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The Southern Star

ISSUE #4

Newsletter for the Dominican Sisters of Wanganui

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*"I knew that to become a Saint one had to suffer much, always
aim at perfection and forget one's self."*

- St Thérèse of the Child Jesus -

LETTER FROM MOTHER prioress GENERAL

Mother Mary Micaela O.P.

Dear Ex-Pupils, Benefactors, Friends and Family,

We are looking forward to a very happy Christmas Holidays. We have the Holy Season of Advent to enjoy in the liturgy at the moment. That will be followed by the actual feast of Christmas with its beautiful liturgy for Christmas Eve including the sung Martyrology and sung Matins. We then go to the Midnight Mass and come home to a traditional midnight "Gaudeamus". A Gaudeamus is a talk and snack taken at midnight in this case. Dominicans speak in the refectory only three days a year, Christmas, Easter, and St Dominic's Day, so you could imagine that the conversation flows like wine. Presents are distributed. Each Sister gets a really interesting book which goes into the community library when it has been read. Much asking to have the book next and sneaky previews go on. Eventually all but the young and foolish retire to their cells. The young and foolish take advantage of the fact that there is no Grand Silence on Christmas night and they have profound conversations until morning.

Another interesting aspect of our Christmas Holidays will be our trip to the Seminary at Goulburn for the Ordinations. We will not only have fifteen Sisters travelling in two vehicles but a kind benefactor is flying up two other Sisters. Also three very kind Sisters are staying home to mind the dog, the house, and to do their schoolwork. With the fifteen Sisters are travelling two prospective postulants who will get a wonderful glimpse of the typical travelling Dominican. When I was a young nun Sister Mary Gertrude, O.P. told me that all her life from a schoolgirl she had observed that all Dominicans get

into a car to drive away but then get out again to say goodbye. Let's hope we don't leave Dominicans scattered over Victoria and New South Wales.

Of course, our whole holidays are leading to our Retreat and the Ceremony in which one Sister will make Final Profession, three Sisters will make First Profession, and four Postulants will receive the Holy Habit and their new names in religion. We always find the priests, altar-boys and choir of Corpus Christi Church very helpful in arranging our ceremonies and the Sacred Heart League of this parish provide a finger-food lunch after the ceremony. People are coming from as far away as Colorado! - I should say not for the finger-food lunch so much as for the Ceremony.

We will have two Retreats, one in Wanganui, New Zealand, and one in Tynong. We are looking forward to words of wisdom and prayerful encouragement.

This is going to be a crowded convent for another reason, too. We have a new Postulant coming in January and five other young ladies coming for visits at various times over the holidays. We will fit them in! The Postulant who is coming in January gave a speech, as last year's Dux, at the Prizegiving at St Thomas Aquinas College and, at the end of her speech, asked the audience's prayers for herself as she would be "trying her vocation and the Sisters' patience" in January. We certainly need postulants with a sense of humour.

Mother Mary Micaela, O.P.

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astarinthesouth@gmail.com

If wish to subscribe by post please send your request to:
The Southern Star, P.O Box 50, Tynong, VIC, Melbourne, Australia



The Tulip Garden

With free tickets to a privately-owned Tulip Garden at our disposal, we decided to take the opportunity to go on a community trip and get some ideas for our future convent garden. Upon our arrival we were entranced by rows upon rows of beautiful tulips as far as the eye could see; tulips of every shade, size and colour. We spent a pleasant afternoon walking in and among the tulips and admiring nature at its best.

A New *Domini-canes* Arrival

Towards the end of November, Sister Agnes, a Third-Order Dominican Tertiary, dropped by the convent one afternoon to place in our care one of her little ones - a beautiful 8-week-old purebred Labrador puppy. Her soft golden coat immediately reminded us of St Catherine who had golden hair, so we named her Siena. Since her arrival, she has been a delight and consolation amidst the many trials and tribulations at the moment connected with the building of our Motherhouse.

ROSARY CONVENT

Tynong; Melbourne; AUSTRALIA

Mother General's Feast Day

September is always a month of smiles; the weather begins to warm up, flowers bud forth, birds start their singing, and creative thoughts are set in motion in preparation for the Feast of our dear Mother General. This year, in addition to a grand dinner, a witty play involving characters from Snow White and Sleeping Beauty was performed. In this version, the heroines have odd ideas about femininity, while their narcissistic male counterparts have strange ideas about male domination. In the end "Snow" and Aurora learn the true meaning of femininity, while Prince Charming and his companion learn what real manhood is all about.

Devotion to the Rosary

During October, the month dedicated to the Holy Rosary, the Sisters, ever mindful of the request of Our Lady of Fatima to pray the rosary every day, promoted the daily recitation of the Holy Rosary wherever and whenever they could and honoured Our Lady with many Rosary Processions, a pious spiritual exercise dear to every Dominican.



Feast of Christ the King



October again, and consequently preparations for the Feast of Christ the King are here. This year we decided to shoot for bigger and better; more sawdust designs, more flowers, more activities for the children and a Parish get-together.

Preparations were begun weeks in advance with a new play area installed at the back of the church for the children and considerable maintenance work around the Church. The preceding Friday saw the Sisters dyeing sawdust and chalking out images which would serve as carpets for the procession, as well as figuring out how best to arrange the flowers for the altar, hanging the altar backdrop and securing candles, linens, and other materials necessary for the day. Friday evening also welcomed the entire Holy Cross Seminary who had travelled 8 hours in a convoy of cars to reach Tynong and celebrate this great feast with us.

Saturday was very busy, with many generous souls, including the seminarians offering their assistance at the church in preparing it inside and out for the following day. Meanwhile a band of very merry secondary girls joined the Sisters at the convent bringing with them their artistic talents and creative ideas. The plan was originally for the girls to come for a few hours in the morning. However, it eventually stretched from 9:30am till 3pm, which was very generous considering they all had exams the following Monday. Nevertheless, thanks to their help, we were able to accomplish a considerable amount and the close of the day saw three very large beautiful designs, numerous flower arrangements and a beautifully adorned altar humbly waiting to welcome the King of Heaven and earth.

Sunday broke with clear skies and a bright sun. Magnificent gold vestments clothed the new seminary rector Fr Themann, Deacon Reverend Marcel Ockerse, and new Sub-Deacon Reverend Nicholas Stamos. Incredible flower arrangements adorned the High altar and aromatic incense filled the sanctuary as hundreds of voices were raised in joyful adoration, "*Gloria in Excelsis Deo.*" A procession following the Solemn High Mass wound its way down the road to the convent over the beautiful brightly-coloured carpets and to the altar, brightly lit and adorned with flowers. The Blessed Sacrament was then carried back to the church where Benediction brought a close to the morning. Immediately following was a meal cooked by each family tying in with their ethnic background. A large variety of food from various countries was on offer. The afternoon was filled with soccer matches and tug-of-war games between seminarians and Tynong boys, as well as a game of "French and English" for the girls.

Due to the heat a prodigious load of water balloons appeared in the hands of many little ones and more than a few went home happy but wet. A lovely large tent had been set up, provided with chairs and tables which served as an agreeable area for the adults to share conversations and avoid the burning sun. Finally, with the sun beginning its downward descent, the day was fittingly concluded with Solemn Vespers and the most holy Rosary.

We look forward to what next year will bring! However in the meantime we live to make Christ reign as King of our lives, not simply for one day but continuously, every moment of every day.

St Dominic's Convent

Wanganui; NEW ZEALAND

Feast of the Holy Rosary

At St Dominic's College, we celebrated the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary with a Rosary procession around the grounds followed by a shared lunch and entertainment. The Form 3 and 4 English class gave a rousing rendition of GK Chesterton's *Lepanto* in chorus, while the Form 5 and 6 Latin class entertained their fellow-pupils with *Suscitatio Lazari*, a medieval Latin play on the Raising of Lazarus.



2015 Bike-a-thon Prizegiving

The 2015 Bike-a-thon was a grand success, as its predecessors had been. Of the three schools participating, Saint Dominic's Girls College raised the most money, but Saint Augustine's and Saint Anthony's were not far behind, as practically every pupil reached their quota, if one may judge from the number of doughnuts awarded at the prize-giving. The entire Primary school doubled their quota, thus meriting a Mega Class Trip, while most of the pupils from Saint Augustine's and Saint Dominic's were excited to be awarded a class trip too. We believe the boys went somewhere exciting for their class trip, but the Form 1 and 2 girls are sure that their trip to Lazertag will take some beating on the excitement scale. The Form 6 and 7 girls didn't need to travel too far to attend Handel's *Messiah*, as the performance was right here in Wanganui, but the music was dubbed exquisite, transporting one out of the here and now and into the grand drama of our Redemption.



Eucharistic Crusade

The little Crusaders had a Crusader Day on the 10th of October. On that day they were with us from morning till evening, with special prayers, activities and games. In the afternoon they went to Bason Reserve for more games. Then, on 22nd October, fifteen of them made their promotions wearing their new uniforms. They processed in their uniforms on the Feast of Christ the King, which made the day a spectacular and memorable one for them.





Why do you do what you do?

People often ask what our educational ideal is, or more simply put, *why do we do what we do?*

Unlike secular educators who need to develop and update their educational framework on a regular basis, we as Religious are fortunate to be guided by our Rule and Constitutions which is our foundation stone and compass that directs all our actions and ensures unity among our Dominican schools.

#202 of our Constitutions states that “*The official work of the Congregation of the Dominican Sisters of Wanganui is to maintain and teach schools for girls of all grades, both for boarders and day scholars; as well as Teachers’ Colleges, Hostels, and other institutions for the promotion of education and instruction, according to the law and mind of the Holy Catholic Church.*”

Our domain of work is thus clearly set out and we therefore insist on separate education for boys and girls from intermediate level and do not assign Sisters to teach classes in the Boys’ Secondary School.

Later points of the Constitutions further develop what is meant by the *mind of the Church*. #211 of the Constitutions makes it clear that “while religious and secular education can, theoretically, be separated, in practice it is not possible; and that *neutral education is a fiction*,” and stress the importance of the “preservation of the *Catholic atmosphere*,” and the “norms of Faith in every domain of their activity.”

We therefore place importance on the formation of Sisters and staff to not only be familiar with Papal

Encyclicals and directives on education but to be vigilant in the application of these in their planning and teaching by integrating faith and reason throughout the curriculum. There is no academic subject that is taught divorced from the teachings of the faith or split off from the mind of the Church. Teacher observations and periodic review of our syllabus and subject content across the school help to ensure the Catholic viewpoint is prevalent in all subjects taught.

The Catholic atmosphere is further inculcated by uniform standards for classrooms which reflect order and devotion with a Crucifix and statues of our Lady and Patron Saints in prominent places. Teachers and pupils unite to start and end the school day and all consequent classes with prayer. Weekly School Mass, and days of recollection, processions or celebrations are kept according to the Liturgical calendar. The Feast days of eminent Dominican Saints are chosen for inter-house competitions to increase knowledge and devotion to our spiritual family. We lay stress on good manners in and outside of the classroom; which represent faith and, in a sense, duty to God rather than to one's neighbour and helps to maintain a true Catholic atmosphere.

Apart from binding us to deliver a true Catholic education, our constitutions also state in #204 that we should direct our work “in school towards producing an educational result of characteristic Dominican quality.” In the upcoming Summer edition we hope to develop and share some of our specific Dominican ideals with you.

OP MOTHERHOUSE BUILDING PROJECT PLEASE STORM HEAVEN FOR US

You can help us
turn this...



... into our new home by
the girls' school!

NO PROGRESS WAS MADE DURING WINTER

BUT! On the 22nd of December, Feast of the Patronage of the Blessed Virgin Mary over the Dominican Order, Fr Fullerton signed the contract for one-third ($\frac{1}{3}$) of the Project. Building will commence on 25th January 2016, and we hope to move in by July 2016.

OUR MOST URGENT NEED IS:

Funds, Funds and more Funds!

Do help us so we can complete the *entire* project!

Motherhouse of the Dominican Sisters of Wanganui

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The Dominican Sisters of Wanganui

warmly invite you to a

Solemn High Mass

on

Tuesday, 19th January 2016

9.00 a.m.

and the ceremonies of

Final Profession

Sister Marie-Dominique, O.P.

First Profession

Sister Mary Amata

Sister Mary Imelda

Sister Mary of Compassion

Reception of the Holy Habit

Miss Monica Gleason

Miss Sarah Dewey

Miss Catherine Ryan

Miss Kathleen McManus

Corpus Christi Church, 15 Granite Lane, Tynong, Victoria 3813

There will be a lunch reception in the parish hall after the Mass and ceremonies.
Please bring a plate and come join us on this joyful occasion.

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, 1590 Berryessa Road, San Jose, CA 95133

Please note new
address for
donations via the
United States