

**The Rule**

**of the Lay Fraternities**

**of**

**St Dominic**

2019





**PART V**

**THE RULE**

**OF THE LAY FRATERNITIES OF SAINT DOMINIC**

**I. THE FUNDAMENTAL CONSTITUTION FOR THE DOMINICAN LAITY**

***Laity in the Church***

**Paragraph 1**

**1. Among the disciples of Christ, men and women living in the world, have in virtue of Baptism and Confirmation, been made sharers in the prophetic, priestly and royal office of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

**They are called to this so that Christ’s presence may be brought to life in the midst of peoples**

**and that “the divine message of salvation be made known and accepted by all people throughout the world”. (Vatican Council II, Apostolicam actuositatem, Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, 4, par. 3).**

***Dominican Laity***

**Paragraph 2**

**2. Some of them, moved by the Holy Spirit to live a life according to the spirit and charism of Saint Dominic, are incorporated into the Order by a special promise according to statutes proper to them.**

***Dominican Family***

**Paragraph 3**

**3. They are united in communities, and they constitute with other groups of the Order, one Family. (Book of the Constitutions and Ordinations of the Friars of the Order of Preachers, LCO, 141)**

**Special Character of the Dominican Laity**

**Paragraph 4**

**4. They are accordingly marked out both by their own kind of spiritual life and by their service to God and neighbour in the Church. As members of the Order, they share its apostolic mission, by study, prayer and preaching according to the state proper to lay persons.**

**Apostolic Mission**

**Paragraph 5**

**5. They follow the example of Saint Dominic, Saint Catherine of Siena and our forbears who illumined the life of the Order and the Church, and strengthened by their fraternal communion, bear witness above all to their own faith, listen to the needs of their contemporaries, and serve the truth.**

**Paragraph 6**

**6. They pay careful attention to the principal goals of the church’s present-day apostolate, driven in a special way to show real compassion to all who are troubled, to defend liberty and to promote justice and peace.**

**Paragraph 7**

**7. Inspired by the charism of the Order, they are mindful that apostolic activity comes out of an abundance of contemplation.**

**II. LIFE OF THE FRATERNITIES**

**Life of the Fraternities**

**Paragraph 8**

**8. They are, to the best of their ability, to live in true fraternal communion inspired by the beatitudes, and to express this in all circumstances by exercising the works of mercy and by sharing what they have with members of the fraternities, especially the poor and the sick; by offering suffrages for the deceased; so that that all may ever have one heart and one mind in God. (Acts, 4:32).**

**Paragraph 9**

**9. Whilst taking part in the apostolate with the brothers and sisters of the Order, members of the fraternities are to share actively in the life of the Church, always prepared to work with other apostolic associations.**

**Paragraph 10**

**10. The following are the chief sources from which the lay members of Saint Dominic draw strength to advance in their proper vocation, which combines at one and the same time the contemplative and the apostolic:**

 **a. listening to the Word of God and reading the Sacred Scripture, especially the New Testament;**

 **b. daily participation (as far as possible) in the celebration of the liturgy and participation in the Eucharistic sacrifice;**

 **c. frequent celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation;**

 **d. celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours in union with the entire Dominican Family, as well as prayer in private, such as meditation and the Marian Rosary;**

 **e. conversion of heart according to the spirit and practice of evangelical penance;**

 **f. assiduous study of revealed truth and constant reflection on contemporary problems under the light of faith;**

 **g. devotion to the blessed Virgin Mary, according to the tradition of the Order, to our holy father Saint Dominic and to Saint Catherine of Siena;**

 **h. periodic spiritual retreats.**

**Formation**

**Paragraph 11**

**11. The purpose of Dominican formation is to provide for true adults in the Faith, so that they may be ready to welcome, celebrate and proclaim the Word of God.**

**It belongs to each province to draw up a program:**

 **a. whether of progressive formation for beginners;**

 **b. or of permanent formation for all, even for members living apart from a fraternity.**

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**12. Every Dominican must be prepared to preach the Word of God. It is in this preaching that Christians, baptised and strengthened by the Sacrament of Confirmation, exercise the prophetic office.**

 **In today’s world, the preaching of the Word of God must extend in a special way to defending the dignity of the human person, as well as life and the family. Promoting Christian unity and dialogue with non-Christians and non-believers is also part of the Dominican vocation.1**

**Paragraph 13**

**13. These are the principal sources to advance Dominican formation:**

 **a. the Word of God and theological reflection;**

 **b. liturgical prayer;**

 **c. the history and tradition of the Order;**

 **d. more recent documents of the Church and the Order;**

 **e. awareness of the signs of our times.**

**Profession or Promise**

**Paragraph 14**

**14. In order to be incorporated into the Order, members are bound to make profession, that is a promise in which they formally promise to live a life according to the spirit of Saint Dominic and the way of life prescribed by the Rule.**

**This profession or promise is either temporary or perpetual.**

**The following or a substantially similar formula is to be used for making profession:**

**To the honour of almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of Saint Dominic, I, , promise before you \_, the President of this Fraternity/Chapter, and , the Religious Assistant, in place of the Master of the Order of Friars Preachers, that I will live according to the Rule of the Laity of Saint Dominic [for three years] or [for my entire life].**

**III. ORGANISATION AND GOVERNMENT OF THE FRATERNITIES**

**Paragraph 15**

**15. The Fraternity is the suitable means for the dedication of each person to the nourishment and growth of his or her own vocation. The frequency of meetings differs with fraternities. Each member’s fidelity is indicated by his or her assiduity.**

**Paragraph 16**

**16. The admission of candidates, given that the prescriptions of the `Directory in regard to the state of persons and the time for admission have been observed, is committed to the lay person responsible, who after having taken a decisive vote of the Council of the Fraternity, proceeds with the Religious Assistant to the reception of the candidate in a rite determined by the Directory.**

**1 Note: By a mistake this paragraph 12 in its second part is missing from Analecta SOP 1987 pp. 82-87, but substantial part of the only official Latin version approved by the Holy See on January 15, 1987 – Prot.**

 **#D.27-1-87**

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**Paragraph 17**

 **17. After the time of probation determined by the Directory and with a favorable vote of the Council of the Fraternity, the lay person responsible, together with the Religious Assistant, receives the profession, either temporary or perpetual.**

**Jurisdiction of the Order and Autonomy of the Fraternities**

**Paragraph 18**

**18. Lay Fraternities are under the jurisdiction of the Order; however, they enjoy that autonomy proper to the laity, by which they may govern themselves.**

**(In the Whole Order)**

**Paragraph 19**

**19. a. The Master of the Order, as successor of Saint Dominic and head of the entire Dominican Family, presides over all the fraternities in the world. It is his responsibility to preserve the integral spirit of the Order in them, to establish practical norms in accordance with the needs of specific times and places and to promote the spiritual good and apostolic zeal of the members.**

**b. The Promoter General represents the Master of the Order for all the fraternities, and transmits their desires to the Master or the General Chapter.**

**(In the Province)**

**Paragraph 20**

**20. a) The Prior Provincial presides over the fraternities within the territorial limits of his province, and, with the consent of the local Bishop, establishes new fraternities.**

**b) The Provincial Promoter (brother or sister) represents the Prior Provincial, and is by right (pleno iure) a member of the Provincial Lay Council. He/she is appointed by the Provincial Chapter, or by the Prior Provincial with his Council, after the Provincial Lay Council of the Dominican Laity has been heard.**

**c) In the territory of the province, the president of the Provincial Council of the Laity is chosen from the fraternities and are regulated according to the rules defined by the Directory.**

**(Governance in Fraternities)**

**Paragraph 21**

**21. a) A local Fraternity is governed by a President with his or her Council, who assume the full responsibility for direction and administration.**

**b) The president of the Council is elected at a time and in the manner of the particular Directories.**

**c) The Religious Assistant (brother or sister) assists members in doctrinal matters and the spiritual life. He or she is nominated by the Prior Provincial, after he has first heard the Provincial Promoter and the local Laity Council.**

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**(National and International Councils)**

**Paragraph 22**

**a) Where there are several Provinces of the Order within the territory of the same nation, a National Council can be instituted, according to the norms established by particular Directories.**

**b) An International Council can be formed in a similar way if it seems opportune, after the fraternities of the entire Order have been consulted.**

**Paragraph 23**

**23. Fraternity Councils can send their proposals and petitions to a Provincial Chapter of the Friars Preachers; Provincial and National Councils to a General Chapter. To these Chapters some representative members of the fraternities are to be readily invited for treating matters which concern the laity.**

**Statutes of the Fraternities**

**Paragraph 24**

**24. The statutes proper to the lay fraternities of St Dominic are:**

**a. The Rule of the Fraternities (Fundamental Constitution of the OP Laity, the norms of life, the governance of the fraternities)**

**b. General Declarations, whether of the Master of the Order, or of General Chapters.**

**c. Particular Directories**

**To complete the legislative work concerning the Lay Fraternities of St. Dominic, we approve and promulgate the following ‘General Declarations of the Rule of the Lay Fraternities of Saint Dominic’ by the authority which we hold. Thus the observance of the Rule shall be attained more easily and with greater spiritual fruitfulness.**

**Given at Rome, on February 16, 1987**

**Fr. Damian Byrne, O.P.**

**Master of the Order**

**Fr. J.Martin, O.P.**

**Secretary**

**GENERAL DECLARATIONS**

THE LAY FRATERNITIES OF ST DOMINIC

1. - § I - The Laity of St Dominic are those faithful who, baptized in the Catholic Church or received into her, confirmed and in full communion of faith, sacraments and ecclesiastical governance, are called by a special vocation to progress in the Christian way of life and to animate temporal things through the charism of St Dominic.

 § II - To be incorporated into the Order of Preachers in whose apostolic mission they fully participate, the Laity of St Dominic make the promise according to the formula foreseen by the Rule. Entry to the lay branch of the Order, called the Lay Fraternities of St Dominic , subject to the Master and the other Major Superiors of the Order, is brought about only with this promise.1

OTHER GROUPS OF DOMINICAN LAITY

2. - § I - In addition to the Lay Fraternities of St Dominic, there are Priestly Fraternities and other Associations and Confraternities, governed by their own Statutes legitimately approved by the competent authority and by various titles attached to the Dominican Family.

 § II - These Associations and Fraternities constitute a great and varied richness for the Church and the Dominican Family, and are to be greatly valued by all the members of the Lay Fraternities.

 § III - The formula of the promise contained in the Rule of the lay Fraternities of St Dominic approved by the Holy See is not to be used by other groups aggregated in any way to the Dominican Family, unless the Master of the Order expressly permits otherwise.2

LIFE OF THE FRATERNITIES

3. - The Rosary, by which the mind is raised up to the intimate contemplation of the mysteries of Christ through the Blessed Virgin Mary, is a traditional devotion of the Order; therefore its daily recitation by the brothers and sisters of the Lay Fraternities of St Dominic is recommended.3

APOSTOLATE OF THE FRATERNITIES

4. - Members of the Fraternities are always to bear authentic witness to the mercy of Christ, in communion with the Church and the Order (cf. Rule, S-7). To make public statements in the name of a Fraternity, or of the Dominican Laity more broadly, they require the authorization of the competent authority in accordance with the Directory.

CA. AZPIROZ Costa, Dichiarazioni Generali circa la Regola della Fraternite Laiche di 5. Domenico, 15-xi-2007 (hereinafter DG2007), I § 1. These footnotes do not form part of the promulgated General Declarations, but are to indicate the source of each declaration.

D. BYRNE, Declarationes generales regul<E Jraternitatum laicalium Sancti Dominici, 16-ii-1987 (hereinafter

DG1987), 5; DG2007, I§ 2.

1. DG1987, 7.

ADMISSION TO THE FRATERNITIES

5. -The Laity of St Dominic are always ascribed to a Fraternity, where possible that of their own canonical domicile or quasi-domicile, or are at least placed in stable contact with a member of the provincial or vicariate Council of the laity.4

6. -§ I. - The perpetual promise is preceded by at least one year of initial reception and by three years of temporary promise, documented in the registers kept for this purpose either by the local Fraternity or in the provincial archive.5

 § II. - A candidate who has received an equivalent formation in the International Dominican Youth Movement may be dispensed from part of initial formation by the President of the Fraternity with the consent of the Council. In his case, at least one year of temporary promise is to precede perpetual promise.6

7.-The faithful who live in particular situations because of which in the judgement of the Council of the Fraternity it is not prudent that they be admitted to the promise may nevertheless participate in the life of the Fraternity and its permanent formation, in a path of following Christ through the Dominican charism, without prejudice to the discipline and Magisterium of the Church.7

THE LAW GOVERNING THE FRATERNITIES

8. -§ I - The Rule by which the Lay Fraternities of St Dominic are governed is the fundamental law for the Lay Fraternities of the whole world.

 § II -The present General Declarations promulgated by the Master of the Order are expansions, explanations and interpretations of the Rule.

 § III - The Provincial and National Directories, prepared by the Fraternities themselves and approved by the Master of the Order, are particular norms for the local fraternities and for their collaboration at provincial and national level.8

9. - So that the brothers and sisters of the Lay Fraternities may fulfil their obligations "not as slaves under the law, but constituted as free people under grace" (St Augustine, Rule, 8; cf. Romans

6:14), we declare that transgressions against the Rule do not as such constitute moral fault.9

10. -§ I - The text of the Provincial Directory is to be agreed by the Provincial Council of the Laity. It is sent to the Prior Provincial, who transmits it, together with his opinion and that of his Council, to the Master of the Order for approval.

 § II - In approving the Provincial Directory, the Master of the Order may also make amendments to particular norms.

 § III -The approved Provincial Directory is promulgated by the Prior Provincial.10

DG2007, I § 3.

DG2007, I § 1.

Proposal by the International Congress of Lay Fraternities of St Dominic, Fatima, 2018.

7 DG2007, I § 4

5 DG1987, 1.

DG1987, 2.

W DG1987, 1; DG2007, II§ 1.

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11.-Unless provision is made by the National Directory, the Provincial Directory must determine:

 1° the conditions for admission to a Fraternity;

 2° the time of probation and of profession of the promise, without prejudice to no. 6 above;

 3° the frequency of the Sacraments, and the prayers which the brothers and sisters of the Lay

 Fraternities are to raise to God;

 4° the frequency of the meetings of the Fraternities and the form of their celebration, and also the frequency of spiritual conferences;

 5° the internal constitution of each Fraternity and of the Fraternities of the Province as a whole;

 6° the manner of proceeding for the election of officials, without prejudice to norms of the Rule and these Declarations;

 7° the manner and limits of dispensation, without prejudice to no. 13 below;

 8° suffrages for deceased brothers and sisters of the Lay Fraternities, and for the whole Order.11

12. -§ I -Where several Provinces are present in the territory of a single nation, there may also be a National Directory. The National Directory provides norms for national structures of the Laity of St Dominic. It may also provide norms for Provinces and Fraternities, although a Provincial Directory may derogate from norms of the National Directory.

 § II- The text of the National Directory is to be agreed by the Provincial Councils of the Laity of the provinces concerned. It is to be transmitted to the Master of the Order for approval together with the opinions of the Priors Provincial concerned and their Councils.

 §III- In approving the National Directory, the Master of the Order may also make amendments to particular norms.

 § IV - The approved National Directory is promulgated by the President of the national committee of Priors Provincial, if there is one, or else by the Master of the OrderY.

13. - § I - The superiors of the Order and the presidents of the Fraternities do not have the authority to dispense from divine law or the universal law of the Church.

 § II- A dispensation always requires a just and reasonable cause (cf. can. 90 § 1). Norms which define essentially constitutive elements of an institute or act are not subject to dispensation (cf. can.86).

 § III - Only the Master of the Order may dispense all Lay Dominicans from a norm of the Rule.

 § IV -The Prior Provincial may dispense individual fraternities from a norm of the Rule or the Directory, even without limit of time.

 § V -The President of the Fraternity may legitimately dispense from a norm of the Rule or the Directory in individual cases and for a determined time

14. - The Prior Provincial has the power to “senate” invalid acts of the Fraternity, especially concerning admission to profession of the promise.14

11 DG1987, 6.

12 DG1987, 1; DG2007, II§ 1.

13 DG2007, III.

14 DG1987, 4.

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GOVERNMENT OF THE FRATERNITY

15. -§ I - Unless the Directory determines otherwise, the President and Council of the Fraternity are elected by the members of that Fraternity who have made at least the temporary promise.

 § II -To be elected President, a member must have made the perpetual promise.

16. -§I- In accordance with art. 21(c) of the Rule, the Religious Assistant is to be a religious ("brother or sister") of the Order. If it is impossible to appoint a suitable Dominican religious as Assistant to a fraternity, the Prior Provincial may dispense from this requirement and appoint another suitably-qualified person to assist the members in doctrinal matters and the spiritual life in the Dominican tradition.15

 § II - A religious or cleric who is not under the jurisdiction of the Prior Provincial cannot validly

be appointed Assistant without the written consent of his or her major superior. For a secular cleric this consent is given by his Ordinary.16

GOVERNMENT OF THE FRATERNITIES IN THE PROVINCE

17. - § I - The Directory determines the manner of electing the Provincial President and the Provincial Council of the Laity.

 § II -To be elected Provincial President, a member must have made the perpetual promise.

18. -§I -In accordance with art. 20(b) of the Rule, the Provincial Promoter is to be a religious ("brother or sister") of the Order. Dispensation from this requirement is reserved to the Master of the Order.

 § II - One who is not under the jurisdiction of the Prior Provincial cannot validly be appointed Provincial Promoter without the written consent of his or her major superior and a signed agreement between the Prior Provincial and the Promoter.17

 § III - The term of office of the Provincial Promoter is four years. He or she may not serve for more than two consecutive terms.

 § IV - Although the Provincial Promoter has the full right to participate in meetings of the Lay Provincial Council, he or she does not enjoy active or passive voice in any organ of the Lay Fraternities. 18

ELECTIONS

19. - § I - Except where these Declarations or the Directory make other provision, elections among the Laity of St Dominic take place in accordance with cannon. 119, 1° and 164-183.

 § II - Unless the Directory determines otherwise, there may be up to three scrutinies in an election. An absolute majority is required for election in the first or second scrutiny. If there have been two inconclusive scrutinies, a vote is to be taken between the two candidates with the greatest number of votes or, if there are more than two, between the two senior by first promise in the Lay Fraternities. After a third inconclusive scrutiny, that person is deemed elected who is senior by first promise in the Lay Fraternities.

15 DG2007, V.

16 ACG Trogir (2013), 187; Bologna (2016), 345.

17 DG2007, IV§ 2.

18 DG2007, IV § 3.

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SEPARATION FROM THE LAY FRATERNITIES

20. -§ I - At the expiry of the temporary promise, if it is not renewed, a member is free to depart from the Lay Fraternities.

 § II - During the time of the temporary promise, or after making the perpetual promise, a member is not to seek an indult to depart from the Lay Fraternities except for a grave reason weighed before God and with the assistance of fellow members. In the presence of such a reason, a motivated request is to be presented to the President of the Fraternity, who is to forward it to the Prior Provincial together with his/her own opinion and that of the Council of the Fraternity.

 § III - The Prior Provincial is competent to grant an indult of departure from the Lay Fraternities. Once the indult is notified in writing to the member concerned, he or she is dispensed from the promise and the requirement to observe the particular law of the Lay Fraternities of St Dominic.19

21. - §I - Besides the situations mentioned in canon 316 § 1, a member who has made the temporary or perpetual promise may be dismissed for one of the following offences:

 1° grave violation of the Rule or of the Directory;

 2° causing grave public scandal among the faithful.

 § II - In the cases mentioned in § I, the President of the Fraternity is first to warn the member formally in writing.

 § III - If the warning is not heeded, the President with the consent of the Council of the Fraternity may ask the Prior Provincial to dismiss the member. In the situations mentioned in can. 316

 § 1 the President must ask the Prior Provincial to dismiss the member.

 § IV -If the Prior Provincial, having afforded the member the opportunity to present a defence, judges the dismissal to be warranted, he issues a written decree of dismissal.

 § V - The decree of dismissal, once legitimately notified in writing to the member, brings about the cessation of rights and obligation deriving from the promise, and extends to all Lay Fraternities of St Dominic.

 §VI -Hierarchical recourse to the Master of the Order against a decree of dismissal is always possible.20

22. -§ I A member who has obtained an indult of departure from the Lay Fraternities and who subsequently seeks to be reincorporated in any Fraternity must follow the formation process again. The member's perpetual promise can be received only with the permission of the Prior Provincial with the consent of the Council of the member's new Fraternity. The promise and admission of one who keeps silent about a previous indult of departure is invalid.21

 § II - One who has been dismissed from the Lay Fraternities, after careful evaluation of his or her condition of life and with certainty of amendment, may be re-admitted under the same conditions as in § I.22

19 DG2007, VI§ 1.

20 DG2007, VII§§ 1 and 3; can. 316 § 1.

21 DG2007, VI § 2.

22 DG2007, VII § 2.

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