



# Why Dominican?

## Presentation Notes for Candidacy Module 4: Dominican Saints and Blesseds

**Note:** There are three points of importance that will be helpful to transmit to the Candidates before this study of the members of the Dominican Family who have been recognized by the Church as Saints and Blesseds begins.

1. The focus should be how these holy people lived the Dominican life at the particular time they lived. Some of the practices especially some of the penances that they performed are not recommended today (to say the least). They should concentrate, therefore, not on how to follow in their footsteps, but rather on being open to the opportunities that the Holy Spirit provides for living one's vocation as a Dominican.
2. The research that is recommended should not be a "book report" type of activity but more of a spiritual encounter with a person from the past. Enlist the Candidates in their choice of persons to study: one of the more well known saints and a lesser known one. A listing of Dominican saints and blessed for the liturgical year can be found on the Western Province USA web site at <http://www.opwest.org/ministries/preaching/the-dominican-year>. Perhaps the Candidates might have chosen this person in the past as a saint for confirmation or have had an interest in this person previously or perhaps they know absolutely nothing about the person and want to investigate his/her life. Each person should read at least a brief account of the lives of each of the four major Dominican saints, however. It is impossible to study all of the many Dominicans who are now saints and blesseds, so try to extend the study of the lesser known ones across the centuries if possible. The study of St. Catherine of Siena will extend into the next module on the Role of the Laity so, while she is extremely important in Dominican history as both a member of the Dominican laity and one of only two female Doctors of the Church, the formation team may decide to minimize her place in this session somewhat in favor of the next.

3. Encourage the Candidates to answer the questions posed in the Study Guide and be prepared to discuss the people they have researched from those perspectives. Each Candidate should engage actively in the conversations rather than taking notes. The formation team should involve the Candidates either before or during the study session, therefore, in deciding how to share what was learned during the session. Some options might include jointly designing a format after the study session discussion that will be completed for each person studied by the researcher and distributed to all at the next meeting or simply providing the Candidates with an already designed format at the end of the meeting to complete and share on whomever they researched. It might be also possible for the visual material of the timeline to be reproduced for all.

The formation team may also decide to share the pre-reading materials pertinent to St. Catherine of Siena that are designed for use with the next module as part of this module. This option might be attractive especially if the Candidates are already particularly familiar with St. Catherine. If so, have a list of those resources available for separate distribution from the rest of the materials for the next module. Since those materials will be used to interpret some of the actual words of St. Catherine, be sure the Candidates know the basics of St. Catherine's life before the decision is made to study them with this module.

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

1. Place important Dominican saints such as St. Catherine, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Martin de Porres, and St. Rose of Lima and other lesser known saints and blessed in the context of what was transpiring in the world and in the Church when they lived.
2. Identify the opportunities in the lives of those studied as times that each cooperated with the Holy Spirit in living his/her Dominican vocation.
3. Describe the strengths of the Dominican saints and blessed studied relative to the four pillars of Dominican life.
4. Describe the strengths of the Dominican saints and blessed studied relative to Dominican mottos.
5. Begin to compare the opportunities that the saints and blessed had with those presented in modern day life.

**Materials:** Each person should have a personal copy of the Litany of Dominican Saints and Blessed (available at <http://www.op-stjoseph.org/litur-litany.html>). You will also need a chalk board and chalk or marker and poster board.

**Prayer/Contemplation:** Pray the Litany of Dominican Saints and Blessed together.

## Study:

1. Begin the session with pre-determined intervals of a timeline extending from the time of St. Dominic to the present, depending on the saints and blessed to be studied. Put the dates of the intervals of the years/century at the top of the timeline.
2. Place the name of each of the four major saints at the appropriate place just below the line of the timeline.
3. If there is a historian among the group, he or she might be asked to facilitate this part of the session. Begin the discussion of world events with a brief summary of life the time of St. Dominic. Ask the Candidates to contribute the name of the saint/blessed they have studied who lived closest to his life time. Have someone describe what was transpiring in the life of the Church at the time as well. Add these names and appropriate words or phrases under them under the timeline.
4. Continue until all of the saints/blessed have been placed on the timeline and the major events of the world and Church discussed. A time keeper might be helpful so that the discussion is neither rushed nor lagging.
5. List each of the four pillars and mottos to be discussed on the board or poster board.
6. Encourage each person to contribute to the discussion of the major saints and to ask questions or make positive comments about the lives of the lesser known saints and blessed. Remind the Candidates that the aim of this session is to discuss the spirituality of these holy people, not just to learn facts about them.
7. Return to the beginning of the timeline. Begin with the first saint/blessed after St. Dominic. Discuss how each person lived the particular pillar or motto. Add the person's name and brief descriptive words or phrases under the title of the pillar or motto.
8. Ask the group to formulate a joint list of opportunities for preaching today based on the lives of those studied and the world events and Church issues present today.
9. Conclude the discussion with time for personal reflection. Ask each participant to reflect on opportunities within the world and Church today that bear some similarity to those present in the lives of those just discussed. Ask them to jot those down in the form of an intercessory prayer to be used within the Liturgy of the Hours. Such an intercession might include such requests as "May we have the compassion of St. Martin de Pores as we tend to those with AIDS, we pray to the Lord....."

**Community:** The community aspect of Dominican life will be enhanced through the genuine spirit of dialogue and questioning that will be part of this study session. If the Candidates will chose the format for more formal sharing of information as a follow-up, how that consensus will be reached will also demonstrate the community aspect of decision making.

**Apostolate:** Each of the persons studied was involved in a form of preaching. Remind the Candidates to contemplate their own inclination for preaching based on the study session.

**Follow-up:** Give clear directions for how the individual materials researched will be shared. Be sure to include the method, length, and the deadline.

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