



# MISSIONARIES IN ACTION

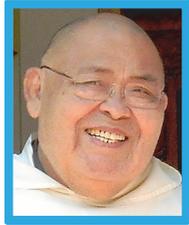
## DOMINICAN MISSION FOUNDATION

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### *Everyday Glimpses of Jesus*

Fr. David Bello, O.P.

Hello to our Mission Partners! Ever since Father Martin asked me to write about our ministry here in Mexicali, Mexico, I have been thinking and praying about how to describe what we do. Certainly we Dominicans, as members of the Order of Preachers, are about presenting Jesus to our people through preaching, but preaching does not always have to be from the pulpit. We also preach by performing or facilitating works of charity, by which our needy parishioners may more clearly come to see the face of Jesus. I think St. Francis said it well: **“Preach the Gospel at all times and, when necessary, use words.”**

A contemporary and friend of St. Francis, our own St. Dominic was moved with pity at the sight of the dying poor during a famine in his native Spain and, resolving to do whatever he could to fulfill their needs, he sold all his belongings to distribute the money to the hungry. A theology student at the time, he even sold his priceless books which, in the twelfth century, were

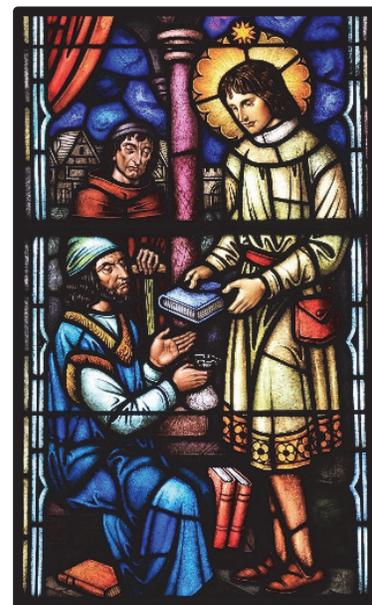
extremely rare and valuable, explaining to his astonished fellow students and masters in theology, **“Would you have me study off these dead skins when men are dying of hunger?”** Deeply moved and ashamed of how meager their own assistance had been, they were inspired to give alms in abundance. Then the citizens of the town responded by opening their granaries, and through their united efforts, the most urgent needs of the poor were relieved for some time.

I am proud to say that many of our people here, while poor themselves, are very generous to those even less fortunate. If hungry or homeless individuals knock on their doors, they readily provide them with some food or clothing, sometimes by having to ‘put a little more water in the beans,’ but it is still delicious!

Our parishioners have also formed groups which seek to provide more structured assistance. The St. Juan Macias group—named after a Peruvian Dominican who, alongside St. Martin de Porres, served the poor in sixteenth century Lima—gathers and distributes food to the hungry, under the

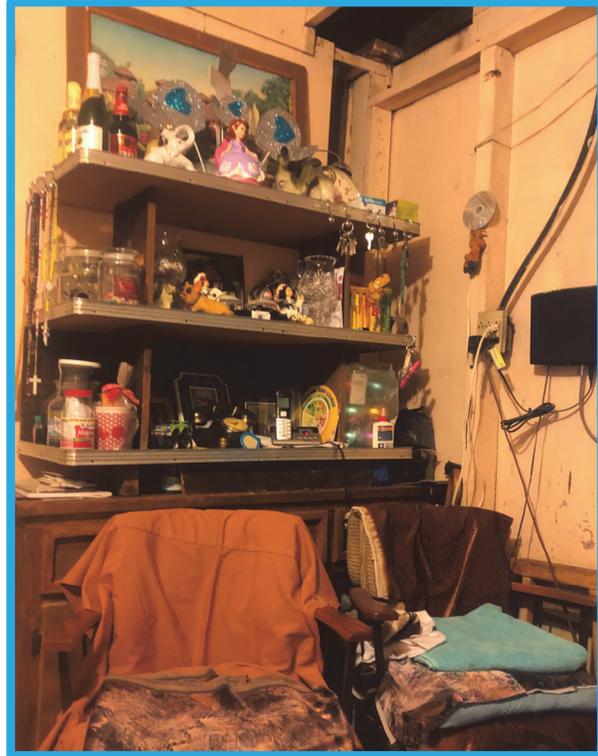
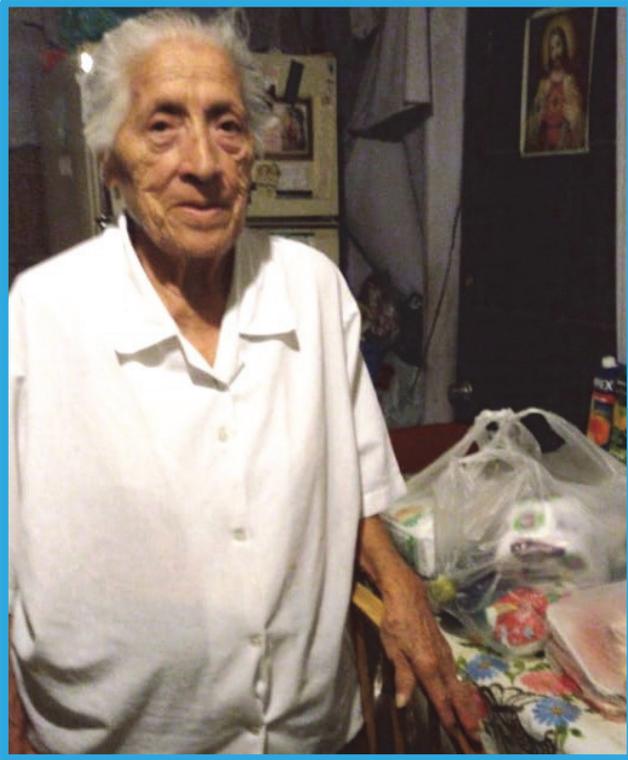


guidance of our Father Bart. The St. Joachim and St. Anne group—named after the parents of the Blessed Mother—serves the many home-bound elderly women and men of our parish, delivering food and supplies, visiting them, praying with them, and letting them know that they are important and cared for.



*Stained glass window from St. Dominic's Church in Washington, D.C. depicting Dominic selling his precious textbook.*

*(Photo by Fr. Lawrence Lew, O.P.)*



*Doña Barbara, 87 and living alone, proudly showing me around her simple home, delighted to have company.*



These ministries call to mind a passage from the Gospel of Mark:

[Jesus] ...watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. Then he called his disciples and said to them, 'Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on' (Mark 12:41-44).

Just last month when I was in the parish office, one of our elderly women came in, hobbling with her cane and out of breath, to request a Mass intention for a neighbor who was ill.

I offered to drive her to her home in Valle del Alamo, not too far away by car but a daunting distance when you're 87 and have asthma. Doña Barbara lives in a very simple house which she built by hand for herself and her mother, who has now passed away.

She is still waiting for building materials which the Mexican government has been promising her since 1990! In the meantime, she put in a small patch of cement floor, now cracked, while the rest of her floor is still dirt. In her 'bedroom' area, she has placed a piece of old carpet over the dirt to alleviate its effect on her lungs and daily breathing, but sweeping the carpet only stirs up the dust, so she is looking for a used vacuum. I promised to ask other parishioners for a discarded vacuum and I arranged for her to receive weekly groceries.





*Top left, yes, this one fits!  
Above, I remember how excited he was to bring these supplies to his mother. Right and bottom right, homeless elderly, grateful for anything.*



*Left and bottom left, a common sight, men and boys made up as clowns perform quick tricks at stop signals and then beg. We offer supplies when we can.*



Our parish has many such individuals who live alone and have no regular income or pension.

We are also faced with many immigrants—men, women, and children who have made the arduous journey from southern Mexico or Honduras, only to be turned away at the border or deported from the United States. Penniless, they cannot afford to make their way back home, but we permit them to bathe in the bathrooms that we have in the parish and we give them clothing as well as hot food, often provided and cooked by our parishioners.

Friends of the Mission, Fr. Martin, Fr. Bart, and I have had many varied assignments over our long, devoted careers and have reached the age at which we can choose where we'd like to 'wind things down,' so to speak, or even to retire, and each of us has made the conscious choice to continue serving the poor in this desolate section of Mexicali.



*Each one of us is invited to recognize in the fragile human being the face of Jesus who, in his human flesh, experienced the indifference and loneliness to which we often condemn the poorest.* ~Pope Francis

And yes, as members of the Order of Preachers, we preach and we form catechists who assist us in evangelization. But I believe that it is not only in speaking the Word of the Lord that we bring Him to those we serve. It is also the actions, the good deeds, the works of mercy and charity, performed by our selfless parishioners and by you, our benefactors, that preach the teachings of Jesus. **“Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth (1 John 3:16-18).”**

And we well-seasoned missionaries—by turns dulled or disheartened or overwhelmed—are thereby encouraged and empowered to continue our humble work. Indeed, we ourselves are privileged to see the face of the Lord Jesus in our every turn.

Please know that much of what we facilitate can only be accomplished through your prayers, which are essential to us, and your own works of charity. We pray daily for you, both those who are living and those who have passed away.

Yours in Christ,  
Fr. David Bello, O.P.  
Pastor

*Never a dull moment for Fr. Martin (top middle), Fr. Bart (top right and bottom right), and me. Retire? Not while there is still so much to be done.*



*A man asked Jesus, 'Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?'... Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, 'You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.' When he heard this, his face fell and he went away sad, for he had many possessions (Mark 10:17, 21-22).*

