



Why Dominican?

Presentation Notes for Inquiry Module 3: The Vocation of the Laity

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

1. Articulate the role of the laity as sharers in Jesus's ministry as "priest, prophet, and king" by virtue of their Baptism.
2. Understand that each member of the Body of Christ has an equally important role within the Church regardless of gender or ordination although those characteristics do define entry into certain roles.
3. Understand that the laity have a special place within the church set aside for them alone just like a priest or a nun or sister does.
4. Consider Lay Dominicans as equal members with all members of the Order of Preachers.

Note: It is not unusual for a group of Inquirers to have widely varying opinions on the place of the laity within the Church and, therefore, to carry this perspective to their place within the Order. It is not the job of the presenter(s) to change opinions, but rather to provide information and foster dialogue based on church documents and the writings of Dominican scholars on these subjects. It is usually during these early discussions of Church that issues such as "Pray, pay, and obey" as well as the ordination of women as priests and marriage within the priesthood surface.

Disagreements about Vatican II arise and can be heated. Open conversation is important and using the documents of the church to state doctrine is essential so that someone else's being judgmental does not interfere with a person's decision to respond to grace. Please seek the advice of the Provincial Executive Council if you feel uncomfortable about suggesting a document that states a church position on a particular subject. The follow-up assignment for this module will also offer some guidance in this matter

Materials: copies of the discussion questions

Prayer/Contemplation: 1 Corinthians 9:16. (Encourage multiple reflections from the Scripture verse.)

Study:

A discussion may naturally flow following the brief reflections from the Scripture verse. If this does not happen, the facilitator should direct attention to any of the following discussion areas based on the readings:

1. The Code of Canon Law 204 explains that the Christian Faithful have a shared office with Christ since they are “sharers in Christ’s priestly, prophetic, and royal office” through Baptism. In what ways do you or other the laity that you know preach the gospel today by being sharers in Christ’s priestly, prophetic, and kingly office?
2. How well do you personally deal with the three exhortations of how laity might exercise this shared ministry, namely by being obedient to the teachings of pastors, by making known personal spiritual needs and desires to pastors, and by making known opinions on matters which pertain to the good of the church ? (Dao p. 5)
3. What ministries might you consider after reading about some suggested activities in fr. Dao’s chapters?
4. One can not give what one does not have.(Dao p. 21) How do you prepare yourself for whatever ministry you are involved in as a sharer in the life of the Church ?
5. “Every Dominican must be prepared to preach the Word of God’. (Dao p. 20) What opportunities do you have to preach the Word of God?
6. What Dominican practices and devotions do you already incorporate into your life and which do you need to increase?
7. Given your own inclinations and talents and those of the other members of the Lay Dominican group, what community apostolate might your group consider for the future?
8. Fr. Kiesling states that Dominican spirituality enables lay people to fulfill Vatican II’s expectations of them. How do you think you will be helped to:
 - a. articulate your faith,
 - b. appreciate creation, and
 - c. build a better world
 - d. as you grow in Dominican spirituality?

9. Where do you feel at ease and where do you see difficulty in observing the common practices of Dominican spirituality on a regular basis and in their totality?
10. Fr. Kiesling says that it is through the Dominican Laity that the spirituality developed by St. Dominic and his followers “moves out into the world to contribute to the coming of God’s reign over all creation.” How do you feel about being immersed in the world rather than set apart from it?

Community: The interaction among members will provide additional insight into their strengths and challenges as each person learns more about the four pillars of Dominican life.

Apostolate: Try to become more aware of the activities that each person is involved in within his/her parish and community.

Conclusion: This particular topic will be a thread that runs through many more discussions among the members of the group. Invite the members to continue to dialogue on-line or via the telephone in-between sessions.

Assignment:

1. Have the participants read Fr. Timothy Radcliffe OP (Former Master of the Order)’s “Overcoming Discord in the Church” from the *National Catholic Reporter*, May 5, 2006. It is available at http://natcath.org/NCR_Online/archives2/2006b/050506/050506a.php

This article discusses the perspectives of both Kingdom Catholics and Communion Catholics. The tradition of Kingdom Catholics stresses openness to the world, finding the presence of the Holy Spirit working outside the church, freedom and the pursuit of justice. Communion Catholics often stress Catholic identity, are wary of too hearty an embrace of modernity, and they stress the cross. Fr. Timothy states that the church needs both traditions and gives some suggestions on how they can work together.

2. Distribute the study guide for the next session.