

The Rule and Directory of the Lay Dominican

Fraternities of the English Province

2018

Ineffable Creator,
Who, from the treasures of Your wisdom,
have established three hierarchies of angels,
have arrayed them in marvellous order
above the fiery heavens,
and have marshalled the regions
of the universe with such artful skill,

You are proclaimed
the true font of light and wisdom,
and the primal origin
raised high beyond all things.

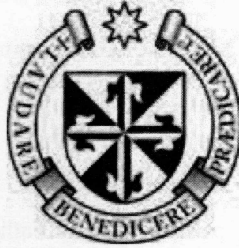
Pour forth a ray of Your brightness
into the darkened places of my mind;
disperse from my soul
the twofold darkness
into which I was born:
sin and ignorance.

You make eloquent the tongues of infants.
refine my speech
and pour forth upon my lips
The goodness of Your blessing.

Grant to me
keenness of mind,
capacity to remember,
skill in learning,
subtlety to interpret,
and eloquence in speech.

May You
guide the beginning of my work,
direct its progress,
and bring it to completion.
You Who are true God and true Man,
who live and reign, world without end.
Amen.

St. Thomas Aquinas



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**CURIA GENERALIS ORDINIS PRAEDICATORUM TO THE LAY
FRATERNITIES OF SAINT DOMINIC**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord and Saint Dominic:

Joyfully I give you the text of the Rule of the Lay Fraternities of Saint Dominic, which has very recently (January 15, 1987) been definitively approved by the Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes.

The text of the preceding Rule, promulgated by Father Aniceto Fernandez in 1969, was approved by the Holy See on an experimental basis. The General Chapter held in Rome in 1983 commissioned the Master General of the order to hold an international meeting of the Dominican Laity in order to renew and adapt the Rule of the Dominican Laity. This meeting, held in Montreal, Canada, June 24-29, 1985, produced the text which is now definitively approved.

Let this Rule be in your hearts and in your fraternities as a gospel ferment to nourish holiness and promote the apostolate together with the whole Dominican Family.

Greetings in the Lord.

Given at Rome, January 28, 1987, on the Feast of Saint Thomas Aquinas:

Damian Byrne, OP *Master of the Order*

(The Rule in Latin - Part IV - has been taken out of this document but may be obtained from the Curia website.)

THE RULE OF THE LAY FRATERNITIES OF SAINT DOMINIC

I. THE FUNDAMENTAL CONSTITUTION FOR THE DOMINICAN LAITY

Laity in the Church

Paragraph 1

1. Among the disciples of Christ, men and women living in the world, have in virtue of Baptism and Confirmation, been made sharers in the prophetic, priestly and royal office of our Lord Jesus Christ.

They are called to this so that Christ's presence may be brought to life in the midst of peoples and that "the divine message of salvation be made known and accepted by all people throughout the world". (*Vatican Council II, Apostolicam actuositatem, Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, 4, par. 3*)

Dominican Laity

Paragraph 2

2. Some of them, moved by the Holy Spirit to live a life according to the spirit and charism of Saint Dominic, are incorporated into the Order by a special promise according to statutes proper to them.

Dominican Family

Paragraph 3

3. They are united in communities, and they constitute with other groups of the Order, one Family. (*Book of the Constitutions and Ordinations of the Friars of the Order of Preachers, LCO, 141*)

Special Character of the Dominican Laity

Paragraph 4

4. They are accordingly marked out both by their own kind of spiritual life and by their service to God and neighbour in the Church. As members of the Order, they share its apostolic mission, by study, prayer and preaching according to the state proper to lay persons.

Apostolic Mission

Paragraph 5

5. They follow the example of Saint Dominic, Saint Catherine of Siena and our forbears who illumined the life of the Order and the Church, and strengthened by their fraternal communion, bear witness above all to their own faith, listen to the needs of their contemporaries, and serve the truth.

Paragraph 6

6. They pay careful attention to the principal goals of the church's present-day apostolate, driven in a special way to show real compassion to all who are troubled, to defend liberty and to promote justice and peace.

Paragraph 7

7. Inspired by the charism of the Order, they are mindful that apostolic activity comes out of an abundance of contemplation.

II. LIFE OF THE FRATERNITIES

Life of the Fraternities

Paragraph 8

8. They are, to the best of their ability, to live in true fraternal communion inspired by the beatitudes, and to express this in all circumstances by exercising the works of mercy and by sharing what they have with members of the fraternities, especially the poor and the sick; by offering suffrages for the deceased; so that that all may ever have one heart and one mind in God. (*Acts, 4:32*)

Paragraph 9

9. Whilst taking part in the apostolate with the brothers and sisters of the Order, members of the fraternities are to share actively in the life of the Church, always prepared to work with other apostolic associations.

Paragraph 10

10. The following are the chief sources from which the lay members of Saint Dominic draw strength to advance in their proper vocation, which combines at one and the same time the contemplative and the apostolic:

- a. listening to the Word of God and reading the Sacred Scripture, especially the New Testament;
- b. daily participation (as far as possible) in the celebration of the liturgy and participation in the Eucharistic sacrifice;
- c. frequent celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation;
- d. celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours in union with the entire Dominican Family, as well as prayer in private, such as meditation and the Marian Rosary;
- e. conversion of heart according to the spirit and practice of evangelical penance;
- f. assiduous study of revealed truth and constant reflection on contemporary problems under the light of faith;
- g. devotion to the blessed Virgin Mary, according to the tradition of the Order, to our holy father Saint Dominic and to Saint Catherine of Siena;
- h. periodic spiritual retreats.

Formation

Paragraph 11

11. The purpose of Dominican formation is to provide for true adults in the Faith, so that they may be ready to welcome, celebrate and proclaim the Word of God. It belongs to each province to draw up a program:

- a. whether of progressive formation for beginners;
- b. or of permanent formation for all, even for members living apart from a fraternity.

Paragraph 12

12. Every Dominican must be prepared to preach the Word of God. It is in this preaching that Christians, baptised and strengthened by the Sacrament of Confirmation, exercise the prophetic office. In today's world, the preaching of the Word of God must extend in a special way to defending the dignity of the human person, as well as life and the family. Promoting

Christian unity and dialogue with non-Christians and non-believers is also part of the Dominican vocation.¹

Paragraph 13

13. These are the principal sources to advance Dominican formation:

- a. the Word of God and theological reflection;
- b. liturgical prayer;
- c. the history and tradition of the Order;
- d. more recent documents of the Church and the Order;
- e. awareness of the signs of the times.

Profession or Promise

Paragraph 14

14. In order to be incorporated into the Order, members are bound to make profession, that is a promise in which they formally promise to live a life according to the spirit of Saint Dominic and the way of life prescribed by the Rule.

This profession or promise is either temporary or perpetual.

The following or a substantially similar formula is to be used for making profession:

To the honour of almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of Saint Dominic, I, __ __, promise before you __ __, the President of this Fraternity/Chapter, and __ __, the Religious Assistant, in place of the Master of the Order of Friars Preachers, that I will live according to the Rule of the Laity of Saint Dominic [for three years] or [for my entire life].

¹ *Note: By a mistake this paragraph 12 in its second part is missing from Analecta SOP 1987 pp. 82-87, but substantial part of the only official Latin version approved by the Holy See on January 15, 1987 – Prot. #D. 27-1-87*

III. ORGANISATION AND GOVERNMENT OF THE FRATERNITIES

Paragraph 15

15. The Fraternity is the suitable means for the dedication of each person to the nourishment and growth of his or her own vocation. The frequency of meetings differs with fraternities. Each member's fidelity is indicated by his or her assiduity.

Paragraph 16

16. The admission of candidates, given that the prescriptions of the Directory in regard to the state of persons and the time for admission have been observed, is committed to the lay person responsible, who after having taken a decisive vote of the Council of the Fraternity, proceeds with the Religious Assistant to the reception of the candidate in a rite determined by the Directory.

Paragraph 17

17. After the time of probation determined by the Directory and with a favourable vote of the Council of the Fraternity, the lay person responsible, together with the Religious Assistant, receives the profession, either temporary or perpetual.

Jurisdiction of the Order and Autonomy of the Fraternities

Paragraph 18

18. Lay Fraternities are under the jurisdiction of the Order; however, they enjoy that autonomy proper to the laity, by which they may govern themselves.

(In the Whole Order)

Paragraph 19

19. a. The Master of the Order, as successor of Saint Dominic and head of the entire Dominican Family, presides over all the fraternities in the world. It is his responsibility to preserve the integral spirit of the Order in them, to establish practical norms in accordance with the needs of specific times and places and to promote the spiritual good and apostolic zeal of the members.

b. The Promoter General represents the Master of the Order for all the fraternities, and transmits their desires to the Master or the General Chapter.

(In the Province)

Paragraph 20

20. a) The Prior Provincial presides over the fraternities within the territorial limits of his province, and, with the consent of the local Bishop, establishes new fraternities.

b) The Provincial Promoter (brother or sister) represents the Prior Provincial, and is by right (*pleno iure*) a member of the Provincial Lay Council. He/she is appointed by the Provincial Chapter, or by the Prior Provincial with his Council, after the Provincial Lay Council of the Dominican Laity has been heard.

c) A Provincial Council of the Laity of Saint Dominic is to be established in the territory of the province. Its members are elected by the fraternities and are regulated according to the norms defined by the Directory. It belongs to this Council to elect a provincial President.

(Governance in Fraternities)

Paragraph 21

21. a) A local Fraternity is governed by a President with his or her Council, who assume the full responsibility for direction and administration.

b) The Council is elected for a specific time and in the manner established by particular Directories. The President is elected by the councillors from among the members of the Council.

c) The Religious Assistant (brother or sister) assists members in doctrinal matters and the spiritual life. He or she is nominated by the Prior Provincial, after he has first heard the Provincial Promoter and the local Laity Council.

(National and International Councils)

Paragraph 22

a) Where there are several Provinces of the Order within the territory of the same nation, a National Council can be instituted, according to the norms established by particular Directories.

b) An International Council can be formed in a similar way if it seems opportune, after the fraternities of the entire Order have been consulted.

Paragraph 23

23. Fraternity Councils can send their proposals and petitions to a Provincial Chapter of the Friars Preachers; Provincial and National Councils to a General Chapter. To these Chapters some representative members of the fraternities are to be readily invited for treating matters which concern the laity.

Statutes of the Fraternities

Paragraph 24

24. The statutes proper to the lay fraternities of St Dominic are:

- a. The Rule of the Fraternities (Fundamental Constitution of the OP Laity, the norms of life, the governance of the fraternities)
- b. General Declarations, whether of the Master of the Order, or of General Chapters.
- c. Particular Directories

To complete the legislative work concerning the Lay Fraternities of St. Dominic, we approve and promulgate the following 'General Declarations of the Rule of the Lay Fraternities of Saint Dominic' by the authority which we hold. Thus the observance of the Rule shall be attained more easily and with greater spiritual fruitfulness.

Given at Rome, on February 16, 1987

Fr. J.Martin O.P. *Secretary*

Fr. Damian Byrne O.P. *Master of the Order*

General Declarations of the Rule of the Lay Fraternities of St Dominic²

1. The Rule by which the lay fraternities of St Dominic are governed, is the fundamental law for lay fraternities of the whole world; the present General Declarations, promulgated by the Master of the Order, are explanations or interpretations of the aforementioned Rule: national or provincial Directories drawn up by the fraternities themselves *and approved by the Master of the Order*,^{3+ 4} are norms particular to local fraternities.
2. So that lay brethren and sisters may fulfil their obligations “not like slaves under the law but like free persons under grace” we declare that transgressions do not constitute a moral fault.
3. Superiors of fraternities can legitimately dispense from the prescriptions of the Rule or Directory, for a time or habitually, if they judge this opportune.
4. Priors Provincial have the power to convalidate invalid acts of a Fraternity, particularly regarding admissions to profession or a promise.
5. In addition to lay Fraternities for which this Rule is intended, there are priestly Fraternities which are governed by a rule proper to them.
6. Individual Directories should determine among other things:
 - a. conditions for admission to a Fraternity;
 - b. the time for probation and profession or promise;
 - c. the frequency of Sacraments, and the prayers which the lay brethren and sisters should each day raise to God;
 - d. the frequency of fraternity meetings and the form of their celebration, also the frequency of spiritual retreats;
 - e. both the internal constitution of each fraternity and the common constitution of the fraternities of a province or country;

² Taken from *Analecta SOP 1987* p. 88

³ Modified by Ordination of the 1992 General Chapter (Mexico), no. 201: “We ordain that the Directories of the Dominican Laity, national or provincial, should be approved by the corresponding Provincial Chapter(s) of the Province(s) in which these entities are established”

⁴ Also modified by Ordination of the 2007 General Chapter (Bogotá), no. 244: “We ordain that the Directories of the Dominican Laity, national or provincial, should be approved by the Provincial with his Council in the Province(s) in which these entities are established.”

- f. the procedural manner of election of these officers about whom there is found nothing determined in the Rule;
- g. the manner and limitation of dispensation;
- h. suffrages for deceased brothers and sisters and for the whole Order.

7. The Rosary is a traditional devotion in the Order. By it the mind is raised to an intimate contemplation of the mysteries of Christ through the mediation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Therefore its daily recitation is commended to the lay brethren and sisters of St Dominic.

THE DIRECTORY OF THE LAY DOMINICAN FRATERNITIES OF THE ENGLISH PROVINCE

Approved by the Lay Provincial Council on 12th July 2014

I - PREAMBLE

This Directory is submitted for the approval of the Prior Provincial and his Council (General Chapter of Trogir 2013 (n. 188), 2007 General Declarations (II § 1). It sets out the ways in which the Rule of the Lay Dominican Fraternities approved at the International Congress of the Laity at Montreal in 1985 is to be applied.

II – THE SPECIAL CHARACTER OF OUR DOMINICAN WAY

1. Who are we?

- a. We are Christians who want to understand and to live the message of Christ in our family, in our parish, in the Church, in our working lives, in the world to which we are open.
- b. We are Christians who take our inspiration from St Dominic. Moved by the discovery of the Word of God and the desire to make it known, we want to set ourselves to listen to the needs of the people of our time.
- c. We are Christians who gather in Fraternities and who are members of the Dominican Order.

2. Our mission

The mission of the laity of the Dominican Fraternities forms an integral part of the apostolic mission of the whole Order.

3. Our spirituality

In order to nourish their particular vocation which intimately links contemplation and apostolate, the lay followers of St. Dominic give first place to:

- a. Listening to the Word of God and the reading of the Scriptures.
- b. Regular sharing in the Eucharist and the use of the sacrament of Penance.
- c. Liturgical prayer such as the recitation of the Divine Office in union with all the Dominican Family, personal prayer, meditation and the Rosary (cf. 24).
- d. Assiduous study of the Scriptures and constant reflection on contemporary problems by the light of faith.
- e. Concern for a shared evangelical poverty.
- f. Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary according to the tradition of the Order, and to St. Dominic and St Catherine of Siena.
- g. Periodically, days of spiritual renewal.
- h. In accord with the tradition of the Order, each Fraternity unites in prayer for the dead of the Order and of the Fraternity.

III – STAGES ON THE WAY TO JOINING THE LAY DOMINICANS

First contacts

4. Fraternities are to welcome enquirers of 18 years and over who profess the Catholic faith. Having met the enquirer, the President will report to the Council so that they may consider whether he or she is interested in the special Lay Dominican character, has the ability and the desire to become part of the common life of the Fraternity, and has the interest and the capacity to develop through study.

5. During their exchanges, the President shall make it clear that the process of admission and formation is directed towards life membership of the Order by a solemn promise known as profession.

Welcoming newcomers to the Fraternity

6.

a. The aim of the time of welcome is to allow the new arrival to get to know the spirit and the activities of Dominican life, and to help the Fraternity to assess the possibility of making him or her part of their fellowship.

b. At the end of this period of welcome, which shall normally last a year at most, the candidate is to be invited to begin a time of deepening his or her understanding (initial formation). The Council shall agree to this and inform the Fraternity. The member may be Admitted and their name is then written into the register of the Fraternity.

The Time of First Formation

7. This period of deepening understanding allows the person, with the help of the Fraternity, to become familiar with the Dominican charism, to consider his or her desire to share in the mission of the Order and to follow an organised course of formation. The Fraternity also gets to know the new member.

8.

a. The accompaniment of candidates preparing to make their first engagement to the Order is entrusted to the Formation Officer. The Formation Officer shall be approved by the Council and shall have made Perpetual Profession unless the Lay Provincial Council allows otherwise (cf. 20).

b. These are the principal sources to advance Dominican formation:

- i. The Word of God and theological reflection
- ii. Liturgical prayer
- iii. The history and tradition of the Order
- iv. More recent documents of the Church and of the Order
- v. Awareness of the signs of the times (Rule, 13).

Profession

9.

a. To be incorporated into the Order, the members of the Fraternities must make their profession. This consists of a formal promise to live according to the spirit of St Dominic and the form of life set out in the Rule of the Lay Fraternities. This profession is first Temporary and then Perpetual. It is made to the Master of the Order who is represented by the President of the Fraternity, and in the presence of the religious assistant.

b. Dominican life is nourished by regular prayer, fraternal life including taking part in the monthly meeting of the Fraternity, the practice of mutual help and sharing, study and personal formation, the proclamation of the Word and the apostolate, and attentiveness to the events of the times; these we need to understand so as to discern the apostolates to which we are called.

10. Once the time of preparation for profession has been completed according to the established norms, the candidate may ask to make Temporary Profession for three years. The member may at his or her own request or at the Council's suggestion, renew Temporary Profession, but not beyond another three years. Someone who has completed six years of temporary profession who does not wish to proceed to perpetual profession must renew his/her temporary profession each year. For the first three years his/her formation is carried out under the direction of the member(s) responsible for formation.

11. His or her time of Temporary Profession completed, the candidate may ask to make Perpetual Profession, that is, for life. Otherwise he or she is free from the engagement previously made.

12. Admission to profession is always by the secret vote of the Fraternity Council.

13. If a person, having made perpetual profession, wishes to be dispensed from living as a Lay Dominican, either temporarily or permanently, s/he is to address this request in written form to the Prior Provincial, copied to the Provincial President, giving reasons for the request and supporting evidence where available. The Prior Provincial will write to the petitioner to inform him/her of the outcome. In the case of the dispensation being granted, the Prior Provincial

will send a copy of this notice to the president of the petitioner's fraternity and the Provincial President. The record of profession will be amended to note the date of dispensation granted.

In the case of a person who requests a dispensation in order to enter religious life, in accordance with Canon 1198 (CIC), the promises of Lay Dominican life are automatically suspended for as long as the person remains in the religious institute, but resume if the person should return to the secular state.

Isolated Members

14.

a. Members of a local Fraternity, who for reasons of their removal to a distance, advancing age, or ill health, or for some other reason no longer attend its meetings, or who have belonged to Fraternities that have disbanded, remain full members of our Order and are linked to us by a fraternal bond.

b. They may be admitted to another local Fraternity. In this case the President of the new Fraternity (and the President of the former Fraternity, if it still exists) shall consult with the member and approve this choice. The Provincial Promoter may be asked to advise if need be.

c. They may, if there is a reasonable chance that these will flourish, seek the approval of the Council for the setting up of new Fraternal Groups.

d. They may be admitted to the Lone Lay Dominican Fraternity which shall be presided over by an Organiser appointed by the Lay Provincial Council for the period of the Council's mandate. The Organiser shall take steps to keep in touch with isolated members and by himself or herself, or with the help of another, circulate a Newsletter. A religious assistant shall be appointed to the Fraternity by the Provincial on the advice of the Organiser and the Lay Provincial Council.

e. Since the Lone Lay Fraternity cannot meet to elect members going to a Chapter, the Organiser shall be delegated by the Lay Provincial Council to arrange a postal vote to choose a delegate or even delegates to the Chapter, to the number that the outgoing Lay Provincial Council shall determine.

f. Those who have not already been admitted to the Order by a Fraternity shall in no case be received to membership as a Lone Lay Dominican, but shall be guided towards a Fraternity or Fraternal Group, for only in this way can their vocation be discerned, the path of formation undertaken, and the fraternal dimension of Dominican life be assured.

g. The Lone Lay Dominican Organiser shall be invited to attend the Council at least once a year to report progress and present the accounts of the Lone Lay Fraternity and its Newsletter. Travel expenses shall be provided by the Council.

IV – THE ORGANISATION OF FRATERNITIES AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

The Lay Dominican Fraternity

15. Lay Fraternities are under the jurisdiction of the Order, however, they enjoy that autonomy proper to the laity, by which they govern themselves. The Prior Provincial presides over the Fraternities within the territorial limits of his Province, and, with the consent of the local Bishop, establishes new Fraternities. The Provincial Promoter (Brother or Sister) represents the Prior Provincial and is a member of the Lay Provincial Council, though without either active or passive voice (cf. Rule nn. 18 and 20 and 2007 General Declaration IV §3).

The Election of a new Fraternity Council

16.

a. All the members of the Fraternity are convoked in writing at least three weeks before the date of the election. Before the election, the Fraternity shall vote to determine the number of members who are to form the Council. The Fraternity Council shall be composed of between three and nine persons and shall be elected to serve for four years.

b. All those who have made their Temporary Profession are electors. All those who have made their Temporary or their Perpetual Profession may be elected to the Council.

17. The Fraternity Council is elected one by one. The vote is always secret. An absolute majority is needed for the first three ballots and a simple majority for the fourth and final ballot. If a tie results, a fifth ballot is held to determine between the candidates. If there is again a tie, the elder in order of Temporary Profession is declared elected.

18. Members of the Fraternity who have been absent from the monthly meeting for a year on the day when the convocation to the election is issued lose their right to vote and may not be elected, unless the Fraternity Council shall determine otherwise.

The Election of the President of the Fraternity Council

19.

a. Once the Council is elected its members shall elect the President from amongst their number for a period of four years. The vote is secret; an absolute majority is needed on the first two ballots, a simple majority for the following ballot which closes the election. The election of the President by any other method requires the prior approval of the Provincial Council on pain of invalidity.

b. To be elected President a member must be Perpetually Professed. A member who is Temporarily Professed may be postulated for by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast. It falls to the Lay Provincial President with the consent of the Lay Provincial Council to accept the postulation.

20. The President chairs the meeting of the Council. He or she convenes it according to need and at least twice a year. The religious assistant or a majority of the members of the Council may require that the Council be convoked.

21. The President submits to the Council for approval the name of the person responsible for formation. This may be someone who is not a member of the Council. In that case he or she takes part in the meeting of the Council when formation is on the agenda. Should the person chosen not be Perpetually

Professed, the nomination must be confirmed by the Lay Provincial President who shall consult the Lay Provincial Council.

The Responsibilities of the Fraternity Council and its President

22.

a. The Council, led by the President, exercises its power of decision each time it is required to do so by the Rule and by this Directory. With the President and the religious assistant, it watches over the spiritual life, the unity and the development of the Fraternity.

b. The decisions of the Council concerning admission to Temporary and Perpetual Profession are always taken by a secret vote and by an absolute majority of the votes cast.

c. The Council shall inform the Lay Provincial President of the result of every new election and of all future professions. The Council shall inform the Lay Provincial President of the result of every new election and of all future professions.

d. The Religious Assistant takes part in the deliberations of the Council but exercises no vote.

e. The Council shall organise the election by the Fraternity, by a secret vote, of the delegate(s) of the Fraternity to the election of the Provincial Council.

f. The Council shall at its first meeting appoint a Treasurer. It is the responsibility of the Treasurer to draw up the budget, present the annual accounts and countersign financial instruments, with the exception of cheques which need only a single signature.

g. In a spirit of openness and of ecumenism, the Fraternity Council may agree that people who are not members of the Fraternity may from time to time, or for a determined period, take part in the activities of the Fraternity.

h. Each Fraternity shall assist according to its means in the expenses incurred in the management and functioning of the Lay Council of the Province.

- i. The President and the treasurer of the Fraternity shall render an account to the Council of its financial affairs.
- j. If it judges it advisable to do so, the Council may in certain matters solicit the consultative or even the decisive vote of all the members of the Fraternity.

The Frequency and Style of Fraternity Meetings

23. The meetings of the Fraternity will normally take place at least monthly. This rhythm, the necessary minimum for the life of the group, shall not be departed from without a serious reason. The style of the meetings will depend on the situation of each Fraternity and its needs and aspirations, and this is left to the appreciation of the President of the Fraternity in agreement with his or her Council.

24. The study of things that lead us to God, in which Scripture has prime place, prayer in community in our Dominican tradition, inquiries and friendly exchanges that respond to the calls we hear from the Church and from our world. These provide the driving force at our meetings to make us open to the urgent claims of the world. They shape our action and our witness in continuation with the mission of Christ.

25.

a. The brothers and sisters are to recite Morning and Evening Prayer of the Divine Office every day if possible, attend Mass, if possible daily, especially on feasts of Dominican saints, frequent the sacrament of penance, and recite five decades of the Rosary in the course of the week. They shall also take care to practise mental prayer or the prayer of the heart.

b. At the monthly meeting of the Fraternity Mass is to be celebrated if a priest is available, and the prescribed Chapter prayers recited, including prayers for the Master and for the good of the Order and the suffrages for the departed brothers and sisters of our Order.

c. Each brother and sister shall make a retreat or at least share in a day of recollection once a year. Fraternities shall where possible observe the custom of

the English Province and keep a special day of prayer, fasting and abstinence for peace and social justice during the seasons of Advent and Lent.

d. The President or Secretary of the Fraternity shall communicate news of the death of a brother or sister to other members of the Fraternity. The Lay Provincial President and the Secretaries of other Fraternities and Fraternal Groups shall also be advised. The Fraternity shall attend a Mass for the repose of the soul of the departed.

e. Members shall have a Mass offered annually for deceased brothers and sisters of the Order at a time and date when it is possible for them to attend.

Fraternal Groups

26.

a. The lay followers of St Dominic have a care to foster and encourage new foundations, in order that the Order may be more and more present especially in places where there are no houses of the friars or of the Sisters. It shall be the concern of the Lay Dominican Council with the assistance of the Provincial Promoter to take every opportunity to found new groups and also to bring together into fraternity members who may be isolated (cf. 14 b).

b. In addition to what is laid down in the Rule (20 a) about the founding of new Fraternities, a Fraternity in process of formation shall be known as a Fraternal Group. A new group which has at least five temporarily or perpetually professed members is eligible to seek permission to become a Fraternity. A Religious Assistant shall be appointed for the Group by the Prior Provincial in the usual way (cf. 42).

c. Where a Fraternity is reduced to four or fewer members who have made at least Temporary Profession, the Lay Provincial Council may, having consulted the members and the Provincial Promoter, ask the Prior Provincial to reconstitute it as a Fraternal Group.

27.

- a.** The life and mission of a Fraternal Group shall in every respect follow the pattern of the Fraternities, except that since the Fraternal Group has an insufficient number of members to elect a Council and to vote on the admission and profession of new members, it falls to the Lay Provincial Council, having consulted the members and the Provincial Promoter.
- b.** to appoint a Convenor and a Formation Officer, who may be the same person, for a period that it shall determine.
- c.** to admit to membership, and to Temporary and Perpetual Profession, candidates for the Dominican Laity who shall be proposed by the Convenor.
- d.** to secure for the Fraternal Group the visits of the President of the Council and the support of other Fraternities and members of the Provincial Council.

V – THE ORGANISATION OF THE FRATERNITIES ON THE LEVEL OF THE PROVINCE

The Lay Provincial Assembly

28.

- a.** The Lay Provincial Assembly is made up of all the members of the Fraternities who have made Temporary or Perpetual Profession, the Provincial Promoter and the religious assistants.
- b.** The Lay Provincial Council may invite to the Assembly members who are still on their way to profession and members of Fraternal Groups who have as yet made no engagement to the Order (cf. 49c). Others should be able to attend but only as non-voting observers.
- c.** The Assembly gathers at least every four years or when convened by the Provincial President with the agreement of the Lay Provincial Council and the Promoter. The Assembly is to be convened at least three months before the date of the Assembly.

The Remit of the Assembly

29.

- a. To consult and exchange ideas about matters proposed by the Lay Provincial Council, by Fraternities and by individual members for the advance of the life and mission of the Fraternities.
- b. To send petitions to the General Chapter of the Friars, to the Provincial Chapter of the friars of the English Province, and to the European Council of Lay Fraternities.

The Lay Provincial Chapter

30.

- a. The Lay Provincial Chapter is convened in order to elect the Lay Provincial Council by a secret vote for a period of four years.
- b. The Lay Provincial Chapter is composed of:
 - i. The President of each Fraternity or his or her representative.
 - ii. The Organiser of the Lone Lay Fraternity or his or her representative.
 - iii. Representatives elected by and from the professed members of each Fraternity: one from a Fraternity with up to eight professed, two from Fraternities with between nine and sixteen professed, and three from Fraternities of seventeen or more professed.
 - iv. One professed member elected by, and from among, the professed members of the Lone Lay Dominican Fraternity for every completed multiple of twenty members on the Register of the Fraternity.
 - v. Up to two members of a Fraternal Group, at the discretion of the Lay Provincial Council.
 - vi. The outgoing Lay Provincial President *ex officio*.

c. The elected representatives of the Fraternities shall be elected in the same manner as the Fraternity Council, save for members of the Lone Lay Dominican Fraternity, who shall vote in a manner to be determined by the Lay Provincial Council.

31.

a. The Chapter is convened by the Provincial President who shall give three months' notice of the date.

b. Two months before the Chapter meets the President of each Fraternity shall send to the Provincial President the names of those attending the Chapter.

c. The Provincial Promoter and the Religious Assistants attend the Chapter without the right to vote.

The Electoral Procedure of the Lay Provincial Chapter

33. The Chapter must allow for a free discussion about the different possible candidates (also called a *tractatus*).

34. The Provincial Council shall be elected in the same manner as the members of a Fraternity Council. After electing the Councillors the Chapter shall elect four substitute Councillors in the same manner as the election of Fraternity Councillors (cf. 18).

The Lay Provincial Council

35.

a. The Lay Provincial Council is composed of eight members elected by the Lay Provincial Chapter, the Provincial Promoter, and a representative of the Dominican Association. When a member of the Council cannot complete his or her term for any reason, the substitute member who received the most votes at the Lay Provincial Chapter (cf. 33) replaces that member to complete the mandate.

b. The Provincial Promoter represents the Prior Provincial and is a member of the Lay Provincial Council. He or she is appointed by the Provincial Chapter,

or by the Prior Provincial with his Council, after the Lay Provincial Council has been heard (Rule, 20 b). The Promoter has neither active nor passive voice (2007 General Declaration IV, § 3).

c. In order to foster unity and cooperation among the members of the Dominican Family so that the gifts of all the members may be called forth in the service of the charism of preaching the Gospel (cf. Constitution of the Dominican Association of Britain and Ireland), the Council invites the Dominican Association to appoint a Dominican Sister of apostolic life to the Lay Provincial Council. The Sister has neither active nor passive voice.

The Remit of the Council

36.

a. To elect from amongst its members the Lay Provincial President, the Treasurer, the Secretary, the Formation Officer, the Communications Officer and the Events Officer. The election is held by a secret vote with an absolute majority required for the first two ballots and a simple majority thereafter. The Provincial President and the Formation Officer shall have made their Perpetual Profession.

b. To take all initiatives and coordinate such measures as will promote the development, growth and vitality of the Fraternities and Fraternal Groups whilst safeguarding the traditional and specific values of the Order of Preachers.

c. To nominate the Convenor of a Fraternal Group that does not have the right to elect (cf. 26a), having taken the advice of the Provincial promoter and the Religious Assistant concerned.

d. To create and to develop amongst the Fraternities a real contact and a vital link by means of the newsletter, meetings, workshops to promote our apostolate, common study and inquiry, days of formation and retreats, etc.

e. To establish and maintain national and international relations of the Fraternities of the Province with the Order and the Dominican Family.

- f.** To decide on suitable ways to meet its financial needs and to establish an annual budget with the help of the Treasurer.
- g.** To request of the Fraternities and fraternal groups a contribution equal to its running costs.
- h.** To arbitrate in the case of any conflict or dispute that may arise, if it is appealed to or if the interests of the community demand it, in cooperation with the Provincial promoter.
- i.** To ask the Prior Provincial to expel a member of a Fraternity or Fraternal Group.
- j.** To inform the Provincial Promoter should an Admitted or Professed Member leave a Fraternity.
- k.** To appoint a representative (normally the Lay Provincial President) to the committee of the Dominican Association.
- l.** To appoint a delegate to accompany the Lay Provincial President to the assemblies of the European Lay Dominican Council.
- m.** To appoint the Editor of the Lay Provincial Newsletter, and other office holders as may be found useful for four years.
- n.** To invite the Organiser of the Lone Lay Dominican Fraternity to attend the Council once a year to report on the progress of that Fraternity.
- o.** At the Lay Provincial Council's discretion, to invite other members and specifically representatives of Fraternal Groups and also members of other Dominican associations and movements to attend its meetings. The Lay Provincial Council is to cover the costs of their travel. All observers must retire if required to do so by the Council.

The Mission of the Provincial President

37.

The Provincial President is the representative of the Fraternities of the Province.

The President:

- a.** Takes the chair at meetings of the Council.
- b.** Convenes the Council.
- c.** Convenes the Province Assembly and the (elective) Chapter with the consent of the Council.
- d.** Submits all important matters, and serious questions of discipline, to the vote of the Council.
- e.** Takes care to visit the Fraternities during his or her term of office.
- f.** Gives his agreement, having consulted the Council, to the setting up of new Fraternal Groups and new Fraternities. It is for the Prior Provincial to formally erect Fraternities (cf. Rule 20a).
- g.** Attends assemblies of the European Lay Dominican Council.

The Mission of the Treasurer

38.

- a.** It is the responsibility of the Treasurer to draw up the budget, present the annual accounts to the Council and to counter-sign financial instruments.
- b.** The President, Secretary and Treasurer have access to a bank account under the name "Dominican Laity." Cheques require only one signature.

The Mission of the Secretary

39.

- a. The Secretary writes the minutes of the Council, the Assembly and the Chapter and keeps the records of the Council.
- b. The Secretary sends the letters convoking members to these meetings.

The Mission of the Formation Officer

40.

- a. The Formation Officer presents the Council with the formation programme that has been worked out in cooperation with the promoter.
- b. He or she promotes this programme in consultation with the Formation Officers of the Fraternities.

The Mission of the Communications Officer

41. The Council will elect a Communications Officer to manage the website and a database of all Lay Dominicans in the Province to facilitate communications.

The Mission of the Events Officer

42. The Events Officer is to organise such events as the Council may decide.

The Province Newsletter

43.

- a. It is desirable that the Editor or an assistant be among those elected to the Council.
- b. The Editor submits the accounts of the Newsletter to the Council.
- c. They are separate from the general accounts of the Fraternities of the Province.

VI – THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PROVINCIAL PROMOTER AND OF RELIGIOUS ASSISTANTS

The Provincial Promoter

44. The Promoter is the representative of the Prior Provincial of the English Province, appointed by the Provincial Chapter or by the Prior Provincial and his Council, having taken the advice of the Lay Provincial Council.

The Religious Assistant of the Fraternity

45. The Religious Assistant – Brother, Sister, member of the Priestly Fraternity or lay person – is appointed for four years by the Prior Provincial with the advice of the Provincial promoter and the Council of the Fraternity (see Rule, 21 c and the Acts of the General Chapter of Rome, 1983, Chapter XVI on the Dominican Family, section B on the promotion of the Dominican Family, n° 277 Declaration).

VII – INCOMPATIBLE JOBS AND RENEWED TERMS OF OFFICE

46. The job of Provincial President may not be combined with any post in a Fraternity.

47. He or she may not serve for more than two consecutive terms of office without a dispensation given by the Prior Provincial at the request of the Lay Dominican Council.

48. The President of a Fraternity may not serve for more than two consecutive terms of office without a dispensation given by the Prior Provincial at the request of the Fraternity Council.

VIII – SUBSTITUTION OF OFFICE BEARERS

49. When a member of a Fraternity Council cannot complete his or her term of office for whatever reason, the Council shall, when it next meets, choose a replacement by a secret vote.

50. Where the Provincial President or the President of a Fraternity cannot complete a term of office, the election of new Presidents is held according to the provisions of this Directory (cf. 35 a, and 19).

51. In all cases, the newly-elected person shall serve for the time remaining of the term of office of his or her predecessor.

IX – FRATERNAL CORRECTION

52. Should a brother or sister who has made a temporary or perpetual promise cause offence by reason of grave inobservance of the Rule or the Directory, or through a persistent lack of fraternal charity, the President of the Fraternity shall with all patience and kindness attempt to resolve the matter. If after every effort the member refuses to be at peace with the Fraternity, recourse is to be had to the 2007 General Declaration VII § 1 and 2 governing Dismissal and eventual reincorporation into the Order (See Declaration VII on p. 14).

X – TRANSFER BETWEEN PROVINCES

53. When a brother or sister leaves the country to take up residence abroad for any length of time, and wishes to be admitted to a new local Fraternity, the provision of 14 a applies. In that case the President of the Lay Dominican Council, or if need be the Provincial Promoter, shall be asked to write to the President of the new Fraternity to introduce and commend the member.

XI – DISPENSATIONS

54.

a. Where there is a need, the Prior Provincial can dispense from those norms of the Rule and the Directory which are not of divine law or ecclesiastical common law. He may grant a particular dispensation for each Fraternity, even in a stable form and without limit of time.

b. The President of the Fraternity can legitimately dispense from non-constitutive norms and not divine or purely ecclesiastical law of the Directory in specific circumstances and for a specified time (See Declaration III on pp. 12 - 13).

XII – THE APPROVAL OF THE DIRECTORY AND SUBSEQUENT REVISION

55. The competent authority for the approval of the Directory is the Lay Provincial Council. It is then promulgated by the Prior Provincial of the Province of England with his Council (2007 General Declarations III). Subsequent revisions may be proposed by the Prior Provincial or by the Lay Provincial Council. The members of the Fraternities are to be consulted about proposed changes. Even if the modifications are on the initiative of the Prior Provincial, they must be approved by the Lay Provincial Council before promulgation by the Prior Provincial with his Council, unless the Master of the Order intervenes.

INFORMATION FROM THE LAITY OFFICE AT ROME

Dear Sisters and Brothers in St. Dominic - and all those who are interested in being informed about the Statutes governing Lay Dominican Fraternities/Chapters!

Several years ago, my predecessor, Fr. Jerry L. Stookey, O.P., asked Fr. Columba Ryan, O.P. to convoke a team of Latinists of the English Province of Dominican friars to prepare an English translation of the Rule of Lay Fraternities of Saint Dominic. Important differences in the translation of the text have been experienced around the world, hence it was necessary to have as literal a translation from the Latin as possible.

The original text in Latin was published in the *Analecta of the Order*, 1987, pp.82-87. Owing to an error, Article 2 of Paragraph 12 of the approved final text of the Rule was omitted. Lay Dominican Provincial Chapters of English-speaking countries, with the approbation of their prior provincials, have the right to produce a modified translation when the language pattern used in their particular country differs from this 'British' English version. It is imperative to adhere strictly to the concept of the original Latin of the Rule, approved by the Holy See on January 15, 1987.

The Rule was drawn up two years before by the International Congress of Lay Dominican Fraternities, Montreal, June, 1985. As Lay Dominican Fraternities/Chapters are integrated to the Order of Preachers via the friars, they pertain not to the Pontifical Council of the Laity as do "associations of the faithful" but to the Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes. This Rule declares (§ 24) that it has to be observed together with the General Declarations, approved by the Master of the Order and his Council and of the General Chapters, as well as national or provincial Directories adapted to local requirements, approved by the provincial authorities.

Lay Dominican Fraternities/Chapters should not regard the Statutes from a solely juridical aspect but as an aid to inspire the Lay Dominicans' vocation as preachers of God's love and mercy for his creation, in union with the other branches of our Order. To "Release the Fullness of our Preaching – catching Fire from Dominic's Vision" – the motto of the time of jubilee commemorating the 800th anniversary of the foundation of the Order of Preachers – the following texts may be a continuous helpful guideline!

Rome, Feast of the Holy Rosary, October 2007

Fr. David Michael Kammler, OP

Promoter General of Dominican Laity

THE RULE OF THE DOMINICAN LAITY (BACKGROUND)

The Dominican Laity originated in its present form with the promulgation of the first Rule under Munio de Zamora, Master of the Order, in 1285. The spiritual origin of the Laity was in the penitential movements centred around St Dominic, who gathered around himself groups of the laity for the spiritual and material defence of the Church and for apostolic work. The Laity has existed, under various names, as long as the Dominican Order itself and has always performed specific functions and collaborated closely with the other branches of the Dominican Family.

There have been five Rules of the Dominican Laity since the foundation of the Order. The First was that promulgated by Munio de Zamora in 1285, for the "Brothers and Sisters of Penance of St Dominic". The Rule of Munio, slightly amended, received Papal approval in 1405. This Rule survived for centuries, serving the laity and being adopted for other branches of the Dominican Family.

The Second Rule, adapted to the new Code of Canon Law in 1917, was approved in 1923 under Master Louis Theissling, with the title: "Rule of the Secular Third Order of St. Dominic".

After Vatican II, the need was felt for a new Rule or an updating of the 1923 Rule; accordingly, the Third Rule was approved in 1964. However, the General Chapter of River Forest in 1968 proposed a Fourth Rule, which was promulgated by Master Aniceto Fernandez in 1969 and approved on an experimental basis by the Sacred Congregation for Religious in 1972 under the title: "Rule of the Lay Fraternities of St Dominic". With this title, reference to "Third Order" had disappeared, to be confirmed by legislation of the 1974 General Chapter abolishing such terms as First, Second or Third Order.

Finally, after the promulgation of the new Code of Canon Law in 1983 and the "Bologna Document" on the Dominican Family in 1983, the General Chapter of Rome in 1983 commissioned the Master of the Order to hold an International Congress of the Dominican Laity in order to renew and adapt its Rule. The Congress was held in Montreal, Canada, in 1985 and a new Rule was prepared. This, the Fifth Rule, the "Statutes of Fraternities of Lay Dominicans", was approved by the Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes in January 1987 and promulgated by Master Damian Byrne on 28 January 1987.

The Dominican Laity is governed by these "Statutes of Fraternities of Lay Dominicans", by the General Declarations of the Master of the Order and General Chapters and by Provincial or national Directories, covering questions of local organisation and practice, as provided for in the Rule and the General Declarations.

These Directories are prepared by the Laity in the local area and are submitted for approval to the pertinent authority (LCO 149).

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CONGREGATION FOR RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR INSTITUTES

Prot. #D. 27-1-87

The Master General of the Order of Preachers on March 14, 1986, through the Procurator General, sent this Congregation the text of the Rule of the Lay Fraternities of Saint Dominic in order to obtain a definitive approval of the text.

After mature consideration and paying attention to the favourable vote of the Congress, this Congregation by force of the present decrees approves the text, of which there is an exemplary in the Archives of the Congregation, together with the corrections of the Congress presented in the letter sent with it.

Anything to the contrary notwithstanding. Given at Rome on January 15, 1987.

Archbishop Vincent Fagiolo,

Jerome Cardinal Hamer, OP,

Secretary

INTRODUCTION to the 1992 Rule and Directory

By Columba Ryan OP

The Rule falls into three distinct parts: the Fundamental Constitutions, the Rules of Life and Administration, which reflects a similar division in the Brethren's own *Constitutions*. It is not for nothing that we are all members of the one Order.

The Fundamental Constitution, brief as it is (and perhaps just because it is brief) gives a marvellous account of the *essentials* of any Dominican vocation and in particular of the lay Dominican vocation. It emphasises that to be a Dominican is to live as a member of a community, and to take one's share in the Order's apostolic mission; from the earliest days we were known as the Order of Preachers. It reminds us of our need to be living in the world of our day, sensitive to its present needs. It reminds us that our *preaching must be rooted in contemplation* with its fine balance of study and prayer.

The second part, on the life of the fraternities, will repay constant reflection. The practical implications of being members of a community (para. 8) are insisted upon as is also our inescapable vocation to apostolic mission (para. 9); then there follows a paragraph (para. 10) to which we might well return again and again, where the day-to-day resources for living a full Dominican life are set out. How much do we use them?

An absolutely necessary part of our life is constant formation; its purpose is to make each one of us ever more effective preachers of the Word (paras. 11 and 12). We might do well to ask ourselves what use we in fact make of the several means of formation listed (para. 13). Perhaps we should make far more effort to help one another find available materials for the Order's history and tradition, and to understand the documents of the Church and Order, to say nothing of learning to 'read the signs of the times'. If so this must be a joint enterprise to which all kinds of people in the Province, lay and religious, could valuably contribute from their own experience and reading. That is why we need more and more communication between the fraternities and the different parts of the Dominican Family.

Finally we are reminded that our life involves a serious commitment (para. 14). It is this which sets us firmly within the Order. I need hardly add that it is a commitment not made just once in the past, but to be renewed at every turning point in our lives and in every decision we have to make.

The third part of the Rule is of less daily importance. It provides a necessary series of regulations, but is not something to live by unless we want to confuse legalities with life. It puts the structures in place and tells us Who is Who. It is useful as long as this life lasts. When we come into our abiding city with God and into life eternal, we hope to be free of all these temporal arrangements.

**From the Handbook for the Lay members of the Order of Saint Dominic of
2009.**

**Forward by fr. Timothy Radcliffe, Friar of the English Province, former
Master of the Order.**

This is, to the best of my knowledge, the first handbook for the Lay Dominican Fraternities that has been published in England for 115 years. It marks the profound transformation that has taken place in the Order's understanding of the Lay Dominicans in that time. They are no longer seen as an outer fringe of the Order, a weak lay imitation of religious life, with 'priors' and 'prioresses'. The Lay Fraternities preserve their profound links with the brethren, but now they are recognized as having their own way of life, mission and dignity.

What do Lay Dominicans do? During my travels around the Order I was astonished by the variety of forms of Lay Dominican life. I came across Lay Dominicans who preached in market places, ran hospitals or leprosaria, or taught in schools, or just met together from time to time to read the Scriptures and to pray. This may sound rather vague, but in this they are like other branches of the Dominican Family. I have met brethren who are academics, parish priests, chaplains in prisons and hospitals, who fly airplanes and travel in caravans with gypsies.

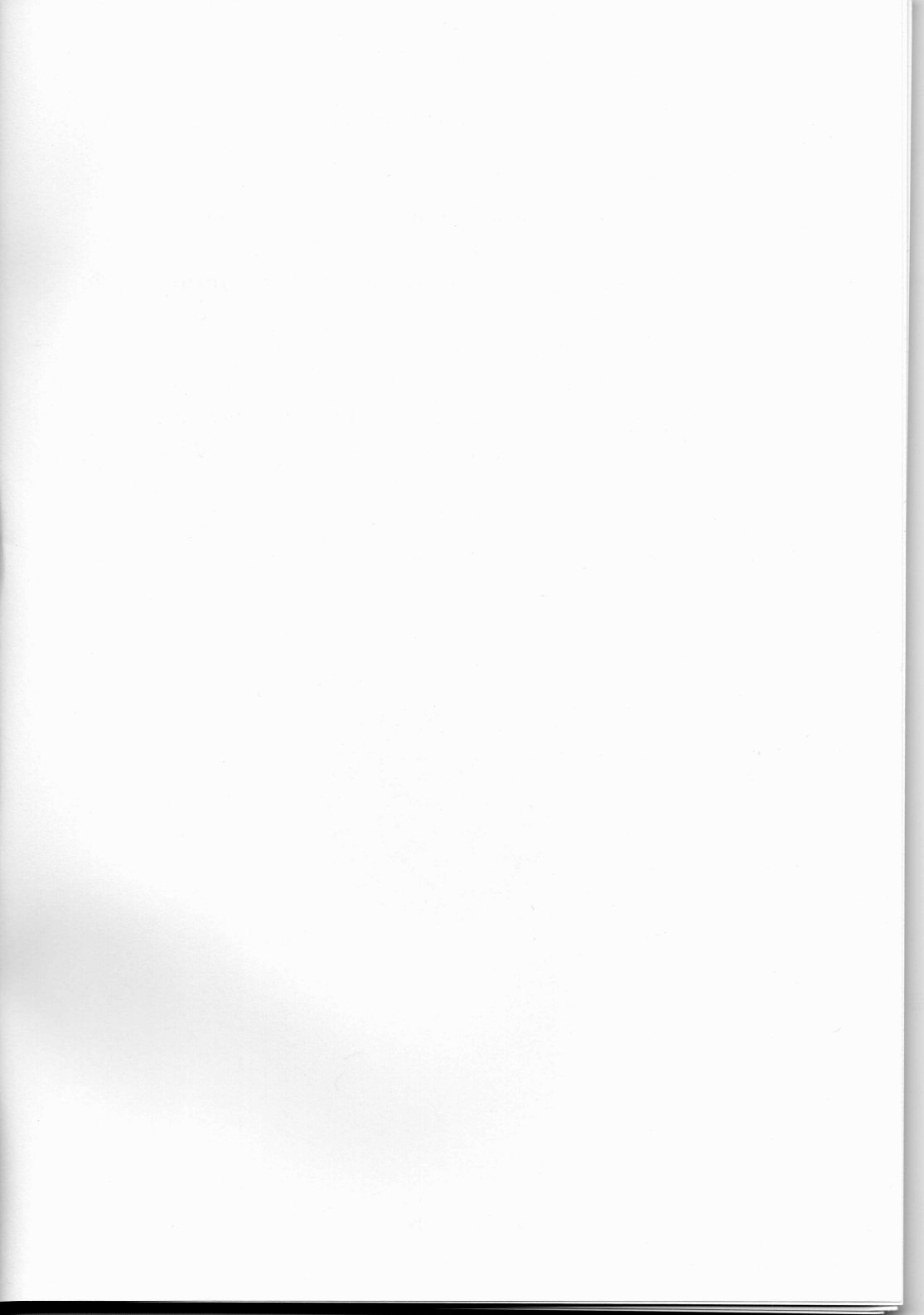
There are the fundamental elements of the Dominican life that are shared, in different ways, by all the branches of the Dominican Family.

Preaching: St. Dominic founded the Order for the preaching of the gospel. This too should be central to the life of the Lay Dominicans. Many do this through a quiet witness to the gospel where they live and work, often in touch with people whom the brethren and sisters cannot reach. This is an incomparable blessing for the Order. Some Lay Dominicans are directly involved in preaching the gospel. For example, in Vietnam there are tens of thousands of Lay Dominicans who work in teams, preaching the gospel in remote mountain areas. There is a fraternity of Lay Dominicans who are academics and another who are serving terms, mostly for life, in a prison in the United States of America. In recent years General Chapters, and indeed the whole Church, have come to see that pursuit of Justice is a central part of our preaching the gospel.

Study: This can range from a full academic formation to fraternities who gather to read the Scriptures together. Perhaps the greatest priority for Lay Dominicans today is to have a good theological formation to support their preaching of the gospel. Theology is often seen as laborious and obscure, even useless. For us Dominicans, theology is part of our love affair with God. It belongs to the attentiveness to God's Word, with all our hearts and minds. For us love and knowledge are deeply linked.

Prayer: Dominicans tend not to have complex techniques of prayer. It has often been thought of as part of our friendship with God. We speak to God as a friend. Sometimes we may even remember to listen as well! Central to our tradition is the Prayer of the Church, the recitation or singing of the breviary. Some Lay Dominicans are able to pray the Office with the brethren or sisters, and very often our monasteries of contemplative nuns are the centres around which the Dominican Family gathers.

Community: Dominicans are not called to be solitary preachers, but to speak from the shared life of the Order. In 1511, when the Spanish in Hispaniola, in the Americas, went to protest to Pedro de Cordoba against Antonio de Montesinos, who had been preaching in favour of the dignity of the indigenous people, Pedro said, 'It is the whole community that preached.' Lay Dominicans also should preach out of the experience of community. This is often just the monthly meeting of a fraternity but in some parts of the world it takes a more permanent form, as with the Lay Dominicans who run the leprosaria near Manila. But whatever the structures, it should be marked by friendship. For St. Thomas Aquinas, our relationship with God is that of friendship. We enter into the mystery of the friendship of the Father and the Son, which is the Holy Spirit. So if we are to preach that friendship with God, study it, and grow into it in prayer, then we must live it in our relationships with each other. May St. Dominic be with you in all your preaching of the gospel.



A Dominican Blessing

May God the Father bless us,
May God the Son heal us,
May the Holy Spirit enlighten us and give us eyes to see with,
ears to hear with,
and hands to do the work of God with,
feet to walk with,
and a mouth to preach the word of salvation with,
and the angel of peace to watch over us and lead us at last,
by our Lord's gift, to the kingdom.

Amen.

