

The “Salamanca Process” Origins, Meaning and Implementation of a Dominican Theological-Pastoral Category

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Abstract: This article offers a brief presentation of the theological-pastoral category “Salamanca Process” or “Salamanca-New World Process,” pointing out its development in the last General Chapters of the Order of Preachers, and trying to clarify its meaning and its possible forms of implementation. This category expresses some distinctive traits of the Dominican spiritual and intellectual tradition - going back to St. Dominic himself, in which study is understood at the service of the preaching of grace. The article intends to offer an initial and fragmentary response to questions posed by some Dominicans who seek a greater clarification of this notion in order to better understand and participate more actively in this initiative. The text deals with the following points: 1) The development of this category in the General Chapters of the Order of Preachers from 2013 to 2022; 2) The School of Salamanca and its dialogue with the preachers of the “New World” in the 16th century as a founding analogy of this category; 3) Some fundamental notes that should allow to perceive the complex and at the same time specific reality of this category and that should be present for an adequate understanding and implementation of the “Salamanca Process.”

Keywords: Salamanca-New World Process, spiritual and intellectual tradition, preaching, School of Salamanca, human dignity, human rights, theology, pastoral, life, mission

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Introduction

The present text aims to offer a brief presentation of the “Salamanca Process,” addressing the introduction and development of this category in the last General Chapters of the Order of Preachers, and intending to clarify its meaning and its possible ways of implementation. This allows us to understand the “Salamanca Process” (or “Salamanca - New World Process,” as it could also be called, and perhaps more precisely), as a theological-pastoral category that expresses peculiar features of the Dominican intellectual tradition and of a “Dominican theological vision,” understanding study at the service of the preaching of grace, which goes back to Saint Dominic himself.¹ This rich category poses in turn a certain challenge both in terms of its understanding and its implementation. In spite of the expressions of the last General Chapters, it is not infrequent that brothers and sisters, members of the Dominican Family, wonder about its precise meaning, and that sometimes different answers are given as to its understanding.

Is the Salamanca Process identical with the task of promoting justice and peace, so that any activity in this field would automatically be synonymous with this process? Is it primarily an activity of the centers of studies or of the academic institutions of the Order, or a content of a teaching syllabus? Does the life and mission of the Dominican Family as a whole have anything to do with the implementation of this process, and if so, in what way? These are some of the questions posed, and a good number of brothers and sisters expect a certain clarification of such questions, in order to be able to understand better and participate more actively in this initiative. I do not have a complete and definite answer to these questions, but I can understand the fact that they are raised, and this text would like to contribute in a certain way, necessarily fragmentary, to identify some elements that may help to understand more clearly and to implement fruitfully this distinctive and rich category.

The present text treats successively: I. The development of this category in the General Chapters of the Order from 2013 to 2019; II. The School of Salamanca and its dialogue with the preachers in the “New World” in the 16th century as the founding analogy of this category; III. Some fundamental notes that allow us to understand the complex reality of this process and that should be present for a proper understanding and implementation of the “Salamanca Process.”

¹ Cf. *Ratio Studiorum Generalis* OP, n. 21. The notion of “*miser cordia veritatis*” has been developed in the General Chapter of Providence, cf. ACG 2001 Providence, 104-117.

The “Salamanca Process” in the General Chapters of the Order of Preachers (2013-2022)

1. General Chapter of Trogir (2013)

1.1 *The Relatio of the Master of the Order*

The notion of “Salamanca Process” appears for the first time in the report on the state of the Order (*Relatio de statu Ordinis*) of the Master of the Order, Fr. Bruno Cadoré, OP, at the General Chapter of Trogir, Croatia, in 2013. It is interesting to note that the term initially used by Fr. Bruno in his report was “Salamanca Project,” while in the Acts of the General Chapter, after the discussion at the commissions and at the plenary sessions, already appears the term “*Salamanca Process*.”

Bruno Cadoré explains in his *relatio* that, given the distance that could sometimes be perceived between the theological and philosophical reflection and the pastoral experiences, especially in contexts in which the dignity and the rights of the people are at stake, he entrusted the Promoter for Justice and Peace and the Delegate of the Order at the UN to develop this “project,” specifying its goal and appointing some brothers to address this challenge:

In many places, it can be seen that there is a certain distance between the theological or philosophical reflection carried out by brothers and sisters and pastoral experiences faced with particularly difficult human, social, scientific contexts, especially those where the rights of persons are seriously undermined. At the time when we were celebrating the memory of the famous sermon of Montesinos, and in the line traced by friars like Las Casas and Vitoria, I asked the Promoter of Justice and Peace and the Delegate of the Order to the United Nations to carry out a project under the title “Salamanca Project” (Philippines, Colombia, which should be extended to other places like Kiev, Chicago and Yamoussoukro).²

When describing the objective of the “project,” the Master of the Order refers to the dialogue that took place in the historical context of the School of Salamanca and which should also take place in the present:

It seeks to promote dialogue between theology and the secular sciences taught in certain of our universities, starting from a concrete confrontation with pastoral experience. The history of the development of the “right of peoples” (*ius gentium*) by the School of Salamanca shows us the potential fruitfulness of such dialogues and the contribution they can make to

² ACG 2013 Trogir, *Relatio M.O.*, 38.

the transformation of the world. As we know, similar challenges are not lacking today (in very diverse fields: political reality, the world of work, education, health...) and call theology more than ever to be fully involved in evangelization, promoting interdisciplinary research based on the problems faced in the pastoral field ...³

In September 2021 I had the opportunity to consult brother Bruno Cadoré, Master of the Order between 2010 and 2019, on the possible antecedents which moved him to propose this category at the General Chapter of Trogir in 2013. Brother Bruno said that the first impulse to do it was on the occasion of his visit in 2011 to Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, historically Hispaniola, on the occasion of the fifth centenary of the sermon of Brother Antonio Montesinos in defense of the dignity and rights of peoples, on the fourth Sunday of Advent 1511, as an expression of the whole Dominican community. In a lecture at the *Casa de América* in Madrid on December 21, 2011, Bruno Cadoré highlighted the role of Dominicans in “making heard ... the call to unconditional respect for the dignity of every human being, without distinction” and thus contributing to “a decisive awareness at a moment in history, which could be described as the beginning of a new era.”⁴ Some expressions of the presentation in Madrid could suggest a glimpse of Brother Bruno’s future proposal in his *relatio* to the following General Chapter. He mentions there e.g., the important role that “study and intellectual debate” would have “among the consequences of this [Montesino’s] preaching,”⁵ which he sees as a first step towards the “Controversy of Valladolid” (1550-1551), in which years later Bartolomé de Las Casas participated in defense of the indigenous peoples. The position taken by the Dominicans of Hispaniola, Brother Bruno says, was not intended as a condemnation, but as a call for the search of truth in contact with the reality and the situations of individuals and people whose dignity and rights are not being respected:

(It) was not a word of condemnation, but rather a call not to remain in ignorance and obfuscation, but to dare to acknowledge and analyze

³ Ibid.

⁴ Cf. *Analecta Ordinis Praedicatorum* (2012), Fasc. I, 169-175: “Act of Commemoration of the Fifth Centenary of the Sermon of Montesinos,” which includes the intervention of the Master of the Order, Fr. Bruno Cadoré, OP (172-175; here: 172).

⁵ Id., 175: “For both the Royal Court and the University, it was important that the denunciations and the ideas that supported them be studied critically in the light of philosophy and theology. The friars were fully involved in these debates, animated by the aspiration to seek the most perfect way to the *truth*. This importance given to the search for truth stems from the conviction that placing one’s intelligence at the service of truth is one of man’s greatest qualities. This also explains why the first friars in America founded numerous universities...”

the problems in order to seek radical and structural solutions to them. It was essentially a call to address the search for truth at the service of building a world that is habitable for human beings, while at the same time becoming a world ‘for God’. This call, addressed both to the heart and to the intelligence of man, should start from reality. From the ‘Indio,’ as Las Casas would say. The Dominican brothers were thus forerunners of a humanistic and theological reflection starting from the victims. They placed themselves at the side of those whom the world wanted to forget, but without whom it would be impossible to search honestly for the truth.⁶

1.2 Acts of the General Chapter and Letter of Promulgation

Moving from the initial report of the Master to the expressions of the General Chapter itself in its Acts, the development of this new category of the “Salamanca Process” can be seen within the framework of the Chapter dedicated to the ministry of preaching (*De ministerio verbi*), after having dealt with the subject of the “preaching forums,” in numbers 112-114 and 116.

The General Chapter highlights the importance of this process, describing it as a particular form of permanent collaboration between brothers and sisters engaged in the mission with those dedicated to study and teaching, in a similar way to what happened in the 16th century between the Dominican missionaries who preached in the “New World” and those who studied, taught, and preached in the Convent of San Esteban in Salamanca. In turn, the General Chapter entrusts the *Socii* of the Master of the Order for the Intellectual Life and for the Apostolic Life to accompany this process, encouraging its implementation and informing the Order.⁷

At the level of the Provinces of the Order, the General Chapter charges the Regents of Studies to present to the respective Provincial Council the initiative of the Salamanca Process and invites each Province to assume some of its aspects, organizing “groups that include brothers engaged in pastoral work and others in

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ ACG 2013 Trogir, 112: “... the so-called ‘Salamanca Process’ is of particular importance. It consists of a particular form of permanent collaboration between the friars engaged in the mission and the friars dedicated to studies, as occurred in the 16th century between the missionaries in the New World and the friars of the Convent of St. Stephen in Salamanca. We entrust the *Socii* of the Master for the Intellectual Life and for the Apostolic Life to inform the Order about the first steps taken on this path and to encourage their implementation in the various regions of the Order.” ACG 2013, 116 mentions the collaboration of the General Promoter for Communication, entrusting him to propose “new ways of working in networks for the friars involved in the “Salamanca Process” and in the other Mission Forums.”

academic work, so that relevant and faithful responses to the Gospel can be given that will contribute to the renewal of the Province's mission."⁸

At the same time, the General Chapter mentions three areas of the socio-cultural reality in which this dialogue proper to the Salamanca Process is particularly urgent, inviting the brothers to take them into account, namely: "1. areas of vulnerability: peoples and persons who are threatened in their life, dignity, culture (migrants, indigenous people, minorities, populations displaced by violence and exploitation of resources, etc.); 2. areas of the search for meaning and belonging: trying to understand the causes, their difficulties and possible conflicts (for example, because of their national, cultural or religious identity, Pentecostal churches, etc.); 3. areas of secularity: abandonment of faith and religion, agnosticism and indifference."⁹

Finally, the Master of the Order, in his Letter of Promulgation of the Acts, highlights the "Salamanca Process," which aims "to promote theological and interdisciplinary dialogue starting from pastoral situations in particularly vulnerable environments" among the three main areas of the preaching ministry, together with the "Mission Forums" and the initiatives of "apostolic creativity in the new continent of the Internet."¹⁰

2. *General Chapter of Bologna (2016)*

The Master of the Order, Fr. Bruno, referred to the "Salamanca Process" on two occasions in his *relatio* to the General Chapter of Bologna. In the first one he mentioned the realization of a colloquium with the purpose of promoting it, which took place in Salamanca that same year.¹¹ He observed at the same time that the Process remained "rather slow in its implementation," and proposed that "the

⁸ ACG 2013 Trogir, 113: "We ask the Regents of Studies to present for discussion in the Province Council during 2014 all that concerns the "Salamanca Process," paying special attention to those topics that are of special interest in each Province. As a result of this discussion, each of the Provinces could take up one or more topics, organizing groups that include brothers engaged in pastoral work and others in academic work, so that relevant and faithful responses to the Gospel can be given that will contribute to the renewal of the Province's mission."

⁹ ACG 2013 Trogir, 114: "We exhort the brothers to take into account, in a particular way, some areas of the socio-cultural reality that make this dialogue particularly urgent: 1. areas of vulnerability: peoples and persons who are threatened in their life, dignity, culture (migrants, indigenous people, minorities, populations displaced by violence and exploitation of resources, etc.); 2. areas of the search for meaning and belonging: trying to understand the causes, their difficulties and possible conflicts (for example, because of their national, cultural or religious identity, Pentecostal churches, etc.); 3. areas of secularity: abandonment of faith and religion, agnosticism and indifference."

¹⁰ Bruno Cadoré, OP, Letter of Promulgation of the Acts of the General Chapter of Trogir (2013).

¹¹ Cf. Mike Deeb & Celestina Veloso Freitas (ed.), *Dominicans and Human Rights, Past, Present, Future*, Adelaide, ATF Press, 2017.

Chapter define a plan for the development of this Project and determine criteria and deadlines for its evaluation."¹² As we have seen, the Chapter encouraged the Provinces to move forward with its implementation. Another valuable observation of Fr. Bruno was given in the framework of his reflection on the identity of the Order that "also comes from the Dominican Family in a variety of forms," as he posed the question, "how can the Dominican Family collaborate in the Salamanca Process?"¹³

In the Acts of the General Chapter of Bologna the sole and fundamental statement on the "Salamanca Process" is the invitation to continue with its development and implementation, as requested by the previous General Chapter.¹⁴

3. General Chapter of Biên Hòa (2019)

3.1 *The Relatio of the Master of the Order*

The General Chapter of Biên Hòa, Vietnam, celebrated from 4 August to 9 August 2019, has provided several relevant expressions on the "Salamanca Process," that are in good measure, echoes or developments of aspects mentioned in the above mentioned *relatio* of the Master of the Order to the Chapter at the end of his mandate. Among other proposals, Fr. Bruno suggested to strengthen the staff of the Permanent Delegation of the Order at the UN in Geneva, "in order to promote, on the basis of the collection of experiences, research according to the orientation given to the 'Salamanca Process'."¹⁵ In his *relatio*, Fr. Bruno highlighted the grounding analogy between the objective of the "Salamanca Process" and the dialogue that took place between the theologians of the School of Salamanca and the Dominican

¹² ACG 2016 Bologna, *Relatio M.O.*, 39: "In this perspective, the Salamanca Process (ACG Trogir 2013, 112-114) aims at linking theological and interdisciplinary reflection with apostolic commitments in situations where people's rights are being undermined, is of particular importance. Within the framework of the Jubilee, a special colloquium has been planned to address this theme and to promote this process which, while it is in line with the conviction of many and corresponds to realities facing the preaching of the Order, remains rather slow in its implementation. I propose that the Chapter define a plan for the development of this project and determine the criteria and deadlines for its evaluation."

¹³ ACG 2016 Bologna, *Relatio M.O.*, 100: "The identity of the Order is also expressed within the Dominican family. This characteristic represents a requirement for the friars who have to learn to develop more collaboration with other members of the Dominican family... how can we collaborate in the reflection of the Salamanca Process?"

¹⁴ ACG 2016 Bologna, 118: "We encourage provinces and vice-provinces to continue the development of the Salamanca Process, as the Chapter of Trogir requested (cf. ACG Trogir 2013, 112-113)."

¹⁵ ACG 2019 Biên Hòa, *Relatio M.O.*, 54: "The strengthening of the Permanent Delegation of the Order in Geneva is in progress... There should also be an Assistant Director with a theological qualification oriented towards social doctrine in order to promote, on the basis of the collection of experiences, research according to the orientation given to the "Salamanca Process."

preachers in the New World, with a specific reference to the island of La Hispaniola, today Haiti and Dominican Republic.¹⁶ Some expressions and proposals of the *relatio* were included in the Acts of the Chapter, as proposed by the corresponding commission for Study, Centers of Studies and Institutions under the Master of the Order.¹⁷ Fr. Bruno addresses again the “Salamanca Process,” referring to study as mission, and to the importance of dialogue between theologians and pastors at the service of the defense of human dignity and of the rights of individuals and peoples.¹⁸ Finally, the *relatio* highlights the fact that all brothers and sisters, and especially those living in places where the respect of those rights is at risk, should participate in the implementation of this Process.¹⁹

3.2 Preface of the Acts: Synergy of Life and Mission

The Preface of the Acts of the Chapter, entitled “Synergy of life and mission in our vocation as preachers,” highlights as a paradigmatic moment of this synergy the community of Hispaniola in the 16th century, where the preaching of Fr. Antonio de Montesinos in defense of the dignity of the native people took place. The Preface sees this as an example of what today is the “Salamanca Process:”

Saint Dominic and the first friars are an obligatory reference point today in order to ensure harmony between our life and our mission. Their inspiration has motivated the most fruitful moments of Dominican life. In relation to the synergy between life and mission, perhaps no moment has been as paradigmatic as that of the community of Brother Pedro de Córdoba. Brother Antón Montesino’s well-known sermon was the result of an intense community life. For a long time, the community dedicated itself to listening to the cries of the victims, to praying for the Spirit to inspire them in such an important matter, to study and to discern in community what they were going to preach and how they were going to preach it. They wrote the sermon and all signed it in their own handwriting, so that it would be recorded as the community’s preaching. And they entrusted it to brother Montesinos who had

¹⁶ ACG 2019 Biên Hòa, *Relatio M.O.*, 54: “This expression [“Salamanca Process”], by analogy with the meeting of the preachers of Hispaniola and the theologians of Salamanca, refers to research which, based on the experience of situations in which respect for the equal dignity of all is endangered ... and aims at placing theology at the service of law and respect for human, individual and social dignity.”

¹⁷ Cf. footnote 22.

¹⁸ ACG 2019, Biên Hòa, *Relatio M.O.*, 131: “... It is also a challenge for what has been called the “Salamanca Process” (cf. 53) which, based on a dialogue between the brothers in the field and the theologians, can contribute to making the demand for respect for the human dignity of individuals and peoples heard from the voice of the forgotten of the world.”

¹⁹ ACG 2019 Biên Hòa, *Relatio M.O.*, 180: “The process called ‘Salamanca,’ in conjunction with the UN Delegation, calls for the participation of all, particularly the involvement of communities living in places where respect for human beings is in danger.”

the grace of preaching. This is an excellent metaphor of what Dominican preaching should be. It is a singular example of what we call today the “Salamanca Process.”²⁰

3.3 *The “Salamanca Process” from the Perspectives of Preaching, Study and the Promotion of Justice and Peace*

In the text of the Acts of the General Chapter of Biên Hòa, the “Salamanca Process” appears considered from the perspectives of Dominican preaching in Chapter IV and from those of study, academic institutions and the promotion of justice and peace, including the role of the Dominican delegation to the United Nations, in Chapter VIII. In this sense, this General Chapter offers some precious elements for a clearer understanding of this category of the “Salamanca Process,” and for its implementation.

Chapter IV under the title “Synergy Life-Mission. Challenges and Renewal of Preaching,” includes within the framework of the promotion of justice and peace, an exhortation to promote the “methodology of the Salamanca Process.”²¹

Chapter VIII, dedicated to “Study, Centers of Studies and Institutions under the Master of the Order,” develops a more complete and integral treatment of the “Salamanca Process,” starting from the analogy proposed in the *relatio* of the Master of the Order, Fr. Bruno Cadoré, mentioned above. The topic is then related to the Order’s Universities and Centers of Studies and to the Dominican Delegation to the United Nations. As for the notion itself, the Chapter states that:

The expression Salamanca Process, “by analogy with the meeting of the preachers of Hispaniola and theologians of Salamanca,” refers to research based on the experience of situations where the equal dignity and the rights of persons and peoples are not respected or are endangered and “aims to place theology at the service of law and respect for human, individual and social dignity” (cf. *Relatio* 154).²²

Regarding the relationship with the Order’s universities and centers of studies, the General Chapter exhorts to organize activities that make the “Salamanca Process” present in these institutions, promoting the dialogue between brothers and sisters working in the academe and those working pastorally in the defense of the

²⁰ ACG 2019 Biên Hòa, 65 (Preface).

²¹ ACG 2019 Biên Hòa, 170: “We exhort our friars to: promote the study and implementation of the teachings of “Laudato Si”; collaborate with the International Dominican Network against Trafficking in Persons promoted by Dominicans Sisters International; and promote the methodology of the *Salamanca Process*.”

²² ACG 2019 Biên Hòa, 315.

fundamental rights of individuals and peoples and also the perspective of the care of creation:

We exhort brothers in charge of universities, faculties and centers of studies in the Order to organize regular activities in line with the Salamanca Process that promote dialogue between academic work and the pastoral experience of brothers, especially of those working in places where the rights of individuals and of peoples and the integrity of the creation are not respected or are threatened. This dialogue should also be extended to bioethical issues, especially those related to the respect of life.²³

The Chapter also mandates the constitution of a “Salamanca Process” working group to promote it: “We commission the Socius for the Intellectual Life and the Socius for the Apostolic Life, in conjunction with the Promoter for Justice and Peace, to create a working group to promote the Salamanca process on issues of justice and peace and put its work at the service of the Order’s representative to the United Nations.”²⁴

4. General Chapter of Tultenango (2022)

4.1 *The Relatio of the Master of the Order*

The recent General Chapter of the Order held in Tultenango, Mexico, between July 16 and August 8, 2022 also made some references to the “Salamanca Process.” The Master of the Order, Fr. Gerard Francisco Timoner III, mentions this category in two points of his *Relatio*. Firstly, he does so in the context of his invitation to rethink or update the various categories that the Order has used in the General Chapters of the last four decades to formulate the priorities of its apostolic mission. In this regard, in n. 15 of the *Relatio*, Fr. Gerard mentions the “Four Priorities” stated in the General Chapter of Quezon City in 1977,²⁵ the five “Frontiers of Evangelization”

²³ ACG 2019 Biên Hòa, 316.

²⁴ ACG 2019 Biên Hòa, 317. Following the proposal of the *Relatio*, the General Chapter also charged the strengthening of the Order’s Delegation to the United Nations in Geneva, stating that the new deputy director to be appointed should “promote ... the orientation given to research by the ‘Salamanca Process’ (cf. *Relatio M.O.*, 54).” This working group has been in the meantime constituted by the Master of the Order, being formed by friars and sisters present in various regions, especially in connection with university centers of the Order, and has begun its work by identifying projects and cases that can contribute to the implementation of this dynamic.

²⁵ ACG 1977 Quezon City, 5. The four apostolic priorities proposed were: a) Catechesis in dechristianized cultures and milieux; b) Cultural policy of the Order “oriented toward philosophical and theological research on cultures, intellectual systems, social movements, and religious traditions operating outside historical Christianity”; c) Justice in the world; d) Integration of social media in the preaching of the Word of God.

defined in the General Chapter of Avila in 1999,²⁶ the “Mission Mandates” proposed after the General Chapter of Rome (2010) through a letter of the Master of the Order, Fr. Bruno Cadoré,²⁷ later formally determined in the General Chapter of Trogir as “Forums of Mission”²⁸ and now identified as “Forums of Apostolic Life.”²⁹ Fr. Gerard raised in that context the question whether those priorities should be updated or reminded and clearly integrated in the Forums of Apostolic Life, mentioning as an example the way in which the forum of the “Salamanca Process” is related to the priority of Justice and Peace.³⁰ Even if this impulse and the proposal of the Master of the Order did not have, in my opinion, the echo that would have been opportune in the discussion and the text of the Acts, the Chapter added some specific formulations with respect to the Salamanca Process, to which we will refer below.

Secondly, the Master of the Order highlights the task of the Coordinator of the Academic Engagement Program of the United Nations Delegation, who as a member of the “Salamanca Process working group,”³¹ is encouraging brothers and sisters working in the academic institutions of the Order “to produce reflections, individually and collectively, that will strengthen the possibilities of overcoming the polarization arising from the conflict of rights, and other questions of human rights, in the light of the Salamanca Process.”³²

²⁶ ACG 1986 Avila, 22. The Mission of the Order is characterized as a “a mission without frontiers” (*misión sin fronteras*), while at the same time the following five “*fronteras*” are identified as priority challenges for its mission: “1. The frontier between life and death: the challenge of justice and peace in the world; 2. The frontier between humanity and inhumanity: the challenge of the marginalized; 3. The Christian frontier: the challenge of universal religions; 4. The frontier of religious experience: the challenge of secular ideologies; 5. The frontier of the Church: the challenge of non-Catholic confessions and sects.”

²⁷ Prot. Nr. 50/12/733.

²⁸ ACG 2013 Trogir, 109ff.

²⁹ ACG 2019 Biên Hòa, 123-181.

³⁰ ACG 2022 *Relatio* M.O., 15: “Is it time to review and update the Priorities of the Order? Or perhaps, we just need to remind the Order the these remain our priorities, thus, must be seriously considered in our different apostolates. How are these priorities integrated as “priorities” in each of the Forum for Apostolic Life? For instance, the priority of Justice and Peace is clearly at the heart of the forum on Salamanca Process, but how is it a “priority” in the forum on Parish Ministry or Artists etc.? How about the “frontiers of evangelization” – are they still relevant today? Are there new frontiers which keep coming up in general chapters which we have not explicitly identified as a “frontier”? In many parts of the world today, the place of mission is no longer just the one that is far from home, it is also close to home! By crossing the threshold (“frontier”) of our convents, we already encounter “many men, women, and children who do not know the joy of friendship with Jesus.”

³¹ ACG 2019 Biên Hòa, 317.

³² ACG 2022 *Relatio* M.O., 46.

4.2 The “Salamanca Process” from the Perspectives of Preaching and Study

The category “Salamanca Process” is mentioned in chapters III and VI of the Acts of the Chapter of Tultenango, referring respectively to preaching and study in the mission of the Order. In the first case, the Chapter exhorts to put into practice the Process and its methodology, favoring the interaction between the mission and the academic teaching of theology, due to the challenge of the protection of human rights in the context of the preaching of the Dominican Family.³³

Chapter VI, under the title “Study in the Life and Mission of the Order,” after highlighting the relationship between study and all dimensions of the mission of the Order, identifies among the challenges or “temptations” in this field the gap that is sometimes found “between academic study ... and pastoral reality... between houses of study and houses of apostolate.” It reminds the brothers about the importance of integrating both dimensions, exhorting “provinces, through their regents of studies, as a regional instantiation of the Salamanca Process, to create interdisciplinary forums in which the competencies of our friars in academic and pastoral ministry may be brought into fruitful exchange.”³⁴

The General Chapter of Tultenango includes a significative commission to the Master of the Order upon the proposal of the Socius for the Intellectual Life and the Permanent Commission for the Promotion of Studies, to include in the *Ratio Studiourum Generalis*, i.e. the general plan of studies of the Order approved in 2017, in the context of the Areas of Competence of the Dominican Intellectual Tradition (RSG, 16-23), “the formation in Catholic Social Teaching, questions related to Justice and Peace, human rights (including the right to life) and the care for creation, the contribution of the Dominican School of Salamanca and the methodology of the Salamanca Process (cf. ACG 2019 Biên Hòa, 170, 315, 316).”³⁵ While the reference to formation in the field of Justice and Peace was included in the previous version of the RSG approved in 1993, that was not the case in the latest version of the text, where it is now to be introduced in a more comprehensive way, including the reference to the School of Salamanca and to the Salamanca Process.

³³ ACG 2022, Tultenango, 104 : “[Exhortatio] La prédication de la famille dominicaine est mise au défi en ce qui concerne les droits humains. Nous l’exhortons à mettre en pratique le processus de Salamanque qui relie les problèmes de la mission avec l’enseignement théologique universitaire (ACG Biên Hòa, 315-316).”

³⁴ ACG 2022 Tultenango, 222.

³⁵ ACG 2022 Tultenango, 237, b.

The Chapter also acknowledges and gives thanks for the establishment by the Master or the Order of the “Salamanca Process Working Group,” commissioned by the previous General Chapter and composed of brothers and sisters working in connection with universities and centers of studies of the Order and with the Dominican Delegation at the UN. Likewise, the Chapter encourages the Working Group to go forward with the implementation of the objectives mentioned in ACG 2019 Biên Hòa, 316-317.³⁶

Finally, even if without a specific reference to the category “Salamanca Process,” it is appropriate to mention the three numbers of this same chapter referring to the *Facultad San Esteban* (Salamanca) and the theological heritage of the Dominican School of Salamanca, which should continue to be cultivated and made available in dialogue with the various disciplines and cultures in collaboration with other academic institutions of the Order.³⁷

The Analogy with the School of Salamanca: Dialogue and mutual enrichment between the theologians of Salamanca and the preachers in the “New World”

In his recent letter “*Praedicator gratiae*,” on the occasion of the eighth centenary of the *dies natalis* of Saint Dominic, Pope Francis highlighted the importance of the School of Salamanca as one of the richest expressions of the Dominican theological tradition in the unity of truth and charity:

The unity of truth and charity found perhaps its finest expression in the *Dominican school of Salamanca*, and particularly in the work of Friar Francisco de Vitoria, who proposed a framework of international law grounded in universal human rights. This in turn provided the philosophical and theological foundation for the heroic efforts of Friars Antonio Montesinos and Bartolomé de Las Casas in the Americas, and Domingo de Salazar in Asia to defend the dignity and rights of the native peoples.³⁸

The “School of Salamanca,” which continues to be the subject of research from various disciplines, was primarily a theological school with interdisciplinary projection, composed mainly of members of the Order of Preachers, which represented a renewal of theology in the Dominican tradition and in particular of

³⁶ ACG 2022 Tultenango, 291.

³⁷ ACG 2022 Tultenango, 292-294.

³⁸ Pope Francis, *Praedicator gratiae*, Letter to Fr. Gerard Francisco Timoner III, O.P., Master of the Order of Preachers for the VIII Centenary of the death of Saint Dominic of Caleruega, at: https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/letters/2021/documents/papa-francesco_20210524_lettera-centenario-sandomenico.html.

St. Thomas Aquinas, while incorporating impulses from modern humanist culture, and open to the signs of the times and the demands of the mission of the Church, particularly in the defense of the dignity and rights of the peoples of the New World. Among its most distinguished representatives are: Fr. Francisco de Vitoria (ca.1492-1546), considered its “founder,” Fr. Domingo de Soto (1495-1560) and Fr. Melchor Cano (1509-1560) among many others.³⁹ The Dominican Preachers in the New World, among them Bartolomé de Las Casas, received directly or indirectly a formation enriched by the theological contribution of the School of Salamanca.⁴⁰ The name given to the “Salamanca Process” is therefore grounded in the fruitful interaction and reciprocal enrichment between the theologians of Salamanca and the missionary preachers in the New World in the 16th century.⁴¹

Felicísimo Martínez, OP says that the term “Salamanca Process” “means that pastoral praxis and philosophical-theological reflection are mutually necessary, that pastoral praxis should animate study and reflection in the Order and study should animate pastoral action.” He observes two other points regarding the understanding of this category: 1. From the geographical point of view, Salamanca was one of the places where theological studies experienced this renewal, thanks to the new missionary deeds of the 16th century, “but the same phenomenon took place also in Avila, in Santo Domingo, in Lima, in Manila ...”; 2. It would be a mistake to think that the Salamanca Process consists in some - the missionaries - raising the questions, and others - the professional theologians - offering the answers. Today, as in the 16th century the “Salamanca Process” aims to conveniently articulate missionary activity and theological reflection, whenever possible, in the same persons and in the same communities.⁴²

³⁹ Cf. Juan Belda Plans, *La Escuela de Salamanca y la renovación de la teología en el siglo XVI*, BAC, Madrid, 2000; J. Brufau Prats, *La Escuela de Salamanca ante el descubrimiento del Nuevo Mundo*, San Esteban, Salamanca, 1989; Ramón Hernández Martín, *Francisco de Vitoria. Vida y pensamiento internacionalista*, BAC, Madrid, 1995.

⁴⁰ Cf. e.g. Mauricio Beuchot, *Los fundamentos de los derechos humanos en Bartolomé de Las Casas*, México, Anthropos, 1994.

⁴¹ Regarding some historical references to the “Salamanca Process,” cf. Alfonso Esponera Cerdán, OP: “Proceso Salamanca: algunas consideraciones sobre su historia,” *Ciencia Tomista*, v. 140, n. 451 (2013), 305-322; Id., “El Proceso Salamanca en la primera mitad del siglo XVI español,” in *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum*, 2013, v. 83, 297-331. A reflection in pastoral-theological perspective addressing especially the third of the subjects pointed out by the General Chapter of Trogir can be seen in: Comisión Interprovincial de Vida Intelectual, “Proceso Salamanca. Vida intelectual y vida pastoral. Un diálogo sobre la sociedad secular,” *Ciencia Tomista*, n.456, v. 142, 2015.

⁴² Cf. Felicísimo Martínez, “Bartolomé de Las Casas y la Evangelización. Otra dimensión del Proceso Salamanca,” *Studium*, 2017, 179-220.

The first of these observations - as well as other aspects mentioned above - allows to ask whether the name “Salamanca Process” should not be complemented and enriched with the inclusion of the other geographical and cultural term that was and continues to be an essential element of what this category seeks to express. Thus, one could probably speak of the “Salamanca - Hispaniola process” or “Salamanca - New World process.” The latter would be, in my opinion, preferable since the term “New World,” applied in the 16th century to the “new” regions with which the Europeans came into contact, would also apply in the present and in the future to the “new” cultural worlds, in the framework of the “signs of the times,” as challenges and possibilities for the deepening of the Gospel in its inexhaustible *newness* and to take steps towards a culture of universal fraternity.⁴³

Summing up, we can say that, for the understanding of the “Salamanca Process” the relation to the “School of Salamanca” of the 16th century and to the dialogue between theologians in their academic commitment and missionary preachers in the New World with their pastoral experience and commitment to dignity of persons and peoples, is of fundamental importance. The analogy with that fruitful dialogue and reciprocal enrichment at the service of the preaching of the Gospel is at the basis of this pastoral-theological category. Therefore, it is by way of analogy with that dialogue that the essential elements and the implementation of this category should be addressed.⁴⁴

The “Salamanca (-New World) Process”: Fundamental Components and Ways of its Implementation

Finally, trying to address the questions posed at the beginning of this text, and to identify the fundamental components of the “Salamanca (- New World) Process,” the following elements could probably be enumerated as constitutive of what this category intends to express:

⁴³ Cf. Pope Francis, Encyclical *Fratelli tutti*. Regarding the question on the possible broadening of the name of the process by incorporating a second term, I am grateful for Fr. Pablo Tiong’s input in this sense at the meeting in Manila on 8 March 2020 in which a first version of this text was presented.

⁴⁴ Cf. Bruno Cadore, “Dominicains pour la justice et la paix : Droits humains, Droits des peuples,” RDC 72, 2022. Brother Bruno highlights the commitment of the Order of Preachers in the field of human rights in the light of the work of the NGO *Dominicans for Justice and Peace* at the United Nations, making reference to the “Salamanca analogy”: «Cette évocation de *Dominicans for Justice and Peace* peut paraître assez éloignée de ce qui se passa à Salamanque. On peut pourtant relever certains traits analogues...» ; «...je retrouve ici encore la trace du ‘moment Salamanque’... C’est la raison pour laquelle, articulée étroitement au travail de *Dominicans for Justice and Peace*, l’Ordre a mis en place un travail théologique contribuant à fonder plus solidement encore dans une prise en compte rigoureuse de la réalité l’annonce de la Parole du Dieu de l’Alliance manifesté par Jésus que peut s’accomplir au long de l’histoire humaine la promesse de justice et de paix.”

1. A certain academic framework, as a community of shared study. This element, even without being the only one and not to be considered in isolation, is part of Dominican life and mission and specifically of this dynamic reality that expresses the term “Salamanca Process.” The beautiful expression of St. Albert the Great, often quoted in texts of the Order referring to study as an essential dimension of the life and mission of all its members, could also be recalled in this context: «*In dulcedine societatis quaerere veritatem.*”⁴⁵
2. Dialogue and mutual enrichment of brothers and sisters working in an academic framework and those working on the ground, with apostolic experience especially in situations in which human dignity and the rights of individuals and peoples, as well as the care of creation as common house of humankind, are threatened or not respected. In the context of Dominican intellectual and spiritual tradition, this includes a philosophic-theological academic framework, open to dialogue with other disciplines and to the pastoral experience of those working in the field. This should take place in the form of *true dialogue and interaction*, avoiding any unidirectionality.
3. An experience of Dominican “*miser cordia veritatis*,” making manifest that serious commitment to study is oriented towards being useful for the salvation of our neighbors, cultivating the inclination of all human beings towards truth, perceiving with compassion their sufferings and hopes, as well as the signs of the times, in order to be able to be, in the footsteps of St. Dominic, preachers of truth and mercy.⁴⁶
4. A process, whose implementation implies a realization throughout time and in different contexts. In the commissions of the General Chapter of Biên Hòa this implementation is primarily oriented to academic institutions and the Dominican Delegation at the UN. This requires identifying some concrete activities or cases addressed by these institutions, that can be a way of going forward in the implementation of this process. It also includes, e.g. through other initiatives of the working group, promoting that the methodology of this process be present in the formation and study programs of the Dominican Family and in the academic institutions in charge of it.

^{45 32} Cf. *Ratio Studiorum Generalis* OP, n. 7; ACG 2013 Trogir, 45; Yves Congar, “*In dulcedine societatis quaerere veritatem.* Notes sur le travail en équipe chez S. Albert et chez les Prêcheurs au XIIIe siècle,” in: Gerbert Meyer, Albert Zimmermann, Paul-Bernd Lüttringhaus (eds.), *Albertus Magnus Doctor Universalis 1280-1980*, M. Grünewald, Mainz 1980, 45-57.

⁴⁶ For the notion of “*miser cordia veritatis*” cf. footnote 1.

5. A process, whose implementation includes the Dominican Family as a whole, in the different dimensions of its life and mission. This could perhaps not be evident at first sight and in fact the question should be posed whether the main elements of the Salamanca-Analogy are present or no, whenever we speak of "Salamanca process," as will be seen below. However, given those fundamental elements, the notion of "*process*" would include not only a realization over time and a mediation involving academic institutions, but also the reality of the life and multiform preaching of the *Dominican Family* in its various forms of expression. In ecclesiological terms, what Yves Congar says about the Church as "messianic people" and universal sacrament of salvation, and his response to the question "who is the sacrament of salvation?," namely the whole People of God through its life and preaching, would apply to the Dominican Family regarding this specific dimension as part of its mission.⁴⁷ When the various members of the Dominican Family (sisters, brothers, members of lay and priestly fraternities, young people, etc.) in a context in which the fundamental components of the abovementioned analogy are present, thus prolonging in history the "analogy" described above, it seems legitimate to speak of forms of implementation of the "Salamanca Process."

6. An ongoing and contextual realization of the grounding "Salamanca-New World" *analogy, including its fundamental elements*. This last statement brings us back to the founding ground of the notion of the "Salamanca - New World Process," namely the analogy with the dialogue and fruitful reciprocal enrichment that took place in the sixteenth century in relation to the School of Salamanca mentioned above. This also suggests to us that the essential elements of that "analogy" should be present when we use this category of the "Salamanca - New World Process." It seems therefore also appropriate to avoid the simplification of calling everything "Salamanca Process," applying this notion in such a generalized way as to suggest that it is applicable indiscriminately to everything, e.g. to any activity related to the promotion of justice and peace, or any academic activity dealing with a similar subject, so important as these concrete activities in they may be, and so precious as they can be also as preparatory or complementary steps for the fruitful dialogue and reciprocal enrichment that is essential to this category.

⁴⁷ Cf. Yves Congar, *Un peuple messianique*, Cerf, Paris 1975, 98 : "Qui est le sacrement du salut ? Le peuple de Dieu. Où et comment ? Dans toute sa vie, dans toute son histoire vécue dans l'histoire du monde."

Such generalization, even if well intentioned, would mean blurring and obscuring its meaning, weakening the motivation and possibilities for its implementation and, ultimately, tend to make it somehow irrelevant. An appropriate criterion seems to be the presence of the fundamental elements of the grounding “analogy” that lies at the basis of this notion. This may be also an argument to propose the more inclusive name of “*Salamanca – New World Process*,” that makes all the components of that analogy more visible. However, these reflections intend to be not a conclusive response, but rather an invitation to continue engaging in this discussion and in this common work of understanding and implementation. **PS**

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