The Dominican Charism in American Higher Education:

A Vision in Service of Truth

Sponsored by
Dominican Higher Education Council
2026 Edition

Dominican Higher Education Council

This document was commissioned by the presidents of the Dominican colleges and universities in the U.S. in conjunction with the 2012 Dominican Higher Education Colloquium entitled The Contemplative Vision: Love, Truth and Reality. It is intended to be "a conversation starter" within and among the institutions of Dominican higher education in the United States to stimulate research and writing that will further explore and articulate the richness of the Dominican tradition. All are invited to bring their scholarship, convictions and experiences to the conversation.

Thanks to the initiative of then-president, Dr. Donna M. Carroll, Dominican University assumed responsibility for the publication of the 2012 document. In 2024, the presidents of the Dominican Higher Education Council (DHEC) recognized the need for a review of the document and authorized an updated version be ready for dissemination at the 2026 Dominican Higher Education Colloquium.

Special thanks go to the American Dominicans who formed the original writing team:

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The original writers were both honored and challenged by the task entrusted to them. They submitted their work to the scholarly communities of the Dominican colleges and universities with the hope that a communal conversation will become a dialogue that generates future publications on the Dominican contribution to higher education in the United States.

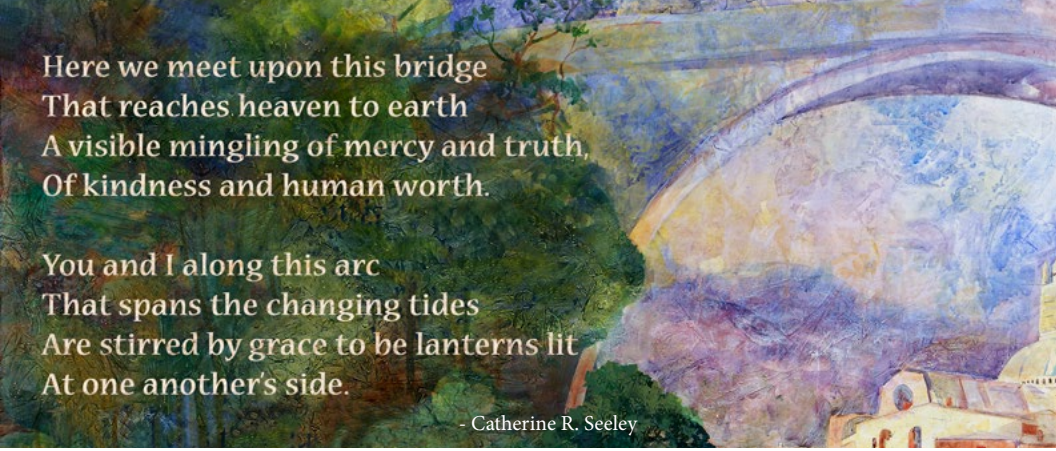
A downloadable version is available at www.dominicanhighered.org.

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines. ***1 Cor 12: 7-11***

Introduction

Dominican education, grounded in an eight-century tradition, is ever new as it evolves to meet the needs of our contemporary society. Rooted in the legacy of the Dominican sisters and brothers who founded American Dominican colleges and universities, the future now rests for the most part in the leadership of dedicated lay women and men. The founding communities have entrusted the heart of the Dominican tradition – and its educational vision - to these courageous partners in mission who contribute their leadership, wisdom, knowledge and faith to institutions initially founded and staffed by vowed religious. As stewards of the tradition and keepers of the charism, lay partners are called to understand its history, preserve its legacy, foster its culture and sustain its intellectual and spiritual heritage for generations of students to come.

Collaboration of vowed Dominicans with lay women and men is not without precedent in the history of the Order. In 1206, Dominic gathered together a community of religious women and men, as well as devoted lay persons who valued preaching and teaching the truth of the Gospel for the church of their age. Today in our colleges and universities the collaboration of the laity with Dominican sisters and friars in commitment to Dominican mission embodies the fullness of the Dominican family that Dominic had envisioned at the beginning of the Order.



This document is written to the contemporary world of Dominican higher education in the United States — out of the collaboration of women and men, religious and lay — for the sake of sustaining a continuous conversation regarding the unique heritage, vision and mission of American Dominican higher education in the 21st century. By initiating the conversation we hope to engage the scholarly richness and diverse experience of our colleagues in Dominican institutions in reflection upon our shared mission and, most importantly, to occasion further research and writing that will articulate the wisdom of the Dominican charism in higher education.

Our Dominican Heritage and Charism

Christians believe that the Holy Spirit continues to grace the church in every age through gifts entrusted to individuals and groups. Through this grace, religious congregations have been birthed over the centuries in response to particular needs of the church and the world. One of these ecclesial groups is the Order of Preachers, also known as the Dominicans. The unique gift — or charism — of the Dominican family is a passion for truth, a passion pursued through communal study and contemplation and expressed in works of preaching and teaching. Founded by Dominic de Guzmán in the 13th century, the Order of Preachers was a bold experiment that integrated contemplation and rigorous study with an itinerant life of teaching and preaching. Dominic wanted the order to serve from the heart of the church and to offer a response to the needs of the world out of an active dialogue with the best learning of the time.

Dominic's understanding of the human condition had a profound influence on his theological mission. The Albigensian heresy was prevalent in Dominic's time. It maintained that the physical world was evil, including



the human person. Dominic knew the danger of this false teaching, and it stirred in him a zeal for truth, a theme that would dominate his life and mission. This theme was not simply intellectual. It was deeply spiritual and rooted in compassion for the salvation of souls. In a quote attributed to Dominican Friar Vincent Oshida, we find the essence of Dominic's view of compassion: "Your heart must be tender to feel another's suffering. If you can do this, you are truly human." True compassion changes the way you live and bridges the gap between the utterly compassionate God and the wounded nature of the human person. It was this zeal for truth and notion of compassion for others that fueled Dominic's preaching. Rooted in the belief that truth without compassion wounds and mercy without truth is a comfortable form of lying, Dominic's search for truth was grounded in the concept of Incarnational theology leading him to preach about the inherent goodness of the physical world.

Dominic emphasized that the divine-human covenant is enacted within everyday life; it is here where God engages us and reaches out to us. Dominic founded his mission in the world because that is where God has chosen to dwell. And he respected the diversity of this world, where each person brings their gifts and talents. Despite our wounded nature, Incarnational theology understands humanity as a sacrament to others and an occasion of grace. We are God-bearers called to see God in all things.

Eight centuries later, Dominican education continues to embrace Dominic's zeal for truth, compassion for others, a universe that mediates the Creator, the unshakeable belief in the inherent dignity of every human person who is created in God's image. Although our lived experience is quite different from the 13th century world, Dominic's example continues to inspire.

The Beginnings of Dominican Higher Education in the United States

The history of Dominican higher education in the United States begins as European immigrants, many of whom were Catholic, moved westward in the early years of the 19th century. Dominican friars, called to serve on the New Frontier, came to Kentucky and Ohio and established houses of study (*studia*) to educate their members and other young men of the area. By the late 19th century, Dominican women of the Order began to establish liberal arts colleges for young Catholic women from the Hudson River to the Mississippi, from Michigan and Wisconsin to Kentucky and Louisiana, from Connecticut to Florida and from New Jersey to Ohio and California. In the early 20th century, the friars founded Providence College for the education of men and added *studia* in California, Illinois, Iowa and Missouri as provinces were established.

The remarkable commitment of American Dominicans to higher education that began in the 19th century and expanded to co-educational campuses in the late 20th century created a national network of colleges and universities grounded in the liberal arts tradition. Today, these institutions remain inspired by the Catholic faith and the Dominican educational vision. They offer curricula that integrate the liberal arts and professional education in ways that prepare students for a meaningful life of service and fulfillment.

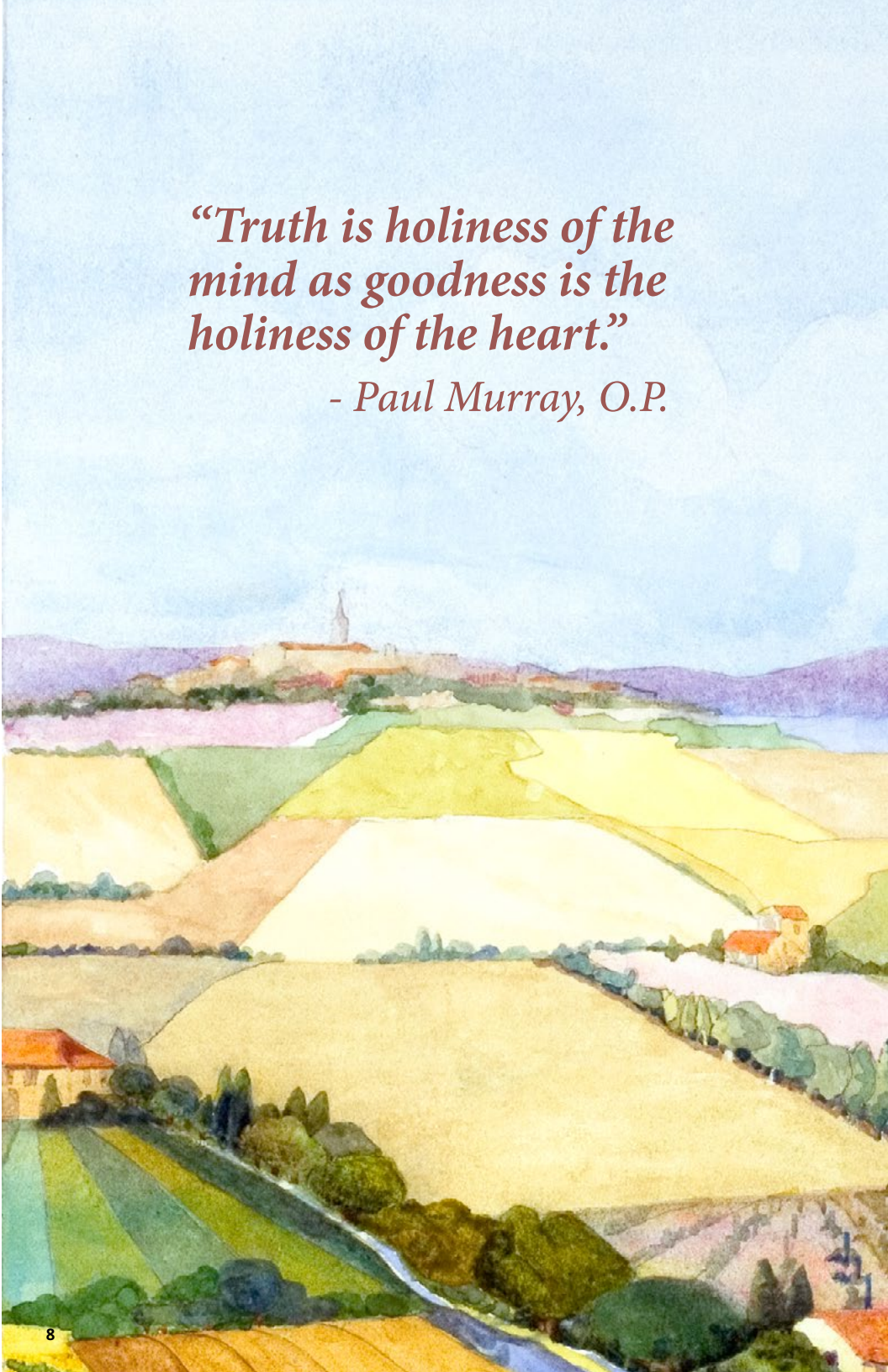
"As scholars and teachers, we delight in the world of scholarship that allows us to ponder, propose, discover, articulate, verify, confirm and publish..."

- Laurie Brink, O.P.



"Truth is holiness of the mind as goodness is the holiness of the heart."

- Paul Murray, O.P.



A Dominican Vision for Higher Education

The Dominican intellectual tradition that has shaped Dominican colleges and universities in the United States is grounded in values integral to the mission of the Order: the pursuit of truth, integration of study and contemplation, seeing God in all things, compassion and justice and engaged scholarship.

These tenets have been instituted at each university and throughout the Dominican family through the four pillars of Dominican life: Prayer, Study, Service and Community. Some Dominican schools elaborate on our tradition by using similar words to express these foundational values. For example, "spirituality," "contemplation," or "reflection" for prayer and "preaching" for service (where service is a form of preaching with our lives.)

The Pursuit of Truth

"Veritas" — Truth is the operative virtue of the Order of Preachers. The pursuit of truth motivates and propels Dominican mission. For Dominican scholars, commitment to truth is both a virtue and a passion. Yves Congar confessed his passion for truth when he wrote: "I have loved the truth as one loves a person"; Richard Woods describes Dominicans as "followers of the star called Veritas"; and Ann Garrido speaks of the Dominican quest for truth as "the quest to come to know what is real;" a quest that implies engagement of the world — coming to know through one's senses what actually exists. The Dominican passion for truth presumes a confidence in the intellect's capacity for discerning truth and for reaching a level of clarity that enables both teacher and student to distinguish truth from error and distortions and half-truths from truth.

The writings of St. Thomas Aquinas demonstrate the scholastic practice of *disputatio*, a method that seeks to resolve difficult questions and controverted issues by finding the truth in each. This practice required of medieval masters and students, as it does today of teachers and learners, a rigorous exploration of multiple ways of resolving a question, ways leading to the one resolution that can be best supported by reason and evidence. The practice of *disputatio* and the heritage associated with it challenges Dominican men and women of all ages to direct their talents not only to the resolution of matters of speculative interest, but also to urgent questions of justice and peace.

Study and Contemplation

Study and contemplation engage all of reality in the pursuit of the true and the good for the sake of others. Sharing the fruits of these pursuits has shaped the educational mission and message of Dominicans in every age. From its beginnings, the Order was formed and shaped by both the intellectual pursuit of the friars and sisters in the universities and the prayer life of those in early monasteries. Thus, Dominicans have engaged the reality of their world and sought a deeper truth through assiduous study and contemplation. Dominican pedagogy, then, is the union of study and contemplation in the service of truth, wherever it leads.

Seeing God in All Things

The search for truth requires not just looking, but seeing — seeing God in all things and all things in God. This requires us to move beyond an anthropocentric world view and to learn to see the world in its fullness. St. Dominic taught that physical matter or Earthly creation and not just spirit is holy. The Dominican tradition emphasizes grace perfecting on nature or goodness embodied within everything that is.

Creation itself, and our modern study of it, exquisitely demonstrates the interconnectedness of all reality. In his 2015 encyclical, *Laudato Si' (Praise Be to You): On Care for our Common Home*, Pope Francis calls each of us to acknowledge this interconnectedness and transform our own consciousness. As Dominican educational institutions, we are uniquely positioned to offer a transformative education.

A clear vision of the interconnected nature of all reality informs all knowledge and is the basis of the sacramental life itself — a vision where the created order is seen and experienced as an occasion of grace. Good in itself, nature mediates God's grace and participates in it. In the Dominican world-view, creation is sacred; grace builds on nature; and faith and reason are in harmony.

St. Thomas Aquinas, O.P., expressed this holistic vision of looking at and being in the world in his understanding of "natural law." It is available to all rational persons and is based on the conviction that God's plan is refracted to us through revelation, tradition and reasoned reflection on human life and experience.



Laudato Si' asks us to widen our vision of what is sacred. As Dominicans, we are called to seek truth. We need to widen our understanding of that truth."

–Sister Patricia Siemen, O.P.

Compassion and Justice

Out of a deep belief in the grace of creation and in fidelity to the spirit of the founder, the Order of Preachers emerged in response to the suffering and ignorance that St. Dominic encountered in the world of the 13th century. Dominican institutions of higher education continue to address the thirst for truth and cries for justice of their age; they are called to be communities of compassion and justice in the service of truth. From their earliest beginnings, Dominicans have been called to see what is needed and to do what is useful. We are called to be attentive to the "signs of the times."

Engaged Scholarship

Urgent questions fuel Dominican scholarship. The liberal arts tradition of the institutions founded by Dominican friars and sisters is a story of engaged scholarship. Vowed Dominicans who earned doctorates in political science, economics, chemistry and biology were not only active in their professional guilds but were also engaged with social and scientific questions of their time. For example, the engaged scholarship of Dominican sisters exposed the false biological assumptions underlying racial prejudice and helped to build the intellectual foundations for the civil rights agenda. Dominican women contributed to the advancement of cancer research, explored the relationship between religion and science and worked to integrate elements of faith and psychology. In the depths of the Depression, in response to the needs of surrounding communities, Dominican sister-scholars offered free evening courses for adults in both liberal and professional studies.

"Instead of saying one was right and the other wrong, the task was to reconcile the truth that was in each of them... the holistic, reconciling way of doing theology came to characterize the best of the Dominican theological tradition."

-Liam Walsh, OP



Dominican Practices Faithful to Our Heritage

The distinctive vision of Dominican education is manifest in characteristic practices and pedagogy. Many of the practices we treasure and celebrate in Dominican institutions come from eight centuries of life and ministry in the university milieu. In the 21st century, a shared vision of Dominican higher education is expressed in the four Dominican pillars:

Study

Service

Prayer

Community



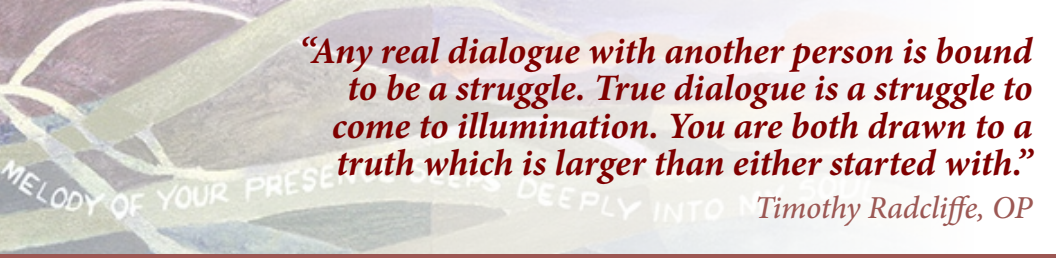
1 Study

True to the Dominican motto, "*contemplare et comtemplata aliis tradere*" (to contemplate and to hand on to others the fruits of contemplation) Dominican schools provide time and space for students to reflect on all reality — the self, God, nature, the cosmos, the world and its people near and far. Dominican educational practices encourage students to sharpen their vision, to look beyond the surface, to probe the depths of all creation and of all that they encounter, both inside and outside the classroom. Patricia Walters suggests that Dominican colleges and universities might best be labeled "schools of ophthalmology," where students and teachers alike learn to perceive and to see more clearly. In a world filled with noise, fixated on multitasking and obsessed with "doing," the Dominican dedication to contemplation as a way of seeing anew, as an avenue to pursuing truth, is, indeed, countercultural.

For Dominicans, contemplative study has two purposes. It brings a deeper and more holistic understanding of a particular science or discipline and, even more importantly, it is ultimately revelatory of God. If our study is oriented to truth, it is oriented to God. Whether the object of study is mathematics or art or music or literature — each reveals something about God. This conviction breaks open the boundary between "secular" and "sacred" knowledge. For a student in the Dominican tradition, any discipline can entertain the question: "What does this tell us of God?"

Making Connections

Dominican institutions exist within a dynamic and challenging information society. Students and faculty are awash with print, digital, audio and visual information that not only teaches but also effects personal lives and relationships. The gifts and the dangers of advanced technology's presence in academe offers its own challenges because it has the potential to distort truth. It can also reduce the pursuit of truth to something of merely instrumental value or foster an attitude of passivity in terms of learning. It is tempting to deal with this surfeit of information by cutting it down, separating it, dichotomizing it and dividing our intellectual pursuits into disciplines and departments. If we do so, we often lose sight of the



"Any real dialogue with another person is bound to be a struggle. True dialogue is a struggle to come to illumination. You are both drawn to a truth which is larger than either started with."

Timothy Radcliffe, OP

essential connections among them. However, Pope Leo encourages us "to teach young people to use these tools with their own intelligence, ensuring that they open themselves to the search for truth." Information is important, knowledge is essential and inspired wisdom leads us to shared truth and social justice.

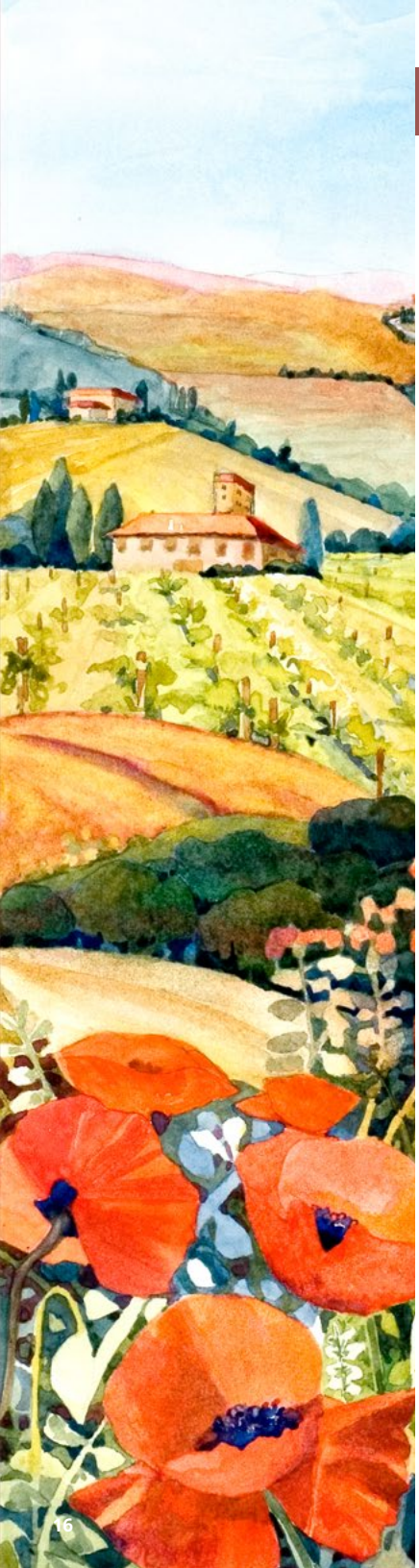
Historically, theology and philosophy have been integrating disciplines throughout Catholic institutions of higher education. Dominican faculties in all academic disciplines carry on this tradition when they ask what their disciplines have to do with one another and how their field of knowledge can relate to questions within philosophy and theology. Every area of integrative study helps students to articulate connections between their coursework and their lives beyond the classroom and between their own lives and the lives of others — past, present and future.

Promoting the Arts

Since the time of Fra Angelico, Dominicans have exercised their charism of preaching through participation in and practice of the arts. From the earliest founding of the American Dominican colleges, the arts have been central to the curriculum. Dominican faculties have been and are comprised of remarkable artists, musicians and sculptors, whose work reveals God as beauty as well as truth and whose teaching awakens the creative gifts of students. Dominican campuses feature the works of these sculptors and artists, musicians and poets, who express the Dominican charism through their artistic works. They were and are scholarly teachers as well as artists, and in their studios and from their works, students find expression of the mystery of the divine presence at the heart of reality. Today, lay and religious faculties continue to collaborate in their commitment to expressing the truth of beauty through the arts.

"What the world needs is openness to light, if I may put it like that. For me, that light is love, and points to the immortality of the soul. As an artist, my job is to make the inner light visible."

Kim En Joong, O.P.



2 Service

Within Dominican institutions of higher education inherent connections are made between the pursuit of truth and the work of justice. Dominican educators seek to integrate the principles of Catholic Social Teaching into their disciplines. For example, doing so enables them to develop arguments from philosophy and Scripture against the death penalty and to bring medical science into dialogue with Catholic moral teaching and the Christian spiritual tradition on death and dying. In American higher education the contemporary focus on civic engagement and global citizenship finds a strong rationale and vision in the Catholic social tradition and in the history of engaged Dominican scholarship.

Questions framed in the light of the Gospel and from the richness of Catholic Social Teaching encourage students to work for justice in our world, particularly in courses that include a service-learning component. These courses enable students to put into practice the principles of Catholic Social Teaching. Public sector internships allow students to develop an understanding of their civic responsibilities. Through volunteering, their internships and their service learning projects, students are called to articulate the connection between the principles of justice and the demands for just action.

"The thirst for justice is not separable from the thirst for truth, witness not separable from proclamation, solidarity with the poor not separable from solidarity with Christ; action on behalf of justice is not separable from the evolution of a contemplative consciousness."

Don Goergen, O.P.

3 *Prayer*

In the Dominician tradition, prayer is a dialogical encounter with the God who loves us. It is the starting point and the sustaining force of our mission to preach the gospel.

Dominic was above all a preacher. He sent his friars out two by two to bring the light of the Gospel to the far corners of a dark world. Dominic founded “houses of study,” priories and convents that formed and nourished the “holy preaching.” These communities were an institutional embodiment of Dominican mission. Today Dominican institutions of higher education have inherited this vocation to preach. They do this through assiduous study of the Word, theological reflection, campus ministry, retreats and especially through student participation in the National College “Preaching in Action Conference.”

Because faith is not simply a private matter, our institutions engage in “public preaching” oriented more to justice and the common good than to personal spirituality. Dominican schools have a serious obligation to preach by addressing economic, political and social issues that affect society and our life together. Dominican institutions preach publicly when they raise questions, frame hypotheses, challenge prevailing assumptions, or critique policy decisions in light of the basic principles of Catholic Social Teaching. This mode of preaching creates space in public discourse for the explicitly ethical and moral dimensions of public policy.





4 Community

In the Dominican tradition, the search for truth is not solely an individual pursuit; professors, scholars, researchers, community partners and learners seek understanding together as a community. Whether in the classroom, the laboratory, the garden, the theatre or the art studio, students and teachers learn from one another in an atmosphere of openness and mutuality. Dominican colleges and universities provide a hospitable space where all are invited to share their their perspectives and insights as all seek to know the many faces of truth within the community. Dominican teaching and learning is a sustained conversation about things that matter; it is a conversation that forms a community of truth.



"The hallmark of the community of truth is in its claim that reality is a web of communal relationship, and we can know reality only by being in community with it."
-Parker Palmer



Cultivating and Celebrating Diversity

The fundamental Catholic principle of the inherent dignity, value and equality of each human person lies at the heart of Dominican education and fosters a spirit of inclusion, mutual respect, empathy, hospitality and caring to create diverse learning communities. The Dominican call to community is a call to embrace a diversity that originated with the Founder. Since the time of St. Dominic, the Order of Preachers has been inclusive — of men and women, religious and lay, ordained and non-ordained. In the contemporary American experience of Dominican higher education, institutions founded to serve a single sex student body are now coed; schools of theology founded to prepare men for priestly ministry now educate both women and men, lay and religious. The 21st century Dominican learning community has a multiplicity of perspectives and differences that include race, ethnicity, language, religion, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, physical and intellectual abilities and ways of knowing. Exposure to the wide range of experience within higher education expands an understanding of the multiple threads that create the fabric of a collaborative society marked by solidarity and acceptance of differences. At the same time, our notion of diversity must extend beyond a human-centered framework to be inclusive of all forms of creation that inhabit Earth. Timothy Radcliffe, O.P. reminds Dominican institutions of higher education of their true call when he says "...we are called to be a place of counter-culture, of a different way of relating, through which one believes that one may learn something from those with whom one disagrees. This requires of us compassion and vulnerability."

Inspiring Compassion

In a tradition that began with St. Dominic, who sold his books to alleviate the sufferings of the poor, Dominican educational practices foster compassion for all those in need. Study is undertaken not for itself alone,



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but for its service to the world at large. Those educated in the Dominican tradition study in order to respond to the needs of their time, whether that means alleviating suffering, enhancing the dignity of each person, serving those in need, or working for peace and justice while upholding the sacredness of Earth.

All who serve in a Dominican institution — administration, staff and faculty — model compassion and empathy by creating a hospitable atmosphere where diversity is respected and where students are encouraged to speak their truth. From the moment students enter a Dominican university or college, they are welcomed by the staff committed to student services — in admissions, the registrar's office, student accounts, financial aid, to name but a few. Residential staffs create an atmosphere in which students are encouraged to develop academically and socially, and in which diversity is respected. During their years of study, library staff and the IT department provide resources to students that enhance their learning and engagement. Those serving in health and wellness centers compassionately tend to students' physical and emotional well being, just as university ministers encourage and enhance students' spiritual development. Thus, staff members play a crucial role in the intellectual, social, emotional, physical and spiritual growth of our students.

Professors see suffering around them and realize that their scholarship and teaching must serve the needs of the world, especially with regard to justice and peace. This is a traditional understanding of compassion —

"Your heart must be tender to feel another's suffering. If you can do that, you are truly human."

-Vincent Shigeto Oshida, O.P.



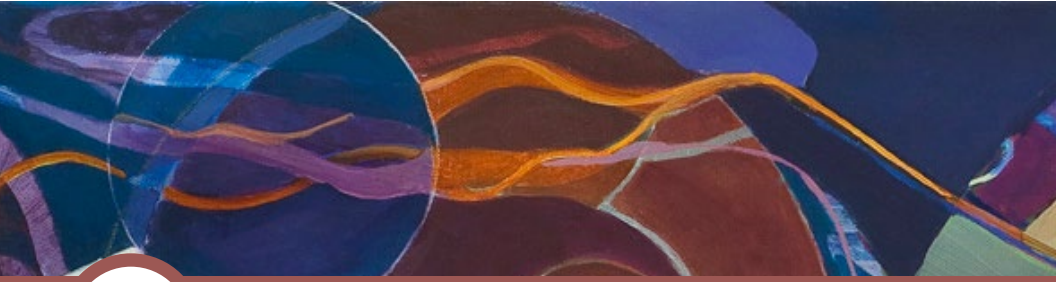
responding to the emotional and physical needs of others. Professors have the opportunity to exercise intellectual compassion as well. This kind of compassion causes us to be moved not only by others' physical suffering but by their intellectual confusion or uncertainty. Intellectual compassion seeks to bring comfort to others by dispelling uncertainty and helping them to understand. St. Thomas said it is better to illuminate rather than merely to shine, and this is exactly what intellectual compassion compels professors to do. Careful scholarship and teaching seek to clarify, simplify and enlighten.

This atmosphere of compassion and caring exists because the administrators of Dominican institutions encourage faculty and staff in their dedication to the total well being of every student. Without their inspiration and support, faculty and staff would lack the resources to serve students in a spirit of *caritas* (charity). Administrators themselves model and inspire compassion in their conversations and interactions with colleagues and students.

Promoting the Common Good

The common good is a political and social reality that may be defined as "the sum total of social conditions that allow people, either as groups or individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily." The common good concerns the life of all members of the Earth community. It calls for prudence from each, and even more from those who exercise the office of authority. From this, we see that the common good is the goal of political life.

The common good is not just a political and social reality, it also has a theological dimension. Thomas Aquinas understood the common good as intrinsic to God: "Now the good of the whole universe is that which is apprehended by God, who is the maker and governor of all things: hence



4 Community

whatever he wills, he wills under the aspect of the common good. This is his own goodness, which is the good of the whole universe."

Formed by Aquinas' understanding, Dominicans see the common good as a foreshadowing of the reign of God. The common good is an organic experience of living together in justice and love, not simply the sum total of individual needs and desires. By the study of all fields of knowledge, Dominican higher education endeavors to help shape a society where the pursuit of goodness is possible and in which every person enjoys dignity and respect.

VERITAS

Epilogue:

For Dominicans, the pursuit of truth wherever it is found, is a life-long search – with good companions. The integration of the preaching mission of the Order with formal academic studies has generated a global network of education which continues a dialogue with the human person and a culture that mirrors Dominic's conversation with the innkeeper more than eight centuries ago. To the Dominican Family, this opportunity for *disputatio* allows us to take the time and actively listen to each other's truths.

Dominican colleges and universities have been inspired and shaped by an 800-year tradition, and they claim this charism joyfully! With the members of the family of Dominic, they exist—as Dominic did—in the midst of the church and the world; and they speak out for truth and justice, "*Ex Corde Ecclesiae*," from the heart of the church, in times and places where the Gospel message is desperately needed.

Dominican institutions of higher education across the United States were established by vowed religious communities of sisters and friars to accompany us in that pursuit. Now they are predominantly led by lay men and women serving in leadership positions. As the role of vowed Dominicans changes within our institutions, knowledge of and commitment to the Dominican educational vision emerges as paramount. The understanding of the Dominican vision and its practices described here is not intended to exhaust the many dimensions of the Dominican tradition but rather to stimulate further reflection on the charism as it is embodied in contemporary American Dominican institutions of higher education.

The colleges and universities that comprise the Dominican Higher Education Council have inherited this legacy and seek to make it manifest so that it may flourish and be shared with future generations. The charism and its manifestation in Dominican institutions of higher education are a cherished gift needed in our troubled world and as light and hope for the church of the 21st century.

The search -- For self, for wisdom, for love, for truth, for justice, for God, Is strenuous and unending. We need good companions in order to persevere in it. In good company, in a community of conviction, the quest Never loses its Relevance, Its urgency, Or its savor.

- Kaye Ashe, O.P.

Dominican Colleges and Universities in the United States

Member Institutions:

Albertus Magnus College - New Haven, Connecticut
Dominican Sisters of Peace
Aquinas College - Grand Rapids, Michigan
Dominican Sisters of Grand Rapids
Barry University - Miami, Florida
Dominican Sisters of Adrian
Caldwell University - Caldwell, New Jersey
Dominican Sisters of Caldwell
Dominican University - River Forest, Illinois
Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa
Dominican University New York - Orangeburg, New York
Dominicans Sisters of Blauvelt
Edgewood University - Madison, Wisconsin
Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa
Molloy University - Rockville Centre, New York
Dominican Sisters of Amityville
Mount Saint Mary College - Newburgh, New York
Dominican Sisters of Hope
Ohio Dominican University - Columbus, Ohio
Dominican Sisters of Peace
Providence College - Providence, Rhode Island
Dominican Friars of the Province of St. Joseph
St. Thomas Aquinas College - Orangeburg, New York
Dominican Sisters of Sparkill

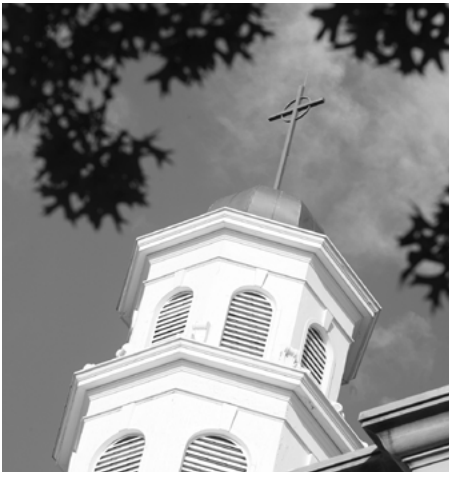
Non-Member Dominican Institutions:

Aquinas College - Nashville, Tennessee
Aquinas Institute - St. Louis, Missouri
Dominican House of Studies - Washington, D.C
Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology - Berkeley, California
Dominican University - San Rafael, California

Former Institutions

St. Catharine College (closed 2016)
Siena Heights University (closed 2026)





SONDEREGGER SCIENCE CENTER

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Dominican Saints and Scholars

This dedication to the pursuit of truth for the sake of others has inspired and formed saints and scholars whose works have built up the faith of the church and contributed to the intellectual and spiritual traditions of the order:

- **St. Dominic:** Our founder from whom we inherit our zeal for the Word and find inspiration in his special gifts of governance and administration, and an immeasurable legacy of wisdom. Feast Day - August 8.

- **St. Thomas Aquinas:** A Dominican friar and masterful theologian and philosopher whose work included proof for the existence of God and the Summa Theologica. Feast Day - January 28.

Dominican Saints and Scholars

- **St. Catherine of Siena:** Our sister-doctor who inspires all to speak truth to power, Italian mystic and ascetic; a patron saint of the Dominican order. Feast day - April 29.

- **St. Albert the Great:** A scientist and lover of the universe, who inspires our care of the earth. Feast Day - November 15

- **Meister Eckhart:** A German master of prayer and contemplation, who gifts us with audacity to be open to all sources of truth.

- **Bartolomé de las Casas:** Spanish priest and Dominican who preached against the unjust treatment of indigenous peoples in the Americas.

- **Marie-Joseph LaGrange:** A faithful and fearless lover of the Word who founded L'École Biblique in Jerusalem.

- **Yves Congar:** A French theologian whose scholarly work shaped the documents of the Second Vatican Council.

- **St. Martin de Porres:** The son of a Spanish nobleman and a freed black slave, Martin faced great prejudice but lived a heroic life dedicated to charity for the poor and marginalized. He is known as the patron saint of social justice. Feast Day - November 3.

- **St. Rose of Lima:** The first canonized saint of the Americas, Rose was known for her life of prayer, penance and contemplation. Feast Day - August 23.

- **Marina of Omura:** a Japanese laywoman and Dominican tertiary who sheltered Christians during persecutions and was martyred.

Dominican Saints and Scholars

- **Fra Angelico:** A gifted friar, who preached not with words but with paint and color, and who challenges us to see God through the beauty of the arts.

- **Francisco de Vitoria:** A brilliant lawyer-friar, who, along with his friar-brothers at the University of Salamanca, developed international law that would reform the Spanish colonies of the Americas.

- **Jacobo Kyushei Gorobioye Tomonaga de Santa Maria:** Japanese Dominican priest who was martyred for his preaching.

- **Saint Pierre-Lucien Claverie:** A French-born Dominican friar known for his deep commitment to Christian–Muslim dialogue and reconciliation. He was assassinated in 1996 and beatified in 2018 with 18 other Algerian martyrs; he is remembered as "the Bishop of the Muslims." Feast Day: August 1

- **St. Bartolo Longo:** He is known as the Apostle of the Rosary and built the Pontifical Shrine of the Most Holy Rosary of Pompeii. He was a former occultist and Satanic priest from Naples who converted to Catholicism and became a member of the Third Order of Dominicans. Feast Day - October 5.

- **St. Pier Giorgio Frassati:** a member of the Third Order Dominicans who was known for his love of mountain climbing. He was actively engaged in lay leadership and worked for social justice by caring for the sick and poor. He is the global patron and companion of young adults and athletes. Feast Day - August 1.



Questions for Communal Reflection

This document offers a brief overview of the Dominican educational charism and a vision for Dominican higher education in the United States that flows from this heritage. This vision is foundational to our institutions and has shaped our practices and pedagogy. College and university leaders are invited to bring board members, faculty, staff and students into conversation about how the Dominican educational charism shapes their own institutions and how it can be deepened and developed into the future. The following questions are offered to begin the conversation:

1. From your experience at a Dominican institution of higher education, how would you describe the Dominican tradition? How does your experience correlate with the heritage and vision as described in this document?

2. What do you think are the essential aspects of the Dominican tradition? How are those aspects of the tradition expressed and embodied in your institution at the present moment?

3. What practices outlined in this document can you identify at your own institution? What additional practices would you include as essentially Dominican?



Questions for Communal Reflection

4. Included in the story of the Dominican heritage are saints and scholars who have helped to form and shape the Dominican intellectual tradition. Who is missing? In the past 150 years American sisters and friars have continued to express and shape that tradition. Who are "the greats" in your institutional history? Who will tell the story of their contributions?

5. Where in your curriculum are the "big questions" addressed? Where are connections made between the pursuit of truth and the work of justice? Can you name ways in which your discipline intersects with theology or philosophy? What is the integrative core of your curriculum? Where are the opportunities for interdisciplinary dialogue?

6. Culture has been described as "distinctive and inheritable." In what ways is the Dominican culture of your institution distinctive? How will you pass it on to the next generation?

7. How do we maintain person-centered education in the face of ever-expanding technologies that threaten to replace human beings in the search and preaching/teaching of truth?



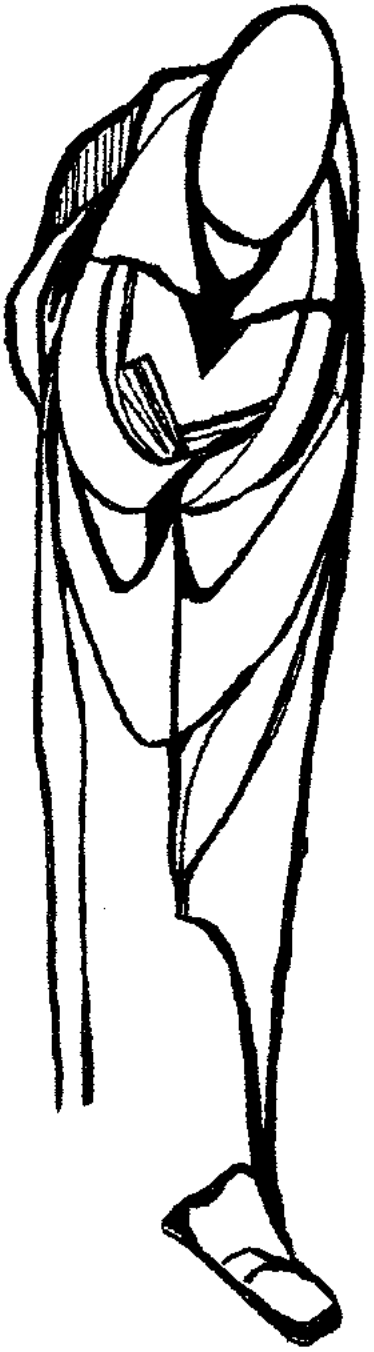
Questions for Communal Reflection

8. How do we maintain a passion for truth in the face of current technology that can 'do the thinking' for us?

9. In what ways do Dominican schools foster a cultural ethos that sees educational technologies at the service of the human being and not the human being as something to be manipulated?

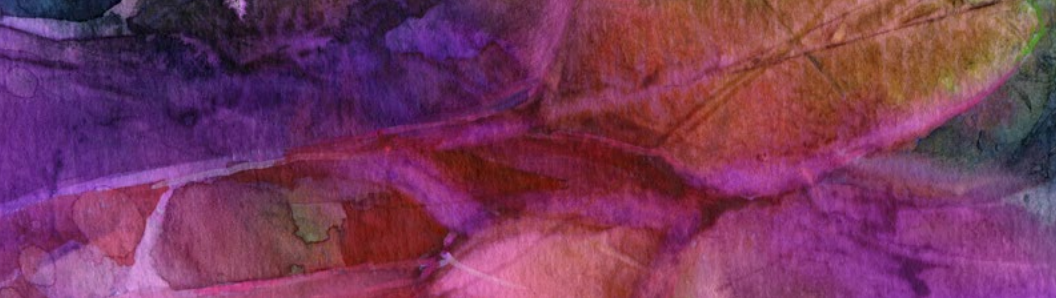
10. What are some of the creative ways that today's modern digital technology is being implemented or used at Dominican schools in professional programs like health care, nursing, business and education?

11. The lay leadership of boards, administration, faculties and staff of Dominican higher education has been entrusted with the Dominican heritage, legacy and intellectual tradition. How will they experience this tradition, allow themselves to be formed by it and pass it on to the next generation? What kinds of programs are in place for their orientation, formation and appropriation of Dominican tradition and culture so that the future is rooted in that same tradition? What are the outcomes we hope for, and how do we measure those outcomes?



WORKS CITED/ RESOURCES

To view go to
www.dominicanhighered.org/resources



GLOSSARY

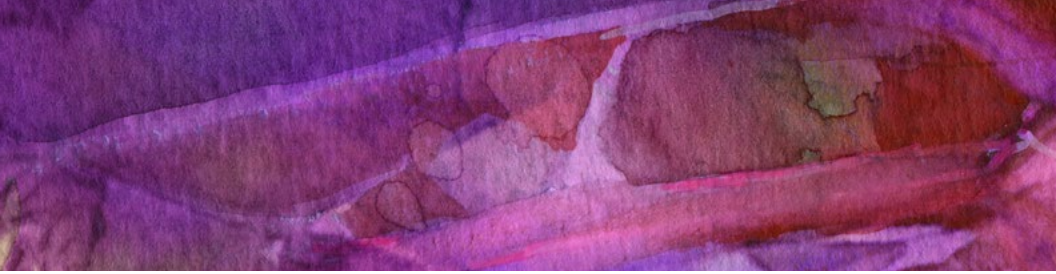
- **Albigensian** named for the town of Albi, the Albigensian heresy was a movement that flourished in southern France in the 12th and 13th centuries.

- **Caleruega, Spain**, is the birthplace of St. Dominic (1170).

- **Catholic Intellectual Tradition (CIT)** epitomizes the ancient Catholic conviction —reaching back to the beginnings of the Church—that faith and reason, divine revelation and human scholarship, are necessary partners to each other.

- **Catholic Social Teaching (CST)** is a body of doctrine that guides Catholics in promoting human dignity, the common good and social justice in all areas of life.

- ***Contemplare et contemplata aliis tradere*** is a Latin phrase which translates into English as "to hand down to others the fruits of contemplation." Derived from the *Summa Theologiae* of St. Thomas Aquinas, OP, the phrase is often used to express the distinct Dominican theory of Christian vocation, and for that reason, it became a motto of the Dominican Order.



GLOSSARY

- **Contemplation** full or deep consideration; reflection. As Walter Burghardt puts it, “A long, loving look at the real.”

- **Convent** a place for a society or association of monks, friars, or nuns.
- **Dichotomize** to divide or become divided into two parts or classifications

- ***Disputatio*** debate or argument; promoting consensus rather than conflict.

- **Dominic de Guzmán** was a Castilian Catholic priest and the founder of the Dominican Order - St. Dominic.

- **Dominican Higher Education Council (DHEC)** a consortiuum of Dominican institutions of higher education in the United States.

- ***Ex Corde Ecclesiae*** - *From the Heart of the Church* is an apostolic constitution from the Catholic Church offering a vision for Catholic identity of universities. The document, created by John Paul II, clarifies that Catholic universities must consider the human person in totality.

- **Ecclesiastical** of or relating to the Catholic church or the clergy; churchly; clerical; not secular.



GLOSSARY

- **Fanjeaux, France** is a town in Southern France where St. Dominic settled after leaving Spain and where the Order of Preachers was first established.
- **Four Pillars of Dominican Tradition** - Prayer, Study, Community and Service; sometimes expressed as spirituality, contemplation, reflection for the pillar of Prayer and preaching for the pillar of Service.
- **House of Study** is an educational institution serving scholars of a religious order.
- **Incarnational Theology** is a Christian theological perspective that is based upon the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation that defines the person of Jesus as both fully human and fully divine. It sees both the material and spiritual dimensions of reality as holy or sacred. It advocates concern for the spiritual and physical condition of the human person as well as the material world.
- ***Laudato Si'*** is the second encyclical of Pope Francis, subtitled "on care for our common home" wherein the Pope criticizes consumerism and irresponsible economic development, laments environmental degradation and global warming.



GLOSSARY

- **Modern Technology** is the capacity of a computer, robot, programmed device, or software application to perform operations and tasks analogous to learning and decision making in humans, such as speech recognition or question answering, i.e., AI - artificial intelligence

- **Order of Preachers** commonly known as the Dominican Order, is a Catholic order founded by St. Dominic in the early 13th century, dedicated to preaching the Gospel and the search for truth (*veritas*).

- **Pedagogy** the art or science of teaching; education; instructional methods.

- **Philosophy** literally means a love of wisdom; it is the rational investigation of the most comprehensive and abstract ideas of human existence: being, knowledge, beauty and morality.

- **Priory** a religious house governed by a prior or prioress, often dependent upon an abbey or monastery.

- **Prouilhe** first established monastery of the Order of Preachers where St. Dominic created a congregation of Dominican Sisters outside the walls of Fanjeaux, France.



GLOSSARY

- **Religious Congregation** is a community of individuals in the Catholic Church or other Christian traditions who live together under religious vows, often focused on prayer, service and a shared spiritual mission.

- **Sacred** devoted or dedicated to a deity or to some religious purpose; consecrated

- **Secular** of or relating to worldly things or to things that are not regarded as religious, spiritual, or sacred; temporal.

- **Service Learning** is an educational approach that integrates community service with academic coursework, allowing students to apply classroom knowledge to real-world problems while fostering civic responsibility.

- **Theology** is traditionally understood as “faith seeking understanding” and is the field of study and analysis that speaks of God’s attributes and God’s relation to the universe; the study of divine things or religious truth.





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Dominican Higher Education Council

A Vision in Service of Truth

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