

**Changing Habits:
The Order of Preachers in the 21st Century**
by
Mr. Robert Curtis, O.P.

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Changing Habits: The Order of Preachers in the 21st Century is a book written by a Lay Dominican that tells us how to preach in the third Millennium. Curtis' message is prophetic with ideas that will work.

Curtis identifies the problems of today as: secularism, relativism, consumerism, unbridled individualism and dechristianization of society. To combat these "isms", Mr. Curtis calls for more collaboration between the branches of the Dominican Family. The Lay Fraternities, in particular, are in the best position to conform these modern day "heresies."

In order to preach the Gospel in today's world, Curtis examines the role of the Lay Fraternities of St. Dominic and suggests that we focus our attention on the writings of the last General Chapters, from Tallaght, 1971 on, current encyclicals, and the Social Doctrine of the Church. Curtis devotes chapters to the Four Priorities of the Order, the Five Frontiers of Evangelization and the Four Pillars of Dominican Life. He examines the Acts of the last general chapters, and the writings of Damian Bryne and Timothy Radcliffe.

Curtis, therefore concludes that it is to the Laity that the Order's focus needs to shift. Friars cannot know the realities of life as the Laity does; friars aren't truck drivers, union members, clerks, etc. How many friars have a CDL? Do they operate snow plows and clear the way for the elderly, or help customers? The substance of the human condition, broadly speaking, belongs to the Lay Fraternities of St. Dominic. Bring the Word to the reality of life requires sisters and the LFSD with life experiences, supported by the theological and pastoral assistance of the friars.

As Mr. Robert Curtis, O.P. quoted an email* from a Lay Dominican in the Eastern Province, Miss Therese Errigo, O.P., "I think the genius of this Order is its ability to defend and elucidate the Truth in every new age and culture. It is our ability (LFSD)** to contemplate deeply the questions of the day in the light of the Gospel and the Church's teachings."

Well said, Therese! And well preached in Mr. Robert Curtis, O.P., Changing Habits.

* Email from August 2007.

** Reviewer's parentheses

