

Draft #5
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Pillar of Study

An Explanation of Expected Outcomes

GOAL: Commitment to Life Long Study

Our Order was founded for the purpose of preaching and the salvation of souls. (*Constitutiones Ffr S.O.P., ed. iussu M.S. Gillet* (Rome 1932), 1, 1, 3, 1). Benedict M. Ashley, OP, sums up the four elements of Dominican spirituality as follows:

1. Dominican spirituality is a share in Jesus Christ the Word in His mission of announcing the Good News of salvation which He Himself is.
2. This calling is fulfilled by a community out of its experience of living for God and for neighbors.
3. The source of its light is prayer, especially liturgical prayer, for which one is freed by ascetic discipline and simplicity of life.
4. This prayer is fed by assiduous study of the Scriptures and of all sources of truth that help us to understand the Word of God.

The goal of the Pillar of Study in the first year formation program is to develop a commitment to life-long study. The elements listed above are all interconnected; they modify and enliven one another and, in their total harmony they are the life of the Order.

Specifically, at the conclusion of their first year of formation Inquirers should be able to demonstrate the following outcomes or competencies- relative-to-study.-

1. Give evidence of knowledge and understanding of the meaning and place of study in **The Rule**.
2. Demonstrate the integration of prayerful study of Scripture into their lives on a regular basis.

Competency: Knowledge and Understanding of the Meaning and Place of Study in the Rule

History and Purpose

"Dominican Laity have been moved by the Holy Spirit to live according to the spirit and charism of St. Dominic." (*Fundamental Constitution of the Dominican Laity*)

To become a Dominican one must acquire knowledge of what that spirit and charism is:

Who was St. Dominic?

How and why did he establish an Order of Preachers?

What are the mechanisms for the continuation of that Order today?

These questions imply the need to understand:

1. The importance of study in the life of St. Dominic and the charism of the Order;
2. The early Constitutions of the Order which clearly state the purpose of the Order;
3. Study is one of the essential means for attaining the aim of the Order (preaching and the salvation of souls) as explicitly stated in The Rule and the general declarations of the Master of the Order and General Chapters.

This charism that has been in existence over 700 years will take more than one year to assimilate. Hence, the goal of the initial year of formation is to communicate that it is a life-long commitment to study that one is undertaking--certainly not a commitment that should be taken lightly.

Learning Activities

1. In-addition to Radcliffe, select and ask Inquirers to read one of the following and reflect on it in their journals. In their journals they should note the role of study
 - (a) in Dominic's life;
 - (b) in the early and modern Constitutions; (c) in recent letters of the Masters
- ◆ Timothy Radcliffe, OP, *Sing A New Song*, "The Wellspring of Hope: Study and the Annunciation of Good News"
 - ◆ Benedict M. Ashley, OP, *The Dominicans* (Check index for references to Constitutions, Laity, Study)
 - ◆ Simon Tugwell, OP, Ed. *Early Dominicans*, pp. 61; 75; 182; 205-208; 216-218; 251-252; 257

- ♦ Marie Humbert Vicaire, OP, The Genius of St. Dominic, Chapter 5
 - ♦ James A. Weisheipl, OP, "The Place of Study in the Ideal of St. Dominic."
2. Prepare five reflection questions for discussion based on one of the readings above.
 3. Explore where to obtain resources for study, i.e., libraries in area, bookstores, ordering sources, other Dominicans, etc.
 4. Develop a plan of study to fit one's individual schedule.
 5. Work with a professed member to lead a study session at a meeting, e.g. prepare:
 - A. A study guide to be distributed a month ahead of time;
 - B. An outline or study questions;
 - C. An article or bibliography

Evaluation/Assessment Activities

As a result of study, reflection and interacting with knowledgeable individuals the learner will be able to complete the following activities. The quality of response to these activities should give some indication of the level of discernment/commitment.

1. Participate in a group discussion of material studied demonstrating knowledge and understanding of content. (The goal of study for a Dominican is to share with others the fruits of our contemplation.)
2. Write a brief paper on one of the following topics:
 - A. What does life-long learning mean? Why do we commit to it?
 - B. Discuss the goal of Dominican study.

Competency: Integration of Prayerful Study of Scripture into the Inquirer's Life on a Regular Basis

History and Purpose

One of the most familiar images of St. Dominic is Fra Angelico's depiction of Dominic sitting at the foot of a crucifix with the Book of the Gospels open on his lap.



This practice of meditating on the Scriptures must be imitated by anyone who aspires to follow Dominic. History indicates Dominic committed much of the New Testament to memory and in fact also carried the Gospel of Matthew and Epistles of Paul on his journeys.

Study leads to prayer and prayer takes us back to study, which prepares one to preach the truth. Such practices as *lectio divina* can be taught at the study sessions during the year. One cannot preach what is not known and because one can never know Truth / The Word / Christ / God completely, one's commitment to study must be planned and developmental, according to one's abilities (gifts) and state in life.

Learning Activities

Choose from the following:

1. Participate in Bible study classes through diocesan/parish/small weekly prayer groups.
2. Participate with other Dominicans in chapter days of reflection, regional study days, retreats, etc., based on scriptural themes/studies.

3. Reflect on the scriptures, e.g. practice *lectio divina* either alone or with others.
4. Do an in-depth study of a gospel (Perhaps the one in the lectionary for the current year would be most appropriate.). Possible, sources are:
 - A. Erasmo Leviva-Merikakis, Fire of Mercy, Heart of the Word, Meditations on the Gospel According to St. Matthew
 - B. The Collegeville Bible Commentary
 - C. The New Jerome Biblical Commentary
 - D. Hans Urs von Balthasar Light of the Word

Review the lives of at least one of the following Dominican Exemplars of commitment to prayerful study:

St. Dominic Guzman, OP
St. Albert the Great, OP
St. Thomas Aquinas, OP
Archbishop Joseph Sadoc Alemany, OP
Arnold Janssen, OPL - Founder of the Society of the Divine Word
Jordan of Saxony, OP
Marie Joseph Lagrange, OP
Venerable John James Olier, OP

Evaluation/Assessment Activities

Ask inquirers to:

1. Write a brief paper reflecting on their study of scripture
2. Share reflections related to passages of scripture during class/chapter study sessions
3. Participate with their group in reflecting on the scriptures, e.g. *lectio divina*
4. Give evidence of how their prayerful study of scripture supports their development of Dominican life.

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