

# MISSION AND IDENTITY

OHIO  
**DOMINICAN**  
UNIVERSITY™



# THE MISSION OF OHIO DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY

As a Catholic liberal arts University with a Dominican tradition, Ohio Dominican University is guided in its educational mission by the Dominican motto: to contemplate truth and to share with others the fruits of this contemplation.

Truth is the basis of human freedom and the source of human effectiveness. Truth is dynamic, an infinite realm in which the person grows throughout life to the fullness of his or her humanity through progressive realization of the significance of old truths and progressive attainment of new truths. Truth can be found in all cultures and traditions, in the whole range of the arts and sciences, and, in a special way, in religious faith and theological reflection on faith.

Ohio Dominican welcomes to its student body sincere seekers of truth whatever their age, gender, race, religious background, or ethnic and cultural heritage. All whose aspirations, maturity, and preparation draw them to pursuing a liberating education mutually enrich one another in the quest for truth in this small community of students, faculty, and staff, through curriculum, supporting services, and informal learning opportunities carried out in a climate of respect and freedom.

Ohio Dominican's primary mission is to provide degree and continuing education programs for the intellectual development, the growth in truth, of each student. In keeping with the Dominican tradition, educational experiences should be grounded in the liberal arts, foster the development of spiritual, aesthetic, and ethical values, promote physical and mental health, and provide for the development and responsible use of human skills and talents in professional and social service.

Since the quest for truth is a lifelong activity, Ohio Dominican is committed to lifelong learning. Faculty, staff, and students practice this through research, creative activities, community involvement, and professional service. The University also offers non-credit programs and activities on and off campus to further the lifelong education of the Columbus civic and religious communities.

Immersed in the technical progress, new human insights, and searching questions of the twenty-first century, Ohio Dominican University looks forward to helping individuals and society continue the search for truth in the expanding horizons of an unknown future.

*Approved: June 28, 2002*

*Ohio Dominican University Board of Trustees*



## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CATHOLIC AND DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY?

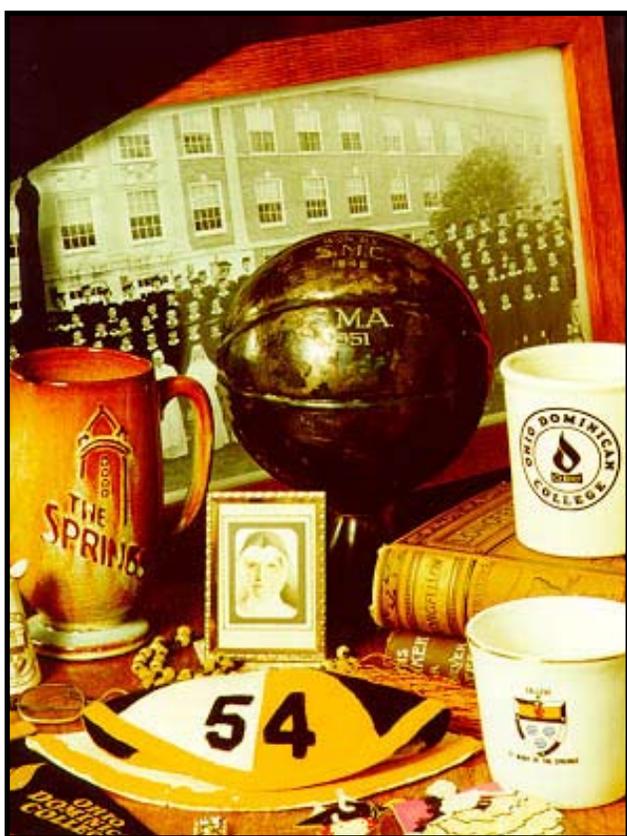
Ohio Dominican University takes seriously ongoing study, reflection and action on this important question. The answer to this question invites us to consider what it means to be Catholic, how the intellectual and spiritual traditions of the Dominican Order bear upon and refine our sense of being Catholic, and how faith and reason are meant to be companions in the search for truth. We invite you to explore this question and the distinctive mission of Ohio Dominican by visiting the ODU website ([www.ohiodominican.edu](http://www.ohiodominican.edu)) and The Center for Dominican Studies web pages ([www.ohiodominican.edu/about/dominicanstudies](http://www.ohiodominican.edu/about/dominicanstudies)) where you will find further resources related to Catholic and Dominican traditions.



## THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

“A Catholic university, by institutional commitment, brings to its task the inspiration and light of the Christian message. In a Catholic university, therefore, Catholic ideals, attitudes and principles penetrate and inform university activities in accordance with the proper nature and autonomy of these activities. In a word, being both a community of scholars representing various branches of human knowledge, and an academic institution in which Catholicism is vitally present and operative.” (Pope John Paul II: *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*)

Ohio Dominican University is Catholic in many ways: by dedication to academic excellence and teaching instruction, by the creative faith and pledge to developing community among its members, as well as by living out the Gospel mandate to proclaim the Good News. The Catholic identity of Ohio Dominican University is a call to action and service to all humanity that is faithful to the past and open to the future.



## IN THE DOMINICAN TRADITION

The Dominican Order (or Order of Preachers) was founded in 1216 by St. Dominic Guzman, a Spaniard whose legendary gift for preaching and conversion built the small medieval order into one of the most influential Catholic organizations in the world.

From the beginning, Dominic sent his preachers to the great university centers to study theology and to learn about the world that was emerging and growing and developing in Europe. This preparation focused on study and contemplation as a basis for responding to the needs of society. The goal of the Order of Preachers for 800 years has been the evangelization of individuals and cultures through both word and example of life.

The University was founded by the Dominican Sisters of St. Mary of the Springs in 1911. Since that time, the Dominican Sisters have contributed to the vibrant life of the learning community through administration, teaching and continued sponsorship of the institution.

## THE HERITAGE

Being truly Catholic as an institution, we recognize and affirm the contributions of all members of our community. Their honored faith, philosophical and academic traditions enrich, expand and strengthen our Catholic heritage. We embrace the challenges this diversity brings for there is no other way to seek the fullness of truth without the dialogue engendered by our diversity.

The Dominican Sisters of Saint Mary of the Springs instituted, formed, and advanced the Catholic and Dominican identity of our institution. In the past, our faithfulness to and development of that identity was insured by their presence and leadership among us as faculty, staff, and administrators. As their presence is now greatly diminished, it is imperative that we find new avenues of carrying on this important task.



In addition to being a “Catholic institution in the Dominican tradition”, we must also recognize that claiming preeminence in these traditions carries with it special demands and expectations in the quality, clarity, and distinctiveness of the basic realities we claim to exemplify. Of primary importance, we must realize that these traditions we claim are not our own, they exist within the living traditions and cultures of the Catholic community of faith. Thus the Catholic culture, tradition, and its child, the Dominican tradition, are our primary reference points. Only within this context can we authentically discern our call and define how we will uniquely live and

develop what we claim to be within the constellation of the academic and ecclesiastical institutions of our day.

To be a vibrant academic community positioned for growth, the heart of the community, its mission and identity, requires ongoing rigorous study, deep contemplation, and faithful prayer. The positioning of this leadership within the institutional structure is determined by the relationships necessary to effectively accomplish the goal of permeating the whole university culture with an understanding what it means to be Catholic and Dominican.

Formation in our mission and identity for all members of our community is the central task. Knowledge and understanding of who we are is foundational to the appropriation and implementation of our mission and identity into every aspect of the teaching, research and services we offer to our students and the civic community

Whereas state run universities relegate theology and the study of religion to a subpart of some other department, Catholic, and more so, Dominican scholastic traditions place it at the center of their life and mission. The formation and integration of faith, morals, and ethics into every human endeavor is integral to our Catholic tradition. This service to the Church and society is the essential unique contribution the Catholic university in relation to state universities.





## THE OHIO DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY LOGO

The Ohio Dominican University logo consists of the name of the University and the date it was founded, around an escutcheon, or shield. At the center of the shield is a flame. The colors of Ohio Dominican are white, black and gold, which are the colors of the Dominican Order and the Papacy. The black and white colors signify the University's tie to the 800-year-old tradition of the Order of Preachers, whose members are known for their commitment to the life of study and service through excellence in preaching and teaching the Word. The inclusion of the papal gold signifies the University's service to the Church.

The shield is two-thirds black and one-third white, which suggests the habit of the Dominicans. The habit is white and the cappa, or cloak, is black. The flame, superimposed upon a field of white, carries several

meanings. Just as light enables sight, liberal education enables insight and human development. As an institution of higher education, the University offers to all sincere seekers of Truth the chance to do so through the liberating education it offers.

A legend about St. Dominic tells that before he was born, his mother had a dream in which she saw a dog carrying in its mouth a flaming torch, the torch of Truth, that his Order would eventually carry into the world. The flame also symbolizes the fire of the Holy Spirit, Who gives wisdom, understanding, good counsel, courage, knowledge, piety and fear of the Lord. The hope of Ohio Dominican is that this fire will burn in the hearts of all of its students so that they, using their gifts, might engage in the renewal of the world.

## SAINT DOMINIC deGUZMAN AND THE DOMINICAN ORDER

Saint Dominic (1170-1221), son of Felix Guzman and Blessed Joan of Aza, was born at Calaruega, Spain, studied at the University at Palencia, was probably ordained there while pursuing his studies and was appointed canon at Osma in 1199. There he became Prior Superior of the chapter, which was noted for its strict adherence to the rule of St. Augustine.

In 1203 he accompanied Bishop Diego de Avezedo of Osma to Languedoc, where Dominic preached against the Albigensians (heresy) and helped reform the Cistercians. The Albigensians falsely taught that all things corporal were inherently evil. Dominic founded an institute for women at Prouille in Albigensian territory in 1206 and attached several preaching friars to it. When papal legate Peter of Castelnan was murdered by the Albigensians in 1208, Pope Innocent III launched a crusade against them headed by Count Simon IV of Montfort which was to continue for the next seven years. Dominic followed the army and preached to the heretics but with no great success.

In 1214 Simon gave him a castle at Casseneuil and Dominic with six followers founded an order devoted to the conversion of the Albigensians; the order was canonically approved by the bishop of Toulouse the following year. He failed to gain approval for his order of preachers at the fourth General Council of the Lateran in 1215 but received Pope Honorius III's approval in the following year, and the

SAINT DOMINIC



Order of Preachers (the Dominicans) was founded. Dominic spent the last years of this life organizing the order, traveling all over Italy, Spain and France preaching and attracting new members and establishing new houses. The new order was phenomenally successful in conversion work as it applied Dominic's concept of harmonizing the intellectual life with popular needs. He convoked the first general council of the order at Bologna in 1220 and died there the following year on August 6, after being forced by illness to return from a preaching tour in Hungary. He was canonized in 1234 and is the patron saint of astronomers. His feast day is August 8.



St. Dominic was the first to propose an Order dedicated to preaching, at a time when no one but bishops preached regularly. Dominic's vision and insights attracted many saintly and talented men. In the first one hundred years of the Order's existence 30,000 members from all the countries of Europe joined; and soon the Order began to spread around the world.

The world of the thirteenth century (St. Dominic's world) was a tumultuous world. Feudal resistance clashed with some democratic aspirations; nations were emerging; cities were developing and were over-populated with the poor; the establishment of universities signaled a cultural leap and new models of learning. In the Church, heresies and schism were widespread. Ecclesial resources to meet the crises were weak. The episcopacy was often characterized by wealth and a comfortable lifestyle. The ministry of preaching, in the hands of the episcopacy, lacked vitality.

St. Dominic, founder of the Dominican Order, always opened his eyes to existing problems. Heretics needed to be refuted and Christians educated. He saw that reforming existing monastic institutions was not the answer nor was his remaining a canon in the monastery at Osma. Something new was called for and Dominic responded. His genius was based in the wedding of the best elements of traditional monastic life and of the innovations needed to address critical issues of the time. He was sensitive to as well as critically reflective of the values of the past and the promise of the future emerging from the experiments of the time.

Dominic was bold in responding to the needs of the times in light of the gospel. Amidst barriers and conflict, this itinerant preacher sent the Dominican friars to the newly founded universities to take advantage of the emerging forms of education. Some thought that Dominic was mad. "Leave me alone," he is quoted as saying, "I know what I am doing." And time proves that he did. Dominic thrust himself and the friars into the heart of change and transition.

On his deathbed he gave his brothers his last will and testament: "Have charity, guard humility, hold fast to voluntary poverty." He promised them that he would be of more use to them in heaven than on earth- a promise which he continues to keep even today. He was buried according to his wishes "under the feet of his brethren."

As a Catholic University in the Dominican tradition, what is distinctive about our search for truth? It is a search that gives priority to:

- The dialogue of faith and reason
- The posing of questions \*
- Engaging in Disputatio, conversations that contribute to the search for truth
- Silence and prayer (our contemplate)
- Being attentive to language
- A search for truth that compels us to be of service to others

\*At the heart of the intellectual work of Dominican friar, Saint Thomas Aquinas is a basic format for his *Summa Theologica*, it is the question. It is a rationality that seeks the truth among a wide variety of opinions carefully. For Dominicans, our bane and our contribution is the ability to distinguish through a rational approach to the search. For Thomas it was never “just” rationality, but rationality infused by grace. It was study for the sake of acquiring wisdom. Thomas’ thinking was grounded in God. Thinking things through contemplatively calls for silence and prayer and the belief that grace builds on nature, and mans nature is to think. Dominicans have since expressed this as **“Contemplating and sharing with others the fruits of that contemplation.”**

SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS



## THE OFFICE OF MISSION AND IDENTITY - AN OVERVIEW

The Office of the Vice President for Mission and Identity is charged with coordinating and facilitating the university-wide process of sustaining, enhancing and promoting the distinctive mission of Ohio Dominican University as a Catholic and Dominican University. It oversees the work of The Center for Dominican Studies and serves as a resource for existing divisions, departments and programs and helps to develop new initiatives expressive of the mission and of the University.

At Ohio Dominican, our search for truth is grounded in the dialog of faith and reason within the context of the human community. Through this human and personal dynamic, we encourage and empower one another in our search for and witness to truth. Our sense of community is thus defined by a strong commitment to study, dialogue, collegiality and cooperativeness in achieving shared goals. This approach is highlighted by a commitment to the common good and respect for all our members.

## SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA



In light of Ohio Dominican’s mission and its belief that the search for truth calls us to be transformed so that we may transform society through outreach and service, the University serves as a place of intellectual exploration and dialogue where students, faculty, staff, administration and alumni can gather for study, discussion, reflection and service. The Office of the Vice President for Mission and Identity strives to enable the Ohio Dominican community to share the richness and diversity of its Catholic and Dominican identity and to engage in a common mission inspired by that heritage.





## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER BEFORE YOUR INTERVIEW AT OHIO DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY

As a candidate for a position at Ohio Dominican University (ODU) it would be helpful to reflect upon these questions in order to personally articulate your understanding of Ohio Dominican's Catholic, Dominican mission and identity during our interview.

- What aspects of the Mission Statement resonate with your experience and heighten your interest in working at ODU?
- Are there any parts of ODU's mission that cause concern for you? Do you have any questions that might help clarify these concerns?
- Can you articulate some specific ways in which ODU's mission as a Catholic and Dominican university might enhance and support your work with students and colleagues?
- How have you demonstrated service to others in your previous positions? How would you plan to carry this experience forward at Ohio Dominican?
- Ohio Dominican University insures academic freedom, thrives on the diversity of beliefs and cultures, and values religious freedom. What skills do you bring to working in a diverse academic environment?
- Dominican education stresses the care of the whole person; intellectually, physically and spiritually that is rooted in study, prayer, community and service. How might you encourage students and colleagues to integrate these four dimensions of their lives at Ohio Dominican?

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