

A Handbook
for
Lay Dominican
Leadership

Approved January 28, 2013 Revision

**Province of Saint Albert the Great,
U.S.A.**

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In this document “Rule” refers to *The Lay Dominican Rule and Guidelines for the Province of St. Albert the Great, U.S.A.*; “Ceremonial” refers to *Ceremonial for Lay Dominicans of the Province of St. Albert the Great, U.S.A.*; “Handbook” refers to *A Handbook for Lay Dominican Leadership*; “Bylaws” refers to *Bylaws of the Lay Dominican Provincial Council for the Province of St. Albert the Great, U.S.A.*

FOREWORD

What is expected of me when I assume a leadership role within my local community of Lay Dominicans? How do I know whether I am fulfilling major duties? Are there fairly common expectations of officers across chapters, pro-chapters or groups?

This handbook is intended to help officers of Lay Dominican communities within the Province of Saint Albert the Great, U.S.A. In particular, the handbook provides information about various aspects of community life. Officers can consult its pages to enhance and promote Dominican life and mission. They can find comfort in clear enumerations of their major tasks. They can understand the major components of a complete meeting and learn about procedures for admission and transfer. All members should become acquainted with the responsibilities outlined, so that community life can be organized effectively and everyone in the lay branch of the Order develops within a vibrant, well-administered community. Choosing appropriate leadership for any community requires awareness of the abilities required and the jobs entailed.

Certain print sources should be in the personal library of all officers so that they can be consulted when necessary: 1) *Lay Dominican Rule and Guidelines for the Province of St. Albert the Great, U.S.A* (which discusses the spiritual center of community life); 2) *A Handbook for Lay Dominican Leadership*; 3) *Bylaws of the Lay Dominican Provincial Council for the Province of St. Albert the Great, U.S.A.* (which explains the relationship of the community to its representative on the Provincial Council); 4) *Ceremonial for Lay Dominicans of the Province of St. Albert the Great, U.S.A.* (which provides ceremonies for initiations, receptions, and professions, as well as prayers and songs shared across all branches of the Dominican Family). Formation personnel also should have a copy of *The Lay Dominican Formation Program*.

The content of this handbook has resulted from many deliberations of the Provincial Council. Elected representatives from all communities in the Province periodically update their role descriptions in an effort to enhance communication, clarify responsibilities, and aid new officers as they begin their terms. This handbook derives from the cumulative wisdom and experience of successive lay leaders and promoters in the Central Province over almost two decades. It is forever a “work in progress,” as representatives flexibly respond to the needs and observations of communities across the Province.

All officers for communities of Lay Dominicans should operate within the guidelines of this Handbook, but should also feel free to share ideas for additions, deletions, and revisions with their Delegates to the Provincial Council for discussion during subsequent revisions. In this way Lay Dominicans learn from their local officers and members, while ensuring clear role expectations, which shape present performance.

CHAPTER OFFICERS

The Spiritual Assistant

The Spiritual Assistant, who is appointed by the Provincial Promoter in consultation with the Provincial Council President and the community, is to be a resource for the community in its life of prayer, study and ministry.

1. The Spiritual Assistant may be a:

- Dominican friar (priest or brother)
- Dominican nun or sister
- Lay Dominican.

If none of these are available, the Executive Board of the Provincial Council may appoint a qualified person who is willing to serve.

2. Duties of the Spiritual Assistant:

- a. Helps the community in formulating a study program for each year using resource materials contained in the *Lay Dominican Formation Program for the Province of Saint Albert the Great, U.S.A.*;
- b. Serves as a resource person to the community;
- c. Ensures that the community observes the four pillars of Dominican life: prayer, study, ministry and community;
- d. Assists the community officers in planning study days, days of recollection, retreats, and other programs beneficial to the group;
- e. Does not interfere in the internal affairs of the community nor does s/he impose personal devotions or spiritual exercises upon the group or upon any individual member.

3. Appointments to the position of Spiritual Assistant are subject to the approval of the Executive Board of the Provincial Council. If a lay director is appointed, usually s/he will come from the finally professed members of a Lay Dominican community.

4. There is no set term of office for a Spiritual Assistant.

The Moderator

The Moderator is the duly elected or appointed leader of the group, who together with the other chapter officers assumes responsibility for the well being of the community. Until such time as a group is able to establish a minimum of officers, the Moderator assumes full responsibility for the well being of the group and presides at meetings. The Moderator should be a finally professed member of the community (see *Rule 18a*, paragraph 2). The Moderator is responsible for facilitating a constructive climate within the community and for developing the gifts and capacities of its members. Moreover, s/he ensures a balanced, vital, engaging community life which is both participatory and democratic.

1. Duties of the Moderator:

- a. Nominates, in conjunction with the community, qualified formation personnel for approval by appropriate officers of the Provincial Council;
- b. Prepares an ongoing study program for each year in conjunction with the community and with the approval of finally professed members;
- c. Prepares an agenda for each meeting;
- d. Shares with the membership information about the Dominican Family;
- e. Appoints special committees to direct projects assumed by the group, such as a telephone ministry to sick members, etc;
- f. Appoints members to lead appropriate portions of the *Liturgy of the Hours* recited at meetings, if the community has no designated liturgist;
- g. Assists those responsible for preparing requested reports to the Provincial Council, such as:
 - i. Annual directory information;
 - ii. Updated lists of new, active and inactive members;
 - iii. Study outlines for ongoing formation;
- h. Presides at ceremonies of reception, profession, renewal of profession, and wake services for deceased members (see *Ceremonial*, p. 4.);
- i. Calls meetings of the Community Council for the purpose of:
 - i. Interviewing prospective members;
 - ii. Convening discussions on the acceptance or rejection of new applicants;
 - iii. Soliciting information from Formation Directors and facilitating discussions on acceptance of members for reception or profession;

- iv. Seeking advice and information on issues affecting the community so as to improve community life and problem solving;
 - j. Makes certain that proper records are kept by the Secretary and Treasurer such as:
 - i. Minutes of meetings;
 - ii. Receptions/professions;
 - iii. Financial records;
 - k. Makes reservations for meetings or special programs (perhaps delegated to a member of the community);
 - l. Assists in planning area retreats, meetings, days of recollection and other events;
 - m. Submits an annual directory to the President of the Provincial Council;
 - n. Distributes "My Wishes" forms, which indicate the after-death preferences of community members;
 - o. Promotes Lay Dominican life and, in partnership with the community, implements recruitment strategies;
 - p. Creates liaisons with other branches of the Dominican Family and encourages mutual sharing and/or joint ventures;
 - q. Correlates community agendas and priorities with those endorsed by the Provincial Council;
 - r. Supports innovation, growth, enrichment, and deepening of community life;
 - s. Consults the Vice-Moderator on difficult community issues, discusses possible initiatives, delegates duties to him/her as seems mutually agreeable, and advises the Vice-Moderator in advance of the Moderator's inability to preside at an upcoming meeting.
2. The term of the Moderator is determined by members of the community. A term may not exceed four years or be shorter than three years. A Moderator may be elected to a second consecutive term.

The Vice-Moderator

The Vice-Moderator is a member of the community duly elected to assume the duties of the Moderator in case of absence or incapacity.

1. In the absence of the Moderator, the Vice-Moderator presides at:

- a. Meetings;
 - b. Receptions/professions;
 - c. Other functions at which the Moderator ordinarily presides.
2. Should a Moderator resign or die while in office, the Vice-Moderator completes the term as Acting Moderator and is eligible for two more successive terms as Moderator. The Vice-Moderator should be a finally professed member of the community, unless the group is in early development.
 3. The Vice-Moderator is a member of the Community Council.
 4. The term of the Vice-Moderator is the same as that of the Moderator and is determined by the community.
 5. The Vice-Moderator assumes a leadership role within the community and fulfills duties delegated by the Moderator.
 6. The Vice-Moderator serves as a sounding board and consultant to the Moderator.

The Formation Director (and Assistants)

The Formation Director is responsible for the orientation and formation of new and continuing members in their early years of association with Lay Dominicans. The Formation Director is nominated by the community in conjunction with the Moderator and Community Council.

1. The Formation Director must be approved by the President of the Provincial Council, who finalizes the appointment.
2. The Formation Director may share duties with assistant(s) who assume responsibilities for a specific formation phase (i.e., initiates, candidates, or temporarily professed). These assistants are subject to approval by the Community Council. Usually a Formation Director is a finally professed member of the community, who has a thorough knowledge of the provincial formation program and the gifts necessary to act as a spiritual companion to new brothers and sisters. Knowledge, temperament, organizational and communication skills are important concerns in the selection of a Formation Director. The term of a Formation Director is unspecified; however, no new member should complete all formation phases exclusively with a single Formation Director. If possible, exposure to two or more finally professed Formation Directors should occur during formation.
3. Duties of the Formation Director:
 - a. Implements the Provincial Formation Program in accordance with the background and needs of the specific members of a community;

- b. Coordinates regular meetings of assigned members in a formation group;
- c. Serves as a spiritual companion and fellow sojourner with community members during the designated formation phases; prompts reflection and encourages regular prayer and spiritual reading, especially the *Liturgy of the Hours* and the Rosary;
- d. Recommends members for reception or profession and provides a written or oral rationale to the Community Council, which serves as the basis for approval or denial of a reception or profession request;
- e. Tells the Moderator when reception/profession requests are forthcoming so that a Council meeting can be called; testifies at the Council meeting and participates in the voting to affirm or deny such requests;
- f. Notifies the President of the Provincial Council concerning reception or profession ceremonies;
- g. Schedules, in cooperation with the Moderator and Community Council, reception and profession ceremonies;
- h. Provides the Secretary with reception/profession information, which is kept as a permanent record for the community.

The Secretary

The Secretary is duly elected by the community to carry out the correspondence and information processing chores of the community.

1. The Secretary is elected from the professed members of the community and manifests the organizational, correspondence, and record-keeping skills necessary for all defined duties. The Secretary is a member of the Community Council.
2. Duties of the Secretary:
 - a. Notifies the President of the Provincial Council concerning names, addresses, and telephone numbers of new members of the community;
 - b. Forwards to the editor of *Challenge*, the Provincial newsletter, a report of what the community is doing and studying;
 - c. Keeps the minutes of each meeting;
 - d. Forwards a Meeting Report Form concerning the business meeting and the ongoing work of the community to the Provincial President within ten days following each meeting;

- e. Notifies the Provincial President of the names of deceased members or of those who have discontinued affiliation with the community;
- f. Sends get-well cards to sick members as well as sympathy/Mass cards to the families of deceased members;
- g. Notifies absent members of important happenings at any meetings that they might have missed as well as community members of future meeting dates either by mail, e-mail or telephone;
- h. Retains minutes of all Community Council meetings and copies of formation, reception and profession information as *permanent records*. These materials are forwarded to each subsequent Secretary elected by the community. Maintains a copy of the community reception/profession book and sends relevant information to the Provincial President after each event;
- i. Maintains completed community *My Wishes* forms concerning after-death preferences.

The Treasurer

The Treasurer handles all matters pertaining to the finances of the community, including the payment of bills and the preparation of financial reports, which are presented periodically to the Council and all members.

1. The Treasurer is a member of the Council and is usually elected from the professed membership of the community. The person elected as treasurer must have the skills and willingness to perform the duties assigned.
2. The Treasurer establishes a bank account in the name of the community. The account should have two independent signatures of community members unrelated by family circumstances. If funds are limited owing to early development of a group and/or banking requirements in a particular region, insufficient funds may be available to open a bank account. In this case, the treasurer must keep records and report to the members according to the particular situation of a community.

Notes regarding roles and terms:

The positions of Secretary and Treasurer may be combined, especially in smaller groups. In such cases, one person is responsible for the duties of both offices.

While the terms of Moderator and Vice-Moderator are determined by the community (three to four years), those of Secretary and Treasurer may extend beyond that period according to the wishes of the community and the Secretary and/or Treasurer.

Provincial Council Delegates

The Provincial Council Delegate is elected from the professed members of the community to represent the community at meetings of the Provincial Council.

1. Duties of the Provincial Council Delegate:

- a. Attends meetings of the Provincial Council and, if unable to attend, notifies the President of the Provincial Council (in writing), giving reason(s) in sufficient time so that the First or Second Alternates may make plans to replace the Delegate;
 - b. Reads, reacts, and is prepared to comment on all written materials sent out prior to the meeting;
 - c. Represents community and private members within the area of the community;
 - d. Reports to the community the contents and decisions of the Provincial Council;
 - e. Communicates to the Moderator and Community Council changes in their duties enacted by the Provincial Council and reports to the next meeting of the Provincial Council efforts of the community to conform to decisions of past Council meetings;
 - f. Gathers information from the community, or its members, for inclusion in *Challenge*, the newsletter for the Province of St. Albert the Great;
 - g. Assists the Moderator in planning retreats, days of recollection, and study days in conjunction with appropriate community officers;
 - h. Establishes communication with other members of the Dominican Family in the area (i.e., friars, nuns, sisters, affiliate groups) in collaboration with the Community Council.
2. The Provincial Council Delegate is elected by the community for a term of three years. The Delegate may not be elected to more than two consecutive terms.
 3. Two Alternate Delegates should be elected to a similar term, in case the Delegate is unable to attend a particular meeting of the Provincial Council.

COMMUNITY LIFE

Meetings

All members bear responsibility for contributing to the climate, creativity and content of community life. Each member derives what s/he invests in the communal life of a Lay Dominican. Community life should be democratic and participatory.

Community meetings should include the following.

1. Prayer. The community recites a portion of the *Liturgy of the Hours*, depending on the time of the meeting (morning – Morning Prayer; early afternoon – Midafternoon Prayer or Office of Readings; evening – Evening or Night Prayer). Communities are also encouraged to allow time for preaching by a member, followed by feedback and discussion.
2. Study. Those in basic formation are instructed separately and in small groups, using materials from the Provincial Formation Program. Members who have made final profession engage in ongoing formation in accordance with whatever materials have been agreed upon by the community for a particular year. Sessions should use diversified resources (videos, audio tapes, guest speakers, discussions, etc.) during the calendar year so as to provide variety and ensure member stimulation. Guest speakers should be the exception rather than the rule. In selecting speakers, the topic should be of interest to all members. Most importantly, Dominicans have an obligation to study – not to be spoon-fed. Remember that spiritual nourishment is both a private and communal aspect of Dominican Life. Membership should be encouraged to study at home as well as during community meetings.
3. Ministry. At least once or twice a year, time should be set aside for members to discuss their particular ministries and to answer any queries. This time not only makes members aware of what others are doing, but also sparks interest in additional opportunities to serve others. Moreover, whenever feasible, members should consider opportunities for ministry by the entire community.
4. Community. Refreshments and conversation among community members enable deepened acquaintance and interpersonal enjoyment.
5. Business. The community should discuss current business issues, announcements and reports. The Moderator conducts the business meeting. The Secretary reads the minutes from the last meeting. The Treasurer gives a periodic financial report. Business issues should take only a small portion of the meeting. Establishing separate spatial areas for business, prayer, and study can be helpful.
6. While the five requirements above comprise essential meeting topics, communities should occasionally include additional activities to enrich community life. In some communities, a "Faith Sharing" session has been added to help members appreciate the prayer needs and spiritual concerns of other community members. Consideration of a theme (forgiveness, commu-

nity, etc.) or perhaps a more free-form discussion might be held at some meetings. All members should attend this exercise in order to build spirituality within the community.

Celebrations

Receptions, Temporary, and Final Professions

The Moderator presides at official ceremonies. The ceremonies should be meaningful and simple. Examples can be found in the *Ceremonial*. Adaptations suitable to individual communities are permitted. Once a ceremony of reception or profession occurs, the Secretary should forward the names of those involved, the location and date of the ceremony, and the presider's name to the President of the Provincial Council.

A reception or profession can be invalid if the time and content requirements of the Formation Program are not adhered to in the preparation of members. Be sure that your community complies with the timetable and phases of formation required by the Province of St. Albert the Great.

Similarly, *election of any member of a community to an office for which they are ineligible (according to this Handbook), without reception of verbal dispensation from the President or Vice-President of the Provincial council or the Provincial Promoter, could result in invalidation of the election.* The Moderator is responsible for requesting any eligibility dispensations prior to community elections, if necessary. If the need arises unexpectedly, proceed with the election as seems in the best interests of the community and consult the Provincial President or Vice-President before confirming any election results.

Special Events

Days of prayer or recollection are encouraged, as well as an annual retreat. These events should be well planned and may be conducted by qualified members of the community.

MEMBERSHIP

Attracting New Members

If Lay Dominican communities are to grow, each community must strive to make the organization known to laity within the Church and to attract new members. Listed below are but a few of the methods that might be used by your community.

In person

1. Include a prayer for vocations to all branches of the Dominican Family in community meetings.

2. Include a prayer for vocations to all branches of the Dominican Family in liturgical prayer, such as at Mass or during the *Liturgy of the Hours*.
3. Make others in the work place and during leisure activities aware of your Dominican vocation.
4. Extend invitations to friends or to those you think might be interested in joining a lay order.
5. Consider hosting a recruitment event, such as an open house or a “come-and-see” to acquaint prospects with Lay Dominicans.

Through advertisement

1. Distribute Lay Dominican promotional brochures in your own and neighboring parishes. Be certain to obtain necessary permissions and to exercise prudence in placement of promotional materials.
2. Publicize retreats, days of recollection or meetings, including events such as an open house or “come-and-see,” in your diocesan paper and church bulletins.
3. Take advantage of parish events, such as vocation days or ministry fairs, to speak about Lay Dominicans.
4. Become involved in study groups, at which you can casually mention that you are a Lay Dominican and can explain this lay branch of the Dominican Order.
5. Share your ideas with other Lay Dominican communities, specifically via submissions to *Challenge*, the newsletter for the Province of St. Albert the Great.

Inducting a Prospective Member

What to do

1. Once a prospective member has expressed an interest in Lay Dominican life, the Moderator invites her/him to attend a meeting or two, at which current community members discuss why Lay Dominican life is meaningful and/or what attracted them to become a Lay Dominican. The Moderator also gives the person some literature to read such as:
 - a. A Lay Dominican brochure;
 - b. "Can Dominicans Be Lay People?" by Vivian Galbraith;
 - c. Information on Lay Dominican Communities.

The prospective member should read and study these materials to determine if s/he feels drawn to the Dominican way of life. At this stage a prospective member is called a “guest.”

2. The Moderator gives the person an application form.
3. Once the application has been completed and returned to the Moderator, letters must be received from the references given. After reference letters have been received, the Moderator presents the application and letters to the community.
4. If all seems in order and the community affirms admission, the Moderator notifies the prospective member that s/he has been accepted and may begin formation.

Be cautious in accepting as new members:

1. Those who express complete dissatisfaction with the Post Vatican II Church, (i.e., everything after the Council is suspect and contemporary theology/practice is problematic.)
2. Individuals with numerous other commitments to spiritual groups; superficial attraction to Dominican life may indicate an interest in socializing but not to a specifically Dominican vocation.
3. Those already belonging to another lay Order. As a lay branch of the Dominican Order, we require members to singularly commit to a Dominican affiliation. Being a Lay Dominican is a vocation and a full-time life; hence, it cannot be combined with membership in lay associations sharing the spirit of another religious institute. (This restriction was agreed upon by the Lay Dominican Interprovincial Council at Metairie, Louisiana in October, 2006 for provinces of the United States and Canada, in light of an allowance of multiple membership in associations of the faithful within Canon 307 of the 1983 *Code of Canon Law*.)
4. Those who display excessive devotion to Mary uninformed by contemporary theology, ecumenical sensitivity, and a true image of human dignity, especially of women. (See *Rule and Guidelines* 10, paragraph "g.")

The Formation Director should contact new members and stress the importance of regular attendance at study sessions and meetings. Reasonable excused absences are acceptable, but repeated absences should not be condoned. If the latter becomes the norm, the person should be dismissed from the formation program.

Status, Transfers, Dismissals - Deaths

Membership status: active, private, and inactive

Any finally professed member, who for reasons of health, circumstance or geography is no longer able to attend meetings, may request status from the Executive Board as a "private member" via a reasoned letter to the President of the Provincial Council. Any finally professed member, who attends only one or two meetings per year and offers no excuse for repeated absence is considered to be simply an "inactive member." If this behavior continues for three years without the

approval of the Executive Board of the Provincial Council, such an “inactive member” may be dropped from membership lists.

Transfers

1. Members transferring from one community to another within the Province or from another province should be received with all kindness and made to feel welcome.
2. Members who are transferring should obtain a transfer form from the Moderator of the new community. Our Province and others have transfer forms. The transfer form should contain the following information:
 - a. Name and address of the community to which they belonged as well as the name and address of that community’s Moderator;
 - b. Dates of their reception, temporary and final professions;
 - c. Offices, if any, held in their former community;
 - d. If still in basic formation, areas of study completed.
3. The Moderator of the new community must forward copies of the transfer form to the Provincial Presidents of both the new and former communities.

Dismissals and Resignations

1. Dismissal of a member may be necessary for the following legitimate reasons: causing strife within the community, excessive complaining, public scandal, admitted loss of faith, or similar serious offences.
2. The Moderator in consultation with the Formation Director and the entire community has the authority to dismiss a person who has not yet made final profession. This decision must be relayed in writing to the person being dismissed.
3. When the local community has voted to dismiss a member who has made final profession, a written copy of the proceedings must be sent to the Provincial President, who consults the Executive Board of the Provincial Council. If the Executive Board approves the dismissal, the Promoter and Provincial President request the Provincial Superior of the Friars to issue a declaration of dismissal.
4. If any officer consistently and inexcusably misses lay Dominican meetings (more than three per year), s/he should be strongly encouraged to resign the position for the benefit of the community. If that officer refuses to resign, s/he may be dismissed from the position by majority vote of the community in consultation with both the Provincial President and Executive Board of the Provincial Council. If the Executive Board subsequently approves the dismissal, the Promoter and Provincial President request the Provincial Superior of the Friars to issue a declaration of dismissal.

5. During any of the above dismissal processes, the member or officer being dismissed may appeal to the Executive Board and to the Provincial Superior of the Friars.
6. Refer to Article XV of the *Bylaws* for additional information.

Deaths

1. Each community should make members aware of a document called *My Wishes*. This form lists exactly how each member wishes to have the community participate in his/her wake and funeral. Members should complete two of these forms – one given to the secretary of the community and the other given to a responsible member of the family.
2. Notice of the death of a member should be appropriately relayed to community members so that they may make plans to attend the wake/funeral.
3. The Secretary of the community should list the names of deceased members in the minutes so that office records can be updated. The deceased member's name must be added to the Recently Deceased list published in *Challenge*.

Lay Dominican Provincial Council Officers
Province of St. Albert the Great, U. S. A.
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Community Resources

Promotional brochure	laydominicancentral.org Members' Info section
Handbook of Lay Dominican Leadership	laydominicancentral.org Members' Info section
Bylaws	laydominicancentral.org Members' Info section
Lay Dominican Rule and Guidelines, Central Prov	laydominicancentral.org Members' Info section
Chapter Meeting Report Form	laydominicancentral.org Members' Info section
Formation: Inquiry, Candidacy I and II	laydominicancentral.org Members' Info section
Scapulars, St. Dominic medals, Dominican shields and crosses	Ms. Karen F Sabourin OP 4319 Dean Road Howell MI 48855-9230 517-546-2559 kfsabourin@sbcglobal.net Please inquire for current prices.
<i>contemplata</i> monthly e-zine archive	laydominicancentral.org Members' Info section
<i>Challenge</i> quarterly e-newsletter archive	laydominicancentral.org Members' Info section