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The Southern Star

ISSUE #19

Newsletter for the Dominican Sisters of Wanganui

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"Very pleasing to God is the
willing desire to bear every pain and fatigue
even unto death, for the salvation of souls."

St Catherine of Siena



LETTER FROM MOTHER Prioress GENERAL

Mother Mary Madeleine O.P.

The feast of St Dominic this year was one like no other, with the 20th anniversary celebrations of St Dominic's College held over that weekend. There were about 250 guests present for the occasion, including some guests-of-honour from Australia: our foundress Mother Mary Micaela, a former principal, Fr Delsorte, and former teacher, Fr MacPherson, as well as ex-pupils, family and friends all gathered to celebrate this milestone in the history of our school.

The celebrations started on the eve of Saint Dominic's, August 3, with a trio of our current pupils performing musical pieces on the piano, violin and French horn. This was followed by our school song, "*Hail to Our Alma Mater*". Our current principal, Fr Laisney, gave the opening address and also read a brief message from Fr De La Tour, the first principal of the school, who was unable to be with us. In his own address, Father Laisney informed the audience of the projected growth of the school, having studied the baptismal register and calculated how many pupils should be enrolled in the next five years or so!

Our feature presentation followed: "*All the Queen's Men*", a play highlighting Our Lady's role in the foundation of the Dominican Order, which was scripted, cast, acted and produced by the six houses of the College. This performance, comprising six scenes in the life of St Dominic, also functioned as our school drama competition.

Between scenes, there were speeches given by Mother Micaela and Fr Delsorte, as well as photo presentations of the boys' and girls' schools over the past twenty years. The audience was also involved in a trivia game on the history of the college, and a leisurely thirty-minute interval was appreciated by all as being a chance to catch up with old colleagues, classmates and acquaintances.

The evening ended with the singing of the Dominican Litanies, renowned as being the most powerful prayer of our Order, in thanksgiving for Our Lady's help and protection over the past 20 years. The music had been composed by our German house-mother as a gift for the anniversary. Father MacPherson then announced the winning houses for the evening and gave the final blessing.

On the following day, the feast of St Dominic, a Solemn High Mass was celebrated followed by a parish luncheon at which we were glad to see so many past and present pupils, friends and benefactors. The Sisters are most grateful for the kindness and support shown to us at this historical moment in our congregation and we wish to assure all our benefactors of our daily prayers for their intentions.

During such festivities, one cannot help but reflect on the importance of education and our vocation as teaching Religious. Watching the pupils perform, seeing photos of the last twenty years and catching up with ex-pupils, one contemplates how uplifting it is to consider that after 20 years the school is still strongly standing, having made much progress, and that we still have the conviction, in spite of the hardships experienced and the small scale on which we work in our remote corner of the globe, that all the efforts of the congregation in this school have been, and will continue to be "worth it", as Fr Delsorte so graciously emphasised in his anniversary speech.

Mother Mary Madeleine OP

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ROSARY CONVENT

Tynong; Melbourne; AUSTRALIA

Hail Saint Dominic!

The Feast of our holy Father Saint Dominic was a special one indeed, with the reception of three new Novices in the Third Order. Brother Mary Joseph, Brother Vincent and Sister Jane of Aza were clothed with the Dominican scapular before the Mass of Saint Dominic offered by Fr Elias and sung by the Sisters. In his sermon, Fr Elias discoursed on Saint Dominic's quest for Truth in charity and highlighted the importance of penance and the practice of virtue in the Christian life. We certainly pray and hope that the new Novices may find in our holy Father Dominic's paternal solicitude the guidance and strength that we all need to profess the Truth in today's world – and to bring forth the sweet odour of Christ to all with whom they will hold converse!



Eucharistic Crusade

On the 18th of August we had the joy of seeing 71 children make their engagements in the Eucharistic Crusade. The national director of the Crusade, Father Campbell, made the journey from Sydney to officiate at the ceremony which took place during a Solemn High Mass. The assistant priests were Father du Chazaud and Father Mwangi, who are the director and assistant Chaplain of the Crusade in Tynong. The ceremony began with a prayer to the Holy Ghost and the singing of "Christus Vincit", after which a long line of children kneeling at the Communion rail promised to fulfil their obligations as pages and were clothed with a scapular and given a silver badge. As they returned to their pews, their badges were pinned on by waiting Sisters and helpers, while their place at the Communion rail was filled by older children who were to become Crusaders, Knights, and Handmaids. After Mass, Father Campbell, led the children in thanksgiving to God for the graces received and begged for the strength to fulfil their new obligations. May our children by God's grace remain faithful to their promises and become what they are intended to be: elite soldiers in God's army!



Team Challenge Day

And your time starts...now! On the Feast of the Visitation, the Children of Mary honed their feast-relevant virtue of fraternal charity with a Team Challenge Day. Following Mass and breakfast, teams of six had to pool their resourcefulness, problem-solving skills and creativity to complete three different tasks, each with a time limit of one hour: cook a two-course meal from given ingredients; set and decorate a table using only the cutlery, crockery and plain white paper provided (with a by-law introduced permitting the use of items from the Priory garden as well); and escape from a room by solving a series of clues and puzzles. After lunch, which involved consuming the two-course meal, teams had to complete ten group tasks as quickly as possible. Take home message of the day: never underestimate the ingenuity and good humour of a Child of Mary!



Observances

Dominicans make their vows according to the Rule of St Augustine and the Constitutions of the Order. However, the Customary sets out much of the detail of how we live the Rule and Constitutions. In this short article I will discuss three of the main customs (or observances) of Dominican Life, the Silence, the Chapter, and Precedence and I will leave other observances for a later article. Of course, observances are not the purpose of Dominican Life, but they are the hedges around the vows and virtues and around our duty to God and our neighbour within the community and beyond it. As we have seen since Vatican II, the whole fabric of Dominican life decays once the observances are ignored.

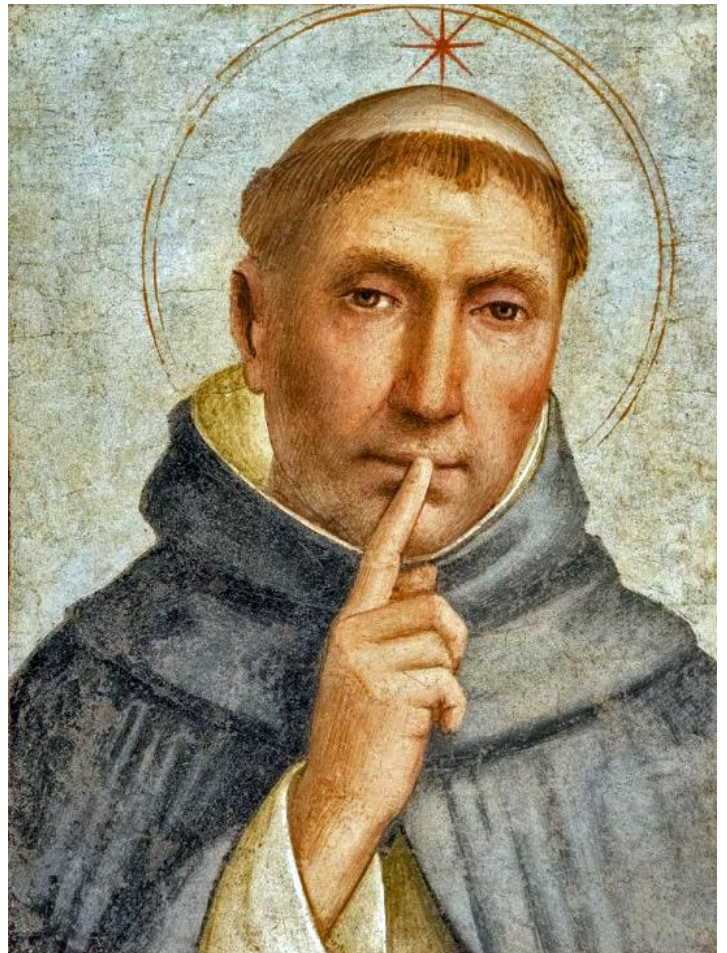
The Silence:

In my experience in a modern Congregation the Silence was one of the first things to go during the period of modernisation after Vatican II. All of a sudden, we no longer ate in silence, with reading, but talked at all meals and sat where we liked in the refectory rather than sitting in order of profession. This meant that the Holy Rule was no longer read once a week, as we are told in the Rule itself. This meant that we no longer heard the Rule's salutary instructions on the vows and the common life. We also missed out on the reading aloud of good books in the Refectory. As the Silence exists to give time for God and to provide an atmosphere conducive to prayer and study, the absence of silence impoverished religious life. It also emerged that some talkative Sisters dominated the table-conversation, which was trying to the rest of us.

As well as Silence at meals with table-reading, we traditional Dominicans also have the Great Silence overnight, from the time the Silence Bell rings about a quarter of an hour after Compline until after Mass the following morning. Thus the hours of the night are consecrated to God, and the Sisters' sleep is not disturbed by unseemly noise, for we not only do not speak at night but we move very quietly around the house and in our cells. One has to have a serious reason to break the Great Silence, something like illness or death!

During the day we have what is known as the Mitigated Silence. This means that from after Mass until Recreation time we do not normally speak. However, if we have to speak for a good reason we speak in a low tone and briefly and we preface our speech with the invocation, "Praised be Jesus". By saying these words before speaking we place what we are going to say under the eyes of Our Lord and we think well and soberly about what we are going to say and whether it is necessary.

Linked to the Silence is Recreation, the two half-hour periods of the day in which we gather to speak to each other. Just as the Silence is obligatory, so is Recreation. No-one may stay away from recreation or refuse to participate. At Recreation the Sisters may not do schoolwork or reading. Nor may they speak only to one other person. Silence is kept out of consideration for our own and others' recollection and prayer, and recreation requires active participation for the relaxation and recreation of all the other Sisters. The idea is that we recreate for the other Sisters' enjoyment and they recreate for ours so that the whole community is refreshed and helped by this period when the Silence is relaxed.



Chapter of Faults:

Another very important Observance of Dominican Life, which vanished after Vatican II, is the Chapter of Faults. This is held weekly and begins with prayers for Benefactors and the Church. The prayers are followed by an allocution by the Prioress on a spiritual topic of relevance to the community, plus any practical announcements she wishes to make. Then the Sisters accuse themselves of their faults against the Rule and



Constitutions (not sins!) and receive advice and a penance from the Prioress. The Chapter of Faults is not an easy exercise, but it keeps us up to the mark in the observance of the Rule and Constitutions. There is even an opportunity, seldom used but always available, for Sisters to remind each other of faults they may have forgotten. Chapter requires humility, honesty and courage, on the part of the Sisters and on the part of the Prioress, but it has an invigorating effect on Community Life and Observance.

Precedence:

Our Constitutions set out the order of Precedence in the Congregation. Thus we sit according to our date of profession in the Chapel and Refectory and observe precedence when we move around the Convent, for example in doorways. Generally, Seniors go first then Juniors but there is an endearing exception in that Juniors are served first in the refectory, before the Seniors. This custom is based on the time during St Dominic's life when there was no food in the House at St Sixtus in Rome, but St Dominic commanded the bell for dinner to be rung. When the Friars were assembled Angels came with beautiful loaves for the Brethren, whom they served beginning with the novices and finishing with St Dominic himself. From

that dates the custom of serving the juniors first in Dominican Refectories. The emphasis on precedence in the Order is a way of expressing Charity, keeping the Common Life orderly, and removing sources of irritation which might distract the sisters from their concentration on God and the things of God.

The pattern of Dominican Observance is an intricate network of customs which all have the same aim – to enable the Sisters to concentrate on God and the things of God. Pope John XXII said that a friar-preacher who kept his Rule perfectly deserved to be canonised straight away. We ask the prayers of our Spiritual Benefactors, that they will ask God to grant us the grace to keep our Observances and so safeguard the observance of the Rule, Constitutions, and of our Vows. In the lifetime of some of us we have seen the loss of the Observances of Religious life and the decline which followed it. We must guard our Observance as a precious treasure bequeathed to us by St Dominic himself.

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All the Queen's Men - Our Lady and the Foundations of the Dominican Order

The highlight of the 20th Anniversary celebrations was the play “*All the Queen's Men*,” written and performed by the six houses of the Boys’ and Girls’ Schools. The audience enjoyed the unfolding of the drama of Our Lady’s role in the Foundation of the Dominican Order. We give here a selection of photos from the evening, and congratulate our talented actors and actresses for their stellar performance before the 250-strong audience.



St Dominic's Convent

Wanganui; NEW ZEALAND

Feast of St Mary Magdalen

The feast of Saint Mary Magdalen, 22nd July, was far from an ordinary Monday for the girls of Saint Dominic's College! In honour of the Saint's final years and happy death in southern France, and to celebrate the feast day of our long-time French teacher and new Prioress General, the afternoon was planned as a French Fête. Preparations began early, and from 8:40 some of the junior girls were busy frying crêpes, dressing (tinned) snails in their (boxed) shells and garlic butter, and more. Others helped with decorating a classroom as a French café, and the Form 1-2s also had a music practice for the school Sung Mass which ended the morning. Then teachers and students alike enjoyed the feast, which included additional French treats provided by a kind mother and was followed by a St Mary Magdalen-themed jeopardy game and a craft activity. The girls had dressed in red, white, and blue, and by the end of the day, when prizes were awarded for the best outfits, we hope that their interior as well as their exterior had been affected, with a deeper knowledge of French culture and, more importantly, Saint Mary Magdalen's spirit of prayer and penance.

Netball - An Old Tradition

In the late 19th Century, Netball was introduced to Dominican schools in Dunedin by the Sisters who had established convents in New Zealand. They realised the role that true sport can play in forming a girl's character. Entered into with the right spirit, girls can learn to bear the hard knocks of life, to fight the uphill battle against adversity. They are also taught to admire and give credit to their opponents for any goodness or skill they show. Besides this, there is no better way to make us quick in thought and ready to take advantage of opportunities offered. As we congratulate our A-team for winning their division this year, we pray that all the girls who have represented the school in any of the three teams entered for the local competitions have benefitted from their participation in school sports.



2019 Bike-A-Thon

The sun came out to welcome our cyclists for the annual school fundraiser on Friday, August 30th, the Feast of the first canonised Saint of the New World, the Dominican Tertiary St Rose of Lima. After much hard work in finding sponsors to meet their quotas, the excited cyclists lined up to see just how many laps they would be able to make this year in order to help the school. They did not disappoint, with some girls reaching a 100 within the hour and many others (including Sisters!) getting close to triple figures. We are happy to report that there were no accidents and that we were able to raise more funds this year compared to last year's bike-a-thon. Many thanks to all our faithful sponsors – your contributions enable us to provide a truly Catholic education for the next generation!



20 Years of St Dominic's College

Growing Catholic Education: 2010 - 2019



Over the years we have managed to incorporate a house system into the college structure by dividing the girls into three teams named after the most renowned places in the life of St Dominic: Calaroga (yellow) where he was born, Prouille (blue) where the first convent was founded and Bologna (red) where he died. Each team has a captain and vice-captain from among the senior pupils and they are responsible for organising their team for the different inter-house competitions which are generally held on the major feasts throughout the year. This provides the girls with the opportunity to work together and gain points for their respective teams using their various talents. These activities provide a good balance between academics, creativity and sport, and help to foster good relationships and team skills among the girls. The house system also gives our senior pupils an opportunity to exercise responsibility and to develop their initiative and leadership skills. Competitions include our annual St Thomas Aquinas debating and speech competition, drama, dancing, sewing, music, arts and crafts, cooking, table decorating, tabloid sports and netball competitions. Since 2016 we have given a theme for the year and tied this in with our competitions. For example, in 2016, in honour of the 800th anniversary of the Dominican Order, we had arranged medieval-themed competitions.

In 2010 the College performed its debut school production: Dante's "Divine Comedy" and have continued to encourage the girls to develop their talents in this field by smaller-scale productions in the following years. In the last two years the girls have

even been challenged to write, cast and dramatize their own plays in which they have shown great flair. Recently they staged scenes of St Dominic's life according to the region that their team represents, to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the College.

2010 also marked the beginning of the Sisters' organisation of the girls' camps, which have allowed the girls to gain many skills from participating in different extra-curricular activities. The camps have often included adventures to distant locations in New Zealand, from as far north as Hokianga, to give reverence to the remains of Bishop Pompallier, to as far south as Nelson and Milford Sounds. Activities have included rafting, canoeing down the Wanganui River, jet boating, horse riding, archery, shooting, caving, unforgettable hikes, mini golf, go-karting, orienteering and sailing.

The beginning of the camping ventures was closely followed by the introduction of what has become our annual school fundraiser: the Bike-a-thon – a community project involving the efforts of all staff, pupils, families and the entire parish. Each pupil is expected to support the school through her efforts to raise a certain amount of money by asking people to sponsor her to ride for an hour around the local velodrome. Tension and excitement are high by the time the grand day rolls around, and pupils look anxiously to the sky, hoping that the weather will kindly permit their competition to out-do each other's prowess on the velodrome, while the staff pray for an accident-free day.

Another big fundraiser for the school is the annual gala, renowned for being the best in Wanganui because of its international food court and exciting games for the children. This year the gala took on a medieval theme which, since it proved to be very popular among the locals, will hopefully remain the standard theme for each successive gala.

The pupils also partake in their own fundraising activities to help fund their overseas trip to New Caledonia which is a part of their senior French curriculum, designed to immerse them in the French language and culture in order to bring to life a real appreciation of what is being studied in the classroom. An essential part of their activities during the trip is the singing of the Mass and participation in parish outings with the faithful there. Many wonderful memories have been gained from this experience.

The overseas experience provides exposure to a different culture, yet the College has also arranged opportunities for pupils to learn about different cultures in our own "backyard" through the

establishment of our boarding hostel in 2013. Since then we have welcomed boarders and young lady helpers from diverse places such as Australia, Germany, France, Switzerland, America, Canada, Korea, Japan, Singapore, the Philippines, Tahiti and Malaysia.

Although English is a second language for many of our boarders, the language-barrier is not always an obstacle to outstanding achievements: one of our Filipina pupils even made the national finals for the New Zealand inter-school spelling bee which we enter pupils in each year. This is further proof of the level of education that our pupils are receiving from attendance at St Dominic's College. The many acknowledgements of excellence which the pupils have received from Cambridge awards for Top of the World or Top of New Zealand to finalists in spelling bees and inter-school netball competitions, assures us that our girls, despite attending a very small school with limited resources, are receiving a very thorough and all round broad education, with the Faith at its core.





Thank You

for all your
support and prayers
these last twenty years.

We pray that God will bless
you and your families.




 The Dominican Sisters of Wanganui
 warmly invite you to a

Mass in the Dominican Rite

offered by
Reverend Father Thomas, O.P.
Monday, 6th January 2020, 10:00am
 and the ceremonies of

Final Profession
 Sister Mary Anna, O.P.
 Sister Mary Jordan, O.P.
 Sister Mary Bernard, O.P.



Renewal of Vows
 Sister Mary Diana, O.P.
First Profession
 Sister Maria Alapati

And thereafter to a lunch reception in the parish hall.
 Please bring a plate and come join us on this joyful occasion.
Corpus Christi Church, 15 Granite Lane, Tynong, Victoria 3813

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*

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

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:
Motherhouse and Novitiate, 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:
Motherhouse and Novitiate, 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:
Motherhouse and Novitiate, Attn: Loren Vaccarezza, 1590 Berryessa Road, San Jose, CA 95133
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