



ORDO PRAEDICATORUM

PRÆDIGATOR GRATIÆ AND THE GRACE OF PREACHING IN THE CHURCH



The Dominican Family is profoundly grateful to our Holy Father, Pope Francis, for writing *Praedicator gratiae*, his inspiring and encouraging letter to the Order on the 8th Centenary of the *dies natalis* of St. Dominic of Caleruega. The *incipit* (title) of his letter echoes the historic event when Pope Honorius III confirmed preaching as the mission of the Order and gave Dominic and his brothers in Toulouse the name “preachers”. Pope Francis affirms in his letter that *preacher of grace* is a title attributed to St. Dominic that “stands out for its consonance with the charism and mission of the Order he founded” i.e., the *grace of preaching* and the *preaching of grace*.

We thank the Holy Father for being *Peter* to us, for strengthening us in the faith (Luke 22:32). We thank Pope *Francis* for greeting the family of *Dominic*. We recall how Domingo de Caleruega and Francesco d’Assisi incarnate saintly fraternity and friendship as foundation of the *evangelization* in their time. As we thank Pope Francis for his paternal solicitude and fraternal closeness to the Order, we also greet him and the Society of Jesus on the 5th centenary of the conversion of St. Ignatius of Loyola on this same year of the Lord 2021. It is well known that a significant aspect of that graced moment of

conversion was his life-changing question: **“What if I should do what Saint Francis or Saint Dominic did?”** Indeed, it is marvelous that on this providential coincidence of jubilees, a confrere of Ignatius, the first Pope who chose the name *Francis* writes a letter to the family of *Dominic*!

By expressing his “prayerful greetings... to all the members of that great family, which embraces the contemplative lives and apostolic works of its nuns and religious sisters, its priestly and lay fraternities, its secular institutes and its youth movements” the Holy Father recognizes that the family of preachers practically includes all states of life in the church. Consequently, the writings of scholars, poets and mystics as well as artworks, works of charity and mercy by the members of the different branches of the family are acknowledged as forms or “genres” of preaching. Significantly, the members of the Dominican family, whose voices were silenced by martyrdom, are recognized as offering us an extraordinarily eloquent form of preaching.

“Speaking either with God or about God”, St. Dominic embodied a synergy of contemplation and action and exemplified a *disciple-missionary*, called to follow and sent to preach the way of the Gospel. It is worth pondering that the Holy Father uses the term *missionary-disciple* instead. Perhaps, Pope Francis is inviting us to realize that the God who *sends us* in mission is the same God who is present everywhere and constantly invites us to *follow* Him as disciples.

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Master of the Order

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