Lay Dominican Assembly 2022: website update

Following last year’s Assembly in September 2021, 4 Lay Dominicans (Ambrose, Alanna-Michelle, Marystella and myself), all from different fraternities, volunteered to update the website. Our group was subsequently joined by Felice, who is our link to the Provincial Council. When we started work, the website consisted of 4 or 5 pages, each with a few paragraphs of plain text, out of date contact details and broken links.

Over the last 12 months we have rebuilt it. There are some posters, but please do have a look at the website itself if you haven’t already done so.

A brief summary of what we have done:

* A lot of behind the scenes work to improve security and navigation.
* Introduced an active news page as the front page.
* Set up pages for each fraternity
* Started to build a resources section, with key documents from Lay Dominicans, but also liturgies and presentations which have been produced in various fraternities and may be useful for others.

It looks a whole lot better. But it’s only a success if it is used.

And it will only be used if the content is what you want and need.

So we need your help. Please:

* Send us news items
* Send us photographs
* Send us information for your Fraternity page
* Let us know if you find anything that’s out of date, or broken links
* Send us resources you’ve developed for your fraternity that other people can use
* Fill in the questionnaire. In a letter to fraternities we explained that we want the website to reflect the real people who are Lay Dominicans in our province. Wouldn’t it be more interesting if our website’s page about becoming a Lay Dominican wasn’t just dry text, but had quotes from real people about how they first came across the Dominicans, what happened when they made their profession, and why it’s important to them. To do that, we need quotes and contributions. The questionnaire and accompanying letter were sent out by the Provincial Council to all fraternities back in March, with a request to forward it on to everyone – and we have had ONE response. I have plenty of copies of the questionnaire available here.

In May this year we linked the website to the Facebook page, working with Mary O’Duffin. We made some updates to the Facebook page:

* updated the name of the page – it’s now Lay Dominicans English Province. It was previously named Lay Dominicans Provincial Council, so it sounds much more as if it’s for everyone.
* We’ve updated the ‘About Us’ information to say who we are and provide a link to the website.
* we’ve continued to share Dominican stories from other Facebook pages (International such as the General Chapter which has just taken place in Mexico but also from the Dominican family in our province, e.g. ordinations at Blackfriars and professions from the sisters).
* We’ve also been putting more of our own news on it. We share everything we put on the website to Facebook, as well as sometimes putting more photos there.

Since we did the refresh, there are many more people following our Facebook page (In May, the day before we made the changes, there were 1178, today 2947). They are from all over the world, including very many Lay Dominicans from other provinces.

By now, you are possibly asking what this has to do with the theme of today’s Assembly: ‘Looking Towards an Apostolic Future’.

Firstly, and very practically, it’s hard these days to look towards any sort of future without asking the question: Is there possibly an on-line aspect to this? The website is there to be used, without each fraternity having to think about how to go about setting up and maintaining an on-line presence. Just send us whatever you want to publish.

Secondly, as each fraternity considers how it is looking forward, we are probably full of ideas, perhaps concerns and potentially new initiatives. The website provides a place where we can share our progress, celebrate our life as a province, as a community, and open up our apostolate to each other and to anyone who visits our website (they may be asking what it is, exactly, that Lay Dominicans do).

If you want to know more about the website, please come and talk, to me, or to any of the group, look at the posters, take a questionnaire (and return it!) and get in touch.