

MSJ Dominican SWOT synthesis of the Reflection Circles

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

- ❖ Our 800 year history and preaching the signs of the times never gets old.
- ❖ Working together, reading and responding to the signs of the times in partnership—explore how to do this more intentionally
- ❖ Expanding our umbrella: other Dominicans, other lay partners, our Earth, all while assessing the needs of our times as Dominic modeled. HOPE!!
- ❖ Stay in conversation with lay partners to help with vision and mission.
- ❖ Proceed as if there are no limits!
- ❖ Watch the vocabulary we use since words are important e.g. shortage not diminishment
- ❖ Deepen contemplative prayer and action centered in care of creation, earth justice, social justice, Church life.
- ❖ Adapt to current realities without letting the past hinder us.
- ❖ Have less concern about fostering vocations and more on developing the charism among the laity so they can be the leadership of the Church.
- ❖ To learn from the Church in Latin America—their methods of empowering the laity to Church leadership.
- ❖ Continue emphasis on COLLABORATION for sake of the mission
- ❖ Identify the heresies of our time that need to be addressed
- ❖ To harness the energy among us
- ❖ Mutual and intentional nurturing of the charism
- ❖ For the charism to continue to flourish we much choose to collaborate with others which calls us to an openness to change and willingness to change.
- ❖ Significance to reconnect/connect the next generation to TRUTH of mercy, compassion, forgiveness
- ❖ Lead by our lives of living truth for present and future.
- ❖ To be nurtured by the connection of sisters and lay members and by the sense of the global dimension that we all share.
- ❖ To come together in justice outreach; to collaborate with a plan; to choose together
- ❖ The time is now for expanded collaboration with both laity and congregations.

Strengths

- ✓ Willingness to promote mission and charism
- ✓ Justice agenda
- ✓ Willingness to adapt to signs of the times
- ✓ We are caregivers of a tremendous legacy to share
- ✓ Mission is alive; openness to Spirit's lead
- ✓ That we are having practical conversations among congregations and with lay partners.
- ✓ An evolving spirituality which will impact our living of the charism
- ✓ Ability to Acknowledge the ecclesial constraints related to our preaching mission
- ✓ Depth of commitment among all responders
- ✓ We appreciate and recognize the VITALITY of our life
- ✓ Intentional collaboration growing from the value of Dominican charism
- ✓ Great number of lay partners across the US
- ✓ Energy of our lay partners...we can move forward together
- ✓ Dominicans are social justice oriented/speak TRUTH that leads to ACTION—this is significant for young people.
- ✓ Even the smallest interaction with others is a preaching.
- ✓ DWA appreciation of the whole of the Dominican charism.

- ✓ Groundswell recognition of lay persons in the mission.
- ✓ The deep joy that exists in spite of the challenges.
- ✓ Commonality of responses signals energy from “the ground up” a spirit of hope!
- ✓ There is an urgency to move forward together.. the time is now!
- ✓ The expansion of the charism being intentionally embraced by lay leadership and their ministry sites.
- ✓ The desire for collaboration.
- ✓ Call for contemplative stance/life from the DWA.
- ✓ Breadth of ministries that all OP women engage in.
- ✓ Responding to ever-changing need as risk takers.
- ✓ That congregations possessed the vision and responded to including lay partners in our ministry!
- ✓ Education is still very big

Weaknesses –Internal challenges

- Lack of clear numbers regarding retirement funding...Is there a longevity study for congregations?
- Need for more women to be involved in the leadership of the Church

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

- Continue to serve poor and vulnerable and be where they are geographically
- Heightened commitment to multi-faith engagement

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

- Awareness of numbers calls us/demands collaboration.
- Continue to be signs of joy and hope
- Continue to build collaboration with lay partners and learn from them
- Future in hands of a smaller group of sisters (324) ...great need to be bound together for growth
- Opportunity to collaborate within sisterhood and with lay partners
- Explore new direction to live out our charism
- Develop a theology of the cosmos
- Strengthen partnership in our Dominican life
- In face of diminishment involve our lay partners in the areas of our preaching
- To focus our efforts to promote an attraction to religious life; market ourselves
- Empower others to carry our charism
- Involvement of the laity---a more organized program including formation in our charism..expanding personal resources for this , including Youth—Dominican preachers
- Orientation program for teachers.
- Share information/data on successful associate programs
- Embrace call to be risk-takers and what it means to preach TRUTH
- Strengthen the collaboration and partnership with ALL who join us in the preaching mission (associates, lay workers, partners etc.)
- Explore models for collaboration
- How do we promote what we do and invite others to join us...possible venture into social and electronic media that will increase our visibility?
- Involve laity as much as we can...social justice, preaching truth to power and to the values we hold
- Laity grow in their spirituality with sisters...mutual mentoring growth

- To put more effort into understanding the various cultures where we minister and with whom we minister.
- To learn more about the Dominican congregations in the US and in Africa to better collaborate and support the whole mission...to change and build as the needs are identified.
- The willingness to change in structure allows us to reimagine the responsibilities/how to direct our energy and gifts.
- To explore other structures even from other faiths that might inspire us..e.g. San Egidio.
- To engage in a practical deep assessment of our current institutional commitments and responsibilities and how each congregation is preparing for these given the future realities.

Threats

Challenges

- ✓ What leadership can we give to better develop collaboration with lay colleagues?
- ✓ How do we create a model that implements/strengthens working with lay partners?
- ✓ How do we increase a sign of hope and joy?
- ✓ How can the 17 congregations collaborate for future projects and share resources?
- ✓ How to strengthen collaboration with the friars?

Comments/Observations on the process:

- Need more clarity about sponsored institutions descriptions