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The Southern Star

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Newsletter for the Dominican Sisters of Wanganui

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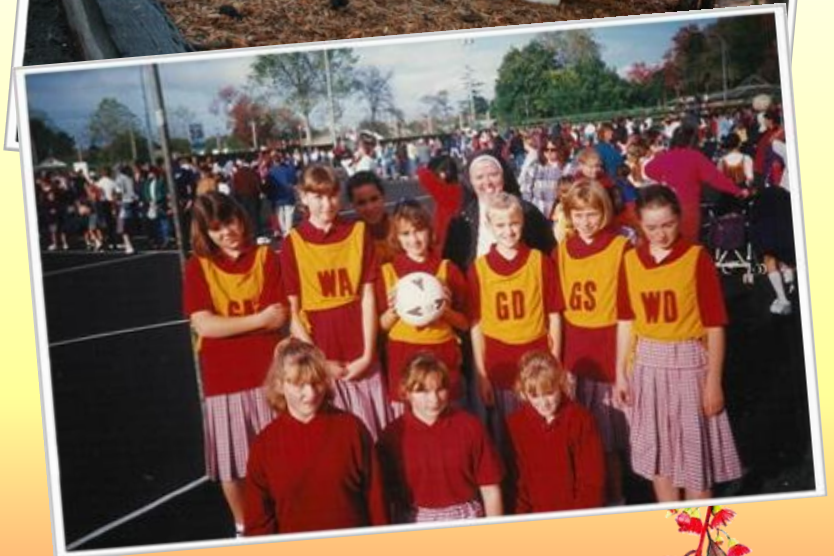
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"The religion of your Father Dominic
is very generous, very joyous, very fragrant;
it is a garden of delights."

The Dialogue of St Catherine of Siena



LETTER FROM MOTHER Prioress GENERAL

Mother Mary Madeleine O.P.

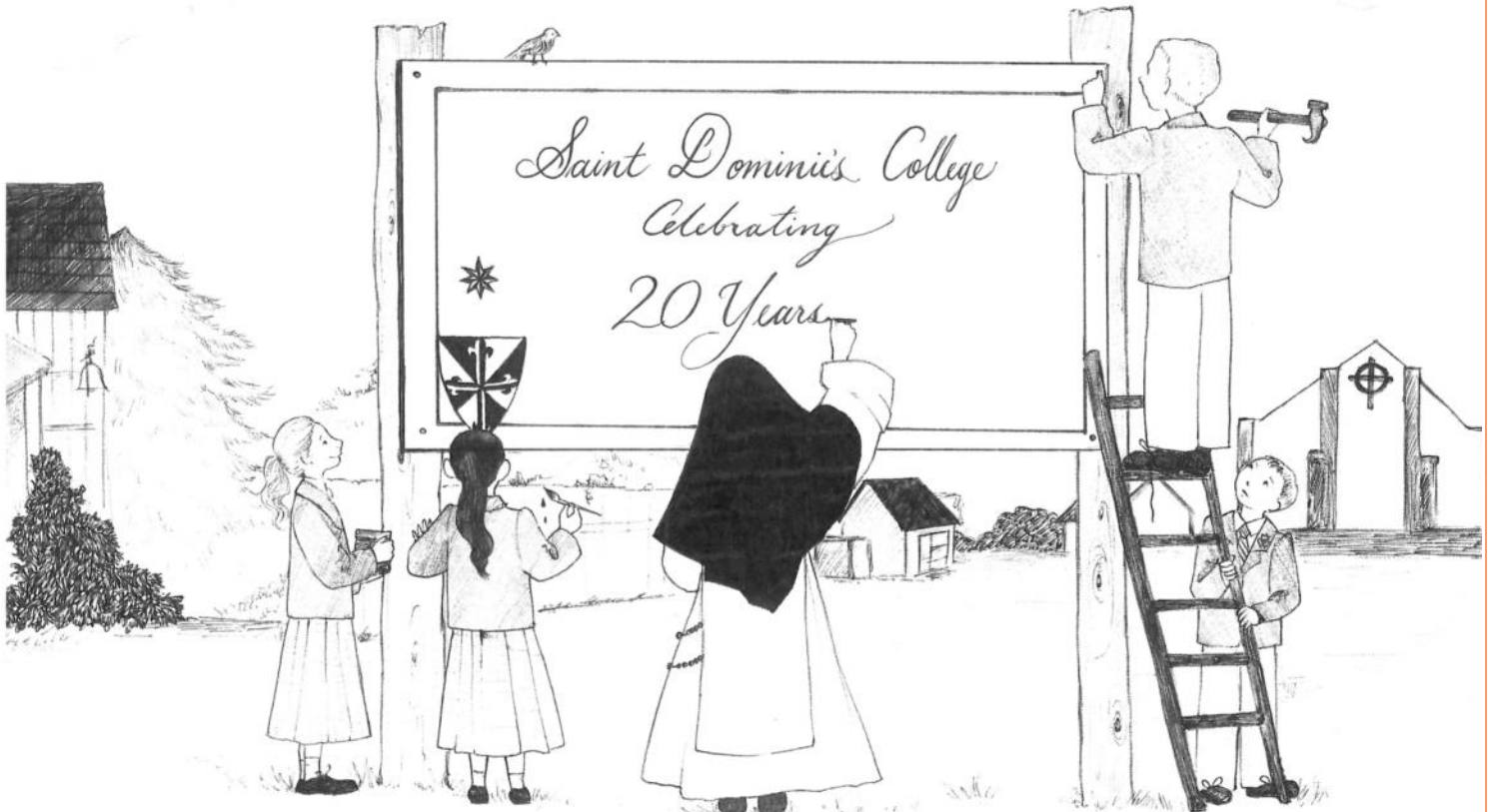
The year 2019 has made its mark in the history of our congregation. This year has seen the appointment of a new Mother Prioress General after the resignation of our foundress, Mother Mary Micaela, in office for the past sixteen years since the beginning of our congregation in December 2002. It also marks the 20th anniversary of St Dominic's College in Wanganui, likewise founded by Mother Mary Micaela with only eleven pupils back in 1999. Having begun with just three sisters, our congregation now numbers twenty-three, with sisters from New Zealand, Australia, Samoa, America, Argentina, Canada, the Philippines, Singapore, India and South Africa, and one pre-postulant. With a current roll of seventy-two pupils in our school, the growth is steady and the tree is bearing much fruit.

It was with such reflections upon the growth of our congregation and school that I was installed in Wanganui as Mother Prioress General by Mother Mary Micaela on April 30th, the feast of St Catherine of Siena. This date holds a special significance for our congregation, being under her patronage, and also coincided with the 15th anniversary of my first

profession. The day was full of important events, for Mother Mary Catherine simultaneously became the Mother Prioress of St Dominic's Convent and Head of the Girls' School. The occasion was celebrated with a Solemn High Mass, and a shared lunch with the pupils, who afterwards entertained us with performances on the life of St Dominic, in preparation for the final performances they will give on August 3rd, the celebration of the school's 20th anniversary, to which you are all invited.

Considering the many blessings that have been bestowed upon our congregation and school since their foundations, we are compelled to express our heartfelt gratitude towards our foundress Mother Mary Micaela, and to acknowledge her achievements. As her spiritual daughters, we will continue to benefit from her wisdom and knowledge, under the guidance of Our Holy Father St Dominic and our patroness St Catherine of Siena, who will doubtlessly continue to intercede for us as we launch into another phase of our congregation's history. To their prayers we humbly ask you to join your own.

Mother Mary Madeleine OP



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ROSARY CONVENT

Tynong; Melbourne; AUSTRALIA

Children of Mary Chronicle

The Children of Mary have been busy with a variety of activities over the last few months here in Tynong. March saw some brave and selfless souls clean Our Lady's pond atop the rose garden at the Church, while others (equally brave) ruthlessly pruned the rose bushes. On Holy Saturday, armed with damp rags, mops, brooms and Brasso, we helped make the Church beautiful and clean for our Risen Lord. May, a special month for all Children of Mary, saw us head out to Hampton with medals, capes and banner for the annual procession in honour of Our Blessed Mother. The bake sale, which was incorporated into the parish social function following the procession, was very successful, thanks to our talented cooks, packagers and saleswomen! Many thanks also to our patrons – the proceeds will be a big help in building up our growing spiritual library. Because spiritual reading, the food of the soul, is so important for the 21st-century Child of Mary, we launched our new monthly magazine, *The Memorare*, in June. It includes reading material on a variety of topics, including Spirituality, Apologetics, Meditation, Catholic Art, as well as some Lighter Fare, for we well know that 'God loveth a cheerful giver!'



Go Crusaders!

The Eucharistic Crusaders of Tynong had their second meeting of the year on 4th May. Excitement levels ran high as this was the day of the long-awaited Easter egg hunt! The meeting began with prayers and an uplifting talk from our Chaplain, after which everyone swung into vigorous games, a welcome activity as the weather was none too warm, and even threatened rain. Fervent prayers seemed to have had an effect on the clouds however, and we were able to have our hunt after the individual group talks. The Church grounds resembled a disturbed anthill as swarms of Crusaders armed with every conceivable shape and size of bags scoured every inch of ground for booty! After our hunt we returned to the hall for some singing, followed by a beautiful Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament which ended a most memorable meeting.

Life in the House of Studies

An integral part of our monastic observance, study is one of the ascetic and penitential practices of Dominican life. It comes as no surprise then that a large part of our day in the Convent is devoted to prayerful contemplation of God and His Truth, whether it be through a rich programme of studies in the Novitiate that encompasses the study of the Liturgy, the Summa of St Thomas, the Vows of Religion, English Literature, and Latin, or secular studies through various colleges and universities undertaken by the majority of the Sisters here in Tynong, as a means to furthering our knowledge in our various teaching disciplines. The Sisters also have a weekly conference on Catholic Philosophy and Religious Life. Whether one is a seasoned old veteran in the religious life or a green-around-the-ears novice, the Dominican life of preaching and teaching is carefully and fruitfully nourished by an assiduous and daily application to study of Sacred Doctrine and Holy Scripture. True to the maxim *contemplari et contemplata aliis tradere*, these considerations nurture a deep love for God and souls that overflows into our various apostolates.





The Dominican Lay, or Secular, Third Order

Both Saint Dominic and Saint Francis, responding to the needs of the 13th century, organized the “Militia of Jesus Christ.” This military-sounding name corresponded to a group of lay persons who defended the property of the Church from confiscation by unscrupulous thieves. As this state of affairs calmed down, the association took on a more spiritual purpose, allowing lay persons to adopt a way of life similar to that of the religious of the Order, while still living in the world, and without taking vows. Members of what is now called the Secular Third Order of Saint Dominic “strive to attain to Christian perfection” while living in the world and following the rules and observances approved by the Holy See. Pope Pius XI approved, in 1923, the Rule that our secular Brothers and Sisters follow today.

As with other Third Order groups, the spirit of the members is that of their holy Founder. The spirit of St. Dominic consists in the paradoxical characteristics of the saint himself; he was, all at once, a man of study, prayer, and action. The study of Catholic doctrine and the mysteries of the Faith nourish the life of prayer. Prayer and conversation with Christ urge us to do as He and His saints did: work tirelessly for the salvation of souls. The study, prayer, and good works of the Dominican Third Order have no other goal. According to the motto of the Order, “to contemplate, and to give to others the fruits of one’s contemplation,” the secular members of the Order strive to sanctify themselves and to bring others to the knowledge and love of the Truth. In addition to these main characteristics, the Third Order also shares the penitential spirit of the Order,

and the “graciousness of the word” so conspicuous in St. Dominic. His intense love for souls blossomed in a gentleness and genuine patience and charity towards all.

Third Order members, joining the liturgical spirit of the First and Second Orders (priests and cloistered religious), recite each day either the Ancient Office of Pater Noster’s, or the Little Office of the Blessed

Virgin Mary, or the fifteen mysteries of the Holy Rosary. If this is not possible, due to the obligations of one’s state and duties in life, other arrangements can be approved by the director.

Certain fasts and abstinences throughout the year, in honour of Dominican saints and feast days, regular confession, frequent Holy Communion, and devotion to Our Lady, St Dominic and St Catherine of Siena constitute the other means to work towards Christian perfection in the Dominican Third Order.

Members share in the works and merits of the entire Dominican Order, reap the advantages of fraternal charity in striving for perfection, and at the time of death benefit from the prayers of their Brothers and Sisters around the world. In addition, they have the privilege of being buried in the holy habit of the Dominican Third Order.

God the Father, in His revelations to St Catherine of Siena, described the religious Order of St Dominic as “a delightful garden, immense, joyful and fragrant.” This atmosphere, as well as the prayer of St. Dominic for his children to “have charity, guard humility, and possess voluntary poverty” sweeten the trials in this valley of tears for all those who don the Dominican



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St Dominic's Convent

Wanganui; NEW ZEALAND

Children of Mary

Our dear little sodality of the Children of Mary in Wanganui continues strong with twenty-one members, despite the departure of six of our international boarders, and a few of our school leavers for different horizons last year. Five members made their consecration on March 25th and six girls were received as aspirants before the parish procession in honour of Our Lady of Fatima on May 13th. The girls continue to be very active in the parish by regularly arranging the church flowers, cleaning the church and preparing for Easter by ironing the purple cloths for Passiontide, cleaning brass and setting up the altar of repose for Holy Thursday. Their obligations include fortnightly meetings, a Holy Hour of adoration on First Fridays, attendance at Mass on First Saturdays with the singing of polyphonic pieces, and attendance at Mass as a sodality on the First Sundays of the month. To raise funds for their different apostolic works the girls organised an Easter Games Day for the children of the parish, and a Mother's Day raffle in conjunction with a Masquerade Dinner which was enjoyed by all. In gratitude for all of the members' generous efforts, one of the councillors organised an outing with a pizza lunch and games on the feast of the Ascension. It is a real delight to watch the girls mature into responsible young women, earnest in their spiritual growth and eagerly organising and partaking in parish events while developing their skills needed for their future vocations in life.



Art Appreciation with St Dominic

It is said that the man who has made a mess of a hundredweight of modelling clay is far more likely to appreciate an artist's domination of the raw material of his craft than one who, with more modesty than courage, recoils from any effort of the sort. The girls from St Dominic's certainly showed much courage in getting their hands dirty during their visit to the Wanganui Art Gallery, where they modelled and decorated pinch-pots as part of an inter-house competition. Competitions this year are based on places of significance in the life of St Dominic (which correlates with the three Houses of the College), with the hope that the girls will become more familiar with the rich history and interesting stories of their patron that unfolded in these settings. The girls mentally prepared themselves for the competition by contemplating the landscape settings, flora and fauna, stories and symbols of their patron in order to decorate their pinch-pots. The decorative designs varied as much as the form and shape of the pots produced. We are sure that the opportunity to try their hand as "clay modellers" has enabled the girls to appreciate the labour and skill of the potter, as well as all the various forms of visual art in general.



St Thomas Aquinas Celebrations

"I cannot go to school today," said little Peggy Ann McKay. Those of us who recognize the first lines of the poem *Sick* by Shel Silverstein will recall the long litany of excuses that the child invented to escape the classroom. Happily, no such excuses were forthcoming from the girls of St Dominic's College on March 7th, the feast of St Thomas Aquinas. Rather, they attended school to participate in the Form 1 & 2 inter-house poetry recital competition judged by Miss Bridget Kimball, during which the above-mentioned poem was recited, while the Form 3 to 7 girls rose to the challenge of an impromptu debating competition between their houses. Fr Michael Johnson adjudicated the three debates on the topics of Catholics in the film and stage industry, the advantages of country living over city life, and the question of corporal punishment in schools – fortunately, like the tale of little Peggy Ann, the pupils weren't unduly influenced by the affirmative team's arguments in favour of the latter topic, and St Dominic's College has enjoyed consistent attendance from the girls ever since, without either plague of feigned illnesses or morbid fear of corporal punishment becoming legal!



20 Years of St Dominic's College

The first decade: 1999 - 2009

Mother Mary Micaela O.P.

St Dominic's College was founded in 1999 as a result of an idea from Fr Gentili combined with the theoretical base provided by Father de la Tour. Then Father Delsorte came along, and like the good rugby player he had been, picked up the ball and ran with it, right into the idea of making St Dominic's a Cambridge school, which was the best thing we ever did.

From here on I will have to give a personal account of what happened to the school, so the dreaded first-person pronoun of English autobiography will obtrude. However, I hasten to say that the work belonged to many people, and principally to God, Who arranged things most marvellously so that St Dominic's College became a highly successful school both religiously and academically.

In 1999 the secondary school started with six girls and five boys. Both the boys and the girls had an immense amount of humour in their temperaments, which was a great help. The girls had a classroom in the Primary School, the one nearest the path down to the field. Part of the room was partitioned off so that I could sleep there as well, with access to the staff bathroom and to a tiny kitchenette. The boys' classes were in the small chapel next to the Church. It was quite bright and had plenty of air when the doors were open but it was definitely dark and airless when the weather was bad. When the Education Review Office (ERO) came they criticised the "fenestration" of the room, i.e. few working windows and many of them covered up by parish library bookshelves.

In that first year, Mr Magnoli taught the boys everything except Latin and Catholic Doctrine, and he also taught the girls Music and Maths. My timetable worked the other way – I taught the girls everything except Music and Maths, including Catholic Doctrine. I also taught the boys Latin. They would argue with me that they should have more marks as they "only got the endings wrong." "Foolish boys!" I said, "The endings are the language!" The priests looked after the boys' Catholic Doctrine and came once a week to the girls' Catholic Doctrine class. We also had the very charming Mrs Howard Jones teaching the girls French.

The next year, we had to expand the number of rooms in the school, to accommodate the next classes that were coming up. There was just nowhere to put the boys, so two new classrooms were built between the Primary School and the Priory. The girls were put into the Tennis Club – after a spell in the little house where I was then living on Alma Road. Later, we expanded the girls' school to the Croquet Club. We got two classrooms out of that and we had all the tennis courts and the croquet lawn for Phys Ed and netball, so we were very happy down there in many ways. Eventually though, we were bursting at the seams and new classrooms for the girls were built up at the other end of the property, with cells above for the nuns.



A history of the school would be incomplete without mention of my great love, Netball, and the major role it played in the girls' school. During my second year in the primary school I began to teach the girls how to play netball and we began to play on Sundays down at Gonville School. Later, Fr de la Tour very kindly had the old netball court on the school property revived, with the help of asphalt from Colin Smith, and we were able to play there with all comers being put into teams, mothers and girls and young ladies of the parish. Finally, when we had a Third Form I decided to have a netball team in the local competition for secondary schools at the Peat Street courts. Mothers devised a netball uniform of suitable length for traditional standards and we entered the competition. In all modesty I can say that our initial appearance at the courts was a triumph. The officials expected that a school new to netball would not be very good, and they put us in a low grade for the Opening Day Tournament. I can only be truthful and say that our team carried all before them, winning their grade of the tournament. We were promptly regraded but not far enough as we still carried all before us, in spite of comments about our long uniforms and modest Bob Charles tops. In future years we continued to be successful and eventually had two teams. I seriously think, though, that the experience of playing and winning or very occasionally losing netball matches gave our girls a priceless experience of being the equal of any other school and released them from the inferiority complex which could have overtaken them in relation to bigger schools.

The experience of taking up the Cambridge International Examinations had a similar effect. When the National Certificate in Educational Achievement (NCEA) came in I suggested to Father Delsorte that he go to a meeting to be held at Auckland Grammar to discuss the introduction of the Cambridge International Examinations into New Zealand. Father went, was impressed, and the rest is history. Once again, as with netball, the Cambridge Examinations demonstrated that a small school like ours can compete with big schools and even do better. The wall with the "Top School" awards in the St Dominic's staffroom bears witness to the successes the school has had, not to mention the solid results achieved over the years.

I cannot finish without mentioning the role of the Dominican Sisters of Wanganui in the success of all this. The young Sisters who joined me in founding the Congregation also carried a heavy burden of study and teaching in their early years in the Congregation. They also had to share me with the school in a way which would be unthinkable now. The fact that they won through and that they are dedicated religious and teachers bears witness to their own faithfulness. The next generation in our Congregation was equally generous and good so that St Dominic's is an excellent school with a very happy staff and happy and successful students.



You are cordially invited to join us in celebrating the

*20th Anniversary of
Saint Dominic's College*

Saturday, 3rd August at 6.30pm

Wanganui Racecourse, 19A Purnell St

Entertainment and supper provided: \$5 per person or \$10 per family

Sunday, 4th August at 10.00am

Solemn High Mass of Thanksgiving at Saint Anthony's Church

Followed by a potluck luncheon: please bring a generous plate to share

RSVP by July 22, 2019

sdc_anniversary@sspx.org.nz

or (06) 344 2265

WE ARE TRUE MENDICANTS NOW.

With Rosary Convent now functioning uniquely as a Novitiate and House of Studies, the Sisters in Tynong, Australia, depend entirely on your goodwill and generosity to help us cover our day-to-day expenses while we continue to organise fundraising events for the completion of the construction of the Motherhouse.

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

We would like to thank 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.

*Please note
important
changes*

God bless you for your generosity.

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"
and sent to: Motherhouse and Novitiate, P.O. Box 50, Tynong, VIC 3813, Melbourne, Australia.
Please note that donations no longer qualify for a tax deductible receipt.

NEW ZEALAND

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