

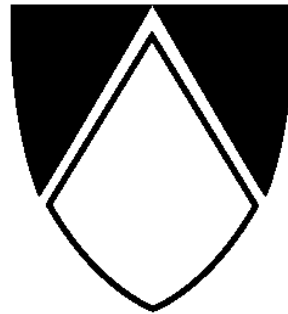
*CONTEMPLARE
ET ALIIS TRADERE
CONTEMPLATA*

*TO PRAY/REFLECT/STUDY INTENSIVELY
& HAND ON TO OTHERS THAT WHICH
HAS BEEN EXPERIENCED & LEARNED*

*CONTEMPLATION/
REFLECTION/ PRAYER*

*SERVICE/ACTION
ON BEHALF OF OTHERS*

*THE DOMINICAN
COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS*



*VIGOROUS STUDY
(LIBERAL ARTS & PROFESSIONS)*

THE DOMINICAN STUDIUM: Contemplation, Study, Service, in Community

The Tradition of the Dominican Studium

In 1206, moved with *compassion* by the plight of the poor and uneducated in the Midi of Southern France, Dominic de Guzman (1170-1221) established the first Dominican *community*, the women of Prouille. In the succeeding years he gathered a *community* of brothers who became known as the Order of Preachers—committed to the search for *Truth* through contemplation, vigorous study and the sharing of the fruits of their contemplation in *partnership* with others through the service of teaching and preaching.

If these wandering, preacher-teachers were to use their gifts and abilities to help solve the problems of their day, they would need not only to root themselves in the Truth/Beauty/Goodness of God through contemplation and prayer, they would also need to learn all they could about the political, social, economic, scientific, linguistic, artistic, musical and mathematical as well as the theological and philosophical contexts of the problems and needs of their day.

Dominic insisted they attend the universities that were springing up in cities like Paris, Bologna, Montpellier and Oxford. At each university the Dominicans set up a *Studium*--a learning community engaged in three, carefully balanced endeavors that flowed from and into each other: contemplation, study, active service with and on behalf of others. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) coined a shorthand abbreviation for their mission: *Contemplare et aliis tradere contemplata* = To contemplate (and study) and to hand on to others the fruits of that contemplation.

In 1828, a young Dominican friar from Milan named Samuel Mazzuchelli, moved with *compassion* at the news of oppression of the Native Americans and the needs of the poorest immigrants in the American Midwest, left his studies in Rome equipped with little more than love of *Truth*, a sense of *justice*, and the liberal arts education provided in the Dominican *Studium*. Listening, learning, teaching, encouraging, loving, he moved freely among the people—Native American and European, Catholic and Protestant, government leaders and lead miners—and created *partnerships* for the common good. Like Dominic before him, Mazzuchelli gathered a *community* of women to share the *truth* of God's all-inclusive compassion and in 1847, Sinsinawa became a living tradition.

In 1927, the Sinsinawa Dominican Sisters opened the doors of Edgewood College to “hand on to others the fruits of their contemplative study” and the traditions of the Dominican *Studium*: contemplation, study, service in a community of learners.

Contemplation. *Contemplare* (< *con* = with + *templum* = the firmament of heaven, the stance from which everything is observed). The one who contemplates does not analyze or judge but rather “looks with love” upon all that is as if observing “from heaven”. In the Dominican tradition, the daily round of liturgical prayer, sacred reading, and silent meditation are practices for opening oneself to the gift of contemplation, an experiential awareness of union with God beyond all words and images, which transforms the way one sees and experiences reality.

Contemplative practice is meant to open one to the experience of “ONENESS” -- a gift which provides the basic stance or worldview undergirding our values and motivating our actions. Prayer and reflection enable one to see and love the world as God sees and loves it and to envision God’s reign of justice “on earth as it is in heaven.”

Seen from another perspective, contemplation leads to integration; it enables us to put ALL the “pieces” together; it is the “place” from which each human person answers the question, “What is IT *all* about?” It is the place from which we assess the consistency of our professed values with what we actually do in light of what we have experienced as Good, Beautiful and True.

Study/Search for Truth. Contemplative awareness does not immediately solve the problems of war, racism, poverty, injustice and global warming. Contemplation flows from and into vigorous study with its focus on the particulars. The love of Truth made *Veritas* the motto of the Dominican order and the *Studium* was designed precisely as a place to search for *Truth*: to read, write, speak, listen understand and think critically and respectfully, to reckon, measure and manipulate matter, quantity and motion in order to predict, produce, exchange... a safe place to discover and articulate one’s own assumptions, beliefs and values and to challenge and be challenged by the assumptions, beliefs and values of others.

Thus the liberal arts-- the *trivium* of logic, rhetoric and grammar and the *quadrivium* of geometry, astronomy, arithmetic and music/art--formed the core curriculum of the medieval university. Upon these foundations, the professional schools of Theology/Philosophy, Medicine/Science and Law trained students to put their knowledge and learning at the service of others.

Edgewood, like most Dominican colleges & universities, is a direct descendent of this tradition where the liberal arts are at the heart of what we do. (See the Edgewood College *Identity Statement* <http://www.edgewood.edu/aboutEC/MissionIdentity.aspx> and the *Mission Statement of the School of Arts and Sciences* (page 2 of *The Offer of a Dominican Liberal Arts College* <http://humaniss.edgewood.edu/FacResources1.html>).

We are the heirs of the Dominican intellectual and spiritual search for truth. The love of Truth means that no avenues to Truth can be excluded. Every truth--and every discipline through which it is discovered--is related to Ultimate Truth, the Mystery of God. The specific "disciplines" have evolved and given rise to new ones but educating through the liberal arts and the professions continue to be understood as the primary means through which Edgewood collaborates with the Sinsinawa Dominicans in their mission of building a more just and compassionate world through their ministry of preaching and teaching.

Active Service in Partnership with Others. Moved with *compassion* and sharing the vision of *justice* expressed and experienced in contemplation and prayer, the Dominican *community* was impelled to share what they had been given through contemplative study with the rest of the world. Unlike the monastics of their day who were vowed to stay in one place (stability), the wandering mendicants could take the fruits of contemplative study and training, and, in *partnership* with people in all walks of life, help create a world where all are freed to reach their highest potential.

In the Dominican worldview, this is precisely what it means to cooperate with grace, to work in *partnership* with the God who sets all people free. Although seeking/catching glimpses of Truth is its own reward, it inevitably overflows into making a difference in the lives of individuals and the structures and institutions of society.

In 1370, after nearly five years of focused contemplation and study, Catherine Benincasa emerged from her solitude to care for lepers, victims of plague, the sick, poor and homeless of Siena. But in addition to this dangerous, disgusting and thankless work, she served the common good: speaking the truth in love to correct the abuses of power and privilege; to bring about peace among warring cities and factions; to reform the Dominican Order and even to restore the papacy to Rome... (Edgewood College, "Calls to Service: Compassion," *Inauguration of the College President*. 29 April 2005).

The commitment to service has been evident at Edgewood in the recruitment of poor, disadvantaged, first-generation, and international students. But it also applies to the values students learn during their college years, which place high priority on service for the common good and especially for those in society who are excluded from its benefits or cannot speak for themselves. (Edgewood College, "Calls to Service: Mission," *Inauguration of the College President*. 29 April 2005).

It is precisely in the wider community, where the search for *truth* and *justice* overflows into service of the common good, that new discoveries, difficulties and dilemmas are encountered and we realize the need for more study and prayer and the ongoing life of a community of learners serving the world in love.

Community/Company of Friends. The Dominican idea of community is about the willingness to share our lives with one another: gifts, talents, perspectives, knowledge, passions, foibles, hopes, and dreams. It is not simply a coincidence that Dominicans speak more often about themselves as a Family than an Order. Granted characters, differences, idiosyncrasies, the bonds of love and affection make it possible for heart to speak to heart even when there are serious disagreements and disputes. Far from isolating individuals in ivory towers, the Dominican way of seeking Truth is a common project and a collaborative venture.

At Edgewood, we strive to be a community where every person, created in the image of God, is esteemed and valued as a full member of the Edgewood family. We long to be a community that respects the unique configuration of differentiating characteristics that is integral to the dignity of each person and contributes to the diversity that enriches our life together.

We endeavor to be a community that welcomes and includes those who differ in race or religion, color or age, sex, gender or sexual orientation, national or geographic origin, handicap or disability, ethnic or cultural heritage, learning style or intelligence, language, health, employment, socioeconomic status or appearance.

In a world too often divided by diversity and plagued by violence, we aspire to be a community where any dispute becomes a Dominican *disputatio*—careful study, open-minded listening and respectful dialogue—a process that itself builds community.

In a world where the powerful demand compliance and the marginalized are silenced, we profess to be a community where everyone can share ideas or discoveries and know that others will listen with respect, respond with encouragement, and offer suggestions that are both helpful and challenging for growth.

In a world that thrives on unbridled competition and radical individualism, we proclaim a community where the wondrous diversity of talents and skills--the many gifts we have been given—are used in complementary fashion so that all can work together in building a society that is inclusive and free, holy and just, a truly “beloved community” of the world.

(Edgewood College, “Calls to Service: Community,” *Inauguration of the College President*. 29 April 2005)

This is our Dominican tradition. And we are honored and proud to claim it, share it, and hand it on to others...