A Legacy of Justice

Dominicans have a deep history of bringing greater understanding about human rights and the economic, social, and other systems that influence and shape the lives of people.

During a time of famine, the young philosophy and theology student Dominic de Guzman, a son of Spanish nobility, sold his school books to help those who were starving and destitute. His preaching, teaching, and forming others in the Truth of the Gospel led to the founding of the Dominican Order of Preachers.

In the 16th century, Dominican missionaries, accompanying native peoples, shared experiences with the Dominicans at the University at Salamanca, Spain. Bringing the light of faith to those experiences, Dominicans reflected, wrote, and called for justice for the native people oppressed by the system of colonialism.

In 2017, the Justice Promoters gathered to reflect on our commitment to promote the call of Gospel justice and help guide the study of and advocacy for human rights and climate justice in our world today. This document reflects our priorities in this time and place in history.

2017-2019

Call To Justice

The ministry of the North American Dominican Promoters of Justice, Peace, and Care of Creation is to encourage all members of the Order of Preachers and their associates to embrace a deepening of the Dominican charism to search for and preach TRUTH as it impacts the lives of people and planet.

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Preach the truth as if you had a million voices.

St. Catherine of Siena
OUR JUSTICE MINISTRY PRIORITIES

The North American Justice Promoters have given priority to the following justice areas for our ministry:

- Climate Justice
- Peace and Security of All Life
- Migration and Immigration
- Human Trafficking
- Economic Justice

We recognize that each of these areas of injustice are rooted in racism, sexism, poverty, and oppression that give rise to violence. These root causes of injustice inform our study and search for truth. Such study helps guide us to commitments in areas where we can be most effective individually and collectively.

OUR JUSTICE MINISTRY PRIORITIES

- Climate Justice
  Ecological reflection leads us to acknowledge three truths:
  1) The theological truth that creation, the precious common home for the whole of life, is of God. 2) The scientific truth that human behavior is causing grave harm to the environment, even to the extent of changing the climate. (Laudato Si') 3) The moral truth that we individuals, groups, and nations have the duty to reverse this destructive trend. Pope Francis, in Laudato Si’ Care for Our Common Home and in his 2015 address to the United Nations, gave voice to the rights of nature.

- Peace and Security for All Life
  We extol the dignity of every human life, made in God's image, a truth revealed in Genesis. To live that truth we take a stand, by preaching and action, against all threats to human well-being. “The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties” of all people - of those threatened by war abroad or gun violence at home, of prisoners, of the sick, of children in the womb, of mothers in crisis - these too are our “joys and hopes...griefs and anxieties.” (Cf. Gaudium et Spes, #1)

- Migration and Immigration
  According to the United Nations, there are over 60,000,000 displaced people in the world today. Recent Popes and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops have repeatedly defended the right of people to migrate whether they are fleeing poverty, political or religious repression, or violence. They call upon wealthier countries, like the United States, to open their doors to receive those coming to them in need.

- Human Trafficking
  There is the sociological and economic truth that the deplorable worldwide industry in human trafficking. For purposes of slave and sex labor, desperate men, women, and children are drawn into a vortex of degradation. We denounce the consumerist mentality by which human beings are turned into mere instruments of satisfaction and profit.

- Economic Justice
  Moved by the Prophets, inspired by Jesus, and guided by Catholic Social Teaching, we claim the truth that the fruits of creation and all that is produced from them have a universal destination – they are meant for all. The economy, enlivened by a healthy cooperation between private initiative and government, is to be at the service of the common good. We denounce global economic systems that value money and profit over the dignity of human beings and the life of the planet.

OUR PROCESS

Woven through the Dominican pillars of prayer, study, ministry, and community is the quest for TRUTH. Finding truth is not a simple process, nor can we ignore truth's complexity.

Dominicans in search of Truth and Justice engage with one another and join the international community of Dominicans in studying the link between faith and justice. We accompany and collaborate with many individuals and organizations.

It is through dialogue and with courage that we...

- Listen to those who are oppressed, economically poor, and living on the margins.
- Seek to understand the interconnected realities that are the roots of injustice and conflict.
- Work with others to challenge and change the systems that perpetuate the harm that is being done.
- Address injustice in a spirit of respect, compassion, and solidarity.

May God move within us and give us eyes to see with, ears to hear with, and hands that your work might be done.

A Dominican Prayer