

Racine Dominicans: SWOT synthesis of the Reflection Circles

<p>Guiding principles or Identity statements - We are Dominican women called to....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ To not be afraid to step forward boldly with less than 100% certainty, to continue the mission of truth, justice, and peace, with and in collaboration ❖ Just as Dominic walked, spreading his message and preaching, we will collectively “find our own feet” in our time.
<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ It was exciting that so many people (vowed Dominicans, Associates, other lay partners) are interested in the process of—and willing to put energy into—“futuring” the Dominican charism. ✓ Surprised by the hunger for collaboration with other communities ??? ✓ Surprised by the hunger for collaboration with lay partners & how much lay partners were valued ✓ HOPE and a positive approach to the future, while holding the past lightly ✓ VISIBILITY of the Dominican charism, mission, ministries, people ✓ Great desire for COLLABORATION ✓ There is a prevailing desire to promote the charism. ✓ It was exciting that so many people (vowed Dominicans, Associates, other lay partners) are interested in the process of—and willing to put energy into—“futuring” the Dominican charism.
<p>Weaknesses (internal challenges)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Our concern was the lack of theological formation among the women we reach out to help. ❖ We are not sufficiently aware (via the graphic information) of the status and movement of the US (much less the international) Dominican family. ...reminding us that we are part of a greater whole. ❖ Love was not mentioned. How does the community/lay partners know that I/we love one another? ❖ The absence of “older, wiser” voices who also would have a lot to contribute about the future, even if they won’t be living in it. ❖ The absence of specifics about new forms of communal living
<p>Opportunities (i.e. concrete ideas for situations/needs to address in the world outside the cong)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Competent women are needed—those who can mentor others. Dominicans need sound theological formation.
<p>Threats - what might hinder us?</p>
<p>Challenges (internal suggestions)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The necessity for personal & community transformation ✓ Love was not mentioned. How does the community/lay partners know that I/we love one another?

- ✓ Is this just a “re”- exercise (e.g. reorganize, recommit, re-plan, re-prioritize) or a call for personal/community transformation?
- ✓ It is only in growing our own definition of the ‘we’ that we become truly collaborative.
- ✓ When the relationships among and between us matter more than the legal details, then things will change
- ✓ We need to be focused and faithful to the goal while remaining flexible, creative, and open to the how (the path)
- ✓ What do these women need? What are they to do? (Asks Dominic)
- ✓ Clarity on the Dominican Charism was missing: a gift of the Holy Spirit that urges members of the Order to seek, speak and live a just Word.
- ✓ The Dominican charism is not widely proclaimed, e.g., when people speak “truth to power”, do we name that as an attribute of the Dominican charism?
- ✓ Collaboration – not as initiators, but as participants, especially in local justice efforts/projects.
- ✓ The role/significance/power of prayer and contemplation as a grounding for justice.
- ✓ Inclusivity – what is our reach, what are our restraints (boundaries) as a Dominican family?
- ✓ How will futuring the charism lead to empowerment?
- ✓ Does the Dominican culture supersede ethnic culture? How do we share respectfully?
- ✓ Are we sensitive to the natural evolution of Dominican communities, recognizing beginning (growing), mature and concluding stages?
- ✓ Keep flow intact: prayer...study...act

Comments/Observations on the process:

- Collaboration was mentioned 35 times (among the 143 responses in the handouts!)
- Is this just a “re-“ exercise (e.g. reorganize, recommit, re-plan, re-prioritize) or a call for personal/community transformation?
- Serious study of the issue: risk brainstorming
- Listen to experience
- Surprised by the variance/variety of theologies
- The absence of materials in any language other than English.
- In keeping with the Dominican value of STUDY, a significant ministry continues to be EDUCATION (literacy, high schools, universities, elementary schools).