

News from the DSIC Leadership Program 2024 by Pat Connick O.P.—MODULE 4, October

The first day we started with a time of contemplative prayer as we listened to “On Eagles’ Wings” by Michael Joncas, closing our prayer in solidarity with the Synod on Synodality, which is concurrent with our own gathering. We began by reflecting on our own best experiences of leadership, sharing that with one other person, and bringing those qualities together in a list of “Core Elements of Dominican Leadership”:

- prayer, authenticity, humility, listening,
- dialogue, openness, empathy, compassion,
- trust, inclusivity, dealing with tensions/conflict, and service.

We next examined the idea of Appreciative Leadership: looking at what we have in assets, rather than what is missing. We are called

- to be curious in our inquiry,
- to act as a mirror so others can see their own potential,
- to be inclusive culturally and generationally,
- to inspire creativity, confidence and a sense of possibility and
- to be women of integrity, to “walk the talk.”

Leadership is convening:

- to create a context
- to initiate and convene conversations, and
- to listen and to pay attention.

Our contemplative space the second day led us to reflect on sayings from the apostle Matthew, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, Pope Francis, Mother Teresa, and Oscar Romero. After this we listened to “The Song of the Shepherd.” Personal care was the main topic for this day in which considered our humility, our sense of community, our fidelity, and our contemplation. We even considered our blind spots and talked about “The Story of the Oyster” and how learning to deal with stress can be unexpectedly productive! With a life compass, we can discern the best direction to take based on whether we are beginning, in the middle, or letting go in the end.

On the last day, Sr. Margaret Mayce, DSI’s International Coordinator, gave us useful statistics about the presence of Dominican women around the world, asking, “What can we do together to move the larger Charism into the future with dynamism?” We heard from some who traveled together to Caleruega in August for a week of sororal connection: “What is God’s dream for us as apostolic Dominican women at this point in our history?” We closed with a final experience of contemplative prayer.

I am most grateful for the entirety of this experience with my Dominican sisters from around the globe. The time we have already spent learning together and beginning to know one another will prove, no doubt, to be of great value in the future!