Southern Dominican Friars
Province of Saint Martin de Porres

Priests and Lay Brothers of the Order of Preachers
dedicated to lives of prayer, community, study, and
preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
The Order of Preachers

In 1216, a young Spaniard named Dominic de Guzman established a new religious community—the Order of Preachers, also known as the Dominicans. He envisioned a religious order focused primarily on announcing the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world. The life and spirituality of the brothers would center on four basic apostolic values—prayer, community, study and ministry. By living this life, the brothers would be strengthened and empowered to preach the truth of Jesus Christ to all peoples and cultures.

Saint Dominic could never have imagined the tremendous impact of his followers. For over 800 years thousands of friars have followed in Saint Dominic's footsteps and faithfully ministered to God's people. Some like Saint Albert the Great, Saint Thomas Aquinas, Yves Congar, Edward Schillebeeckx have broadened our understanding of the Catholic faith through the fruits of their study and preaching. Others like Saint Martin de Porres, Saint Juan Macias and Bartolome de las Casas defended and brought comfort to the poor and marginalized.

From the very beginning, Dominic dispersed the friars throughout Europe in response to a need for men committed to preaching the truth of Jesus Christ and ministering to His people. As the Order continued to grow, friars were grouped together in provinces based on where they lived. Nearly eight centuries later, over 6000 Dominican friars minister in 93 provinces worldwide. Although each Dominican province has its own unique personality and local leadership, all are part of the same Order of Preachers and are under the leadership of the friar serving as Master of the Order.

The Province of Saint Martin de Porres

Dominicans have historically been at the service of the Church in their commitment to evangelization wherever needed. In this same spirit the Southern Province was established in 1980 in response to the rapidly growing Catholic population growth in the Southern United States. The friars understood the immense challenges facing the Church in the South—support services for the large multicultural and multilingual immigrant population; the influence of fundamentalism and the need for an educated and faithful Catholic voice just to name a few.

The friars of the Province chose Saint Martin de Porres as the patron of the Province because of his legacy of serving the poor and bridging the gap between races, cultures and classes in 16th century colonial Peru. Facing a similar disparity of cultures and economics in the South today, Saint Martin provides our friars with an example of the tremendous effect one Dominican can have on the day-to-day lives of people.

Strengthened by Our Diversity

The geographic territory of the Province includes eleven southern states from North Carolina to Florida and west through Oklahoma, as well as a mission in Guayaquil, Ecuador. Similar to the demographic makeup of the South, our 140 friars represent a variety of racial and cultural backgrounds. Although the majority are from the United States, others are from the Caribbean, Latin America, Asia and Africa. This multicultural dimension of our Province helps us more effectively connect with and preach to the diverse Catholic population in the South.

Ministries in the Southern Province

Each year men much like yourself enter the Order and bring with them a variety of careers and experiences—law enforcement, education, law, finance, military, just to name a few. This wealth of experience and training allows our Province to serve more people in more creative and innovative ministries.
As friars of the Order of Preachers, each of us is called to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ through our words and actions. Although our friars minister in varied apostolates, each one participates in our shared legacy of proclaiming the truth of Jesus Christ. From immigrant parishes to cathedrals, universities to prison cells, Southern Dominicans continue to minister to the needs of the people and Church of the South.

- **Preaching:** Our Dominican legacy calls every friar to some form of gospel preaching. Preaching is our heritage and what “we do” no matter where our ministry takes us. Whether teaching in a classroom or preaching full-time at parish missions and retreats, each friar responds according to his particular gifts and ministry.

- **Higher Education:** Our friars are engaged in the teaching of theology and philosophy, as well as other subjects at universities throughout the United States and the world including, the Aquinas Institute of Theology, Xavier University of Louisiana, Barry University, University of Arizona, the University of Freibourgh, and the Angelicum in Rome.

- **Parish Life:** We currently staff thirteen parishes throughout the South ministering to the day-to-day spiritual needs of parishioners.

- **Campus Ministry:** Dominicans have traditionally provided University communities with a well educated, Catholic ministerial presence. Our Province currently staffs campus ministry centers at a number of universities including, Barry University, University of the Incarnate Word, University of Dallas, Xavier University, St. Catharine College, University of Memphis, Rhodes College, Dominican University of Ohio and Tulane University.

- **Special Chaplaincies:** A number of friars minister in other areas such as high school educators, prison and hospital chaplains, and tribunal canon lawyers.

- **Mass Communications and the Arts:** Friars are exploring new ways to preach through media including film production and emerging communication opportunities utilizing the internet.

### What Makes Us Different?

As you look around at different religious communities you will probably look for what distinguishes one community from the other. Its those distinctions in ministry and lifestyle that will make one group appeal more to you than any of the others. The goal is for you to find the community that would best utilize your particular gifts.

Dominican life is distinguished by the emphasis we place on four core values which have served for 800 years as the foundation for our Dominican life.

1. **Prayer:** Prayer is the beginning point of our Dominican life. Without it, a living relationship with Christ is impossible. Only through putting Christ at the center of each day and by taking adequate time to pray to Him in communal prayer and contemplate Him in the Eucharist can a friar find the inspiration and substance of his preaching.

2. **Community:** The Dominican sense of community is rooted in the model described in the early church and based upon an understanding of a healthy family life. Community is the place each friar calls “home”, where he finds companionship from his brothers, gets called out when he leaves dirty dishes in the sink, and finds support from his brothers when facing life’s challenges.

3. **Study:** Study is an integral part of Dominican life. Through study we discover new avenues for encountering God through his creation. Dominicans love learning, not merely for its own sake, but also because it allows us to discover new ways to present the truth of Jesus Christ and our Catholic faith.

4. **Ministry:** Every Dominican friar is called to preach the Gospel in one form or another. Whatever his ministry, the friar must be able to see and interpret the signs of the times and effectively communicate the truth and power of the Gospel message.
"Come, follow me."
-Jesus

Is He Calling You?
Throughout history God has chosen to call some of the most ordinary people to do the most extraordinary things. The story of God reaching out to Paul on the road to Damascus describes a truly inspiring and dramatic vocational call. Jesus chose ordinary fishermen as his first disciples. They were good men, with many gifts, but by no means perfect. It's hard to imagine, but Paul and the disciples were no different than you or anyone else. Each of us is called by our baptism to a particular vocation. Like Paul and the disciples the challenge comes in recognizing the call and having the courage and faith to say, "Here I am Lord!"

If you feel a strong desire to share your faith with people from a variety of cultures and circumstances, to search for truth in a world overrun with relativism, to help people open up the mystery of God, and a willingness to defend and support the oppressed, ... then you should consider the possibility that God is inviting you to follow in the footsteps of Saint Dominic as a Southern Dominican friar (priest or lay brother). We invite you to some time to get to know us, our ministries and our lives.

The Next Step is Up to You
If what you've read about us in these few pages interests you, then you may want to explore our life a little deeper. There are a number of things you can do to get a better understanding of Southern Dominican life:

- Get things moving by contacting our Vocation Director. He is experienced in helping men like yourself discern their vocation. Feel free to call or email him at any time.
- Attend one of our Dominican Experience Weekends. Held in the Fall and Spring, they offer a great opportunity to explore our life on a more intimate level.
- Visit our vocation website. It's updated on a regular basis and has a lot of good resources on Dominican spirituality, vocation discernment and religious life available for download.
- Get to know our friars. Schedule a visit to one of our local communities and join them for prayer and dinner.
- Get your questions answered and your concerns addressed. No question is too simple or dumb. Always feel free to contact our Vocation Director.

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