

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Although there are other definitions/explanations for the following terms, the members of the Reconfiguration Subcommittee have accepted the following as our common understanding. This Glossary has been approved by the Cluster Coordinating Committee and will serve as a guide in the readings as we go forward on our Cluster journey.

ALLIANCE	Itinerant Dominican women. committed to collaboration link their energy, resources and personnel to preach the Gospel.
ASSOCIATES	Women and men who share the Dominican charism and are associated with a religious congregation but who are not canonical members of the congregation.
CCC	Initials for the Cluster Coordinating Committee; comprised of one member from leadership and one from congregation at large. The goal of the CCC is to involve all members in a discernment process that includes a strategic plan with action steps and a time line moving us toward a recommendation of alternative structures for the reconfiguration of Dominican Cluster Congregations.
CANONICAL	Aspects of religious life governed by Canon law, i.e. rights and obligations.
CLUSTER	Dominican congregations committed to a process for exploring reconfiguration of sister congregations for the sake of Dominican life and mission. The Cluster Congregations are: Akron, Columbus, Great Bend, Kentucky, New Orleans Eucharistic Missionaries of St. Dominic, New Orleans St. Mary, and Oxford
COLLABORATION	Individual congregations coming together for the common purpose of strengthening Dominican life and mission, e.g. Collaborative Novitiate, Dominican Council of the South, Dominican Praise: Liturgy of the Hours, Dominican High School Preaching Institute, Dominican Volunteers USA, Dominican Alliance, Federation of Dominican Sisters USA, etc.
COLLEGIALITY	Because the Spirit lives in all members, uniting all as one body, each sister is responsible for the common good and, therefore, shares in the formation and implementation of Congregational/community decisions.
COMMUNITY	A group of individuals who choose to be in relationship for the sake of Dominican life and mission.
CONGREGATION	Members of a religious institute who by public vow observe the three evangelical counsels, are consecrated to God through the

ministry of the Church, and are incorporated into the institute with rights and duties defined by law See canon.654

CONSENSUS

A decision-making process in which communications have been sufficiently open and the group climate sufficiently supportive to make everyone in the group feel she has had a fair opportunity to influence the decision. If at the end of the process some members' preference is different from that of the group, consensus exists if they can honestly take the position that *"This is not my preference but I will let go in faith and support it."*

Adapted from Schweickert: Standing at the Crossroads, pp. 85 and 98

CYCLES

Sequential phases in the Cluster Process.

DISCERNMENT

A process for decision-making in which one is open to God's spirit within herself, within others and within the group as a whole. Experience, prayer, contemplation, and listening to other's wisdom are part of this process used in both personal and communal decision(s).

FEDERATION

Non-canonical: An organization of congregations of a similar charism who come together to foster their charism and strengthen their spiritual bonds while retaining their own identity and autonomy, e.g. Federation of Dominican Sisters USA.

Canonical: An organization of congregations of a similar charism who come together to form both a civil and canonical entity for defined and specific purposes while retaining their own identity and autonomy, e.g. Benedictine federations.

The Federation of Dominican Sisters USA: formed in 1999 "in order to create a dynamic union which supports and promotes among members mutual collaboration for the sake of the mission." It is a non-canonical organization in which each institution keeps its identity and autonomy. Membership is open to all Dominican congregations. All members of Congregations that belong to the Federation may participate in Federation events at the local, regional, and national levels.

Federation Documents

INSTITUTE

The term used in canon law for a congregation.

LEARNINGS

What has been gleaned from research, experience, study and prayerful reflection.

MERGER A process in which “an institute, usually a fairly small one, joins another in such a way that the former is incorporated into the latter adopting its name, its constitutions, its form of government, etc. In other words one institute has disappeared juridically although its houses and works may be maintained”, e.g. Spokane Dominicans becoming part of Sinsinawa Dominicans.

Marjory Gallagher, S.C. “The Future of Small Religious Institutes: Merging and Other Issues” CLSA Proceedings 57 (1995) p. 210.

For our purposes, “merger” and “fusion” will be used synonymously.

NON-CANONICAL Aspects of religious life not governed by canon law.

PROCESS A deliberate dynamic movement in a group that allows the Spirit to move it through chaos to new truth and new life for the sake of its mission.

RECONFIGURATION The outcome(s) of Congregations’ exploration of structuring new ways of being together for Dominican life and mission.

REUNIFICATION Congregations that were founded as a single institute but became independent groups now make a decision to re-unite into one institute.

SPONSORED MINISTRY A sponsored ministry is one in which a congregation has an on-going relationship as well as the right and responsibility to ensure its Catholicity and Dominican charism. The relationship may or may not involve financial commitment.

SUBSIDIARITY The principle by which decisions are made at the level at which they are to be effected.

TRANSITION “...a movement FROM and a movement TOWARD; it is a PASSAGE; it is not an end in itself.”
Schweickert: Standing at the Crossroads p. 67

UNION Two or more congregations give up their distinct identities to form a new institute with a new name, new constitutions, and a new government structure, e.g. Dominican Sisters of Hope

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