### **ST-DOMINIC PROVINCE OF CANADA**

### **STRATEGIC PLAN : APOSTOLIC PRIORITIES**

INTRODUCTION

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From the beginning, preaching, teaching and spiritual direction have always been at the heart of Dominican ministry. Today this mission extends to parishes and universities, to justice, peace and ecology, to publishing, social media, the Internet and the arts. Throughout the world, our friars are involved in all of these areas because of the need to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ. These apostolates are more than ever relevant for us.

For this reason, this mission at the service of the Gospel is called to be lived out in collaboration with the Dominican Family in missionary projects that can involve laity, apostolic sisters, nuns and members of priestly fraternities, each according to their own charisms.

To this end, it is imperative that young people be able to commit themselves with us and that we be credible witnesses of the joy of following Jesus Christ. This is a constant concern that must be shared by all the Friars.

This mission takes place in a country with two official languages and very different cultures. Past experience has shown us that it is not desirable to impose bilingualism from the beginning of the novitiate. However, a second language, acquired during the course of studies, is necessary and is part of the requirements for the formation of student brothers. The knowledge of another language can only promote a better understanding of the world and offer new possibilities in the intercultural context of our country.

Here are some of the apostolic priorities that we wish to promote in our Dominican Province of Canada.

THE INTELLIGENCE OF FAITH

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he intellectual life of the Canadian Province has undergone profound changes in recent years, such as the reduction in the number of friars, the retirement of those involved in a university institution, and the closure of the Dominican University College (Ottawa and Montréal). For more than a century, the intellectual life of the Province was essentially developed thanks to the activities of the DUC and its professors. We must now face the challenge of rethinking it as an apostolic priority in a completely different context. All the more so because the closure of the DUC comes at a time when our Western societies are experiencing more instability than ever and a profound questioning of their roots.

This social disorder, as well as the search for meaning that characterizes our times, demands an adequate response. The friars are already deeply involved in this service of the intelligence of faith. Among the activities that are being developed are the *Centre dominicain d’éthique et de vie spirituelle[[1]](#footnote-1)* (CDEVS), the *Lawrence Dewan Chair of Philosophy*, as well as the friars who teach in various institutions or speak at forums in all the cities of our Province where we are present.

These commitments focus mainly on theology and philosophy. They can also be carried out in other subjects, usually at university level. As far as teaching is concerned, it can take place in Catholic or state educational institutions, but also in small workshops or reflection groups. Brothers are also called to contribute to various periodicals, to give lectures and to lead seminars open to the general public.

IMMIGRATION, MIGRANTS AND CULTURAL COMMUNITIES

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here really is a frontier here where we Dominicans must become more and more involved, because the issue of migratory movements is found wherever our Order is present. For example, the creation of the Foyer du Monde by the Dominican Family in Montréal was prophetic. Throughout our Province, this concern for migrants and, by the same token, for cultural communities, should be part of our mission. Of course, this issue is experienced differently in Vancouver, Toronto or the city of Québec, but we believe it is a missionary priority that should challenge the entire Dominican family.

In Montréal, the Saint-Albert-le-Grand convent has already taken on the specific mission of responding to the needs of Catholic cultural communities of immigrant origin. These communities are an important magnet for newcomers to the country, who seek anchorage and support in their experience of a foreign land, with all its difficulties and challenges. The Diocese of Montréal offered us this mission, which we have been carrying out for more than six years, thanks to the collaboration of the friars of the Province of Colombia.

We are also asked to take care of a Portuguese-speaking community, for which a brother from Angola has joined us to take up this challenge. We should also mention the commitment of the friars of our Vicariate in Rwanda and Burundi here in Canada, especially to the Rwandan and Burundian communities, or the ministry of our friars at St. Mary’s Parish in Vancouver, where two friars from the Province of India have come to help us. The Dominicans of St. Mary’s have been working with a community mainly from Asia and the Philippines since 1997, while our brothers in Toronto have been working for almost ten years with a French-speaking community of many origins.

It is worth quoting Pope John Paul II on the occasion of World Migrants Day: *"The Church is, by her very nature, in solidarity with the world of migrants, who, through the diversity of their languages, races, cultures and customs, remind her of her condition as a people coming from all parts of the earth on a pilgrimage towards the definitive homeland. This perspective helps Christians to abandon any nationalistic logic and to avoid narrow ideological schemes.[[2]](#footnote-2)"*

The future of our societies is a colorful one, enriched by diversity and intercultural relations. It is important to note, for example, that 28% of immigrants coming to Canada identify themselves as Catholics. This means that, despite secularization and disaffection in parishes, these immigrants bring an undeniable dynamism to the life of our Church.

YOUTH AND UNIVERSITY MINISTRY

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f mission to the younger generation is important, it's because so many things are happening at once between the ages of 18 and 30: school, career choice, first love, to name just a few. It is therefore important to accompany millennials (born between 1983 and 1996) and young adults of Generation Z (born between 1997 and 2006), who often have no religious training and for whom faith in God often seems absent. But aren't they committed to ecology, justice and many other causes, and thus bearers of very real Gospel values?

So, we are called to help young people discover that the world has meaning, that we are loved by God, that Jesus Christ came so that we might have life in abundance, and that we are not only citizens of the world but also brothers and sisters in faith. Isn't that life changing! That is why one of our priorities is to minister to college students and young people from all walks of life.

ARTS, CULTURE AND FAITH

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hroughout its long history, Christianity has not only been the source of inspiration for works of art in the fields of architecture, sculpture, painting, music, poetry and literature, theatre and film, but the Church herself has encouraged and promoted artistic creation as an expression and vehicle of faith. Art is undoubtedly a privileged meeting place and a means by which our contemporaries can express what they feel, what they hope for, what makes them tick. It can also open minds and hearts to the Gospel and to the great mystery of life. Art has always been and will always be an excellent instrument for catechesis.

The purpose of the *Espace Saint-Dominique* de Québec is to present the religious heritage of the beautiful church of Saint-Dominique, and to develop links with artists from Québec City and elsewhere. It also aims to act as an interface between contemporary culture and its representatives, whether Christian or not. In all the places where we are present, in the city of Québec, Tokyo, Montréal, Ottawa, Toronto and Vancouver, "We must foster centers of meditation and contemplation on the Christian mystery, on the unfathomable richness of the mystery of Christ in its human and cultural implications" (Cardinal Paul Poupard).

SOCIAL MEDIA

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ocial media have become a part of everyday life, both in the professional and private spheres. These new technologies are changing the world of communication. Despite the legitimate criticisms that have been levelled at them, they remain powerful levers of transmission and have a significant impact on today's culture. It is therefore important to be involved and to encourage the friars of our Province to be present in this new Areopagus of our time, where everyone can have their say.

**Province of Saint-Dominique in Canada**

**Extended Provincial Council (LCO 375)**

**Held in June and October 2024**

1. Dominican Centre Ethics and Spirituality [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Message for the World Day of Migrants, 2 February 1999 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)