



# Why Dominican?

## Study Guide for Candidacy Module 3:

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

The purpose of the Candidacy phase of formation is to provide individuals with the opportunity to participate in continued discernment of Dominican life as a lay person. Essential to this process is familiarity with the role of the laity in the Church and within the Dominican Order. St. Catherine of Siena, as a member of the Dominican Laity and a Doctor of the Church, serves as someone to be included in this discovery process.

#### PRAYER/CONTEMPLATION

Through the intercession of St. Catherine, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal important interactions in your life as a lay person within the Church. Ask for guidance to put those interactions in proper perspective as you read the readings and prepare for a group discussion.

#### STUDY

The Suggested Readings that accompany this Study Guide are designed to present various perspectives regarding the three main parts of the discussion for this study session. The Formation Team will involve you in decisions regarding which materials from the Suggested Readings will be read by everyone, which might be selected individually by the Candidates, and which might be assigned for specific Candidates to read. Although some of the readings are older ones, they still contain important perspectives on the subject matter. The three main topics for study and discussion will include:

1. the Church's official position on the role of the laity within the Church
2. some actual experiences of the laity within the Church and the Order of Preachers
3. the role of the laity as modeled by St. Catherine of Siena including her prayer life, her service to others, her interaction with the Church hierarchy, and her view of obedience and conscience including:
  - a. modern day views such as stated by Pope Benedict XVI and former Master of the Order, fr. Timothy Radcliffe, OP
  - b. glimpses of St. Catherine through the eyes of recognized scholars, and
  - c. more in-depth reading based on prepared bibliographies.

You are also encouraged to contribute current articles from periodicals, newspapers, and other sources that address these subjects.

It is suggested that you plan to read these materials in several short sessions. As you read them, add one or two quotes from each selection to your journal. Choose those that you feel capture a

main point with which you strongly agree or strongly disagree or wish the group to discuss and clarify. Future investigation into this on-going and important topic of the place of the laity within the Church is strongly recommended. Additional suggestions are included in the list of Suggested Readings.

### **COMMUNITY**

The discussion during this study session should be a lively one since each person and author has lived rather personal experiences, both positive and negative, as a member of the Church. True Dominican dialogue and conversation about this topic does not have as its goal either to focus on or minimize negative experiences, but rather to explore ways to make people's lived experiences in the future come closer to the ideal set forth by the Church. Sharing one's personal feelings is yet another step in building true Dominican community. Be especially aware of confidentiality and sensitivity concerns during the discussion.

### **APOSTOLATE**

As you learn more about the life and choices of St. Catherine, keep I mind possible ways that individuals or the group can model the balance she tried to maintain between her conformity to the will of God and her own fiery spirit.