

# An Apostolic Vocation: the Formation of the Religious Life for the Dominican Sisters in the Thirteenth Century

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**D**OMINIC'S DECISION TO establish the women's communities of his Order in accordance with the Rule of St. Augustine has been understood either as simply aligning the Sisters' *religio* with that of the Preachers or as complying with the requirements of Lateran IV.<sup>1</sup> However, this misunderstands Dominic's intentions, and those of the Sisters themselves, and misrepresents the Sisters' vocation. Both women and men heeded the call to the *vita apostolica* in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, though the perceived unfitness of women for preaching was, and has continued to be, understood as excluding them from the realization of an apostolic vocation. This presumes that the authentic apostolic life is premised on preaching, though the call that Jesus made to his followers was much broader than this and was made to both women and men. The Dominican vocation sprang from complex historical understandings of the *vita apostolica*, and the Dominican women's *religio* should be approached as part of these same contexts and perceptions.<sup>2</sup> This can be most readily achieved through studying the representation of the apostolic vocation that was achieved in the yoking of the Augustinian Rule with the Dominican women's institutes.<sup>3</sup> In this way, the fundamental premise of the female Dominican *religio* may be better understood. Hence, this study takes as its focus the normative texts that were intended to shape the Sisters' lives and to enable or authorize a particular vocation and that were cultural products springing from their particular religious and monastic environments. This is not a study of the lived experience of the Sisters or of how the rules and institutes may have been implemented or interpreted—that is an entirely different endeavor.

Firstly, a brief historical overview of the steps that made possible

the apostolic vocation for Dominican nuns is in order. The principles for the achievement of an apostolic vocation are to be found in Jesus's own recommendations as found in the Gospels and in the Acts of the Apostles. For Augustine, the ideal religious community was based on that of the Apostles. His Rule evoked the lifestyle that the earliest Christian communities had achieved in which women were clearly present and valid participants in Jesus's ministry and in the Acts community. The canonical reforms of the eleventh and twelfth centuries form a well-known backdrop to the formation of the Dominican Order and should also be understood as part of the environment that enabled the formalization of an apostolic vocation for Dominican women. Dominic's application of the Augustinian Rule to the formation of a women's *religio*, in the contexts of the thirteenth-century renovation of apostolic ideals, was neither unconsidered nor a juridical fiction. He was signaling the formation of an apostolic vocation for the sisters of his nascent Order. The institutes he wrote for the San Sisto community in Rome in 1221 formulated their everyday lives to articulate with the Rule of St. Augustine and to implement their particular *religio*.<sup>4</sup> During the ensuing forty years, the desire of religious women to be incorporated into, or at least aligned with, the Order of Preachers was countered by opposition among the Order's leadership to the *cura monialium*, which they perceived as deleterious to their core business: their public preaching mission. During those same years, the ongoing support of the papal curia and of many friars who continued to attract and care for pious women enabled the consolidation of the women's Order. Under papal guidance, the San Sisto *institutiones* were applied to a large number of women's communities, especially in southern and southwestern Germany. They were renovated for the Sisters of Montargis in France in 1250, and the final, official formulation was approved at the General Chapter of the Order at Valenciennes in 1259. Throughout this period, the Sisters perceived that they fulfilled a vocation that entitled them to be part of, or at least aligned with, the Order of Preachers. This history of the formation of the Order of the Sisters of Saint Dominic has appeared (albeit piecemeal) in a variety of scholarly works; however, the formation of their vocation as fulfillment of the principles lived by Jesus and his followers is here elucidated for the first time.

## The Gospel Vocation

The apostolic quality and nature of the Dominican women's vocation, like that of the Preachers, may first be identified with the vocation of the women and men of the New Testament. A variety of signifiers for the vocation Jesus was establishing are identifiable in the Gospels, and they entail both active and contemplative commitments. The active work of preaching was instituted and fulfilled by Jesus himself, and his Apostles and disciples carried on this duty both during his time on earth and after the Ascension. Notwithstanding the Gospel of John's account of Jesus's encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well, after which she assumed the role of announcing the advent of the *Christus*, and Mary Magdalene's role in revealing Jesus's Resurrection to the Apostles, preaching was never deemed to be appropriate for women.<sup>5</sup> In the Acts of the Apostles, the common life established in the Jerusalem community centered around the preaching activities of the Apostles.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, this common life, with its unity of heart and soul, was common to both women and men. Personal abnegation of possessions, sharing of everything in common, and communal prayer and breaking of bread were the distinguishing activities of all the believers. The active preaching ministry did not by any means constitute the whole of the life that Jesus advocated—indeed, its “best part” was not founded on active service, but in the contemplative life evoked in Jesus's conversation with Martha of Bethany. In Luke 10:41-42, Martha complains to Jesus that her sister, Mary, is not helping her minister to Him and his followers, to which “the Lord said to her, ‘Martha, Martha, you are careful and troubled about many things. But one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the best part, which will not be taken away from her.’”<sup>7</sup> The one necessary thing in Jesus's estimation was contemplation; it was the best part of his Gospel-based vocation and would become the basis for the monastic life for both women and men. What is eminently clear, as Jo Ann McNamara eloquently reminded us, is that women constituted a significant element of the pre- and post-Ascension apostolic fellowship, and thus the application of a form of life that was based on apostolic ideals was appropriate for both women and men.<sup>8</sup> Over the centuries, monastics perceived the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles as offering

the elementary example for the religious life as well as inscribing the proper *rule* for living a life modeled on that of the apostolic fellowship.

### Augustine's Ideal of the Religious Life

For Augustine, the ideal for the communal religious life was found in the Acts of the Apostles with its exemplary fulfillment of Jesus's injunctions. A constant refrain in his writings and sermons on the religious life comes from the account of the protomonastic life of the Apostolic community in Acts 4:32-35.<sup>9</sup> The apostolic spirit of Augustine's monastic Rule is established in the opening lines of his *Praeceptum*:<sup>10</sup>

Firstly, because you are gathered as one and live together in the house, may there be one spirit and one heart in God. And do not call anything your own, but hold everything in common. . . . Such may be read in the Acts of the Apostles, that everything was in common and distributed to each according to need.<sup>11</sup>

His *Ordo Monasterii*, also envisioned under the apostolic banner, emphasizes prayer, reading, silence, and manual work.<sup>12</sup> The form of the monastic life Augustine advocated for both men and women is not enclosed, but his expectation is that excursions outside the monastery should be limited to necessity and that otherwise the life of contemplation should not readily be disrupted or relinquished.<sup>13</sup> Within the community, silence should be observed at meals and during the hours set aside for work and reading, and at no time should there be idle chatter.<sup>14</sup> For Augustine, silence has moral value, but, more importantly, it enables *contemplatio*, communion with God (though he makes no specific reference to the example provided by Mary Magdalene).<sup>15</sup> The basic purpose of the monastic life is to be freed from worldly business in order to lead a quiet life [*quies*] of study and have freedom for contemplation [*otium cogitationis*].<sup>16</sup> According to Augustine, *vocatur ad otium* is a vocation to a life of disciplined leisure that enables the monastic to come to know God.<sup>17</sup> Yet, while the monastic might be free from the demands of business and enjoy a leisured communion with God, that does not mean that s/he should not work, lest *otium* become *otiositas*.

In his *De opere monachorum*, Augustine is clear that no monk may be excused from work, even for the sake of prayer, because the apostolic life includes working for daily food.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, monastic *otium* itself is active for it is not possible to choose a contemplative life without *labor*.<sup>19</sup> Study, engagement in a striving, ascetic contemplation, most readily achievable in a life shared with like-minded companions, is a fundamental task of the monastic.<sup>20</sup> The Augustinian monastic was enabled to live a retired life free of external burdens in which work had a privileged place. In Augustine's thought, the *vita apostolica* is contingent upon the *vita contemplativa*.

However, there were other understandings of the religious life in Augustine's thought which likewise had their foundations in the apostolic life. According to Acts, the Apostles had also fulfilled Jesus's command to preach on his behalf, and Augustine's second religious foundation at Hippo was a community of clerics that assumed the duty of preaching.<sup>21</sup> Yet, when the clerics undertook their divinely ordained task of preaching, they perforce relinquished the *vita contemplativa* for the *vita activa*. Indeed, in establishing the two separate communities, Augustine acknowledged that there were two possible apostolic vocations. Nevertheless, in taking on episcopal and pastoral duties, Augustine felt the loss of the life of monastic *quies*, and, to preserve as far as possible the contemplative ideal for his clerics, he ensured that they should still observe a duty to study and take time for contemplation; the fruits of holy leisure must always inform pastoral work.<sup>22</sup> Still, while Jesus had specifically ordained both the active and contemplative modes of religious life, and both were grounded in the *vita apostolica*, in Augustine's view the inescapable fact was that the life of contemplation was the "best part."

## Twelfth-Century Conditions

The canonical reforms of the eleventh and twelfth centuries constitute an important environment for the development of the *vita apostolica* in the thirteenth century. Caroline Walker Bynum, Giles Constable, M.-D. Chenu, and Jean Châtillon, among others, have established the historical pedigree of the *vita apostolica* as the basis for the canonical or monastic

life and its significance among reformers for whom it was best evoked in the Rule of St. Augustine. Up to the twelfth century, the *vita apostolica* had not been perceived as an active, public preaching vocation. The idea of emulating the apostolic community had been largely reconceived as forming a contemplative *religio*—the *vita apostolica* had come to equal the *vita communis*.<sup>23</sup> At a council at the Lateran Palace in 1059, Gregory VII endorsed the movement back to the ideals of the *primitiva ecclesia*, emphasizing that the canonical order should observe apostolic poverty and the common life of the Acts community.<sup>24</sup> The spiritual renaissance of the period, inspired by the Gospels, was particularly evidenced among itinerant preachers and the canonical orders as the commitment to the “truly apostolic life” [*vita vere apostolica*] came increasingly to include preaching, though the canonical reforms of the late eleventh and twelfth centuries had not yet characterized this as a public mission.<sup>25</sup> Rather, a canon understood the Gospel ideal of a duty to one’s neighbor only in relation to his fellow canons.<sup>26</sup> Bynum has traced the understanding of the constitution of the canonical vocation as including the duty to edify *verbo et exemplo, vita et doctrina*, but this duty was not specified as pertaining to preaching or leadership, but rather to exemplary living “either inside or outside the cloister,” and the duty of offering moral edification to one’s fellows would only rarely draw a canon from his cloistered life.<sup>27</sup> Increasingly, the canonical life was deemed to have derived from the Augustinian apostolic life. Lietbert of St. Rufus, among others, had even claimed ca. 1100 that the canonical life was superior to monastic life because it had “first flourished in Christ, in the Apostles,” and because “the blessed Augustine ordained it in his Rules.”<sup>28</sup> Hugh of St. Victor (d.1148), commenting on the Augustinian Rule, described it as a rule for canons who live in monasteries and who live apostolically. For Hugh, as for Augustine, the monastery encompassed the *religio* of its members as they committed to dwelling together in concord, with unity of spirit, and communal property.<sup>29</sup> Like Augustine, the canons of the twelfth century, and the sisters under their care, who followed his Rule regarded the apostolic life as communal and contemplative, and only the fulfilment of divinely imposed external duties could draw the true religious away from the *quies* and *vacatio* of the communal life. As will be seen, this understanding of the monastic life as, ideally, fulfilling the

*vita apostolica* clearly informed the institutes that would make possible an apostolic vocation for the Dominican Sisters.

Also fundamental to an understanding of the place of the *vita apostolica* in the *religio* of the Dominican Sisters is the prominence of women in the religious movements of the twelfth century. Women responded in unprecedented numbers both to the rise of the new formal monastic orders and to the itinerant preaching movement—in some circumstances both these influences can be seen at work, as in the case of the Dominicans.<sup>30</sup> While women responded to the call to a Gospel-based vocation, any adherence to apostolic principles that conformed with clerical expectations had, if the women were to distinguish themselves from heretical groups, to eschew any claim to such active evangelical work as preaching.<sup>31</sup> Hence, any women's vocation had to assume as its basis a stable, enclosed environment under a rule and with suitable clerical supervision. Any woman who chose a religious life separate from her family was usually expected to settle in a suitable, protected community.<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, women with religious vocations sought to engage with contemporary spiritual currents that evoked the *religio* of the apostolic community.

An issue that has concerned historians of women's religious life during the Middle Ages is the perceived problem of the *cura monialium*. However, this scholarly certainty that male religious resented and avoided the *cura monialium* has, in recent years, been contested in studies of the close links between individual monks, canons, and friars with religious women, and, more importantly for the present argument, between male and female monastic and mendicant orders.<sup>33</sup> In particular, scholarly studies of women's communities of southern and western Germany during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries have linked many of these communities with the canonical and monastic reforms associated with centers at Marbach and Hirsau.<sup>34</sup> For instance, Julie Hotchin attests that during the eleventh century, women in southern Germany were seeking to share the religious life of canonical and male monastic communities through a variety of formal and informal links and that some canons and monks perceived this as a call to the *cura monialium* that replicated the relationships between women and men in the apostolic community.<sup>35</sup>

The Order of Prémontré preceded the Dominicans in linking women

to its apostolic and Augustinian way of life. The Premonstratensian sisters shared the Augustinian Rule and constitutions with the canons, though it seems there was no endeavor to shape a specifically female vocation for them.<sup>36</sup> In the early thirteenth century in central Italy, there were so many women making informal commitments to lives of apostolic poverty that Cardinal Hugolino of Ostia felt compelled to establish his order of *sorores pauperes*, and Francis of Assisi enabled the vocation of Clare and her sisters. Both of these orders were initially established under the Benedictine Rule and under strict enclosure, though in ensuing years a Rule took shape that was specific to the Clarissan vocation of Gospel poverty.<sup>37</sup> In Flanders, according to Jacques de Vitry, women were living in enclosed communities without approved rules or incorporation into approved orders. One of the features of the religious lives of these women that impressed Jacques was that they “invited each other to do good through mutual exhortations” (*mutuis exhortationibus ad bonum invitare*).<sup>38</sup> They shared a commitment to the same principles of *docere verbo et exemplo* that have been identified as marking the *religio* of the canons. In all of these examples across France, Germany, and Italy, the resonances between women’s construction of their religious lives and the lifestyle of the women of the apostolic community are clear—their vocation was contemplative with distinct apostolic attributes.

The third key environmental factor in the development of women’s religious life in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was the two ecumenical councils, Lateran II in 1139 and Lateran IV in 1215. Canon 26 of Lateran II reflected a growing concern for the numbers of women who were participating in informal religious communities. The Council determined that the “detestable custom” of women who “wish to be considered nuns by the common people” yet live “neither according to the Rule of St Benedict nor of Basil or of Augustine” should be abolished, and only those women who “observe common life in church, dormitory and refectory” could be regarded as nuns.<sup>39</sup> The same Council also prohibited nuns from sharing the same choir with monks or canons. Henceforth, any woman who wished to undertake an approved form of monastic life had to do so under the auspices of a traditional Rule and in a female-only cloister. In 1215, the Fourth Lateran Council determined that the Benedictine and Augustinian Rules constituted the



only formulations for the monastic or canonical life. From this time, no one was permitted to found a new religious order (*religionem*).<sup>40</sup> If anyone, male or female, converted to a religious life (*religionem*), they were expected to enter an approved order, and anyone wishing to found a new house was required to accept an existing “approved rule and institute” (*regulam et institutionem accipiat de religionibus approbatis*).<sup>41</sup> By requiring commitment to an approved Rule (that is, Benedictine or Augustinian), the Council was determining that all forms of religious life should have the respectability of one of the traditional Rules and that all religious should commit either to the enclosed stability of the Benedictine *religio* or to the explicitly apostolic principles of Saint Augustine. It was also understood that both these Rules constituted broad frameworks for a religious life and that any community or order would develop particular practices that would usually be inscribed as institutes or constitutions which would shape its specific religious commitment and enable the quality and nature of its vocation.

### The Vocation of the Preachers

Dominic Guzmán had lived for approximately ten years as a cathedral canon before he travelled with his bishop, Diego of Osma, to France where they undertook their mission to the Cathars in the Languedoc in 1206—a task that ultimately led to the formation of the Order of Preachers. Diego had undertaken the reform of his cathedral community, according to Jordan of Saxony (ca. 1233) taking “pains to urge his canons, by frequent admonitions and salutary exhortations, to agree to observe a canonical religious life under the Rule of St. Augustine.”<sup>42</sup> Dominic and the little band of canons who accompanied him into the Languedoc had been committed to the strict form of Augustinian life.<sup>43</sup> They had been accustomed to the *religio* that Augustine had formulated for his contemplative community, sharing with the canons of their day an apostolic vocation of *quies*, communal property, and dwelling together in concord. With the success of their mission, Dominic approached Innocent III in 1215 seeking permission to establish an order of itinerant preachers.<sup>44</sup> The preachers elected to continue to live according to the Augustinian Rule—in Jordan’s view, this was because Augustine “had

been an outstanding preacher.”<sup>45</sup> Dominic and his new Order of Preachers thus remained loyal to their original commitment to their Rule, distinguishing, as Augustine had done, that the duty of an active preaching vocation demanded that the cleric relinquish the *vita contemplativa* for the *vita activa*. While Dominic’s new *religio* was exceptional, its foundational principles were long established; he and his Preachers lived an apostolic vocation under the Rule of St. Augustine, they were committed to the edification of their fellow Christians, and they renounced personal possessions. In later years, Gregory IX would describe Dominic as a “man who was an adherent of the entire apostolic rule.”<sup>46</sup>

The Preachers’ new vocation constituted a far different life from that which they had led as canons. Like Augustine’s community of clerics, the friars’ *religio* was embedded in the *vita activa*, and they had, in part, relinquished the *quies* of a monastic life withdrawn from the everyday world. The vocation of the Preachers then was apostolic in that they lived under the Augustinian Rule, they pursued active preaching work, and they lived without possessions. In keeping with Augustine’s representation of the preaching vocation, Dominic and his Preachers recognized that their labors could only succeed if they were nourished on the fruits of study and contemplation. So essential were these pursuits to the fulfillment of their vocation that each friar was required to devote some part of his time to study.<sup>47</sup> Indeed, the General Chapter of 1228 determined that the prior of a community had the authority to dispense the friars from other duties, including chapter and the office, if he considered it more appropriate that they should spend the time in study or preaching.<sup>48</sup> Thus the Preachers’ lives had to constitute a mix of active preaching and contemplative study. Still, in keeping with the Augustinian spirit, it was only because preaching was perceived as a divinely imposed duty that the friars could endure to relinquish their contemplative lives. While they were committed to the principle of lifetime study, they were excluded from the *optimam partem* of the apostolic life, the pure *vocatur ad quies*.

The Preachers’ vocation was evoked in their constitutions in conjunction with the Augustinian Rule.<sup>49</sup> Both of the surviving redactions of the constitutions open with the Augustinian evocation of unanimity of spirit and go on to define the behaviors and practices that align the Preachers with the Augustinian *religio*, thus establishing their specifically

Dominican vocation.<sup>50</sup> Nothing in the constitutions is at odds with the Augustinian Rule; they incorporate apostolic unanimity and poverty and allow times for work and for silent contemplation and study. Augustine's Rule allowed for any *religio* that fulfilled its apostolic qualities. The Dominican duty is to preach; yet, in keeping with the Augustinian ideal, where no such duty exists then *quies* can and should be maintained. The Dominican *religio* included times of *quies* for the friars and limited any interference with study and contemplation during the time spent *in monasterio*. Their preaching had to be a product of their contemplation; therefore their duty included time spent in the monastic *quies* so dear to Augustine.

### The Establishment of the Dominican Women's *Religio*

When Dominic and his preachers took up the yoke of the active apostolic preaching life in the Languedoc, Dominic established a base near Fanjeaux as a place of retreat. The first women's community associated with the work of Dominic's little band of preachers was a small group of women whom they had recovered from Cathar communities around Fanjeaux in 1205-06.<sup>51</sup> Dominic arranged for the women to live in Fanjeaux and persuaded Bishop Fulk of Toulouse to donate a church in nearby Prouille for their use.<sup>52</sup> Over the next few years Dominic was able to settle the sisters in Prouille with lands and buildings he obtained for them through a number of chartered donations. This little community became well respected in the region; it attracted donations of land and incomes and became known as the Holy Preaching.<sup>53</sup> The sisters (as they are called in the earliest charters) were not nuns in their initial years at Prouille-Fanjeaux as there was no order, and the Holy Preaching was not a permanent monastic foundation. Still, even if it was not entirely stable, Prouille *was* a religious community and its members followed the Rule of St. Augustine.<sup>54</sup> The sisters who lived as part of the Holy Preaching had been living in Cathar women's communities, which served as bases for the Good Men both for preaching and rest, just as the sisters of Prouille were doing. Their lifestyle had clear parallels with that of the women of the Acts community and as evoked in the Augustinian Rule: they lived quiet lives of work, contemplation, and prayer, and they were

not enclosed. Hence, the Rule would have been as appropriate for formulating the lives of the sisters of the Holy Preaching as for the friars. It was certainly part of Dominic's understanding of an appropriate basis for a women's vocation when he came to found his enclosed community of nuns in the church of San Sisto Vecchio in Rome.

The monastery of nuns established at San Sisto in 1220 was unlike any of the other communities of sisters that came into being as part of early Dominican history. While the sisters at Prouille, Madrid, and Bologna were converted to the Dominican way of life by the preaching of Dominic and his followers, the San Sisto community was founded as a papal project to reform the monastic observance of the sisters of the various nunneries of Rome.<sup>55</sup> Innocent III had initiated the plan, and Honorius IV brought it to fruition when he placed the task in Dominic's hands. The latter sought the assistance of Hugolino of Ostia who had been reforming the informal women's communities of central Italy.<sup>56</sup> However, Hugolino had based his order of *sorores pauperes* on the Rule of St. Benedict in conjunction with his own institutes, while Dominic made the decision to base the *religio* of the San Sisto sisters in the Augustinian Rule.<sup>57</sup> This community was unlike the uncloistered group at Prouille because part of the papal mandate was that the new nunnery should be strictly enclosed.<sup>58</sup> Given that enclosure was a central issue for the papal reform project, it would seem that a *religio* that was based on the Benedictine Rule would have answered the intentions of the reformers, especially as the Roman nuns were already accustomed to it (however deficient their observance may have been). Hence, Dominic's decision to establish the San Sisto community on the Augustinian Rule was clearly made intentionally—and was made to define the vocation of the nuns as Augustinian *and* as apostolic.

While the Premonstratensian example may have influenced Dominic in choosing the Augustinian Rule for the sisters of San Sisto, he did not follow it by subsuming the sisters' *religio* under that of the Preachers. He wrote female-specific institutes that defined their *religio* as enclosed and then linked that enclosed *religio* with the apostolic vocation and Augustinian Rule of the Preachers. The San Sisto Prologue establishes that the basis for the life of the nuns is that of the Acts community: "just as in the beginning of the new-born Church the multitude of believers

was of one heart and one soul, and they had everything in common, in the same way it is proper for you to be of one custom and life in the house of the Lord.”<sup>59</sup> This echoes the principles outlined in the first chapter of Augustine’s Rule and resonates with the account of the historical foundations for the communal life in Acts 4:32.<sup>60</sup> The Prologue concludes “And for that reason it is appropriate that you who live likewise under a rule and one vow of profession, should always be found uniform in the rule of living and the observance of canonical religion.”<sup>61</sup> Dominic here echoes the first sentence of the Preachers’ Prologue and aims equally to foster unanimity of heart and mind. He then offers the means for achieving this goal when he states “this is the rule for truly living the life.”<sup>62</sup> Here, encapsulated in the San Sisto Prologue, is the monastic spirit as first achieved by the apostolic community, as understood and explicated by Augustine, and as observed by the Preachers. Dominic is endowing his community of nuns with this illustrious monastic heritage and manifestly locating them specifically in the *vita apostolica*, which they “live likewise.”

Each of these texts, the Augustinian Rule, the Preachers’ constitutions, and the San Sisto *institutiones*, formulates an apostolic *religio* through attention to both contemplative and active elements: prayer, contemplation, reading, silence, and work. With regard to prayer and reading, Augustine is relatively laconic, organizing a simple routine of prayer, reading, and quiet work intended to free monastics for that contemplation that is the cornerstone of their *religio*. While in their monasteries, the Preachers must participate in the office and chapter, and the performance of the daily round from matins to compline is clearly set out; however, nothing must be allowed “to impede study, or preaching, or anything pertaining to the good of souls.”<sup>63</sup> There is no particular time specified for reading or study as this is perceived as the principle endeavor of the Preachers when *in monasterio*. The San Sisto *institutiones* do not describe the prayers or times for the office, but these have been clearly established in the Rule. However, while neither the Rule nor the Preachers’ constitutions makes any distinction between feast days and ordinary ferial days, on feast days the nuns are permitted to put aside all manual work so that they might be free for reading, the divine office, and prayer.<sup>64</sup> On ferial days they may, if it should be

perceived expedient, say the office for prime, terce, sext, and none in the workroom.<sup>65</sup> The nuns of San Sisto undertake a daily round of prayer and reading that will enable the *otium cogitationis* that is the cornerstone of Augustinian monasticism.

Silence has, since the earliest days of the Church, been perceived as possessing fundamental value for the monastic life. Augustine translated his understanding of the retired monastic life as an opportunity for quiet study and contemplation into his Rule as an element of praxis. Silence should be observed at table and at work unless a task requires one to speak. There are to be no idle words and no one should “stand around weaving tales.”<sup>66</sup> Augustine’s concise treatment of this fundamental value in the Rule is evidence of his understanding that anyone who had chosen the monastic life would have done so for the very opportunity that silence offered. Dominic was more explicit on the requirements for observance of silence by the Preachers: “Our friars should keep silence in the cloister, dormitory, in their cells, in the refectory and in the friars’ oratory.”<sup>67</sup> As with Augustine, silence for Dominic was not simply a matter of not speaking; it is an entire approach to the *quies* of communal life. Of course, silence could only be expected of the Preachers while they were *in monasterio*, though in all places they should keep silence at meals.<sup>68</sup> For the nuns of San Sisto, silence is expected in all places except during chapter or when given permission to speak in the parlor or at the window. In the workroom the Sisters are permitted to speak silently of things that pertain to their work.<sup>69</sup> The silence expected of the nuns is no different from that formulated by Augustine and by Dominic for the Preachers. *Silentium* is simply a foundational principle of the life of contemplation. The *religio* of Augustine’s monks and that of the San Sisto nuns makes it possible for them to abide under monastic silence, while the Preachers will enjoy the opportunity for silent *quies* while *in monasterio*.

Work, like silence, has been regarded since the time of Augustine as elementary to the monastic life. Indeed, Aldolar Zumkeller has pointed out that Augustine’s *De opere monachorum* established the “work ethic of Western monasticism.”<sup>70</sup> From morning till noon Augustine sets his monks to work and, after none and the refreshment, they should work in the garden or wherever necessary until the lighting of the lamps.<sup>71</sup>

In formulating the *religio* of the Preachers, Dominic perceived that the demands of their preaching ministry would require periods of study and contemplation when they could ill afford time for manual work, and hence there is no reference to it in the constitutions. The *religio* of the Preachers still retained Augustinian *vacatio ad contemplati* when in their monasteries, while their work of preaching formed their active fulfillment of the *vita apostolica*. In the case of the nuns of San Sisto, Dominic provided for their observance of apostolic and Augustinian ideals of work, both for its spiritual benefit and as contributing to communal well-being, and he quotes foundational biblical texts regarding the ethical value of work in an apostolic community: “the Apostle [Paul] says, ‘anyone who will not work should not eat.’”<sup>72</sup> Hence, in those hours not set aside for prayer, reading, preparation for the Divine Office or chant, or for the learning of letters, the Sisters, like Augustine’s monastics, should apply themselves attentively to manual work.<sup>73</sup> It is important to emphasize here that the Sisters are enabled to engage in reading and study, thus aligning their spirit and practice with the Rule and identifying their vocation with the contemplative role of Mary in the apostolic community. While the nuns of San Sisto may be required to perform manual work, that is not expected of the Preachers; their work practices unquestionably locate them within the Augustinian and apostolic traditions.

### **The Expansion of the Order of the Sisters of San Sisto in Germany**

The Augustinian Rule had been in use in women’s communities in Germany and Flanders since at least the early twelfth century. Commencing in the diocese of Trier around 1100, Augustinian communities of canons dispersed quickly across Germany, and many of these held the *cura* of female communities. As Julie Hotchin points out, many male communities perceived their associations with religious women as enabling the latter to participate in the apostolic life. Likewise, their own apostolic duties were fulfilled when they assumed the pastoral care of the sisters’ communities.<sup>74</sup> In Alsace, the group of reformed monasteries associated with the canonical community at Marbach was

notable for its “openness to women,” and indeed, in some cases, when a male foundation was established in this region, it was accompanied by the foundation of a linked community of canonesses likewise living under the Augustinian Rule.<sup>75</sup> The close ties that existed between these communities were not simply in fulfillment of the *cura monialium*, but also represented a true spirit of collaboration. Fiona Griffiths comments that the close relationships between the male and female Augustinian communities in Germany aspired to achieve the spirit of mutuality of the Acts community. Griffiths argues that the reform impetus at Marbach sprang from the Hirsau reforms and that the Hirsau movement was so invested in its commitment to the imitation of the Acts community that it perceived the inclusion of women as standard.<sup>76</sup> Thus it is perhaps not surprising that the new orders based on the Augustinian Rule, such as the Premonstratensians and the Dominicans, found fertile ground for their dissemination in Germany and Flanders. Shelley Wolbrink has established that women’s communities of the Order of Prémontré were very successful in northwestern Germany in the twelfth century.<sup>77</sup> A significant number of Premonstratensian women’s houses were founded in this region (seventeen out of the twenty-five Premonstratensian foundations in this region were for women).<sup>78</sup> The sisters followed the Rule of St. Augustine and shared the canons’ *institutiones* with nine female-specific chapters inserted.<sup>79</sup> Wolbrink explains that the relationship of the Premonstratensian canons with their sisters has been misunderstood and that, far from denying women access to the order and to their care (as has been maintained by scholars since Grundmann), the canons formed close ties with “vibrant” women’s communities.<sup>80</sup> Likewise, from the earliest days of the Dominican mission in Germany, the Preachers formed strong links with religious women and informal women’s communities. Grundmann has traced both the development of this association and the spread of the San Sisto *institutiones* in parts of Germany.<sup>81</sup> Similarly, Ernest McDonnell has demonstrated the close links between the Dominicans and the women’s religious movement in Belgium and Germany from the earliest days of their mission in that region, and he is quite explicit that “Germany was the real home of the Dominican nuns.”<sup>82</sup>

The earliest regulatory text for a German Dominican community to



have survived is also the earliest surviving copy of the San Sisto *Institutiones*. In 1232, Gregory IX placed the Pénitente Sisters of Mary Magdalene of Strasbourg, who had been living according to the Benedictine Rule and the Cistercian constitutions, under the “Rule of the Blessed Augustine and the institutions of the order of nuns of Saint Sixtus of Rome.”<sup>83</sup> The Sisters of Mary Magdalene were also provided with their own *Constitutiones* (probably at about the same time), which were derived from the 1228 *Consuetudines Fratrum Predicatorum*.<sup>84</sup> It would appear that the change of Rule and institutes was the pope’s initiative and that the Dominican Preachers played no part in this shift in the Pénitente Sisters’ *religio*.<sup>85</sup> (It may have been that Gregory was aware of the predilection for the Augustinian Rule among religious women in Germany.) The San Sisto *Institutiones* circulated widely among German women’s communities with some existing houses choosing to exchange their institutes for the *Institutiones* or with new houses coming into being under the direct influence of the Preachers. Either way, many communities of Dominican affiliation or conviction sprang from the women’s religious movement in Germany during the second quarter of the thirteenth century.<sup>86</sup> The strength of the response of religious women in Germany to the Preachers, and their attraction to the Dominican way of life, clearly demonstrates the close alignment between the two vocations and the appeal for these women of a vocation based in the Augustinian Rule.<sup>87</sup> The dissemination of the San Sisto *Institutiones* in Germany continued until the ratification of the authoritative institutes, applicable to all women’s houses in the Order, at the General Chapter of 1259, and at no point was there any perception that the Sisters should/could not live the form of religious life that was enabled under the Rule of Saint Augustine.

### The Later Institutes

In April 1245, Innocent IV issued a bull, addressed to the Dominican Master General and the Provincial Prior of France, affirming the foundation of the female monastery of Saint Dominic at Montargis by Amicie de Montfort and establishing its place in the Order.<sup>88</sup> Sometime between 1245 and 1250 the monastery was provided with its own *Consuetudines*, of

which the only surviving copy is in a manuscript from 1250.<sup>89</sup> Humbert de Romans was Provincial Prior of France at this time, and it has generally been accepted that he was instrumental in the formulation of the Montargis *Consuetudines*.<sup>90</sup> The Prologue opens with the Augustinian commendation to live “according to the precept of the Rule to have one heart and one spirit in the Lord.”<sup>91</sup> The only elements of the Montargis *Consuetudines* that were not applicable to the friars were the rulings on the duties of the cellaress and *circatrixes*, on manual work, and on the maintenance of enclosure—that is, matters that pertained to the Sisters’ enclosed life and to their Augustinian commitment to work.

In 1259, the General Chapter at Valenciennes approved the definitive *Constitutiones* for the Sisters. These were unquestionably the work of Humbert de Romans (Master General, 1254–63), who had observed that the women’s communities that were ostensibly Dominican were not following uniform institutes. He had addressed his concern to Alexander IV in 1257, and the pope supported his plan to establish obligatory institutes for the Sisters.<sup>92</sup> Humbert presented his new compilation to the General Chapter in 1259 and required the provincial priors to disseminate it. In his encyclical letter to the Sisters, he decreed that anyone who did not wish to accept the new *Constitutiones* would by no means be received as members of the Order.<sup>93</sup> Significantly, the Sisters’ *religio* continued to be based on the Rule of St. Augustine and remained in close correspondence with that of the definitive *Constitutiones* of the Preachers approved at the General Chapter of 1256.<sup>94</sup> The prologues of the two *Constitutiones* differ negligibly, with both exhorting unity of heart and spirit in the Lord, thus echoing Acts 4:32 and the Augustinian Rule, and preserving the apostolic origins of both the female and male vocations. The only distinctions between the precepts for the Sisters and those of the Preachers is that, as the Sisters do not have a duty to go out of their communities to preach, they must live entirely within their monasteries, preserving strict enclosure, and they must work with their hands for the benefit of the community. When the Preachers are residing within their communities, they are to behave in the same manner as the Sisters except that they are excused from manual work if they require the time for study or contemplation preparatory to their preaching duty. The similarities of wording and expectations between the *Constitutiones* of the Preachers

and those of the Sisters indicate just how mutual their vocations really are. The 1259 *Constitutiones* were understood as legislating the basis for a *religio* that definitively made the Sisters part of the Order. It may also be that by keeping the Sisters' *Constitutiones* as close as possible to those of the friars, the Preachers' vocation might be seen as reciprocally linked to the contemplative life undertaken by the Sisters.

## Conclusion

Participating in the *religio* of an order requires commitment to its Rule and institutes. Ultimately any Rule or institutes is a statement of principle, of ideal behaviors; it offers potential for achieving particular spiritualities and fulfilling specific practices. The fulfillment of ideals and the realities of actual behaviors depend upon individual groupings and regimes—that is, real life is never ideal. However, the spirit of an Order is conceived in the intentions of its founder(s) and of those who formulate and adapt its institutes. The Augustinian Rule replicates the *vita apostolica* as represented in Luke's Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles. It enables both active and contemplative vocations. The duty of Augustine's active community was the task of preaching, which meant that the canons had to relinquish part of their *contemplatio*, though they were still expected to preserve times of *quies* in their *religio*. Augustine was specific that his preachers lived the *vita mixta*, and Dominic's Preachers did likewise—but Augustine's monastics lived entirely the *vita contemplativa*, as did the Dominican Sisters.

The Augustinian Rule, as a required fundamental Rule, was deemed to make a real contribution to the shaping of the vocation of the Preachers. Some friars during Humbert's time considered that they should not have it as their Rule because it applied to canons, which, in their self-perception, they were not.<sup>95</sup> Concerned for this disaffection, Humbert wrote a long commentary on the Rule to demonstrate its aptness for the Dominican preaching vocation. He glosses each phrase of the Rule, making clear how it pertains in particular to the Dominican *religio*.<sup>96</sup> Thus, if the Rule has an active and significant part in the vocation of the friars, its application to any vocation, including that of the Sisters, must likewise be meaningful and must be understood as apt—the Sisters

were Augustinian as well as Dominican. The presence in some Dominican nunnery libraries of works by Augustine, including the Rule, and of commentaries on the Rule by Humbert of Romans and Hugh of St. Victor reinforces this point.<sup>97</sup>

The Rule of Saint Augustine operated jointly with each edition of the Dominican Sisters' institutes to construe an apostolic women's vocation. The Sisters, like the friars, lived according to the Augustinian Rule supplemented with order-specific institutes; these texts conjointly formulated the particular practice and spirituality of the Order. It was the amalgamation of the two that constituted the Dominican women's vocation—their *religio* must be understood as the fused elements of the two documents. While each recension of the institutes might propound slight variations of practice, the fundamental spirit of each text was consistent with the ideals established by Jesus and invoked by Augustine, and they all evoked a vocation that was both female and apostolic.

The application of the Augustinian Rule to the religious lives of the Sisters offered them the opportunity to embrace the contemplative form of the apostolic life that Jesus had said was its best part. They were to live the enclosed monastic life, premised on the Augustinian life of *otium cogitationis*, and were enabled, and expected, to participate in the *vita apostolica*. Their lives would be a realization of Jesus's "one necessary thing," and they would be living as Augustine had envisioned. Hence Michel Parisse's claim that religious women were excluded from "the ideal religious life of evangelical perfection" that was available to monks, canons, and friars underestimates the quality of the vocation of the Dominican Sisters.<sup>98</sup> The fact that they did not preach did not thereby exclude them from the vocation that was inaugurated by Jesus, fulfilled by women and men of the apostolic community of Luke and Acts, and embodied in Mary Magdalene. Through the Augustinian Rule the Sisters were incorporated institutionally into the *vita apostolica*—the Sisters lived regular, contemplative, enclosed lives, but their *religio*, by virtue of their obedience to the Rule and by the close affinity of their institutes with the constitutions of the Preachers, was inherently apostolic.

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∞ END NOTES

1. Jean Leclercq, "Women's Monasticism in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries," *Greyfriars Review* 7 (1993): 167-92; Michel Parisse, *Les nonnes au moyen âge* (Le Puy: Christine Bonneton, 1983), 81; Micheline Pontenay de Fontette, *Les religieuses à l'âge classique du droit canon* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1967), 103.

2. The word *religio* might have a number of meanings in the central Middle Ages such as religious piety, religious or monastic lifestyle, a religious order, or a rule observed by an order. In the present discussion it is understood in the sense of a particular religious lifestyle with its specific communal environment and definitive principles and behaviors.

3. For purposes of clarity and simplicity in the present essay, I will use the general term "institutes" for any normative text written for a women's order or community and the general term "constitutions" for the texts written for observance by any male order or community. Within the various texts written for the Preachers and Sisters of the Dominican Order during the thirteenth century, a variety of terms were used including *institutiones*, *constitutiones*, *consuetudines*. When referring to any particular version of the Dominican institutes and constitutions, the specific Latin term used within the text will be cited.

4. Julie Ann Smith, "Prouille, Madrid, Rome: The Evolution of the Earliest Dominican *Instituta* for Nuns," *Journal of Medieval History* 35 (2009): 340-52; 351.

5. John 4:28-30: "reliquit ergo hyriam suam mulier et abiit in civitatem et dicit illis hominibus venite videte hominem qui dixit mihi omnia quaecumque feci numquid ipse est Christus exierunt de civitate et veniebant ad eum." John 20:16-18: "dicit ei Iesus Maria conversa illa dicit ei 'Rabboni' (quod dicitur Magister) Dicit ei Iesus . . . 'Vade autem ad fratres meos et dic eis ascendo ad Patrem meum et Patrem vestrum et Deum meum et Deum vestrum.' Venit Maria Magdalene adnuntians discipulis quia 'vidi Dominum et haec dixit mihi.'"

6. Acts 4:32-35: "Multitudinis autem credentium erat cor unum et anima una nec quisquam eorum quae possidebant aliquid suum esse dicebat sed erant illis omnia communia. Et virtute magna reddebant apostoli testimonium resurrectionis Iesu Christi Domini et gratia magna erat in omnibus. Illis neque enim quisquam egens erat inter illos quotquot enim possessores agrorum aut domorum erant vendentes adferebant pretia eorum quae vendebant et ponebant ante pedes apostolorum, dividebantur autem singulis prout cuique opus erat."

7. Luke 10:41-42: “et respondens dixit illi Dominus Martha Martha sollicita es et turbaris erga plurima porro unum est necessarium Maria optimam partem elegit quae non auferetur ab ea.” The place of this passage from Luke in medieval exegesis and religious life may be found in Giles Constable’s study “The Interpretation of Mary and Martha,” *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 1-141.

8. Jo Ann McNamara, “True Yokemates,” in *A New Song: Celibate Women in the First Three Christian Centuries*, chap. 2 (New York: Haworth Press, 1983), 23-40.

9. Adolar Zumkeller, *Augustine’s Ideal of the Religious Life* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1986), 131-32. T. J. van Bavel, “The Evangelical Inspiration of the Rule of St Augustine,” *Downside Review* 93 (1975), 83-99; 83-84 sums up Augustine’s emphasis on the Apostolic foundation for his monastic life by enumerating biblical references in his works: in the Rule there are thirty-one biblical references, twenty-seven of which are from the New Testament, and most of these from Acts. The passage from Acts 4: 32-35 is cited almost fifty times in the whole of Augustine’s work, 87.

10. *Augustine of Hippo and his Monastic Rule*, ed. George Lawless (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987). Augustine’s Rule is in two parts, the shorter *Ordo Monasterii* (74-78) and the longer *Praeceptum* (80-108).

11. *Augustine of Hippo and his Monastic Rule, Praeceptum* 1:2-3, “Primum, propter quod in unum estis congregati, ut unanimes habitetis in domo et sit vobis anima una et cor unum in Deum. Et non dicatis aliquid proprium, sed sint vobis omnia communia. . . . Sic enim legitis in Actibus Apostolorum, quia erant illis omnia communia et distribuebatur unicuique sicut cuique opus erat.”

12. *Augustine of Hippo and his Monastic Rule, Ordo Monasterii*, chap. 4, for we wish to live the apostolic life (“apostolica enim vita optamus vivere”).

13. *Ibid.*, chap. 8.

14. *Ibid.*, chaps. 7 and 9.

15. Paul F. Gehl, “*Competens Silentium*: Varieties of Monastic Silence in the Medieval West,” *Viator* 18 (1987): 125-60; 133-34 and 140-41.

16. Lawless, *Augustine of Hippo and his Monastic Rule*, 51.

17. See Jean Leclercq, *Otia monastica: études sur le vocabulaire de la contemplation au moyen âge* (Rome: Herder, 1963), the classic work for understanding the key ideas that underpinned monastic *contemplatio*. In his *De vera religione*, Augustine cited Psalm 46:10, “Be still and know that I am

God,” as the call to *quies* and *contemplatio*; Lawless, *Augustine of Hippo and his Monastic Rule*, 51.

18. Zumkeller, *Augustine’s Ideal of the Religious Life*, 188–94.

19. Augustine, *De Vera Religione*, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 32 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1962), chap. 65: “Vocatur ergo ad otium, id est, ut ista non diligit, quae diligi sine labore non possunt.”

20. Leclercq, *Otia Monastica*, 76–77; Lawless, *Augustine of Hippo and his Monastic Rule*, 51 and 57.

21. Zumkeller, *Augustine’s Ideal of the Religious Life*, 41.

22. *Ibid.*, 195–97.

23. M.-D. Chenu, *Nature, Man and Society in the Twelfth Century: Essays on New Theological Perspectives in the Latin West*, trans. Jerome Taylor and Lester K. Little (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 206; Jean Châtillon, “The Spiritual Renaissance of the End of the Eleventh Century and the Beginning of the Twelfth,” *The American Benedictine Review* 36 (1985): 292–317; 301.

24. Giles Constable, “Renewal and Reform in Religious Life: Concepts and Realities,” in *Monks, Hermits and Crusaders in Medieval Europe*, Variorum Collected Studies; CS273 (London: Variorum Reprints, 1988), 37–67; 52–54.

25. Châtillon, “The Spiritual Renaissance,” 316; Chenu, *Nature, Man and Society*, 214.

26. Caroline Walker Bynum, “The Spirituality of the Regular Canons in the Twelfth Century,” in *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 22–58.

27. *Ibid.*, 55; 57–58.

28. Constable, “Renewal and Reform,” 52, 54.

29. Hugh of St. Victor, *Expositio in Regulam Beati Augustini*, PL 176:881C; 881–83C.

30. Women’s reactions to the religious ferment of the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries and its impact on the forms of religious life available to them have been the focus of significant scholarship. The foundational work is Herbert Grundmann, *Religious Movements in the Middle Ages: The Historical Links Between Heresy, the Mendicant Orders, and the Women’s Religious Movement in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Century, With the Historical Foundations of German Mysticism*, trans. Steven Rowan (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1982), 22–58.

31. Grundmann, *Religious Movements*, 82.

32. For example, the women of the Humiliati movement either lived at home as members of a third order or in enclosed communities. See Sally Mayall Brasher, *Women of the Humiliati: A Lay Religious Order in Medieval Civic Life* (New York: Routledge, 2003) and Frances Andrews, *The Early Humiliati* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). The women who were converted by the preaching of Robert of Arbrissel formed the core of the Order of Fontevrault; see *Robert of Arbrissel: A Medieval Religious Life*, ed. and trans. Bruce L. Venarde (Washington, DC: Catholic University Press of America, 2003).

33. This case for the positive disposition towards the *cura monialium* is outlined succinctly in Fiona J. Griffiths, “Men’s Duty to Provide for Women’s Needs: Abelard, Heloise and their Negotiation of the *cura monialium*,” *Journal of Medieval History* 30 (2004): 1-24; 3-6.

34. The Hirsau reform movement had its origins in the commitment of William of Hirsau and his followers to the way of life of the apostolic community. The ideal was most fully realized in a confederation of communities linked to Hirsau, in southwest Germany, between 1180 and the mid-thirteenth century. Similarly, the canonical community of Marbach in Alsace formed the nucleus of an Augustinian confederation committed to reform. Griffiths points out that, while the Hirsau reforms were Benedictine, the Augustinian reform impetus of Marbach, including its disposition towards the *cura monialium*, drew significantly from the Hirsau group; Fiona J. Griffiths, “Brides and *Dominæ*: Abelard’s *Cura Monialium* at the Augustinian Monastery of Marbach,” *Viator* 34 (2003): 57-88; 63-71; Fiona J. Griffiths, *The Garden of Delights: Reform and Renaissance for Women in the Twelfth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 34.

35. Julie Hotchin, “Female Religious Life and the *Cura Monialium* in Hirsau Monasticism, 1080 to 1150,” in *Listen Daughter: The Speculum Virginum and the Formation of Religious Women in the Middle Ages*, ed. Constant J. Mews (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 59-83; 63-64. This background to the German esteem for the Augustinian Rule is discussed in more detail below.

36. Grundmann, *Religious Movements*, 77-78, 233-34; Shelley Amiste Wolbrink, “Noble Pursuits: Family, Power and Gender in Premonstratensian Monasteries of North-Western Germany” (PhD diss., University of Cincinnati, 1998). For the Premonstratensian constitutions see “Les premiers statuts de l’Ordre de Prémontré,” ed. Raphaël van Waefelghem, *Analectes de l’Ordre de Prémontré* 9 (1913): 67-74, with a small group of female-specific chapters at 65-67.



37. For the Clarissan literature see among others Joan Mueller, *The Privilege of Poverty: Clare of Assisi, Agnes of Prague, and the Struggle for a Franciscan Rule for Women* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006); Maria Pia Alberzoni, *Clare of Assisi and the Poor Sisters in the Thirteenth Century* (Saint Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2004); Lezlie S. Knox, *Creating Clare of Assisi: Female Franciscan Identities in Later Medieval Italy* (Leiden: Brill, 2008); Julie Ann Smith, "Observing the Gospel: Obedience in the Clarissan *forma vitae* (1212-1253)," in *Interpreting Francis and Clare of Assisi: From the Middle Ages to the Present*, ed. Constant J. Mews and Claire Renkin (Mulgrave, NSW: Broughton, 2010), 121-34.

38. Grundmann, *Religious Movements*, 75 and 301n1.

39. *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. Norman P. Tanner, vol.1, *Nicaea I to Lateran V* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1990), 203.

40. *Ibid.*, 242.

41. *Ibid.*

42. Jordan of Saxony, *Libellus de Principiis Ord. Praedicatorum, Monumenta historica sancti patris nostri Domini*, chap. 4, *Monumenta Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum Historica* 16 (Rome: Institutum historicum ff. praedicatorum, 1935), 1-88; 27.

43. G. R. Galbraith, *The Constitution of the Dominican Order, 1216-1360* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1925), 30-31.

44. A distinction is made in this essay between the (lower case) preachers who formed the early preaching mission in the Languedoc, and the (upper case) Preachers of the order of Friars Preachers established in 1216.

45. Jordan of Saxony, *Libellus*, chap. 42, "predicatoris egregii," 46.

46. *Ibid.*, chap. 125, "virum totius apostolice regule sectatorem," 85.

47. Marian Michèle Mulcahey, "First the Bow is Bent in Study..." *Dominican Education before 1350*, *Studies and Texts* 132 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1998), 133, points out that the obligation to study did not cease with the completion of the student's training period. As study was fundamental to the fulfillment of the Order's *raison d'être*, each friar was considered to be a lifelong student and expected whenever possible to attend the community's daily *schola*.

48. P. Heinrich Denifle, "Die Constitutionen des Predigerordens vom Jahre 1228," *Archiv für Literatur- und Kirchengeschichte des Mittelalters* 1 (1885): 162-227; 194: "Prelatus dispensandi cum fratribus habeat potestatem, cum sibi aliquando videbitur expedire, in hiis precipue, que studium, vel predicationem, vel animarum fructum videbuntur inpedire."

49. The formulation of the constitutions was achieved in a number of steps between 1216 and 1259. The early versions of the constitutions (from 1216 and 1220) have not survived, and the earliest extant text is from the 1228 Chapter. The 1228 constitutions are divided into two sections, the first defining the observances for the friars when in their monasteries, and the second constituting the administrative formation of the Order along with requirements for preaching and study (William A. Hinnebusch, *The History of the Dominican Order*, vol. 1, *Origins and Growth to 1500* [New York, NY: Alba House, 1966], 84-85). In 1256 the General Chapter endorsed the final version of the constitutions compiled by Humbert de Romans (Master General 1254-63) incorporating developments and refinements approved by General Chapters in the years since 1228 ("*Liber Constitutionum Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum*," *Analecta Sacri Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum* 3 [1897], 26-60, 98-122, 162-181).

50. Denifle, "Die Constitutionen des Predigerordens vom Jahre 1228." "Because we are commanded by a precept of our Rule to have one heart and one spirit in the Lord, it is fitting that we, who live under one rule and under the vow of one profession, be found uniform in the observance of the canonical *religio*, so that the unity that is kept in our hearts may be fostered and manifested through the uniformity kept in our external behaviour" (194); also "*Liber Constitutionum Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum*," 31-32.

51. Smith, "Prouille, Madrid, Rome," 343. Bernard Gui, "*Legenda Sancti Dominici*," chap. 17, in *Bernardi Guidonis: scripta de Sancto Dominico*, ed. Simon Tugwell (Rome: Institutum Historicum Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum, 1998), 237-94; 245-46.

52. *Monumenta Historica S.P.N. Dominici*, vol. 1, *Historia Diplomaticus S. Dominici*, ed. M.-H. Laurent (Paris: J. Vrin, 1933), 22-23: "Fulco, Dei gratia Tholosanae sedis minister humilis, dedit et concessit . . . ad preces domini Dominici Oxomensis. . . . ecclesiam beatae Mariae de Pruliano . . . mulieribus conversis per praedicatores ad praedicandum contra haereticos . . . tam praesentibus quam futuris ibidem religiose viventibus."

53. The history of the establishment of this community is traced in Smith, "Prouille, Madrid, Rome," 342-46.

54. *Ibid.*, 343; 345-46.

55. The Madrid community began with a group of women who were converted to the religious life by Dominic in 1218. They acquired the property relinquished by the friars when the latter adopted absolute poverty in 1220. In the same year Dominic wrote a brief letter to the Sisters advising

them of his desire for them to live under enclosure. See Smith, “Prouille, Madrid, Rome,” 346-47. The Bologna community, again founded for a group of women who had been converted to the religious life by Dominic and the Preachers, was still at the planning stage when he died in 1221. See Simon Tugwell, “Notes on the Life of St Dominic: Dominic’s Last Years,” *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum* 66 (1996): 5-200; 152.

The San Sisto project entailed bringing together women from a number of existing Benedictine nunneries in Rome. Innocent entrusted Dominic with establishing a single enclosed community. The decision to place the sisters under the Augustinian Rule appears to have been made by Dominic, who, after the relocation of the sisters, devised his own institutes for them. See Smith, “Prouille, Madrid, Rome,” 347-51.

56. Cecilia of San Sisto, “*Miracula Beati Dominici*,” in *Miscellanea Pio Paschini: Studi di Storia Ecclesiastica*, vol. 1 (1949): 306-26, 308. Alberzoni, *Clare of Assisi and the Poor Sisters in the Thirteenth Century*, 38-39.

57. Joan Mueller, *A Companion to Clare of Assisi: Life, Writings, and Spirituality* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 70; Smith, “Observing the Holy Gospel,” 124-25.

58. Indeed, according to Benedict of Montefiascone (prior of San Sisto 1316-18), part of the reason for the reform strategy was that the nuns of Rome had not been keeping proper Benedictine enclosure: “La fondation dominicaine de Saint-Sixte de Rome. Notice historique servant d’introduction au registre des chartes du monastère,” in Vladimir J. Koudelka, “Le ‘Monasterium Tempuli’ et la fondation Dominicaine de San Sisto,” *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum* 31 (1961), 5-81; 69-72.

59. “*Institutiones Ordinis Monialium Sancti Sixti de Urbe*,” *Analecta Sacri Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum* 3 (1896): 628-35; 629, “Sicut in primordio nascentis ecclesie multitudinis credentium erat cor unum et anima una erantque illis omnia communia; sic vos unius moris et vite in domo Domini esse decet.”

60. See notes 10 and 6 above.

61. “*Institutiones Ordinis Monialium Sancti Sixti de Urbe*,” 629: “ideoque convenit, ut vos, qui sub eadem regula, et unius professionis voto vivitis, inveniimini semper in norma vivendi et canonice religionis observanciis uniformes.”

62. Ibid.: “norma vero vivendi talis est.”

63. “*Constitutiones Antiquae Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum*,” ed. Antoninus Hendrik Thomas, *De Oudste Constituties van de Dominicanen* (Leuven:

Leuven University Press, 1965), 309-69. 311: "que studium vel predicationem vel animarum fructum videbuntur impedire."

64. "Institutiones Ordinis Monialium Sancti Sixti de Urbe," 634, "Diebus vero festivis omnes vacent lectioni, divinis officiis et orationi, mechanicis operibus pretermissis."

65. Ibid.: "Primam vero, tertiam, sextam et nonam profestis diebus in operatorio dicere poterunt, cum visum fuerit expedire."

66. *Augustine of Hippo and his Monastic Rule*, 76, *Ordo Monasterii*, chap. 7: "Sedentes ad mensam taceant, and sedentes ad opera taceant, nisi forte necessitas operas exegerit, ut loquitur quis," and chap. 9: "Otiosum verbum apud nos non sit . . . non stantes fabulas contexam."

67. "Constitutiones Antiquae Ordinis Fratrum Predicatorum," 327, "Silentium fratres nostri teneant in claustro, in dormitorio, in cellis, in refectorio, et oratorio fratrum."

68. Ibid.: "In mensa autem omnes fratres ubique intus et extra silentium teneant."

69. "Institutiones Ordinis Monialium Sancti Sixti de Urbe," 630: "Sorores autem silentium teneant in locis omnibus, preterquam locutorio et capitulo in hora capituli. Nec etiam in locutorio loquantur sine licentia speciali . . . ad fenestram de licencia priorisse. . . . In operatorio vero loqui silenter poterunt, de hiis, que spectant ad opera."

70. Zumkeller, *Augustine's Ideal of the Religious Life*, 194.

71. *Augustine of Hippo and his Monastic Rule*, 74: *Ordo Monasterii*, chap. 3, "Operentur a mane usque ad sextam . . . et ad nonam . . . refecerint, sive in horto, sive ubicumque necesse fuerit, faciant opus usque ad horam lucernarii."

72. "Institutiones Ordinis Monialium Sancti Sixti de Urbe," 634: "et Apostolus dicit: qui operari noluerit, non manducet."

73. Ibid.: "exceptis illis horis, quibus orationi, lectioni vel provisioni divini officii seu cantus seu eruditioni litterarum debent intendere, operibus manuum omnes attente insistant."

74. Hotchin, "Female Religious Life," 63-66.

75. Griffiths, *The Garden of Delights*, 34-38: 34.

76. Griffiths, "Brides and *Dominae*," 66.

77. Wolbrink, "Noble Pursuits," 396.

78. Shelley Amiste Wolbrink, "Women in the Premonstratensian Order in Northwestern Germany, 1120-1250," *Catholic Historical Review* 89 (2003): 387-408; 393, 405-8.

79. “Les premiers statuts de l’Ordre de Prémontré,” ed. Raphaël van Waefelghem, *Analectes de l’Ordre de Prémontré* 9 (1913):67-74; 65-67.
80. Wolbrink, “Women in the Premonstratensian Order,” 390; 405-8.
81. Grundmann, *Religious Movements in the Middle Ages*, 97-109.
82. Ernest W. McDonnell, *The Beguines and Beghards in Medieval Culture: With Special Emphasis on the Belgian Scene* (New York: Octagon Books, 1989), 195-200;195.
83. “*Institutiones Ordinis Monialium Sancti Sixti de Urbe*,” 629: “regulam beati Augustini, et institutiones ordinis monialium sancti Sixti de Urbe uobis duximus concedendam.” Gregory’s reference to the “order of nuns of San Sisto” is anomalous as no order was ever established, though many communities were given the *Institutiones*.
84. André Simon, *L’Ordre des Pénitentes de Ste Marie-Madeleine en Allemagne au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Fribourg: Librairie de L’Oeuvre de Saint-Paul, 1918), 35-37.
85. Grundmann, *Religious Movements in the Middle Ages*, 103 and 322n88.
86. According to Grundmann, *Religious Movements in the Middle Ages*, 97-98, in many cases the communities adopted the institutes of the Sisters of St. Mark. No example of this latter text has survived but Grundmann posits that, as Gregory IX considered St. Mark’s to be part of the Order of San Sisto, it “no doubt . . . generally agreed” with the San Sisto *Institutiones*, 102.
87. Grundmann used the term “religious women” as a broad category to cover those women who were not incorporated into formal communities or orders—the term is used in the same sense here.
88. Innocent IV, Bull, “Cum sibi dilecta,” *Bullarium Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum*, vol. 1: 148.
89. “*Consuetudines Sororum Monasterii Beati Dominici de Monte-Argi*,” in Raymond Creytens, “Les constitutions primitives des soeurs Dominicaines de Montargis,” *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum* 17 (1947): 41-84: 67-83.
90. Creytens, “Les constitutions primitives,” 56; Hinnebusch, *History of the Dominican Order*, 1:381; Edward Tracy Brett, *Humbert of Romans: his Life and Views of Thirteenth-Century Society*, Studies and Texts 67 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1984), 73.
91. “*Consuetudines Sororum Monasterii Beati Dominici de Monte-Argi*,” in Creytens, “Les constitutions primitives,” 67.
92. Brett, *Humbert of Romans*, 73; Creytens, “Les constitutions primitives,” 59.
93. “Letter of Humbert to the Sisters of the Order,” in *Litterae Encyclicae Magistrorum Generalium Ordinis Praedicatorum: ab anno 1233 usque ad*

*annum 1376*, ed. Benedict Maria Reichert, *Monumenta Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum Historica* 5 (1900), 50-52. "Si que vero nollent huiusmodi formam recipere pro sororibus ordinis minime habeantur," 51.

94. *Acta Capitulorum Generalium Ordinis Praedicatorum: Vol. 1: an anno 1220 usque ad annum 1303*, ed. Benedict Maria Reichert, *Monumenta Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum Historica* 3 (1898), 78-83.

95. Raymond Creytens, "Les commentateurs Dominicains de la Règle de S. Augustin du XIII<sup>e</sup> au XVI<sup>e</sup> Siècle," *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum* 33 (1963): 121-57; 138.

96. *Ibid.*, 139-40.

97. Creytens, "Les constitutions primitives des Soeurs Dominicaines de Montargis," 47, indicates that the manuscript containing the Montargis *Consuetudines* also included the Rule and Hugh's commentary. A catalogue from the late fifteenth century of the Dominican Sisters in Lemgo (Westphalia), Staatsarchiv Detmold, L110 B Nr. 18, 3r-7r, reveals that the community owned the commentaries on the Rule by both Humbert and Hugh. Jeffrey F. Hamburger and Eva Schlotheuber, "Books in Women's Hands: Liturgy, Latin Learning and the Libraries of the Dominican nuns in Westfalia," (papers presented at *Entre stabilité et itinérance: Livres et culture des Ordres Mendiants (13e-15e siècles)*, symposium, Paris, 19-20 November 2010, organizers Nicole Beriou and Martin Morard. I am indebted to Professor Eva Schlotheuber for bringing the Lemgo manuscript to my attention.

98. Parisse, *Les nonnes au moyen âge*, 85.