

MONIALIBUS

International Bulletin

April 2021, n° 44



Nuns of the Order of Preachers



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Monialibus is the official International Bulletin of the Nuns of the Order of Preachers published by the International Commission of Nuns (ICN) twice a year in April and October. It is available at the website of the nuns www.monialesop.org and at the website of the Order: www.op.org

At Table With Saint Dominic

Recently I discovered a beautiful little story told by Henri Nouwen:

A little boy is watching a sculptor who, through his work, is making a beautiful carved lion out of a large block of granite.

Very proud, the sculptor asks the boy: "So what do you think?" "It is very beautiful", the boy answers in wonder, but he continues by asking: "Tell me, how did you know this morning that in this block of granite was hidden a lion?"



This little story challenged me in the face of the pandemic that weighs down like this block of granite and prevents the outpouring of life in its beauty, day after day, as we had the grace to live it until a year ago.

So much suffering, so much existential anguish for the future of so many people of all ages... When will the pandemic give way to the courageous and joyful impulse of life? Life in its beauty, its simple human relationships, its shared joys and the

pooling of talents to help build a better world.

We celebrated Easter! Celebrating our Risen Saviour throughout this Easter season strengthens us in the certainty that life is stronger than death, that light is stronger than darkness, that the stone (of granite) could not hold Jesus in the darkness of the tomb... Yes, Jesus is risen, Alleluia!

Jesus, the Risen One, changes our outlook, he opens our eyes as he did for the disciples of Emmaus, he invites us to "see" the beauty of life and to witness to it.

For us Dominican Nuns, invited in this Jubilee Year to the table of Dominic, together with his sisters and brothers, we are given the grace to discover his face. This face which, in a certain way, remains hidden from our eyes, is now revealed and appears in and through the life of each one of us, of all of us, sisters and brothers. For perhaps there are as many faces of Dominic as

there are sisters in each of our communities, and better still, as many as there are sisters and brothers in the Order...

Admirable Dominic!

To be with Dominic, to walk with Dominic, to be at table with Dominic - what a beautiful invitation! The table of the bread shared from day to day and the table of the word, which makes us discover ourselves as sisters and brothers in the work of each day.

Several sisters dared to share with us their view of Dominic, thank you very much! Thank you for this beautiful bouquet of testimonies received which contribute to embellish the Jubilee!

This invitation is still open (do not hesitate to send your contributions for the next issue!) Let us dare to enrich each other by sharing our view of Dominic: the table is big, there is room for all!

Fraternally yours,

Sr Lioba, Monastery of Prouilhe, France

(Original: French)



First “Online” Meeting of the International Commission of the Nuns



³³They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together ³⁴and saying, "It is true! The LORD has risen and has appeared to Simon." ³⁵Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread. (Luke 24:33-35)

Dear sisters, dear nuns of all the monasteries of our beloved Order, receive fraternal and affectionate greetings and congratulations for Easter. I wish you to be very well, renewed in spirit and living a holy and fruitful Easter time.



Easter, among other things, invites us to remember that we are made for love, we were created by love and for love. Only by love can we express God's mercy and the compassion of St. Dominic. Only by love can we be authentic preachers of grace, the gospel of grace. In the fantastic passage on the disciples of Emmaus, we see how those two happy new believers reunited with the apostles. They represent the infant Paschal Church, the Church that was born from the Resurrection of Jesus Christ to preach the Gospel.

The Church is born as a community, as a group of brothers and sisters united in the Risen Christ, "to praise, to bless and to preach" to the Father moved by the Spirit. In this community they go to live in love to witness to the love of God in Jesus Christ. It is a love in communion, not in solitude, and less in isolation. It is about finding in Christ Jesus the reason to being together and to love. Gandhi says, "Love is the most humble force, but the most powerful that can order the world." The love of Jesus breaks down all barriers that can limit this love of communion in the world. social condition, color, sex, ideologies, places of origin, beliefs, etc. Jesus has broken, with his Cross and Resurrection, everything that divided human beings: "There is no

longer Jew or Greek, slave or free, neither male nor female, since you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3 , 28).

I say the above, dear sisters, because when referring to the International Commission of Nuns (ICN), I want to remember that it is a work of unity and shared effort. The ICN now brings together 18 presidents, representatives of all the monasteries of the Order of Saint Dominic. Our last meeting by zoom was a wonderful expression of unity in the love to which the Lord has called us in Our Holy Father Dominic. We are called to work in communion and collaboration in the ICN, to express that unity with the universal Church.

A little history. The ICN was established in 1992 at the request of the 1989 Oakland General Chapter, by the Master of the Order, fr. Damien Byrne, OP. Four nuns had been invited to the Chapter. Before that date, fr. Juan José Gallegos, was in charge of the nuns, sisters of active life and laity. We can imagine how huge the task was. The aim of the ICN was seen as a think tank to advise the Master, like many other commissions of the Order. It was established to promote the contemplative prayer life in the fraternal life and a life of study, but above all to help the monasteries that are geographically more isolated.

Together with the ICN and *Monialibus*, a separation of functions began as of that year. There would no longer be a single friar for these three branches of the Order. There would be a General Promoter of the Nuns, another for lay people and a religious for the sisters of active life. The first General Promoter of the nuns was Br. Viktor Hofstetter, OP. Then followed: fr. Manuel Merten, fr. Brian Pierce, fr. César Valero Bajo and now, the fifth on the list, fr. Fernando Garcia, OP.

In the early days the ICN met twice a year. The first meeting of the Commission was like an experience prior to deeper work, and it took place in June 1991, just over thirty years ago, at the Monastery of Orbey in France. Then another followed, the following year in Santa Sabina, Rome, from March 2-6, 1992. There were 235 monasteries in those years. The work, above all, was trying to "promote the contemplative life according to the needs of the times" and also "to seek the best way to implement the Constitutions, both for each nun and for each monastery."

The ICN was, at that time, composed of a very small number of nuns, some of whom had participated in the General Chapter. Since then, a greater representation of nuns in the Commission was seen as fundamental for the future. Later on, other sub-commissions emerged, such as "Spem Miram Nuns" and the connection of the nuns with the Promoter of Justice and Peace. Finally, I want to say that, at the last meeting of the ICN at the Federal Monastery of Santa María de Guadalupe in Lake Guadalupe, Mexico, held from September 27 to October 2, 2019, the Master of the Order proposed and fr. Gerard Timoner III agreed to increase the number of representatives of the Commission to 18, all Federation or Association Presidents.

The Covid-19 pandemic, which also began in 2019 and which we continue to experience this year 2021, has put a check on the whole world. It is essential to avoid contagion through isolation, the essential protection and all the necessary care, but this meant that the imperative and necessary meeting of the Commission could not be carried out last year.

On February 18 2021 we had our first online meeting through the Zoom platform. We entrusted ourselves to the intercession of Bl. John de Fiésole, OP, better known as Blessed Angelico, in his day. All the Federal Presidents were present, and we had the participation of the Master of the Order, fr. Gerard, the Procurator General of the Order, fr. Benjamin Earl & fr. Orlando Rueda Acevedo, who did the translation service for us.

The meeting began at 3:30 p.m., Rome time. We were delayed for a few minutes due to technical issues. After the opening prayer, fr. Gerard addressed a few words of encouragement and thanks to the Lord for the meeting and reminded us of the importance of contemplative nuns for the Order. He also invited us to update the *Catalogus* of the Nuns and the need to send some other information that the Promoter will indicate soon.

Finally, he made an invitation to renew fraternal life, remembering that we meet in the Jubilee of the 8th centenary of the *dies natalis* of our Holy Father Dominic.

Next, fr. Benjamin took the floor and he told us that the work on the revision of the Constitutions has already begun to be updated with the VDq and CO documents and that they would soon have a second meeting. The Nuns worked in groups and in a plenary meeting to make adaptation to the proposals.

The Promoter then welcomed the Federal Presidents who were recently elected in the new Federations. Finally, each of the Presidents was given the floor to express and briefly comment on what they expected from the Commission. All the sisters, including those from the subcommittees, who were present, were able to express themselves and none of them lacked to do so.

The agenda had a few points, since it was already foreseen that the time went very quickly, given the number of participants that we were, namely 26, nuns from Africa, Asia, America and Europe. We wanted to hear a short report from each Federation, but unfortunately, there was no time for it.

Fr. Gerard asked for a couple of minutes at the end to say goodbye and to insist on the point of sending the statistics of each Federation. We finished a few minutes after the appointed time, but not before seeing smiles and the pleasure of having seen each person's face and listening to their words.

The Promoter also expressed the same joy and gratitude to God and to St. Dominic for having met all the Presidents and friars and reminded us that there will be another convocation for a new meeting on this platform in about three months. We gave thanks to God with another prayer and remained with the hope of a new meeting.

(Information: Sr. Lioba Hill, OP; Article Sr. Elie Calis OP and Analecta OP)

Fr. Fernando García Fernández, OP
March 15, 2021 General Promoter of the Nuns

(Original: spanish)

ICN MEETING WITH THE MASTER OF THE ORDER

On February 18 of this Jubilee Year 2021, the ICN meeting was held with all the Presidents of the Federations and Associations of the Nuns of the Order. In total we are 16 Federations and 2 Associations, spread throughout the different continents.

It was carried out through Zoom, due to the sanitary alert that we live as a consequence of the pandemic caused by the Covid-19, that makes us avoid trips to prevent the chain of contagion.



There were 27 participants: Fr. Gerard, Master of the Order; Fr. Fernando Garcia, our Promoter; Fr. Benjamin Earl, Procurator of the Order, Fr. Orlando Rueda, who was the translator, and 23 nuns.

That day we were celebrating the memory of Blessed Fra Angelico. I think it was a fraternal, celestial and effective gathering. It was impressive to see the representatives of the sisters from Africa, America, Asia and Europe. Many were familiar faces, for those of us who had participated in other meetings, and all of them were the fruit of the seeds that Dominic cultivated, cared for and looks after, launched into the world by the Holy Spirit.

The meeting started at 3:00 PM, Rome time, and lasted about two hours. After the sound and video adjustments, which were a bit difficult for us, Bro Fernando Garcia welcomed us and wished us a holy and fruitful Lent.

Fr. Gerard expressed his joy to be able to participate in the meeting and to see the nuns. He reminded us of the importance that we have in the Order; the need to have updated statistics of the monasteries; the work of the Commission for the revision of the LCM and the importance that this will have. Finally he invited us to renew our fraternal life.



Fr. Benjamin, informed us about the Commission that is revising the LCM--he is the president of the commission. They continue working, although a little slower than expected due to the pandemic situation.



At the moment they are preparing the first drafts and hope that before the summer they will have a complete text to offer to the monasteries according to the procedure foreseen by LCM, n.

Friar Orlando had to "navigate" in several languages, trying to make us understand each other, but we did not always succeed. During the sound adjustments he had to change office

and while he was walking through the corridor of the curia of Santa Sabina, we could see the pictures of the portraits of the Masters of the Order. A nice "extra"!

Fernando had asked us not to be triumphalist but brief and real, about *"what is really happening in the contemplative life, in each monastery. How are the community relationships, how is the study, the manual work, how is the relationship between authority and obedience, the life of prayer and contemplation? It is also about talking about how we see the future, what are our hopes and fears"*.

We only had time to say our name, the name of our Federation or Association, the country or countries where we were, and what we expect from the ICN meetings and where we would like to go from here.

On the question of what we expect of the ICN, the answers were: to be a structure of communion between the monasteries of the Order, to be a help to the Master, to advance together towards that future that is presented with difficulties and enormous changes, but abundant in the grace of God. Undoubtedly with nuances and differences, but with the desire to live the Order in the communion that has endured for 800 years.

Sister Lioba, responsible for Monialibus, with Sister Mary Catharine in the USA and Sister Maria Angeles and Sister Carmen Maria in Spain, encouraged us to share in the Bulletin the events, the life of the monasteries and how we live the Jubilee of the Order, since it is read with interest in all the communities of the world.

Sister Paola, together with Sister Stanislawka and Sister Mary Rose, from the sub-commission of the Nuns' Fund, expressed gratitude for the splendid collaboration they have experienced when they have made consultations about help for the monasteries.

Sr. Irene Diaz, who belongs to the Justice and Peace Commission, spoke briefly about the importance of this task of the Order.

Sister Lorena, who belongs to the LCM Revision Commission, and one of our hosts in Mexico, also shared that the task is slow because it is done through videoconference.

The theme of the Jubilee: "At the table with St. Dominic" was present. We gathered around a table of fraternity, even if this time it was virtual.

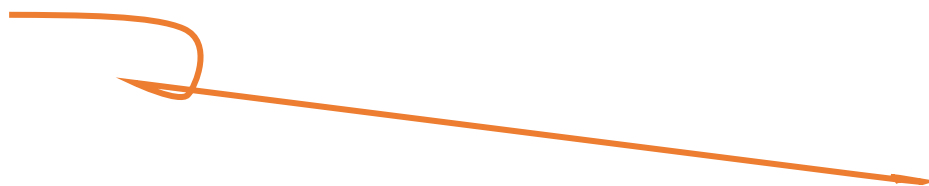
We needed more time, but it was the time we had. To Fr. Gerard and all the brothers and sisters who participated: thank you for being there!

We ended the meeting, as we had begun, thanking the Lord, giver of all good, knowing that Dominic, from heaven, fulfills, through the centuries, what he promised us, and invites us to learn fidelity, joy and hope, in the book of charity.

Sr. Maria Teresa of Jesus Gil, OP
Monastery of the Immaculate

Torrente (Valencia) Spain

(Original: Spanish)



Living the Covid-19 Pandemic as a Time of Grace



We have been forced to stop, to reflect on the grievous "today" we are living, to consider it as a constant invitation to practice the concrete charity of daily service to the poorest, or to those who are simply closest to us: the old man who usually enters our church (always open from 6.30 to 20.00 and on Tuesdays until 22.00, only during the total closure we opened and closed according to government regulations) for a brief greeting to Jesus, the father of a family with a precarious job who, because of the pandemic, for the first time knocks on the door of a monastery.

To better penetrate into the fragility of our neighbor it is therefore necessary to live this time of suffering, mourning, and restlessness as an opportunity that the Lord offers us to reinvigorate our spirit through prayer, to regain confidence in Providence, assuming an attitude of true openness towards others even when it is a question of refugees fleeing on a boat in the middle of the sea.

To this end, it may be useful to reconsider what the Church, at the beginning of the Lenten journey, proposes to the faithful as spiritual means to arrive prepared for the celebration of Easter: almsgiving, prayer, fasting.

The obligation of almsgiving has never failed in the Christian religion, but it is necessary to re-evaluate its concept and practice and to consider almsgiving not as the purely material gift of goods necessary for the sustenance of people but, according to what St. Thomas of Aquino says in *Summa Theologiae*, as "an action by which something is given out of compassion to a destitute person for God's sake. Now this motive belongs to mercy, as we have seen. It is clear then that giving alms is really an act of mercy. And this derives from the term itself: in fact, in Greek it derives from mercy, like the Latin *miseratio*. And since mercy, as we have seen, is an

effect of charity, it follows that almsgiving is an act of charity dictated by mercy. (*Summa Theologiae*, II-II, q.32, a.1)

For contemplatives, social isolation, made necessary by the pandemic for Covid-19, is not a difficult reality to live even though we nuns, too, for more than two months, suspended the Eucharistic celebration, *lectio divina* with young people, meetings with Dominican laity, but all this gave us strong motivation to put all our resources to use and continue to keep alive the spiritual life of our community, of the Dominican fraternity and of all those who habitually attend the monastery: We have tried to live this pandemic as a "kairos", as a time of grace. It may sound like a hyperbole, but it was exactly like that because, before this contagion exploded, we had never thought of livestreaming through Facebook Eucharistic adoration and the Holy Rosary every day of the week. For our community it was a spiritually corroborant experience because we had to engage ourselves every day to prepare meditations for Adoration and the Holy Rosary, and we found considerable participation in our broadcasts, beyond all expectations.

The void created by social distancing has been filled, many people have "attuned themselves" to God, they have returned to their interiority to meet the Lord and know themselves better in Him. We can also consider this a miracle in an era in which man's times have become so frenetic as to be inhuman: in the economic field an unbridled liberalism has affirmed itself and workmen have to work even on Sundays, impoverishing the spiritual life; technology, if not used correctly, is only capable of constantly transmitting to us a conglomeration of images and news that do not make the mind and spirit mature.

The words of St. Thomas are clear in that they emphasize the dispositions of mind that must accompany our acts of generosity towards those in need, especially in this period of the Coronavirus pandemic, in which everyone, consecrated and lay, is required to become capable of a welcome that truly starts from the heart, that is able to grasp all the needs of our neighbor, both material and spiritual. In this way, a spiritual space will be created around us, produced by our being completely disinterested, free from any aspiration to a reward, prostrated only for the good of our brothers and sisters who for us have the face of God.

Prayer is another spiritual means that can help us to live this Covid-19 pandemic as a "kairos", as a time of grace, during which we turn to God not only to complain about the pain caused by the loss of so many lives, the spread of poverty and social insecurity, but to express our thirst for Him and renew our act of faith.

This crisis has been an experience of poverty, because we have taken note of our smallness: before the contagion exploded we believed we were the masters of everything, rich in every material good, almost invincible. In this condition the temptation to leave God aside was a danger that prevented us from transcending ourselves, we trusted without reserve the technology that made us almost believe that there was no longer any need for the transcendent. But the experience of our poverty and inadequacy, and the defeat we suffered, made us think a lot and now allow us an openness to others, to nature, to God. A new religious fervor has awakened, the forced inactivity caused by the lockdown has given many people the chance to rediscover the taste for prayer, lived as a personal relationship with the Lord. If, in this "today" of ours, we identify and evaluate these signs of recovery of spirituality, we will be

able to get out of ourselves and support those who, with innovative and creative spirit, try to reinvent Christian life.



The last ascetic practice to be re-evaluated in this moment of trial is fasting understood as a return to the essential in all aspects of our life: we have seen that prosperity and well-being can break down in a very short time, that not all the goods we possess are absolutely necessary, that a healthy fast from so many hours of networking can improve our relations. We treasure all that we have experienced during this pandemic so that we consider it not only as a world humanitarian disaster but as an opportunity for spiritual rebirth, as a "kairos", as a time of grace in which the Lord comes again to meet man.

The limitations imposed by the anti-virus provisions have not prevented us to celebrate, as every year, the solemnity of St. Dominic. The restrictions did not allow us to welcome many people in the Church, so we decided to celebrate in the garden of

the monastery, thus allowing more people to participate.

We had to renounce the procession with the statue of St. Dominic but not the blessing and distribution of bread and prayer and blessing on the many "friends of Dominic" of Lettere and neighboring countries nor did the present community show less fervor in their participation of the feast day.



Sr. M. Margherita Petito o.p.

Monastero SS. Rosario- Lettere (NA) Italie

(Original: italian and english)

I HAVE A DREAM...

I dare to dream to be as Dominic was:
An ardent fiery apostle,
A Beloved and a Lover fast-knit to Christ,
radiant with his joy.

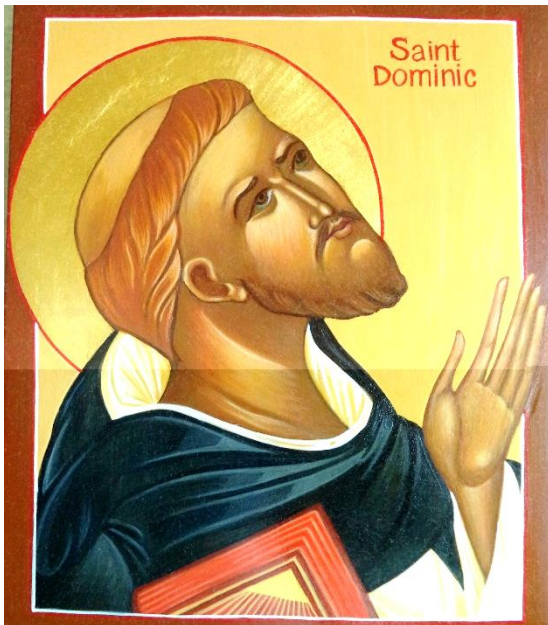
A Preacher whose silent voice resounds
throughout the universe,
By love, by prayer, by quiet pondering
of the Word of Life.

A faithful child of God,
reflecting the unity, love and happiness
of the Blessed Three in One
to everyone whom I meet in my daily
contacts.

A compassionate Listener, pleading,
interceding
for mercy on the broken and needy people
of our world.

A sinner in need of redemption
identifying with my fettered brothers
and sisters
in my chosen immobility.

Yes, I dare to dream to be as Dominic was
an ardent fiery apostle
of the glad tidings of salvation.



*Monastery of Catherine of Siena, Drogheda, Ireland
(Original: english)*

The Drogheda Sisters

Offer Us These Interesting Contacts

St Dominic was born in Caleruega, Spain in 1170 and died in Bolgna, Italy on the 6th August 1221 – 5 short years after receiving confirmation for his Order of Preachers (1216) and establishing the nuns of the Order in 1206.



When announcing a jubilee year commemorating Dominic's death Fr Bruno Cadoré OP, ex-Master of the Order stated: "It is with profound thanksgiving for the path of holiness opened up by Saint Dominic that we will celebrate the anniversary of his death during the year starting on the **6th January 2021 until the 6th January 2022.**"

We will give thanks for the path that he has opened up for us, and on which we desire to walk as preachers for our sanctification. We will give thanks for the witness of so many sisters and brothers whose holiness is welcomed by the Church as a precious gift for all the faithful. We will give thanks for Dominic's intercession to God, promised by him to his sorrowful brethren, which gives its strength to holy preaching today. And we will give thanks with the keen awareness that the celebration of his memory is at the same time a prayer: that through the intercession of Mary, Mother of Preachers, and of Saint Dominic, the brothers and sisters of the Order, lay and religious, apostolic and monastic, confirm their "holy preaching" by their service to humanity and to the Church."

For information on the various branches of the Dominican Family in Ireland please contact:

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Dominican Friars: Fr Colm Mannion OP, vocations@dominicans.ie; www.dominicans.ie/vocations

Dominican Sisters: Cabra Congregation: www.dominicansisters.com

Dominican Sisters of St Cecilia: St. Saviour's Priory, Limerick - limerick@op-tn.org;

Lay Dominicans: laydoms@gmail.com

© Dominican Nuns, Monastery of St Catherine of Siena, The Twenties, Drogheda, Co. Louth



The Table of the Mascarella

The Eucharist (in the choir) and the refectory are two very important places for me, essential to my life as a nun. Both are places of growth and of building the life of the Kingdom of Heaven already present in this world. These two moments of our days make, in equal fashion for me, reference to the Holy Thursday accounts offered in the version of the synoptic Gospels or the Gospel of St. John. Without doubt, that is also why they are so dear to me.

These are two places of "rebuilding" and two communal places. During the Eucharist we receive the body of Christ, food for our souls and pledge of our eternal life, support for our daily life to live the Gospel in truth. In the refectory we receive our daily food to "rebuild our bodies and our minds." The meal prepared and offered supports our bodies for our daily toil, and replenishes our worn-out selves, spent in the service of our sisters or for those encountered in the course of our work charges. In the choir as in the refectory we listen, in silence, to both the Word, and the word which is shared with us. And if we want to hear well, it is God who speaks to us, and it is also the world, that is to say the brothers (and sisters) of Jesus, the children of the Father who make us hear their voices, their cries, their testimonies, and thereby share their life with us. In these two places we are gathered in community, within the Church.

If I love the Mascarella Table¹ so much, it is because it has the "flavor" of Holy Thursday to me, if you allow me the expression! When we look at it (the reproduction, since I have never had the pleasure of seeing it in real life!) we first see a group of brothers sitting behind a table covered with multiple cups, jugs ... We notice enough quickly that one of them, alone between two pillars, in a central position, a little taller and distinctly haloed, presides over the table. This is obviously St. Dominic. On this table, cluttered with numerous bowls, cups, jugs and loaves of bread, are also just as many books, placed in an orderly fashion!

The placement of the brothers immediately makes one think of the meal of the Last Supper with Christ present in the midst of his apostles, in the heart of his Church, forming the Church, on the evening of Holy Thursday, during his last meal.

For me this "image" is like an icon, representing Dominican life in its deepest sense (only the sisters – contemplative nuns² or apostolic sisters - and a few lay people are missing... but if you look carefully you can glimpse them hidden by the pillars!!): fraternal life, study, liturgical and sacramental life.

The arrangement of the brothers, shoulder to shoulder, like the disciples of Jesus on many depictions of the Last Supper, speaks of their fraternity. Their arms, with the right arm always on the table, proclaim their commitment. It is not just a raised arm, it has a movement that

¹ The Mascarella Table is a wood table featuring the first portrait of St. Dominic, painted shortly after his canonization, which is kept in the Church of Santa Maria de Mascarella in Bologna, Italy.

² Specialist who has analyzed the painting identify the person sitting to the left of St. Dominic as a nun: Diana d'Andalo.

says a word, Yes, I commit myself, I choose what is offered to me. None of the faces of the brothers is alike, and I like to think that the painter, "the iconographer", depicted the brothers who lived with him or who were known to him at that time. It is an embodied, living brotherhood.

On the table, the cups that seem more ornate naturally recall the Eucharist. Bread, in the concrete form of a loaf, connects the "two tables" even more strongly: that of the refectory and that of the altar. The books arranged at the edge of the table tell us of both the Word of God, food for our lives, and of the study so essential in the Order which enables us to speak and share the life of God.

Looking closely, we notice that the loaves of bread sit next to the books and are placed more at the edge of the table, along with most of the more ornate cups, while the jugs and bowls are closer to the brothers. There is a non-random distribution of the elements that make up the table. Are the bowls used for hand washing? Presumably, a brother even seems ready to pour water for his neighbor, thus performing the rite of hand washing, proper to the Eucharist. The proximity of bread and books also makes the two tables that constitute the Eucharist, according to the tradition of the Fathers of the Church, more meaningful: the table of the Word, with the readings of the Mass and the homily, and the table of Bread with the Eucharistic consecration, properly speaking.

Tradition says that this table is that of the miracle of the loaves. Remember: the brothers were short of bread one day for a meal, St. Dominic had them all sit down and share what little they had when two angels carrying baskets come in and place deliciously tasty bread in front of them! I am happy that a brother was inspired to preserve the memory of this holy moment by weaving it as a parable of the Eucharist, or a more modern parable of the multiplication of the loaves, which multiply the more they are shared.

The economic crisis into which the Pandemic had plunged us forced me to "mull over" our situation. In fact, our main source of income is ordinarily our hotel... Being in the Cradle of the Order, I naturally turned to St. Dominic and asked him in my prayer how he could help us in this jubilee year. And so, after a while, I had the idea (a daring one!) to reproduce a fragment of the Mascarella Table in clay.

To start with, I am not a born artist. But a few years ago, I had the joy of learning how to write icons. This experience gave me confidence that the Holy Spirit is capable of working wonders provided our hands and our hearts do the work. So, I sculpted an image of St. Dominic surrounded by two brothers on either side, with the table and the cups, the bread and the books. Thanks to the assistance and precious advice of Brother Marie-Bernard Barioulet of Toulouse, a renowned master santonnierⁱ, I made a first mold from the original. At the time of writing this article, I am at the stage before firing my "mascarellita" (or "tabellita") as I like to call them. Then I will have to paint and finish them.



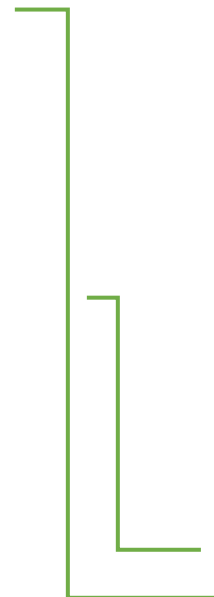
My wish, after having gone through all the stages of making (the tables), is that the sisters of the community can all participate in their production. I would like this little clay table to be a place of communion, a place of the fraternity already existing within my community here at Prouilhe.

As I reshape certain faces (I am not very skilled at this yet, so they are sometimes deformed or damaged when they come out of the mold!) I think of the brothers I know, of those I may never know but who are my brothers in the Order; of all those in the (Dominican!) family who preach throughout the world through so many ministries and in so many new ways, whether hidden or well-known. As I take a glass of wine or a loaf of bread, I think of our Eucharists, of so many people who cannot participate in them, of those who are unaware of this mystery; I think also of our meals and of all those who lack them... A dialogue with the world is created within me. And since the earth is a living material, to work with it is something that gives life, that gives joy, that makes one enter into communion.

Since a painting cannot be copied identically in bas-relief, I allowed myself a few liberties. For example, to the right of St. Dominic, a friar is holding a cup. For me, he represents the martyrs of the Order, today or yesterday. I have always loved St. Peter of Verona, who, with his blood, was able to write "Credo" with his last breath. St. Dominic's strong desire for martyrdom, which the Lord did not fulfill in the literal sense of the word, was realized in his brothers. To give his blood, to drink from the cup: there is no greater love.

My other wish, in creating this "tabellita" is that all those who will not be able to go to Bologna to see and venerate this "icon" may have at home a small piece of the Mascarella Table that will allow them to make a pilgrimage, to remember God's love for the world and for the Order;

so that we too may take in a small piece of this delicious bread that is God's love for his children, and that tastes of fraternity.



Sr. Anne-Dominique, O.P.

Monastère Sainte Marie de Prouilhe, France

(Original: french)



I AM A DAUGHTER OF SAINT DOMINIC

I am a daughter of St Dominic – his grace courses through my veins. His call is my call.

I am a daughter of St Dominic – with my Father I bow before the open Book of Charity and with him it is there that I have learned everything. With him I stand before the Cross of Christ Crucified and, as for my Father, the suffering of the world is carried within the compassion of my own heart.

I am a daughter of St Dominic – his star rests upon my brow; the star of witness, the star of preaching. I preach in silence, listening to and celebrating God's Word so that my Father and his brothers may scatter it to the ends of the earth and it may bear fruit.

I am a daughter of St Dominic – as a city on a hilltop or as a lamp shining in a dark place, I bear witness to the Truth – God is Love; to Beauty – the Human Person made in God's Image; and to Goodness – Grace builds upon nature.

I am a daughter of St Dominic – I trust the mystery of Providence to guide my life as it guided my Father's through his joys and sorrows, his blessings and disappointments; so too I believe each moment of my life has purpose and meaning beyond myself in God's plan for our world today.

I am a daughter of St Dominic – my greatest gift, my glory, and the happiness of my soul. May God be praised and glorified forever for His gift of the Order of Preachers to the world. May we, the daughters of St Dominic, be faithful to our call so beautiful and so needed in our world today. Amen.

Sister Emmanuella Handlos, O.P.

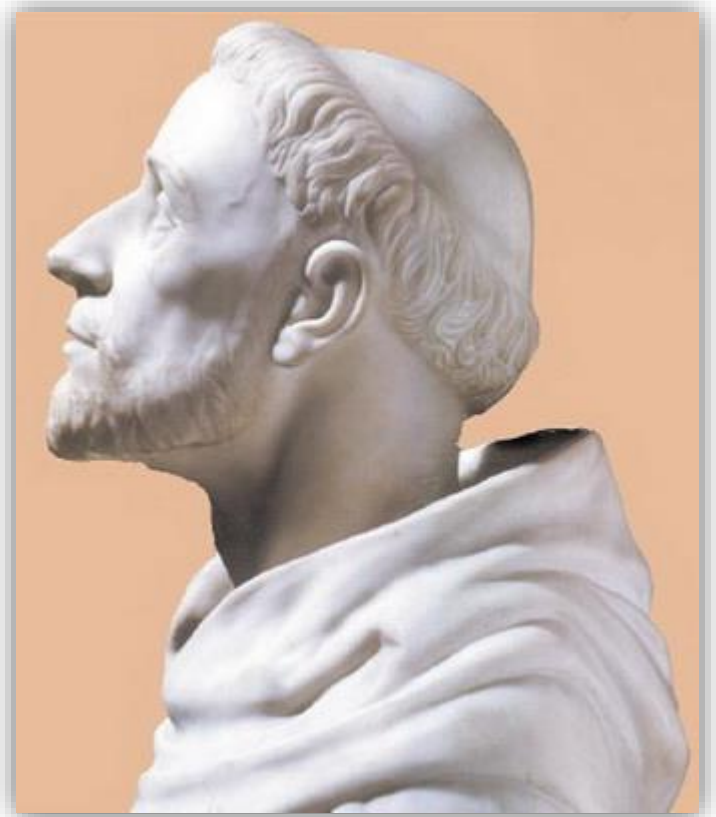
Monastery of Mary the Queen

Springfield, Illinois, USA

(Original: english)



What I Have Learned From Saint Dominic



I like to tell the story of how I “met” St. Dominic while standing outside of St. Dominic’s Cell at Santa Sabina in Rome. At the top of the stairs is a very large, framed parchment of the names of friars who had received the habit from St. Dominic. As a lover of history, I noticed this frame and began reading the names. These men were real people! I can’t really explain what happened but at that moment I met St. Dominic. I was a novice in an active community of sisters, so I didn’t immediately start thinking I wanted to become a Dominican. However, I left my community shortly after and began visiting Dominican communities.

Shortly after I entered the monastery, we began listening to a retreat given long ago by a Dominican friar on Dominican life and spirituality. The talks were by Fr. William Hinnebusch who wrote the classic book, *Dominican Spirituality: Principles and Practice*. One of the lectures was about the penitential life of St. Dominic. I was hearing about his fasting and abstinence, his penances such as walking barefoot and taking the discipline and his nights of prayer. While I knew something of St. Dominic I didn’t know about his penitential practices. I thought, “Oh no! I can’t imitate St. Dominic! What have I gotten myself into!”

In many ways, St. Dominic is a John the Baptist figure. He directs your attention away from him and points the way to Christ. I became intrigued that our constitutions say that the first nuns had “no one else but St. Dominic to teach them the Order.” So, as we sang the O Spem Miram every Tuesday after Vespers in preparation for the feast of St. Dominic I asked him to “teach me the Order”. I said to him, “St. Dominic, I want to learn about YOU so that I can become your daughter. Give me some hints!”

Of course, I read the *Libellus* of Bl. Jordan. I also read the accounts of the of the Canonization Process and Bl. Cecilia's recollections. I read them with an open heart. Not once, but many times. I spent time with the *Nine Ways of Prayer of St. Dominic*. Slowly, I began to see who this spiritual father of mine was and asked for the grace as his daughter to resemble him but still be me!

Here are three characteristics of our father, St. Dominic, that I would like to share. I could write of more but this is supposed to be a short reflection not an article for *Dominican Monastic Search*.



His great love of God and for souls revealed in his prayer. I think that the first thing that struck me about St. Dominic is that he is the founder of the Order of Preachers yet what we know best about him is the example of his prayer. All the accounts in the canonization process tell us that St. Dominic had a deep devotion and zeal for celebrating Mass daily and the Divine Office. Many early friars comment on his extraordinary contemplative prayer which they witnessed at night in the church and on the road when preaching. It was a prayer that was filled with the love for the salvation of souls. There is a personal touch in these accounts as well. St. Dominic, like the rest of us, would get tired at night and fall asleep on the steps of the church and doze during meals. What a great encouragement for novices adjusting to our *horarium*!

His love for the nuns and for the brethren.

St. Dominic's love for the brothers and sisters was shown in many practical ways. For the nuns he worked hard to provide a source of income so that they would not be in need. The poverty he wanted for the nuns was not the same as for the friars. The friars could go out and beg and he encouraged them to trust in God's loving Providence. And while St. Dominic wanted the nuns to practice evangelical poverty, he also knew that if they were concerned about providing for their basic material needs their life of prayer would suffer. Unlike other monastic Orders, the first nuns did not come with income or wealthy patrons to build their monastery. We will never forget that not once but twice—in Bologna and in Madrid—St. Dominic stopped the friars' building project so that the nuns could have a roof over their heads and proper place to live the contemplative life!

St. Dominic showed his fatherly care for the nuns in other ways. The story of bringing spoons for the nuns in Rome all the way from Spain always inspired me. I think of my own traveling and how tiring it is to lug a “personal item” (as the airlines say) on my trips and how by the time I get to the monastery I’m traveling to my well-organized bag has become a confused shambles! St. Dominic could have said that the nuns didn’t need those spoons. They surely could have found some in Rome.

For the first nuns in Rome their spiritual lives were foremost in his concern. He wanted their cooperation as he launched the reform of the monasteries, but he was also firm and determined on his plan of action. He challenged them to live their monastic life more authentically while at the same time he showed them his love by encouraging them in their new way of life. Imagine being woken in the middle of the night to come to the parlor to hear about the good news of his preaching and to share a glass of wine...or two knowing that what you were drinking was a miracle!

St. Dominic’s love for regular observance and his confidence in its efficacy. I nearly said, “his love for the Dominican life!” Brother Ralph tells us, “He [St. Dominic] was always cheerful and pleasant; a comforter of the brethren, he was patient, merciful and kind. If he saw a brother breaking any rule, he would pass by as if he had not seen it. But afterwards, with a mild expression and kind words he would say, “Brother, you must confession your fault.” Brother Stephen tells us, “He never saw any man who was so zealous to strengthen the Order, preserve the Rule and comfort the brethren...”

There are testimonies of other brothers telling the same experience of St. Dominic’s dual concern for the observance of the rule and of the brothers. While St. Dominic held up a high ideal to the brethren, at the same time he wanted us to live regular observance as an expression of love. So much so that we are told that if he found out that the brethren thought to demand obedience out of pain of sin, he would go to all the houses and cut up the rule and constitutions with his own knife!

These accounts are a source of hope. Our first brothers struggled and didn’t always succeed in perfect observance much the same as us today. For many years I was intrigued by the fact that



when we make profession, we not only make it to God and to our prioress and the Master but also to our Blessed Mother and St. Dominic. Our profession is very much a “family affair”. Every night at Compline we confess our sins and faults not only to God and the Blessed Virgin but to St. Dominic as well! I have often thought that St. Dominic continues to say to us each night, “Sister, you must confess your fault.”

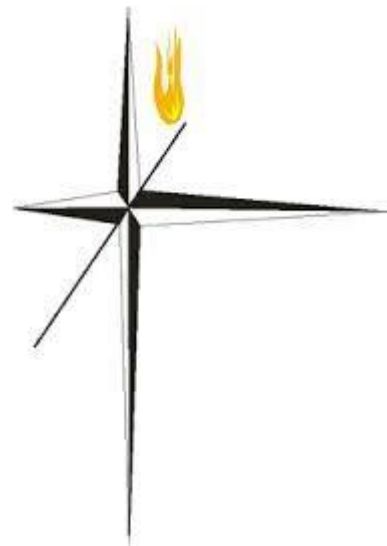
Our father, St. Dominic, promised us 800 years ago that he would be more useful to us in death than in life. I think we shouldn’t be afraid to hold him to his promise as we face challenges in the Order and especially in our monasteries. We know of his great love for us, the nuns. Even more so, standing before the throne of God, he loves us and wants us each to be holy and to become saints. This 800th anniversary year of St. Dominic’s entry into heaven is a good time to recommit ourselves to this adventure, confident in God’s grace and trusting in his prayers. *“Imple Pater quod dixisti nos tuis juvans precibus!”*

Sr Mary Catharine Perry, op

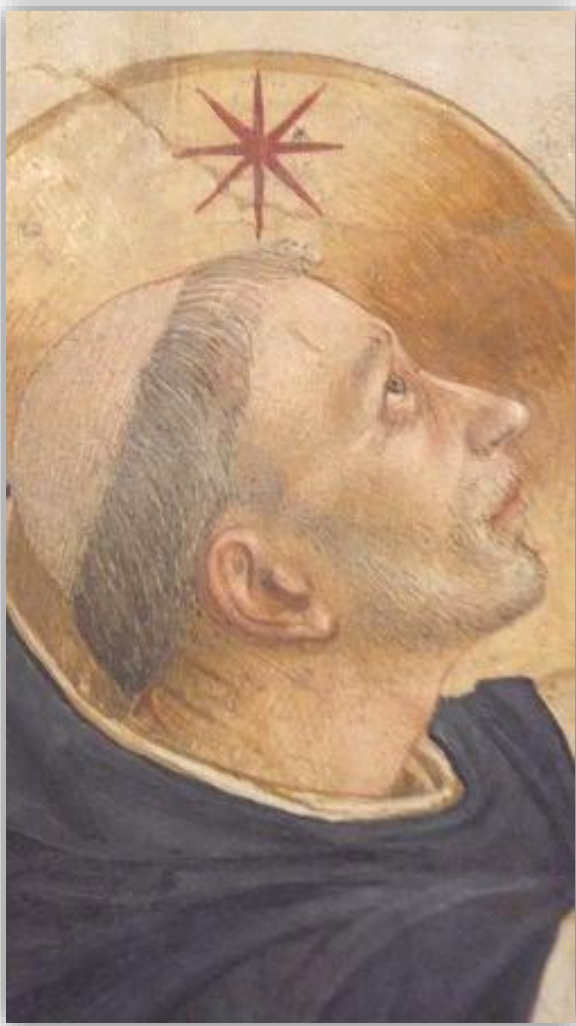
Monastery of Our Lady of the Rosary

Summit NJ, USA

(Original: english)



To Saint Dominic, in Prayer...



A prayer that is fervent, loving, amorous.

Sr. Anne, op
Monastery of the Immaculate Conception
Queen of the Rosary, Lourdes

(Original: french)

Dominic,

TEACH us, teach me to pray.

Teach me to remain at the foot of the Cross
of Jesus,

like you...

Share with me your contemplation of Jesus
on the Cross, of Jesus

suffering, of Jesus in dereliction...

What did you say to him as you gazed on?...

"My God, My Mercy, what will become of
sinners?" ...

To Him did you speak of yourself?...

Make me enter into this intensity of your
heart praying...,

supplicating...

Teach me to keep watch in prayer, the way
you did

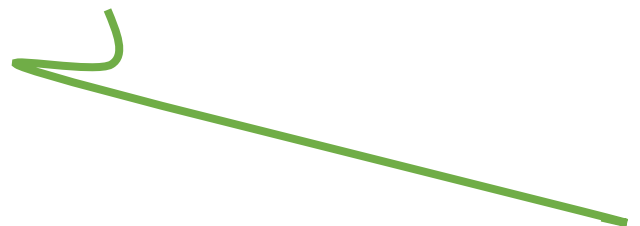
so well on this earth...

Teach me to receive from Jesus, the Love of
compassion

that you also sought in Him...

In this year when we celebrate the 8th
centenary of your

death, Saint Dominic, give us this grace of
prayer.





The Nine Ways of Prayer of Our Holy Father Dominic always present him praying before the Crucified Christ with the pierced side, from which blood flows abundantly. Have we ever wondered why whoever painted these miniatures chose this image and not another?

In this jubilee year, in which we are invited to renew our charism and as we ask our Father Dominic to “keep his promise!”, I would like to reflect aloud, taking ideas from here and there, that might help us to penetrate a little into the heart of Our Holy Father Dominic. This because as our Constitutions say: "the nuns perpetuate the special charism that blessed Dominic had for sinners, the poor and the afflicted, taking them in the intimate sanctuary of his compassion" (LCM 35.I). Indeed, the heart of Saint Dominic was a hospital of illnesses and that is what we are also called to be, as we are asked elsewhere: “Be imitators of Saint Dominic as he was of Christ, perpetuate your fervor of spirit and prayer; do not forget his frequent exclamation: ‘Lord, what will become of sinners?’” (LCM 74.III).

Make of our heart a hospital for illnesses, a welcoming place, where all the poor, afflicted, marginalized of our world can find refuge. When Saint Dominic contemplated the pierced Heart of Christ, he saw an image of what his own heart had to be. Surely, he would turn to Sacred Scripture seeking that understanding of the heart that led him to itinerant preaching, to prayerful night vigil, to inflame his soul with an ardent charity that would be effective in seeking and dedicating himself to the salvation of souls.

What did Saint Dominic contemplate in Scripture?

He contemplated that the heart in the Bible always indicates the essential. The great commandment of God in all translations of the Bible, names the heart first: "*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart*"; later, the words that follow may vary: "*and with all your soul, and with all your spirit and with all your strength, with all your mind, with all your being*", but the heart is always there and it is the first thing that is there, because the heart in the Bible designates the most intimate center of the person, the center in which all personal multiplicity is still unity. That is, if we think about what the human person is, we will see that there are many things in us: thoughts, feelings, ideas, fantasies, experiences, acts, desires, etc.; But all that is unified around a center and that center is what the Bible calls the heart.

The heart is the ultimate point by which everything from outside enters us. Everything enters through the senses, then passes through our inner world, what we could call our soul in the broad sense, and finally it is deposited in a final point: the heart. There, everything that enters from outside is deposited; and vice versa, everything that comes from within man,

ultimately comes from the heart. The heart is the ultimate subject of our actions, the ultimate point to which everything that is attributed to man must be referred. As the Bible expresses in many ways, the heart is the center of man, the center of the human person.

Saint Dominic would find that the divine desire that man lives in intimate communion with Him, acting according to the will of God, is expressed in Scripture: *"Engrave in your heart and in your soul these words that I am telling you today."* If you engrave them in your heart, your decisions will be correct. Or even more beautiful as the *Song of Songs* says: *"Set me as a seal upon your heart."* If you put me, says the Lord to the Bride, like a seal on your heart, everything that comes from your heart will be marked by this seal of my presence. Therefore, everything will be good and according to my will because the heart is the seat of human decisions.

When Saint Dominic encountered these phrases and saw them in the light of the Heart of Christ, he understood why the Heart of Jesus was pierced and he understood what he had to do with his heart.

Saint Dominic discovered that because the heart is the center of man, it is also the place of spiritual combat. The heart is where the Lord sows his word and from which Satan immediately steals it (parable of the sower). Christ dwells in the heart through faith (Ephesians); the love of God, which has been given to us with the Holy Spirit, has been poured out in the heart (Romans); the divine light of God shines in the heart (2 Corinthians); the devil sows evil purposes in the heart (John 13) and it is where there are evil thoughts (Acts 5). The heart is the place of spiritual combat, grace is there, but there is also the devil prowling around like a lion ready to devour us, and Saint Dominic knew this from his own experience.

As the center of man, the heart expresses the totality of our being. Whoever gives their heart gives everything because the heart sums up the person. Hence, the Wisdom of God says in Proverbs: *"My son, give me your heart,"* because whoever gives his heart gives everything. That is why Saint Dominic tried to guard his own heart with special care, because everything that constitutes our faith depends on it. The book of Proverbs also says: *"Above all things, watch over your heart, because from it springs the fountains of life."* Here we have a whole vein that is the custody and vigilance of the heart, because everything depends on that, our whole being and our eternal destiny.

Saint Dominic knew that in giving his heart, he would give everything. But all this also made him know the heart of man, and especially of sinful man and that made him cry out: what will become of sinners? What will become of those who do not give their hearts to the Lord?



He realized the human situation. Every person needs a heart transplant; without a meek and humble heart it is impossible to love God and men. That is why a heart transplant is necessary, and this can only be done by the Holy Spirit.

Saint Dominic, at the feet of Jesus Crucified with his pierced Heart, learned one thing: he learned an aspect of the heart that must be transplanted. In order to be converted, my heart must be removed, and the Heart of Christ must replace it. But this Heart has a peculiarity; it is a broken Heart; it is a wounded Heart. The surgeons would not want him, because he is injured, broken, unsuitable for a transplant. "*When they got to Jesus, and they saw him already dead, they did not break his legs, but one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear and immediately blood and water came out.*" The Heart of Christ was pierced by a spear and since then it is a permanently open Heart in which one can always enter and leave with total freedom, because in Him there is no will to possess, but only to love. Christ expresses this through his pierced body-heart, to express that God is a completely open heart. God does not want to force anyone. This heart is completely open so you can come and go, not wanting anyone to the force.



Everyone who receives the Heart of Christ must know that he receives a broken heart, therefore a permanently open heart, never hardened and closed. The work of salvation in us demands from each one of us the acceptance of living with such a heart. We don't like this so much anymore: 'Do I have to live with a broken heart, wide open, that can't be closed? When I see so and so I can't close my heart? That's asking a lot! ... '.

Well, the Heart of Jesus is like that, and if I want to have the same feelings as Jesus Christ, I cannot close my heart. If I want to perpetuate the special charism of our Holy Father Dominic, I cannot close my heart, and not only to those outside, to those who are far away. First, I must do it with those who are close to me, with the sisters of the community, with those closest to me.

The first work that the Holy Spirit wants to do in us is to break our hearts. "*A broken and humbled heart, you do not despise.*" The Holy Spirit is the father of the poor: "Come father of the poor", the poor are those who have a broken heart. Those who are not broken in heart are not poor, they are hardened, they are rich in their assurances. They have certainties so certain that they allow themselves to harden their hearts and close it. Through this brokenness the grace and love of God reaches us, and our sin becomes evident, not to bury us in remorse but

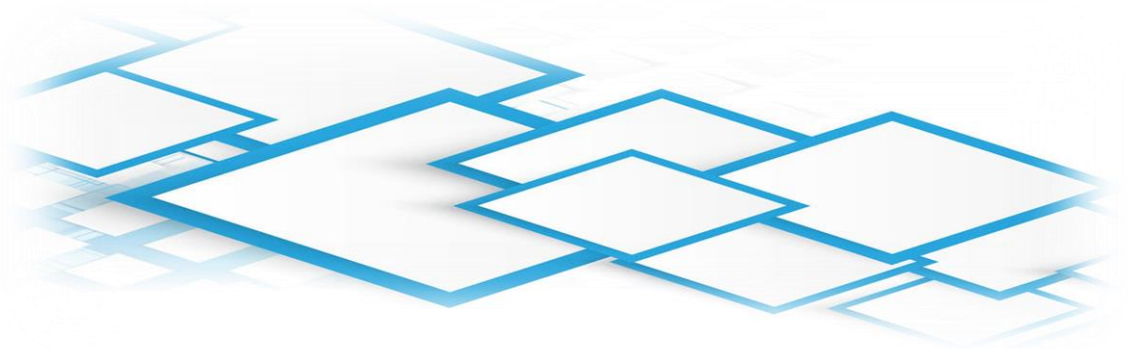
to immerse us in immense gratitude. Therefore, the first work of the Holy Spirit: breaking our heart so that through the broken heart we see what is in it to overwhelm us with gratitude to the Lord.

It is what our holy Father Dominic sees at the foot of the Crucified. It is what we want to see as we celebrate this Jubilee year in order to reach the fullness of love, so that we may also be preachers of grace and mercy from our hearts.



Sor Inmaculada de la Cruz, OP
Monasterio Santa M^a de
Gracia
Córdoba, Spain

(Original: spanish)



MY HUMBLE FATHER...

My humble father,
Who are you to me?
What is this legacy that you give to us?
I know it is "mercy";
Your heart brought forth compassion.
"What will become of them?"
Over time your cry became my own;
I found myself uttering the same words for
them.
Mercy, compassion,
At the feet of Our Savior.
We sing, we give our lives for them,
As you did.
As He did.
My humble father,
(And I your daughter);
You gave your life for them,
As He did.

Sister Catherine Marie Berglund, Novice
Monastery of Mary the Queen
Springfield, Illinois, USA

(Original: english)



CALLED BY GOD, LIKE MARY

A call is like a pilgrim who is undertaking a long journey, in search of meaning in life. The journey may be long and full of challenges, but it brings growth and transformation leading the person to grow in the likeness of God. More so a call to religious life.

In my own experience, being a religious is not primarily something I do but something I am. It becomes the subject of a prolonged process of discernment which involves reflection, testing and formation. For most of us who have been formators and who are still formators, we know that "Formation is not Information and for the formees, formation is not a tunnel passage where by one passes without being affected and infected. When you get a mosquito, a spider

or any other creature's bite, you cannot be the same but be disfigured. When you grow in intimacy with Jesus, you cannot help but get transfigured.

I am so much encouraged by our L.C.M (1: # iii) "Called by God, like Mary, to sit at the feet of Jesus and listen to his words (cf Lk. 10:39) they are converted to the Lord.) What a wonderful call in deed which is absolutely gratuitous, personal and unique.

It embraces us to the extent that we no longer pertain to ourselves, but to Christ. A call free, personal and gratuitous. A call hidden from one's physical eyes, yet its effect in the world is so visible. It is like the roots of a tree. When we look at any tree we are overwhelmed by its beauty from the trunk, branches, flowers and fruits.

We do not see the roots and God in hiding the roots knows well how important they are. St. Paul in his letter to the Colossians says "YOUR LIFE IS HIDDEN IN CHRIST" (col 3: 3) This is our life; we are the roots. Hidden but the world enjoys the fruits and beauty of our hidden life.

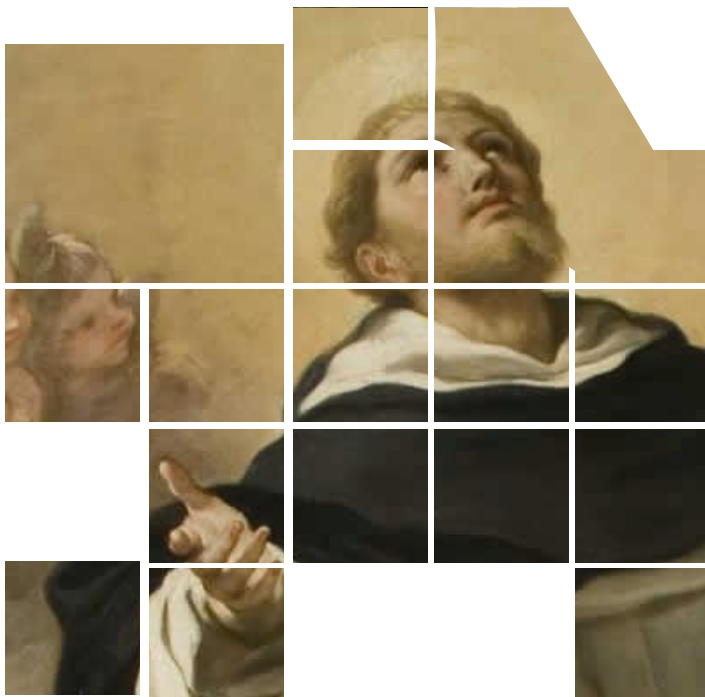
Having made known His will to us, let us proceed, our eyes fixed on His honor and glory, and let us forget ourselves, learn by the experience not to listen to the fears of nature and to be different of God's goodness. If His glory is our only aim, let us not fear that we will not succeed for this great God is all powerful. He has given us his mother and called us like her, for with her we cannot fail and without her we cannot succeed.

Sr Mary Martin - Corpus Christi Monastery - Kenya
(Original: anglais)

Reminiscences on Saint Dominic

Apart from being the 800th anniversary of the death of our Holy Father, 2021 (specifically, August 8, 2021) happens to be the tenth anniversary of my entrance into the monastery. While I was not feeling especially creative when I began writing this and so will kind of just be listing a few things, I thought it would still be good to make a contribution to the question, “What have I learned and received from St. Dominic?” - especially since Sr. Mary Rose asked so nicely! I hope it is of profit to someone.

The first and most obvious gift of our Holy Father to me was his name. I made my aspirancy with the Monastery of the Blessed Sacrament in Farmington Hills, MI in the spring of 2009, just a few months after a conversion/reversion to the Catholic faith and receiving Confirmation at the Easter Vigil. I don't remember what I heard read in the refectory/Novitiate/elsewhere that led to this, but while I was there I remember learning about St. Dominic and his zeal for souls with great admiration. I remember distinctly sitting in the refectory at dinner one day (around where our current Novice sits at the time of this writing...) and prayerfully thinking to myself, “I would take Dominic as my name if they'd let me!” The “Marie” came from the huge role my time in France played in my coming into the Church, and is appropriate enough as it was also the primary mission field at the Order's inception, and also where St. Dominic got *his* vocation, so to speak (and it doesn't hurt that both of my biological half-sisters, as well as all three of my half-nieces have “Marie” as their middle name...)



At some point, I think, during my Postulancy, I was making a meditation that involved imagining how Our Lady was at work during my life of sin before my conversion to God. I imagined myself as a poor, neglected, ignorant baby who was being poisoned by all the filth I was consuming, and Our Lady watching me very carefully and tenderly, not interfering with my freedom directly, but nevertheless making sure that I didn't incur any harm that would take me beyond the point of no return, and in every way she could, protecting and preparing me in God's perfect timing. At some

point I realized that St. Dominic was there, too, casting a loving and fatherly gaze upon me. I was touched by this and truly felt that he *had* been watching over me and had chosen me for one of his daughters before I even knew who he was.

After having spent some time in the monastery, I remember learning about our Holy Father's daily practice of taking the discipline to blood three times a day—once for his own sins, once for all poor sinners, and once for the poor souls in purgatory. Probably sometime shortly after receiving the habit I thought to myself, "How can I emulate this part of St. Dominic's spirituality in a way that is more in keeping with our current manner of life?" After praying about it, what I ended up deciding to do was to make a spiritual offering of myself to God in front of my cell crucifix for each of those intentions, one each at three separate times every day. Eventually I also began to pray a *Memorare* to St. Dominic in front of an image of him every day.

This last one must not be considered as a reproach to any of my Sisters, as I consider it as having been a special gift: at least one Sister has commented to me how anyone with the name of Dominic usually has her feast day all but completely forgotten, swallowed up, at least, in the wonderful joy and merry-making of the solemnity. One year I discovered this in a personal way. Near the end of our celebration, as we were sharing with each other in the community room and likely winding down a festive meal, time kept moving on with no one singing the feast day song for me! Of course, being no less a sinful wretch than anyone else, my first reaction was selfish indignation. I thought to myself, "Look at these people! They can't even remember to sing a little feast day song for *me*! Who do they think they are and what do they think we're all celebrating, anyway?!?!" or something like that.

When I came to my senses, I had a great idea - I said to Holy Father Dominic, "Holy Father Dominic, if you love me with a love of predilection, they won't remember to sing the feast day song for me *at all!!!*" As the evening went on with no song forthcoming, I kept getting giddier and giddier with delight (that's what you call the "Holly Ghost Giggles" - cf. St. Dominic's eighth way of prayer), now hoping they *wouldn't* remember! I may have been bouncing in my chair for all I know, though I suppose it wouldn't be the first or the last time...Finally, when it was time to pray the *sub tuum* and line up for the *Salve* procession into Compline, I was practically in ecstasy, thinking to myself with glee, "*HURRAH* St. Dominic really loves me - like *that!!!*" I was almost disappointed when a few Sisters, after Compline, surreptitiously either hummed or quietly sang the feast day song for me on our separate ways to bed, but consoled myself by vehemently insisting, "That doesn't count! When I said, 'they' and 'at all' I meant 'everyone at recreation before Compline' and 'specifically during that allotted time frame.'" So of course it also didn't count when, contrite, everyone remembered the next day and sang me a belated feast day song!

Of course, these are not *all* the things I have learned and received from our Holy Father Dominic, but you get the picture! May he continue to obtain many blessings for all of his children, especially by cultivating in each of us a heart full of gratitude for the gifts our Lord has bestowed on us through his intercession and through the Order.

In JMJD,
Sr. Dominic Marie of St. Michael Thorn, OP
Monastery of the Blessed Sacrament
Farmington Hills, Michigan, USA
(Original: english)

Living the Jubilee Year at St Maximin

During the homily of the Mass for the opening of the Holy Door at St. John Lateran on December 13th, 2015, the year in which we celebrated both the jubilee of mercy and the birth of our Order, Pope Francis preached, *“The invitation extended by the Prophet to the ancient city of Jerusalem is also addressed today to the whole Church and to each one of us: “Rejoice... exult!” (Zeph 3:14). The reason for joy is expressed with words which inspire hope, and which can look to the future with serenity. The Lord ... has decided to live among us ... sadness in any form is not allowed, even though we may have reason, with many concerns and the many forms of violence which wound our humanity. The coming of the Lord, however, must fill our hearts with joy... It is time to rediscover the presence of God and his fatherly tenderness.”*



Strengthened by this Hope in this very turbulent period, we hold ourselves in intercession for the many and painful causes which wound humanity and inhabit our hearts as nuns.

More than by investing in external events, even if they are of course present, we want to celebrate this jubilee by making the choice of joy through all the dimensions of our life! The joy which so characterized our Father and Brother Dominic!

Joy of living in Saint-Maximin La Sainte-Baume, Magdalenian and Dominican land.

Magdalenian, since the relics of Saint Mary Magdalene are housed in the crypt of the Basilica. Our life as Dominican nuns is imbued with the presence of Saint Mary Magdalene, watching over us and encouraging us to imitate her.

Dominican, because although our monastery was not founded until 1872, the brothers had been there since the 13th century. Some big names: Blessed André Abellon, Blessed Hyacinthe-Marie Cormier, Father Lagrange....

The relics of Blessed André Abellon are now offered for the veneration of the faithful in our church. He was born in Saint-Maximin around 1375. After hearing Saint Vincent Ferrer preach, he entered the convent of the Friars Preachers in his native town. He was an ardent and indefatigable preacher throughout Provence. A master of theology, he taught his brothers. He actively worked for the reform of Dominican life, restoring discipline in several convents. Very attached to everything that touches the splendor of worship, he emulated Blessed Fra Angelico by his painting. For him, the attraction of the beautiful was a real springboard to lift hearts to the love of God! He died in Aix on May 15, 1450 and was beatified by Leo XIII in 1902.

This preaching by the beautiful particularly resonates with us. The beauty that arouses in us an energy that does not run out, a desire that cannot be sated, thus leading us to the edge of eternity, to the fullness of joy.



Joy aroused by the beauty of the site in which we live! The monastery is located on the heights of Saint-Maximin, in the silence of a typically Provençal nature. The hills, in relief both arid and gentle, covered with holm oaks, pines, almond trees, olive trees, vines, and fig trees, naturally raise our gaze to the creator in praise and thanksgiving. .

Joy which is also expressed in the beauty of the liturgy: theophany, daily manifestation of our God. Always renewed joy in celebrating together. Our liturgy combines the Gregorian heritage with the polyphonic repertoire of Fr. André Gouzes, O.P., sung in 4 voices.

Joy also in sharing our study. We have just had three days exclusively reserved for intellectual work. Six sisters gave a talk on their personal study. Here are the chosen themes, with a brief summary:

- **Wisdom "from the mouth of the Most High", in the book of the Ecclesiasticus.**
- **"May my prayer to you rise like incense."**
- **God and unity.** *In the Summa Theologiae, Ia, q.11,*
- **"Life gave birth to Life" (St. Augustine), and this "Life was manifested" (1 Jn1:2)**
- **The missionary beginnings of the Order in the Near East in the 13th and 14th centuries.** This stimulates our prayer for the Order and its missions around the world!
- **Presentation of De natura et dignitate amoris by William of Saint-Thierry.** "The art of arts is the art of love".



Joy, again, of working together: Our first job is simply to take care of the house and the garden, where our vegetable garden spreads slowly but surely. What a joy to eat beans, tomatoes, salads, Swiss chard... planted and picked together. And to decorate the church with our own flowers!

We also have several areas of production: Jam, herbal tea, rosaries, icons, altar vestments, santons, enamels, candles ...

Until the first lock-down period, the sale of our products was quite comfortable: in our small shop which was newly inaugurated on January 4, 2020 and in various places where monastic crafts were sold. But now, with the health crisis, we had to find other solutions: mail order, sale in the shopping mall of a supermarket on Christmas week (and ahead, preaching directly: a real success! Even if this will remain only occasional). We also came closer to local producers and participated in the creation of an online sales platform, "the corner market", experiencing more

than ever the fact that through our work we are in communion with the lived reality of the people of our time.

There would still be many joys to share! So just one last one: that of the definitive commitments of our sisters: Sr. Clotilde-Marie, last summer, and soon, in the light of Easter: Sr. Clara of the Annunciation and Sr. Marie Faustina of the Heart of Jesus. Others might follow!

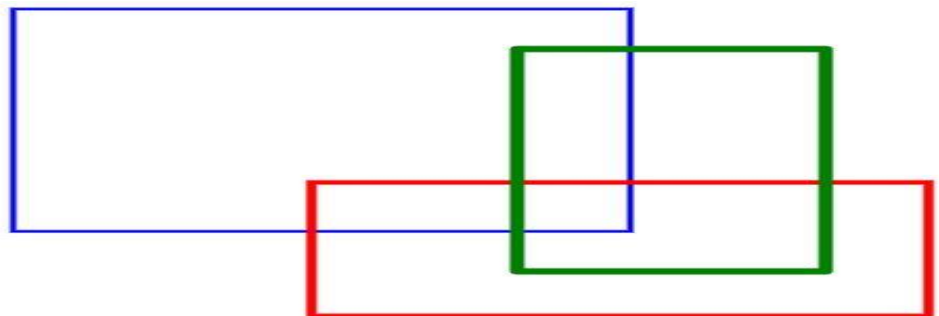


A joy that is lived day by day, to which the invitatory invites us every morning:
“Come, let us shout for joy to the Lord, let us hail our Rock, our salvation!
Let us come to him giving thanks, by our festive hymns let us acclaim him!
Yes, the great God is the Lord.”

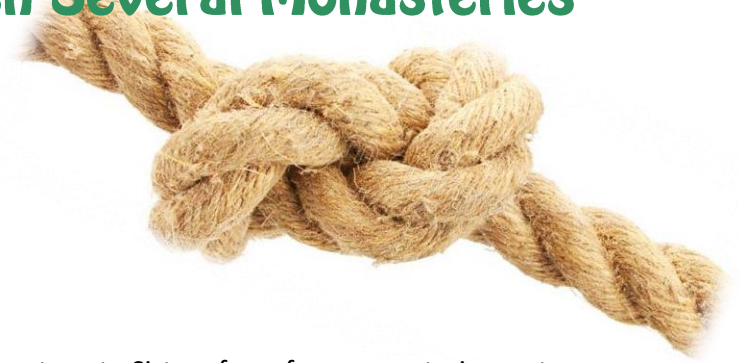
Sr. Maguelone, op

Monastery of Saint Maximin La Sainte Baume, France

(Original: french)



Fraternal Days Between Several Monasteries



In this month of October 2020, month of the rosary, twenty Sisters from four monasteries met near Notre Dame de Chalais. We were hosted by the community of Chalais for these fraternal days that were organized four years ago now. Each year or nearly so, we thus live a time of free encounter to live “federal fraternity” together.

We met at Chalais from the 12th to the 15th of October: five Sisters from Langeac, Sr. Marie-Jordane from Paray-le-Monial (and Sr. Marie of the Holy Spirit for a short time), four Sisters from Taulignan, two Sisters from Røgle in Sweden, who succeeded in traversing the distance to spend two months in France without issue, and of course the entire community of Chalais. Br. Fernando, Promoter of the Nuns, made the trip from Rome for a stay in Chalais.

We must begin by warmly thanking our Sisters of Chalais. Their fraternal welcome surrounded us with light in the midst of gloom and fog, as the flaming colors of autumn in the Chartreuse Mountains as they blaze with all their fires.



These days took place in a climate of great simplicity - or even *simple* simplicity!!! The “fraternal reunions” allowed us to immediately put into practice the theme presented: Fraternity.

We first considered it in general: human fraternity according to the Abu Dhabi document of February 4, 2019, signed by Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Ahmad Al-Tayyeb. Sr. Maya presented this document to us with the help of a commentary by Br. Jean-Paul Vesco, OP.

To continue in the fraternal discovery, Br. Fernando gave us a little overview so we could get to know him better...how a Mexican brother found himself in these October days at the Chalais monastery in France. He gave us a very interesting testimony of his journey and his life today at Santa Sabina. He



arrived there in February...to be confined there a few weeks later!

Sr. Agnes then proposed to us a reflection on fraternal life and ongoing formation. After her introduction, an exchange between communities followed on the subject of ongoing formation and how it can lead to an increase in fraternity. At this time, she presented a very interesting document to us: "The art of seeking the Face of Christ—lines of orientation for the formation of contemplatives" (August 2019 CIVCSVA Cardinal de Aviz and Monsignor Carballo) available in French only at the Vatican.



Following the presentation and introductions, we had time to share in three groups, each on a different theme connected to the key word of our days...of our lives in community. A word so dear to our Order: Fraternity.

Thus were they proposed: a group on forgiveness, a group on the welcoming of vulnerabilities in our guest accommodations but also in

our most fragile Sisters, our aged, and a final group on fraternal life. This was an occasion to perceive the trust that is growing and being nourished between our monasteries. Again a fruit of the federal life of our communities!

The afternoon of rest came just in time to increase the inter-monastery fraternity and rejoice our hearts and eyes: the discovery of the Grande Chartreuse for some, visit to the Abbey of Saint-Antoine, different paces adapted to the strengths of each in the heart of autumn colors and lights for others.

Sr. Thérèse of the Heart of Jesus, from Langeac, shared her experience of the IICR (International Interconfessional Conference of Religious) with us. This was an update on the "state of affairs" in



today's ecumenical dialogue. We heartily thank Sr. Thérèse for her very interesting sharing. We also went to...Sweden in Røgle, thanks to Sr. Katarina, who shared the history and life of her community with us, with magnificent photos to back it up. The last night a movie screening on racism was offered, a burning issue that is always current, dealt with in a manner at once serious and funny.

We cannot finish this without telling you that we observed all the sanitary guidelines! Thus each monastery had "its" sanitary facilities, we had two dining rooms to maintain distancing and for dishwashing we all put on our masks. The same for the Office on the side of the faithful.

Fraternity in act also manifests itself in a very beautiful way in faith. Sr. Marie-Joseph of Chalais has been reunited with the Lord as you all know. For a week the community went to the cemetery to pray for her. We all participated in this procession. It's very beautiful to live in communion this faith in the Resurrection.



We all left after a very positive report of our days and in thanksgiving for this time of fraternity that will radiate at the heart of our communities and of the federation. We thank our Sisters of Chalais again for their warm and fraternal welcome and our communities for having allowed us to be away for these days.

Sr. Danièle de l'Annonciation (Monastery of Taulignan) and Sr. Sylvie-Marie (Monastery of Langeac)
France

(Original : french)

LCM REVIEW COMMISSION

When I was notified in January of 2020 that the Master of the Order had appointed me to the Commission for the revision of LCM, I felt honored and excited. The first twenty years of my religious life, from the time I walked in the door in 1967 until the present LCM was approved in November of 1986, had as a background the elaboration of LCM. In June of 1987 I was a member of the commission that did the official English translation and arranged for its publication. I felt that now I had come full circle. But also, I who am not a world-traveler, would get to go to Rome, stay at Santa Sabina, maybe even see the Vatican. My excitement knew no bounds!



Then COVID-19 erupted onto the scene. The meeting of the Commission in Rome scheduled for early July was cancelled. We could only work through Zoom and hope that COVID would be over with, or at least under control, by February. So the first Zoom meeting took place on July 7 at 16:00 Rome time, 15:00 Ireland time, 10:00 New Jersey time, and 9:00 Guadalajara time. I was able to meet all the other members of the Commission whom I had never met before: Sr. M. Breda Carroll (Drogheda, Ireland) Sr. Jean-Therese Vauhkonen (Orbey, France), Sr. Paola Panetta (Crea, Italy), Sr. Maria Dolores Perez (Toro, Spain), Sr. Lorena

Barba Franco (Guadalajara, Mexico), Fr. Benjamin Earl, Fr. Philippe Toxe (France), and Sr. Delfina Moral.

Fr. Fernando Garcia said the opening prayer and Fr. Gerard, Master of the Order, greeted us in the name of the whole Order. We sorted ourselves into the three official language groups, English, French, and Spanish, looked over the various topics that we would have to address and the corresponding numbers of LCM, then divided up the topics and numbers among the language groups. Thus we were off to a good start.

Since then the Commission has had two more plenary sessions: October 23, 2020 and February 9, 2021, still via Zoom because COVID is still raging throughout the world. In between, the language groups have met separately in whatever way they were able. We have addressed major issues relating to each of the sections that need revision (October meeting) and each language group has proposed texts relating to their topics for review and critique by the whole commission (February meeting). So the work goes forward, with other Zoom sessions being planned. Although some have expressed regret that not meeting in person has slowed the work

down, I for one am happy with the pace and with the spaces of time in between to think about issues that have been raised at the plenary sessions and discuss them in smaller groups.

But we are Dominicans and Dominicans have always been devoted to the Incarnation. Not being able to meet and talk together in person has certainly robbed the process of a certain vitality, and made getting to know each other more difficult, not to mention slowing the work down. And I have not been able to see Rome! Well, maybe we can still meet this summer, and if it doesn't happen in this life, in the next life we will have, I hope, all the face-time we could ever desire, in halls so beautiful that I will never miss seeing either Santa Sabina or the Vatican.

Sr. Mary Martin Jacobs, O.P.

Monastery of Our Lady of the Rosary

Summit, NJ, USA

(Original: english)



JUBILEE PRAYER

Dies Natalis Sancti Dominici

O God
Our Creator, Redeemer, Paraclete,
In prayer, we lift our
praise,
our blessing, our preaching.

Eight hundred years ago,
you called Saint Dominic
to enter into eternal life,
and to join you at table in
heaven.

As we celebrate this
Jubilee,
feed us and fill us with
grace
so that we may realize our
mission
of preaching for the
salvation of souls.

Help us nourish your people,
with your Truth, your
Mercy and your Love,
until the promised day
when we are all united with
the blessed.

We ask this,
as One Dominican Family,
through the pleas of Mary,
in the name of Jesus.
Amen.

