

WINTER & SPRING 2021

# *The Southern Star*

ISSUE #26 Anniversary Edition

Newsletter for the Dominican Sisters of Wanganui



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“Have charity, guard humility, hold fast to voluntary poverty ...”

Last Will and Testament of our Holy Father Saint Dominic

# LETTER FROM MOTHER prioress GENERAL

Mother Mary Madeleine, O.P.

This newsletter will be a very special anniversary edition combining the events which have occurred over winter and spring. In fact we have celebrated three anniversaries this year – 800 years since Our Holy Father St Dominic's entry into Heaven, 450 years since the great victory of Our Lady of the Rosary, Patroness of our congregation, at Lepanto, and 150 years since the arrival of the first Irish Dominican Sisters in New Zealand. It has been a year of grace for our congregation and for the whole Dominican Order, being celebrated throughout the world. A close-up of the image on the next page was sent to us from the Fanjeaux Sisters in the USA and likewise from the Dominicans of Santa Sabina in Rome—an image which has been used as the Jubilee card. It is the earliest depiction of St Dominic, and shows him at table—actually, it was physically painted *on* the wooden table at which he was sitting with his hungry friars when angels came to feed them. (see image on next page.) This was at the convent in Bologna, where St Dominic soon afterwards died on the 6 August, 1221. It was on this day in 2021 (European time) that our pupils performed the play mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter. Its title, “O Spem Miram” (O Wonderful Hope), recalls St Dominic's dying promise to help us more from heaven than he had while with us on earth.

Our celebration of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our foundresses' arrival in New Zealand was described in the previous newsletter, but the story of the first Prioress, Mother Mary Gabriel, and her vocation, was also included in the play. So also was the Battle of Lepanto, which of course we likewise celebrated on October 7<sup>th</sup>, the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, with a rosary procession around the school and parish grounds.

Also in October, we had our annual guild dinner for all of our benefactors in New Zealand. In keeping with our Irish theme for the school year, chosen in honour of Mother Gabriel and the other foundresses, the night opened with some Irish dancing and singing from the boarders. There were a couple of speeches, games and musical performances throughout the evening and some lovely lucky door prizes were up for grabs. A fun night was had by all. *Go raibh mile maith agat!* Thank you very much!

In November, we had our annual fundraiser, a jog-a-thon this year rather than a bike-a-thon, which raised about \$55,000 for the schools. We would very much like to thank everyone who contributed by sponsoring the Sisters and girls for this event and to congratulate all of the joggers, in particular our youngest boarder who jogged 100 laps, the highest number in the girls' school.

The last week of school included a Celtic Art workshop in which the girls were introduced to Celtic art forms and then given time to produce an illuminated page or initial of their own design. The end of the day revealed some very impressive pieces, considering the limited amount of time available, and Fr Elias OSB adjudicated first, second and third place within each age group. Some examples can be seen on the photos page of this newsletter.

On the following day, Sisters and pupils boarded buses for the drive to Mount Taranaki, where we enjoyed beautiful walks to Dawson's Falls and Wilkies' pools with a picnic in between. The date was especially appropriate for mountain walks, being the feast of St Catherine of Alexandria, November 25, whose body was carried by angels to Mount Sinai after her martyrdom. It was also a fitting close to our first year of teaching philosophy to the senior girls, since St Catherine is the patroness of philosophers and a protectress of the Dominican Order.

Recalling the Communion of Saints and the help of our friends and spiritual ancestors in the Church triumphant has been a big part of this year with its threefold anniversary. We are very grateful to St Dominic for being our Father, to those involved in the victory of Lepanto which preserved Christian Europe from destruction, and lastly to our foundresses, the ten valiant Irish Sisters, who left home and country to educate the Catholic girls of New Zealand. Finally we would also like to thank you, our friends and benefactors, for making it possible, by your prayers and material assistance, for us to continue growing and developing in their footsteps.

Mother Mary Madeleine OP

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# The Final Testament of Saint Dominic

Excerpts from Friar Marie Étienne Vayssière, OP on the Dominican 7th centennial celebrations last century



## THE FATHER'S TESTAMENT

As Dominicans, as Third Order Members, as Past Pupils, Benefactors, Guild Members and Friends—St Dominic should play a role in our spiritual lives, as a powerful intercessor, patron and Father. Father Marie Étienne Vayssière can help us by some of his insights from the last centennial celebrations of St Dominic:

How are we to put into action our devotion to St Dominic? It is ... the ambition of Dominicans that St Dominic *live again* in them. As in the heart of {Blessed Father Cormier OP, master general of the Order}, St. Dominic lived in an intensity of thought, of truly admirable love. To look upon him, to study him, to imitate him, to make him live again, these were his ever present needs. "Oh, Dominic," he would often say, "come and live within us." Called to be the successor of St. Dominic in the governance of the Order, and searching for a motto that would express both the secret of his interior life and the spirit of his charge, his thought fell on the great words of St. Paul chosen by his pontiff Pius X as motto for his pontificate: "To restore all things in Christ" But to modify it in the sense of his Dominican gift, he would say: "To restore all things in St. Dominic," *Instaurare omnia in Dominico*, which is to say, to frame everything around his memory, to animate everything with his spirit, to invigorate everything in his gift, to consume everything in his charity. A magnificent ideal, one that cannot help but attract souls, vowed to a similar calling.

## FINAL INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE FOUNDER

This death, the worthy coronation of a life all divine, adorns itself with a characteristic of striking nobility... Around his death-bed, he first called the novices and with the most gentle words, exhorted them to discharge faithfully the duties of their vocation. Then he called for twelve of the oldest friars, and in their presence, out loud, made to Brother Ventura the general confession of his own life. At its end, he added:

*Up to this day, the mercy of God has kept for me a pure flesh and a virginity without stain. Should you desire a similar blessing, avoid all suspicious relationships. It is the protection of this virtue that makes the servant agreeable to Christ, and that gives him glory and credit before the people.*

*Persevere in serving the Lord in the fervour of the Spirit. Strive to spread the Order, which is only beginning. Remain grounded in sanctity and in regular observance. Keep growing in virtue.*

This said, after having placed in high relief the purity of the friar preacher, his love for the Order, the enthusiasm that must animate him, his application to the holy observances, the commitment to genuine holiness, Dominic's voice took on a more solemn tone, as if, in this development of Dominican life, he wanted to go further and climb even higher. Using the sacred form of the testament, he added: *"My beloved brothers, here is the heritage I leave you, as my genuine children: have charity, preserve humility, embrace voluntary poverty."*

With these words and with his earthly mission completed, as Dominic faced eternity he made this prayer: *'Holy Father, I have accomplished your will; those whom You have given me, I have preserved. Now, I commend them to You; keep them, watch over them.'*

These were his last words. In the supreme effort that expressed to his sons his wishes as patriarch and father, his heart stopped beating. Here you have the testament of St Dominic... A testament is always a sacred matter, all the more reason when it is the testament of a father, if the father is a saint, and a glorious saint among all others. How imposing, then, his authority! What veneration is awakened in the heart of his children! The testament of St. Dominic is admirable; its substantial brevity, the spiritual life is fully concentrated and dynamic. "Have charity," that is to say, live with the life of God Himself, since God is charity. "He who remains in charity remains in God and God lives within him." In these simple and brief words, the life of the friar preacher is fully directed and fixed, and even admirably raised to the heights where it is destined to flourish and to shine.

But, here below, man carries this treasure of charity and of divine life in a fragile vase, the vase of his fallen nature. Dominic does not ignore this, which is why he adds: "Embrace voluntary poverty," thereby pushing away the enemy outside: cupidity, [the love of money] "the source of all evils." [I Tim 6:10] Moreover, he adds: "Preserve humility," a direct and decisive blow against the enemy within: the ego, self-love, home of all covetousness and of all revolt.

There you have it, the final instructions in the struggles for holiness and for the apostolate - a dynamic affirmation of what he himself had always been. **Poor**, with a poverty that reduced him to the strictly necessary; **humble**, with a humility that in everything kept him beneath the feet of every creature; and in a radiant **purity**, consequence of those self-denials, living in admirable fullness the life of charity, the very life of God.

This life of God, this life in God, is basically what characterizes Saint Dominic.



## O Spem Miram

### *A Triple Anniversary Production*

This year 2021 marked three important anniversaries for the Dominican Sisters of Wanganui, namely: the eight hundredth anniversary of St Dominic's death, the four hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Battle of Lepanto, won through prayer, especially the Rosary, and the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the arrival of Dominican Sisters in New Zealand. With so much to celebrate we decided to have one big drama production which would involve the whole girls' school, as well as smaller celebrations on the actual dates. Three Sisters worked on the script of the play and then two of them who had taken a major part in the writing of the play, took over the staging and production. They were assisted by the senior girls who did valiant work in helping with costuming, stage-managing, and organising dancers. We

were blessed in being able to hire the Hall at Rutherford Junior High School, which has a sophisticated lighting system. On the night of the play one of the sisters looked after the lighting board with wonderful effect. Another Sister provided musical background throughout the play.

The play took place on 7 August 2021. It was built around the Heavenly War Office where St Michael the Archangel (Bridget Nyssen) keeps watch over the progress of the Church Militant. He has a small angel (Gabrielle Sharp) to send on errands and an undercover angel, Angel 007 (Mia Beckenham), who visits earth and reports back to St Michael on how the Church Militant is going. St Michael also gathers advisors such as St Dominic (Rosalia Nyssen), Don John of Austria (Madeleine Sophie McKenna), Pope Pius X (Gwen Ono), and Pope Pius IX (Jacinta Field).



(Clockwise from L—R):

Head Girl Monica Bennett opens the evening with an introductory speech; the play opens with the death of St Dominic (Rosalia Nyssen) in the monastery amidst his brethren (Lourdez Vakadranu, Hannah Bennett, Lucia McKenna); Luther (Angelica Hickman) and Eck (Elizabeth Petersen) have a heated debate over Scripture; a small angel (Gabrielle Sharp) looks coyly at the audience while delivering her messages; the sailors (Hannah Bennett, Anne Barton, Louisa Bennett, Kyra Manuel) perform a lively hornpipe dance at the Bay of Lepanto; the battle of Lepanto results in the victory of the Christians under the leadership of Don Juan (Madeleine McKenna) over the Turks led by Ali Pasha (Dimitria Devine).







(Clockwise from above): Victoria Gill (Rosabella Gregory) runs away to the Convent and is met by a surprised Sister Portress (Mariane Chua); St Dominic (Rosalia Nyssen) pays homage to the Queen of Heaven (Therese Hovens); St Michael (Bridget Nyssen) and Pope Pius V (Mereana Kawana) join St Dominic and Our Lady in looking up New Zealand on the globe; Secret Agent Angel 007 (Mia Beckenham) keeps St Michael in the Heavenly War Office up to date with the happenings on earth; the Dominican Sisters of Sion Hill (Jacinta and Talia Ioakimi) rush to pack their belongings to begin their long journey to Oceania; Fr Gentili (Regina Pawson) confers with Mother Micaela (Micaela Oakman) while Mother Aubert (Immaculata Hanumare) looks on from Heaven; the zouaves (Diya Denny, Maria Nyssen, Kyra Manuel) report to their captain (Anne-Sophie Mathey).

The costuming and effects used in the play were very clever. St Michael wore an Air Force uniform teamed with a pair of angel wings. Nuns and friars among the characters in the play were all correctly habited and various clergy such as the Popes and Bishops were properly adorned. The Turks in the great Lepanto scene were vividly dressed in oriental fabrics and Martin Luther (Angelica Hickman) looked just like his pictures. The sailors, whose hornpipe dance indicated the passing of time on the Nuns' voyage to New Zealand, all wore sailor-hats.

Apart from the wonderful lighting, the almost bare stage was used to good effect as the play wove its way through the centuries. Special mention should go to the carriage in which Victoria Gill (Rosabella Gregory) (travelled, when, unbeknown to her escort, Joe Gill (Amy Nyssen), she was running away from her mother's (Beatrice Devine) urging to "Say 'Yes' tonight" to an expected proposal of marriage. The carriage consisted of a side-piece and two "horses" who played their parts to perfection as Victoria Gill's cousin waited for her to come back from a visit to the Convent, where she intended staying.

It was most entertaining to see how the fifty-one girls

almost all playing several parts, managed to present a smooth, and often amusing, narrative from St Dominic's deathbed to the Protestant Reformation, then from the Protestant Revolt to the nineteenth century with the troubles of the Pope with regard to the Italian take-over of the Papal States. Linked to this dangerous situation are preparations for the founding of a Dominican Convent in the new diocese of Dunedin, New Zealand.

The final act of the play shows Angel 007 reporting on the chaos in the Church at the end of the Twentieth Century. St Michael calls in Pope Pius X and Pope Pius IX for their expertise on Modernism. St Jean Vianney's (Eloise McKenna) promise to Mother Aubert (Immaculata Hanamure) that the Faith would survive in Wanganui is recalled. Archbishop Lefebvre (Anastasia Ng) gives his advice and says that his Society will help the fight against modernism, to be based in Wanganui. A nun is found by Father Gentili (played by a well-padded Regina Pawson) who is able to set up a convent and secondary school in Wanganui and young ladies start arriving to enter the convent. The play ends on a note of hope as we realise that the new beginnings in Wanganui are being watched over by our friends in the Heavenly War Office.



## Saint Dominic's Day 2021

St Dominic's Day, 4 August, was celebrated with the usual Dominican panache. We received many greetings from friends and ex-pupils, including one from a lovely group of recent ex-pupils who made us a video of clips of each of them offering a message for the day. Some of them were local girls giving greetings but some were ex-boarders whom we would not have heard from in the normal course of events, or in these COVID times, the abnormal course of events.

The nuns, of course, celebrated the Office with all the Solemnity it deserved on such a special day. The public part of the day began with a Solemn High Mass in the Church, with Father Elias, OSB, as the celebrant and Father Palko and Father Ladner as deacon and subdeacon. The Sisters sang the Mass and the girls helped with the singing of hymns and, of course, all joined in singing "Hail St Dominic."

Morning tea with the Tertiaries, friends and ex-pupils

followed the Mass. This was a great occasion for talk so that morning tea stretched out to make us a little late for the office of Sext at 12.20.

After lunch there was a netball match between the Sisters and the girls. The final score was 12-14 which made the girls happy because they won and made the Sisters happy that the game had not been a walk-over.

After the netball match we had afternoon tea with the girls. A feature of that celebration was a juggling display by Father Elias, OSB. This small meal stretched out until the Nuns had to go to Vespers, Benediction, Rosary and Matins.

The final celebration of the day was a lovely dinner for the Sisters. Various delicious dishes had been cooked by families of the parish, and the Sisters were very grateful as the day had been a busy one with no time for cooking.

As usual for the Nuns the day concluded with Compline.



Solemn High Mass was offered with Fr Elias OSB as the main celebrant. Fr Ian Palko was the Deacon and Fr Erik Ladner was the Subdeacon.

The Sisters sang the Mass Propers, while the girls joined in the hymns in honour of our holy Father Saint Dominic.

Fr Elias OSB preached a beautiful sermon on the love of God and the zeal for souls displayed in the life of St Dominic. May we too be inflamed with such love for God that the salvation of souls may be our highest and noblest aim!



The annual Sisters-versus-Students Netball Match was a close fight, but the girls won this year, with the Sisters satisfied that the 12-14 score was really quite decent! After the match, the girls and Sisters had afternoon tea before being entertained by Fr Elias OSB with a repertoire of juggling tricks.





## The Saints

I don't know if any of you have ever had the occasion to visit the Catacombs in Rome, but if not, it is quite likely that from pictures or books on the subject, you have been able to conjure up a very vivid impression of what they are. They are calculated to make an extraordinary impression on a Christian soul—an impression utterly unlike the impression made by any Christian monument of any age or of any kind.

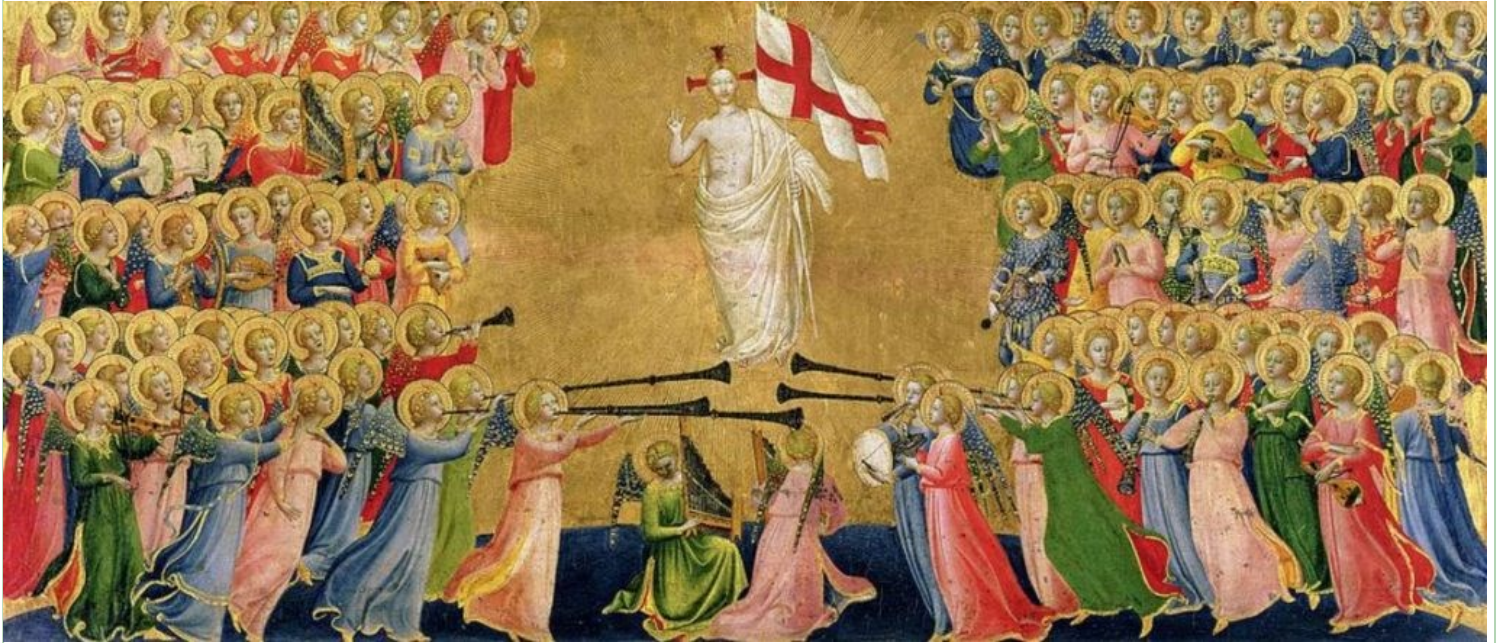
You make your way down a steep stairway into those tunnels in the soft, unyielding rock and come into a world which is indeed silent, but yet instinct with speech. You see these long passages hollowed out, and on either side the loculi, or tombs of the saints. There are miles of these passages, and in spite of the silence, the whole place seems to be alive in a way completely indescribable. A tomb gives the impression of complete silence, of being shut away; but here it is an impression of living, vital presences. In the Catacombs everybody experiences a complicated feeling, one difficult to analyse.

One enters an opening and descends the steps, and in a flash one is in contact with the very origins of Christianity. The intervening centuries are annihilated. One gets the impression of a world of mind and soul and even of body, a world to which Christianity was a vital, living, present experience, a world of intense reality, a

world for which the veils that fold between us and supernatural things seemed to disappear and one had a living, vital, vivid, almost tangible experience of Christ Himself. And Christ not as something narrowed, but as filling the whole universe—heaven and earth; Christ as pervading all life. And those who have been placed there and whose bodies have dissolved into dust, give the impression of men and women for whom life was complete reality, for whom heaven was the thing and earth nothing. Again and again you see on broken slabs the words: "Requiescat in Pace," and in these words or similar ones you have the perfect assurance of the passage from the phenomena of earth into the face-to-face vision and presence of God. In every case there is that tranquil assurance of an opening into eternity—of a gladness, a buoyancy, a joyous emancipation, a coming to and being with God. There is never a note of sadness or of doubt, never a trace of misgiving on our part that all is not well with the departed. No. You have for miles and miles nothing but this note of dissolving into God.

You do not find this note at any other period of Christianity. In our own you have an obscurity and perplexity, due to a greater conflict between what is of God and what is not of God which makes life for the Christian complex and which deepen; the obscurity of faith, while darkening the world to come with certain





shadows. All this is absent from the Catacombs. There is a world without shadows, a world where you have the assurance that God and Christ are a reality.

For us the Church would have us recapture this same experience on the feast we are celebrating - the Feast of All Saints. We are close to the hard realities of life, our toil, our work, our contact with earth (brute earth), economics, buildings, pursuits, labours undertaken, teaching, nursing— all which impress a reality on us of a hard kind, a reality of this world, with the result that the world of spirit in which God is the illumination and which vibrates with God's Own Life, becomes very remote.

The Church gives us the Feast of All Saints, and drawing aside the veil, gives us a glimpse of that world of light and splendour which is really ours. All Saints is meant to remind us of those who are gone, and of those who will in time go, into this world of light and splendour. There all those who have lived in faith and died in the Lord are now glorious with light and life, and with an effort of faith we can be in touch with it and realize that one day it will be ours too.

For us too, humble beings though we are, as for the early Christians, Christ is All-in-All, and at a touch He will transform our whole being from "glory to glory"; living a divine life, all shadows, all imperfections, obscurities, sins, faults, all contrarieties will be swept away, and nothing left but the pure expression of Christ Himself.

Our Divine Lord would have us rise to that concept of ourselves, that we are always in the condition of beings capable of being touched at any moment by Christ with this splendour, in spite of the drab appearance of our lives. It is only justice to Him really to believe that. He gives us the assurance in many ways that in spite of the work-a-day world about us, the world of splendour stands ready to be revealed at any moment. "Come to

Me all you who labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you." "Take up My yoke upon you, for My yoke is sweet and My burden is light."

How often have we heard and read these words. Perhaps we seized the sense, but how rarely the profound significance and reality of the words come home to us! So it always is with the Scriptures. We understand the terms and words and clauses, but we grasp them only with our minds; it is completely different when we grasp them with our whole souls. For this we need more than the knowledge of language; it is not a text that gives it, but life touched with experience. Experience comes to us, and then what was before a mere statement suddenly bursts into splendour which illuminates our whole existence.

There are few statements more consoling in Scripture than that quoted. It throws a flood of light on God's attitude towards us and towards our life. "Come to Me all you who labour and are heavy-laden." It is most consoling, my dear children, that God Who is Almighty should tell us this one thing—that He recognizes that our life is a hard and heavy burden — that it is not a thing that He thinks lightly of, but one which He understands and weighs at its worth. How wonderful it is that He deigns to tell us this, that we are persons weighed down with care and trials and sorrows. He does not treat as children's sorrows our trials and regard them as trivial. Our Lord does not act so. He does not regard them as of no consequence, but calls them a "heavy burden" and sees us as heavy-laden; He shows us profound sympathy and understanding as a consequence.

What a consolation to us to see that God's attitude is not that of a dispassionate, just, impartial judge sitting on His tribunal, noting our efforts to be good, judging us keenly, ready to applaud our success, but also unsympathetic towards our faults. He is not there like a music-examiner, calculating our capacities, noting the



tone, execution, and other features of a musical display. That notion is entirely foreign to God. He is there judging us keenly, prepared to approve every effort on our part, it is true, but He is note-taking with the extremely tender love of a father who realizes all our experiences and knows that they are hard. It is not God but we ourselves who have made life hard. God but submits to the operation of His own laws. I repeat that it is not He but we ourselves that make life hard. But God will take steps to secure that the effects of the burden that we have made for ourselves may be remedied, and that we shall not suffer—if we will to accept His aid—from what of itself should make us suffer.

My dear children, Our Divine Lord shows Himself in this sentence profoundly sympathetic with our whole life's experiences; He shows that He is not unfeeling, not without understanding, not a stoic. He confesses that we have burdens to bear and heavy ones; He confesses that at all times we are crushed with trials and sorrows, and avows that He is all eagerness as a friend, to come and retrieve the situation for us. "Come to Me.... I will refresh you." Note, He does not say: "perhaps I will be able to help you," but that He is in a position to deal with the situation so that we are not crushed and the thing becomes light.

He would have us understand how we are to come to that attitude of soul in which we can deal with the burden of life and find it a yoke which is light and sweet. He does not tell us He is going to take it from our shoulders; He does not say: "I'll take it," though we might expect that He would. No. Why? Because that is impossible. Life must be what life is—a thing woven of human experiences for each, and these depend on birth, education, contacts, on money or loss of money, position, bereavements; all these make up life and must make up our life. Therefore He cannot take the burden of life from us without taking life itself—that tissue of pleasant and painful experiences.

But note what He can do: He can take it all, with its light and shade, and transubstantiate it - change it. "My yoke is sweet and My burden is light." He makes it His, and not the world's, burden. It is still a burden, but it is ours and His, not any longer that of the world—that of those who bear it apart from Christ. He would have it our burden in Christ - a totally different thing. That He undertakes, so that what would be crushing for our own strength, we can carry with Him. He wishes to insinuate His shoulders into ours, His mind into ours, His heart into ours, His strength into ours, if only we will it.

One burden He completely takes from us—the burden of sin; that He will not lighten, but will make to disappear altogether, like a vapour. But the burden of life—the experiences which are not sinful—He must permit to remain on our shoulders. That He leaves to us; it may gall us, but He arranges that it shall not gall us while remaining a burden. A burden is calculated to

crush and exhaust us; He secures that it will not crush or exhaust us; He will not lighten it, but He will make us strong. He cannot change the nature of the burden—that which makes it heavy—but He makes us strong. A weight of twenty-eight pounds is heavy for a child but nothing to a man, though it is the same weight: so, Christ gives us vigour and strength which enable us to bear the burden He cannot take from us, and which would be crushing and exhausting for ourselves alone.

We are not transformed by an odd prayer, but only by life itself, by living life in all its phases. We cannot be sanctified by stepping aside from life's duties on the plea of being absorbed in prayer. Every experience of the twenty-four hours, including sleep, is of value if we are united to Christ and borrow His strength to enable us to sanctify it. If we do this, we are changed. Time is the material of eternity. Mind that truth. It is not the few hours of prayer, not the specifically religious exercises, which change us and make us divine. No, but the whole thing is meant to make us to become what Christ wants us to become. Every experience—not only the hard things, not only the joys, but all, the sorrows, the joys, the recreation, sleep, work, eating, drinking—all are needed.

Life is a material woven of many colours and of a great variety of threads, all of which form the pattern which is to make us like to Christ. There are the gold threads of our prayer; the purple of sorrow; the green of hope; the red of suffering; the grey of our work; the white of joy: all are woven into one piece, one fabric, which is meant to make us what God wants us to be. Accept all-the pattern and the weaving—and ask Christ to up-hold it with us until it becomes for us that festal garment with which we shall be clothed among the Saints whose octave we are celebrating.

If the veil were drawn aside and we could see into heaven, we should see thousands and thousands of persons who were to us very work-a-day-nondescripts, perhaps-now transformed and shining in glory. Millions of the most ordinary people with whom we have come in contact are now in glory. In each of us there is the material of that same glory, in the measure we take Christ as ours, and according to the greater or less degree in which we make our burden His.

Therefore don't confine life to your times of prayer. All that makes up life is of value. The role of prayer, of your time in the chapel, is to consecrate the whole fabric of life, and not a thing standing apart. Prayer—union with God—is what transubstantiates the whole of our life's experiences, and that is the reason why life borne with Christ is such a joyous, buoyant thing. Life should be joyous; Christ has said His yoke is sweet. It is hard only if left to ourselves to bear, not so if He is permitted to take it and change it into His own.

By Father Edward Leen, *The Voice of a Priest* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1946) pp.259-266. These are notes of a conference given by Father Leen in Killeshandra, Ireland, about a week before his death, written down as he spoke.

# Photo Nook

...a place for past-pupils to share notable events in your lives...



August 28 2021

Veronica, née Smith, and Joachim Petersen, two graduates of St Dominic's College, received the holy sacrament of matrimony at St Anthony's Parish.



September 18 2021

Laura, née Palmer, and Kieran McBrydie were united in the holy sacrament of matrimony at St Anthony's Parish.

November 27th 2021

Elise, née Nyssen, and Zacharia Tangira, both former pupils at St Dominic's, received the holy sacrament of matrimony at St Anthony's.



As a regular section of the *O.P. Corner*, we invite you to share with us and your fellow alumni, in the *Photo Nook*, notable events in *your lives* that have taken place recently. Please send photos with captions (eg. date, event, etc.) to [o.p.corner@dominicansisters.net.nz](mailto:o.p.corner@dominicansisters.net.nz)



# News from St Dominic's Convent

Wanganui, NEW ZEALAND

## New Zealand Spelling Bee

Not until put to the test of having to spell an unfamiliar word, on stage, alone, in front of a large audience, does one appreciate just how difficult it can be spelling those words that form the English language, with all of its delightful inconsistencies and irregularities! Having passed the National Spelling Test in June with high scores, eight girls from Saint Dominic's College were selected to compete in Wellington on August 11th in the regional Spelling Bee competition. After an initial written test, in which the girls were expected to correctly spell over twenty tricky words in quick succession, in order to qualify for the next round, one Year 9 girl from our little group was successful, and her progress as she correctly spelled on stage several challenging words, and thus survived round after round, was watched eagerly by her peers – with a mingling of disappointment and relief. The bell that signified the elimination of our school's sole representative was rung all because of one pesky little letter: E (once loved, now loathed). She will forever afterwards remember that whilst *reservoir* is able to shake off the pestilential E at the end of it, *repertoire* is not. We heartily congratulate our regional finalists, and hope that some of them may have the same determination they displayed this year to compete in next year's Bee.



## Inter-House Netball

Netball continues to be the popular sport among the girls of Saint Dominic's. Even those who don't call themselves "sporty" played with a healthy spirit of competition for their School House on Saint Mary Magdalene's Feast Day. Showers of rain threatened to cause the plans to change but the sun shone through and, despite a couple of minor slips, the Bologna team won the day, with Prouille coming in second.



## National Fire-Wise Programme

Our Home Economics class for most of Term 2 was dedicated to instructing the Form 1 & 2 pupils in material from the New Zealand national *Fire Wise* programme. This programme is intended to educate children in New Zealand about the dangers of home fires, means of prevention, and what to do if a fire breaks out. After completing the course, a group of volunteers from the local fire station came to give us a demonstration of a kitchen fire, also allowing the pupils to examine their truck and the tools they use in their work at fires and car wrecks. A few of the Firefighters made a point of thanking the Sisters for the opportunity to visit our school, and to remark on the learning, engagement, interest, manners and decorum of the pupils as being impressive and out-of-the-ordinary in their experience of local schools, especially for their year level. To thank them for their time and their daily work in saving lives, the pupils prepared a large gift basket of food and snack items to be shared in the Fire Station break-room, presenting the gift, in its custom class-designed box, in a brief visit to the Station.





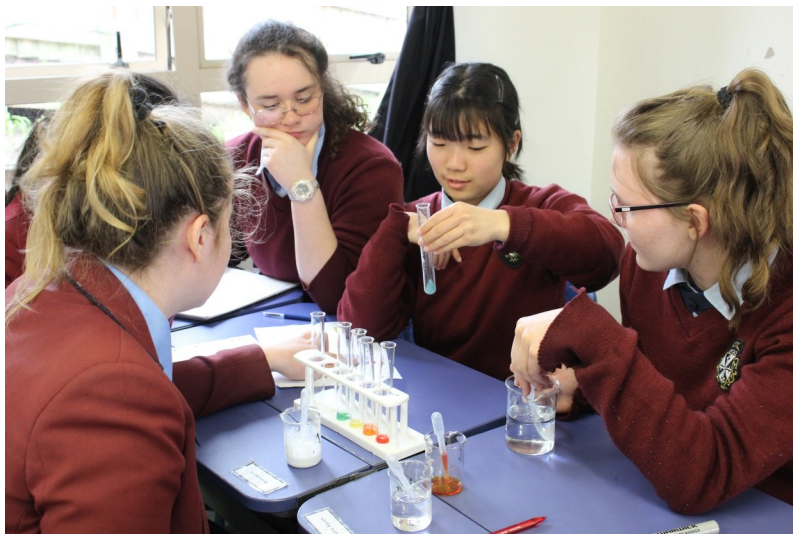
## Photo Chronicle

### *St Dominics' Convent and College in Pictures*

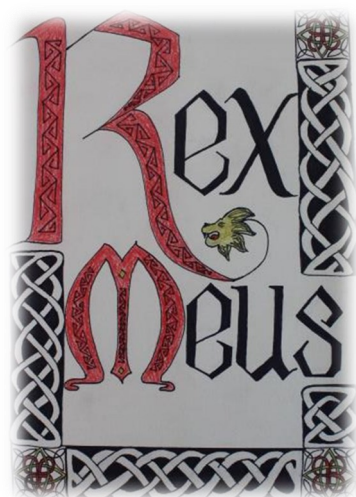


Some samples from the Celtic Art workshop & competition in November (above & below)

The Form 3 and Form 4 girls discuss results of a very colourful Scientific experimentation involving test tubes, beakers and mysterious substances. (right)



The College celebrates the Feast of the Holy Rosary with a procession on October 7 (below)



A group photo from the outing towards the end of the school year on St Catherine of Alexandria's feast to Dawson's Falls and Wilkies' pools (bottom left)

Some eager and energetic joggers for our jog-a-thon fundraiser (bottom right)







Construction of the extension to the Refectory and new Library extension is proceeding steadily. Thank you for your prayers and monetary contributions!



## Highlights from Guild Dinner 2021



This year's Guild Dinner's theme was in keeping with our anniversary celebrations and since the founding Dominican Sisters who came to New Zealand were from Ireland, *Irish* was the theme of the evening.



(Clockwise from above): Mother Micaela was the master (mistress?) of ceremonies for the evening and kept everyone jolly with her witty Irish jokes; The guild members were pleasantly surprised by a few performances of Irish songs and dances from our Signadou boarders; later in the evening, Mother General's speech was accompanied by an informative slideshow— keeping members interested by photos from this past year as well as photos from the more distant past linked to our three anniversaries this year— for example, an anniversary pageant from the Galway convent's students in Ireland.







(Above) Guild members and Sisters engaging in the various games and competitions during dinner, including knowledge (or guessing!) of the meaning of Irish words and idioms, completing Irish proverbs and lyrics of Irish songs, and guessing the types of beer. Prizes were awarded for most points gained and lucky door prizes were given as well (below); and the audience was again delighted to listen to duets by some of our musical sisters (left)



(below left) Father Elias OSB spoke to the guild members of the important Battle of Lepanto in 1571 (450th anniversary) and of Our Lady's intervention; (below right) the pleasant evening came to a close with a toast







## *Celebrating the 800th jubilee of St Dominic's Entrance into Glory*

Please consider helping us out - whether with gifts of cash or regular monthly donations. The stipend we receive is minimal, so we are truly grateful for every little effort and sacrifice that helps us to continue living our traditional Dominican way of life.

Thank you to those who have already pledged regular donations - these gifts, no matter how small, do make a difference!

May Our Lady of the Rosary reward your generosity and kindness to the Spouses of Her Divine Son. The Sisters pray specially for you during our weekly Chapter.

*Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, pray for us!*

### **AUSTRALIA**

Westpac Account Name: Dominican Sisters of Wanganui  
Westpac Account BSB Number: 033-636  
Account Number: 334285

### **NEW ZEALAND**

Westpac Account Name: Dominican Sisters of Wanganui  
Westpac Account Number: 03-0791-0728558-00

*Please note that the banks in NZ no longer accept cheques. Apologies for the inconvenience.*

**All donations now qualify for a 33% TAX REBATE from the IRD.**

**Please quote our NZ Charities Services Number: CC37884**

### **UNITED STATES**

Account Name: Dominican Sisters of Wanganui  
Wells Fargo Bank, A/C # 2 015 569 425, Routing # 1210 42882  
Cheques can be made out to "The Dominican Sisters of Wanganui" and sent to:  
Dominican Sisters, Attn: Loren Vaccarezza, 2240 Paragon Drive, San Jose, CA 95131  
**All donations to our U.S. account now qualify for a tax deductible receipt!**

### **OR VIA PAYPAL**

Visit our website at <https://www.dominicansisters.net.nz/fundraising>

