

# A Monastic Life - An Apostolic Life

© Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia

## *Part I of VII*

### *Introduction*

Can anyone walk two different paths at the same time and make them one? This is what Dominicans do. Thus the motto of the Order: *Contemplare et contemplare aliis tradere* (to contemplate and give to others the fruit of contemplation.) This we have learned from our father, St. Dominic, who founded for the first time in the history of the Church, an Order that is simultaneously contemplative and apostolic. Never before had anyone proposed this way of religious life. We today cannot be true daughters of Dominic without having both parts as strong columns upholding the structure of our consecrated life.

How did Dominic conceive bringing two supposedly opposite elements together? God prepared him as He does each of us.

**Dominic was sensitive to people.** As a child in the northern part of the Burgos province of Spain, in his village of Caleruega, he saw the poverty and hard labors of his people. Yet, he also witnessed their goodness, happiness, bravery and noble dignity.

**Dominic acted where he saw a need.** When he was a young student in Palencia a great famine spread through the land. Spontaneously he sold his precious annotated manuscripts to provide food for the starving.

**Dominic contemplated God within a structured life.** As a young man called by the bishop to be a canon in Osma, he first learned and lived a monastic way of life.

Founding an Order was not in the mind of Dominic, even as a canon of Osma. As his life unfolded, circumstances, needs and varied experiences gradually led him to this unique way of life and the ultimate approval of the Church.

No matter how varied our lives, our structures or circumstances may be, we are each singularly prepared by God for the plan He has for each of us.

To come, reflections on:

- *Monastic elements*
- *The Liturgy*
- *Meditation and contemplation*
- *Study*
- *Silence*
- *The cells and the refectory*