



Southern Dominican Laity
Province of St. Martín de Porres, USA

Lay Commission on Peace, Justice,
And Care of Creation

This charter amended and ratified by the 2008 Lay Provincial Council.

Introduction

The Commission is comprised of dedicated men and women of the lay Province of St. Martin (Southern Dominicans.) Our task is to work for peace by achieving justice, particularly through structural reform and social action. The Commission operates by authority of the lay Provincial Council and under the supervision of the Lay Executive Council of the Southern Dominican Province.

Our Hopes

Our first hope is to be *prophetic* – to challenge unjust situations with the message of the Gospel, by word and by deed.

Our second hope is to be *pragmatic* – to work in solidarity with others to transform those parts of our lives, our Church, our society and our world that do not contribute to the building of the Kingdom of justice, peace, and love.

Our Aims

- To work for justice in social structures.
- To seek to work in conjunction with the victims of social injustice.
- To provide information, support, and opportunities for social action for people of the church in their mission to give first concern to the poor, the powerless and oppressed members of society.
- To provide opportunities for educating the Catholic community in the social doctrine of the Church.
- To provide a Christian context for the research and analysis of social issues where structural injustices occur.
- To help spread the Gospel message of justice throughout the lay Province and wider community.

Our Actions

We are involved in monitoring developments globally that affect us locally. Through utilization of the four pillars of Dominican life, we aim to conduct research, provide information, service and support, and collaborate with other individuals and groups who serve the cause of Justice and Peace.

Our Commitment

We are committed to the empowerment of and empowerment by, individuals and groups with specific interests, skills, and experience in working for justice and peace through the major themes of Catholic Social Teaching: *Life and Dignity of the Human Person, Participation: The Call to Family and Community; Rights and Responsibilities; The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers; Solidarity; and Care for God's Creation.*

Our Functions

We will observe, judge through social analysis and theological reflection, and act on justice and peace issues with dependence upon prayer, study, and contemplation.

We will work to raise awareness within our provincial community of the problems of injustice resulting from of our study and research.

We will work to develop and promote models for social action for unjust situations.

We will work to stimulate and support the establishment of local Catholic social justice groups within the lay Dominican Province, and to support individual and group initiatives.

We will work in collaboration with other religious, civic, and professional organizations similarly concerned with justice.

We will monitor the development and implementation of public policy as it affects social justice.

When necessary and / or appropriate, we will make public statements in consideration of particular social issues.

We will work to act as a forum within the Church, our lay Province, and the wider community.

Our Process

We will meet monthly via cyber meetings to implement a three tier / three year program, as follows:

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Year One (2008) | 9 Month program developing an understanding of Catholic Social Teaching (Prayer and Study) |
| Year Two (2009) | 12 Month program discerning opportunities for justice and peace action in local areas / provincial wide (Prayer, Study, Contemplation) |
| Year Three (2010) | Implementation of justice and peace actions in each group / chapter as well as one action provincial wide (Prayer, Study, Contemplation, Mission) |

Ultimately, our work as a commission will result in accomplishing several goals:

- We will create a body of work and accomplishment that will speak out against injustices in our province.
- By relying on the four pillars, we will actively participate in the holy preaching of the Dominican charism.
- We will create a greater sense of “community within a community”.
- We will make ourselves visible to others that may be discerning a vocation to lay Dominican life.

At the end of our three year period, we will also have created a collection of study materials and experiences that can be retooled into a training program which could be made available to other lay communities, parishes, and groups, thus becoming yet one more avenue of holy preaching and potentially a source of revenue for our lay province.