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Newsletter for the Dominican Sisters of Wanganui



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"Some rebel against what happens to them but
God does nothing without the salvation of man in mind."

St Catherine of Siena

LETTER FROM MOTHER prioress GENERAL

Mother Mary Micaela O.P.

When I finished my last letter I was writing about the beginning of the Secondary School in Wanganui. At the time the Parish Priest thought it would be rather jolly to call the boys' secondary school, "St Augustine's" and the girls secondary school, "Sacred Heart", after the two schools which had been closed down to form a new co-educational school called "Cullinane College" after the Bishop of the Palmerston North Diocese, who was, and is, still alive!

I could see the point of view of this dear priest but I had to tell him that it was "not our custom" to call schools "Sacred Heart", but rather the first school in a place should be called after St Dominic, the second after Our Lady's Rosary, the third, St Catherine's and so on. Father was very kind and allowed me to call the girls' school "St Dominic's" and the boys' school eventually became St Augustine's, which I liked because Dominicans live by the Rule of St Augustine. So, the Novus Ordo were spared a joke at their expense, and while they were setting up a co-educational school, we were having great fun as Father, a versatile young man, a uniform-shop mother, a Dominican ex-pupil in the parish and I set up the new school. For this task I drew on my best memories of the various schools I had taught at.

For example, the uniform of the new school was based on that of Moreau College in Dunedin, a blue and mulberry skirt, a blue blouse, a little bow-tie, a mulberry coloured jersey. For the boys we had similar colours substituting blue shorts and long navy socks for the girls' skirts. I wrote to a Sister in my old Congregation and got a copy of the music of *Hail St Dominic* and of *Hail to our Alma Mater*, and we were under way with a foundation on which we could build a truly Dominican new school.

I was in Wanganui last week (early September) and rejoiced to see how the schools have grown and developed during the last seventeen years. Both schools now have nice buildings and are going ahead well. I will leave the development of the boys' school aside as I stopped being Head of both schools after about three years and the boys' school developed under the leadership of the priests and lay teachers.

Returning to the Girls' School last week delighted me, though. On the staffroom walls were framed awards from the Cambridge International Examinations, which was the path that Father Delsorte and I had chosen when the National Certificate of Educational Achievement was introduced in New Zealand. Father Delsorte organised his Mass schedule so that he was in Auckland for a historic meeting at Auckland Grammar, was pleased with what he saw and heard, and we were launched as a Cambridge School. We were better placed than State Schools as we could be a totally Cambridge School and did not need to offer the NCEA at all. The awards on the staffroom walls mark occasions when our girls have gained "Top of New Zealand" awards and "Top of the World" awards. Every year there is an awards ceremony in Auckland for winners of these awards, and I must say our girls look very nice as they go up to collect their prizes wearing the school uniform topped by the mulberry-coloured blazers bought from the internet business the versatile young man now runs.

Gaining these awards is a great way for a small school to make its mark, but the girls who do not get awards do very well also as Cambridge is a very fair system with a nice

plain syllabus, fair examinations and fair marking of the examinations which are sent away to England for marking.

While I was in Wanganui, I also attended the weekly assembly at the girls' school where the young ladies sang *Hail to our Alma Mater* as it was sung in Dominican Schools in the South Island when I was a young Nun. I also attended the Inter-house Music Competition. For me this was another blast from the past as these competitions used to occur in all Dominican Schools. The Music Competition was impressive as the preparation of the House Choirs, the announcements, and the piano items had all been prepared or chosen by the senior girls in each house. As a speech enthusiast I was wonderfully impressed by the announcements by the girls which told us what was coming next and explained how Our Lady was being honoured in each segment of the concert. Even the very young girls announced their own piano items, telling us their names and the name and composer of the piece of music. As an example of good co-operation between the two Institutes who run the school, the Inter-house Competition was marked by Father Palko, SSPX, Sister Maria Lucia, and Sister Teresa Joseph.

When I first arrived in Wanganui I found that the girls were feeling a teensy bit like second-class citizens. It just seemed that the boys had more attention paid to things like their camps. I am happy to say that over the years I was in Wanganui I completely reversed this situation, largely by the use of netball and also by allowing Certain Young Sisters to unleash their organisational powers on camps and other excursions.

I started the netball accidentally when I found out that the girls did not know how to play netball! We started on a pocket-handkerchief of a court up at the Primary School. However, there was an old tennis court on the grounds of the school which was cleared of vegetation by a working-bee, and the grandfather of some of the girls brought in his gang of road-makers to dump surplus tar from jobs they were doing around Wanganui. Eventually we finished up with a fine netball court with only one chronic puddle, which the girls just avoided walking in. At first we played Sunday Netball at Gonville School, then moved to our own court when it was ready. Finally we entered the competition held at the Wanganui Netball Courts in Peat Street. At first other teams laughed at our girls' "long skirts" but when we cleaned up the Opening Day tournament and began winning competition games they stopped laughing. I think I can say that Netball did as much for the Traditional Girls of Wanganui as their Cambridge Exams. Other great things the Sisters have done in Wanganui have been the foundation of the Children of Mary, the organisation of exciting camps, and the preparation of young women who are now taking their place in the parish as mothers of the next generation.

And so we finished up with a vibrant and happy school, eventually with boarders, which I saw when I returned to Wanganui last week. It's been a real blessing to me to be part of the foundation of St Dominic's College and to have it proved to me first-hand that Dominican Education is still relevant to the progress of Tradition.

Mother Mary Micaela, O.P.

ROSARY CONVENT

Tynong; Melbourne; AUSTRALIA

Samoa - Island Paradise

The Sisters had a taste of island paradise when they took a trip to Samoa in the South Pacific for 3 days before their vocations trip to USA. Accompanied by Father Paul Robinson, SSPX, their tropical visit hoped to attract more vocations as the Congregation has now two Samoan members, and also to visit the small Traditional Mass community who were all eager to meet and greet the Sisters. They arrived Saturday July 1st and celebrated a Sung Mass for the Feast of the Precious Blood in a chapel at Immaculate Conception Cathedral, Mulivai. Though they had to adjust quickly to the warm climate, the Sisters sang the Mass beautifully to the delight of the local Traditional community. The following day after Mass, they were served a welcoming *to'ona'i* (Samoan Sunday Lunch) and in the afternoon gave a presentation of the Dominican Order to a gathering of St Anthony's Youth Group. The Sisters also visited the local Carmelites and the Little Sisters of the Poor, who were most gracious and friendly. The sightseeing of the island then began with Lalomanu's sandy beaches and the beautiful waterfalls of Papapapaitai-Uta. It was a memorable weekend for the Sisters and a taste of Samoan culture. Our most sincere thanks to Father Robinson, and to Vicky and Family for their kindness in hosting and helping to make the trip truly wonderful.



Saint Dominic's Feast Day

Celebrations started the evening before with a Pizza and Games Night with the Senior girls. While the girls competed against each other in a variety of games, from a mini obstacle course to a surprise favourite, the nerf gun shootout (*congratulations to the spectacular shooter who took out the thimble!*), the Tertiaries were entertained with a Trivia Game and delightful conversation with Mother General and friends of Rosary Convent. Mass was offered at the Convent on 4th August to the tune of "Hail St Dominic." The annual Teachers -vs-Students Netball game was held that afternoon with both teams vying for the cup with intense interceptions and superb goal-shooting. The Feast Day ended with a lovely Asian cuisine dinner and joyous thanksgiving for the many blessings of being children of St Dominic. "Thank you" to all our dear family, friends and kind benefactors for your generous support - may you be rewarded in Our Lord Jesus Christ through our holy father Saint Dominic.



A Mother-Daughter Evening

On Saturday the 12th of August the Sisters had the pleasure of hosting a group of girls and some teachers from St Philomena's School (Brisbane) and the senior girls from St Thomas at a Mother and Daughter evening at the school multipurpose hall. The evening began with a delicious supper followed by a fascinating presentation given by two of our Sisters on Dominican life and on our congregation in particular. Immediately afterwards an exciting but brief Trivia game was played which involved walking, quick decision making, and knowledge of a wide variety of facts. Then all settled down to a craft activity; very cute little babushka doll keyrings made of felt. Of course busy fingers did not, in most cases, hamper tongues, so the room was filled with happy chatter as all exercised their multi-tasking talents! At the end of the evening the Litany of Our Lady was recited, followed by a clean-up which, with everyone helping, was a record for speed and efficiency!





Once Upon A Time...

"We know that in everything, God works for good for those who love Him." (Rom 8:28)

Once upon a time, there was a wise old farmer who had worked on the land for over 40 years. One morning, while walking to his stable, he noticed that his horse had run away. His neighbours came to visit and sympathetically said to the farmer, "Such bad luck!" "Maybe," the farmer replied. The following morning, however, the horse returned, bringing with it three other wild horses. "Such good luck," the neighbours exclaimed. "Maybe," the farmer replied. The following afternoon, his son tried to ride one of the untamed horses and was thrown off, causing him to break his leg. The neighbours came to visit and tried to show sympathy and said to the farmer, "how unfortunate!" "Maybe," answered the farmer. The following morning military officials came to the farmer's village to draft young men into the army to fight in a new war. Since the farmer's son's leg was broken, they did not draft him into the war. The neighbours congratulated him on his good luck and the farmer calmly replied, "Maybe."

- from an ancient Chinese fable

In His wisdom, God not only creates but orders all events within the universe so that the end for which it was created may be realised. That end is that all creatures should manifest the glory of God, and in particular, that man should glorify Him, recognizing in nature the work of His hand, serving Him in obedience and love, and thereby attaining to the full development of his nature and to eternal happiness in God.

The First Vatican Council proclaimed that "By His providence God protects and governs all things which He has made," and Our Lord tells us that not one sparrow falls to the ground without the will of our Heavenly Father, and that the very hairs of our head are numbered.

Having only partial knowledge, many aspects of God's providence are hidden from us. How often can we lend our voice to the cry, "How incomprehensible are God's judgments, and how unsearchable his ways!" (Rom. 11:33)

As Catholics, it is important to hold fast to the knowledge that nothing happens without the will or permission of God. The Sisters have been fortunate indeed to have had Sister Shirley, a religious of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, visit us to share some of the many instances during the 50 years of her working within the mission field of Papua New Guinea that displayed God's loving providence in a concrete way. Her fidelity to her religious vows during both joyful and trying times was inspiring to our young Sisters. Her adventures started at once upon the completion of a three-day boat journey (which lacked the basic facilities we so take for granted and during which fish had to be caught for sustenance) to her assigned mission station. Exhausted, but delighted to drag her suitcase down onto dry land, she and the

only other Sister with her were immediately beckoned by the Priest who met them, to assist a mother who had been in the throes of a difficult labour for days. Although she was trained as a teacher, Sr Shirley had to make the little newborn take its first breath while the other Sister there attended to the mother. Thus began a lifetime's work and trust in Divine Providence.

At home in Tynong, we are getting our own opportunities to practice our Faith and trust in Divine Providence. The application for the Teachers' College has passed its preliminary assessment, and is now on the substantial assessment. The Sisters are busy preparing paperwork now for the Victorian Institute of Teaching application, which is to approve our course for training future teachers. At the same time, three of them flew to Sydney to interview staff at leading Universities and to visit the National Library and Archives as part of their research projects towards bettering their qualifications. Although the hire car was tiny, the GPS was somewhat out-of-date and tired, and the navigator lacked aptitude for map-reading, Sister driver displayed heroic patience and good driving skills tackling Sydney traffic! They were protected from many a close call and even managed to make their way to the Mary Mackillop memorial chapel, to pray at the tomb of Australia's first canonized Saint. They left many prayer intentions, trusting in the intercession of a Saint who, seeking only the will of God, showed great trust in Divine Providence amidst many difficulties.

One of our trials has been troubles with Immigration, who seem intent to make us practice much prayer in our efforts to get visas approved for our "foreign" Sisters. Not letting this dampen our spirits, the Sisters visited Samoa (who gave us two vocations recently) and the United States of America (which has been generous with vocations) in July to visit different parishes in order to give talks on our Congregation, the nature of femininity, and vocations. May God grant us many more vocations as well as help in getting their visas approved! We resign ourselves lovingly to the will of God, thereby enjoying peace of mind even in the midst of the many trials that beset us.

Instead of answering "maybe" – we shall say, "God's will be done!" for "The Lord ruleth me, and I shall want nothing." (Ps. 22:1)

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The Southern Star, P.O Box 50, Tynong, VIC, Melbourne, Australia

St Dominic's Convent

Wanganui; NEW ZEALAND

Annual Inter-house Netball

The last day of Term 2 ended with the annual Inter-House Netball competition. Surprisingly enough, the weather was better than anyone expected. Prouille, Calaroga and Bologna took turns facing off and displaying their developing skills on the court. In the final game the pressure was on Prouille who needed just one more goal within the last few minutes of the last quarter of their game against Calaroga to come out on top and beat Bologna due to a tie with them in the previous game. Just before the final whistle blew, a goal was scored making Prouille the winners of the coveted prize - chocolate!



2017 New Zealand Spelling Bee

On August 3rd four girls, from the Form 3 & 4 (Year 8 & 9) class, bravely foregoing the St Dominic's Eve festivities that their peers were to enjoy, travelled to Wellington to participate in the New Zealand Wellington Regional Spelling Bee competition, having been selected as four of the top 200 participants in the spelling bee written test which took place earlier this year in June. Of the four girls, Irene Jacob was fortunate enough to gain the fourth place out of approximately forty fellow-spellers, and just missed out on becoming one of the three participants to advance to the finals. The two words which let her down, and will for that reason forever remain etched in perfect letter-order in her memory were, "traduce" and "germane". This was the fifth consecutive year that girls from the college have been selected for the semi-final regional competition – may the tradition continue!



St Dominic's - Portuguese Style

This year, our St Dominic's Day celebrations in Wanganui took the form of a Portuguese festa, in honour of the 100th anniversary of Our Lady's apparitions at Fatima and also (though we didn't know it then) of the 800th anniversary of the Dominicans' arrival in Portugal! Our vigil celebrations with the girls began with First Vespers, followed by a Portuguese meal, games, folk dances, a dress-up competition and finally Compline to close the evening. On the feast day itself, we had a sung Mass, and afterwards enjoyed a brunch with friends and benefactors. Father Cranshaw's sermon, about St Dominic's parents, inspired us to pray for many holy Catholic parents who, like Felix and Juana, may form heroes of the faith for the saving of Christendom.





Easy as A-B-C

O tempora! O mores! Cicero's words mourning the times and manners of the ancient Romans echo on through the centuries and are as relevant today as they were over two thousand years ago. It will only grow worse as manners disintegrate in this digital age we live in. The youth of today, heads buried in their mobile phones, have all but lost interest in and respect for their neighbour and the basic art of conversation.

An escape from technology and the humdrum of daily life is good for the soul, so our Children of Mary embarked on their annual July Recollection weekend: this time to Jerusalem, located just over an hour north of Wanganui. The historic convent and chapel of the Sisters of Compassion - once home to Mother Suzanne Aubert, soon to be New Zealand's first Saint - provided the ideal venue for talks from Father Bochkoltz on the vocation of love and the foundation of the spiritual life, signs of a vocation, dating and leadership, punctuated with a recording during lunch on dressing modestly. The perfectly manicured gardens also provided the idyllic setting for meditation and reflection. Our girls came away both inspired and rejuvenated by these talks which they found to be very applicable in their daily lives.

The next day, the members undertook a one and a half hour tramp to Blythe Hut in the Ohakune region, providing the physical activity needed for the complete rejuvenation of mind and body. This day out also allowed an opportunity for the girls to employ the virtues they are encouraged to practise as Children of Mary: charity, patience, humility and modesty in imitation of Our Blessed Mother. Like her they will hopefully lead others by their good example and draw many souls to God.

Yet how does one become a leader? How does one inspire people to follow them? The key is acquiring good manners, a quality of the self-giving and respectful soul. Manners inform the way a person habitually acts, the way one talks, the way one acts towards others - even something as seemingly inconsequential as the way one eats. An article from the Catholic Education Resource Centre provided the girls with the following guide to

reaching their potential as future leaders through the cultivation of ladylike manners:

- A - Accept a compliment graciously
- B - Be on time
- C - Clean your hands
- D - Do chew with your mouth closed
- E - Elbows off the table
- F - Friendliness to others
- G - Greetings with a smile: "Hello" & "Goodbye"
- H - Hang up your clothes
- I - Interrupt only for a very important reason
- J - Join in and include everybody
- K - Kindness to all living things
- L - Lend a helping hand
- M - Magic words: "Please" and "Thank you"
- N - Never point or laugh at others
- O - Obey the rules
- P - Pleasant tone of voice is a plus
- Q - Quiet when others are working or sleeping
- R - Remember others on special occasions
- S - Sit up straight
- T - Thank the host or hostess
- U - Use your beautiful smile
- V - Visit a friend who is lonely or sick or the elderly
- W - Watch out for little ones
- X - "X" out bad habits
- Y - Yawn if you must but cover your mouth
- Z - Zip your zipper

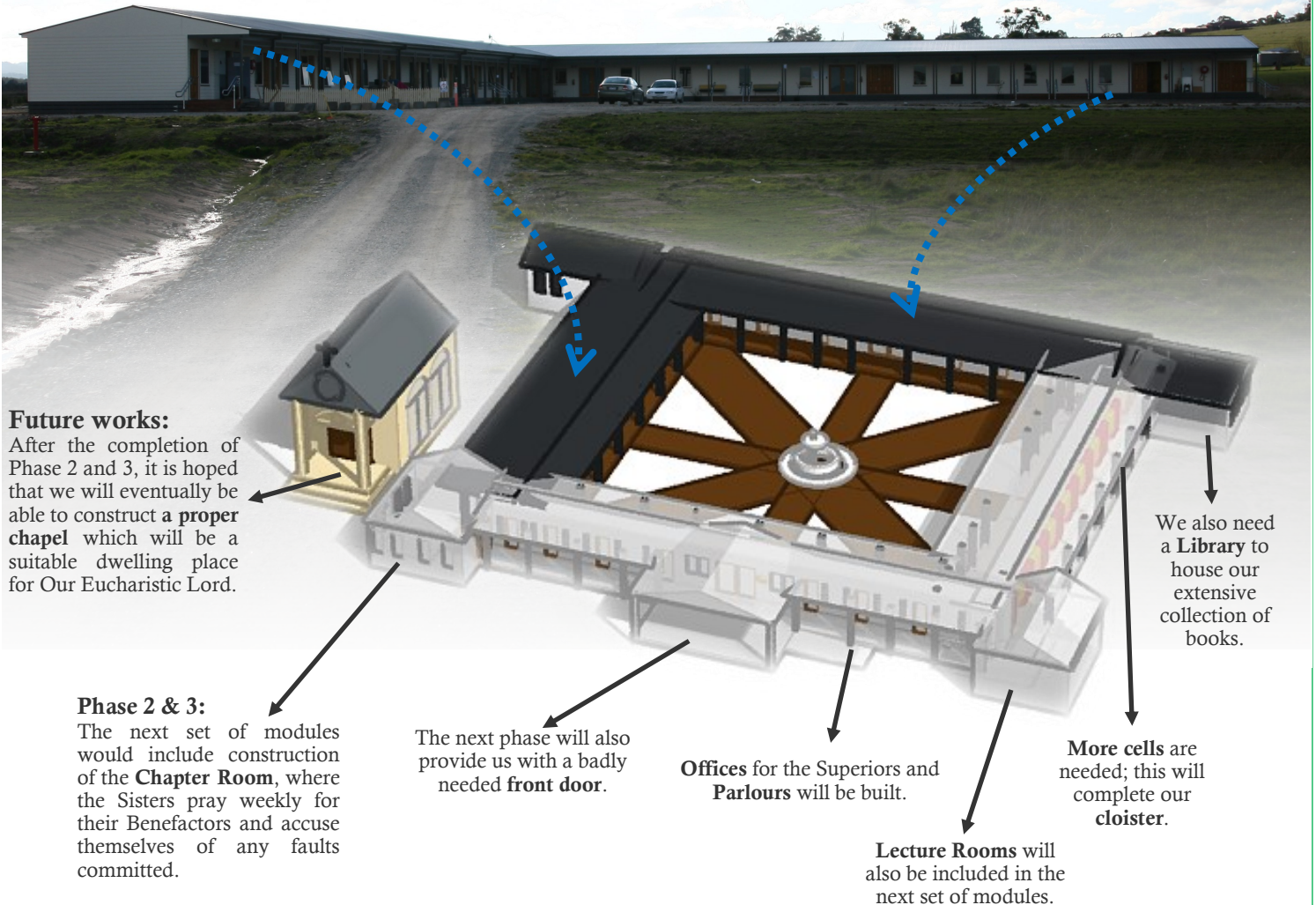
Through learning this alphabet of manners and minding their p's and q's, our hope is for our girls to follow in the Christ-Child's footsteps and continue to "advance in wisdom and age and grace with God and man" (Luke 2:52). With Our Blessed Mother as their guide, our girls put their newly acquired knowledge into practice by visiting a local rest home on the Feast of the Assumption and performing a selection of songs and dances for the inhabitants, and afterwards spending some quality time with them. This was a rare opportunity for the girls to engage with a generation of people who still remember an era when good manners were the norm and we hope that through this means we can restore, inculcate and encourage our girls to be the models of what a true lady should be.

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.



Please storm heaven for us:
The greater the delay, the greater the costs incurred!

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.

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*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