietnam. These illustrious Dominican martyrs of the Asia-Pacific region have preached by giving up their lives. Yet to be a *martyr* is to be a witness. While *dying for the faith* is a grace that is given to a few, *living for the faith*, is a vocation of all believers, especially those who embrace the charism of preaching the Gospel.

The World *In Front* the Text

The people addressed by the text, who live in a concrete context, is the *world in front of the text*. One of the approaches for interpretation of a Biblical text is the determination of the history of its influence or effect.¹¹ The manner by which a Biblical text is received or appropriated forms part of its ongoing hermeneutic understanding. Thus, the unique context to which the “text of Dominic’s preaching” is addressed expands and enriches its meaning.

I wish to note some demographic and geographic facts concerning Asia, the “hearers” of the preaching of the brothers. *Asia-Pacific* or *Asianness* as unitary terms can be very misleading.¹² Asia is the world’s largest and most populated continent. Of the top ten countries ranked in terms of population, six are in this region: “top ten most populous countries (in millions): China 1373.54; India 1266.88; United States 324.00; Indonesia 258.32; Brazil 205.82; Pakistan 202.00; Nigeria 186.05; Bangladesh 156.19; Russia 142.36; Japan 126.70”¹³ The region “constitutes one-third of the land area of the whole world (17,124,000 sq. miles) and is home to sixty percent (60%) of humanity...there are twenty (20) mega-cities in Asia with populations of 5 to 20 million.”¹⁴ Asia is comprised of forty six (46) countries. It stretches from Turkey and Israel in the West; Kazakhstan and India in the South-Central part; Philippines and Indonesia in the South East; and China and Japan in the East. All the major religious and ethical traditions of *Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism,*

¹⁰ Lawrence of Ripafratta on Fra Angelico quoted by Damian Byrne, *A Pilgrimage of Faith* (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1991) p. 29.

¹¹ “Within this perspective, the history of the effect produced by a book or a passage of Scripture (*Wirkungsgeschichte*) begins to enter into the work of interpretation. Such an inquiry seeks to assess the development of interpretation over the course of time under the influence of the concerns readers have brought to the text.” Pontifical Biblical Commission, “The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church”, April 23, 1993.

¹² Yoko Arisaka notes that the “intra-Asian differences” are greater than “East-West” differences. The Philippines, for instance would have a greater sense of affinity with the United States than with Kyrgyzstan. Cf. Yoko Arisaka, “Asian Women: Invisibility, Locations, and Claims to Philosophy” in *Women of Color in Philosophy*, Naomi Zack, ed. (New York: Blackwell, 2000). Also in <http://www.arisaka.org/asianwomen.pdf>.

¹³ World Demographics Profile 2017, CIA World Factbook, updated July 9, 2017 http://www.indexmundi.com/world/demographics_profile.html

¹⁴ James Kroeger, *Asia-Church in Mission* (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 1999), p. 113.

Hinduism, Confucianism and Taoism were all born in Asia. Indeed, the continent is a rich and colorful mosaic of many religions, cultures, races and colors.¹⁵

If we will do a thought-experiment about the world's demography, it would be something like this: *If we shrink the entire earth's population into a village of precisely 100 people, with all existing human ratios remaining the same. In this village, there would be 60 Asians, 10 Europeans, 9 from Latin America and Caribbean, 5 North Americans and 16 Africans.*¹⁶ *In terms of religion, 31 are Christians, 24 Muslims, 15 Hindus, 7 Buddhists, 6 Folk Religions, 1 other religions and 16 are unaffiliated to any religion.*¹⁷ *Of the 31 Christians, 15 are Catholics.*¹⁸

That in a nutshell is the “world in front of the text” of Dominican preaching in the region. The number of people who have not heard about the Gospel far surpasses the entire population of the world during the time of Jesus Christ! Thirty-one percent of the current world population are Christians, half of which are Catholics (15% of the world population). If half of these Catholic population attend the Sunday Eucharist and listen to a homily or liturgical preaching (a very optimistic estimate), then only 7% of the world's population could be reached by liturgical preaching. But definitely, more than 7% percent can be reached through various forms or “genres” of preaching.

Last week, on the eve of the culmination of the Muslim commemoration of *Muharram*, we were on the way to the airport in Lahore, Pakistan. We passed by several checkpoints with heavily armed military men. At one check point, our driver told the security personnel that his passengers are Catholic priests. The guard let us pass even without checking who are inside the car. Br. Pascal, the Vice Provincial, explained to me: a good number of Muslims know that Catholics do a lot of charity work and we cause no problem to the society that is why they treat us kindly. Obviously, our actions are better heard or seen than our words.

Yet even with this vast world “in front of the *text*”, we should not forget the immediate world in front of us. The people who work closely with us are the first “hearers” of our preaching. Our drivers and cooks, our co-workers, and office staff are the first ones who know if we do not live in unanimity of heart and mind (according to the Rule of St. Augustine). Sometimes we treat them as though they are invisible but they hear our critical remarks about our brothers; they notice when we do not eat together, etc. But they are also the ones who see us praying, eating and having discussions together.

Conclusion

Jesus sent out seventy-two others in pairs...in addition to the proclamation of the Kingdom and the healing of those who are sick, he told those whom he sent: *Stay in the same house and eat and drink what is offered to you, for the laborer deserves his payment. Do not move about from one house to another. Whatever town you enter and they welcome you, eat what is set before you.* (Luke 10:7-8).

It is curious that Jesus repeats this admonition. The first time, one might say, “Yes, eat what they give you, waste no time going around looking for a household that serves the best food.” But

¹⁵ James Kroeger and Peter Phan, *The Future of the Asian Churches* (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 2002), p. 3.

¹⁶ World Population by Regions <http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/> accessed October 8, 2017

¹⁷ Pew Research Center, “The Changing Global Religious Landscape” (2015), <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/04/05/christians-remain-worlds-largest-religious-group-but-they-are-declining-in-europe/>, accessed October 8, 2017.

¹⁸ The Global Catholic Population (2010), <http://www.pewforum.org/2013/02/13/the-global-catholic-population/>, accessed October 8, 2017.

when the charge is repeated almost immediately, one has to pause and ponder. Here are the seventy-two, sent to preach the Good News, filled with great power to heal all who are sick, and Jesus is concerned that these missionaries might be choosy over food? What is so important about receiving table hospitality that the charge is made twice?

Eat what is set before you, Jesus commands us. Before we begin to preach or heal or do anything for the good of others, we are told, not once, but twice, to be served by the people we are intending to serve. *Jesus is telling us that we can only feed people if we are willing to be fed by them.* We can become more effective in our preaching if we listen attentively to what our hearers tell us. Surely, there is more blessing in giving than in receiving, but what good is giving if no one is willing to receive? Is not the joy that we feel when we give, a gift in itself? When we eat what is set before us, we enter into a table fellowship with our host.

During his visit to the Philippines last January 2015, Pope Francis told the youth gathered in this campus:

You know how to give and yet have you ever learned how to receive? You still lack one thing. Become a beggar. This is what you still lack. Learn how to beg. This isn't easy to understand; to learn how to beg; to learn how to receive with humility. To learn to be evangelized by the poor, by those we help, the sick, orphans, they have so much to give us. Have I learned how to beg? Or am I self-sufficient? Do I think I need nothing? Do you know you, too, are poor? Do you know your own poverty and your need to receive? Do you let yourselves be evangelized by those you serve? This is what helps you mature in your commitment to give to others. Learn how to open your hand from your very own poverty.

Pope Francis calls this a “culture of encounter”. Preacher of the Gospel must learn how to nourish and be nourished by the people, to preach the Gospel and to hear the Gospel preached to them.

On several occasions, Br. Bruno told the brothers to be ever mindful that *preaching is a path to sanctity*. Often, we think of St. Dominic's wish “to be buried under the feet of the brothers” as a manifestation of his profound humility. At that time, deeply devoted people wanted their mortal remains to be buried in a church, to be as close as possible to the altar where the relics of saints rest, because closeness to the saints (in this case to be within the vicinity of relics) signifies proximity to sanctity and salvation. Thus, when Dominic expressed his wish to be buried “at the feet” of the preaching brothers, he wanted to be proximate to what constitutes, for him, a *path to sanctity* i.e., the preaching of the Gospel. Preaching brings us to the path of holiness and salvation.