



OPFAM

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*Contemplate the Gospel of Humanity
then preach the Humanity of the Gospel*

A Newsletter for the Dominican Family in Australia, New Zealand, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea

Dominicans must promote conversations with the new knowledge and technologies *Fr Bruno Cadore*



The editorial team of the annual magazine (Veritas) of the student

brothers of the Province of India sat down with fr. Bruno Cadore, the Master of the Order for a conversation during his last visitation to the Province. Here is the transcript of this conversation with our Master General.

Veritas: In the midst of the many political, environmental, religious, social and moral crises, what do you think is happening to the world? Are you able to make sense of all these trends? How do you describe the current state of human affairs?

fr. Bruno Cadore: We can say that this is the story of human creativity. The human reason is developing many new capacities. Human intellectual capacity does not stop at applying itself to understanding and bring forth new knowledge. Human reason is in a new position now. It not only works to arrive at new knowledge but it also works to master the subject of that knowledge. Best example is the way we look at the human body. Today, the way to understand better the human body is also a way to master it and to transform it. However, this new way of the

development of human reason can also be called human creativity. Reason is able to develop itself and its field of application.

When faced with these new kinds of human ingenuity we can have two kinds of responses. First could be to see everything as a threat, and as a consequence, we tend to identify all the negatives. We focus on what is getting worse rather than what is getting better. Nevertheless, it is important to identify the risks of new technology, techno-scientism, or any new way of mastering of the reality. The second kind of response could be to see them as opportunities. ... we can look at transformation in new ways, not just to complain but to identify the ways of salvation and the ways of evangelising. In order to take this new look at the ingenuity of human reason we must take time to discern and understand the reactions, the reasons for those reactions and the dangers or benefits that these reactions bring for humanity. It is my conviction that the Dominican Order has to promote this kind of conversation with the new knowledge and new ways of mastering reality so that we will arrive at a clearer understanding why some actors in the process consider that this new way of

mastering reality is good for the world and humanity.

Veritas: India is facing numerous challenges like; Hindu fundamentalism, the caste-based politics, trampling of human rights and minority discrimination, sharp rise in violence against women, a controlled, scared and mostly bought media etc. How will you compare India with other parts of the world with similar challenges?

fr. Bruno: Yes, I am aware of it more or less because I try to read a lot on current affairs. I can say that it is part of my job. That doesn't mean that I understand everything. Nevertheless, we can identify some trends that are common to many countries today.

One of those trends is the tendency to focus so much on identities as if they can be some protection against a global enemy. In this way the countries or societies identify themselves with very strong religious or philosophical or cultural identities. We can observe this all over the world.

Another trend that we are witnessing is that, in many countries politics is a matter of opinion and not debate. But politics is debate. Politics has common good as its goal. If we think that the aim of politics is the common good, then we need to discuss to achieve that common good. Political debate has become a mere stating that I have this opinion and you have a different opinion. But the real political debate is to say that I have a particular opinion for a particular reason and you have a different opinion for a different reason. Therefore, now let us discuss around the reasons.

The political agitation or political noise is done to avoid taking time to debate. Social media is made as the place of political talk which is often black and white or yes or no. This too is not a debate. We can only make statistics like

10 % has this opinion or 25% has another opinion or this group is a minority etc. The political space is not available for the so called minorities or different groups to express their reasons which can be a better contribution to the common good. In short, the opinion is becoming more important than discussion and debate.

There is a third one which is a consequence of the previous one which is that the religious opinions will become the factor which influence and replace the political debate. So the religions could be exploited by this movement. We have a very important task to remind ourselves that our master and Lord taught us to reject any exploitation of religious sentiments or to use the Word to exercise power over others. The sacred language, sacred authority and sacred conviction don't give us any power over the other.

Veritas: It looks like we are living in a culture that doesn't seek and value truth in all walks of life. Dominican Order has Veritas as its motto. Our magazine is also named Veritas. We Dominicans try to seek, understand and establish truth in all our endeavours. In this crisis of truth what kind of role do we Dominicans play?

fr. Bruno: I would say that the Order of Preachers has been entrusted with the task of preaching the name of Jesus Christ. The Order of Preachers in this crisis has to repeat that the Truth is not some content or a doctrine. The truth is someone. In other words, seeking the truth is to open new ways to the truth who is someone. And I would say that the crisis you are talking about is a crisis because we define truth in terms of content or doctrine. But this is a very narrow definition of truth.

Here I suggest you consider the commentary of St. Thomas Aquinas on John 17:17, "Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth". This commentary will help us to understand that this consecration is a consecration to Him who is the way, the Truth and the Life. We may be tempted to commit ourselves to the truth and say that we know the truth in terms of the content. We should rather say that we know the truth in terms of the way. Our mission is not just pointing out the ways to find the truth. Our mission is to say, "With you, we would like to discover the way to the Truth." This discovering of ways involves a dialogue with unbelievers, new knowledge and new technologies.

We are not sure from where this motto Veritas came from but it is a good way to say something about the itinerancy. This itinerancy is not just a geographical movement but also a cultural movement. We must learn to be itinerant in our minds, our intentions and in our human reason to discover the new ways. One Belgian Philosopher used to say that the structure of human reason is eschatological. So just begin to seek the truth and you will discover that your human reason has insatiable thirst for truth. We the Dominicans have this duty to help our contemporaries to discover this joyful endeavour of seeking the truth

From the Fashion World to the Adrian Dominicans

by [Soli Salgado](#) Mar. 1, 2018, in Global Sisters: http://globalsistersreport.org/blog/q/trends/q-sr-xiomara-m%C3%A9ndez-hern%C3%A1ndez-fashion-world-adrian-dominicans-52271?utm_source=GSR%20digest%203-1-18&utm_campaign=cc&utm_medium=email

Sr. Xiomara Méndez-Hernández's journey to becoming an Adrian Dominican began in the fashion world, continued as an associate, and was made official when she professed her final vows Dec. 18 in Santo Domingo, capital of her home country, the Dominican Republic. Today, she's a board certified chaplain for Loyola University Medical Center in Chicago. The first Adrian Dominican to do her formation in the United States but profess her vows on the island, Méndez-Hernández is honing her background and passion for cultures to lead her congregation toward embracing interculturality — a burgeoning theme for congregations around the world that are becoming more diverse. In a conversation with Global Sisters Report, Méndez-Hernández talked about the transition from fashion designer to associate to sister and how her spirituality has been awakened with each step in that evolution.

GSR: Tell me about your journey to becoming an associate.

Méndez-Hernández: When I was 19, a Dominican sister was preaching for a Lent retreat in my parish. I was a freshman at Universidad Autonomo de Santo Domingo, and seeing a woman preaching, I thought, "Wow." Then I saw another woman doing a spiritual liturgical kind of dance, and these two women didn't have habits. I didn't know that sisters were able to wear secular clothes. Adrian Dominican Sr. Xiomara Méndez-Hernández, middle, played St. Rose de Lima in a one-woman show about the saint's life and wore an antique habit for the occasion.

The joy they had and the depth of the talking about their personal relationship with God, it drew me. And I was never drawn to religious life because [the sisters I always knew] were very strict, very serious. It was just a different experience, and I wanted to know this woman.

I was studying to be a fashion designer, and so I continued my life. The year after, our local priest invited us to go to the mountains for another journey with a Bible class. It was again with two women, and it just so happened that these two women were also Dominican sisters. They taught us about the Bible, and it felt so different — I'm a Bible lover, which is weird for a Catholic, at least at that time. She started first with history: the history of our country and how God walked with us. I fell in love with them, with that way of looking at spirituality. At that time, I was 21, and I started visiting the sisters. But I was not ready. They eventually moved from the parish to a religious house, and I lost contact with them.

In my late 20s, I met them again, and they invited me to be an associate, and I was thrilled that I could be praying with them. I fell in love. By that time, I had a master's degree, and I was teaching fashion. I was in a different world, with fashion shows and runways. That was my life. But then I had a longing to become closer to God, to find more meaning not about me and myself and being successful. I was more into what was meaningful — not only for me, but for others. Why did you decide to take your final vows?

I knew there was something special I was feeling when I met the nuns, but I was not ready to discern or to take the time to explore that call, as we would call it now. When I decided to join the congregation, I think I had my mind set already that this was serious. It was a commitment. Leaving my country and selling my business [which designed clothes for marketing events and fashion shows] was a huge, huge thing. Leaving my career and telling my family I was leaving everything behind — it was big.

I took my first vows in 2011, and I knew that my first vows were my final, that the next years were just a preparation to confirm that, yes, this was a good fit for me and the congregation. The discernment wasn't easy. Speaking a second language and going from a professional woman to starting from scratch

was hard for me. But to feel in that journey, confirming in every step, that I was not alone, that I had a better purpose for my life — that made me say yes to forever. Not to today, but to forever.

Has that transition had an effect on your spirituality?

I think so. I became more intentional about my relationship with God, which affects my relationship with others. Religious life is not only about me and God. It's about God, creation, my relationship with my brothers and sisters, having that passion and compassion with one another as beloved creations of God, and to see God in everything and all. That is the thing that has changed. And I have more time. Well, no, I make time. I'm intentional to be in that relationship with God in order to be in that relationship with others.

You've attended conferences and discussions on interculturality and have played a part in your community's approach to that. How is that going now?

I am blessed that my congregation has become more and more intentional to be culturally inclusive, culturally aware. One of my passions is equality and equity and seeing everything as a manifestation of God. I became part of our focus group on what we should do to bring more diversity and to be more aware, to be more inclusive.

I was chosen to go to [Catholic Theological Union in Chicago] as part of the [diversity program](#) because I was part of this group. We have a name, "Toward Communion: Undoing Racism, Embracing Diversity." It's something we're developing as a congregation, and it's a big project.

We're trying to face our own bias and what is hindering us from being in common union. How can we get to that loving community that God and Jesus invited us to form in order to bring about the reign of God?

This is why, when they asked where I wanted to celebrate my vows, I said I wanted to do it in the islands. Not only because I would be closer to my family and they could come, but

also because I wanted to bring to witness my "yes" to God with a diverse group: people from the U.S., from other cities within the country, and my group of friends, which is

very diverse, from Africa, from Cuba, the Philippines. I try to bring all groups, white, black, Latinos, to be intentionally part of the celebration, and how beautiful that can be.
