



# Inquiry Formation

## *Meeting Four*

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### The Pillars of Dominican Life: Liturgical Prayer

Until about thirty years ago we had what was known as the Dominican Rite. We Dominicans celebrated Mass and Divine Office differently than the rest of the Western Church. The feature that most people noticed was that we took water and wine into the chalice at the beginning of Mass rather than at the Offertory. There were many other differences too but that was the most obvious. The reason we had our own rite was that at the beginning of the Order in the 13th century, there was no one officially approved way of celebrating Mass. Every city or area in Europe had its own variation of the liturgy. The Order was the first to move its men around all over. If a Dominican was moved from Cologne to Paris to Naples, let us say – as St. Thomas Aquinas was – he had to learn a whole new way of celebrating Mass every time he moved. It got so that our men were spending about as much time re-learning how to celebrate Mass as they were in preaching or teaching. Rather early on they got the idea of having just one rite for Dominicans no matter where they went. In 1256 Blessed Humbert de Romans, the fifth Master of the Order, issued a new unified liturgy. In 1267, Pope Clement VII approved it and Dominicans held to it until recently. The reason we able to do that was that when St. Pope Pius V in 1570 imposed on the whole Church what is correctly known as the Roman Rite – not Tridentine as some call it – he exempted those rites which had been approved for over two hundred years. Remember now, the Dominican Rite was approved in 1267 – 203 years before.

Also remember, St. Pius V was a Dominican which goes to show that it pays to have one of your men in the right place at the right time. When the new rite of the liturgy was approved in the 60's we adopted it because there were no strong reasons for holding on to our old Dominican Rite, especially since many of the features of the new rite were more similar to the old Dominican Rite than it was to the old Roman Rite. Our old Solemn Mass was even more magnificent than the Pontifical Mass celebrated by bishops. Its only problem was that it was so complicated that few of us were able to get through it without making quite a number of errors, and we had no Master of Ceremonies to keep us on the right track as the Roman Rite did.

The Dominicans have always been devoted to the Liturgy, going back to St. Dominic himself who had been a Canon Regular at the Cathedral in Osma, Spain. He loved the Divine Office and celebrated Mass every day that he could. Sometimes, of course, in his peregrinations around Europe he would be caught out in the middle of nowhere with no church around. But otherwise, he did not miss celebrating Mass or the Divine Office.

This love of the liturgy became central to Dominican life, a rich source of prayer and a powerful means of uniting ourselves to Christ. But before we go any further let us make sure that we clearly understand what the Liturgy is. It is the official worship of the Church, the Body of Christ, the



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People of God, offering praise and worship to God, to the Holy Trinity. It is centered in the Mass and expanded in the Divine Office or Prayer of Christians. When one joins in celebrating Mass or when he or she says the Prayer of Christians, even when saying it alone, he or she is joined to the whole Church in prayer, worship and praise.

Through the Liturgical Year, which begins with the First Sunday of Advent, we enter into the mysteries of Christ. We go through the life of Christ from the divine preparations for his coming to his birth at Christmas to the Epiphany and Baptism. We then have the beginnings of our consideration of his public life, but shortly thereafter, on Ash Wednesday, we plunge into Lent and the events leading up to his Passion and Death. Then comes Easter, the celebration of his Resurrection, Ascension into Heaven and the sending of the Holy Spirit upon the new Church. When that is over we will go back to the public life of our Lord to reflect on those three years he spent walking the dusty roads and hills of Galilee and Judea, preaching, teaching and healing.

Through the Liturgical Year, then, we come into intimate contact with Christ our Lord and re-live the mysteries that wrought our salvation, and through it we are enabled to become more like unto him. As Pere Festigire, a great French Dominican scholar, said, the liturgy is “the method authentically instituted by the Church to make souls like unto Jesus.” (Quoted in Pere Bernadot, O.P. in *Dominican Spirituality*, translated by Anselm Townsend, O.P., p. 87), or as Pere Bernadot himself says, “it is the most simple and certain way to become like unto Jesus Christ.” (Loc. cit., p. 91). Back in 1919, Abbot Columba Marmion published one of the great classics of our time, *‘Christ in His Mysteries’*, in which he shows how wonderfully the revelation of the Gospels concerning our Lord is taken up and elaborated by the liturgy during the year and how the whole effect of the Church’s worship is to furnish motives and means for the imitation of Christ. The Liturgy, then, is another one of those marvelous resources God has made available to us to grow in holiness. What a treasure we have! Not only did St. Dominic see and appreciate this, but also Dominicans down through the years have done so. They have – and still do – see it as an effective antidote to the activity of preaching and prevents the preacher from getting caught up in the hustle and bustle of traveling from place to place and also from becoming proud if he is successful and popular. The Liturgy is a constant reminder of his mission – to preach Christ and him crucified.

For those Friars engaged in teaching, the Liturgy prevented their study and preparation for classes and lectures from becoming cold and abstract speculation. In fact, it complements what they are studying for the Liturgy celebrates the mysteries of Christ which they are endeavoring to understand. As Pere Bernadot says: “This is living dogma speaking to the heart as well as the intelligence.” (op. cit., p.92) It should be noted that the Liturgy contains the fullness of Catholic teaching in its prayers, psalms, hymns, readings from Scripture and the Fathers of the Church . And we must remember as well that every word has been approved by the highest authority in the Church. It not only inflames the heart but also nourishes the mind because, as we have said, it brings us into intimate contact with Christ and his mysteries.

This was all well and good for the Friars who were, of course, fluent in Latin, because, for hundreds of years, that was, throughout the Western Church, the only language the Liturgy was in, but how about the lay people who were not able to understand Latin? Those who could not

read any language at all could recite a certain number of Our Fathers and Hail Mary's during the day. Later on, those who could read some language could say the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary. But it was the same office every day and after a while it became boring or, at least, monotonous. There was no variety to speak of, but our Dominican Laity would loyally and devoutly keep to it.

In 1970, everything changed. The Holy Father approved the revision of the Liturgy of the Hours, mandated by the Second Vatican Council, and shortly after, in 1975, an English translation was published and the laity could recite the Liturgy of the Hours right along with the clergy and religious. As Pope Paul said in the Apostolic Constitution approving the New Office:

*The Office has been drawn up and arranged in such a way that not only clergy but also religious and indeed laity may participate in it, since it is the prayer of the whole people of God.*

For this reason, the General Rule for all Dominican Laity, promulgated in 1987, recommended, "the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours in union with the whole Dominican family." Most Province Directories have a similar recommendation.

We use the word "recommends" rather than "obliges" because nothing in the Dominican Rule for any of its branches binds under the pain of sin. St. Dominic was most insistent on this. At any rate, you are fortunate to be able to join with the whole Order in reciting the Liturgy of the Hours. Look upon it as a privilege rather than an obligation, something you want to do because you get so much from it. If you have that attitude, then it will not be difficult to work in morning and/or evening prayer nearly every day anyway. Some days you cannot, so do not worry about it. The General Rule also recommends that the laity attend "as far as possible, daily Mass and Communion." Another advantage the revised liturgy has brought is evening Mass, which makes it so much easier for people to get to Mass on a daily basis. But as the Rule recognizes this is not always possible, and for many it will be impossible all the time because of the hours of work, a long commute, family and home responsibilities and a number of other factors over which we have no control. It is, however, an ideal and a goal we should keep in mind so that someday we will be able to. I am always amazed at the number of people who do make the sacrifice to get to daily Mass. They do it because they know from their own experience that participating in the renewal of the life-giving sacrifice of Christ on the Cross gives them spiritual strength to meet the trials, difficulties and hardships of life. The Mass, along with the Prayer of Christians, are the most powerful means available to us to grow spiritually, to become more like Christ, and enter more fully into his saving mysteries. Lay Dominicans of today are far more fortunate than those of earlier times. You are able to use the same rich resources of the Liturgy the Friars have used for nearly eight centuries to grow in the Dominican life and spirit, resources St. Dominic saw were essential for us to fulfill our mission of bringing truth to the world.

## ELEMENTS OF THE LITURGY OF THE HOURS

*Note: Postures are used in communal celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours.*

<b>Morning Prayer Lauds</b> (Soon after rising)	<b>Daytime Prayer Terce, Sext, None</b> (9 A.M., Noon, 3P.M.- one hour unless obligated to all three)	<b>Evening Prayer Vespers</b> (Early evening)	<b>Night Prayer Compline</b> (Just before bedtime)	<b>Office of Readings Matins</b> (Anytime of day)
Praise of and thanks to God, worship. Old Testament revelation leading to Christ.	Commitment to following Gods will. Obedience.	Fullness of revelation in New Testament. God sent His Son.	Trust God, Darkness and sleep symbol of Paschal mystery.	While the other hours are primarily speaking to God, this time is to listen to God.
<b>Introduction:</b> Stand Face Forward (Invitatory) Verse Doxology: Choral Stance Alleluia	<b>Introduction:</b> Stand Face Forward (Invitatory) Verse Doxology: Choral Stance Alleluia	<b>Introduction:</b> Stand Face Forward (Invitatory) Verse Doxology: Choral Stance Alleluia	<b>Introduction:</b> Stand Face Forward (Invitatory) Verse Doxology: Choral Stance Alleluia	<b>Introduction:</b> Stand Face Forward (Invitatory) Verse Doxology: Choral Stance Alleluia
<b>Hymn:</b> Stand Choral Stance	<b>Hymn:</b> Stand Choral Stance	<b>Hymn:</b> Stand Choral Stance	<b>Hymn:</b> Stand Choral Stance	<b>Hymn:</b> Stand Choral Stance
<b>Psalmody:</b> Sit  The antiphon at the beginning may be repeated at the end. Psalm prayers are optional.	<b>Psalmody:</b> Sit  The antiphon at the beginning may be repeated at the end. Psalm prayers are optional.	<b>Psalmody:</b> Sit  The antiphon at the beginning may be repeated at the end. Psalm prayers are optional.	<b>Psalmody:</b> Sit  The antiphon at the beginning may be repeated at the end. Psalm prayers are optional.	<b>Psalmody:</b> Sit  The antiphon at the beginning may be repeated at the end. Psalm prayers are optional.
<b>Reading:</b> Sit (Pause for reflection)	<b>Reading:</b> Sit (Pause for reflection)	<b>Reading:</b> Sit (Pause for reflection)	<b>Reading:</b> Sit (Pause for reflection)	<b>First Reading:</b> Sit (Pause for reflection)
<b>Reponsory</b>	<b>Reponsory</b>	<b>Reponsory</b>	<b>Reponsory</b>	<b>Reponsory</b>
<b>Canticle of Zechariah:</b> Stand Choral Stance	<b>Canticle of Mary:</b> Stand Choral Stance	<b>Canticle of Simeon:</b> Stand Choral Stance	<b>Second Reading:</b> Sit (Pause for reflection)	
<b>Intercession:</b> Stand (Consecrate day to God) Face Forward		<b>Intercession:</b> Stand (Universal concerns and for the dead) Face Forward		
<b>Our Father:</b> Stand Face Forward		<b>Our Father:</b> Stand Face Forward		
<b>Final Prayer and Conclusion:</b> Stand Face Forward	<b>Final Prayer and Conclusion:</b> Stand Face Forward	<b>Final Prayer and Conclusion:</b> Stand Face Forward	<b>Final Prayer and Conclusion:</b> Stand Face Forward	<b>Final Prayer and Conclusion:</b> Stand Face Forward

## TERMS

1. **Antiphon:** a short text, usually from scripture, as a refrain before and after a psalm, canticle in the liturgy.
2. **Canticle:** a lyric or song of thanksgiving not from the Psalms and composed by a famous person of the Old or New Testament.
3. **Invitatory:** an exhortation to praise God at the beginning of the day's Divine Office.
4. **Memorials:** certain celebrations of the Saints. When the word is found in the liturgical books after the Saint's name, these are Obligatory. When no indication occurs, the celebration is Optional.
5. **Ordinary Time:** the name given to the part of the liturgical year that does not fall within one of the major seasons (Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter) and does not observe any specific aspect of the Mystery of Christ.
6. **Proper:** those parts of the Divine Office (and the Mass) that vary according to the feast or the liturgical season and do not belong to the Ordinary of the common of the saints but rather to the particular day/feast.
7. **Responsory:** a meditation on a biblical reading in the Divine Office, shedding light on the passage just read.

### *The Lay Dominican as a Contemplative in Modern Society*

The sounds of progress in modern society are very hard to drown out and we need periodically to move away to a quiet place to recharge and refresh our faith in and love of God. Jesus moved away from the crowds going onto a mountain, out on the lake and into the Garden of Gethsemane to pray to His Father in Heaven. "Learn of Me" he said, so in our search for God, we must move to a quiet place to become recollected.

Dominicans are contemplatives. The majority of Lay Dominicans are busy people working in a society that is moving with an ever increasing pace. To build an interior life with God, there is not always the physical possibility of moving away to a quiet place. St. Catherine escaped from the distraction by mentally escaping to an 'interior cell' to be with God. Our search for God is endless; as St. Augustine says "Our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee."

God has placed us in this world, in this present age, amongst all the distractions of modern day living. Our search for God must continue in spite of the distraction of today's world. God, who formed us, wills that we should search for Him and long for Him throughout our lives and we will not be fully content until we reach the Kingdom of God. God has placed us where we are and He is there with us. This knowledge should help us to look inward and rest in God in the midst of a noisy world.

Contemplation is reflection, that is, thinking deeply. Contemplation of God is thinking about God and the things pertaining to His gifts to mankind.

Silence and solitude are essential for true contemplation. The Scriptures and the Psalms of the Office are the rich sources of contemplation. It is from these riches of Scripture that contemplation will lead to direct prayer with God. Contemplation will encourage detachment and to be truly united to God there must be a sense of detachment from worldly pursuits. This is a difficult achievement for people who are busy working in modern society. There is a lot of activity, noise and distraction to be in daily combat with, but a person who has a hunger to be united to God, to be absorbed in God, will set a timetable to work from, so that there will be habits formed which will allow part of each day to be given to reflection and prayer.

Prayer is the most important part of the Dominican vocation. Mass, the Sacraments, Morning and Evening Prayer and the Rosary will increase union with Christ. St. Dominic would always carry with him on his journeys, the Gospel of St. Matthew and the letters of St. Paul. Whenever they paused to rest on the journey he would read, meditate and pray and he would always ask his companions to join him and think about the Lord.

The difficulties that Lay Dominicans face when endeavouring to follow a contemplative vocation are many. Noise is everywhere. Streets are filled with the jangle of traffic. Offices and factories abound with the noise of machines. Homes are beset by the radio and the television, so that to be a contemplative in a Lay life requires a well-ordered timetable to each day and the discipline of being able to keep to a routine. A Lay Dominican does not have the help of a community to assist with keeping to a life of prayer and contemplation so this is why self-discipline is so important. A person is simply dependent on themselves and sometimes this can be lonely. Some spiritual reading each day, if only for a short period, is necessary for the Lay Dominican to achieve a contemplative spirit.

Dominican Laity cannot be slaves to the fashions and customs of today, but must learn the truth of Christ from the Scriptures and be able to present this truth to others.

The words of the Psalms used in the Office, the gift of the Eucharist and the mysteries of the Rosary are all part of the contemplative's day. We are told Mary pondered over the words of the Angel and the words of Simeon. We, too, must ponder over these things which tell of the beauty and truth of God.

In contemplation we encounter God, and so are led into deep, private prayer with God. Without this true union with God, the Dominican cannot help others to learn about God, for no-one can give what they do not have.

## LITURGICAL PRAYER

Prayer is essential to the life of the Dominican. In the fundamental Constitution for Lay Dominicans (Montreal 1985) – (10e) states that *‘progress in the fulfilment of their inseparably contemplative and apostolic vocation, the Laity of St. Dominic have recourse to the source of liturgical prayer in union with all the Dominican family, also private prayer, meditation and the Rosary.’* Later in Item (13) of the Constitution it states *‘one of the principal sources of Dominican formation is liturgical prayer.’*

When a Chapter of the Dominican Laity meets it is a community meeting as a part of the Dominican Order. To be united with the whole of the Dominican family a form of Morning or Evening prayer is said at each meeting. The Chapter, by participating in part of the Divine Office, becomes united with the Church and with the whole of the Dominican Order, each person being a link in the Order presenting praise and petition to God.

The Morning and Evening prayer is composed of Hymns, Psalms and Antiphons. The history of the psalms dates back to the time before the birth of Christ. They were the poems, songs and hymns of Israel. The prophets used them to express all the emotions of man in praising and petitioning God. The Psalms were shouts which expressed the joy, the love, worship, suffering, injury, faith and hope of the people of Israel. We inherited the Psalms from the Hebrew people. The Psalms are the prayers of the Chosen people. They have been used in three periods of time. Firstly, they were the songs of Israel, composed by the prophets who told the story of the people. Then they were used by our Lord Jesus Christ and the Apostles and now in this age they have been adapted for use by the people of God. From the many Psalms used before the time of Christ there was a final collection of Psalms chosen during the fourth century one hundred and fifty Psalms were divided in five books according to the type of Psalm they were in the expression of their sentiment. More than half of the Psalms chosen were attributed to King David.

The Psalms still offer to mankind the deepest, richest, source of prayer. Our Lord used the Psalms as His prayer to the Father. In the Gospel of Luke 24:44 our Lord said: *“ This is what I meant when I said, while I was still with you, that everything written about Me in the law of Moses, in the Prophets and in the Psalms has to be fulfilled’*. Throughout the New Testament we see that Christ constantly referred to the Psalms and used the hymns of praise and thanksgiving in prayer to the Father.

The early Church then followed this example of prayer, so that today the prayers of the present Liturgy used in the Mass and Divine Office are an adaptation of these ancient Psalms used by our ancestors in Faith. Mass and Morning and Evening Prayer each day are a source of richness in the spiritual life of the Tertiary. The Lay Dominican saying the Morning and Evening Prayer alone is in union with all Dominicans throughout the world, praising and thanking God and praying for the salvation of souls.

The Hymns, Psalms and Antiphons and the Divine Office were dearly loved by St. Dominic and he constantly encouraged his Friars to pray the prayer of the Church devoutly. St. Catherine of Siena

could neither read nor write. She longed to read the Psalms so that she could recite the Office. In spite of efforts to learn to read, she was unsuccessful until she begged our Lord to teach her to read if he wished her to recite the Office. Through Divine help her knowledge of the art of reading was acquired and from that time she read fluently and recited the Psalms, sometimes our Lord walking beside her as she recited them.

For the Dominican Laity to begin using Morning and Evening prayer of the Church, the language and thoughts contained in the Psalms will perhaps appear difficult. Prayer is a very personal experience with God and touches some of the deepest emotions and yearnings of a person. The formality of the Hymns, Psalms and Antiphons may, at first, present difficulties to the Lay Dominican who is new to Dominican life, but perseverance will be rewarding, for with some practice the beauty of these ancient words will become a rope to which one will be glad to hold each day and unite the person with the Order and the Church in praise of God.

One of the essentials that we have learnt from the prophets is the reverence which they had for the Laws of God and the adoration of His Majesty, God, when speaking to St. Catherine of Siena, through the means of the Dialogue said: *“ I provided for you in the Law of Moses in the Old Testament, and in the holy prophets. Before the coming of My only begotten Son, the Jewish people were never without a Prophet to strengthen and lead them so that they knew that God would make them free men”*. The Prophet was the instrument of God to pass God’s message to mankind before the coming of the Word, Jesus Christ. The four Prophets (called major because of the length of their writings) were Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel. Twelve shorter books in the Bible were attributed to the minor Prophets – Amos, Hosea, Micah, Zephaniah, Naham, Habakkuk, Haggai, Zechariah, Obadiah, Malachi, Joel and Jonah. With the coming of the Word there was a new law to replace the law of the Old Testament. Through the centuries the Church has drawn upon the inspired word of God to inspire the people of God to praise God and to give homage to Him. We are indeed ***‘A chosen race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation, a people set apart to sing the praises of God’***.

In the words of St. Paul (*Coloss. 3:16-17*). *“Let the message of Christ, in all its richness, find a home with you. Teach each other, and advise each other, in all wisdom. With gratitude in your hearts sing psalms and hymns and inspired songs to God; and never say or do anything except in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him”*. When you as Dominican Laity pray the Psalms, you are voicing the Prayer of the Church, but the real heart of the prayer will be lost unless you make the words of the Psalms echo from your heart. The quality of prayer is more important than the quantity. God looks at the intentions within the mind and heart of the person. Try to keep your time for prayer free from distractions.

### **Additional Reading List**

Dominicana

- Ch 3 (The History)
- Ch 4 (Mission of the Order)

### **Questions**

1. Saint Dominic gave us the “model”: carrying the Gospel of Matthew and the letters of St. Paul wherever he journeyed. What do you carry on your journey?
2. Explain how we “cannot be slaves to the fashions and customs of today”? Where do you find “quiet” for contemplative prayer?
3. We will practice Evening Prayer during Meeting Four.