



ORDER OF PREACHERS

RULE OF THE LAY FRATERNITIES OF SAINT DOMINIC

APPROVED BY THE CONGREGATION FOR INSTITUTES OF CONSECRATED LIFE AND
SOCIETIES OF APOSTOLIC LIFE (2019)

I. THE FUNDAMENTAL CONSTITUTION OF THE DOMINICAN LAITY

LAITY IN THE CHURCH

1 - Among Christ's disciples, men and women living in the world are made participants in the prophetic, priestly and royal office of our Lord Jesus Christ by virtue of their baptism and confirmation. They are called to make Christ's presence radiant in the midst of all peoples so that "the divine message of salvation may be known and accepted everywhere by all people" (*Apostolicam Actuositatem* 3, 3).

THE DOMINICAN LAITY

2 - Some lay people, moved by the Holy Spirit to lead a life according to the spirit and charism of St Dominic, are incorporated into the Order by a special promise according to their own statutes.

THE DOMINICAN FAMILY

3 – They are gathered in communities and form one family with the other groups of the Order (cf. LCO, 141).

THE SPECIFIC CHARACTER OF THE DOMINICAN LAITY

4 – They are therefore marked in a particular way both in their own spiritual life and in service of God and neighbour in the Church. As members of the Order, they participate in its apostolic mission through study, prayer and preaching, in accordance with their condition as lay people.

THE APOSTOLIC MISSION

5 - Following the example of St Dominic, St Catherine of Siena and our forebears who lit up the life of the Order and of the Church, the laity of St Dominic, strengthened in fraternal communion, bear witness in the first place to their own faith, are attentive to the needs of people of the present time, and serve the truth.

6 - They carefully reflect on the particular objectives of the present apostolate of the Church, and are dedicated in a special way to showing true mercy to all, defending freedom, and promoting justice and peace.

7 - Inspired by the charism of the Order, they are mindful that apostolic action proceeds from an abundance of contemplation.

II. THE LIFE OF THE FRATERNITIES

FRATERNITY LIFE

8 - The members of the Lay Fraternities of St Dominic are to strive to live an authentic fraternal communion according to the spirit of the Beatitudes, which must be constantly manifested through carrying out works of mercy, sharing the resources at their disposal with the other members of the Fraternity, especially with the poor and the sick, and offering prayers for the deceased, so that all may be always one soul and one heart in God (Acts 4:32).

9 - Taking part in the apostolate with the brothers and sisters of the Order, the members of the fraternities are to participate actively in the life of the Church, always ready to collaborate with other apostolic groups.

10 – The following are the main sources from which the laity of St Dominic draw in order to advance in their own vocation, which is both contemplative and apostolic at the same time:

- a) Listening to the Word of God and reading Sacred Scripture, especially the New Testament.
- b) Liturgical celebration and participation in the Eucharistic sacrifice, if possible on a daily basis.
- c) The frequent celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- d) The celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours in union with the whole Dominican Family, as well as private prayer, such as meditation and the rosary.
- e) The conversion of the heart according to the spirit and practice of Gospel penitence.
- f) The assiduous study of revealed truth and constant reflection on contemporary problems in the light of faith.
- g) Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary according to the tradition of the Order, to our Holy Father St Dominic and to St Catherine of Siena.
- h) Periodic spiritual retreats.

FORMATION

11 - The objective of Dominican formation is to form people who are truly mature in the faith, so that they are able to receive, celebrate and proclaim the Word of God.

It is up to each Province to elaborate a programme:

- a) of progressive formation for beginners.
- b) of permanent formation for all, even those who are isolated.

12 - Every Dominican should be able to preach the Word of God. In this preaching the prophetic office is exercised by the baptized Christian, strengthened by the sacrament of Confirmation.

In today's world, the preaching of the Word of God should extend in a special way to the dignity of the human person and also to defence of life and of the family. Promoting Christian unity as well as dialogue with non-Christians and non-believers also belongs to the Dominican vocation.

13 - The main sources for a complete Dominican formation are:

- a) The Word of God and theological reflection
- b) Liturgical prayer.
- c) The history and tradition of the Order
- d) Contemporary documents of the Church and the Order
- e) Understanding of the signs of the times.

THE PROFESSION OR PROMISE

14 - In order to be incorporated into the Order, members must make a profession or promise by which they formally commit themselves to live according to the spirit of St Dominic, in accordance with the way of life prescribed by the Rule. This profession or promise may be temporary or perpetual. In making profession, the following form, or one substantially similar, is to be used:

“To the honour of Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of St Dominic, I, N.N., in the presence of you, N.N., prior (president) of this fraternity, and N.N., religious assistant, in the place of the Master of the Order of Friars Preachers, promise to live according to the Rule of the Lay Fraternities of St Dominic (for three years)/(for my whole life)”.

III. THE STRUCTURE AND GOVERNMENT OF THE FRATERNITIES

15 - The Fraternity is the ideal means for the dedication of each member to the nourishment and growth of his or her own vocation. The frequency of meetings is different according to the fraternity. The regular attendance of each member testifies to his or her own fidelity.

16 - Having observed the prescriptions of the Directory concerning the conditions required and the time of admission, the admission of candidates is entrusted to the lay person responsible for the fraternity, who, after the deliberative vote of the Council of the fraternity, proceeds to the reception of the candidate according to the rite determined by the Directory, with the religious assistant.

17 - After the time of probation determined by the Directory and the favourable vote of the Council of the fraternity, the lay person responsible receives the temporary or perpetual profession, together with the religious assistant.

THE JURISDICTION OF THE ORDER AND THE AUTONOMY OF THE FRATERNITIES

18 - The fraternities of the laity are subject to the jurisdiction of the Order; but they nevertheless enjoy that autonomy proper to the laity, by which they govern themselves.

IN THE WHOLE ORDER

19 - a) The Master of the Order, as the successor of St Dominic and head of the whole Dominican Family, presides over all the fraternities of the world. It pertains to him to keep intact in them the spirit of the Order, to establish practical norms according to the exigencies of time and place, and to promote the spiritual good and apostolic zeal of the members.

b) The Promoter General represents the Master of the Order in all the fraternities and presents their views to the Master or to the General Chapter.

IN THE PROVINCES

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

b) The Provincial Promoter (brother or sister) represents the Prior Provincial and participates with full rights in the Provincial Council for the Laity. He or she is appointed by the Provincial Chapter or by the Prior Provincial with his council after consultation with the Provincial Council of the Laity of St Dominic.

c) In the territory of each Province there is a Provincial President and a Provincial Council of the Laity, elected by the fraternities and regulated in accordance with the norms established in the Directory.

IN FRATERNITIES

21 - a) A local fraternity is governed by a president with his council, who take on full responsibility for the direction and administration of the Fraternity.

b) The President and the Council are elected for the time period and in the manner established by the particular Directories.

c) The religious assistant (brother or sister) assists the members in doctrinal matters and in the spiritual life. He or she is appointed by the prior provincial after consultation with the provincial promoter and the local Council of the laity.

THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL

22 - a) Where there are several provinces of the Order in the same national territory, a National Council may be instituted, according to norms established in the particular Directories.

b) Likewise, there may be an International Council, if it seems appropriate, after consultation with the fraternities of the whole Order.

23 - The Councils of the fraternities can send views and petitions to the Provincial Chapter of the Friars Preachers; Provincial and National Councils can send them to a General Chapter.

Some of the people responsible for the Fraternities should willingly be invited to these Chapters to deal with matters that regard the laity.

THE STATUTES OF THE FRATERNITIES

24 – The proper Statutes of the lay fraternities of St Dominic are:

a) The Rule of the Fraternities (Fundamental Constitution of the OP Laity, norms of life and government of the fraternities).

b) General Declarations of the Master of the Order or of a General Chapter.

c) Particular Directories.