



# Why Dominican?

## Presentation Notes for Inquiry Module 5: Dominican Prayer

Note: This session contains three parts: a basic discussion of prayer, a demonstration of Lectio Divina, and a discussion of Dominican contemplation. By the time this session occurs, the formation team should have a fairly good idea which of these three subtopics needs the most emphasis based on the particular group being instructed. The presenter can thus divide the time among the three topics accordingly to suit the needs of the group.

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

1. Describe various types of personal prayer.
2. Describe various types of liturgical prayer.
3. Have a general understanding of St. Dominic's *Nine Ways of Prayer*.
4. Understand that symbols often assist in bringing the mind and heart to God.
5. Understand that prayer takes place in a variety of settings such as within one's room or while walking in the woods and also through a variety of means such as singing or drawing.
6. Understand that although Dominican prayer has distinct characteristics, each person has a unique way to engage in prayer.
7. Identify holy people such as Mary and some of the Dominican saints to whom Dominicans have a special regard and implore in intercessory prayer.
8. Engage in Lectio Divina.
9. Understand that Dominican contemplation is not an ascetic practice but a process that propels one into the world to preach.

**Materials:** chalk/chalkboard or poster board and markers, blank sheets of paper and pens/pencils

**Prayer/Contemplation:** Matthew 18: 19-20 or Luke 10: 38-42 (one can be used at this point and the other when demonstrating Lectio Divina.)

## Study:

1. Begin the discussion by asking the participants to list the different types of personal prayer they might commonly engage in during a day. The list should include prayers of praise or adoration, blessing, petition, thanksgiving, contemplation, Lectio Divina, intercessory prayer, formal prayers of the church such as Prayer before Meals or the Psalms, and personal devotions such as the Rosary or Stations of the Cross. List these types of personal prayer on the board or poster.
2. Use the same procedure for types of liturgical prayer that they might engage in during the week such as the Mass, Liturgy of the Hours, Taize, or a Reconciliation service.
3. Ask each participant to draw two 4 inch circles on a blank piece of paper. The first circle will represent their waking hours during a 24 hour period of time. Ask each participant to divide those daytime hours with the amount of time that represents their different types of prayer during the day from the list of personal prayer items. Personal sharing of the amounts of time will not take place.
4. The second circle will represent a week's worth of waking time that one might spend in liturgical prayer. Participants are to divide that circle into the amount of time currently spent in liturgical prayer. Personal sharing of the amounts of time will not take place.
5. Allow time for the participants to share personal touches of their prayer life such as praying the Rosary while driving or exercising and/or time spent in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.
6. Briefly characterize Dominican prayer as containing these elements or characteristics as stated by fr. Stan Parmisano OP in an article available at <http://laici.op.org/eng/library/dominican-prayer.php> . Put the web site of this article on the board or poster so those who wish to do so may read the entire article.
  - a. an orientation rather than a method which has an objective with a dynamism that moves beyond all things into the very depths of God
  - b. study, principally of sacred revealed Truth
  - c. meditation
  - d. goal of contemplative action in the world
  - e. use of the body
7. Connect St. Dominic's nine ways of prayer with some ways the participants pray .
8. The second part of this session is about Lectio Divina. Some Inquirers may not be familiar with Lectio Divina, so take the time to demonstrate this process briefly perhaps with one of the Scripture quotes from Prayer/contemplation of from the daily readings. Check the Resources page on this web site to access some teaching suggestions such as : <http://www.beliefnet.com/Faiths/Catholic/2000/08/How-To-Practice-Lectio-Divina.aspx> Some steps might include reading, reflection, response, rest (contemplation).

9. The third section of this session is a look at Dominican contemplation and the motto “Contemplata aliis trader” (to give to others the fruits/benefits of one's own contemplation). Read the ninth paragraph of fr. Parmisano’s article aloud. The discussion that follows should gently move the listener to an understanding that contemplation is a deeper step than simply meditation and that contemplation for a Dominican impels that person to preach.
10. To understand that contemplation for the Dominican is NOT just a relationship between the person and God, discuss the meaning of one or more of the following quotes about or by Dominicans taken from fr. Murray’s article.
  - a. God speaking to St. Catherine about His care of the world: "My daughter, see now and know that no-one can be taken away from me...They are mine. I created them and I love them ineffably. And so, in spite of their wickedness, I will be merciful to them...and I will grant what you have asked me with such love and sorrow".
  - b. The painting of St. Dominic on wood in Bologna: “One small detail worth noting is the way Dominic's right hand takes hold of the bread so decisively, while his left hand, no less firm and strong, holds on to the table. The Dominic of this painting, like the Dominic of history, clearly possesses a very firm and very vital hold on the immediate world around him.”
  - c. “The world and the Word of God should not, Chenu insisted, be separated. "Our priority is to go out to the world. The world is the place where the Word of God takes on meaning."
  - d. “Catherine longs to be with Christ. But her passion for Christ compels her, as a Dominican, to want to serve the Body of Christ, the Church, here and now in the world, and in any way she can. Her anguish of longing comes from her awareness that all her efforts are inevitably limited. She writes: "I am dying and cannot die; I am bursting and cannot burst because of my desire for the renewal of holy Church, for God's honour, and for everyone's salvation".”
  - e. “But what she (Catherine) did not approve of at all was the cowardly silence of certain ministers of the Gospel who, in her opinion, ought to have been crying out loud and clear on behalf of truth and justice. "Cry out as if you had a million voices", she urged, "It is silence which kills the world".”

**Community:** The presenters may decide to introduce the participants to the Dominican Rosary by praying the Rosary together instead of praying the Liturgy of the Hours. If this option is chosen, please ask the participants ahead of time to bring a rosary with them. Since instruction in praying the Dominican Rosary is discussed in Candidacy, simple instructions and the example of veteran Dominicans present should suffice at this time. You may want to consult one of several web sites for assistance such as:

[www.confraternityoftheholyroosary.org/DominicanRosary.html](http://www.confraternityoftheholyroosary.org/DominicanRosary.html) or  
[www.domlaitydenver.org/dominicanRosary.pdf](http://www.domlaitydenver.org/dominicanRosary.pdf).

**Apostolate:** Be particularly attentive to ways that the participants are already preaching in their daily lives.

**Conclusion:** If the discussion advances as most such discussions on Dominican prayer and contemplation, it may be difficult to end the session. Perhaps asking the participants to spend a minute or two to jot down a quick list of additional topics, thoughts, or questions for journaling may assist in bringing closure to this time.

**Follow-up:** Contact with one another before the next meeting is strongly encouraged.

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