

## ORIENTATION AND INTRODUCTION TO THE DOMINICAN ORDER SESSION

Let us welcome you today as you begin the first stage of Formation known as Postulancy, (or for some chapters it is known as “inquiry”). For the next year you will be learning the fundamentals of the Order of Preachers. It is only the beginning of a lifetime of continuous learning. Fundamentally our life is centered on four “Pillars” (those key characteristics of the Order that make the Dominican Order what it is): Community, Prayer, Study and Preaching. Upon the completion of the first year, and if the community and you agree, you go on to become a Novice.

As a Novice, (or, for some chapters “candidates”), one attempts, with God and the Chapter, to be formed as a Dominican, not the easiest of things. At the end of the Novitiate comes first Profession for one year, to three, and after a minimum of three years you may become life professed.

Our chapter is a part of the world wide Order Of Preachers, otherwise known as the Dominican Order, in some areas we are also known as the “black friars” because of the black cloak and Cappus that the Friars and religious wore for travel and during lent.

The Order had its beginnings in 1203 when St. Dominic of Guzman was sent with his bishop to arrange a marriage between the son of the king of Castile and the daughter of the Lord of the Marches. While travelling through southern France, Dominic was appalled at the major inroads a heresy known as Albigensianism was making in that part of the world, (so called because it started in the town of Albi). Albigensianism taught that all matter was evil and all spirit was good, and that the “good” God created the spirit realm while a demon God created and reined over the corporal world. This means that all material things and pleasures had to be rejected.

The “Elect” of their society lived strictly while everyone else could do whatever they desired as long as they accepted all Albigensian teachings as true, and renounce the Catholic faith and admired and respected their Elect.

As soon as his mission was completed, and with permission, St. Dominic resolved to return to Southern France and endeavor to counteract this heresy with the preaching of the truth. It must be remembered that at this time it was not common for any priest to preach – only the Pope and bishops could preach. Dominic began to attract many men and lay people to him. The Lay people at first were known as the “Militia of Christ,” and would soon be given a rule and became known as “The order of Penitents.” This was the beginning of the “Third Order” or more commonly known today as “the Dominican Laity,” which is now the largest branch of the Order.

As time went by Dominic realized that it was not just Southern France that needed the preaching of the truth but rather the entire world. With the Approval of the Holy See, he began to put together his Order of Friars Preachers and dedicate it to this work of preaching and winning

souls for Christ through reason.

St. Dominic placed great emphasis on study. A preacher had to be educated to know what he was talking about before he got into the pulpit. Another characteristic of the Order that was even more innovative for the time was the democratic spirit of the Order. All superiors were to be elected for certain limited terms, and laws were to be made by elected delegates. It is this democratic characteristic that has allowed the Dominican Order, of all the major religious Orders, the ability to be able to reform itself from within – the Dominican Order has never split into several different Orders, as have the Benedictines who are in several groups (Trappists, Cisterians and regular Benedictines), or the Franciscans (who are Conventual's, Capuchins and Minors), or the Carmelites (who are either Calced or Discalced).

At about the same time as St. Dominic was gathering a group of men around him to be the nucleus of the Order, he also founded a monastery of cloistered nuns in Prouille near Toulouse. Most of these were women who had been Albigensians but who had returned to the Church and wanted to continue to serve God in some kind of Catholic religious life. Thus, the Friars, the Laity and the nuns came into being at roughly the same time.

The Dominican Order or Family is worldwide and is composed of various branches. The first is made up of the Friars; the second are the cloistered nuns, who live in monasteries. Third, there are fraternities of diocesan or secular priests, and apostolic sisters and brothers who make up what is known as the Third Order Religious, and finally lay men and woman that are just as much a part of the order as the other branches but continue to live their lives in the secular world and not in a conventual setting.

The head of the Order is known as the Master of the Order. He has direct jurisdiction only over the Friars and Laity and cloistered nuns. The Friars, Nuns and Laity make their Professions to him while the congregations of Dominican Sisters are independent of one another and have their own superiors.

Regions are divided into provinces, and in the U.S. we have four of which we are a part of the Western Province of the Most Holy Name of Jesus. Both the Friars and the Laity are co-extensive.

All major superiors of the Order, including the Master, Provincials and Priors, are elected, if not directly then by elected delegates. In the case of the Master, it is by delegates from each of the Provinces, and in the case of Provincials by delegates from each of the Pories and those from what we call colleges, which are groups of men from around the Province who are not members of a Priory. Superiors of houses are appointed by the Provincial but only after consultation with the members of the house.

Just as the Master of the Order appoints a delegate or Promoter of all the Dominican Laity, so also does the Provincial appoint a delegate or Promoter of the Laity within his Province.

The units of the Dominican Laity are called Fraternities – or as they're called in the

United States – chapters. Each one is lead by a prior or prioress (some chapters prefer the term “Moderator”). The Chapter elects a Council which conducts the business of the chapter. When necessary or desirable, a council’s decisions are presented to the entire chapter for approval or input. Following the tradition of the Friars, all the officers including the members of the Council are elected directly by the chapter, with the exception of the Prior/ess who is elected directly by the Council. Chapters and their councils typically meet once per month, each – with councils meeting in advance of the regularly scheduled chapter meeting to assist with the planning of that meeting, in addition to handling the other business of the chapter. At the provincial level, there is also a Lay Provincial Council which meets annually.

Becoming a Lay Dominican is not like joining a club, a sodality or even a Confraternity. One is joining a Religious Order, and becomes a Dominican in the fullest sense of the term, and something to be taken very, very seriously. Novices and postulants received a period of formation, they make public promises to live according to the Dominican spirit and Rule of the Laity and our Particular Directory, (or Statutes).

## BOOK LIST

**REQUIRED:**

The Liturgy of the Hours– Catholic Books Publishing Company New York

Saint Dominic by Sister Mary Jean Dorey - Tan books and Publishing-Rockford Illinois

The Dominicans A Short History: William Hinnebush O.P.-Dominican publications, Dublin Ireland

Catechism of the Catholic Church Second Edition Liberia Editrice Vaticana

St Dominic's Family by Sister Mary Jean Dorcey, O.P.- Tan books and Publishing-Rockford Illinois

The Holy Bible RSV- Ignatius Press –San Francisco, Ca

Vatican Council II –The Conciliar and Post Conciliar documents edited by Austin Flannery, O.P. Costello Publishing Co. Northport, New York

**FOR THE ENTHUSIAST:**

Saint Dominic The Grace of the Word: Guy Bedouille O.P.-Ignatius Press –San Francisco, Ca

Saint Catherine of Siena-by Alice Curtayne- Tan books and Publishing-Rockford Illinois

Early Dominicans-Selected Writings- The Classics of Western Spirituality Series-Paulist press, New York, New York

The Dialogue by Saint Catherine of Siena- The Classics of Western Spirituality Series-Paulist press, New York, New York

The Love That Never Ends (A key to the Catechism of the Catholic Church) DiNoia O.P., O' Donnell O.P., Cessario O.P. Cameron O.P.-Our Sunday Visitor publications, Huntington, Indiana.

Mental Prayer according to the principles of St. Thomas Aquinas by Rev. Denis Fahey- Christian book Club, P.O. Box 900566-Palmdale, Ca.

My Way Of Life-by Walter Farrell O.P. S.T.M. and Martin J. Healy, S.T.D.-Confraternity of the Precious blood-Brooklyn New York

Theology for Beginners by F.J. Sheed-Servant Books, Ann Arbor Michigan

Dominican Penitent Woman: The Classics of Western Spirituality Series-Paulist press, New York, New York

**FOR THE OBSESSED:**

The Laity and the Life of the Counsels (The Church's Mission in the World) Ignatius Press

Dominican Saints by Dominican Novices-Tan books and Publishing-Rockford Illinois

Summa Theologica 5 Volume set by St. Thomas Aquinas –Christian Classics –a division of Thomas More Publishing-Allen, Texas

The Navarre Biblical Commentary Series- Four Courts Press Great Britain

The Summa Contra Gentiles-By St. Thomas Aquinas

**WEB SITE RESOURCES**

Western Province – Dominican Laity

<http://laydominicanswest.org/>

Spirituality today:

<http://www.spiritualitytoday.org/spir2day/index.html>

Dominican spirituality William Hinnebusch

<http://www.domcentral.org/trad/domspirit/default.htm>

Papal encyclicals online

<http://www.papalencyclicals.net/>

Dominican calendar

<http://opwest.org/Directory/calendardominican.htm>

Dominican Western Province

<http://www.opwest.org/>

O.P. Sources

<http://opsources.edgewood.edu/>

The Rosary Light and Life

<http://www.pacifier.com/rosary-center.org/ntrll.htm>

The Vatican Online

[http://www.vatican.va/phome\\_en.htm](http://www.vatican.va/phome_en.htm)

New Advent. Org-Contains the Summa and Catholic Encyclopedia

[http://www.vatican.va/phome\\_en.htm](http://www.vatican.va/phome_en.htm)

Aquinas Multimedia

<http://aquinas-multimedia.com/>

Catechism of the Catholic Church

[http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc\\_css/archive/catechism/ccc\\_toc.htm](http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/ccc_toc.htm)

Code of Canon Law

[http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG1104/\\_INDEX.HTM](http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG1104/_INDEX.HTM)

Document s of Vatican II

<http://www.ewtn.com/library/COUNCILS/V2ALL.HTM>

The Dominicans by Benedict M. Ashley O.P.

<http://www.domcentral.org/study/ashley/dominicans/ashdom00.htm>

Early Church Fathers

<http://biblestudy.churches.net/CCEL/FATHERS2/INDEX.HTM>

Dominican Documents

<http://www.dominicans.ca/english/documents.htm>

Summa Theological Online

<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/aquinas/summa.html>

The Dominicans a Short History

[http://www.catholicprimer.org/dom\\_his/default.htm](http://www.catholicprimer.org/dom_his/default.htm)

The Imitation of Christ By Thomas Kempis

<http://www.worldwideschool.org/library/books/relg/christiantheology/TheImitationofChrist/chap2.html>

Thomas Aquinas in English

<http://www.home.duq.edu/~bonin/thomasbibliography.html>

Catholic Answers. Com

<http://www.catholic.com/default.asp>

Dialog of Saint Catherine of Siena

<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/catherine/dialog.html>

Zenit- News From the Vatican

<http://www.zenit.org/index.php?l=english>

Dominican Liturgy

<http://dominican-liturgy.blogspot.com/>

New Liturgical Movement

<http://www.newliturgicalmovement.org/>



ST. DOMINIC AT STUDY