



# Why Dominican?

## Presentation Notes for Candidacy Module 3:

### The Role of the Laity As Modeled by St. Catherine of Siena

**Objectives:** At the end of this session, the Candidate will be able to:

1. Articulate the official position of the Church regarding the place of the laity within the Church
2. State positive ways in which that ideal has already been realized at various times and various places within the Church
3. Increase his/her awareness of sensitive issues and conditions which might create potential tension between the laity and the clergy in modern times
4. Understand the importance of St. Catherine of Siena not only as an important Dominican lay woman in Church history but also as someone who is highly admired within the Church today
5. Incorporate some of St. Catherine's thoughts and perspective into his/her own discernment regarding personal suitability of the Dominican Laity as a lifelong vocation.

**Materials:** Candidates' notes from personal journaling, chalk and chalk board or markers and poster board

**Prayer/Contemplation:** 1 Corinthians 12: 4- 13, 27-31

Note: Much of the structure of this study session will be determined by the people involved, both the Candidates and the Formation Team members. This is particularly appropriate for the Candidates as they come closer to the time to consider temporary promise/profession. The main objective of the session is to expand one's knowledge of the subject matter and to incorporate that knowledge into the personal discernment process of living the life of a member of the Dominican Laity. Prayerful determination by the Formation Team of what is to be read and by whom is necessary before the participants are given the Suggested Readings as part of the usual Study Guide. Decisions about the reading assignments should be based on such criteria as the prior knowledge and involvement of the Candidates in this topic of study as well as each one's familiarity with St. Catherine as evidenced by participation in the previous Candidacy

session. The length of the session and the usual attention to detail by the Candidates should also be considered.

**Study:**

1. Candidates should be reminded to bring their journals with them or at least a listing of the quotes each selected from the materials that each one read.
2. Divide the study time into four parts based on the resources selected to be read. There should be some time devoted to each of the three main parts listed but the time for each part does not have to be equal. The selected timing should reflect the emphasis the Formation Team feels needs to be placed on the three parts listed plus the closure and follow-up activities that are the usual part of the study session.
3. Appoint a time keeper to assist with keeping the discussion on track. Remember that each document is well worth a full blown discussion!
4. Begin the discussion with a general statement such as that the post Vatican II Church views collaboration between the clergy and the laity as both necessary and attainable.
5. Ask the Candidates to contribute several statements especially from the first section of the readings to support the general statement. It may be helpful to list each document and place of the quotation on the board or poster for those who wish to take notes.
6. Allow time for the participants to elaborate on their own personal experiences that contributed to progress toward such collaboration. Add the views of some of the other authors as applicable to the board or poster.
7. Ask the participants to cite other examples from the readings that identified challenges to this ideal of collaboration. Include the document or article and place within it. Rework any prolonged feelings of negativity into statements that reflect a serious challenge.
8. List these challenges on the board or poster. Don't forget to ask the time keeper to verify adherence to available time before proceeding with the discussion.
9. The historians in the group should connect some of the present day challenges faced within the Church today to those of St. Catherine's time. Encourage the participants to include new information from outside sources that they have brought to the meeting. The facilitator might use a different color chalk or marker to list any challenges that do seem to be parallel.
10. Focus attention on how St. Catherine recognized and addressed the challenges of her time. Open the discussion to examples and quotations from the articles read. List those on the board or poster under the headings of her prayer life, her service to

others, her interaction with the Church hierarchy, and her view of obedience and conscience. Include specific places where the quotes can be found.

11. Pause for personal reflection as time will allow.
12. Ask the participants to identify positive ways that individuals or the group might model the positive attributes of St. Catherine in ways to address important issues within the Church today.

**Community:** Serious differences of opinions might have surfaced in this study session. Remind the participants that confidentiality is to be maintained concerning the opinions voiced in all study sessions. Encourage the participants to respect each other's opinions and work toward positive ways to find the common ground of reaching the goal of collaboration within the entire Church.

**Apostolate:** As the group discusses important issues within the Church, be attentive to those leanings that might lend themselves to opportunities for preaching and even a group apostolate. Mention these possibilities as they arise and ask that they be brought to prayer in between the sessions.

**Follow-up:** The place of the laity in the Church is a continually developing area of widespread interest with many new initiatives and documents becoming available. Personal study as well as group study is strongly encouraged for Dominicans. This topic may be one in which some of the Candidates have a natural inclination. Listed on the Suggested Readings are several full length books and web sites that are most suitable to consult in order to continue this journey.

**Assignment:** Distribute the Study Guide for the next session.