

Pillar of Community

An Explanation of Expected Outcomes

GOAL: Incorporate Inquirers into the
Dominican Lay Community

Dominican life, both lay and religious, is based on community life that is anchored in our common Catholic faith, centuries of Dominican tradition, the Rule, the Particular Directory, the unselfish sharing of the talents and gifts of a diverse group of people, and the mutual caring of members for each other. Dominic incorporated community life in his design for the new Order because he recognized that preachers need a home and fellowship to which to return after time spent in ministry. In the Dominican tradition, community is meant to refresh, renew, support, and encourage us in the mission of preaching; the community is a place in which we can learn from one another and review our beliefs and the contents of our preaching in order to ensure orthodoxy and share the Spirit working in each of us.

In the first year of formation, Inquirers become acquainted with the members of the Lay Dominican Chapter they have joined, as well as the government and structure of the Order, its history and democratic philosophy. Their study of Scripture reminds them of the initial community of 12 apostles that Jesus founded and patiently prepared to carry the Good News out into the world. Reflecting on this initial community, Inquirers can see how the apostles shared with each other their gifts, talents, faults and failings, and especially their concern with how little they felt they had and their ultimate discovery of the fulness granted them through the power of Jesus working through them.

As the apostles carried the Good News out into the world and the early Church began to grow, it was necessary to assign responsibility in accordance with the talents and gifts of the members so that all ministries might be accomplished. Dominic had this model in mind when he founded his Order of itinerant preachers. He relied on democratic principles to keep intact the communal nature of his Order, a community that would live together and be dependent on each other.

The goal of the Pillar of Community in the first year formation program is to develop an understanding and experience of what community means for Dominican Laity.

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

1. Familiarity with community as found in scripture, tradition and Dominican resources;

2. Understanding the place of community in an integrated Dominican way of life;
3. Participating in those activities which help forge true Dominican community.

Competency: Familiarity with Community as found in Scripture, Tradition and Dominican resources

History and Purpose

A reading of the Gospels and life in the early Church demonstrates the beginnings of Christian community.

John 17:1-26 relates that when Jesus and his disciples gathered together for the Last Supper, He prayed that we "may be one" so that "the world may know that You sent Me." He invites us to "love one another" as He loves us. Throughout the Gospels, many of the images Jesus used express the community nature of the Church, i.e., the vine and the branches, the household of God, the flock and the shepherd, etc. All these point to a community living together and dependent on one another and on their Master.

The early Church took to heart the idea of being servants and, using the example of Jesus, went especially to the poor and afflicted. The Church was open to all; the Gospel message was for everyone.

The Dominican Order, born in the 13th century, founded on The Rule of St. Augustine, is one facet of the Church and a reflection of the Church as community. The Order generated the Dominican Family which includes "friars, nuns, apostolic sisters, members of secular institutes, fraternities of priests and laity (and) associations attached to the Order, who, through a shared charism ... assume a similar mission of preaching and compassion." Acta, *General Chapter Bologna 1998, Prologue #148*

Simon Tugwell, OP states, "...through St. Dominic and his companions, we are invited to contemplate, from a particular point of view, the example of our Lord ... who went about tirelessly proclaiming the gospel of the Kingdom of God." Simon Tugwell, OP, Ed., *Early Dominicans, Selected Writings*, (Ramsey, NJ: Paulist Press, 1982) p. xiv. It is that particular "point of view" that unites Dominicans, a point of view which can be seen in the common characteristics of all the branches. This point of view includes community life that life which nourishes the vine, as well as its branches –

- ♦ community life, in which there is a high respect for group values, concerns and apostolic ministry;
- ♦ community life, in which the gifts and talents of members are shared so that we support, learn from and encourage one another as loving brothers and sisters;
- ♦ community life, which gives strength and support in our weaknesses, help in our struggles, adds insight to our beliefs and growth in our vocations.

Dominican lay community begins at the chapter level. It is here that members meet monthly to pray, to study, to enjoy fellowship, to share their experiences in the world, to catch up on news of prayer members and others who have been important to the chapter, and to seek the support and guidance of their fellow members as they go about their vocations in the world. Community is the well from which members draw refreshment for the soul, the waters that nourish vitality and growth.

Community life is family life, always developing, always challenging. It involves many different personalities who regularly come together in a caring environment as they learn and share the Good News of the Gospel. It involves caring, commitment and sacrifice, as members take part not only in the life of the chapter, but in the Order as well. It involves generosity and hospitality, welcoming and providing for the instruction of inquirers, joy and tears, harmony, dissonance and compromise.

True Dominican community doesn't just happen. Like a good marriage, it has to be worked at, developed and perfected. Conflicts which arise must be worked out and resolved. This requires patience, understanding and effective implementation of problem solving skills.

Learning Activities

1. Read one set of Gospel passages and one set of New Testament passages and reflect on which aspect of community life is exemplified, e.g. group values, concerns, and/or apostolic ministry, etc.:

- **The four Gospels:**

Mark: 2:15-17, 6:7-13, 9:33-37, 10:13-16, 35-45, 12:28-34

Matthew: 5:38-48, 6:1-34, 5:1-10, 7:1-14, 9:10-13, 10:1-16, 18:1-4, 15-22, 20:20-28, 22:34-40

Luke: 11:1-4, 12:22-32, 6:27-45, 14:25-27, 5:29-32, 10:1-12, 9:46-48, 18:15-17, 22:24-27, 10:25-37

John: 10:7-16, 13:1-16, 34-35, 15:1-17

- **Acts of the Apostles:** 2:42-47, 6:1-7, 11:1-27, 15:1-12, 30-40, 20:16-38

- **New Testament Letters of St. Paul:**

Romans - 8:14-30

1 Corinthians - 3:1-17, 11:17-34, 12:4-11, 31, 13:1-13

2 Corinthians - 6:16-18, 13:11-13

Galatians - 4:3-7, 5:13-15, 19-26

Ephesians - 1:3-17, 4:1-16

Philippians- 1:3-11, 2:1-11

Colossians- 3:12-17

1 Thessalonians - 4:1-18, 5:9-18

Thessalonians - 3:6-15

1 Timothy - 3:1-13

Titus -2:1-9, 3:1-3

Philemon - 4-7

Hebrews -12:5-12, 13:1-10, 17-18

2. Ask Inquirers to read and reflect on the following in their journals:

A. Tarsicius J. Van Bavel, OSA, *The Rule of Saint Augustine*, pp. 7-13, 41-60, 92-98

B. William A. Hinnebusch, *Op, Renewal in the Spirit of St Dominic*, pp. 111-120

C. *The Particular Directory of the Western Province*, II F 3-5

3. Additional options:

A. Read Shale Paul, *The Top 10 Characteristics of Effective Problem Solvers*
(See Appendix)

B. Complete the *Conflict Resolution*

Questionnaire designed by Jock McClellan's 1993 class on Conflict Resolution.
(See Appendix)

C. Readings recommended by the formation director.

D. Review the lives of at least one of the following Dominican Exemplars of commitment to Dominican community:

St. Dominic Guzman, OP
Bishop Edward Dominic Fenwick, OP
Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassatti, OPL
St. Catherine Jarrige, OPL
Dr. Agnes McLaren, OPL - Founder of the
Medical Mission Sisters
Bl. Magdalen Pannatieri, OPL
Munio de Zamora, OP

Evaluation/Assessment Activities

1. Ask inquirers to choose from the following:
 - A. Lead a group discussion citing examples based on one of the following New Testament elements of community:
 - Love for one another
 - Gospel morality
 - Social justice
 - Service and sensitivity to all
 - Simplicity of lifestyle
 - Compassion, understanding and patience
 - Diversity
 - Importance of the common good
 - Prayer together
 - B. List citations from the gospel they read or additional New Testament citation that apply to community.
 - C. Participate in a group discussion regarding the spirit of community that existed within the early Church.
2. Ask inquirers to participate in a group discussion concerning:
 - A. Van Bavel's commentary on love and community as presented in his book, *The Rule of St. Augustine*.
 - B. Procedures available to resolve disputes constructively (What did St. Dominic do? What does the Particular Directory say?)
3. Choose from the following:
 - A. Ask inquirers to discuss some of the attitudes that are needed to solve problems effectively.
 - B. Ask inquirers to score, then discuss what they learned from the Conflict Resolution Questionnaire.

Competency: Understanding the Place of Community in an Integrated Dominican way of life

History and Purpose

Dominican community within the concept of lay life is not an "addition;" it is an integration, the deep unfathomable well from which members drink, an appropriate priority among priorities, which at times comes first. For example, on meeting nights, etc., all other priorities in members' lives normally come second. For Lay Dominicans, community -this purposeful coming together – is necessary so that everything else, including both our personal and our apostolic lives, works well.

As Lay Dominicans carry the gospel message into the world, the waters of Dominican community begin to move out in concentric circles. Chapter members who may be separated by miles still can be close in prayer, spirit and love. It is in the unfolding of daily life that members regularly keep in touch with each other so that the threads which bind them are not just occasional experience. By email or telephone, or even a drive to share a cup of coffee, they offer their brothers and sisters a listening ear, help and advice, as they live out their Dominican charism in the world.

Dominican community within the concept of lay life also concerns itself with a group apostolate, which often means service in the world. This apostolate involves the entire chapter in a commitment to some caring work to which they have been called. Members share their problems and experiences arising from participation in their chapter apostolate with each other and inquirers in chapter meetings.

An integrated Lay Dominican way of life also includes participating in chapter, provincial, national and international offices and committees, when requested. It includes reaching out to Lay Dominicans at the provincial, national and international levels, all of which brings chapter members into contact with the larger Dominican community.

The Rule of the Dominican Laity adapts the basic goals of the Order to the life of its lay members. Its observance ensures direction within the community and offers lay members fellowship, love and support, an opportunity for study and prayer and, as tension between individual and community priorities is resolved, mortification and sacrifice.

The local provincial adaptation and application of the Rule, known as the Particular Directory, is voted upon by the professed members and approved by the Lay Provincial Council and the Prior Provincial. Among other things it outlines the government and structure at Provincial and Chapter levels, the basis of Dominican life, membership and the process of incorporation into a Chapter, ongoing community life and departure from a Chapter. Local chapters are governed by a moderator with a council, who also are elected from among chapter members. The monthly chapter meetings, where gifts of the spirit, heart and mind are shared, provide the foundation for community life.

Learning Activities

1. Ask inquirers to record in their journals their observations and reflections of community life within their chapters.
2. Ask inquirers to read the following and reflect in their journals their response to Dominican community:
 - A. *The Rule of the Dominican Laity, /it, pp. 11-12*
 - B. *The Particular Directory of the Western Province, II: pp. 6-11; VII: p. 17-21; VIII: p. 21.*
 - C. Pietro Lippini, OP, *The Next General Chapter in Bologna, IDI, May 1998*
 - D. *Acta General Chapter Bologna 1998, Prologue 146-178*
3. Choose from the following:
 - A. Ask inquirers to read either 1, 2 or 3 and reflect in their journals how this affects their personal priorities:
 1. Damian Byrne, OP, *A Pilgrimage of Faith, pp. 34-48*
 2. *The Particular Directory of the Western Province, I:E, p. 5; IV: p. 15*
 3. Liam Walsh, OP, *Dominican Family: Call and Response, pp. 1-7*
 - B. Attend the Called and Gifted Workshop in your area or Parish, if available.

Evaluation/Assessment Activities

1. Choose from the following:
 - A. Based on their journals, ask inquirers to participate in a group discussion concerning their observations of community life within their chapter, what community will mean for them and what they realize they can contribute to the community -- their gifts, abilities, willingness to participate, etc.
 - B. With a group, ask inquirers to design a simple family tree that shows the branches of the Dominican Order, the governing structure of the Laity within the

Western Province and your Chapter. (Refer to *The Rule, III* and *The Particular Directory, 11, VII, VIII.*)

2. Optional:

- A. Ask inquirers to explore on the internet the Acta and other documents that seem pertinent to their study of the community, print some of them off and share them with others in their formation class or chapter.
- B. Ask inquirers to participate in a group discussion concerning:
- ◆ Their response to the IDI article, *The Next General Chapter in Bologna*
 - ◆ Their response to the *Acta General Chapter Bologna 1998 Prologue*
- C. Discuss in a group the six aspects of community life outlined by Damian Byrne, OP, *A Pilgrimage of Faith*, (Dublin, Ireland: Dominican Publications, 1991) and how they apply to Dominican lay community. (Refer to *The Particular Directory of the Western Province, I:E, p. 5; IV: p. 15*)
- D. Discuss in a group the address by Liam Walsh, OP, *Dominican Family. Call and Response*, (Dominicana Publications, 1979)

Competency: Participating in Those Activities Which Help Forge True Dominican Community

History and Purpose

Even though they do not live within the confines of convents or priories, there are many ways in which Lay Dominicans forge true Dominican community.

- ◆ Chapter members regularly attend and participate with enthusiasm in their Chapter's monthly meetings.
- ◆ Chapter members enjoy regular communication with each other and with prayer members who have moved out of the area by telephone, email and personal visits; they link to the province and to the world through the internet, email, the Dominican Prayer Line, the provincial newsletter, *Christ in the World*, and the international newsletter, IDI.
- ◆ As Chapter members pursue their individual and Chapter apostolates, they share their experiences and draw on the experiences and help of their Dominican brothers and sisters.
- ◆ Chapter members help with chapter hospitality and potluck celebrations.
- ◆ Chapter members provide transportation to those brothers and sisters who can no longer drive; they help in the caregiving of members who are ill or troubled, as well as keep vigils at sick and/or death beds.
- ◆ Chapter members participate in fund raising events.
- ◆ Chapter members accept responsibility for holding office and performing the work that is needed to keep life within the Chapter and the Order moving along; they take an active interest in and participate, when requested, in provincial, national and international meetings and on provincial, national and international committees.
- ◆ Chapter members attend days of reflection/study/celebration with other chapters.
- ◆ Chapter members invite friends and acquaintances to chapter meetings to explore their possible callings.
- ◆ Chapter members pray together, attend the yearly Chapter retreat and remember each other in prayer and in greetings on special days like birthdays, patronal days, weddings and anniversaries, graduations and special awards, caregiving and funerals.

Learning Activities

1. Choose from the following:

Ask inquirers to:

- A. Help with some aspect of the Chapter apostolate
- B. Help with chapter hospitality or a potluck celebration
- C. Provide transportation to a member who can no longer drive, or assist members in need
- D. Participate in a fund raising event
- E. Attend the yearly chapter retreat and other chapter events
- F. Attend a day of reflection/study/celebration with another chapter

2. Optional:

- A. Participate in the email prayer line
- B. Link to the Western Province and the Dominican Family through the internet and personal contact.
- C. Participate in other Dominican activities and events.

Evaluation/Assessment Activities

Choose from the following:

1. Ask inquirers to participate in a group discussion concerning one of the following:
 - A. Participation in the chapter's apostolate;
 - B. The- day of reflection/study/celebration they attended with another chapter;
 - C. How chapter hospitality or celebrations might be improved;
 - D. The assistance given to members in need, etc.;
 - E. Fund raising.

2. Ask inquirers to share with others in their formation class or chapter one of the following:
 - A. The status of those who have asked for prayers on the email prayer line;

- B. Documents of interest to Dominicans;
 - C. Their experiences in the yearly chapter retreat;
 - D. Their problems and experiences arising out of their individual lay apostolates;
 - E. Their reflections concerning their chapter's efforts to build community through various activities such as study days, days of reflection or celebrations with other chapters.
3. In order to encourage leadership and review and refresh the topic for their group, the formation director might ask inquirers to lead a reflective group discussion about community as an element of our charism.

PILLAR OF COMMUNITY - BIBLIOGRAPHY

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