

Preaching: January 17, 2022

“No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old cloak. If he does, its fullness pulls away, the new from the old, and the tear gets worse.”

Mark 2:21

“...No one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the skins are ruined. Rather, new wine is poured into fresh wineskins.”

These analogies speak to our receiving graces from the Holy Spirit. How? Much like new wineskins, we are to make ourselves anew. We must do away with the old ways of thinking, living, being, etc., so that we can open ourselves to receiving graces from God. Otherwise, our old ways begin to clash with the new ways; our worldly ways of thinking and reasoning will compete and confuse Christ’s teachings—meaning is lost. This also gives meaning to the saying, “We are in the world and not of the world.”

The analogies are also akin to the formation process that we go through in becoming Dominicans. As the word formation indicates, we are constantly forming ourselves to the Dominican way of life. How? We shed our old ways and perceptions leaving us empty and creating ourselves anew, ready to receive the graces attributed to our Dominican vocation. We begin to discover our true Dominican selves and more and more of those graces are poured into us helping us to truly live as Dominicans. But know and understand that even after we make our Final Profession, that openness must always remain to continually receive more of those graces.

Also, important to Dominicans is our works in our interior life, contemplation, and the sharing of the fruits of our contemplation. In order that we may share what we have learned through our contemplation to serve God and each other, we must empty ourselves to realize God within. We must learn to sit still and be quiet to empty ourselves, creating ourselves anew. Once devoid of all worldly and self-concerns, we begin to hear that tiny voice within. The more we empty ourselves, the more we realize God’s presence in ourselves. Once realized, we can begin to share the fruits of contemplation.

Reflect on this teaching and know that Jesus wants to pour an abundance of grace into your life if you are willing to let yourself be first created anew.