

Convent of Santa Sabina, Rome, Sunday 27 April 2025, Octave Day of Easter.

JOINT LETTER TO THE LAITY OF THE ORDER OF PREACHERS

Dear brothers and sisters,

This Easter Season, we remember that the grace preached by Dominic and which earned him the title of ‘Preacher of Grace’ (*Praedicator Gratiae*) was “*the gospel of God’s merciful love*”.¹ If there has ever been a Dominican way of speaking of the Risen One, it was that: a gaze that contemplates with love, a voice that preaches with compassion and tenderness, a heart that weeps for and with his brothers and sisters.²

It was Jesus’ way, and it was also Dominic’s way. And it is the way to which all the laity of the Order are called, as we respond to a call that constitutes an authentic vocation; a way open to baptised members of the Church that transcends differences. When we join a lay fraternity or an IDYM community, the DNA of the Dominican charism makes us feel at home.

In this light, Pope Francis recognised and confirmed a truth that we already see: the sap of Dominic’s charism, of his way of being Christian, which flows through all the branches of the tree of the great Dominican Family, is always the same.³ And for the laity, this is a beautiful reality: the youth movement and the fraternities are two distinct arteries of the same road. Although they sometimes seem to lead to different destinations, they unite us in the same charism. This is why we must act among ourselves with the fraternity and coordination of a *synodal* community of brothers and sisters who walk together. We must recognise ourselves in the brother or sister who walks the same path with us.

The first step is to heed the call made to us by the General Chapters of the Order and the assemblies of each branch at the international level. With the support of Master Bruno Cadoré and as a result of the III International Assembly of Fatima 2018 of the Lay Fraternities, new provisions were established in the General Declarations to facilitate the transition between a youth community of the DYM and a lay fraternity.

Ordinarily, an aspirant should complete one year of initial reception and three years of temporary promise (cf. General Declarations, 6 § I). However, if this aspirant “has received an equivalent formation in the International Dominican Youth Movement”, then he or she, on a case by case basis, “may be dispensed from part of initial formation by the President of the Fraternity with the consent of the Council. In this case at least one year of temporary promise is to precede perpetual promise.” (General Declarations, 6 § II).

In response to this gesture of goodwill, the Lisbon Assembly thanked the Lay Fraternities for their consideration and urged the IDYM International Commission to work together with the Promoter for the Laity and the International Council of Lay Fraternities (Minutes of the Lisbon 2023 International Assembly, No. 7).

Thus, this letter is a heartfelt appeal to all parts of the world where Lay Fraternities and communities of the DYM coexist, to work together with love and good will. It is our explicit wish and hope that wherever appropriate, the Lay Fraternities avail of the possibility of appropriate dispensation for the initial formation of young people coming from the DYM.

Similarly, during the meeting of the International Commission of the Dominican Family in November 2024, in the presence of the Master of the Order, we analysed the fact that many communities of young people journey through formation together and grow old at the same time. This provides a precious opportunity for young people to continue their vocational journey in the Order, while maintaining their lay status and their commitment to the Dominican charism.

Whenever this happens, we ask each Provincial Council of the Lay Fraternities (or whoever takes its place) to discern, and if appropriate, enthusiastically accompany the creation of new lay fraternities, even in cities where one already exists. There is nothing to prevent the creation of more than one lay fraternity in a single city or in a single convent if this is deemed appropriate. We believe that this will have a direct and immediate impact on the transition processes of the young people of the DYM. We also announce that in the near future, we will provide supplementary materials to complement the content and invitations of this letter, which will serve as a guide for Lay Fraternities and DYM groups.

Fraternally your brothers in Christ and St. Dominic,



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With the support of:



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General Promoter for the Laity

References

1. Pope Francis (2021) *Praedicator Gratiae*. Letter of the Holy Father Francis on the Eighth Centenary of the death of St. Dominic of Caleruega. Available in: Holy See Press Office ([Bollettino Sala Stampa](#)). Fourth paragraph.
2. cf. *Libellus* (A History of the Beginnings of the Order of Preachers) by Blessed Jordan of Saxony, 13. Available in English in: Bro. Francis C. Lehner, OP (Ed.) (1964) *St. Dominic: Biographical Documents*. Washington, D.C.: The Thomist Press.
3. cf. Pope Francis (2021) *Praedicator Gratiae*. Op. cit., seventh paragraph.