



Why Dominican?

Attitude Adjustment Alert!!!

St. Dominic spoke “to God or about God”. Part of our commitment to being a Dominican is to follow in St. Dominic’s footsteps in his quest to follow the example of Jesus in our daily lives by preaching the Word of God. How each of us strives to meet this goal in a modern day world is a very individual matter, but, for each of us, it must center on our continual conversion of heart.

The focus of Candidacy is to enable the candidate to understand the Dominican way of life more clearly and to discern whether that way of life is the best way to help that person embrace this conversion of heart. The subject matter of Candidacy is much the same as the content of the Inquiry phase in places, and, in other places, it investigates a slightly different topic. All topics, however, become more intertwined with one another and are aimed at probing things more deeply from this spiritual perspective.

The emphasis in the Candidacy modules is this deeper understanding of the topics being presented. The emphasis is all about an attitude adjustment, a turning more internally toward God in all ways and in all things. Underlying the presentations, therefore, you will find a subtle and not-so-subtle probing of one’s internal view of such concepts as rationale, philosophy, pre-disposition, perspective, attitude, mind set, and priority.

A conversion of heart affects one’s behavior in small ways and in larger ones. The primary purpose of the following modules, therefore, is directed internally. The modules are also designed to help the Candidate to pursue any change of outward behavior as necessary in order to provide some external evidence of this gradual conversion of heart. This dual shift in teaching and learning methodology is purposeful and does necessitate an attitude adjustment. Presenting and learning about the content of the Candidacy topics will be quite different from reading and discussing a topic with the intent of gaining facts and following a procedure. Each presenter and Candidate must invest not only his/her time and contemplation into gaining a deeper meaning from what is addressed, but also a little bit more of oneself into the community.

The Formation Team is encouraged to emphasize the internal aspect of the “why” of each topic and offer suggestions concerning the “how” of possibilities for change from perhaps an initial way of thinking toward a more prayerful and deeper one. The topics for Candidacy are presented in a numerical order that matches the same order of similar topics in the Inquiry stage. That choice was made deliberately to enable the members of the Formation Team to study and present only one topic if they are teaching both Inquirers and Candidates.

The Candidacy topics, however, do not need to be presented strictly sequentially, especially if the presenters feel that a certain topic might be more appropriate to present next rather than another given the discussion of the previous session and the spiritual development of the Candidates. If that is the case, or if the Provincial Formation Team members or local formation team members feel that a different order is more beneficial for a particular set of Candidates or for the lay province in general, no spiritual or educational value will be lost in presenting the modules in a different order. In an attempt to provide a cohesive road map for the entirety of Candidacy, however, the main objective of each topic is listed below.

Candidacy topics:

- History of the Order/ Symbols and Traditions of the Order: The Dominican way of life has continued through the years and been expressed in various ways.
- The Dominican Approach to Liturgical Prayer including the Liturgy of the Hours and the Eucharist/Mass: The Dominican way of life includes participating fully in the life of the Catholic Church including praying the daily Liturgy of the Hours and participating in the Eucharist/Mass.
- The Role of the Laity as modeled by St. Catherine of Siena: The Dominican way of life includes an understanding that a member of the laity, such as was St. Catherine of Siena, can have a deep and personal spiritual relationship with God and significantly influence Church events a well.
- Dominican Saints and Blesseds: The Dominican way of life includes investigating the paths that other Dominicans took in order to discern how one might live the vocation of someone called by God to be a Dominican.
- Dominican Personal Prayer and Contemplation: The Dominican way of life includes making the time to contemplate the mysteries of God, sharing the fruits of that contemplation with other Dominicans, and discerning how to bring forth those fruits into the world.
- The Dominican Approach to Sacred Scripture and Tradition: The Dominican way of life includes the study of Sacred Scripture and Oral Tradition and a desire both to live and to preach the Good News.

□ Dominican Community and Governance: The Dominican way of life includes a spirituality of government based on each member's voice, commitment, and mutual trust to the Order and to one another.

□ Study and the Passion for Preaching/ Lay Preaching: The Dominican way of life includes an insatiable thirst for God demonstrated through a lifelong commitment to purposeful study and preaching about what one discovers.

□ Living the Rule: The way of life of a member of the Dominican Laity includes a thorough understanding of the rationale and particulars of Rule by which we are governed. A commitment to trying to live this Rule is necessary before proceeding to the next stage of formation by making a Temporary Promise/Profession.

□ Living with the Particular Directory: The way of life of a member of the Dominican Laity includes a thorough understanding of how and why decisions are made within one's own lay province and how to abide or change the formulations of those decisions in the Particular Directory of the lay province in accordance with the Rule. A commitment to trying to live according to the Particular Directory is necessary before proceeding to the next stage of formation by making a Temporary Promise/Profession.

Only ten months of instruction are provided for the full year of study. It is recommended that one month during the year be devoted to fellowship and a purely social event and one month be earmarked for a retreat. Inclement weather and changes in schedules during the summer months also influence the yearly schedule.

Given this information, it is easy to see that a choice might be made to present the modules on Sacred Scripture and Preaching in sequential months and then the module on Community and Governance just before the last two modules. Perhaps the modules on the Rule and Directory seem to fit better right after the module on the History of the Order. It is also easy to see a rationale for waiting to the end of the year of Candidacy for these last two topics to allow a more thorough examination of the Rule and Particular Directory before the final, mutual decision to proceed to the next stage of formation is made. All such changes and choices should be made prayerfully and in accordance with the direction given by the Provincial Formation Team.

Instruction in Candidacy is undertaken both by those who are serious about pursuing their possible vocation as a Dominican and by those who are committed to helping them in that journey. The process will work best if the Formation Team reads and plans well in advance and involves the Candidates in decision-making at an appropriate level. Resourcefulness is often necessary! Here are some ideas to help problem solve.

1. Sometimes Candidates, for whatever reason, are reluctant to embrace on-line resources as a source of instruction. In the spirit of community, the Formation

Team should investigate a “buddy system” for matching such folks with someone who can assist in accessing information or even arranging for that person/group to go to the public library for easy access and expert instruction from the staff.

2. Those on limited income might not be able to print their own copy of what to read. The Provincial Formation Team should be consulted for their assistance. Sometimes a parish will provide free copies if the Dominican group will supply the paper. Some groups bind the formation materials into a copy that can be borrowed by new Inquirers or Candidates but not kept by them. Other members simply share their materials with one another.
3. Sometimes the reading assignments in some of the modules require more time than some Candidates can manage that month or the group as a whole can address adequately. The Formation Team is encouraged to get to know the materials and the Candidates well enough to be able to assign selected readings to selected members of the group to share at the study session. The Formation Team should strive to insure that each person can participate in the study session with a feeling of confidence and community rather than feel left out or unprepared. It is good to instill the concept that we can learn from one another in our group as well as from the experts who have written our materials.
4. Since these materials are often connected to other web sites, you may find that some links simply do not work anymore. The Formation Team is asked to notify us immediately of the problem. We usually have no control over any changes on someone else’s web site, but we will investigate why that site no longer has that link operable. In the meantime, the Formation Team can look on-line themselves to find a new link, look in the Resources section of *Why Dominican?* for a similar material, or substitute an alternative material until the problem is resolved.

We intend *Why Dominican?* to be a collaborative work in progress and we invite your feedback and suggestions. Contact us at siteadmin@whydominican.net .