

St. Dominic's Day

August 8, 2006

Homilist: *S. Patricia Marie Walsh*

**To me, was given the grace to preach the Good News
of the inexhaustible riches of Christ**

The grace to preach the good news...if we had invited a Franciscan here to preach
on this St. Dominic's morning,
he or she might have quoted St. Francis--
--we know the saying:
Preach at all times; when necessary--use words.
I'll return to this....

In reflecting on this passage from the letter to the Ephesians, I am inspired by the **courage** our
Holy Father Dominic had----
in responding to the "grace to preach the Good News"

To preach this Good News **effectively** in his day, Dominic had to break with tradition--
and he did so in at least two ways.

As we know, the heresies of the day were rampant--
and being taught in the neighborhoods, in the parish churches, in the universities, and among the
middle classes-- in the various towns of Europe.

So, Dominic sent the friars out there--
to the marketplace.

That was **courageous**-- because
I am sure there were those who criticized him and the early friars by saying--
they should be in their monasteries, copying manuscripts as **all** good monks do. Why aren't
they in their cloisters?

Another way Dominic courageously broke with tradition, as we know,
was when he sought and was granted permission for the friars to "preach"
at a time-- when only Bishops could do so.

It is from this break with tradition that the Order of Preachers was born
and how it is that you and I are here today.

So, we know that Saint Dominic was a trail-blazer--compelled to preach the Good News of the
inexhaustible riches of Christ. Dominic didn't just accept change;
he initiated it--

because it was in the marketplace where the preaching was needed at that time.
It was **only** in that way that he could, as the reading says, illumine for all the inner design of the
mystery of God--
when God's people were being led astray by **un-truth**--the heresies of that time.

Besides his **courage** I am inspired by Saint Dominic's **JOY**. His biographers consistently refer to it--
and we celebrate his gift by singing the hymn, **Joyful Friar**.

In reflecting on Dominic's life--
I keep having a question about him;
I've thought about it often --
and it won't go away.
I haven't ever shared it before--but this question probably wouldn't surprise you.
And the question is--
How would St. Dominic accept the changes/transitions of aging?

St. Dominic died when he was about 51 years of age--
which may have been standard for his day --and for the amount of energy he expended---
but I've always wanted to **know**: how would Saint Dominic handle the aging process? Would
his **courage and joy** stand him in good stead
as he faced limitations and transitions?
In pondering this, I remembered Saint Francis
Might Dominic have said:
preach at all times; when necessary, use suffering?

Deeply comprehending the Scriptures, St. Dominic, it seems to me,
would make sense of the suffering that goes along with aging. Since he had memorized all the
letters of Saint Paul, would the words to the Colossians have prompted Dominic to pray:
"Even now I find my joy in the suffering I endure for you. In my own flesh I fill up what is
lacking in the sufferings of Christ for the sake of his body, the church."

St. Paul says: I find my **JOY** in the suffering...
There are times in illness and/or aging--when we can **DO** nothing--and the only response we can
give to suffering is surrender.

I believe
that when we suffer, we are **powerfully** preaching--filling up what is wanting in the sufferings
of Christ.

How would Dominic accept the transitions and changes that are inevitable in the aging process?

We do not know--
but I submit it would be in character for him to meet these challenges,
as he did all challenges,
with the Holy Spirit's gifts of courage and joy.
Preach at all times; when necessary, use suffering.