

## May 2011

### **MINISTERING TO THE MINISTERS** Fr. Domingo Rodríguez Zambrana, S.T.

It happens once a month, on a Saturday morning until noon. And they come from far and near, two hours away or from just two minutes close by. It is the program in Salt Lake City, Utah, called "Emmaus: Plan of Formation for Hispanic Lay Ministry". María Cruz, the Director, speaks of the upcoming events, trying to settle them down, all 75 of them, as they each sit at small group tables. They have been meeting for a year now, in a 3 year program. María tells me proudly, "sota voce", as we line up in procession to Chapel to pray Lauds, "These are our future leaders here in Utah!"

The time goes too fast. On May 15th, we enter into a sharing of ideas regarding styles, attitudes, behavior, reactions in the experience of pastoral ministry. The central theme was "Recommendations for Leadership Guided by Gospel Values". After each of the ideas presented, there is time for comments, questions. The group validates the presenter's exposition, as he warns them about the dangers and temptations inherent in the experience of leadership.

"Beware of inferiority complexes which lurk behind titles and positions of authority", says the presenter. The harsh question of power and motivation is placed before the group as a constant threat to growing in the spiritual life. Ministry is about service and service is about being in love with God and the Church. Simple? Not really..., quite complex given human nature's flaws and limitations.

The end note is about the analogy of the troubadour. His song is alluring and inspirational, as long as he remains in love with the people he sings for. He fails miserably when he gets tired of falling in love with the people. And so happens with the minister whose ministry is not born and lived in love.

### **THIS IS THE PLACE!** Fr. R B Williams, OP

I thought of those famous words of Brigham Young when I flew to Salt Lake City on May 12 to preach a Day of Retreat for Lay Ecclesial Ministers in training as part of the Congar Institute's ongoing assistance to the Diocese of Salt Lake City! I was met by the director of the training program, Susan Northway, and from that moment on I knew I was in good hands! I stayed with my brother Dominicans of the Western Province at St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Newman Center at the University of Utah, who welcomed this Southern Province brother with great fraternal kindness. (I was even able to celebrate and preach at one of the Sunday Masses at the center!) On Friday the 13th (!), I met much of the day with Susan to plan the retreat experience. The planning paid off in the smoothness and power of the retreat experience the next day. On Saturday the 14th, Susan and I drove to Park City, UT, to a historic Catholic church with adjoining hall where the retreat took place. It would be difficult to find a more spectacular setting than the snowcapped mountains that surrounded this historic mining town, now a popular ski resort.

The day began with Morning Prayer, very nicely designed and prepared by Susan. The theme of the retreat was taken from one that is being celebrated around the world in 2011 in the

Order of Preachers (Dominicans) as part of our preparation for our 800th anniversary of foundation (1216-2016): "We hear them speaking in our own tongues of the mighty acts of God." [Acts 2:11]. I drew my inspiration from the "four pillars" of Dominican life: prayer, study, community and service. Each of those "pillars" was presented as a question: How am I praying? How am I learning? How am I loving? How am I serving? Anyone who hopes to engage in public ministry (perhaps even on a private level) will find that ministry much more difficult if he or she is not praying, learning, loving and, as a result, serving! The challenge on the retreat was to do some "history" of these pillars in one's own life to see what kind of "baggage" one might be bringing to the ministerial encounter! If we claim to preach in our very diverse church in diverse tongues, we should be aware of what we bring to our preaching!

The day was concluded with a brief ritual in which the participants renewed their baptismal commitment. I was impressed with the quality of the participants and their commitments to service in the church community in various ways. It is clear that all were appreciative of the work of the Congar Institute with the Diocese of Salt Lake City.

### **SOUTHERN DOMINICAN PROVINCE**

Last week, Fr Wayne and I attended the Annual Assembly of the Dominicans in the South. It was a moment of encounter, discernment, study and prayer. Ms. Terry Escamilla, from the Diocese of Beaumont, helped us to reflect on the importance of taking seriously the management of the lay staff at the institutions where we work. We were pleased to share with someone from one of the diocese where we work and to learn from their experience and knowledge. There were also workshops for brothers ministering with African-Americans and Latinos. Once again, by being, praying and studying together, we confirmed and strengthened our commitment to serve the people of God, especially the many lay men and women who dedicate their lives to the proclamation of the Gospel.

Fr. Luis R. Aguilar, OP