

## Discussion About the Structure of Dominican Chapters

On Apr 28, 2018 8:56 PM, Catheryn P Orive <catherynporive@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi again Helen,

I have a quick question for you about the last formation meeting...did the subject of the elimination of the nomenclature of first, second, and third, orders come up? After Vatican II, (I'll have to look up dates), the designations are no longer formally used, even though the habit persists in some places and within some groups. The Dominicans do not label the Lay groups as third orders anymore and the organizational structure is horizontal rather than vertical. This actually has interesting implications. I was planning on sharing the photograph from a book I have that illustrates this and will try to find it again so you can see it. We also are no longer formally labeled 'Dominican laity' but rather Lay Dominicans and this too is deliberate and reflects highlighting the central role of the lay members of the Order (over 250,000 strong by the way). We are the largest branch in the Order by far and evermore important as Fr. Cadore has highlighted on multiple occasions and in a formal way since the Jubilee. It is important to recognize that while we have a special relationship with the Friars, and just as the other branches, are under the main direction of the Master of the OP, we are NOT in any way supposed to be subservient to any other Dominican branch or associated group. This is deliberate. We are the only Order in the Church where this organizational structure exists.

When we get together again I can tell you a personal story of how this was exemplified by the Master himself with me in Denver a couple of years ago. I have had the great luck to have met and dined with him on two different occasions when he visited Denver. The last time, one of the Vietnamese members approached him with a question about Lay Membership and he deferred the question to me, as a Lay member. It was a very unexpected but natural and clever way to show that he does not either impose rules on the Lay branch, nor does he interfere in any way in the daily operations and structuring of the Lay branch. Since the woman's Chapter was with the Vietnamese Province here in Denver, we both suggested she inquire with them directly (Denver does not oversee them either).

It is of note that the OP is the oldest continuously operating democracy in the western world. All of this to say that while we may have a Friar, or Sister, or Nun, as a spiritual director, we also may have a professed Lay Member just as easily. And while we defer to the wisdom of our pastors in pastoral matters, we do not take orders from the Friars nor can they interfere in the organizational operations of the Lay Branch. It just isn't within their purview. Nor should it be. They have their work to do and we have ours. We are bound together through the mandates of Christ and must be empowered to act as full members of the Church, guided by the Spirit, and in our Order, under special protection of our Lady. Finally, we ARE under the supervision of our Provincial Council which has the responsibility to interpret and publish periodically, editions to the Rule and Guide for the lay members of the Order in each Province. So in a sense, it is Jonathan, and the Council (all lay members), who wields the big stick here ;)

That was longer than I thought! But it has been on my mind since last meeting so better to write it down I guess :)

All blessings!!

Cate