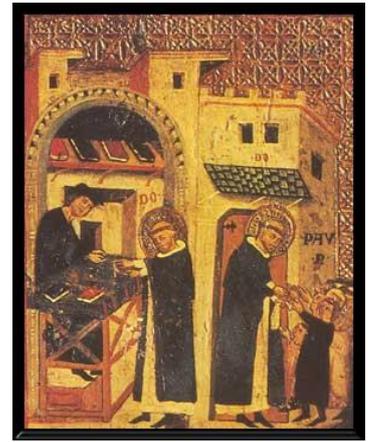


Santo Domingo

de Guzmán

2017



My dear sisters,

The feast of our father St. Dominic is fast approaching, a compassionate man, filled with a compassion that wanted to be a response of mercy for the world.

There are three significant qualities in St. Dominic that always called the attention of his contemporaries and which are more necessary today than ever: JOY. REALISM and MERCY.

JOY which does not necessarily mean noise or amusement, but a seriousness that creates a healthy and pleasant atmosphere that makes life in community lively. Joy must be united with REALISM, a lucid way of looking at things, knowing how to discern what is unacceptable in so many situations that oppress the people. MERCY approaches realism with hope. Mercy, not paternalism or an attitude of momentary grief, but a permanent disposition to help realistically and in close solidarity to all those who do not find meaning of their life.

According to his biographer, Pedro Ferrando, St. Dominic's compassion had already stood out since his childhood, even before he thought of founding any ORDER: "Since his childhood compassion grew with him, in a way that he took as his own the misery of others, up to the point that he couldn't see any affliction without partaking it." There is a famous event in the life of the young Dominic which is good to be recalled here. A great famine ensued in the region of Palencia. Dominic felt a deep compassion for the poor and he gave them everything he had, even the thing he treasured most, his books which were full of annotations and which meant a fortune, not only economic but intellectual. Another scene in his life is even more dramatic, in which he thought of selling

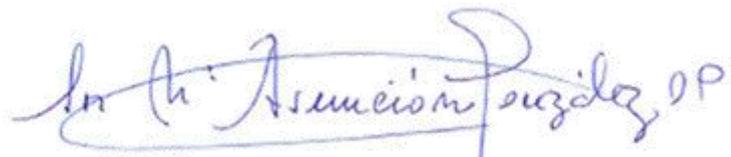
himself as a slave when he had nothing else to sell. It was a criticism to a society which didn't have mercy, egoistic and lacking in solidarity; a criticism which we must extend nowadays with the means within our reach, since faith is offered through word but shown through action.

Such compassion was awakened when during his trip through the southern part of France, he found the Cathar heresy taking advantage of the ignorance of the people to divert them from the Catholic faith. Those who lived with Dominic related that he was always joyful, that his face was always happy and radiant, except when he encountered any kind of suffering. Dominic's compassion often became prayer, it was converted into a prayer of solidarity. Truly, compassion was a specific characteristic of his whole life.

Sisters, our world nowadays is in great need of mercy in the full sense of the word. The painful necessities of others demand mercy that would lead in the construction of a world where there would be less clamor, pain and anguish, yearning for a gratuitous and disinterested love. We are called to work for justice in order to achieve a more humane society. In that way we will surely receive, every one of us, the kiss of Peace, of Love, and the fullness of Joy.

¡HAPPY FEASTDAY OF OUR FATHER ST. DOMINIC!

With fraternal embrace.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sor Mª Asunción González, O.P." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Sor Mª Asunción González, O.P.
Piora General