

# **A Monastic Life - An Apostolic Life**

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## ***Part II of VII***

### ***Monastic elements***

St. Dominic's all-embracing heart was vibrant, disciplined and joyous. He spent years combating heresy, living as the apostles, traveling on foot and preaching Truth. The great need of souls cried out for apostolic preachers and teachers with trained minds who at the same time would keep close to their Crucified Lord in prayer. This dual activity became the motto of the Order of Preachers, and thus, of our Congregation of Saint Cecilia, "to contemplate and give to others the fruits of contemplation."

The following monastic elements are essential to our life as members of the Dominican Order and as members of the St. Cecilia Congregation. From this contemplative foundation, we take what is pondered in our prayer out to the world where we serve our brothers and sisters. The following series will address the monastic elements that characterize our life: the liturgy, meditation and contemplation, study, silence, the cell, and the refectory. Further, insights from well known Dominicans will give insights into the depth and meaning of this life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### *Reflections on Dominican Life*

"It is precisely this contemplative activity of study, buttressed by the regular observances of silence, cloister, prayer and the common life that is often neglected by those who are more intent on *doing* than in *becoming*. Dominicans are not exempt from the temptation to discard the regular observances that foster a contemplative attitude. If they do this, however, they may carry on an effective apostolate, but it will be "the fruit of a form of contemplation that is more intellectual than religious in character."

Fr. Jordan Aumann, O.P.

"The Dominican Rule and Constitutions bear the stamp of the Church's approval. The discipline they impose will bring Dominicans grace, if they sincerely submit to it. Père Cormier underlined this truth: "All observances, even the least, hide a certain grace and deserve that we diligently carry them out. "Pope John XXII is said to have remarked when he was canonizing St. Thomas Aquinas: 'Prove to me that a Friar Preacher has kept his rule perfectly, and I will canonize him forthwith without any further proof of sanctity.'"

Fr. William Hinnebusch, O.P.

"The observances, immolating the religious as a victim of holocaust, play a vital part in Dominican life. Chief among the rubrics of the Rule and Constitutions are the monastic observances: silence, fasting, abstinence, wearing the habit, kissing the scapular, and grace before and after meals...The observances stand among the four chief means - the vows, choral recitation of the Office, the common life with its monastic observances, and the assiduous study of sacred truth - chosen by St. Dominic for the achievement of the Order's ends. Founders prized

the observances for their many contributions to the community and to individual religious. Among these benefits was the establishment of an atmosphere of sacrifice. The observances not only ensure united direction in a community, offering the members fellowship, love and support, and promoting the apostolate, but also provide opportunity for mortification.”

Fr. William Hinnebusch, O.P.

To come, reflections on:

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