

## San Rafael Dominican SWOT synthesis of the Reflection Circles

### Guiding principles or Identity statements

- Oneness and encounter – having a Dominican core of contemplation
- Recognizing and integrating global religious life and mission of the laity
- Through Baptism, each of us is called to preach the Word of God and to nurture that gift in each other
- We are called to re-energize ourselves and our communities/congregations to risk and be prophetic while remaining faithful to the Dominican charism.
- The gifts of Dominican charism that remain very relevant today and into the future, including:
  - Dominic’s ability to work around structural barriers
  - Dominic’s ability to listen to the needs of communities, individuals and respond appropriately
  - Dominic’s radical inclusivity across class, gender, beliefs, status within the church (bishops/priests, lay)
  - Focus on Prayer, Study, Community and Ministries
  - Dominic’s ability to connect faith and prayer to action
- Listening – dialogue – relationship
- Dominic knew that he did not have all the answers. Perhaps this was the beginning of the democratic nature of the Dominican Order.
- The importance of dialogue and relationship
- The Dominican charism is more relevant and needed today
- Dwell in the Word
- Be Inclusive and collaborative
- Be attentive to relationships as family

### Strengths

- ✓ The unanimity of all of the responses, we are all on the same page, concerning issues and claiming our Dominican identity.
- ✓ A willingness to risk in response to a new reality.
- ✓ A willingness to participate in crafting a new future together.
- ✓ The I/me moving to we/us and then entering into the “we” of a global Order engaging in a shared hope for the future.
- ✓ We share a desire to continue the 800+ year legacy of the Dominican spirit filled with compassion, through stories that encourage risk and perseverance through challenging situations, hospitality to everyone, engaging in the truth, focusing on preaching and the common foundation of Saint Dominic and Saint Catherine.
- ✓ That so many congregations are still involved in education and literacy centers.
- ✓ The optimism in our congregations despite the demographics.
- ✓ Trust in God.

### Weaknesses – Internal challenges

- Absence of responses regarding vocations, initial formation, formation and future leadership in a global world.
- We need to move from one response to twelve responses to being a sign of joyful hope

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

- Young people hunger for meaning and purpose – this points to authentic mission of the Order, beginning with Dominic.
- To speak truth to the heresies of our time: economics, science, health, theology.
- Utilizing and developing a grassroots power base.

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

- Importance to empower lay leadership in our Dominican family using networks rather than hierarchical structures from past decades [1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Order].
- To continue a common focus on the interconnectedness of justice issues and Catholic teaching which challenge us each day, to respond to the relevant issues of our time, by being radically inclusive. To broker this process of understanding, appreciating the process of change and how to motivate people to become willing to do something and move forward.
- We need to be signs of joyful hope.
- Preaching needs to be more of a priority.
- Being resilient as we become smaller, religious communities.
- How do we implement technology and language to further the charism and preach the Gospel values?

### Threats

- Concern of “fundamentalism” in Church and in some male Dominican men.
- Why are we not as diverse as the Dominican Sisters of San Rafael were at their founding? How are we addressing, “forming”, and engaging youth and young adults? If we allow these conversations to be congregation led, we will not capture a more youthful, diverse inclusive perspective nor the majority of the lay voice or our local communities’ culture.

### Challenges

- ✓ How best to communicate and appropriately use technology to expand learning opportunities?
- ✓ How do we take action regardless of possible barriers? How do we nurture the ability to overcome the fear of the unknown future and see the needed changes as a grace: an invitation for the spirit, for renewal. To identify barriers to collaboration where they exist.
- ✓ Is it traditional structures that do not serve? Is it personal grievances that have not been reconciled? Are there risks that seem insurmountable?
- ✓ Live our radical roots, the lives of Saint Dominic and Saint Catherine, break out of the status quo, seeing beyond and outside the box. From a charity model to a justice model. How do we bridge our theological gaps? We need to practice nonviolent conversations consistently to learn how to listen to divergent positions and to express our own opinions peacefully.
- ✓ Integrating the contemplative way with our active lives.
- ✓ New lens in understanding the new cosmology.

- ✓ Dominic lived among the people not behind monastery walls. In order to preach and nourish the people he had to know the people. His focus on clerical reform is still relevant today. We cannot be afraid to get outside of the Catholic bubble. Dominic was a man of deep prayer and was not afraid to try, test, creative new structures in order to preach the Word.
- ✓ Maximizing the energy we have as a congregation.

**Comments/Observations on the process:**

- Surprise that Europe sisters were not included.
- No mention of Mary.
- Disagreement with leadership perception as seen on pie charts.