

## FORMATION: A PERMANENT TASK

The DLN values study highly. Study is an essential contribution to our mission. Within the DLN it mainly takes the form of formation: personal and joint reflection on the biblical, ecclesial and Dominican traditions and on issues that are on the agenda of culture and society.

The DLN has separate formation programs for the initial formation prior to the temporary promise, for the period between the temporary and final promise, and for all members collectively. Separate committees are responsible for each of these programs.

The program for initial formation spans two years. During this period, aspirants are introduced to core values and figures from our tradition: compassion, truth, contemplation, and Dominic, Catherine of Siena, Meister Eckhart, and so on. Of course the international context of the Order, and its 'synodal' and 'democratic' way of consulting and governing that is so characteristic of our tradition, are also considered.

The continuing initial formation in the period between the temporary and

final promise is aimed at deepening the own Dominican spirituality of those in formation.

In addition to these two forms of initial formation, there is a program of ongoing formation in which all members participate. Each year the committee responsible for this program selects an overarching theme that is fleshed out in two 24 hours sessions and two days of formation each year. A variety of themes relevant to Dominican life, Church life and social life have already been covered in recent years. From "caring for the soul" to "Catholic social teaching" and "reading the signs of the times in the light of the Gospel".

*The full formation program is presented at [www.ecldf.org/558/for-the-salvation-of-all-souls-dutch-formation-anno-2021](http://www.ecldf.org/558/for-the-salvation-of-all-souls-dutch-formation-anno-2021).*

During all our meetings, we set aside space and time for prayer and celebration, for intercession for the world, the church and each other. And of course we also take care of the necessary formalities and discuss and take the necessary decisions together.



**DOMINICAANSE  
LEKENGEMEENSCHAP  
NEDERLAND**



## WHO WE ARE: A COLOURFUL CROWD

The Dominican Lay Fraternity of the Netherlands (Dominicaanse Lekengemeenschap Nederland - DLN) was founded in 1999, in continuation of the former Third Order. We began with nineteen members, today we have over sixty sisters and brothers.

The members of the DLN form a colourful crowd: women and men, different in stage of life, ways of living and social background. More than a third of our members are professional theologians, working as pastors, teachers, spiritual counselors in health care or in prison; there are also publicists, musicians, workers in health care and welfare, teachers, civil servants, volunteers in all kinds of diaconal work, etc. Roughly half of our members are between the ages of 50 and 65; the other half are over 65.

The Netherlands is a very diverse country in terms of church, religion and philosophy of life. Typical of the Dutch situation is that Protestant Christians are also actively involved in our community.



Our fraternity is not linked to one Dominican priory or religious community, but covers the whole of the Netherlands. In addition to national meetings and activities, the members also meet regionally.

*The DLN experiences its diversity as a challenge, but above all as a source of enrichment.*

## OUR MISSION: LIVING A LIFE THAT PROCLAIMS

As lay Dominicans, we share in the mission of the Order to proclaim the Gospel in word and deed: that God in Jesus mercifully looks after people. Within the Dutch context, this mission is translated as follows:

*‘as lay Dominicans we are called to live a life that proclaims’.*

Dutch lay Dominicans express this mission in the first place within their own personal lives and work environment, in parishes or other church contexts in which they are involved, in contacts with people close to them, but also as citizens of society. We consider ‘compassion’ to be a Dominican core value. It lies at the basis of the Dominicans’ commitment to human rights and justice. Anno 2022, among other things, lay Dominicans commit themselves actively to a society that is hospitable to refugees, asylum seekers, religious and cultural minorities.

The DLN feels a responsibility for the continuation of the Dominican presence and ministry in the Netherlands. This responsibility is all the more urgent now that the number of vital brothers and sisters – and as a result also the number of Dominican priories and parishes – in our country has become very small. Members of the DLN are engaged in Dominican

religious communities in Zwolle, Huissen and Nijmegen. In Utrecht some of them established their own ‘House of Saint Dominic’ in continuation of a former Dominican parish. In Rotterdam they support a Dominican center for spirituality.

On a national level, lay people are actively contributing to the website of the joint Dominican family in the Netherlands ([www.dominicanen.nl](http://www.dominicanen.nl)). Among other things, on it they publish sermons and texts for liturgy and meditation. A number of lay Dominicans collaborate with members of the other branches of the Dominican Family in writing and pronouncing short ‘Dominican columns’ on national public radio. In 2021-22 lay people collaborated with artists in a project around Timothy Radcliffe OP’s book, ‘Alive in God’.



May 2022, the Dutch Province of the friars, dedicated to the Holy Rosary, merged with the Province of St. Thomas Aquinas (Belgium). The Dutch lay Dominicans look forward to an inspiring collaboration with the fraternities in Dutch and French speaking Belgium.