

# Lay Dominican Formation

The goal of Dominican formation is to continuously assist members in Christian formation, thereby deepening their response in faith, enabling them to receive, live and proclaim the Word of God more perfectly.

The stages of formation include:

**Getting to know one another:** Above all else, this first step allows the candidate to get to know the Order better. This step is normally conducted through regular meetings with one of the local chapters in the candidate's area. The vocation director at the candidate's local chapter will help the candidate discern whether or not he or she is made for Dominican life. If there is a positive response at the end of this step, the candidate will be invited to proceed to the next step.

**Inquiry Period:** People interested in the Order meet once a month to learn about the history of the Order, the four pillars – prayer, study, community, apostolic activity. They learn what is required for membership and what it means to discern. Coming to a successful completion of this first year, they are asked if they want to be received and, if so, are asked to complete official paperwork for reception. The reception celebration is explained to them. One must be Catholic for at least two years before beginning the inquiry period.

**Candidate (Novitiate):** After the new candidate receives his Dominican pin, he is officially welcomed as a member of the Dominican Order and begins his one year formal formation period. This is a more formal formation period in the life of a fraternity member. This period includes diverse activities: the study of the life of St. Dominic and other great Dominican figures, such as St. Catherine of Siena; the study of the Constitutions, the history of the Order, and the Rule of the Fraternities of St. Dominic; and the general practice of the commitments of a lay Dominican (e.g., daily Mass, Morning and Evening Prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours, daily Rosary).

**Temporary Profession:** Temporary profession is made to the Rule of the Lay Chapter of Saint Dominic following the Candidacy Year. Professions are made for three years. Profession consists of promises to live according to the Rule of the Chapter. Formation in Dominican life and spirituality continues during this time. At the end of this period, the candidate and the Order decide if the candidate is prepared to make final or permanent profession.

**Life Profession:** Life Profession is truly life transforming. This means that the member has fully integrated the Dominican way of life into his or her own way of life. When the decision is reached to move ahead and make final profession, the individual makes a commitment to live according to the Rule of the Fraternities of St. Dominic for the rest of his or her life.

**On-going Formation:** Dominicans are particularly committed to on-going formation both in the chapter and individually. Even though one has made a permanent commitment to be a Dominican, on-going study continues in the area of Dominican spirituality, the Scriptures, the teachings of the Church, etc. Dominicans are always concerned about growing in understanding of both their faith and their Dominican vocation.