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The Southern Star

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Newsletter for the Dominican Sisters of Wanganui



"You will be rewarded according to the measure of your love,
not according to the work or the time spent."

St Catherine of Siena

LETTER FROM MOTHER Prioress GENERAL

Mother Mary Micaela O.P.

In the account of my life, and the foundation of the Congregation of the Dominican Sisters of Wanganui, which has been wandering through the pages of the Dominican Sisters' Newsletter, we have come to a turning-point. We had gained several lovely Sisters, and a real Convent to live in in Wanganui. From Wanganui, how did we come to make our first foundation, and that in Australia?

Well, round about 2010 we were getting many postulants, thank God. However, the priest in Wanganui began to fear that he could not support such a large Convent and he asked me if we could make a foundation elsewhere, perhaps Australia? He particularly felt that he could not support the Novitiate. I think in some ways the foundation was a loss to Wanganui as Novices grow up to be teaching nuns and teaching nuns teach according to the Faith and are cheap to keep, even after you have built a convent for them. However, seeing as we could not stay in Wanganui I asked our ever-helpful founding father, who was by now in Tynong, if he could take on a foundation of Dominican Sisters. He bravely said yes.

It was a major wrench deciding who was to go to Tynong. As the Novitiate was moving I had to go myself as Canon Law states that the major superior has to live where the Novitiate is. We also had to take a Novice-Mistress and all the novices. Fortunately, Father Delsorte, the Prior and Principal at Tynong, had found us a nice place to stay in a house near the Church, which was not only large but also had a habitable barn. Into this accommodation we therefore moved. Many of the Sisters had to sleep in the barn with

contrived partitions between their bed-spaces. As the partitions were not high enough the Sisters added to the height of the dividers by stapling cardboard onto the top. This led the then District Superior, Father Black, to tell Father Delsorte to "Get those Nuns out of that slum." I suppose the General Impression was of the back-streets of Manila or somewhere. Unfortunately, the Landlord's cat loved to climb the partitions from where she would jump down right on to the only non-cat-loving sister sleeping in the barn. She is an intelligent cat.

Eventually our community grew so much that we had to get in Ausbilt cabins which were transported to the spot on huge trucks and craned into place. Obviously, it was time for a new convent. Father Delsorte purchased land behind St Thomas Aquinas College in Tynong Road, and began to interview architects. Alas, the first one who seemed to be quite good at understanding what we wanted turned out plans which would have bankrupted the Federal Government.

And here, I must pause for reasons of space, until the next instalment of the Newsletter when I will explain how we got half our lovely Convent but badly need help, financial help, to complete it.

Mother Mary Micaela, O.P.

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ROSARY CONVENT

Tynong; Melbourne; AUSTRALIA

Inter-house Competitions

These have been busy months indeed at the Girls' School here in Tynong. After an all-school Mass in honour of Saint Thomas Aquinas, the Year 7 to 10 girls were in a state of feverish excitement as they waited impatiently for the inter-house debating competition to begin on the feast of the great prince of theologians. Wit, close attention and nerves of steel were the order of the day as the four houses verbally sparred each other on topics ranging from the fashion police to having shorter school hours. The best speaker went to Judith Beckenham of Year 9 for her clever rebuttal against pet ownership - a fitting close to a day enjoyed by all who took turns at the lectern to deliver their well-prepared arguments.

The girls took to the stage again on April 30th, the feast of Saint Catherine of Siena. The inaugural inter-house drama competition saw the world premiere of four original plays written by Sr Mary Anna, O.P., and unearthed a surprising slew of talent from the different teams who delivered their lines flawlessly to an appreciative audience.

Annual May Pilgrimage

For one special Sunday in May, the Sisters make their way to Hampton to take part in the annual May pilgrimage and procession. This year was no different, as we made our way on 20th May southeast of Melbourne again for the Mass of Pentecost followed by a public procession of the Blessed Sacrament and Our Lady. The cozy little church of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour and St Andrew was packed to the rafters, with the Sisters and seminarians from Holy Cross Seminary able to assist at the Solemn High Mass celebrated by Rev Fr Christopher Curtis alongside other faithful pilgrims who had come to honour Our Lady.



Sweet Treats for Our Lady

As the month of Our Lady arrived, the Children of Mary prepared for their annual fundraising cake stall following the May Pilgrimage. This involved planning, chopping, crushing, stirring, melting lots and lots of chocolate, baking and of course cleaning up after the delicious treats were cooled and packed. The Pilgrimage dawned grey and dreary, threatening rain; nevertheless the Children of Mary nobly braved the weather and processed throughout the streets of Hampton singing hymns in honour of Our Lady and Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. After the pilgrimage, the Children of Mary brought out all their hard work, and the generous patrons of both the Hampton and Tynong Parish graciously supported the girls through their benevolent donations. A spiritual bouquet from the Children of Mary will be offered for all benefactors throughout the month of June.



Ecce Sacerdos Magnus

Patrick Moran, First Bishop of Dunedin

Not much is known about the Most Reverend Patrick Moran, First Bishop of Dunedin, New Zealand, but he will be forever remembered in our own annals as a great and holy prelate who always “watched over the Sisters with a solicitude really paternal.” It was Bishop Moran who brought the first band of Dominican Sisters over from Sion Hill, Ireland, for his new diocese in Dunedin, New Zealand in 1871. On arrival, the Sisters had been promised a convent, however when this turned out to be nothing more than a shed which offered no protection from inclement weather, the good Bishop was mortified and immediately handed over the Priory to the Sisters until other arrangements could be made for them. He was always very generous and very selfless, and whenever the time came to make an appeal for the convent building fund “on the spot he set them (the faithful) the example by laying down all he had in the world.”

The Dominican annals allude to the fact that the Most Reverend Patrick Moran worked zealously for the establishment of schools and convents in his diocese. He was a courageous man of sound principle and openly opposed the secular system of education and forbade Catholic parents to send their children to government schools under pain of excommunication. In the words of the good Bishop, “the holiest and most important place on earth is the Catholic school-room, where the mind of youth is trained and knowledge imparted in accordance with the religion established by our Divine Redeemer.” Everywhere he went, he “begged for the establishment of Catholic schools. Although some Catholics were disturbed with the noise and commotion he was making, “the vast majority rallied to the support of their Bishop, rejoicing in the knowledge that they now had a leader who would fearlessly espouse their cause.”



The Sisters in their turn worked tirelessly despite the deplorable state of religion in New Zealand at that time and the many inconveniences and hardships that they faced. As a result, Catholic education flourished in New Zealand. Within four

days of their arrival they were already at

work in the classroom. In addition to

the usual primary and secondary

level subjects, the Sisters gave

lessons in music, singing, art,

painting, foreign languages

(French, Italian, German and

Spanish), needlework and

flower-arranging. The Sisters

worked hard to fundraise,

holding bazaars at regular

intervals to raise funds for

new convents, new schools

and new boarding schools.

With only a small amount of

money and with the tireless

help and support of the Bishop

and the generous faithful, the

Sisters soon had convents and

schools all over the South Island, in the

North Island and even sent a party to

Western Australia in 1899. All their hard work paid

off, for vocations flourished. It was said that great

alarm was caused in New Zealand by the continual

increase in the number of Sisters, so much so that

one particular paper warned readers lest “at the

present rate of increase, Protestants may by-and-by

wake up to discover that they are out-numbered by

the sworn subjects of the Pope” (NZ Tablet, 24 May

1878).

Alas, all that is gone now and in such a short space

of time after the Second Vatican Council. Many

Religious Orders are dying out and only a remnant

remains to carry on the work as before. However,

we must not despair and have confidence that in the

end our Lady’s Immaculate Heart will triumph. We

simply have to trust in Divine Providence, put our

hands to the plough as the Dominican Pioneer

Sisters did long ago, to build up and plant again.

*All quotations are taken from **Star in the South: the Centennial History of the New Zealand Dominican Sisters** by Sr Mary Augustine McCarthy, published in 1970.*

You Can Help Us

Give a once-off donation

Sponsor a convent cell or room

Donate grocery items or supermarket vouchers

Undertake fundraising projects for us

Sponsor an individual Sister

Give regular weekly or monthly donations

Sponsor the studies of a Sister

Make or donate items we can sell

Pray for us; have Masses said for our intentions

Give your life to God in the religious state

Join our fundraising committee

Join the Dominican Third Order and help us by your prayers and good works

Your generosity will help us rebuild Catholic Tradition by...

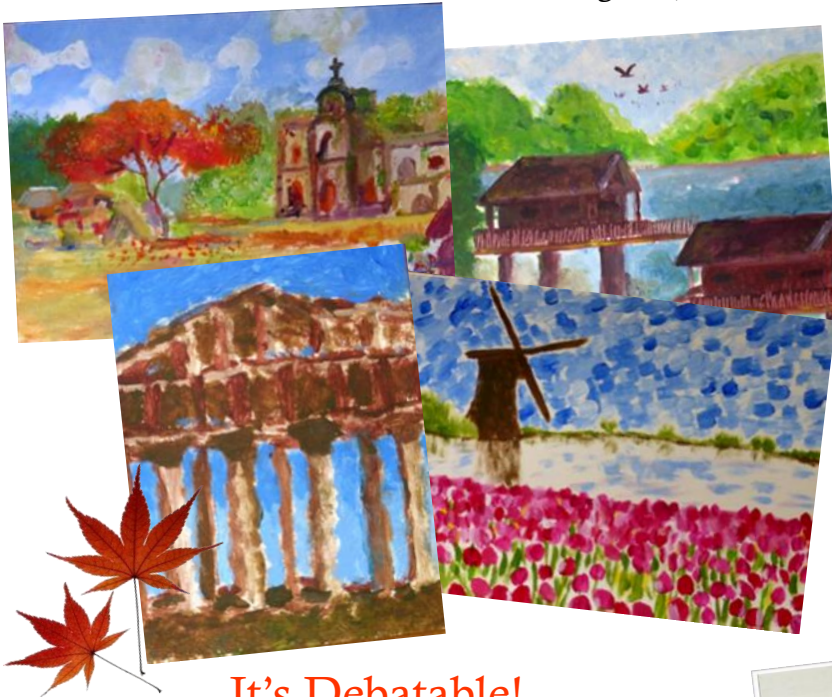
- completing our Motherhouse
- providing rooms for postulants
- building facilities for our Teachers' College
- nurturing a new generation of Religious Teaching Sisters for your children and your children's children

If you are able to help us in any way, please contact Mother General at (03) 5629 2167 or email sr.m.micaela@dominicansisters.net.nz

We promise a lifetime of prayers and are confident that God will reward you a hundredfold.

St Dominic's Convent

Wanganui; NEW ZEALAND



It's Debatable!

Which of our inter-house competitions challenges the mind the most? Well, it's debatable, but the traditional competition for the Feast of Saint Thomas Aquinas certainly calls for a great deal of brain-work before and during the event, and supplies food for thought for many weeks afterwards. The 2018 St. Dominic's Girls' College Inter-house Debating Competition explored a small portion of that nebulous concept 'Culture' by examining and dissecting such statements as "Culture is a virtue", "Women are more responsible than men for the transmission of culture" and "The Irish contributed more to the culture of New Zealand than the English did." Hot discussion and breath-taking eloquence were the order of the day, and not least of the attractions of the competition were the incisive and illuminating commentaries of our adjudicator, Father Michael Johnson. After the debates, the Junior students entertained the whole school with dramatized recitals of the epic poem *Beowulf*. Finally, three merry minstrels (students from each of our three houses) regaled a chortling audience with impromptu tales of daring and adventure. Which part of the day was most enjoyed? It's debatable.



St Anthony's Gala Fundraiser

St Anthony's Gala is one of our school's yearly fundraisers, launched to help with its needs and finances. This year, we had all of our usual stalls; there were also rides and opportunities to have a picture taken with famous movie characters from *Pirates of the Caribbean* and *Star Wars*. There were new attractions as well: the enjoyable log truck ride and live entertainment organized and performed by the Signadou boarders and St Dominic's pupils: dances, songs and instrumental items. Even our new Principal, Fr Laisney, contributed by playing his ever loved instrument - the recorder. It was a pleasant and gratifying day for our visitors and friends from within and without Whanganui as well as the St Anthony's parish. With everyone's devout and generous help, St. Anthony's gala raised about \$10k this year. May God reward the cheerful givers!



Why We Teach Latin, Music, and French

When Dominicans sing the *Veni Sancte Spiritus* at Pentecost, we have a small addition of our own. "Come, Holy Ghost, fill the hearts of thy faithful and enkindle in them the fire of thy love, *thou who through the diversity of many tongues hast gathered the nations into the unity of faith.*" It is a kind of Pentecostal 'felix culpa': a confession of the Divine Wisdom and Omnipotence that resolved the curse of Babel by the coming of the Holy Ghost, just as the sin of Adam was redeemed by the coming of the Son.

Since we do not all receive the gift of tongues at Confirmation, though, an important part of Catholic education is to familiarize the students with the twofold language of the Church, Latin and ecclesiastical Chant. Writing in the mid-19th century, Mother Frances Raphael Drane, O.P. was already lamenting:

Can there be any incongruity more grievous than to enter a Catholic school...and to find that, in spite of the time, method and money lavished on its support, its pupils are unable to understand and recite the Church offices, and are untrained to take part in Church psalmody? The language of the Church has... become a dead language to them, and it is from other, and far inferior, sources that they derive their religious instruction.

Holy Mother Church teaches her children through her liturgy, but unless they speak and understand her language, Catholics cannot receive the full benefit of this education. By teaching our pupils Latin and Sacred music, we open their eyes, ears and tongue to receive her teaching and join in her praises of God - their eyes, no longer needing to be glued to their missal, can drink in the meaning of the ceremonial while their ears take in the words, and their tongue can join in, with full understanding. This is the ideal, towards which, of course, we must work step by laborious step, gradually rebuilding the Christian culture in which laymen could sing the *Vexilla Regis* or the *Te Deum* - with clear understanding - at the drop of a hat. Though at the moment we are content if our graduating pupils can read the Latin side of their Missal for the Gospels (the Epistles are trickier!), we constantly strive to improve, hoping eventually for a more perfect achievement of what is really the first step of Catholic education, symbolised at Baptism by the 'Ephetha' - 'be thou opened.'

Now, a little codicil on French. We like our pupils to learn a modern language as well as the language of the Church, and there are many reasons that could be given for this. One is that the comparison between various languages enables students to see more clearly the way in which language itself works. This was traditionally accomplished through the study of Latin and Greek, of which Evelyn Waugh wrote:

I do not regret my superficial classical studies. I believe that...only by them can a boy fully understand that a sentence is a logical construction and that words have basic inalienable meanings, departure from which is either conscious metaphor or inexcusable vulgarity.

While we do not teach Greek, the relationships among Latin, French and English provide sufficient material for comparison and contrast, as well as study of the derivations of many English words from one or the other - or both! These comparisons can also help students understand something of the connection between a language and its speakers' habits of thought - why the Romans spoke of fearing 'lest' whereas we speak of fearing 'that'; why the French speak of something being missing 'to me' while we speak of missing the thing. And this in turn helps us to understand the culture and way of life of others, as does the ability to read their literature and history in the original language. For us, the choice of French is convenient in that French is the language of tradition in more ways than one - not only the language of Archbishop Lefebvre, of the SSPX, and of many traditional religious orders and congregations, but also of the first counter-revolutionaries, the first anti-liberal writers who had to contend with the children of the French Revolution.

As with the wounds of original sin, the wound of Babel is healed only gradually by grace. Through our teaching of Latin and Chant, the languages of the Church, and of French, the language of the Church's Eldest Daughter, we do our best to speed this process of healing, of which the coming of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost showed the final goal - the union of all nations in one Christendom.

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thesouthernstar@dominicansisters.net.nz

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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 #334 285

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

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