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# The Southern Star

ISSUE #10

Newsletter for the Dominican Sisters of Wanganui

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"Charity to our neighbours for God's sake is the fire that cleanses the soul."

From the Letters of St Catherine of Siena

# LETTER FROM MOTHER PRIORESS GENERAL

Mother Mary Micaela O.P.

In our last newsletter I mentioned some of the things I did while “on the loose” after my stylish flight from St Dominic’s in Henderson. As I mentioned then, I did clerical work for the Medical Council, school-teaching at Wellington Girls’ College, and I had spent time with the Dominican Sisters of Wagga Wagga during which time I did some school-teaching and also taught Scripture to some of the young men at the Wagga Wagga Seminary of St John Vianney.

I learned a lot from those Sisters in Wagga Wagga as they were a little older than me in age and in religious life so they knew more of Dominican Life as it had been lived before Vatican II. However, they were not fully traditional in that they attended the traditional Latin Mass when it was available but also attended the Novus Ordo. They sang Compline in Latin from the Dominican Compline Book but chanted the rest of the Office in English from a Roman Breviary. By that time I was leaning towards something more completely traditional; and they were leaning towards something more nun-like in a recruit, so we parted company. I did learn a lot there, for which I am grateful. They were attractive nuns and deserve their popularity in Australia. Living with them had also opened my mind to the many streams of conservative and traditional life available in the Church in Australia, many more than in New Zealand.

I returned to New Zealand not knowing what to do next. Fortunately, three very nice men suggested that they would make a job for me helping their wives and children with homeschooling. They would get me accommodation in Picton where the three families were living and pay me a small stipend. This was a very pleasant interlude but there was no prospect of the Latin Mass in Picton. Eventually, the consortium broke up and I followed one of the families to Auckland, where I attended the Latin Mass at Father Mueli’s Mass Centre at Titirangi. From there it was a short step, which I eventually took, to going to the Society of St Pius X Chapel at Avondale.

Once at Avondale I looked for a chance to speak to Fr Gentili, a large and kind priest, who mostly said Mass there. I was absolutely stymied by a woman who dominated any conversation with the priest and outstayed everyone else after Mass. Eventually, I rang Fr Gentili in Wanganui and asked if there would be any way I could help in the school in Wanganui. He made a date to talk to me after Mass in Auckland the following Saturday night. I must say that when I talked about my whole career with Father Gentili I experienced great understanding and kindness, giving

me the wonderful internal peace that comes from being understood.

Things moved quickly after that. I was invited to Wanganui for a visit and an offer was made that the Society would find me somewhere to live and that I would start teaching in the primary school, although my eventual role would be to develop a secondary school. This all duly happened, as you might say, with persecutions, but I was convinced from the start that the Society of St Pius X was the way forward for me. Unfortunately, Father Gentili left New Zealand only a few weeks after I arrived in Wanganui but the next Prior, or priest in charge, did a good thing for me by sending me to stay with the Dominican Sisters of Fanjeaux at their Boarding School in Post Falls, Idaho. I spent nearly six weeks with those lovely Sisters over Christmas and New Year. Because their school-year was different from ours I saw quite a lot of school and helped a little in the school. The Sisters were lovely. They were from a different tradition from the Irish-Prouille roots of my own Congregation but they were still Dominican and they were very good and sisterly to me. The whole time I was in Idaho there was deep snow on the ground! However, I came back with wonderful ideas for books for our forthcoming secondary school and even with sets of Catechism books and samples of English books given to me by the Mother Prioress.

When I returned to New Zealand, Wanganui, I began planning for the secondary school as there would be children old enough for it the next year. Assisted by what I had brought back from Idaho, and by my memories of Dominican education, I brought the secondary school to birth without a lot of fanfare – though I had a lot of fun organising the uniform and books. By that time Wanganui had an excellent Prior in Father Delsorte who was most supportive and helpful in what I was doing. There was no thought of the boys and girls being taught together. The girls had a classroom in a new block in St Anthony’s Primary School and the boys used an ex-chapel which housed the parish-library and bookshop. (The Inspectors complained about the fenestration of the room.) A versatile young man from America was retained to teach the boys – rather he and I shared the teaching. He taught mostly the boys and I taught mostly the girls but I taught the boys Latin and he taught the girls Maths. We had six girls and four boys in the Third Form and it was a most happy year. The versatile young man eventually married a young lady of the parish.

*Mother Mary Micaela, O.P.*



## ROSARY CONVENT

Tynong; Melbourne; AUSTRALIA

### Mother's 70th Birthday

Secret plans were afoot for weeks before our beloved Mother General's 70th birthday, which fell on Sunday, 7th of May. Regrettably, we did not get a military tattoo (the band, not the skin variety), but we did manage to smuggle in a surprise in the person of Mother Mary Madeleine, who had flown quietly in from New Zealand the evening before. Mother General was fêted with a home-cooked BBQ meal and lively conversation, with the evening finishing up with a special edition of song and dance accompanied by selected tunes from the comic opera by Gilbert and Sullivan, *The Pirates of Penzance*.



### A Warm Housewarming Present

A mysterious invitation for the entire Girls' School and all the school Sisters to convene in the VCE girls' homeroom after school one afternoon turned out to be a most pleasant surprise. After three-and-a-half years of hard labour amid much colour-matching, fabric-choosing and tangled skeins of coloured thread, Mrs Sarah Faulkner and the girls were pleased to present to the Sisters three beautifully handstitched quilts as a housewarming gift. The Sisters are heartily grateful and delighted with this gesture of warmth (just in time for the cold winter nights!) and wish Mrs Faulkner all the best as she embarks on a new project: motherhood!



### Children of Mary in Tynong

Over the course of the past six months the Children of Mary have become more active in their life and apostolate. In a happy atmosphere of prayer and wholesome recreation, the girls meet monthly, where they say prayers in common, are given a spiritual talk by Father Elias, SSPX, discuss things to be done, mention people to be prayed for, and welcome new members or aspirants. Since January we have had the great pleasure to welcome seven new Aspirants, some of whom will be preparing for consecration and/or postulancy in the coming months. The girls enjoyed a hike early on in the year, and performed a great of service by cleaning the church in preparation for the Sacred Triduum. They also polished brass and prepared candles for the Altar of Repose. They had a day of fun and baking in preparation for a bake-sale held after the annual May Procession in Hampton. The girls had the honour of preparing a carpet for the Blessed Sacrament in the Corpus Christi procession held at Saint Thomas Aquinas College this year and look forward to more opportunities to prove their love for Immaculate Heart of Mary.







The make-shift fence that protects our enclosure stays up by dint of some very ingenious concrete paver arranging courtesy of Sr Mary Agnes.

A Professed Sister makes her meditation along the driveway, contemplating the school pigs (left), ducks (everywhere) and railway (further up front).



The Sisters had the happiness of singing Tenebrae according to the Dominican Rite in our little chapel in Holy Week.

Father Elias, SSPX, blesses the Stations of the Cross donated by a beloved and longtime benefactress

We are fortunate to have Mass celebrated nearly every day by the priests of the SSPX, who are our biggest spiritual benefactors.

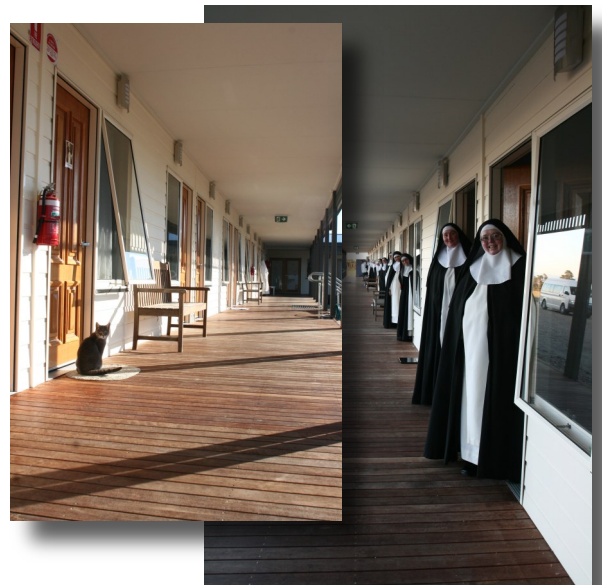


The Feast of St Vincent Ferrer, patron of Sister Mary Vincent, O.P. (left), was the first feastday we celebrated here in the Convent. The Professed Community room now has enough space to house individual carrels for study as well as room for tables for recreation, lectures for the entire community and feastday gatherings.



## Settling into Our New Home

A big "Thank You" to all the generous hands who have helped us settle into our new Convent. Since a picture speaks a thousand words - we thought a few pictures in lieu of the million or so words that could be said about how grateful we are for our new buildings might possibly suffice for the moment!



The Sisters peeping out of their cells for a photograph. More space means we are able to live the contemplative aspects of our Dominican life more fully and prayerfully.

Grace the cat has settled herself in too. She plays "musical beds" in the day and keeps the mice and ducks away at night.



Our silent Refectory, where we nourish both mind and body.

The long-awaited kitchen with the desperately needed walk-in fridge and freezer and gas oven and stove to provide for the needs of our growing community.



# St Dominic's Convent

Wanganui; NEW ZEALAND

## Celebrations in honour of St Thomas

Saint Thomas Aquinas's feast day saw the senior girls of Saint Dominic's College once again preparing for their annual debating competition. This year's topics centred round the Fatima apparitions and included, for example, the question of "whether Our Lady chose to appear in Portugal because the country was poor." The Sisters, looking forward to razor-sharp distinctions between material poverty and poverty of spirit and fierce debate as to the relative places of poverty and simplicity in the hierarchy of virtues, were a little disappointed in what the debaters actually produced, but Mother General's old friend Melda Townsley, our adjudicator, was pleased with their poise and fluency as speakers. Over lunch, Melda judged the junior girls' poems - likewise Marian in theme - and their skill in reciting them. This portion of the competition, too, was greatly enjoyed by all, and we may perhaps be able to print some of the girls' poems in future issues.



## Busy as Bees

St Dominic's Convent and the Signadou boarding school in Wanganui have been hives of activity during this first term of school. A surprise boarders' day out was among the memorable events. Mother Madeleine and Sister Diana accompanied the boarders on a trip to the 'big smoke' - Wellington City. The day consisted of a visit to the Te Papa Museum, followed by a trip to the zoo. The museum offers a free Gallipoli exhibition, featuring incredibly life-like, giant-sized mannequins. Of course the zoo trip was interesting but all agreed the museum visit was the most memorable.



## Celebrating Our Lady's Queenship at St Dominic's

In an age where ugliness and disorder are met with at every turn, we endeavour to form in our pupils a taste for true beauty, the splendour of truth, beginning with an appreciation of external beauty. To honour our heavenly Queen, who is titled "*mater puerarum dilectionis*," the pupils of St Dominic's College were put to the task of demonstrating beauty and elegance in dress and decorations on May 31st, the feast of Our Lady's Queenship. The 38 girls wore to school their "Mary-like outfits", which incorporated a skirt they had made themselves (with some necessary help, in many cases!). Whilst the girls enjoyed the novelty of being at school out of uniform, the teachers enjoyed seeing the efforts made to design stylish, tasteful, outfits which demonstrated the girls' notions of modesty and "Mary-like" dressing.

To add to the festivities and to further honour our Queen, the pupils spent a very busy afternoon preparing and beautifying three shrines for statues of Our Lady in their classrooms, as an additional house competition. Father MacPherson kindly judged the shrines, awarding Calaroga first place, Bologna second, and Prouille third. Again, we commend the girls for their cooperation and efforts to create very attractive shrines which will remain in each of the classrooms until the end of this year in honour of Our Lady of Fatima.



## Noblesse Oblige

Legend has it that an angel presented Clovis, King of the Franks, with a golden lily upon his conversion to Christianity. The *fleur de lis* has since become the most symbolic emblem of France, representing French royalty and the principle of *noblesse oblige*: the idea that unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required (Luke 12:48). Although the days of chivalrous kings may be long gone, we were struck by the fact that noblesse oblige is still very much alive in French culture today, even in the remote island of New Caledonia where we spent eight days with four of our senior pupils as part of their French programme. Wherever we went, we met with evidence of *noblesse oblige* and the three types of charity symbolised by the *fleur de lis*: our duty of charity towards God, ourselves and our neighbour.

The central and largest petal represents our love and devotion to God. Knowing that to sing is to pray twice and that music plays an important role in our worship of God, we wanted our senior French pupils to have the privilege of singing the Mass and of playing the organ for the faithful in New Caledonia. We were further privileged to be able to accompany Father Bochkoltz on his sick calls and to sing in French for those we visited. Connecting and relating to people in their own language makes it possible to pass on traditions and culture of the Catholic Church.

The second petal of the *fleur de lis* represents charity for ourselves. Coming in contact with people who live the French culture reminded us of the great virtue of courtesy which needs to govern our dealings with other people. Our pupils were impressed to learn that French courtesy extends even to manners at the table, as determined by the hostess, or mother of the family. In an age where general sloppiness is the norm, we were reminded that politeness and neatness at table is an important element in character formation. Personal decorum is a duty we owe to ourselves as a temple of the Holy Ghost, as well as being a means by which we edify our neighbour.

The third and final petal of the *fleur de lis* represents our duty to love our neighbour as ourselves. There are reciprocated benefits to our trip: demonstrating hospitality with the opportunity to serve others, while learning about each other's cultures through skills of relating to others,

participating & contributing in a Mary-like spirit of respectful humility and self-sacrifice.

Each new example of charity reminded us of the great reality behind the symbol of the *fleur de lis*, representing the Queen of Heaven who is the Queen of charity. How grateful we are that our visit to New Caledonia demonstrated, above all, that Mary holds the *fleur de lis*, this flower of charity, in her hands, and places it in those of all women; that they may be, like her, a queen of charity in the home, through their generous hospitality. Providence arranged that our girls would meet with such examples everywhere we went, that our theme for this 2017 school year might be emphasised and shown in action: Mary, Our Lady and Our Mother.

According to the New Zealand curriculum, one learns French in order to communicate with others and explore their own world, enabling them to travel, live and work in other countries with little inconvenience. From a Catholic perspective, learning French, the language of 'the eldest daughter of the Church,' opens up a plethora of opportunities for our own daughters. As traditional Catholics we are aware that traditional Catholicism is strongest in France and that a familiarity with the French language and culture gives one access to much traditional Catholic writing and education. We were glad for our girls to be immersed in traditional French culture, and impressed by their efforts to embrace it and to use the language at every opportunity. Not only did they benefit from seeing the charity of the people of New Caledonia but they were also enriched by seeing the respect paid to the woman - a respect so lacking in the predominating culture around them. In New Caledonia, surrounded by the French culture which reminded us so forcibly of Our Lady, we could not help but sing "*Chez nous, soyez Reine.*" May this be our motto in life and may it be on our lips as Our Lady ushers us into the heavenly banqueting room under her mantle.

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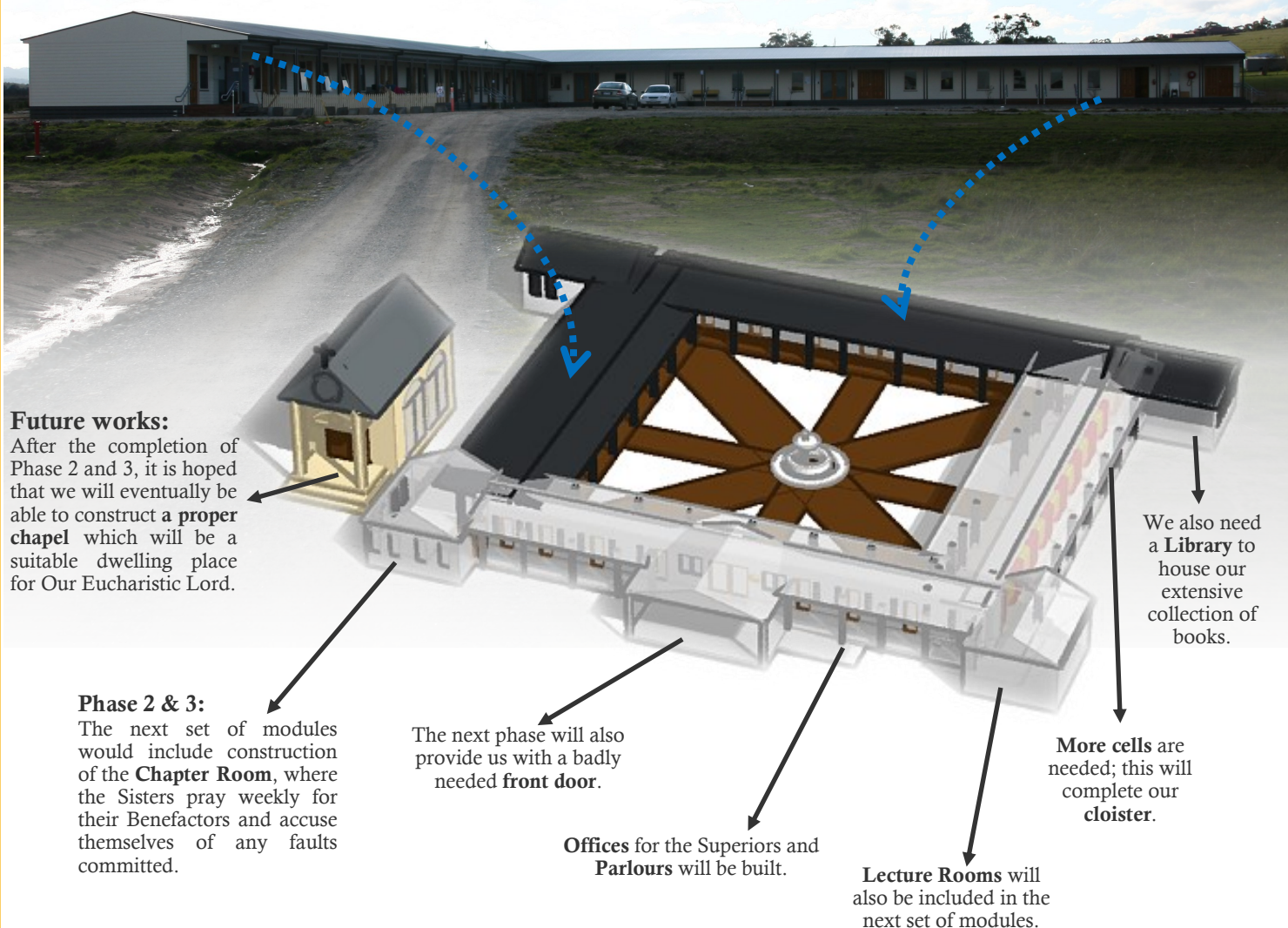


# OP MOTHERHOUSE BUILDING PROJECT

## Please help us make the *entire* convent a reality!

### Phase 1:

Existing buildings that we now have: which includes the Refectory, Kitchen, Laundry, Novitiate Common Room and the Professed Community Room, and eighteen cells for the Sisters.



### OUR MOST URGENT NEED IS:

To raise the shortfall for the completion of the second and third phase which will provide us with the cloister, additional cells, a front door, parlours and lecture rooms.

Our deepest thanks and prayers to all those who have helped us in any shape and form so far.  
We ask that you continue to pray that we will be able to obtain our goal.

**Motherhouse of the Dominican Sisters of Wanganui**  
1A Tynong Road, Tynong, VIC 3813, Australia  
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Email: [sr.m.micaela@dominicansisters.net.nz](mailto:sr.m.micaela@dominicansisters.net.nz)  
[www.dominicansisters.net.nz](http://www.dominicansisters.net.nz)

We have a new address!

# HERE'S HOW YOU CAN HELP US



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ASSETS**

✓  
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PAYMENTS**

✓  
**LARGE REGULAR  
PAYMENTS**

*May God reward you for your generosity!  
Our Lady of the Rosary, pray for us!*

## HOW TO MAKE A DONATION

### AUSTRALIA

Our account details in Australia are: Dominican Sisters of Wanganui,  
Westpac Account, BSB: 033-636, A/C #334 277

Cheques can be made out to "The Dominican Sisters of Wanganui";

Cheques for the Convent Building Project must be made out to "St Thomas Aquinas College Convent Building Fund Account" and sent to: OP Motherhouse Project, P.O. Box 50, Tynong. VIC. 3813, Melbourne, Australia.

**All donations for the Building of the Convent qualify for a tax deductible receipt**

### NEW ZEALAND

Our account details in New Zealand are: Dominican Sisters of Wanganui  
Westpac Account, Victoria Ave, Wanganui BSB: 030-791, A/C #0728558

Cheques can be made out to "The Dominican Sisters of Wanganui" and sent to:  
OP Motherhouse Project, 12b York Street, Wanganui, 4501, New Zealand.

### SINGAPORE

Our account details in Singapore are: Friends of the International Priestly Society of St. Pius X  
United Overseas Bank (UOB), A/C # 143-300-495-2, Changi Airport Branch

Airport Boulevard #B16-17 Passenger Terminal 2 Building Singapore Changi Airport  
Singapore 819643, Institution Code: 7375; Branch Code: 068; SWIFT: UOVBSGSG

Cheques can be made out to "Friends of the International Priestly Society of St. Pius X" and sent to:  
OP Motherhouse Project, SSPX, 286 Upper Thomson Road, Singapore 574402.

### UNITED STATES

Our account details in the United States are: 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:  
OP Motherhouse Project, Attn: Loren Vaccarezza, 1590 Berryessa Road, San Jose, CA 95133