

Blauvelt Dominican SWOT Synthesis of the Reflection Circles

Guiding principles or Identity statements - We are Dominican women called to....

- Distinct gifts our world needs from us today are: contemplative dialogue, truth, and compassion.
- Our call has always been to reach out to the most vulnerable. Thinking of the common good, we are called to reach out to all, not just the most vulnerable.
- Deep call to speak truth to power with others
- Know and understand the distinct contribution Dominicans are making at the local and global level; truth, study, emphasis on oneness, fidelity to contemplative and spiritual life, engaged scholarship
- To be courageous and brave in the pursuit of truth;
- to promote a sense of oneness, a sense of belonging to a family.
- Dominicans were known for advancing new scholarly developments—rigorous about the new thinking, the social order, engaged scholars in the rigorous study of new truths

Strengths

- ✓ Being hopeful about what we have not seen and may never see—the loss does not diminish our hope and faith in God
- ✓ Great sense of hope as we partner with others to keep the charism alive

Weaknesses – internal challenges

- Disconnect between our desire to promote our mission and lack of capacity to do so
- Diminishment of numbers can put added pressure on those in active ministry. It is hard to find time for the study and reflection that will lead us to the future.

Opportunities (i.e. concrete ideas for situations/needs to address in the world outside the cong)

- There is great division in our country. Therefore, the study and action of truth and justice is so important.
- The invitation to enter the dialogue beyond our US borders is calling us to a new level of awareness.

Internal opportunities (i.e. identified need and response)

- to be open to new ways;
- Congregations should continue to invest generously into the lives of Sisters under 70. They will carry our charism into the future.

Threats

- Disconnect between what leadership identified as strengths of their congregation (commitment to mission and Dominican charism, passion, willingness to search for truth) and their challenges (emphasis on the negative—declining numbers, lack of resources, advanced age,
- It is challenging to realize that NRRO provides 50% or more of the retirement funding for the congregations. This fact merits attention for congregations like Blauvelt who count significantly on governmental sources such as Medicare and Medicaid. These sources appear much less secure as we move into the future. *(clarification—NRRO doesn't provide the funding; it simply provides the formula that helps determine the percentage of funding for retirement a congregation currently has in relation to projected need.)*

- Current structure of religious life does not support the future of religious life and our charism. How do we recapture a new radical way of living?

Challenges

- ✓ The value and meaning of truth have been greatly undercut and this presents a challenge for Dominicans in our time. The world needs the modeling of the Dominican commitment to truth.
- ✓ Dominic and his followers, especially today, have always been most attentive to the needs of the times. What needs are calling us today?
- ✓ Need for compassion and unity in our world today in the midst of so much division.

Comments/Observations on the process:

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