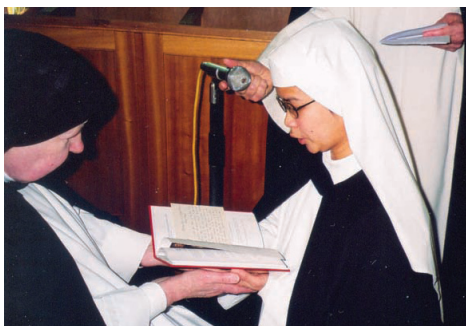


*"Pray the Lord of the harvest to send labourers..."*



On February 2<sup>nd</sup>, as the Church remembers all those consecrated to God by Religious Profession, our dear Sister Grace Marie of the Holy Trinity offered her life to the Lord by her First Profession of Vows. Sister met our Community while on pilgrimage to Fatima with her mother and aunt a few years ago. It was a special joy to welcome her family and friends from Philippines and various parts of the world for this occasion.

Thus, Sister has begun her cloistered religious life – a life dedicated entirely to the contemplation of the mysteries of our Faith; a life of continual prayer – the Eucharist, the Liturgy of the Hours and the Holy Rosary, our great means of "intercession, along with Mary's, in placing the wounded of our world at the feet of Jesus."

In a letter to her sister Céline, St. Therese once wrote: "...Jesus has so

incomprehensible a love for us that He wills that we have a share with Him in the salvation of souls. He wills to do nothing without us. The Creator of the universe awaits the prayer of a poor little soul to save other souls redeemed like it at the price of all His Blood. ...These are the words of Jesus: 'Lift your eyes and see.' See how in my heaven there are empty places; it is up to you to fill them, you are My Moses praying on the mountain, ask Me for workers and I shall send them, I await only a prayer, a sigh from your heart!"

At this time when the whole Church is praying for Vocations to the priesthood and religious life we ask all of our *Friends of Fatima* to pray fervently – especially the Rosary - because indeed "the harvest is rich but the labourers are few"(Lk 10:2; Mt 9:37).

For young women, who may feel called to our Dominican contemplative way of life, we invite you to write to Mother Prioress at the address below for further information about our international, English speaking Community here in Fatima.

***"I am the Way, the Truth and the Life...Come follow Me",***  
says the Lord.

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# Friends of FATIMA

N.º 86

## Dominican Year of the Rosary

On January 1st Fr. Carlos Azpiroz Costa, Master of the Order wrote to all Dominicans throughout the world. The subject of his Letter is the Holy Rosary. Our Community is very grateful for this *gift* and we have reflected together on its contents especially the theme of personal and community renewal through the contemplative prayer of the Holy Rosary.

In the first part of his letter, Fr. Carlos encourages us to remember our early encounters with the Rosary. Our Sisters agreed to share their own memories and we include these in this issue of our newsletter. (A few Sisters preferred to remember in the silence of their heart.) "These memories," Fr. Carlos said, "speak to us of the nearness of God."

Then follows a theological reflection on the Rosary in which Fr. Carlos concludes by saying that "Living in the company of Jesus, as Mary did, we become the disciple and the apostle that

the world needs and God desires."

Finally, the Master of the Order looks at the need for those expressions of our Faith that enkindle in the heart the flame of love and fidelity to God. As evidenced by the numbers of pilgrims visiting Marian Shrines across the world, it is clear that the faithful look to Mary and recognize in Her both their "identity and their destiny."

We feel certain that all our *Friends of Fatima* will appreciate reading this beautiful Letter. We pray that you too will be inspired to realize more and more this method of prayer as a means of contemplation and a path for peace in your personal life as well as your family and/or community life.

In loving gratitude to you, dear *Friends of Fatima*, a Triduum of Masses will be offered in honour of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary (May 29-31) for all of your intentions. We remain united with you in prayer day by day.

Lovingly in Our Lady,  
Mother Prioress and Sisters



# Rosary Letter from the Master of the Order



Rome, 1 January 2008

Feast of Mary, Mother of God

World Day for Peace

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

...While this Jubilee year comes to an end, we now begin to undertake a novena of years, culminating in the Jubilee of 2016, 800 years of papal confirmation of the Order of Preachers. At our recent General Chapter in Bogotá, the capitulars requested that we use the time between these two jubilee years (2006-2016) as a time to enter into a serious renewal of our life and mission as preachers. (General Chapter of Bogotá #51) Therefore, I wish to invite each entity of the Order as well as each community and individual to begin the long process of renewal through reflection, decisions and actions taken relating to our whole way of life as preachers of the Gospel.

In order to provide a focus for this next year, *I am proposing that we begin to renew our preaching way of life through re-discovering the Rosary as a means of contemplation and an instrument of prophetic preaching.* In many ways the Rosary, as a uniquely Dominican contribution to the life of the Church, has slipped from our grasp. And, yet at the same time, the Rosary remains very much alive among us. In this letter I would like to offer a simple meditation on the Rosary from the viewpoints of memory, theological reflection and popular religiosity.

## 1. Memory

Permit me to bring to mind a few of my own memories, which I hope will elicit some of your own. Memories are important in shaping our identity, putting flesh and blood onto our ideas, and enabling us to re-live and re-interpret pivotal moments in our life.

My first recollection of the Rosary goes back to my early years at Champagnat School of the Marist Brothers in Buenos Aires with the first Rosary that I held in my hands. The brothers instilled in us a real love of Mary as a mother who unconditionally loves and intercedes for her beloved sons and daughters, the Mary of St. John's Gospel. Of course, we had the month of Mary with processions, rosary, and litanies. Even as a young person, I carried a "decade" in my pocket. The repetition of the "Our

and reluctant, we responded to the *Aves* lead by her. We had no rosaries, statue or picture of Mary. We kept this secret meeting with Mary as my father left for work at his bakery at 3:30am to be back at 7am or sometimes we kept this rendezvous with "Blessed Mother" (as my mother called Her) in the evenings. Our mother was permitted to practice her Catholic Faith and to educate us in Catholic schools but our dear father wanted us to practice Buddhism.

Educated in Catholic schools we learnt our Faith but we saw the practice of this Faith in my mother's trust in "Blessed Mother" for all her needs, trials and tribulations.

By continuing these meetings with Blessed Mother and Her rosary She has led me to where I am now as a Dominican Nun of the Perpetual Rosary.

*Sr. Maria Francisco of the Blessed Sacrament (Sri Lanka)*

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One of the means that knit our family together was praying the Angelus and the Rosary everyday in the evening.

One of the most memorable incidents I recall was when I was seven years old. It was the feast of the Assumption of Our Lady and it was midday when I was on my way to school where I met an accident. I was rushed to the hospital. I was unaware of what had happened but when I opened my eyes I saw the priest together with the attendants and my family. They were all smiling at me and the priest took my hand and handed me a Rosary. He whispered: "Be close to Our Lady and She will take care of you." From then on the Rosary became

my constant companion in life. It was my great love of the Rosary that drew me to the love of the Eucharist.

*Sr. Grace Marie of the Holy Trinity (Philippines)*

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My earliest memory of the Rosary occurred when I was five or six years old. It was Christmas. The gift which I received that year was a most beautiful lavender colored Rosary. I was filled with inexpressible joy and gratitude. To this day the memory of that gift of the Rosary remains so clear.

The family Rosary was part of our life. It was my grandmother who began this practice as a result of hearing the *Rosary for Peace* broadcast on the radio each evening by a devoted Fatima priest, Msgr. Cirrincione. We could never count the blessings received and the abundance of love and mercy that God poured out upon our large family through the prayer of the Holy Rosary. One of those blessings is the grace of my Dominican Rosary vocation.

*Sr. Maria Lúcia of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary (USA)*

**With hearts filled with gratitude we thank our Blessed Mother for the many gifts that the world, the Order and we have received through the powerful prayer of the Rosary. Pray the Rosary - and peace is sure to come as Our Lady promised here in Fatima!**

the Rosary, Live the Rosary, which is all contained in the Gospel message. My personal memories of the Rosary begin with the image of our family gathered daily to recite the Rosary, which left me with a great love and devotion for the prayer of the Rosary. Then, traditionally, in our Parish church there was Sunday evening Rosary and Benediction which was so based on the love of God for each one of us. What better way to learn to love God than with Mary through her Rosary.

When I was considering my vocation, it was the charism of the Rosary that drew me to our Monastery. What struck me as a young Sister in my first days in the monastery was the love and devotion of our older Sisters for the Rosary - these are great memories to treasure.

*Sr. Mary Michael of the Blessed Sacrament (Northern Ireland)*  
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My memories and love for the Rosary began when I was a very young child, while reciting it every evening with my family. We each had the privilege of saying a decade and this helped give us an understanding of the mysteries. It probably was also a means of fostering religious vocations in my family as my older brother became a priest of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate and later on I entered the Dominicans.

*Sr. Mary Bernadette of Lourdes (Ireland)*  
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The greatest influence was the “blue” Rosary booklet which was a gift of St. Patrick’s Missionary Society for the mite box collections. Under the tuition of my Aunt, who assisted at daily Mass,

I learned to develop a deep devotion to Our Lady’s Rosary. Soon after, I was introduced by my Parish priest to the story of Fatima.

*Sr. M. Immaculate Heart (Ireland)*  
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The Rosary was present from my earliest years...I learned how to pray the Rosary from my good mother by seeing her pray alone, or with others in church and with our family. Every night we gathered for the family Rosary and after prayers we would line up to receive our little treats from our dear father. I cannot recall a time when he failed in this. As a



teenager I joined the Legion of Mary. The Rosary was a source of inspiration, guidance and strength in the difficult decision I made to enter religious life. (Truly the Holy Rosary is like Mama Mary’s “spiritual garden” where the seeds of vocations are sown, nurtured and grown.)

These memories make me think of how Our Blessed

Mother brings us to the knowledge and love of God, our Abba Father. It is a glimpse of His infinite kindness and generosity towards all of us His dearest children, of the unfailing gifts of His Holy Spirit especially in times of trials and sorrows and what tender love He has for each one of us in JESUS!

*Sr. Marie Jacinta Therese of the Lamb of God (Philippines)*  
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At 4am each day the prayer call for the Muslims was heard in our neighborhood. At that hour we also gathered around our faithful and brave mother. Sleepy

Father”, “Hail Mary” and “Glory be” allowed this prayer to take a deep root within my own life.

To this day, I especially like to pray this prayer while walking. It accompanies me through different landscapes, whether on the road or in town. It is the “wandering contemplation” of which fr. Vincent de Couesnongle spoke. It begins to mark the rhythm of my footsteps, allowing me to have a hold on the world that is constantly in flux. It allows me to give soul, life and heart to the city or place through which I am only passing; to meetings that await me with all their joys and hopes, lights and shadows.

Recently, during one of our retreat days, the General Council reflected on the mystery of death. One of the friars described how dying brothers almost always asked for their Rosary, even if it was only to hold it. I remember seeing the film “Batismo de Sangue” (Baptism of Blood), the story of our Brazilian brothers being tortured back in the 70’s during the dictatorship of Medici. Bro. Tito de Alencar, as he was being dragged out of the convent, shouts for a brother to go for his Rosary. What did it mean to him at that hour of terror?

What are your memories regarding the Rosary? What might these mean for you? For me? What might our theological study and reflection have to tell us about them?

## 2. Theological Reflection

I believe these memories speak to us of

the nearness of God. The mystery of the Incarnation is not only about the birth of the Lord in millennia past, but about the incarnation of grace, or the birth of God, in our own daily lives. Jesus lives and His Spirit continues to heal, teach, forgive, comfort and challenge us. This is not an empty abstraction, but rather is made visible in and through the images associated with the mysteries of the Rosary. Awareness of the Incarnation increases as one allows these images to intersect with the concerns of our own daily life. Thus, the Rosary is profoundly incarnational, biblical, Christ-centered, and contemporary.

Most obviously, the Rosary is Marian. Let us be clear as to what this means. In Mary, divinity becomes united with humanity; the creature becomes one with the Creator. In Mary we recognize both our identity and our destiny. We see this holy communion of God-with-us and God-within-us. We realize that our God is God-for-us – redeemer and savior, sanctifier and glorifier.

Indeed, Mary is a central figure in our life of faith. While we can think of her as Daughter of the Father, Mother of the Son, and Spouse of the Spirit, we ought also to see her as a believer in the valley of darkness, and one who hopes when confronted by a situation of despair. She can be seen as a protector of pregnant women who give birth in poverty, a patroness of those who migrate to foreign lands in order to survive, and as one who keeps vigil when her child is arrested, tortured and killed. And yet, through all



this we see the triumph of her faith, hope and love. Pope John Paul II invited us to contemplate the face of Christ through the eyes of Mary.

What might this mean to us? As Master of the Order, I am a missionary who strengthens my brothers and sisters scattered throughout the world. I hear their stories and see their reality. I remember the faces of Christian families badly wounded at Bahawalpure (Pakistan 2001), the neighbors of our sisters in the poorest barrios of Kinshasa (Congo), the children following us in Cameroon, in the Civil War Square in Campodos (Tibu), Colombia, families fishing from the canoes off Gizo in the Solomon Islands or in the Urumamba River in the Peruvian Amazon. These images accompany the mysteries and so the Rosary becomes my intercession, along with Mary's, in placing the wounded at the feet of Jesus.

Our world is one that seems to be constantly torn apart by war. Uppermost in my mind is war-torn Iraq, and of course not far behind is the continual bloodshed between Israeli's and Palestinians. The 20th century was a century of wars and devastation across the planet. In the worst of these moments, people turned to the Rosary praying for peace. Indeed, was that not the focus of the Fatima

devotions for the conversion of Russia and was not Mary invoked as the Queen of Peace? At the same time, let us not minimize those cold wars that can go on within families, communities, and within our own hearts and souls. Cannot the Rosary bring us to peace? This year we also celebrate the 50th anniversary of fr. Dominique Pire, our Belgian brother, who won the Nobel Peace prize for establishing islands of peace. Perhaps

his inspiration for this project flowed from his meditations while praying his Rosary for peace.

The words of the prayers accompanying my meditations speak of the kingdom of God, of daily bread, of liberation from evil, of the fruit of the womb, of sinners and of the hour of

death. The kingdom of God is justice and peace. The will of God does not coincide with those trampled underfoot. Bread is to be shared. Forgiveness is to be given. The blessed fruit of the womb of women is sacred. Yes, the Rosary words of Scripture and our lived meditation makes it a prophetic prayer as well as a contemplative prayer; a prayer that both announces and denounces, a prayer that consoles and transforms. The words that give praise to the Trinity invite us to live in community, without subordination, where each person is totally open and available to the Other. Yes, "God's will" will be done and so we

*"The will of God does not coincide with those trampled underfoot. Bread is to be shared. Forgiveness is to be given. The blessed fruit of the womb of women is sacred."*

In the little town where I was born in Sicily, there is a very ancient church dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary. My grandfather was a member of the Confraternity of the Rosary (and of the Perpetual Rosary Association). I distinctly remember him praying the Rosary in the evening with the family. My mother, whose name was Rosaria, followed his example of great love and devotion to Our Lady and Her Rosary. She taught me to pray the Rosary from my infancy and used to ask me to accompany her in her Hour of Guard.

Divine Providence guided me to the Dominican Monastery of the Perpetual Rosary in Fatima ... Thank you, Lord for calling me to a life of praise and adoration with the Rosary and through the Rosary.

*Sr. Maria of the Eucharist (Sicily)*

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Recalling my own Rosary journey, I can say that the Rosary has always been part of my life. I owe this to many, but in particular to my grandmother. I watched her pray her Rosary so many times and saw something beautiful there though my young mind did not know it's name. Then there were the wonderful Sisters at school. Last, but not least a priest who gave our school Retreat.

"Hold on to your Beads," was Father's cry. He showed us the love of Our Lady for us. He insisted: in all dangers, fear

and temptation call on Mary through her Rosary and all will be well. I never forgot this priest. Finally, as we lived so near the Dominican Priory one could not help being drawn to the Fatima devotions every Saturday night. The Rosary and the Fatima hymns filled the street, the hearts and the homes of the people. I treasure those memories and all those who helped make the Rosary known and loved.

The Rosary can never be kept enclosed within you; it is the link that unites humanity to God through Mary; it is biblical and theological. Saints and sinners have prayed it down the centuries.

The Rosary, this sublime gift from

heaven, is for all stages of life. The sick room and death bed of my Sisters have been moments of great awareness for me of this gift as we prayed the Rosary. The echoes of the Aves, *pray for us now and at the hour of our death*, leave one, despite the tears, full of an unknown joy. Indeed, through our daily Rosary Mary is indeed Our Sweetness and Our Hope. We continue to be linked to the Queen of the Rosary forever!

*Sr. Angela Marie of the Rosary (Ireland)*

My reflections on the Master's letter brought great joy to me and to my community. Calling each one to take their Rosary in hand and go forward in renewed hope - to Pray the Rosary, Preach

*"...the Rosary ... is something we can touch, hold, and even grasp at difficult moments of our life; it is like grasping the hand of Mary herself."*



## From the Sisters...Rosary Memories

*"Memories are important in shaping our identity, putting flesh and blood onto our ideas, and enabling us to re-live and re-interpret pivotal moments of our life."*

*Letter on the Rosary.*

The Family Rosary accompanied the rhythm of life, from the cradle to the grave, of the people of God in our native parish of Davidstown (of Bethlehem, I like to add!).

My earliest memories, as the youngest girl in a family of seven, are of falling asleep to the murmuring sound of the Rosary being prayed downstairs, a heavenly lullaby of angelic salutations. Then the time came when I was old enough to join the family on their knees, to finger the beads, and learn the

mysteries, and take my turn in "giving out" a decade.

At school and in the parish church, the Rosary was prayed by the happy band of pupils, with "trimmings" according to the need of the moment. When a death occurred, we paused on our way home to visit the wake, and share in the Rosary being recited at the departed one's bedside, and again at the vigil in the mortuary when the coffin was transferred to the church. How wonderful the prayer repeated unceasingly, the last murmured by St. Bernadette, "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen."

*Sr. Mary Diane of the Sacred Heart (Ireland)*

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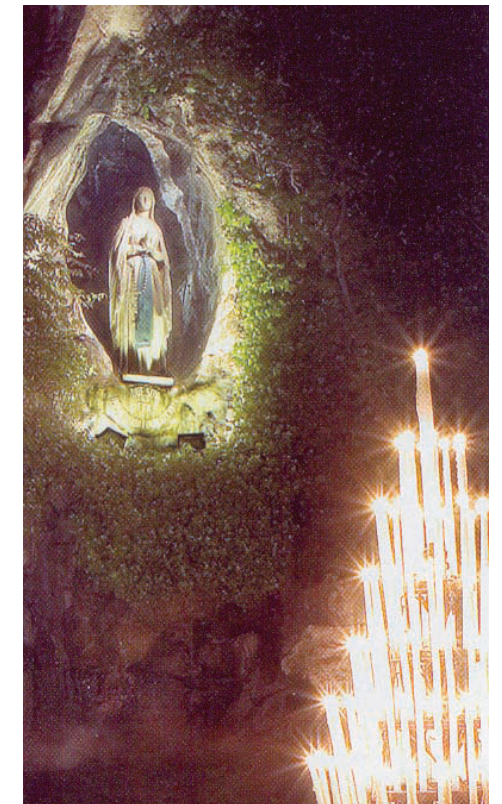
never despair. Our preaching is hope-filled because "...that which has existed since the beginning, that we have heard with our ears, and we have seen with our own eyes; that we have watched and touched with our hands: the Word who is life this is our subject." (1 John 1) Living in the company of Jesus, as Mary did, we become the disciple and the apostle that the world needs and God desires.

### 3. Popular Religious Practice

After Vatican II, we tended to downplay the importance of "popular religiosity." Correctly, we emphasized biblical study and greater liturgical participation. In doing this, we also minimized those popular expressions that allowed greater religious sentiment to be expressed; e.g. benediction, processions, pilgrimages to Shrines, Rosary devotions, etc. Now, after forty (40) years of experience, we see that people both old and young need these expressions in order "to fan into a flame the gift that God gave you." (2 Tim. 1:6)

Such popular religiosity still asserts itself at the great Marian Shrines in every part of the world. This year we celebrate 150 years of Lourdes (France) and 90 years of Fatima (Portugal), just two Shrines that attract literally millions of people every year. One can also think of Guadalupe (Mexico), Czestochowa (Poland), Knock (Ireland), Chiquinquirá (Colombia), Coromoto (Venezuela), Lujan (Argentina), Manaoag (Philippines), and so on. Almost every country of the world has its national shrine to Our Lady that gathers the faithful from far and wide into a maternal embrace.

We still see St. Christopher medals in cars as well as rosaries hanging from rear view mirrors, small altars in homes, or statues in gardens. There are the rituals of ashes at the beginning of Lent and palms at the beginning of Holy Week that inform us as to the desires and religious sentiments of the people. These are rituals that inject a certain order and stability, a certain rhythm and incarnational dimension into the life of ordinary people, enabling them to experience more intense religious moments. Can we Dominicans recover this popular religiosity in terms of something that is peculiarly ours: the Rosary?

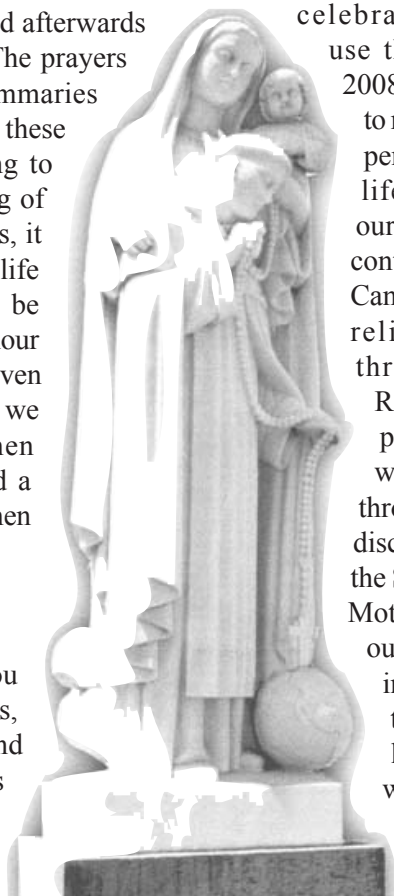




I have come to see the Rosary as indeed a beloved universal prayer. Whether in Italy or the Ukraine, Mexico or the United States, the Philippines or Vietnam, Kenya or Nigeria, the Rosary is found, prayed and loved. I believe one reason for this is because it is a tangible reality as well as a prayer. It is something almost every Catholic owns. It is given as a gift. It is a ritual whether said alone or together. It is something we can touch, hold, and even grasp at difficult moments of our life; it is like grasping the hand of Mary herself. The Rosary is placed in our hands both at the "hour of our death" and afterwards when we are buried. The prayers of the Rosary are summaries of our faith. Learning these prayers is like learning to talk; it is the beginning of our prayer life; and yes, it is also the end of our life of prayer "your will be done" "now and at the hour of our death." We are given a Rosary in our youth, we receive a Rosary when we take the habit, and a Rosary is at our side when we are buried.

### Conclusion

I have shared with you some of my reflections, I hope both simple and profound, perhaps more a meditation and heartfelt reflections than anything else.



At the General Chapter of Bogotá, it was my privilege to appoint fr. Louis-Marie Ariño-Durand of the Province of Toulouse as the new Promoter of the Rosary. He has developed and is developing an extensive web-site which can be of service to you during this next year. In turn, I am asking you to help him in its development by responding to his requests. Together we can build a web-site that can be beneficial to the whole Church.

As we begin this novena of years in preparation for the anniversary celebration of 2016, can we use this next year, Epiphany 2008-Epiphany 2009 as a year to rediscover the Rosary in our personal life, our community life and in the renewal of our preaching which is both contemplative and prophetic? Can we help shape the popular religiosity of our people through developing anew Rosary novenas, missions, processions or shrines? Can we contemplate our Master through the eyes of the perfect disciple? Can we contemplate the Son through the eyes of the Mother? Can we contemplate our world as one profoundly in need of transformation by the Gospel? Can we come to live and preach passionately with the creativity of God the Father and of Mary the mother of the beloved Son?

I am grateful to have had this opportunity to share with you my own reflections. In the coming months, the General Council will outline the different steps and themes for the next several years of this on-going renewal of our life and mission. I would ask the Provincials and Vicars-General, Prioresses, and Presidents of our Lay Fraternities to see that this letter is circulated among their members. Throughout this New Year, know that you will be frequently remembered in my thoughts and prayers. In turn, I ask for yours.

Brothers and Sisters, let us walk this road of renewal together. Let us set out having the confidence that Dominic had in Mary, the Mother of God.

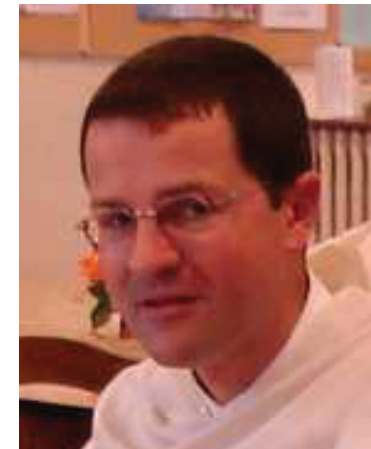
Your brother in Dominic,

Fr. Carlos A. Azpiroz Costa, OP  
Master of the Order

*Fr. Carlos was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1956 the eighth of fourteen children. He entered the Dominican Order in 1980. Ordained to the priesthood in 1987 he served as Professor of Theology and of both Civil and Canon Law. In 1997 Fr. Carlos was appointed Procurator General of the Order in Rome. On July 14, 2001 he was elected Master of the Order of Preachers.*

**Thank you and God bless you,  
Fr. Carlos!**

## International Dominican Rosary Promoter



Fr. Louis-Marie Ariño-Durand is a Dominican friar currently assigned to the Priory of St. Thomas Aquinas in Toulouse (France). It was from Toulouse that our holy Father St. Dominic sent forth the first friars preachers on August 15, 1217. Fr. Louis-Marie can be contacted at: Couvent Saint Thomas d'Aquin 1 impasse Lacordaire 31078 Toulouse France  
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