

# DOMINICAN STUDY

**Fr. Michael Mascari OP, PhD**



Dominican Father Michael Mascari serves as Academic Dean and Vice President of Aquinas Institute, from which he graduated in 1987 with an M.Div and an M.A. in Theology. In 2003 he was elected as Prior Provincial of the Province of Saint Albert the Great. In 2012, he served the Order as the Socius for the Intellectual Life, President of the Board of Directors of the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas in Rome (Angelicum), as a member of the Conseil scientifique, École biblique et archéologique française (Jerusalem), and as President of the Order's Permanent Commission for the Promotion of Studies. In addition to his academic degrees from Aquinas Institute of Theology, Fr. Michael holds a Ph.D. in Early Christian Studies from the Catholic University of America (1996), a J.D. from DePaul University School of Law (1978), and an A.B. degree in history from Georgetown University (1975).

# PRESENTATION OUTLINE

I. Study as Zeal for the Truth

II. The Created World as a Mirror of the Truth and Goodness of God

III. Places to Pursue the Truth:

- Holy Scripture
- Sacred Tradition
- Philosophy and the Use of Reason
- The Liturgy
- The Writings of Fathers and Doctors of the Church
- Contemporary Theologians
- The Great Intellectual Lights of the Order
- St. Thomas Aquinas

IV. Ways that We Pursue the Truth

- Dialogue
- A Hermeneutic of Sympathy
- Spiritual Mendicancy
- Intellectual Itinerancy
- A Common Project

V. Study and Prayer

VI. Study and Friendship with Christ

VII. Study as an Integrating Part of Dominican Vocation

VIII. Study and Preaching

## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do you think Veritas or Truth is? In your own life where have you looked for Truth? What are the occasions when you have glimpsed or encountered it?

2. Dominican study includes the dynamic of dialogue. Why is dialogue important? What makes dialogue often difficult for us? How can we overcome these difficulties?

3. Dominican study also requires that we become itinerants. How does Dominican study lead us to change? In what ways has your own study changed your understanding of God, the Church, and yourself?

4. Dominican study does not take place in isolation but takes place most profoundly in the presence of others. How does communal study promote dialogue, mendicancy, and itinerancy?

# THE ART OF LITURGICAL PREACHING

**Sr. Sara Fairbanks OP, PhD**



Sr. Fairbanks is the Associate Professor of Theology and Preaching at Aquinas Institute of Theology. She achieved a PhD from the University of St. Michael's College, University of Toronto, an MA from Aquinas Institute of Theology, and a BA from Wilson College. Sr. Fairbanks is a Dominican Sister of Adrian, Michigan. Before coming to Aquinas Institute of Theology, Dr. Fairbanks taught at Barry University in Miami Shores, Florida. Sr. Fairbanks' areas of expertise are homiletics, theology of lay ecclesial ministry, theology of preaching, practical theology, and Christian anthropology.

## **PRESENTATION OVERVIEW**

In this presentation Sister Sara will explore liturgical preaching as rooted in the preaching of Jesus. She will address the question of what makes effective liturgical preaching in today's church. What are the dos and don'ts of good preaching? She will illustrate some of the hallmarks of good preaching with excerpts from a variety of homilies.

## **SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. With which character in the parable do you most identify?
2. What personal experience comes to mind as you reflect on the scripture passage?
3. What central message about God do you want to communicate?
4. What faith response do you wish to invite others to put into practice?

## **THE ART OF LITURGICAL PREACHING ASSESSMENT OF THE HOMILY FORM**

In light of the hallmarks of good liturgical preaching, which ones were in evidence in this homily:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge of the audience | <input type="checkbox"/> Invitation to conversion/discipleship             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rooted in Scripture       | <input type="checkbox"/> Witness to hope                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shaped in prayer          | <input type="checkbox"/> Relates message to liturgical time and prayer     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> One central message       | <input type="checkbox"/> Aid to becoming a Saint                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> One unifying image        | <input type="checkbox"/> Conversational                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sound theology            | <input type="checkbox"/> Contextual and inculturated                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Profoundly shaped by Word | <input type="checkbox"/> Calls for social just on behalf of the last/least |

# THE IMPORTANCE OF LITERATURE IN OUR LIFE OF FAITH

**Dr. Hilary Finley, PhD**



Dr. Hilary Finley is a professor in the Department of Catholic Studies at Saint Louis University. Dr. Finley received her Doctorate in Literature from the University of Dallas, after receiving a Bachelor of Arts in Humanities and Catholic Culture from the Franciscan University of Steubenville. She has taught English Literature for Holy Apostles College, including courses on Novel and Poetry, and Catholic English Literature, and she offers occasional lectures on various aspects of literature. Hilary lives in St. Louis with her husband and three children.

## **PRESENTATION OVERVIEW**

This talk has two basic components: discussion of literature as a mode of artistic wisdom, and specific works which are particularly relevant to progress in the spiritual life. If we can see that literature is inspired, and that it is an elevated art, then we are more likely to appreciate its offerings and bring ourselves to it. I hope to show the following:

-Literature is an art

-Literature is inspired

-Literature is an important mode of knowing who we are as human beings

## **SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

What is a novel or poem which has provided stability or inspiration for you? Why?

What prevents you from reading good literature?

How might reading a novel or poem with a friend increase your spiritual growth?

Do you let a work of literature move in you, or do you come to it with prejudice about its value?

# HOUNDS OF THE LORD

**Dr. Kevin Vost**



Dr. Kevin Vost, Psy D. is the author of numerous articles and twenty-one published books including *Hounds of the Lord*, *Memorize the Faith*, *The Seven Deadly Sins*, *The One Minute Aquinas*, with three more books on the way. He has taught psychology at the University of Illinois at Springfield, Aquinas College in Nashville, Lincoln Land Community College, and MacMurray College. His website is [Drvost.com](http://Drvost.com). A self-styled Aristotelian /Stoic /Albertine /Thomist, he lives with his wife and two sons in Springfield, IL. Dr. Vost travels the globe sharing themes of faith, philosophy, and fitness on radio, television, and in live presentations.

The talk focuses on the lives and teachings of nine Saints and Blesseds of the Order of Preachers, from the 13th century to the present, not in the form of formal lecture, but rather as family members (in this case, St. Dominic's family) might gather together and regale each other with some of the favorite shared tales from their shared family history.

Further, the saints are examined through a rather unique set of "trifocals," so to speak, built upon the traditional divisions of the contemplative and active lives as described, compared, and contrasted by St. Thomas Aquinas, with an added subdivision of the active life as suggested by a classification of saints presented by French 20th century Catholic psychologist Henri Joly in his *The Psychology of the Saints*. With no intention of introducing a formal psychological theory of saintly personality types, let alone any profound new theological insight, the nine great Dominican saints are examined for the ways they embody "Contemplative," "Apostolic," or "Charitable" spiritual styles (summarized most succinctly as "Thinkers," "Doers," and "Lovers"), as a means to show that while some are known best for one particular kind of spirituality, they all showed forth all three through the various acts of their lives in which they imitated Christ in their own unique ways and loved God with all that they were.

The goal is that these "Hounds of the Lord" will inspire us to "let the dogs out," so to speak, within our own lives, so that we might see God more clearly, love him more dearly, and follow him more nearly, showing progress every day, sharing gladly with others the fruits of our contemplation.

### **QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER REFLECTION**

1. In what ways the "hounds of the Lord" metaphor might prove helpful (or harmful, if you think so) in explaining and inspiring Dominican spirituality?
2. Our exemplary "Thinkers" of the "Contemplative Style" were Saints Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, and Catherine of Siena, while our "Doers" of the "Apostolic Style" were Saint Dominic, Blessed Humbert of Romans, and Fra Angelico, while our "Lovers" of the "Charitable Style" were Saints Martin de Porres, Rose of Lima, and Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati. Which of these saints strike a special chord with you?
3. In which areas do your own spiritual strengths lie? Imagine three separate 10-point scales for the "Contemplative," "Apostolic," and "Charitable" styles and give yourself a score on all three.



## About Blessed Margaret of Castello



Blessed Margaret of Castello was born in 1287 in Metola, Italy to noble parents. Her father was a famous military hero who was determined to have a son to carry on his military reputation. When the news was brought to the new parents that their newborn was a daughter, blind, hunchbacked, dwarf, and lame, Margaret's parents were embarrassed. Margaret was kept in a seclusion in the upper floor of the family castle in the hopes that her existence would be kept secret.

When she was six years old, she was accidentally discovered by a guest of the manor. This led to her parents taking further actions to hide their embarrassment. Determined to keep her out of the public eye, her parents had a room without a door built onto the side of the manor estate church and walled Margaret inside this room. She lived here in seclusion for the next 14 years, never being allowed to come out. Her food and other necessities were passed on to her through a small window. Another small window into the church allowed her to hear Mass and receive Holy Communion. The parish priest took upon himself the duty to educate her. (You can view pictures of the church and the room Margaret lived in on the internet; a door has been added in later years).

After many years of living in a small room next to the chapel, her parents heard rumors of a shrine in Citta di Castello, Italy, where many sick people were cured. They made a pilgrimage to the shrine so that she could pray for healing. However, Margaret, open to the will of God, was not healed that day, or the next, so her parents abandoned her in the streets of the town and returned to their manor, never to see her again.

Abandoned and now homeless in a strange town, Margaret had to beg for her food. Yet during this time, she became known for her holiness. She often preached to her fellow beggars and helped guide them spiritually. She preached a message of joy and thankfulness, despite their suffering. She noted that, as beggars, they were able to mimic the Holy Family by living in poverty and exile.

Due to her growing reputation for holiness, she was asked to join a monastery of contemplative cloistered nuns. Joining the monastery was a great joy for Margaret, but things quickly changed. Margaret was intent on living the cloistered life exactly as written in the rule for the nuns. The nuns were largely ignoring their written rule. In a short time, the nuns decided to expel Margaret from the monastery. According to the nuns, Margaret was going too far in her devotions and piety. Many of them became resentful of Margaret's obedience to the monastic rule.

Margaret was now back out on the streets of Castello as a beggar and homeless. In addition, because she had been expelled from the monastery and because the nuns were creating false stories about Margaret, her reputation suffered. But over time, the people of Castello were able to see that it was the nuns who were being inauthentic. Margaret spoke about her time in the monastery with gratitude. At the same time, the nuns were always spreading evil rumors about Margaret. Eventually, people noticed this pattern and Margaret was now looked upon for her holiness. Interestingly, the monastery of nuns closed, (and later became a monastery for Dominican nuns), yet Margaret's story lives on.

Later she met the Dominican friars in Castello and became a Dominican tertiary. Here she received the habit of the Dominican order, in a group called the Mantellata ("veiled ones.") As a member of what we now call the Dominican Laity, she devoted herself to tending the sick and the dying and visiting prisoners in the city jail.

Throughout her life of suffering and abandonment, instead of becoming bitter, she forgave her parents for their ill treatment of her and treated others as well as she could. Her cheerfulness stemmed from her conviction that God loves each person infinitely, for He has made each person in His own image and likeness. This same cheerfulness won the hearts of the people of Castello, and they took her into their homes.

At each home where Margaret stayed, the families reported physical and spiritual healings, mended relationships, and a sense of peace while Margaret lived with them.

Despite her suffering, Saint Margaret remained serene, thankful, cheerful and courageous. She never became bitter, complained, criticized others or became discouraged. She preached through her joy and gratitude. She passed from house to house in this way, "a homeless beggar being practically adopted by the poor of a city" (Bonniwell, 1955).

Bl. Margaret died on April 13, 1320 at the age of 33. As a member of the Mantellata, Margaret was buried in the Dominican habit. The Dominican friars wanted her to be buried in the Dominican chapel. But the people of Castello, recognizing her holiness, demanded she be buried in the local church. (You can still view her incorrupt body at the altar in Castello). More than 200 miracles have been credited to her intercession since her death. She was beatified in 1609. Thus, the daughter that nobody wanted is now one of the glories of the Church. Blessed Margaret is scheduled to be canonized on September 19, 2021. Her feast day is April 13.

Based on: The Life of Blessed Margaret of Castello by fr. William T. Bonniwell, OP. TAN Books and Publishers, Inc.: Rockford, IL. c. 1983.

