



"I am a voice crying in the wilderness."

During Advent of 1511, Fr. Antonio Montesinos, OP preached against the oppression and enslavement of the native peoples of Hispaniola, modern day Dominican Republic and Haiti. *"Tell me, by what right or by what interpretation of justice do you keep these Indians in such a cruel and horrible servitude? By what authority have you waged such detestable wars against people who were once living so quietly and peacefully in their own land?"*

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.

Dominicans, 800 years later continue justice preaching, recommitted to the promotion and defense of human rights and protection and care of Creation.

RESOURCES FOR STUDY AND COLLABORATION

- Reflect Upon and Support the Call to Community in *Laudato Si'*: *Care for Our Common Home* by Pope Francis.
- Follow Dominican Life issues and calls to action at domlife.org
- Support implementing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all.



www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/



North American Dominican Justice Promoters
domlife.org/peace-justice



In *Laudato Si' Care for Our Common Home*, Pope Francis suggests that faith convictions can motivate Christians to care for nature and for the most vulnerable of their brothers and sisters. He begins with the biblical account of creation and then meditates on the mystery of the universe, which he sees as a continuing revelation of the divine.

"Everything is related, and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures and which also unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth."

Pope Francis concludes: *"The earth is essentially a shared inheritance, whose fruits are meant to benefit everyone."*



North American Dominican Justice Promoters



2017-2019 Call To Justice

The ministry of the North American Dominican Justice Promoters 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.

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.

Preach the truth as if you had a million voices.

St. Catherine of Siena

OUR JUSTICE MINISTRY PRIORITIES

The North American Dominican 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.

● 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 God's.
- 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.

Our call is to respect and honor those rights through the lifestyle choices we make, personally and collectively.

Our call is to see the face of God in the whole of life, to embrace the tenets of nonviolence, and to practice loving our enemies.

● 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)

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.

● 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.

Our call is to welcome the stranger, to speak the truth of our own immigrant nation, and to advocate for just immigration policies and practices.

● Human Trafficking

There is the sociological and economic truth of 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.

Our call is to expose the truth about modern-day slavery and advocate for substantive laws that protect victims and hold accountable all who facilitate and enable human trafficking.

● 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 call is to examine economic structures and systems in terms of how they hurt people living with the least resources; to change our own practices that contribute to this; and to advocate for policies that promote more equitable sharing of Earth's abundance.



St. Dominic de Guzman, founder of the Dominican Order of Preachers

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