

Good evening sisters, associates, family and friends - present here in this sacred space and on livestream,

On this feast of the patronage of Blessed Virgin Mary over the Dominican order and this historic day for our church, Luke's gospel passage is rich in messages that speak to us. We are here to formalize our commitments as associates of the Dominican Sisters of Peace. We have all been associating with the sisters for years, so tonight we're here to make it official!

Why? Because there's something about the Dominicans. Some of us met you early in life, some later. But we were all attracted to your way of being in the world, to your peace. As the angel said to Mary, "The Lord is with you." We see God's presence in your commitment to truth through study, prayer, community and service. We see how you work for justice and peace with hope in these troubled times. We see role models who walk the walk. You preach through your lives and show us the path to being the kind of people we want to be.

Like Mary though, I have questioned (and maybe Pope Leo the 14th has said the same thing), "How can this be?" How is it that I am here to join the Dominican family at this particular time? Over 15 years ago at a low point in my life, I met Sister Joan Supel, my first Dominican and now my formation companion. I wanted to go from being a back bencher at St. Pius X to greater involvement in my parish. Someone suggested that I become an RCIA sponsor but I didn't think I would be allowed. I had seen new Catholics entering the church at the Easter vigil and envied their sponsors.

Sister Joan graciously welcomed me and went on to encourage me to do even more. At that point I wasn't particularly comfortable talking about my faith.

Footnote - Father Dan Millisor was assistant pastor at St Pius at the time and now I often quote one of his homilies on answers to prayer in our OCIA inquiry session on prayer.

So fast forward to 2025 and after working with Sister Joan and Sister Maxine (who is with us in spirit and you know she is smiling.) I went on to meet Sister Rosie , Sister Marguerite, and later Sister Terrie at Shepherd's Corner. I worked with Sister Robin at the Dominican Learning Center and I admired the artwork of Sister Thoma. I realized "There's something about these Dominicans."

As I prepared this talk I again thought "How can this be?" that I am here speaking to members and associates of the Order of Preachers . All I can say is that the Holy Spirit plays the long game and never gives up even when the formation program gets delayed by a pandemic. Thank you, Mark Butler, for restarting the formation process and guiding us over the past year.

The angel said to Mary "Nothing is impossible for God." It's taken me quite a while to understand that God often picks the most unlikely candidates to do his work. From Moses in the Old Testament to Saints Peter and Paul and Mary Magdalene. They surely didn't start out as number one draft picks for sainthood - until they encountered the love of Jesus. The Lord

indeed was with them, was with the Dominican saints whose lives we have studied, and the Lord is with us today.

As the angel went to a young girl in Nazareth and asked her to do the extraordinary, Mary said “Yes”, freely and graciously. Your will be done. The angel assured her not to be afraid. We are excited and curious, but not afraid as we move forward to make a commitment to the Dominican community. We know we’ll have the support of the community as we proceed toward whatever comes next in our faith lives. Just as Mary said “yes”, we’re here to say “yes” . We will be preaching. It may look like healthcare, justice work, fair housing, care for the earth, writing, dance, art, music, teaching English or whatever the Holy Spirit invites us to do. Through our preaching may God’s perfect love be brought to everyone we meet, even though we’re imperfect people. We’re here to say, “yes” because there’s something about these Dominicans.

May God bless us all abundantly, especially Pope Leo the 14th, as we go forth to preach the good news and to be peace.