



Why Dominican?

Presentation Notes for Inquiry Module 4: The Fundamental (Primitive) Constitutions of the Order

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

1. Trace some of the beginnings of the four pillars of Dominican Life as stated in these documents.
2. Understand why St. Dominic and the brethren initiated some of the rules that were followed at that time.
3. Begin to appreciate the heritage that has been passed on to current Dominicans

Materials: copies of the discussion questions

Prayer/Contemplation: 2 Cor. 12: 9

Study:

1. Remind the Inquirers that the purpose of this session is to identify the beginnings of the four pillars of Dominican life rather than to discount the unusual practices that may conflict with more modern times and current Dominican practices. Allow the Inquirers to peruse the questions. Ask a volunteer to begin the discussion by choosing one of the questions and sharing his/her thoughts about it. Questions for discussion include:
 - a. A dispensation could be granted from some of these rules. For what purpose could a dispensation be granted? What does this suggest about the focus of these early Dominicans?
 - b. What forms of prayer did the early Dominicans use?
 - c. How did the early Dominicans give evidence of the importance of study?
 - d. What practices bound the early Dominicans together in community?
 - e. How was preaching a part of the lives of early Dominicans?
 - f. Why do you think that there was no right of appeal for decisions about a particular person in these early times?
 - g. Discuss how the documents demonstrate “the inflexibility of the principle and the flexibility of particular legislation”.

- h. There were many rules and regulations and penances, some severe, in these documents. Explain how some of these actions give evidence that their purpose was to “foster and indicate the unity which should be present interiorly in our hearts.”

2. Ask the Inquirers to share items from their journaling that they thought were notable.

Community: What practices within the present group help to foster Dominican community? Do they have their basis in any of the earlier practices?

Apostolate: There were particular restrictions on the early Dominicans requiring a certain amount of study before anyone was given the office of preaching or preacher general as well as an age requirement. Do you think that restrictions should be placed on Dominicans preaching now? Why or why not?

Assignment:

Distribute the Study Guide for the next session.