



Office of Mission and Ministry

P R O V I D E N C E C O L L E G E

*Λόγος* LOGOS

# Λόγος LOGOS



VOLUME 3, NUMBER 1 • September 2008

## *The Charity of St. Dominic*

In the *Lives of the Brethren* we are told that when St. Dominic was asked which book had taught him the most he responded, “The book of charity.” He learned its lessons well. As his 13th-century biographer Jean de Mailly noted, when St. Dominic was a theology student in Palencia he sold his books and gave the proceeds to feed the hungry. Time and again the early biographies of the saint testify to his simplicity of life, his eagerness to care for the needy, and even his willingness to be sold into slavery in order to redeem a man whose poverty had occasioned his loss of faith. It is no wonder that Blessed Jordan of Saxony, St. Dominic’s successor as Master of the Order, would say of him,

“Everybody was enfolded in the wide embrace of Dominic’s charity, and since he loved everyone, everyone loved him. He made it his own business to rejoice with those who were rejoicing and to weep with those who wept. He was full of affection and gave himself utterly to caring for his neighbors and to showing sympathy for the unfortunate.”

St. Dominic’s example provides us with two lessons that we should take to heart. First, our studies and “books,” be they literal or a metaphor for what we possess and hold dear, should lead us to an exercise of ever greater charity. In his address to the presidents of Catholic colleges and universities this past April, Pope Benedict said that leading people to the truth is an act of charity. So too one measure of our possession of the truth is an increase in our charity. Truth and love can never be opposed, and growth in the one should lead to growth in the other.

Second, the exercise of charity is its own form of preaching and evangelization. When we feed the hungry, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, comfort the sick and console the sorrowful, we are leading people to the truth of Christ and the Gospel no less surely than when we preach, or teach, or mount a rigorous argument in defense of faith. Indeed, it is striking that while few of St. Dominic’s words have survived the passage of time his many acts of charity have.

*(continued on next page)*

OFFICE OF MISSION AND MINISTRY 401-865-1210

www.providence.edu/Mission+Ministry

Fr. Joseph J. Guido, O.P., Vice President

Fr. Kevin D. Robb, O.P., Associate Vice President

CENTER FOR CATHOLIC AND DOMINICAN STUDIES 401-865-2870

Fr. Thomas D. McGonigle, O.P., Director

CHAPLAIN TO THE NATIONAL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION 401-865-1520

Fr. John S. Peterson, O.P., Chaplain

OFFICE OF THE CHAPLAIN/CAMPUS MINISTRY 401-865-2216

www.providence.edu/Student+Life/Spiritual+Life/

Fr. Thomas J. Blau, O.P., Chaplain

Mrs. Patricia Campellone, Wedding Consultant

Mrs. Sherry Humes Dane, Director of Liturgical Music

Fr. Thomas J. Ertle, O.P., Assistant Chaplain/Campus Minister

Ms. Meghan Griffiths, Campus Minister

Fr. Augustine Judd, O.P., Assistant Chaplain/Campus Minister

Mrs. Jane Larson McGuirk, Administrative Assistant



PROVIDENCE  
COLLEGE

*Office of Mission and Ministry*

Harkins Hall 110

549 River Avenue

Providence, Rhode Island 02918-0001



## *The Charity of St. Dominic* (CONTINUED)

The unity of truth and love is evident in a recent homily by Pope Benedict on the Solemnity of the Assumption. The Pope noted that contrary to what is sometimes believed, heaven is not an abstract idea or an imaginary place but rather God himself. "God is heaven," the Pope said, "our goal, he is the dwelling place from which we came and toward which we are called." And since God is love, as the Apostle John reminds us, this truth about heaven is also a truth about love. Heaven is God, God is love, *caritas*, charity—without limit, without end, for all and without exception.

Let us ask St. Dominic to insure that our exercise of charity be as vigorous as our pursuit of truth, for as he knew well, they are in the end one and the same.



### SERVICE AS A FORM OF OUTREACH AND EVANGELIZATION

That charity can serve to evangelize is evident when we consider students' experience through Campus Ministry. This past year 980 students performed 15,436 hours of voluntary service at 46 sites. The sites were varied: Darfur Oxfam Relief, Kennedy Plaza Hunger Outreach, Hasbro Children's Hospital, St. Pius V CCD, Rhode Island Right to Life, and Times<sup>2</sup> Academy. So too were the students who volunteered. Some were active in their faith and dedicated to service. Others were equally dedicated but skeptical of faith and wary of the church. Still others were tentative, or faith filled but inexperienced, or merely accompanying a friend for friendship's sake. But what they shared in common was an experience of human need and an invitation to reflect on the meaning of that experience in light of the Gospel. In small groups, on retreat, or one-on-one with a campus minister, students began to consider the deeper questions embedded in their experience and what this revealed to them about themselves and about God.

This is no accident. As we noted in *Cor ad cor loquitur: Heart Speaking to Heart*, the strategic plan for the division, and *Casting a Broader Net: A Pastoral Plan for Outreach and Evangelization at Providence College*, college students today tend to fall into one of three categories with respect to faith. Some are devout and want to bridge their lives of faith and every other aspect of their lives, whether in the classroom, on the ball field, or on a Saturday night with friends. Others are seekers who come with little or no religious background but who are seeking a faith, religious or not, that is worthy of their dedication. Finally many are disengaged. They are indifferent to things religious and questions about God or faith hardly arise for them and generally do not influence the choices that they make.

This suggests that efforts to reach students and to deepen their experience of faith must be similarly varied, and open to students at each level of faith commitment. This is what *Casting a Broader Net* envisions. It proposes that evangeliza-

tion take place under the rubrics of service, catechesis, and faith formation, and that it address the specific needs of the devout, seekers, and disengaged. That is why there is no prerequisite to service within Campus Ministry beyond a desire to serve others. Indeed, for many students active in service it is the only contact they have with the campus ministers. But it is a contact and with it comes the possibility that having been invited to reflect on their experience in light of the Gospel they might begin to feel the first stirrings of faith, or at least consider the possibility that faith need not be irrelevant to their lives.

At the same time those who are committed to faith may find that their commitment is its own witness to their peers. As Pope Paul VI noted in 1974, "Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses." They may also find that by articulating their faith to others it is deepened and refined in the process.

There are many reasons to serve others and many people of good will who give generously of their time and talent. This is true at Providence College as elsewhere. But what should distinguish Christian service is a willingness to explore the connections between faith and service, and thus to deepen one's commitment to both. One example of how this can be accomplished is the *NOLA Immersion* program which begins this year.

Under the direction of Ms. Meghan Griffiths, campus minister, 13 students have been selected to spend part of their Christmas break in New Orleans meeting with and serving alongside those who are trying to rebuild the city and the lives of its inhabitants. To prepare for this, students will participate in a weekend retreat this fall. While in New Orleans they will engage in ongoing reflection and prayer with each other, and with local worshippers. And when they return they will have an opportunity to attend a second retreat with volunteers from various service projects and will be asked to share their experiences with students more broadly. In this

*(continued on next page)*

### SERVICE AS A FORM OF OUTREACH AND EVANGELIZATION (CONTINUED)

way the good that they do is grist for the mill of reflection and the deepening of faith, both their own and that of their peers.

To evangelize—to introduce people to the Gospel and to invite their faith in Jesus Christ—is at the heart of what it means to be Christian, and is at the heart of what it means to be a Dominican. Always respectful of the freedom and dignity of each individual, and cognizant that God calls people in many different ways, it is also never done. Whether it is a matter of seeking a faith to believe in, or seeking to deepen a faith already embraced, we are all just beginning: beginning to know Christ and beginning to understand the implications of his Gospel for our lives.

Future issues of *Logos* will describe the other two elements of evangelization outlined in *Casting a Broader Net*, catechesis and faith formation, and specific programs that will enable students and recent graduates to animate the life of faith in the residence halls and beyond.

### A FOND FAREWELL

We bid farewell to Ms. Jessica Pane at the end of August. Over the last three years she has been a blessing to many students, faculty, and staff, and a dear and valued colleague. Her clarity of vision, depth of spirit, and commitment to students, as well as her pluck, good humor, and patience, will be sorely missed. Even so, we understand her desire to be closer to family and are so very grateful for her time with us. May God continue to bless her and all those entrusted to her care.

A search to replace Jessica will begin early this fall and we hope to have a new full time campus minister in place for the start of the second semester.

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

As always, the coming semester promises to be busy and will hopefully prove of benefit to members of the College community. The accompanying Calendar of Events can also be found on our Web site, and highlights just several of the many offerings available. Indeed, the work of the Office of the Chaplain/Campus Ministry is so extensive that only a sampling of the programs it sponsors can be represented here. For a more complete listing, please see its Web site as noted below.

Given that this is an election season, please note that several offerings will address the role of faith and Church teaching in the public square.

### *Mass* AT ST. DOMINIC CHAPEL *(academic year)*

#### WEEKDAYS

11:35 A.M., 4:30 P.M., 9:00 P.M.\*

\* *except Friday*

#### WEEKENDS

4:30 P.M. Saturday (*vigil*)

4:30 P.M. Sunday

7:00 P.M. Sunday

10:30 P.M. Sunday

### *Confessions* AT ST. DOMINIC CHAPEL *(academic year)*

#### WEDNESDAYS

3:30 P.M.-4:30 P.M., 8:00 P.M.-9:00 P.M.

#### SATURDAYS

3:30 P.M.-4:30 P.M.

#### OTHER TIMES BY REQUEST