

“To Contemplate and Share the Fruits of Contemplation”: Mary, Model for the Order of Preachers

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The Blessed Virgin Mary and the Order of Preachers are particularly known to go hand in hand. Despite their original error when it came to the Immaculate Conception, the Dominicans have been known to be close to her heart. A famous Dominican tradition recounts the instance of St. Dominic seeing a vision of Heaven and finding the members of the Order gathered at her feet and wrapped in her mantle. Her life and the calling placed from God is the perfect model for Dominican spirituality: she receives the gifts of God—the essence of what it means to contemplate—and then bears and shares these fruits to the rest of the world.

Mary is, what many would call a “contemplative in action.” It begins with her willingness to receive what God offers to her: the love that He has for her as His most perfect creation (she is His daughter), and the gift of the Incarnate Son (she is, in a way, His bride, being handpicked from all women). These things which unite her to Him, among others, she “keeps in her heart”¹—i.e. contemplation—but her Divine Maternity also enables her to be Mother of those whom her Son redeems with His Blood. Because she has received the fullness of Grace, she becomes the Mediatrix of all Graces to the Church. In other words, because she received the ultimate Fruit in her womb, that fruitfulness multiplies to the Body of Christ, the Church. Therefore, Mary exemplifies the spirituality of the Order of Preachers: “To contemplate, and to share the fruits of contemplation.”

1.) Dominican Spirituality: Contemplative and Active

It is important, first, to define terms in this consideration. St. Thomas Aquinas in the *Summa Theologica*, *Secunda Secundae Partis* talks about the concept of contemplation: it is

¹ Lk 1:51 *The Bible: Revised Standard Version* (New York: American Bible Society, 1970).

connected to the intellect, but is caused by the will, which also moves the intellect.² He also adds that the appetite “moves one to observe things either with the senses or with the intellect, sometimes for love of the thing seen” and that “since everyone delights when he obtains what he loves, it follows that the contemplative life terminates in delight...the result being that love becomes more intense.”³ Putting it in the context of the spiritual life, “Contemplation is nothing but the raising of the soul to God.”⁴ This raising is a response and receptivity to what God is already offering. Since God is pure act, anything that man does is a response aided by His grace, and what He is already giving. Of course, it takes man’s free will in this response, but contemplation is ultimately God’s gift to the soul. In the responding and receiving of this gift, the soul experiences union with the Divine.

The active life, however, has a different end compared to the contemplative life. Aquinas simply speaks of it as, “external work.”⁵ In Question 181, Article Three of *Secunda Secundae Partis*, he says of the active life, “a man conceives a truth inwardly, so as to be directed thereby in his outward action.”⁶ For him as a Dominican friar, the active life manifested in preaching and teaching. In essence, it is anything that is geared towards life outside the walls of a cloister.

One of the mottos of the Order is “*Contemplata aliis tradere*”—“To contemplate, and share the fruits of contemplation.”⁷ This phrase was coined by Aquinas, in *Secunda Secundae Partis*, Question 188. In this section of the *Summa*, he talks about contemplative versus active forms of religious life, considering the unique situation of his own order. Founded by Spanish

² Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 2, 2, 180, 1 at New Advent, newadvent.org.

³ Aquinas, *Summa*, 2, 2, 180, 2, at New Advent.

⁴ Patrick Mary Briscoe, OP and Jacob Bertrand Janczyk, OP, *Saint Dominic’s Way of Life: A Path to Knowing and Loving God*, (Huntington: Our Sunday Visitor, 2021), 68.

⁵ Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 2, 2, 181, 1, at New Advent.

⁶ Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 2, 2, 181, 3 at New Advent.

⁷ Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 2, 2, 188, 6 at New Advent.

priest Dominic de Guzman in 1216, these friars were not cloistered monks, nor were they diocesan priests; rather they were itinerant preachers, living in a prayerful, contemplative life in community, yet still active in the world. Their contemplation obviously took in the form of deep prayer—both communal and individual—and the sharing of the fruits happened through their preaching and teaching.

Their establishment was a response to the Albigensian heresy, and so the mission of the friars was to preach Truth. St. Dominic realized that in order to “preach for the salvation of souls,” the friars would have to be deeply rooted in prayer and sincere in the pursuit of Truth. Hence, the term “to contemplate and share the fruits of contemplation.” The Order of Preachers, in comparison to the monastics and secular priests, was unique in its marriage of contemplation and activity. Unlike the cloistered, these friars were out ministering to those around them. And unlike the latter priests, the friars had the characteristics of a monastic and contemplative community as well. St. Dominic knew that his friars needed to live a life of deep prayer, to come to know Truth Himself, and be in union with God, but that they could not keep the fruits of this union to themselves. They recognized the infinite importance of knowing not just truth as a concept, but Truth as a Person, and preaching/teaching was their charism of communicating this Person to the rest of the world.

Essentially, the soul of a Dominican is one that receptive to God’s overflow of grace and pours what is received to the rest of the world. Fr. M. M. Philippon, O.P. best put it, “A Dominican soul is a soul of light whose rapt gaze dwells in the inaccessible splendor wherein God conceals Himself.”⁸ In other words, a Dominican is one who is united to God, especially through contemplation. However, this soul does not keep these joys for himself; Philippon states,

⁸ Philippon, O.P., M. M, “The Dominican Soul,” At *EWTN*, at ewtn.com.

“We have here the key to the whole Dominican vocation: to live, defend and propagate the faith in the atmosphere of the Church.”⁹ A person who possesses this spirituality is immersed in, and permeated with God, and is naturally compelled to share the fruits of this union.

How does this relationship occur, that it might overflow to the rest of the world? It happens primarily through prayer. Truly, the Order has requirements of structured prayer (Mass, the Liturgy of the Hours, etc.), but it also recognizes the unique ways in which individual souls best relate to God. Therefore, people can arrive at contemplation in a variety of ways, and so the rule of the Order allows for both “structure and freedom” when it comes to prayer. Fathers Briscoe, O.P., and Janczyk, O.P. well articulates the Dominican method of attaining contemplation:

“For Dominic, contemplation is not arrived at by putting together the right spiritual recipe... No, Dominic realized that the life of contemplation is a gift, an invitation to share in the divine life of God, to which we are all called. It is a response to God’s grace that is offered to each of us, uniquely and particularly.”¹⁰

What these friars are saying is that aside from the efficacy and necessity for the Mass and Liturgy of the Hours, the individual soul can still significantly relate to God in different ways of prayer. This demonstrates that God not only pours out His grace for the person to receive, but He also chooses to do it in ways unique to that individual...creating a beautifully unrepeatable relationship. Again, this relationship is initiated by God, a gift freely given to the soul, who is free to receive or not. The one who receives this gift becomes more like the ever-generous Giver, desiring others to also receive this gift.

⁹ Philipon, O.P., M. M, “The Dominican Soul,” At *EWTN*, at ewtn.com.

¹⁰ Briscoe and Janczyk, *Saint Dominic*, 67.

As the saying goes, “You cannot give what you do not have.” The active life for the Order is preaching and teaching. This is not something they purely do; rather these activities are born out of the deep, cultivated relationship with God. Of course, they are not preaching and teaching for their own sake, but to communicate the Truth and the Gospel to those who do not know it. Being in true communion with the Lord, of course is bound to transform the soul and bear good fruit within. For the Dominican, prayer and study form the contemplative aspect (getting to know the One they love) and preaching and teaching are a natural result of the relationship that is cultivated in the former activities (an invitation for others to get to know this Beloved). It truly is “the overflow of his contemplation.”¹¹ From the internal comes the external. The external, if it does not have the foundation it needs, would be done in vain and disintegrate.

Again, the activity is not done for its own sake, but primarily for the salvation of souls. Having experienced the fullness of life that comes from being united to God, the aim of Dominican spirituality is to preach and teach others so that they may come to have this abundant life as well. Truth is one of the core tenets of the Order, and it is essential for people to know what is true about God and everything He created. However, Truth is ultimately a Person, not merely a concept. Preaching and teaching at its core are all about communicating Christ, who is Truth, by one’s words, actions, and overall way of life. The Blessed Virgin Mary, in her vocation as the Mother of God, exemplifies this communication of Christ to mankind; therefore, it is only fitting that Blessed Mother would have such a special role in Dominican spirituality.

There is certainly good reason to believe that the Blessed Mother had a great influence on the founding of the Order. *The Lives of the Brethren of the Order of Preachers*, a collection of stories surrounding the origin of the friars, gives clear examples of this. One of the very first

¹¹ Briscoe and Janczyk, *Saint Dominic*, 103.

chapters recalls a vision a monk had of Mary regarding the birth of the religious community. In it, he becomes privy to a conversation between Christ and His Mother, after she fervently prays for the salvation of souls, saying to Him, ““but devise yet further means for their salvation””¹²:

“Such prayers as these did the Mother of mercy pour forth for sinners, kneeling at the feet of her Son...the Son replied, “I know, sweet Mother, that sinners are being lost for want of preachers, having none to break to them the bread of the holy Scriptures, or teach the truth...Wherefore, yielding to thy entreaties, I will send them new messengers, an Order of Preachers, who shall call the people and lead them to everlasting joys;”¹³

It is clear that Mary contemplated the need for a new breakthrough in the Church. Knowing the dire state of the world in that time, her prayers to her Son were answered in the birth of the Order of Preachers. St. Dominic, a man deeply united to His Lord, was also the type to not simply pray, but to passionately beg the Lord to save souls. What does the Blessed Mother and Dominic have anything in common? It was a deep unity with God—a union of love that was and is so complete and real, that it compelled them to act in order to bring the world into this union. Therefore, what became the fruit of the prayers was an avenue for men and women to cultivate this union and intimacy with their Savior, so that they may bring the rest of the world into this transformative relationship.

The friars were/are not the only ones to benefit from Mary’s example; the cloistered nuns of the Order and their way of life truly reflect the example of Mary. Although not active outside the walls of their convent or monastery, they are still able to demonstrate the contemplative and even active aspects of the spirituality, and the Blessed Mother. Br. John Maria Devaney writes,

“the nuns have the sublime calling of being consecrated radically to God and of interceding for the Friars and indeed for the whole

¹² *Lives of the Brethren of the Order of Preachers*, I, I, at Dominican Central Archives, at domcentral.org.

¹³ *Lives of the Brethren of the Order of Preachers*, I, I, at Dominican Central Archives, at domcentral.org.

world, just as Mary was consecrated to God and continues to intercede for us now in heaven...”¹⁴

These nuns’ way of life is certainly contemplative in that they spend most of their time in prayer, being in constant union with their Bridegroom. However, it can also be said that their intercessory prayer is a form of activity, because it is geared toward affecting that which is apart from their own interior selves. The nuns, spending all their days with their Bridegroom, also spiritually labor for the ones who need their prayers. Like Mary, they dwell in union with Christ, as He is the one who invited them into their vocation. However, they also let this union bear fruit in their intercessory prayer for the world. Love never stays stagnant between the lover and the beloved, but eventually must give life to all, and Mary best exemplifies this in her calling as the Mother of God.

At first glance, the Order’s charisms of preaching and teaching may not have so obvious a connection to the Mother of God, but to consider the whole of their mission—again, to “contemplate and share the fruits of contemplation”—it is only fitting that she truly would have had an influence in this renewal of the Church. The members of the Order study and pray the Word of God in order to preach and teach it. Mary literally received the Word Himself into her womb, in order that He would be known to humankind. As the Dominicans contemplate, and then communicate God to others, Mary, in a much more real and tangible way, contemplated the Son who became the fruit of her womb and physically communicated Him to the world. At the heart of it all is relationship between persons.

This theme of contemplating and sharing contemplation’s fruits is based firmly on a simple but profound cycle: first, relationship, and then generation (the goal of which is to bring others in

¹⁴ Devaney, O.P., John Maria, “Dominican Nuns and Mary, the Model of Contemplation,” At *Dominicana*, (8 September 2014), at dominicanajournal.org.

to said relationship). It cannot be emphasized enough that God is the One initiating the pursuit. He is the Bridegroom who seeks to wed Himself to His bride, whom He chooses from all others to fulfill His specific plan. However, it does not merely end with generation, but a continual receiving of the outpouring of God. When one continues to contemplate, the delight and love for the Lover intensifies¹⁵ and it follows that love is generated to others even more. This is always the case for the human soul who is truly humble and realizes her place in the plan of the Most High. And Mary of Nazareth best fits this role.

2.) The Blessed Mother in the Scriptures Contemplating and Sharing Fruits

To understand how Mary is a great model of the contemplative-in-action, it is important to look at what the Scriptures say about her. The most insightful accounts all revolve around the two most important moments of salvation history: the Incarnation and the Crucifixion of her Son. Even the few times she is mentioned during His ministry provides implications of the significance of her role as His Mother. It is important to keep in mind the themes of an inward receiving, which then turns into generosity of the gift by the recipient to the rest of the world.

Mary of Nazareth first comes into the scene in the beginning of the Gospel of Luke. He tells of the Angel Gabriel being sent by God to a Nazarene virgin named Mary, betrothed to a man named Joseph. The Angel greets her with the curious title, “full of grace,” which causes her to be frightened and confused. He then reassures her and tells her of the plan: that she will conceive a son, and that she is to name Him Jesus. The moment of truth happens when Mary responds, “Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word” (Lk 1:38 *RSV*). At this moment, she consents to receive the Son of God within her womb. What must have those first moments been like, after the angel left, when the “Word became flesh and dwelt

¹⁵ Aquinas, *Summa*, 2, 2, 180, 2, at New Advent.

among us” for the first time in the womb of this young girl? It must have been one of the most profound moments of contemplation in all of history.

In the very next verse, Luke notes that “Mary arose and went with haste” (1:39) to where her cousin Elizabeth lives. This is the “active” or “sharing” aspect of the contemplation-action sequence playing out. Mary, having just received the word from God through the angel—and literally the Word Himself—into her womb, goes out “in haste.” Believing the angel’s message about her formerly barren cousin now expecting a child, and having experienced a miraculous conception herself, she knew that she had to act, and the Scriptures even note the sense of holy urgency. Even more telling is when the sound of Mary’s voice causes Elizabeth’s unborn son to leap in her womb (1:41). As the two women rejoice, Mary bursts into her song praise, the Magnificat, proclaiming all that God has done for her. This event is not only a remarkable example of sharing the fruits of contemplation, but of preaching Truth literally conceived.

Twice does Luke remark in the infancy narratives that Mary “kept all these things in her heart” (2:19, 51). This gives a window into Mary’s heart and spirit: she is one who cultivates an interior life, always keeping in mind her circumstances and relating them back to God. All throughout her Son’s childhood, she received all that happened to them, even tragic circumstances. In the ordinary day-to-day, she would have contemplated the hidden wonder in front of her. This was the reality for thirty years, until Christ began His public ministry. This was the point of His life that she knew that it was time to “share” the Fruit that she nourished and contemplated for thirty years of their lives.

The wedding at Cana chronicled in the Gospel of John is a turning-point moment for both Mother and Son. This event is when He performs His first public miracle, and Mary played a

significant role in it. After years of nourishing and getting to know her Son, she intuited that this crisis was the time to make Himself known to Israel. Having “conceived an inward truth,” as Aquinas puts it, that her Son was indeed the Savior of the world for the past thirty years, and that He could rectify the lack of wine, she decided to act as a mediator between Him and the servants. Her act of intercession, aligned with the will of her Son, was essentially sharing the Fruit of her womb to Israel. She knew the truth of Him, that He was going to be the One to save the people. Therefore, having contemplated this reality for the last thirty years, she knew it was right for her to assist in in the “launch” of His mission.

During Jesus’ ministry, Mary gets very little attention until one day, a woman in the crowd calls out to Him, “Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts that you sucked!” to which He replies, “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!” (Lk 11:27-28). Other translations say “obey” rather than “keep”.¹⁶ Christ is not dismissing Mary in this instant at all; rather He is calling to mind a deeper reality of His Mother, who indeed “heard the word of God” and kept it, by bearing Him. Keeping God’s word naturally also means doing whatever He wills. All the physical aspects of motherhood that the world sees as ordinary, are founded on an extraordinary and hidden reality: that God took on flesh, and Mary, in literally receiving the Word into her womb, did the will of God. Jesus is honoring His Mother by proclaiming her receptivity and activity to and for God.

Perhaps the most significant event for Mary, aside from the Nativity, would be the Crucifixion. John makes note of Mary’s presence at the foot of the cross, and the unique role that Jesus bestows upon her. The Evangelist writes,

¹⁶ “Luke 11:28.” At *Bible Hub*, at biblehub.com.

“But standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother’s sister... When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, “Woman, behold, your son!” Then he said to the disciple, “Behold your mother!” And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home” (Jn 19:25-27).

Traditionally, Jesus was doing what any good Jewish son would for his widowed mother, if he knew that his time on earth was short, and therefore, unable to take care of her. There is, however, an even deeper meaning to all of this: Jesus, in giving Mary to the beloved disciple, and the disciple to her, is showing that she is the mother of all His disciples. In other words, she is Mother of the Church. In that mothering, she spiritually nurtures souls to maturity in the Kingdom, just as she more literally nourished Christ, that He may one day grow to be a man and fulfill God’s mission. This is even more evident considering that when Christ’s side is pierced with a lance, and out flows blood and water, the Church is born. First, Christ officially bestows the spiritual maternity upon her, before He dies and is pierced, signaling the birth of the Church. The outflow of blood and water are postmortem signs in this case, but also natural results of birth. She once again receives the dignity and gift of being a mother to her Son’s disciples, and uniting her will to her Son’s activity of self-sacrifice, this new fruit of her contemplation is made manifest to the world for the first time.

Mary’s maternity of the Church is then made evident at the Feast of Pentecost. It is noted in the Acts of the Apostles, that in the days leading up to Pentecost, the disciples were gathered in the Upper Room “with one accord devoted themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus” (Acts 1:14). In the next chapter, after days of prayer and finally on the day of Pentecost,

“there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit

and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:3-4).

Peter then goes out to the multitude who have arrived in Jerusalem for Passover and preaches the Gospel to them. This account certainly possesses the theme of contemplating and sharing the fruits. Although Mary is not the main speaker, considering the role that she had been bestowed at the foot of the cross, the mere mention of her presence at this “second” birth of the Church shows that she has a significant role in this manifestation. She is found praying with the disciples, and surely also received anew this outpouring of the Spirit she already knew so intimately. As spiritual mother of the disciples, and obviously of Christ, she would have intensely interceded for them to bear Him and His message to the world. In her role, she carried the disciples spiritually within her, nourishing them with her prayers, and with that, they are sent out to preach to the world what they have received from their Lord.

Evidently, these stories show Mary as someone who is perfectly receptive to whatever God gives her—found especially literally in the conception and Incarnation of Christ. Certainly, her motherhood to Him had eternal consequences—for herself, and for all of mankind.

3.) Ontological Considerations: Divine Maternity, Fullness of Grace, Spiritual Maternity

Before receiving fullness of grace, Mary was predestined with the vocation to be the Mother of God. This was the initial gift from God. Fr. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., explains it in this way,

“It follows that as Christ was predestined to natural divine son-ship (*in signio priori*) being predestined to the summit of glory and to the fullness of grace (the germ of glory) so also the Blessed Virgin Mary was predestined first to the divine maternity, and in consequence to a very high degree of heavenly glory and to the

fullness of grace, in order that she might be fully worthy of her mission as Mother of the Saviour.”¹⁷

Mary had the most intimate connection with God, being called to be His Mother. God raised up her lowly nature by taking on her flesh and blood, and this was solidified by her “fiat” at the Annunciation. This vocation and dignity were certainly not something she earned, but a gift from Him. Garrigou-Lagrange, drawing much from Aquinas, also notes that “the principle or beginning of merit cannot itself be merited.”¹⁸ Divine Maternity was what God had in mind for her even before she existed. As a fitting result of this calling, and knowing her positive response to it, she was full of grace from the moment of her conception and preserved from Original Sin. This fullness of grace is essentially the fruit of Divine Maternity.

Garrigou-Lagrange dives deeper into the meaning of this term, with which the Angel Gabriel greets Mary:

“The grace intended in the words, “Hail, full of grace” addressed to Our Lady is therefore something higher than nature or the exigencies of nature...It is a participation in the divine nature or in the inner life of God, which makes the soul to enter into the kingdom of God”¹⁹

Because God bestowed this unmerited gift of Divine Maternity upon her, pre-ordaining this relationship before she ever came to be, she was free from Original Sin and filled with grace when He finally created her in the time and place that He did. Because she is the Mother of the Lord, possessing such an intimacy would naturally follow in this plenitude of the life of God within her. Being the Mother of God certainly comes with its fruits, one of them being the grace

¹⁷ Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., Reginald, *Mother of the Saviour and our Interior Life*, (Charlotte: TAN Books, 1993), 7.

¹⁸ Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., *Mother of the Saviour*, 8.

¹⁹ Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., *Mother of the Saviour*, 29.

to preserve from Original Sin. This fullness also has its ripple effects, not just for Mary, but for the whole world as well.

The fullness of grace, preceded by the calling of Divine Maternity, well prepared Mary for to receive the Incarnate Son in her womb. The fruitfulness of God in her soul from the moment of her existence made her fitting to bear the “fruit of her womb”, even without the aid of a man. Unlike Eve, she received what was given to her by God; Mary did not grasp as Eve did, who thought she could attain that which was alone for God to grant. Because of Mary’s reception, or “contemplation,” of the Son in her womb, He had the means to be made manifest to the world. The Fruit of her womb would then become the Fruit of salvation on the tree of the cross, of whom mankind would be invited to receive. In essence, Mary’s Divine Maternity and fullness of grace allowed her to share the Gift that she received from God that He might also unite Himself to the rest of humanity.

Because of this foundational relationship between Mother and the God-Man, she is then able to extend that motherhood to the rest of the Church. Her fruitfulness in bearing Christ to the world, which includes her abundance of grace, enables her to also be Mother to those He redeems with His Blood. As she consented at the Annunciation to birthing the Son into the world, so too did she consent to her Son’s Passion and Death on the cross, which resulted in the birth of the Church. In the former case, she allowed God to unite her to Him, accepting Him incarnate in her body. In the latter, despite the inexpressible pain, she accepted the will of her Son to suffer and die, completely releasing Him to the will of God. Here, she accepted that He had His own mission in saving mankind, and in that acceptance, she consented to the birth of the Church and her own role in it. This is visibly evident when Christ gives St. John the Beloved to

her as her son, and she as his mother. In essence, being the Mother of the Incarnate God extends her maternity to the ones whom He brings into adoptive sonship with the Father.

Garrigou-Lagrange further reflects on the efficacy of Mary's spiritual motherhood of Christians. This maternity, he explains, "participates in the fruitfulness or fecundity of the divine and really communicated to us grace, the germ of eternal life."²⁰ Only is this possible because God first bestowed on her the gift of being His Mother. She received this calling and grace with a full-hearted yes, and through her the Second Person of the Trinity became flesh in space and time in order to redeem fallen mankind. Thus, she possesses the title, Mediatrix of Graces, because God chose her to enter into humanity. Recalling the words of Aquinas on the active life, she literally conceived Truth Himself in her womb, that He might be made manifest to the external world and redeem it by His Sacrifice. Mary's role does not merely stop at the Incarnation and the Crucifixion. Now that she is in Heaven, in perfect contemplation of God, she can mediate the graces that her Son wishes to bestow on the Church.

4.) Concluding Thoughts

All of this goes to show the pattern of the contemplative-in-action: receiving, then giving; conceiving, then bearing; relating, then generating. At the very foundation of this concept is life-giving relationship. Mary, as demonstrated in the Scriptures, exemplifies this cycle. She was created by God for to be mother to the Incarnate Son, and therefore her being was such that she was completely receptive to Him and be spiritually fruitful as a result of this union. The Order of Preachers certainly emphasizes this unity of reception and generosity, making it a significant part of their charism and spirituality, incarnated in their preaching and teaching of the Word and His Truth.

²⁰ Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., *Mother of the Saviour*, 154.

The Blessed Mother was not a teacher or preacher in the strict sense, but she taught the disciples more than any Dominican could their students, because of the unrepeatable bond she shared with Truth Himself. A Dominican can still be deeply united to God, who bestows the gifts of Wisdom and Knowledge, but Mary literally bore in her body He who is called the Wisdom of God, the Logos. Wisdom took on flesh from her, and it was she who communicated Him to the world, more tangibly anyone else could. Her virginal motherhood demonstrated the kind of Person He was, God Incarnate.

The Dominican soul cannot give what he or she does not have. He must open himself to union with God through contemplation. Ultimately, it is not his to attain, but as emphasized, it is God's gift to give—the gift of Himself. As a result of receiving this gift and cultivating an intimate relationship with the Lord, he is called to preach what He has received from His Creator, to help enlighten those who sit in darkness. And he will have, not only an expert interceding for him at his side, but a Mother who spiritually carries him in her womb that he may also bear spiritual life to the world.

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