

Rule of the Lay Fraternities of Saint Dominic

Helen Hawkins

May 16, 2021

The Specific Character of the Dominican Laity

Paragraph 4:

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

This paragraph speaks to me as an individual. How am I to respond as a Dominican given my own particular strengths and weakness? Before taking final vows it is imperative to search one's heart to understand what God expects from them. We must ask ourselves: How do I study? How do I pray? How can I preach? For me, the question, "How can I preach?" is the hardest for me to answer for I am not academic in nature nor do I speak well, and debating is out of the question for me. I am capable of arguing but that is not the same as debating. In spite of my misgivings about preaching, I know that in some way God alone has the answer for me and I know that He has brought me to St. Dominic for a reason – I have no clue as to what that reason is but there is a reason, and I will follow His lead.

Apostolic Mission

Paragraph 5:

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 our works of mercy, sharing the resources at the disposal with the members of 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)

This paragraph speaks to me as a member of our almost to be Dominican Chapter. Family, close friends, companions in a battle against forces of evil – however we want to describe ourselves we must see ourselves and each other as beloved children of God. Paragraph 5 mentions the Beatitudes, which are a sure guide for any organization. Another important scripture for us to understand is: 1 Corinthians 13:2

*If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and **all** knowledge, and if I have all faith so as to move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.*

As Dominicans we have great respect for knowledge, so much so, it can be easy for us to forget that love - true love in friendship and respect for one another is the glue that can hold a community together. No matter how much we study, no matter how much we understand the mysteries of our faith, without the bonds of friendship, trust and respect we hold for each other and for those who find their way to us, we will not survive as a chapter.