

**PASSING THE TORCH: DOMINICAN PREACHING ACROSS GENERATIONS**  
**Dominican Preaching Network North American Colloquium**  
**Weber Retreat and Conference Center, Adrian, Michigan**  
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**“Report of Key Themes Surfacing from the Interviews”**  
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I want to start this afternoon with a verse from scripture that was given to me by one of you—a quote that encapsulates so much that I have heard from you in preparing for this gathering. Maybe we could use it as a prayer phrase to begin this time that we have set aside to be with one another: *“When I came upon your words, I devoured them; and your words became my joy, and the delight of my heart, for I am called by your name, O God, Sabaoth”* (Jeremiah 15:16).

Tell me if this verse does not rouse something within you as a Dominican. You are here today I suspect because you also are someone who devours God’s word and has found joy and delight there. And what an honor to be in your midst.

When the DPN planning committee first invited me to a meeting over a year ago, they shared with me the background of these gatherings and their hope to initiate a conversations among the Dominicans of the U.S./Canada around what they had discerned (as a result of feedback from the 2016 Jubilee Colloquium in St. Louis) to be one of the most pressing issues the Dominican Order in North America faces as preachers at present, which is the question of what the charism of preaching itself means across the generations present in the Order right now.

The image of the dog carrying a torch has long been a central image in the Dominican community. And so, we refined the question (a decision that we can return to later) to ask, “What does it mean to pass on the torch of Dominican preaching to a new generation?” We wanted to ask Dominican elders and Dominican newcomers what the torch of Dominican preaching meant to them, what it meant to pass it on, and what it meant to receive it. We wanted to facilitate conversation between the generations on this topic. It didn’t seem like a particularly controversial image...until we got into the thick of it.

It has been my privilege in advance of this gathering to interview twenty Dominicans, both men and women—ten elders and ten newer members—to launch a conversation related to the “torch.” What I’d like to do is to share an overview of what I heard in order to get the conversation started among us here in this room, knowing that this room is just a starting place for a larger conversation that needs to be had within the Order and beyond. But we must start somewhere!

Between June and August 2019, I spent about an hour in conversation with each of the Dominicans identified by the planning committee to get a lay of the Dominican preaching landscape. One of the first questions you might ask is whether twenty is sufficiently representative of the Order in the U.S. and Canada. The answer from a statistical point of view: Of course not. Having been affiliated with the Dominican community for over twenty years, I am well familiar with the phrase: “If you’ve met a Dominican, you’ve met ONE Dominican.” At the same time, I think that the voices the planning committee asked me to interview are a representative snapshot of the

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The Dominican Preaching Network is a global collaboration of Aquinas Institute of Theology in St. Louis, the Institute of Preaching in Quezon City, and the Institute for Pastoral Homiletics in Dusseldorf. In October 2016, a global Jubilee Colloquium was St. Louis, and regional colloquia have been held in Manila in October 2017 and Cologne in October 2018. The next global preaching colloquium on “The Dominican Encounter with the City and the World” will be in Manila on 7–10 October 2020. See <https://dpnop.org>.

diversity of voices that exist within Dominican communities in the U.S./Canada where there has been an intentional reclaiming of the preaching charism (acknowledging that not all Dominican communities think in those terms). As we continue, you might disagree and think there are other voices and other questions that need to be raised. That would be lovely; again, this is merely a starting point.

As an interviewer, I was listening for themes rather than trying to capture everything that was said. If something was said by just one (or even two) people, I have tended not to include it, though as we continue this conversation one-on-one in this gathering and beyond, I do think it'd be intriguing to pursue comments your own conversation partners make as individuals. In the end, each of us only really represents ourselves.

I will break my own report into five areas:

- Sense of Call to Preaching and What Exactly Does That Mean?
- What We Find Exciting and Worrying about Dominican Preaching at Present
- Neuralgic Topics: Where We Feel Stuck as Dominican Preachers
- The Magic Wand: Ideas We Have About Getting “Unstuck”
- Questions We Have for Each Other

### ***Sense of Call to Preaching and What Exactly Does That Mean?***

In imitation of Krista Tippett, I began each interview by asking the interviewee how they came to the Dominicans in the first place and whether they had a sense of a call to preaching from the start.

A very few respondents answered an unequivocal “yes”—i.e. that it was their sense of a call to preach that led them to investigate the Dominican Order. If that was the answer, it was more common among the younger Dominicans than the older ones, and more common among younger men than younger women.

A good number of respondents said something along the lines of, “Oh mercy, no.” Indeed, a couple noted that when they entered, they had no idea whatsoever that the Dominicans were affiliated with preaching and that, if they had, they would have entered another order. This category includes young and old, men and women.

The majority of respondents I would put in the category of “No, but...” What do I mean by this? I mean that they chose to enter the Dominican Order because they were drawn to the intellectual, conventual, or liturgical life of the Order. A number of people used very similar language: “When I got there, it just felt like home.” But then, with 20/20 hindsight, they realized that there had been signs all along that they were called to a preaching life, and delighted in God’s sense of humor. For example, they noted that they’d come from a family full of storytellers. Or that they’d been involved in forensics during high school and loved it. One told me that when she entered the convent, her friends told her that she’d never stay because she “needed a stage.” (She did stay, and she found a pulpit instead.)

Without exception, every person that I interviewed said their definition of preaching had changed over time as a result of the experiences that they’d had in the Order. Most commonly, those interviewed had initially conceived of preaching as pulpit preaching in the context of the Mass, but over time had become aware of a wide range of preaching venues—from retreat preaching to prison preaching to online preaching. Across the board, there was an acknowledgment that their time in the Order had taught them to think of their whole lives as a preaching—individually (by the integrity with which they conducted themselves) but also communally (by their shared witness, for example, in social justice activity or common prayer). There is a strong shared sense of belonging to “The

Holy Preaching.” This is true among younger and older members, men and women, apostolic and cloistered.

At the same time, interviewees put different emphasis on the role “words” play in preaching. On one side of the spectrum, there are Dominicans who see the way they live their lives as the *primary* way that they participate in the preaching ministry of the Church (i.e., “words” not all that important). On the other side of the spectrum, there are Dominicans who focus on preaching as an explicit, verbal proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ (i.e., “words” are very important). As one interviewee said to me: “We are not Franciscans. Our motto should be, ‘Preach the Gospel at all times; Words are necessary.’” Somewhere in the middle, there are Dominicans who focus on preaching as any effort at expressing the Good News in some sort of public way, and so might include here teaching or the visual arts or music.

While there could be some correlation of response to this question based on branch of the Order (i.e., nuns are more likely to frame preaching in terms of communal life witness, and friars are more likely to frame preaching in terms of explicit oral proclamation), all of the Dominicans I interviewed saw themselves somewhere between those two poles. Even the nun I spoke with saw herself getting excited about the possibility of the monastery becoming more vocal via online means. And even the friar who first focused exclusively on the verbal nature of preaching found himself then talking about all sorts of ways the rest of his life was also preaching.

I want to note that there was not a generational nor gender divide here. Dominicans of all generations are all over the board in terms of the role that “words” play in that preaching. I bring this up here because it will come up again later: If one’s definition of preaching revolves around an explicit “proclamation of the Word” then one’s excitements and worries about preaching are going to be focused in a different direction than if one’s definition of preaching is based more on “a way of life.”

What I found intriguing was that many interviewees said they had not been asked before how they define preaching, and many laughed at their own struggle to do so. This response verified for me research that I became aware of over twenty years ago by a vocation director who shared that she helped religious congregations identify and articulate their charism by asking, “What is it that you argue about most?” She noted that people only argue about what they care about. And that by asking this question, she was able to quickly get to the heart of where peoples’ passions lie, and hence where their charism lie. (She observed in listening to Benedictines they were always arguing about prayer and work balance. The Franciscans were always arguing about poverty.) But often the people who “swim in this water” all day long can’t define what it is that they are endlessly talking about and have a hard time pinning it down. It can be more easily seen by an outsider.

One last observation from this section of the interviews: eighteen of the twenty people I interviewed had a very strong sense of identity as called by God to preach, and the two people who wouldn’t currently say that I would observe (as an outsider) are well on their way toward self-identifying as preachers. It is an identity that they would say they are still in the process of waking up to, but they show every indication of moving in that direction. In general, it takes Dominican women a longer period of time to self-identify as a preacher—i.e., to see preaching as constitutive of their call—than it does Dominican men. But once they have arrived at that point of awareness, the women’s depth of conviction about that call parallels that of the men in the Order. Both the men and the women of the Order, and the younger and older members of the Order experience significant triggers if their sense of identity as a preacher is questioned within the Order or by the church at large. This will come up again later when we talk about neuralgic issues.

### ***What We Find Exciting and Worrying about the Preaching Ministry of the Order***

There are a couple preaching ventures or new preaching possibilities going on across the U.S./Canada presently that had interviewees excited, and—intriguingly—almost all of them had to do either with new forums for preaching or new potential collaborations for preaching.

With regard to the first point: There was a lot of enthusiasm about online preaching efforts (video or written reflections) to reach those whose spiritual needs are not being addressed by pulpit preaching, either because they are unchurched or because they are on the margins of parochial structures (e.g., homebound, suffer from bad local preachers). It was also frequently noted that online preaching provides opportunities for those who don't have faculties to preach in parish liturgical life to still have a space to preach from (e.g., [Word.op.org](http://Word.op.org); the Central Province student brothers' [Friarly](http://Friarly); blogs; [Preacher Exchange](http://Preacher Exchange)).

With regard to the second point: There was excitement about efforts to form lay Dominicans and students in Dominican institutions to participate in the preaching ministry of the Order (e.g., the high school and college preaching conferences, scripture study circles among lay Dominicans). And there was excitement about any indication that Dominicans were getting together to collaborate on preaching projects (e.g., [Dominican Women Afire](http://Dominican Women Afire); the retreat for novices that happened in St. Louis last spring).

These excitements cross generations. Worries, however, did have strong generational themes.

Older Dominicans, both men and women, are very concerned about signs of diminished collaboration between the male and female preachers in the Order. Many of them have powerful memories of having gone on a Parable retreat that changed their lives and helped them to grow in their love of the Word of God. Many of them also have experiences of having served on a preaching team that led a Parable retreat and/or were part of a preaching mission team. It makes them sad to see that these opportunities for joint preaching seem to be declining. They recognize that the financial model that previously supported these ventures isn't working anymore and that demographics both inside the Order and in parishes are changing, but they fear that underneath these external factors there is lessened energy among the men and women preachers to *want* to work with one another. They worry about this on two fronts:

- 1) That the friendships born of these collaborations which they found so sustaining of their own vocations as Dominicans will not be there for the next generation. The move of the interprovincial novitiate from St. Louis exacerbates these fears. They wonder how the younger sisters and brothers will ever get to know each other.
- 2) That the preaching of the Word of God will be diminished by a dearth of women's voices. That there will be people who never get to hear the gospel "in their native tongue," if you will, and miss a transformative experience with God. They attribute some of the loss of the next generation of Catholics from the pews to young women, in particular, not feeling a sense of connection.

A number of older Dominican women also expressed worry that the contemplative dimension of a preaching life might be getting lost. In the noise of the secular world and the frantic busy-ness of ministerial life, they fear that many Dominican preachers are not getting a chance to "live" with the Word and have it transform their own lives before they have to preach on it. They worry about the loss of silence from the lives of preachers and the impact this will have on the quality of Dominican preaching, which has long taken "*contemplare aliis tradere*" as its motto.

Younger Dominicans seem to share these worries only to the degree that they have inherited them from their elders. Most of them have not been on a Parable retreat nor been part of a preaching team nor had much experience of women preaching. They don't know members of the other branches of the Order well yet; they are still getting to know members of their own

communities/provinces. And so, it is hard for them to long for something that they've not experienced or miss someone they've never met. They hear older generations of Dominicans grieving a past, but they don't share the same sense of loss or worry or energy around the issue. They express curiousness and openness to collaboration between men and women preachers of the Order but aren't sure how to go about it, and they identify several things as stymieing such possibilities:

- 1) The number of institutional commitments that both the friars and sisters have at present is experienced as all-consuming. In order to have a presence in these institutions, there is an "all hands on deck" mode of being that doesn't allow personnel or financial resources to have young sisters/brothers creating new ministries (especially new ministries that are not financially self-sustaining from the start). Moreover, they experience little "downtime." Young religious are pulled in a lot of different directions by their own communities who want to make sure that their voices are well represented on committees, boards, national panels, etc. In this way, they do verify the concern identified earlier about lack of time for contemplation and reflection.
- 2) The new women and the new men of the Order are not (statistically-speaking) natural fits for becoming friends. Friendships most commonly develop among people in similar age ranges and educational backgrounds/interests. They also most commonly develop between people who see each other a lot. Presently, there is often an age gap between newer members of the women's congregations that have claimed a preaching identity and the newer members of the men's provinces, and they have significantly different interests/worldviews. In terms of age and world view, the young men of the Order might more naturally form friendships with the young Dominican women whose congregations more strongly self-identify as teachers (vs. preachers). This is not to say that the kinds of friendships that would lead to preaching collaborations couldn't happen, but they'd require greater effort. And at present, there is not a lot of infrastructure in place for them to spend enough time with one another in a way that friendships might still emerge—either in formation or in a shared ministry site.

Underneath the worries described above, there seems to be a deeper worry that feels a bit more tender to touch. I'll put it under the header "Letting Go and Trust." There are a disproportionate number of older Dominicans to newer Dominicans. Older Dominicans have a great deal of life experience and wisdom that they would enjoy passing on and, indeed, need to be able to do so for their own ongoing psychosocial development. But there are too few younger Dominicans to be asking about it. A lot of the experience of Dominican elders includes stories of grief and disappointment, and so the experience is a gift to be offered, but a gift that carries a certain heaviness to it. It is a heaviness that is exacerbated by the fact that there are so few younger Dominicans to receive it. Basically, every new Dominican could have six storytelling mentors—a tremendous gift, but also a big weight of hard memories to receive.

Younger Dominican preachers describe being grateful for stories of the past but also sometimes a little overwhelmed by them. They sometimes experience what I would label "compassion-fatigue" that manifests itself as a certain impatience to move on from the past and an eagerness to be entrusted to make decisions about the future of the ministry in the way they see fit. They sometimes worry they are not being trusted with the "torch" or tire of being in the consistent role of the "receiver" of the torch. They experience themselves as ready to "run with it." While both young men and women Dominicans mentioned some frustration at what they see as a holding onto the past and hesitancy to pass the torch, the sense of compassion-fatigue is expressed more strongly among the young Dominican men. As one noted, "Sometimes we just say among ourselves, 'Let the torch fall. We'll pick it up when they are gone.'"

Older Dominicans (both men and women) describe experiencing a lessening of compassion toward their stories and their concerns. They perceive the younger friars, in particular, are not

interested in being in a mentorship relationship with them but would like greater independence to be on their own. And they worry about a “coarsening” of members of the Order toward one another. This increases their grief and disappointment, and a repeating cycle ensues.

### *Neuralgic Topics: Where We Feel Stuck*

As one of the older interviewees told me, “Neuralgic...I used to think I knew what that meant, but now I have sciatica, and I really get it.” So, what are the issues that when you are together, you lightly touch them, and it feels as if they set every nerve in the community buzzing? Politics, ecclesiology, and liturgy provide lots of triggers for Dominican preachers nowadays, as they do for just about every Christian. Particularly related to preaching, the single most neuralgic issue has to do with preaching and the non-ordained within Eucharist. From the outside, I would observe that the fact this issue is still so neuralgic among Dominicans (when it seems not to be a particularly “hot” topic in the wider church) is an indicator that preaching truly is the charism of the Order. So, I would read this in a positive light, while not denying the discomfort this issue causes.

The question of preaching and the non-ordained is a complicated conversation that “pinches” different people in different places, and it is hard to summarize the many different ways that Dominicans look at this issue. Let me lay out four basic approaches, aware that there are variations on these themes.

- 1) For some Dominicans, the question of liturgical preaching and the non-ordained is a non-issue. If their definition of preaching focuses on preaching as a way of life, and if the primary way that they see themselves participating in the Holy Preaching is by living a life of integrity or being a witness out in the world, liturgical preaching is not something they find themselves dwelling on much. Liturgical preaching often doesn’t play a significant role in their own spirituality. They may have some ideas on the matter, but it doesn’t consume a lot of their energy. They would suggest the Order focus on something else, like where the people actually are, since it is not in the pews at Mass.
- 2) Other Dominicans would say it is a non-issue for other reasons. They would say that the magisterium has spoken on this issue and there is nothing that Dominicans can or should do about it. Pulpit preaching matters, but we owe our obedience to the magisterium, and we’re not sure why we keep talking about just one form of preaching that has been put off-limits to the non-ordained when there are so many other opportunities for preaching by the non-ordained (e.g., prison ministry preaching, prayer services, retreats, etc.) Let’s stop focusing on what can’t happen.
- 3) The third group of Dominicans would be a variation on Group #2: They would not say that the preaching of the non-ordained is a non-issue. They do experience a call to pulpit preaching and would like to be able to speak from that space because they think it would be helpful to the People of God, but they have lost the energy of beating their heads against a brick wall. They’ve decided to focus their energies on where they can preach. The needs of the People of God are so great, and they say “yes” whenever a pulpit is opened to them—wherever that might be (prison, campus ministry, retreat, etc.)—and find they are too busy to spend too much time on this issue, though it saddens them.
- 4) The fourth group of Dominicans would say that the preaching of the non-ordained at Eucharist is definitely an issue, and they tend to frame it as an issue of justice, particularly for women. The women in this group experience a strong personal call to preach with their lives, but also explicitly with words. They’ve often sought training for themselves in preaching and give a lot of personal energy to crafting their preaching. Liturgical preaching plays a strong role in their own spiritual practice. Good liturgical preaching is meaningful to them personally, and they want to hear it, but moreover, the act of preaching is a spiritual practice that helps them grow in

holiness. They feel most alive and actualized in the act of preaching, and they read God's hand in that. When they frame it as a question of justice, it is more than just a question of "guys get to do it, so women should, too." It is a question of the justice of being able to fulfill their own deep sense of vocation in this area (i.e., feeling as if their own salvation is at stake) and justice toward the congregation that they sense would benefit from hearing a wider range of voices and a higher quality of preaching.

There are men and women, young and old in all of these categories, all experiencing varying degrees of pain or weariness around the topic. In general, it is probably more neuralgic for the older Dominicans, but the younger Dominicans have picked up on how painful this topic is for some in the Order and are moving in the direction of taking strong personal stances on the topic expressing less curiosity/less openness to investigating other perspectives. The pain has not "skipped a generation."

Before closing out this section, I want to add an observation about *what did not come up* in this part of the interviews: neither the older nor younger Dominicans interviewed expressed any hesitation about the notion that the non-ordained *should* be preaching. The only point of hesitancy regarded church regulations needing to be obeyed—i.e., the concern was fidelity to church regulation, not concern about the fitness of women, the theological content of what the women were preaching, etc. Even those not in favor of women preaching at Mass seemed to indicate that if the regulation were different, they would personally support women preaching liturgically. I think this would be an area worth exploring more deeply in one-on-one conversations. As an interviewer, I found it interesting that no one expressed concern that *what* each other might be preaching is problematic. The words "unorthodox" and/or "irrelevant" did not come up once in any of the conversations as a judgment of each other's preaching.

### ***The Magic Wand: Ideas We Have About Getting "Unstuck"***

I asked interviewees, "If you were able to wave a magic wand over the situation (based on all that you've just mentioned), what would that look like?" The wording that I used here was intentionally vague, leaving open multiple possible interpretations. Intriguingly, in their responses, no one focused on external ecclesial changes (i.e., "Church regulation will change" or "We will suddenly have a hundred new vocations to our province/congregation.") Everyone interviewed immediately considered the question in terms of what they felt the Order as a whole had capacity to influence, even if they felt limited personal agency to effect the change they wanted to see.

Many of the responses fell under the category of "We need pathways for getting to know one another better and then see what could happen." Interviewees wanted opportunities to have deeper conversations between older and younger members within one's congregation or province, but the stronger emphasis was on younger Dominicans forming peer relationships across congregational/provincial lines, and even across national borders. There was a widespread acknowledgment that because of busy-ness and current structures, there are few opportunities to get to know one another or one another's stories at a deeper level.

There was mixed thought about whether those opportunities to get to know one another should be structured or purely organic. A number of the interviewees, but especially older members, were hesitant to have anything imposed on the younger members and wanted to allow younger members space to come up with their own ideas for meeting with each other. Younger members also expressed interest in relationships evolving organically but were interested in established models/paradigms they might look at so as not to have to recreate the wheel from scratch.

The following are a representative sampling of ideas that came forth:

- “I’d love to see the young friars and young sisters all take their first course in preaching with one another. I’d also love for it not to end there. We could look at what ongoing preaching formation looks like after ordination and profession. Why could we not have some sort of ongoing workshops with each other? We all still need to keep growing as preachers and to take that seriously.”
- “I would love to see some sort of shared ministry that the brothers and sisters co-sponsored and co-staffed. Maybe a campus ministry or a school or a food pantry where they would work with one another on a daily basis and then see what naturally grows from that.”
- “I don’t see any reason why when we gather for chapters or assemblies, the sisters couldn’t always invite a friar to be present and to preach at one of the services, and the brothers couldn’t always invite a sister to be present and preach at one of the services.”
- “My absolute dream would be to start a co-sponsored farm in Appalachia that would have groups from colleges and high schools come visit and volunteer with a Dominican focus. It’d be six days long, and each day there would be preaching and formation on a different theme: Veritas, the four pillars, Caritas. We’d reflect on how we lived Dominican values in our work that day.”
- “I don’t really understand why Parable retreats died out. Maybe we won’t be able to recover that project, but maybe there is another financial model that would make it work on a more limited basis? Or maybe we organize ourselves instead around online preaching teams? How do we want to use the internet together for the sake of evangelization?”
- “Do we need a campus preaching team that would be based in one of our campus ministries but would go out as an itinerant team to visit all our campus ministries and do evangelical work?”
- “Could we be part of each other’s formation teams? Not just to have professors from other branches of the Order but formators from other branches of the Order?”
- “I have a hope that we’d be less scattered. Maybe we don’t have a common ministry, but maybe we could live nearer each other and focus on trying to have more common life as part of the Holy Preaching. High on my radar right now is living in a community that really nurtures good preaching/reflection on the Word.”

### ***Added Note***

During the North American Dominican Preaching Network Gathering (19–19 October 2019), participants were invited to reflect on the information collected in the interviews and to pose additional ideas for addressing the issues raised by the interviewees. Approximately twenty “magic wand” ideas were synthesized from the interview material and DPN discussion tables. DPN participants were then asked to identify the suggestions that they felt the most energy around. As a result of this process, five ideas surfaced as the ones garnering the most enthusiasm. They are listed here in descending order, with the top point garnering the greatest interest from the group:

- 1) Create opportunities for preaching teams. (Specific recommendations in this area included ideas such as resourcing two friars and two sisters to form ongoing preaching teams; re-creating something similar to Parable; integrating high school or college students onto preaching teams; and focusing in on-campus ministry preaching.)
- 2) Ongoing formation for preaching. (Specific recommendations in this area included ideas such as a shared workshop on preaching with members of different branches of the Order; regional vs. national gatherings of Dominicans passionate about preaching; and some sort of ongoing preaching institute or study week.)

- 3) Create a joint calendar that encourages the leadership teams of the various branches of the Order to have significant conversations for the sake of building relationships to serve the mission. (Note that Dominican Sisters Conference's [Dominican Life USA](#) may be able to assist with this.)
- 4) Create a space for the spirit to work among newer members of the Order organically and watch what emerges.
- 5) An Order-wide T.V. show or YouTube channel that features preaching on the Sunday readings by both men and women of the Order.

### ***Questions We Have for Each Other***

In the initial interviews, interviewees often noted that any planning in the arena of strengthening the preaching ministry of the Order needs to begin with getting to know one another better. And so, I closed the interviews by asking interviewees what questions they would be curious to ask one another if these initial interviews were expanded to involve members of the Dominican Order interviewing each other across generational and gender differences. [Added note: During the DPN gathering in Adrian, participants used these questions to initiate conversations with at least one fellow Dominican whom they did not know well, and then suggested additional questions that they'd find interesting to explore. I have clustered the questions originally posed by interviewees alongside those posed by DPN participants into four general areas for future conversation.]

#### *Questions Around Call and Dominican Vocation in General*

- What drew you to the Order? Was it preaching or something else?
- Where have you been, and what have you been through as a Dominican?
- What have been your high points and low points in Dominican life?
- What were your expectations and hopes in entering the Order? What have been the biggest surprises since entering?
- Where do you find space for contemplation in your life as a preacher?
- When did you first experience a sense of call to preach? How did that happen?
- What have been your greatest adventures as a Dominican?
- What global experience of the Dominican family have you had? What has that meant to you?
- What brings you joy?

#### *Questions Around Preaching Experience*

- What is your experience of working on a co-ed team?
- What new venues are you seeing for preaching and experiencing as a preacher?
- How are you preaching these days? How are you using the internet?
- Whom are you preaching to? What are the issues that you see most impacting your congregation's life? How are you trying to address those issues as a preacher?
- What are your stories of preaching? What do you consider to be your greatest preaching successes, and when do you think you flopped?
- Why do you preach? Why does this mean so much to you?
- How comfortable are you with the use of technology in preaching? What are you finding works? What not?

*Questions Around a Vision of Preaching into the Future*

- How do you picture we could best reach out to people who are on the margins of the church or unchurched to bring the Good News to them? How will we reach the “Nones” in a pluralistic world?
- What do you see as the greatest needs for preaching in our time? Where do you see the greatest need?
- We are in a time of transition. How do you see that happening: slowly or quickly? Would you be willing to hand over more to me now?
- What makes one credible as a preacher? Why should anyone listen to me? To you?
- Is there any value in preaching institutionally/communally vs. individually?
- As a preacher, what are signs of hope to you in the modern world, and what causes you concern?
- Could you see yourself working on a co-ed preaching team? Why or why not?
- What ideas do you have for how we could get to know members of other branches of the Order?
- How can the older sisters and brothers, and the nuns of the Order support the larger preaching mission best?

*Questions Around Differences Between Us*

- What makes you most nervous around forming preaching teams that include men and women?
- How would you see yourself participating in the preaching ministry...because I don't want to assume I already know the answer.
- What keeps you from saying what you think needs to be said as a preacher?
- What are you seeing about the future of the preaching mission that you think I might be missing? Why is that important to you?
- I sense that you might be feeling weary/frustrated/irritated around the topic of \_\_\_\_\_ and preaching. Can you tell me more about what you are feeling? What is the impact of this conversation on you?

***A Closing Invitation***

It was the hope of the 2019 DPN Planning Committee that the twenty interviews conducted and the larger gathering in Adrian would provide a catalyst to jumpstart a larger conversation among Dominicans around the future of the Order's preaching ministry in North America. We invite local Dominican communities to read and discuss the findings described in this report and to ask themselves the following questions as a way of continuing the conversation:

- What did you hear that you expected to hear?
- What did you hear that surprised you?
- What did you hear that you found most discouraging?
- What did you hear that you found most hopeful?
- What ideas for strengthening the preaching ministry of the Order did you find most energizing? Are there any that you would like to take on locally?
- What questions raised would you find most intriguing to ask within your own local community?
- How could your local community reach out to another Dominican community to further the conversation about preaching?