No disciple is superior to the teacher; but when fully trained, every disciple will be like his teacher.

Luke 6:40
Overview

What do you mean by Intentional Preachers?

In 2013 we began by focusing on Intentional Disciples. It was an opportunity to explore what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, and to become more intentional about discipleship. Last year we focused on Intentional Seekers. In that series we looked at the doubts and barriers that frequently keep us from getting to discipleship. Now, on the eve of the celebration of 800 years since the founding of the Dominican order (A.K.A., the Order of Preachers), we plan to explore Dominican Spirituality. Many of us find ourselves drawn to this Dominican parish, but we can't really tell you why. Other orders seem to have a very clear spirituality (e.g., the Jesuits or Benedictines). For this year we'll discover and explore what it means to be part of the Dominican family. What unique gifts and insights have kept fervor of St. Dominic alive for 800 years. How can those gifts and insights speak today in San Francisco. Our goal is to:

Radiate the Joy of the Gospel from the Heart of the City

What is asked of me?

First, pick up a booklet at St. Dominic's each month and follow along. If you can, attend one of the Explore sessions (everyone is welcome) offered each month. If you want to go deeper, sign up for a Small Christian Community. Small communities will meet twice a month to discuss. We hope to be able to offer committed small communities and drop-in small communities as we get a better understanding of people’s interested. Please see the back cover for specific dates.

When did the Intentional Preacher initiative start?

September 2015 is our first month. We will gradually roll it out to the whole parish. We hope to be able to connect people whenever they learn about the initiative or are ready to get involved.

What if I’m not sure how much of this I’m ready to do?

Pick up a booklet, and try it out. Pray about it.

I’m interested, but I just don’t have the time.

We understand that this will not fit everyone’s interest or schedule. We would like to ask you to pray for this initiative in the parish.
Format

Each month we’ll have a theme based around some aspect of Dominican Spirituality. We’ll pick scripture passages and other writings that will help us explore this theme. We’ll spend the month going deeper and challenging ourselves. In September and October, we will roll this out to the parish. We will form several small communities. It is not too late to join one if you are interested (see the back cover). We plan to make this a yearlong initiative. Here’s the planned format for each month:

**Week 1 - Explore**
In the Explore session we break open the texts and learn about the theme. This week is led by a presenter who has prepared to take you deeper into the topic of the month. We generally take time to discuss the central readings of the month in small groups and to share the group’s insights with everyone at the session. By the end of the Explore session you should be ready to connect the theme with your life as the month unfolds.

You can explore the theme on your own through this book, or you can attend a presentation (see the upcoming schedule on the back cover).

**Week 2 - Share**
Consider joining a small community to discuss the themes in our lives. There is something powerful about gathering with others to explore and respond to spiritual practices.

If you can’t join a small community, you can take time each day to pray the texts and reflect on your own journey.

**Week 3 - Act**
This week we’ll challenged ourselves to take some practical step in our daily lives. We’ll do this on our own, so if you’re part of a small community, there will not be a meeting this week.

**Week 4 - Share**
Gather again in your small community or reflect on your own.

*Bernardus valles, montes Benedictus amabat, Oppida Franciscus, celebres Dominicus urbes.*

(Bernard loved the valleys, Benedict the mountains, Francis the towns, Dominic the populous cities)
Starter Questions

What do you think of when you hear the word “preach”?  

What do you think of when you hear “ministers of the word”?  

What is the purpose of preaching?  

How has preaching touched your life?
The people were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes.

Mark 1:22

To talk about Dominican Spirituality we have to begin with preaching. The Dominican Order is known as the Order of Preachers. What Dominic realized was that, while we tend to emphasize many good aspects of faith (e.g., Sacraments, charity), we often neglect teaching (instructing, preaching, proclaiming). We should not be surprised about the importance of teaching. It is, by far, the activity where Jesus spent the majority of his time. Jesus points this out when the crowds come to arrest him: “Day after day I sat teaching in the temple area, yet you did not arrest me” (Mt 26:55).

The Gospels contain for us a wealth of material taught by Jesus himself, and in Jesus’ teaching we have direct access to the Truth that God wants us to know, what the Church calls Saving Truth (i.e., what we need to be saved):

Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life? Luke 10:25

A turning point in Dominic’s life came when he encountered an innkeeper who had embraced a sinister form of heresy called Albigensianism. Albigensians believed in two gods: one good but remote, the other evil and responsible for the material world. Dominic debated the innkeeper throughout the night until the he finally saw the light and returned to the Catholic faith. Dominic later founded the Order of Preachers to be Ministers of the Word for the Salvation of Souls.

As members of a Dominican parish, we are the beneficiaries of this charism, but we also have a responsibility to share what we receive in the world. We live in a world that is hungry for instruction and unlikely to come to the Church to get it. We meet these people every day. They are our friends, our family members, and our coworkers. This month we’ll explore how we can be Ministers of the Word for them.

You call me ‘teacher’ and ‘master,’ and rightly so, for indeed I am. If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet.

John 13:13-14
Exercises

What are the questions and struggles that my friends, family members, and coworkers face?

What teachings of Jesus speak to these questions and struggles?
What aspects of the lived reflection of the Church speak to these questions and struggles?

What are creative ways I can speak to these questions and struggles so the Good News will be heard?

How does my life set an example that supports the Good News I want to share?
Main Texts

Moving Hearts and Illuminating Minds

What makes preaching really preaching is ... that it is a communication of the Gospel Word in a way that not only moves the heart but also illumines the mind with the light of an understanding, growing faith. It was St. Dominic’s special insight that a true understanding of the faith is not just for the elite but for every Christian. Strangely, although Our Lord devoted His own ministry chiefly to instructing the people, even the most ignorant to whom He communicated His message in the stories we call “parables,” yet throughout the history of the Church it has been the Ministry of the Word which seems to have been the most neglected. We build churches, celebrate the sacraments, perform works of charity, but we neglect to instruct the people. It was this ignorance of their religion which exposed the people of Dominic’s day to the Manichaean heresy and St. Dominic’s perception of this great need was the founding inspiration of his Order.

http://opcentral.org/resources/2012/09/17/dominican-spirituality

Read prayerfully: What insight does this reading give you into what it means to be Ministers of the Word? How does it apply to your life?
Play “Matchmaker” Between God and the Faithful

Dominicans are called to a profound life of contemplation in order to engage in contemplative preaching. The term “preaching” is often used today as a broad term to mean many different things, but traditionally, preaching can be understood in four categories: (1) catechetical, which instructs about the faith; (2) moral, which exhorts people to live the faith; (3) apologetic, which seeks to remove obstacles to faith; (4) contemplative (or holy), which seeks to lead the faithful to an encounter with the living God.

This preaching “should normally draw the listener toward contemplation,” notes Fr. Thomas Phillippe, O.P., in *The Contemplative Life*. The Dominican should be able to play “matchmaker” between God and the faithful; to inspire in his audience the love of God. As our own Fr. Antoninus Wall, O.P., states in *The Mixed Religious State in St. Thomas*: “Preaching passes on to others the interior perfection of contemplation in the most complete manner since it not only moves the intellect to know the truth, but also the will to an affective and effective love for it.”

http://opwest.org/aboutus/ourwayoflife/ministry

*Read prayerfully: What insight does this reading give you into what it means to be Ministers of the Word? How does it apply to your life?*
Preach the Person and Event of Jesus Christ

So many people live the anguish of the centurion of the Gospels who begs Jesus Christ: “Only say the word, and my servant will be healed” (Mt 8:8). Dominicans preach to give that Word of healing to the world. In a letter to Saint Dominic and his brothers, Pope Honorius III wrote, “He who never ceases to make his Church fruitful through new offspring...inspired you with a holy desire to...commit yourselves to the proclamation of the Word of God.” Dominicans preach because we burn with this desire. The purpose of Dominican preaching is to generate others: “The object of our preaching is either to cause the faith to be born, or to allow it to penetrate people’s entire lives more deeply” (Fundamental Constitutions). More than a message, Dominicans preach the person and event of Jesus Christ: the Incarnate Son of God whose voice we can still hear, whose face we can still see, whose Passion is still saving us, and whose heart calls us to a transforming encounter. That is the veritas—the Truth—of Dominican preaching. The great Dominican preacher Saint Vincent Ferrer (+1419) urged preachers, “Let people find in you a father full of compassion for his children.

http://www.op.org/en/content/dominican-preaching

Read prayerfully: What insight does this reading give you into what it means to be Ministers of the Word? How does it apply to your life?
The Best Place to Help People Reflect on their Lives

In parishes we must not be satisfied with preaching to those who come to Mass. We require every province to consider its present commitment to parishes and ask if each one represents the best basis for itinerancy in preaching to the unchurched. Is a particular parish a basis of new evangelization? Can it become so? If not we should probably hand it over to the diocese.

*Dominican General Chapter of Caleruega, Acta, 1995 (37)*

Should we operate parishes? We have got to ask two questions: (1) Are these parishes really effective in the "world-redemptive" work of the Church today? Are they really pastoral in that sense. Do they primarily simply administer the Sacraments, or do they first of all begin with the secular life of every single human being within the parish territories and work to help those people live a life of social justice and love and find Christ at work in the world? If not, then we should profoundly reform them or abandon them. (2) Granted that the parish has this new orientation, then we must ask ourselves: Do our men in this situation contribute effectively and importantly to the advancement of prophecy in the Church? is the parish situation the best place to be to help people reflect on their lives and find the Gospel meaning in their lives? Or will be able to do this better in some other situation. If not, then let us phase out the parishes in favor of a more effective work of prophecy.


*Read prayerfully: What insight does this reading give you into what it means to be Ministers of the Word? How does it apply to your life?*
Key Insights

Moving Hearts and Illuminating Minds

- Illuminating minds leads to growth
- Teaching was a significant portion of Jesus' ministry
- Everyone deserves instruction
- Jesus often taught in parables to communicate in a different way
- Ignorance of Jesus’ teachings leads people to fall into various traps

Play “Matchmaker” Between God and the Faithful

- Dominicans are called to a profound life of contemplation
- Four categories of preaching:
  a. Catechetical: instructs
  b. Moral: exhorts
  c. Apologetic: removes obstacles
  d. Holy: lead to an encounter
- Preaching “should normally draw the listener toward contemplation”
- know the truth...love it

Preach the Person and Event of Jesus Christ

- Give that Word of healing to the world
- Make his Church fruitful through new offspring
- Dominicans preach because we burn with this desire
- “The object of our preaching is either to cause the faith to be born, or to allow it to penetrate people’s entire lives more deeply”
- Dominicans preach the person and event of Jesus Christ
- That is the veritas—the Truth—of Dominican preaching

The Best Place to Help People Reflect on their Lives

- Is a particular parish a basis of new evangelization?
- Are these parishes really effective in the “world-redemptive” work?
- Do they begin with the secular life of every single human being?
- Do they help those people live a life of social justice and love and find Christ at work in the world?
- Is the parish situation the best place to be to help people reflect on their lives and find the Gospel meaning in their lives?
Examples of Jesus Teaching

Matthew 5:1-3 When he saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him. He began to teach them, saying: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven..."

Matthew 7:28 When Jesus finished... the crowds were astonished at his teaching.

Matthew 9:35 Jesus went around to all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and curing every disease ...

Matthew 11:1 When Jesus finished giving these commands to his twelve disciples, he went away from that place to teach and to preach in their towns.

Matthew 21:23 When he had come into the temple area, the chief priests and the elders of the people approached him as he was teaching and said, "By what authority are you doing these things? And who gave you this authority?"

Matthew 22:33 When the crowds heard this, they were astonished at his teaching.

Jesus Tells Us to Teach

Matthew 28:19-20 Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."
Recap & Prepare for Week 2

- Reread the text for this week.
  - Underline phrases that speak to your heart
  - Pick a phrase each morning, and write it on a slip of paper
  - Hold that theme in your heart throughout the day
  - At the end of the day, pray an Examen (below)

- Reflection questions:

  What is the purpose of preaching?

  What are the different forms of preaching?

  Why do the people in my life need to hear the Good News?

A Daily Prayer - The Examen

The Examen is an extremely fruitful daily prayer (set aside 5-15 minutes):

1. Take a moment to recognize that you’re in the presence of God
2. Thank God for the many gifts in your life
3. Invite the Spirit to walk back with you through your day, focusing on the specific theme of the day. Take the time to stop and really see that moment with new perspective.
4. Pray for God’s guidance for tomorrow.
Individual Option

- Find 20-30 minutes where you won’t be interrupted.
- (10-15 minutes) Follow the prayer format (Lectio Divina) in the group exercise below.
- (10-20 minutes) Spend time reflecting on the questions outlined above.

Advice For Participating In Small Christian Communities

- The facilitator’s role is to guide the flow of the meeting. They are not in the group to be experts. Help the facilitators by following their lead.
- During the discussion period, there will be multiple questions or topic for conversation. It is best to take them one at a time (i.e., let everyone share about one before moving to the next).
- Don’t attempt to give the “right answer.” Just share your experience, insights, and perspective.
- Please stay on topic (the questions asked).
- Pay attention to time. Keep your answers on the shorter side. You can always add more later.
- Make sure everyone gets a chance to speak (i.e., give others a chance to speak before sharing a second time).
- It’s ok to not share if you don’t feel comfortable, but challenge yourself to share occasionally.
- Give your attention to the person speaking. Please don’t start side conversations.
- Avoid asking follow-up questions. Let people share what they want to share. It is always good to affirm others.
- Avoid answering other people’s questions (i.e., taking on the role of expert).
How To Pray The Scripture Using Lectio Divina

● Goal:
  ○ Engage one of the scriptures at a deeper level
  ○ Allow the Spirit to teach our hearts
  ○ Provide fruit to lead into the discussion and sharing

● Steps (Should take 10-15 minutes):
  ● Lectio (Reading, 2-5 minutes)
    ○ A participant reads the scripture passage
    ○ 30-60 seconds of silence
    ○ A participant reads the scripture passage
    ○ As the scripture is being read, the participants are invited to find a word, phrase, image, or idea that resonates with them. We’ll call this the focus.
    ○ Example: Imagine reading the Our Father text from Matthew 6. People might focus on: "Thy Kingdom Come," "Lead Us," "Our," the idea of fatherhood, an image of God’s Kingdom, Do I forgive others? Etc.
  ● Meditatio (Meditate, 5-10 minutes)
    ○ Stay with the focus from above.
    ○ There are different ways to do this: Why does it resonate? What does it mean in my life today? Repeat it as a mantra. Imagine it. How is this connected to seeking God?
  ● Oratio (Pray, 1-2 minutes)
    ○ Whatever comes up in meditation, form into a silent prayer offered to God.
  ● Contemplatio (Contemplate, 1-2 minutes)
    ○ After speaking a prayer to God, sit and listen or rest in God’s love.
  ● This leads into discussion and sharing.
    ○ Start with insights from the prayer.
    ○ Transition to sharing about seeking God.

● Tips
  ○ There is no “right way,” do what works for you
  ○ Embrace the silence
  ○ Let God find you
Small Christian Community Process - First Meeting
(Suggested timing based on a 60/90 minute meeting)

- Welcome & Check In (5/10 minutes)
- Review Format (5/5 minutes)
  ○ Review the participant’s advice (page 15)
  ○ Prayer (15 minutes), review format: *Lectio Divina* (p. 16)
  ○ Discussion based on the prayer and the questions (p. 14).
- Prayer (10/15 minutes)
  ○ Transition Passage: “the crowds were astonished at his teaching.” *(Matthew 7:28)*
- Discussion (30/45 minutes)
  ○ Begin with insights from the prayer experience
  ○ Discussing the reflection questions (page 14)
- Action/Request (5/10 minutes)
  ○ The practical exercise is listed on the next page
  ○ Participants can share thoughts and plans
  ○ Review date of the next group session
  ○ Participants can request prayers from the group

*Luke 10:25-37*—There was a scholar of the law who stood up to test him and said, "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus said to him, "What is written in the law? How do you read it?" He said in reply, "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." He replied to him, "You have answered correctly; do this and you will live." ... "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied, "A man fell victim to robbers as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. They stripped and beat him and went off leaving him half-dead. A priest happened to be going down that road, but when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. Likewise a Levite came to the place, and when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. But a Samaritan traveler who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight. He approached the victim, poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged them. Then he lifted him up on his own animal, took him to an inn and cared for him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper with the instruction, 'Take care of him. If you spend more than what I have given you, I shall repay you on my way back.' Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers' victim?" He answered, "The one who treated him with mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."
Week 3 - Act

Revisit the exercise on pages 6 & 7

Actions:

Pick a Gospel teaching that you believe is important for someone in your life. Spend the week contemplating the teaching and writing down how it moves you.

Think about creative ways you can share the fruit of your reflection so that it will be heard.

Share the Word with the person in your life who most needs it.
**Week 4 - Share**

**Preparing**
- Continue to use the phrases you highlighted when you prepared for Week 2:
  - Pick a phrase each morning, and write it on a slip of paper
  - Hold that theme in your heart throughout the day
  - At the end of the day, pray an Examen (page 14)
- Week 3 exercise:
  - Plan to share something about your Week 3 exercise
  - If you were not able to do it, plan to share your barriers.

**Individual Option**
- Find 20-30 minutes where you won’t be interrupted.
- (10-15 minutes) Follow the prayer format (*Lectio Divina*) in the group exercise below.
- (10-20 minutes) Journal about the experience of the exercise from Week 3.

**Small Christian Community Process - Second Meeting**  
*(Suggested timing based on a 60/90 minute meeting)*
- Welcome & Check In (5/10 minutes)
- Review Format (5/5 minutes)
  - Review the participant’s advice (page 15)
  - Prayer will be about 15 minutes
  - Review the prayer format: *Lectio Divina* (page 16)
  - Discussion will follow based on the prayer the Act exercise (page 18)
- Prayer (10/15 minutes)
  - Transition Passage: “Lord, teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples.” (*Luke 11:1*)
  - *Lectio Divina: Preach the Person and Event of Jesus Christ* (reading from op.org; page 10)
- Discussion (30/45 minutes)
  - Begin with insights from the prayer experience
  - Discussing insights from the Act exercise
- Action/Request (5/10 minutes)
  - Review date of the next Explore session
  - Participants can request prayers from the group
Three Ways To Get Involved With Intentional Preachers

1. Pick up a booklet, and explore on your own. - or -

2. Attend an “Explore” session to learn about this month’s scripture. Everyone is welcome. - or -

3. Check out a Small Christian Community to join with others to go deeper.

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Upcoming “Explore” Sessions

Young Adults’ Session*, Wed., Sept. 9, 7:30-9 PM, Parish Hall

Monday, September 14, 7:30-9 PM, Aquinas Room

Sunday, September 27, 10:30-11:30 AM, School Basement

* The Young Adults group is a community of single and married Catholic adults in our 20s and 30s; to find out more, visit: http://stdominics.org/youngadults

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Connect With a Small Christian Community

Contact Scott Moyer at scott@stdominics.org

or come to an Explore session to get connected