

HOPE Dominican SWOT synthesis of the Reflection Circles

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

- ❖ Dominic is saying to us that we need to come together. We can appreciate diversity, but we really need to unify. No more thinking vertically, we must think horizontally. That's what Dominic did, and what we think he's asking us to do!
- ❖ We thought that Dominic would be very passionate about the charism today, and that such passion lives on. We are enlivened by the global-ness of the Order— we feel very close to our Sisters in Iraq (even if we haven't met them) and we feel very close to Haitians and other populations that we serve. We also feel enlivened by the local startups (i.e. Benincasa, lay Dominican community) to further the charism. Dominic always first pointed out the truth in what other people were about, even Cathars/heretics. Through a commitment to Truth,
- ❖ As Dominica engaged the women of Prouille in prayer for the mission, we are encouraged to engage the laity in prayer and ministry for the future of our charism. i.e. social media, reflection circles
- ❖

Strengths

- ✓ Recognition of being global citizens – caring for justice issues and the world's needs – also needs of the earth.
- ✓ Empowerment of laity – shared responsibility for mission
- ✓ Reflected joy and hope – energy for movement
- ✓ Great need for charism in today's world and our willingness to respond to those needs through the Spirit. Charism is not ours alone – it is meant to be shared.
- ✓ Discerning truth leading to contemplative dialogue and availability for communion with all creation.

Weaknesses – Internal challenges

- we need to be better at engaging in deep conversation with each other as Dominicans.
- Lack of responses from many Dominican groups – MSJ dominant

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

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

- More conversation with laypeople. Maintaining willingness to speak to someone who differs from me. We need a greater commitment to Truth. We must talk about religion and politics! Trying to find spaces that connect us rather than what separates us, searching through contemplative dialogue and listening. We must be uncomfortable sometimes. And we must join with others who need support living the Gospel call. It's my truth and your truth that we share and bond over. It's not that we have the truth. We arrive at it together. We must empower the laity, and ensure that the lay movement is alive and well.
- More collaboration with other countries, specifically Philippines, Africa, etc. "The time is ripe to do more on the international level than has been done in the past. Connecting more with the grassroots works already happening than re-starting. The work is already happening on the ground. Could we create a new way of being Church together with the world?"
- Perhaps using social media more to collaborate? Most of the women who came to the collaborative novitiate were drawn by direct contact with the Sisters. Many were also drawn through social media/websites; i.e. what they observed the congregations doing.

- We have to use technology and beef up our technology and be communicating back-and-forth. Especially if we are to communicate with Africa and other countries.

Threats

- Overwhelmed by diminishment that leads us to remain in our comfort zone.

Challenges

- ✓ A greater commitment to contemplation.
- ✓ What about being practical and being available?
- ✓ We have big questions. What are people doing instead of coming to church? Where are people at? What do people need spiritually? Are we each willing to ask these questions individually?

Comments/Observations on the process:

- We wish more congregations were involved in the packet (*Futuring Questions*)! Why was it mostly two congregations?
- What about white supremacy, what about the LGBT issues, the racism issues, the sexual harassment? The list of what was missing from the list was very long.