

From Palencia to Peru via Athens: How the Dominicans have addressed the social questions of their times.

St Dominic's responded to the plight of the hungry in Palencia by selling his textbooks. Celebrated from earliest times, this taught the friars' obligation to corporal acts of mercy. Their preaching was likewise concerned with civic peace, where good order required the reconciliation of feuding factions and just laws. Disputes between popes, emperors, and communes led Remigio dei Girolami to develop by the early 14th century a defence of civic rights informed by Aquinas and Aristotle's account of the common good. St Antoninus went beyond traditional teaching against usury to tackle complex economic questions in 15th century Florence. Horrified by the cruelty of *conquistadores* in the Americas, Las Casas, Vitoria and De Soto campaigned for the rights of indigenous peoples in lectures, treatises, sermons, and at the court of Charles V and Philip II. The Reformation and persecution of Christians in the Far East required friars of the 17th and 18th centuries to adapt their mission in addressing religious minorities. In 19th century France, Lacordaire defended religious freedoms in post-enlightenment terms. The 20th century saw Lebreton, Chenu, and McNabb variously address the sufferings resulting from industrialisation, while recent decades have seen the rise of the 'Salamanca process', where academic research, advocacy and solidarity go hand in hand.