

Spring 2024

The Southern Star

ISSUE #36

Newsletter for the Dominican Sisters of Wanganui



Dominican and Franciscan friars singing at lecterns, conducted by Christ.

Ecce quam bonum et quam jucundum, habitare fratres in unum!
Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell in unity.

- Psalm 132

LETTER FROM MOTHER PRIORESS

In the Dialogue of St Catherine of Siena, the Heavenly Father tells her that St Dominic's order "is a delightful garden, broad and joyous and fragrant...it still possesses every delight, but in the beginning its subjects were not as they are now, but blooming flowers, and men of great perfection: each scented to be another Saint Paul, their eyes so illuminated that the darkness of error was dissipated by their glance." Though our own times, like St Catherine's, have seen a crisis in which some members "have turned it into a desert and defiled it with their scanty virtue and light of science," it remains true that "it still possesses every delight"; as our Mother Foundress likes to say, "the Dominican package works", and you have only to live it to enjoy the beauty of the Dominican garden.

This spring season saw many buds and blossoms coming forth in our corner of this garden. On the feast of St Michael, we organised a gathering for the mothers of our older pupils to give them the opportunity to receive input from an experienced priest, as well as sharing insights with one another, about explaining motherhood and the secrets of life to their daughters. This event allowed us to see both buds and blossoms as more experienced mothers shared with younger ones their experiences with their own daughters. The month of October was indeed a month of roses with the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary soon followed by the parish's annual pilgrimage to the statue of Our Lady of Lourdes at Paraparaumu. The Eucharistic Crusaders also had their reception and promotion ceremony, and now number fifty-eight, beautifying God's garden with the scent of their "prayer, communion, sacrifice, apostolate". Our school apostolate has also been growing, with our largest-ever graduating class of eleven pupils completing Form 7 this year. To celebrate this milestone with them, the Form 6 class helped to organise a lovely dinner in the hockey pavilion for the graduates, their parents, teachers and the Sisters on the Feast of the Miraculous Medal. Our school year ended with Camp Mater Admirabilis for the pupils and some

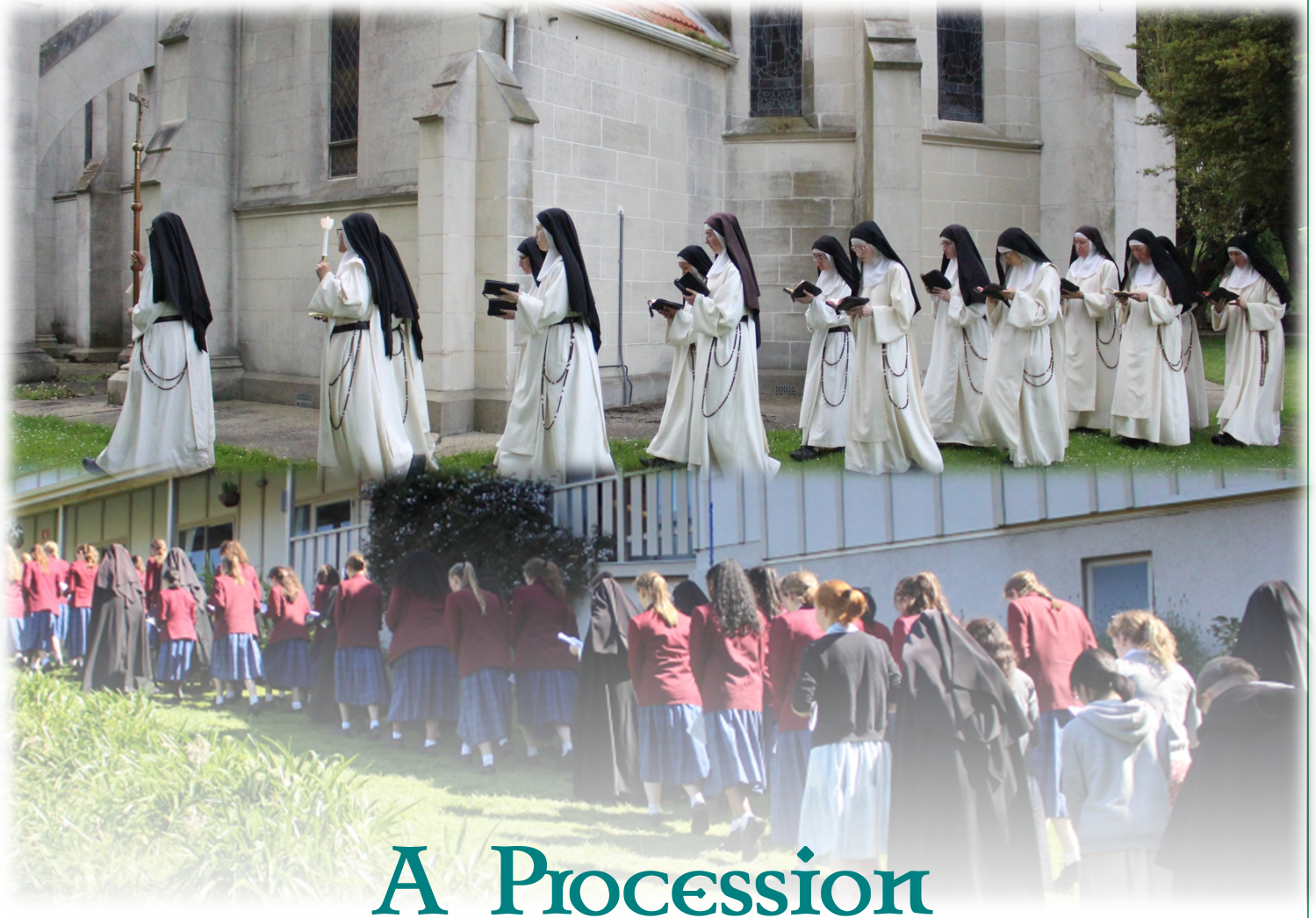
of next year's future pupils, a promise of continued growth for our garden in the coming seasons.

Another sign of growth is that in November, our builders began clearing the ground in our front garden, where our future chapel will, God willing, soon begin to grow (photos on back page).

We have also had the joy of seeing the growth and flourishing of other gardens this spring—those of St Francis and Archbishop Lefebvre. At the beginning of September, we received a visit from two Franciscan friars from France, one of whom was newly-ordained and gave his first blessings as well as saying a first Mass in both the parish and our convent chapel. His companion, the first recruit for the Traditional Capuchins many years ago, shared some of his experiences with us as well. This first contact with Franciscan friars, the children of our second Father, St Francis, was a very great joy for the Sisters, and we hope it will not be the last. Also in September, some of the Sisters attended the golden jubilee celebrations of the Sisters of the Society of St Pius X in Sydney, which gave them the unexpected opportunity to also celebrate the golden jubilee of the birth of one of Wanganui's former priors, Fr Cranshaw! Our Sisters particularly enjoyed seeing a photo presentation which showed the consistency of the SSPX Sisters' apostolate and its fruits in their many houses around the world.

Please pray that the gardens planted by these three great founders—St Dominic, St Francis, and Archbishop Lefebvre (and of course, also St Benedict - who has given us one of his monks as a chaplain to assist us in our daily spiritual growth) - may continue to flourish, following their teaching and example. May the beautiful variety within and between these gardens continue to give God the glory of which He spoke to Saint Catherine, saying that a holy man "rejoices more in the different ways of holiness which he sees, than if he were to see all travelling by one road, because, in this way, he perceives the greatness of My Goodness become more manifest, and thus, rejoicing, draws from all the fragrance of the rose."

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A Procession

Processions, as a form of religious worship, are common in the Catholic Church throughout history. These include various types: extra-ordinary, such as to ask for rain, or ordinary, such as the procession on Palm Sunday or of the Blessed Sacrament on the feast of Corpus Christi. There are also 'informal' processions, such as are held on feasts of our Lady as we do with the school girls for the Feast of the Queen of the Holy Rosary. The Order of Saint Dominic has several processions of its own which have characterized it for hundreds of years, fostering the special devotions of the Friars Preachers—such as the Salve, the Rosary, the Holy Name, the Blessed Sacrament and the Libera—processions which are daily, weekly, monthly or yearly held within the Order. The sisters even have the privilege on Christmas Eve, after having sung Matins just before the Midnight Mass, to lead the figure of the Child Jesus through the cloister to the manger, singing the *Te Deum* in a candlelight procession. Space

denies the description of each of the processions here, so two have been selected: the Salve Procession, held daily, and the Rosary Procession, held monthly. Father Ceslaus McEniry, O. P. wrote regarding these:

The "Salve Regina," or "Hail Holy Queen," is sung every day after Compline, the brethren going in procession from the choir to the church. This laudable custom of singing the "Salve" was first begun by Blessed Jordan of Saxony, the second saintly Master General of the Order. In 1223 a diabolical persecution was raging throughout Saxony. It was then that Blessed Jordan commanded that the "Salve," which had hitherto been only recited daily after Compline, should henceforth be sung processionally. The effect of this ordinance was the immediate disappearance of those diabolical spirits which had eaten their way into the very hearts of the people. "This affliction," says Blessed Jordan in his life of Blessed Dominic, "was the reason we established the custom of singing



the anthem, 'Salve Regina,' after Compline. We did this first at Bologna; then the pious and salutary custom spread over the whole province of Lombardy, and finally prevailed over our whole Order. How many tears of devotion has not this praise of the Mother of God called forth! How often has it touched the hearts of those singing and of those hearing it, softened and inspired them with fervent piety! Can we fail to believe that the Mother of Our Saviour is pleased and touched with the honour thus shown her? A most trustworthy religious has assured me that he has often beheld in spirit, the Mother of God throwing herself at the feet of her Son, praying for the preservation of the whole Order, while the brethren were singing the words, 'Eja ergo advocata nostra,' that is, 'Turn, then, our advocate.'"

Here the entire community kneel until the words "O clemens, O pia, O dulcis Virgo Maria!" Then a short versicle is sung, with a response, invoking the intercession of the Heavenly Queen, after which the priest adds the following petition: "Concede nos famulos tuos"- "Grant, we beseech thee, O Lord God, that we thy servants may enjoy continual health of mind and body; and that through the glorious intercession of Blessed Mary, ever Virgin, we may be delivered from present sorrow and hereafter enjoy everlasting happiness." After the "Salve," the procession returns to the choir, the brethren singing in honour of Saint Dominic the beautiful anthem, "O Lumen Ecclesiae"...

Besides this daily procession, which has been held for seven {now eight} centuries in honour of the Blessed Virgin, we have also the Rosary procession on the first Sunday of the month—a procession which should be of special interest to the Christian world. On October 7, 1571, during

the reign of the Dominican Pope Pius V, was won the crowning victory of Lepanto, "the most decisive battle of the world", gained by the direct help of Mary. And it was to commemorate this great event that Pope Clement VIII ordered that a procession to be made on the first Sunday of the month in honour of "Our Lady of Victory."

...But perhaps a non-Catholic might be led to inquire into the meaning of those ecclesiastical ceremonies. "What," he may ask, "is the reason for so many magnificent processions, for so many gorgeous vestments, so many lighted candles, so many flowers, so many prostrations and genuflections, and why so many hymns of praise?" Why? Because it is only natural for man to give outward expression to his inward religious feelings... How...magnificent should be the public honour shown to our Supreme Ruler, the eternal King, Jesus Christ! Moreover, this external manifestation of divine worship was religiously and publicly observed when Our Saviour "was seen upon earth and conversed with men" (Bar. III, 38). Did not a choir of angels sing over the cave at Bethlehem? Did not the shepherds come in procession to the crib? Did not the Wise Men bring to the Infant Saviour their offerings of gold, frankincense and myrrh? And in the very streets of Jerusalem a procession was formed of which Our Lord is the central figure. At His triumphal entry into that city, garments were strewn upon the way, palm branches were waved, and as the Saviour passed, men, women and children joyfully sang: "Hosanna to the Son of David!" Again, we see the last solemn procession slowly winding its way up the rugged hill of Calvary—and leading that procession is the Son of the Living God, "The King of ages, the invisible, the immortal, the only God, to whom be honour and glory forever and ever" (Tim. I, 17).

- Excerpts taken from: *Dominican Processions*, Ceslaus McEniry, O.P., *Dominicana Journal*, Vol II, No. 2, 1917

Spring: News from St Dominic's Convent

A Capuchin Visit & the Transitus

In the month of September, the Sisters and the parish of St. Anthony's received for the first time the exciting visit of two Capuchin friars, Father Angelo-Mary and Father Jean-Joseph, O.F.M.Cap. Father Angelo-Mary received his Priestly ordination on 27th of June 2024, the Sisters therefore had the great privilege and consolation of assisting at his first Mass and receiving his first blessing. The two friars made good use of their brief visit by giving inspiring presentations to the Wanganui parish and schools on the life and spirit of their holy founder as well as sharing their edifying Convent life in Morgon, France. Although their visit was short, doubtless, these two friars have given food for thought to their listeners of the importance of penance and poverty.

Not long after the sad departure of the Capuchin Fathers from our midst, we celebrated on October 4th the joyful departure of the Holy Founder himself, St. Francis of Assisi, with his children of the Third Order of Penance. The festivities began with Vespers, and the Transitus ceremony, and ended with a light supper. In the Transitus ceremony the children of St. Francis gather in front of the altar of St. Francis (or the main altar), upon which the relic of St. Francis is exposed on the Gospel side; antiphons, psalms and hymns which commemorate the departure (Latin - Transitus) of St. Francis from this world to his heavenly home are sung. Then all who are present kiss in veneration the relic of St. Francis and the ceremony ends with the members of the Franciscan Order renewing their Profession.

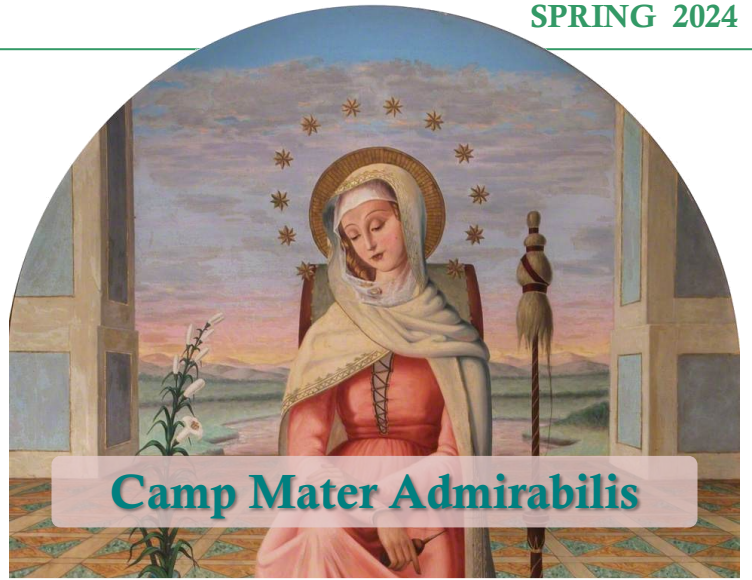


Visit for SSPX Sisters' Jubilee

On Sunday, September 22nd, the Society of Saint Pius X Sisters in Rockdale commemorated 50 years since the foundation of their congregation. A Solemn High Mass of thanksgiving was offered, followed by a luncheon and a photo presentation of their apostolate throughout the world. Three of our Dominican Sisters, including Mother Prioress, flew to Sydney for the weekend to join the festivities with the Society Sisters. The Mass, and luncheon afterwards, were well attended by parishioners and family members. The luncheon included a Lebanese buffet, surprise presents for the Society Sisters from their parish with a special gift for the first sister who took the habit in the congregation 50 years ago and currently resides in Rockdale, and a cake and gift for the 50th birthday of one of the priests.

During this trip, the Dominican Sisters spent a day making a little pilgrimage to the School of the Sacred Heart at Rosebay to see their chapel to furnish ideas for ours soon to be built, (St Madeleine Sophie Barat's choir stall is also kept there), and they prayed at the tomb of St Mary MacKillop, the crypt of St Mary's Cathedral where many former Archbishops of Sydney are buried and finally Eileen O'Connor's tomb, who is known as the Little Mother of Our Lady's Nurses of the Poor. She has been declared a Servant of God in 2018 and her cause is being investigated in Rome. One recalls to mind the words of St Mary Mackillop "Remember, we are all but travellers here". May all our Sisters in Christ be ever more faithful in serving Our Lord and King from their corner of God's vineyard.





Camp Mater Admirabilis

This annum’s encampment bore the visage of yore, steeped in the noble lore of chivalry, extolling the four venerable virtues of prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude. ‘Twas beneath the noble aegis of Mater Admirabilis, a grand fresco wrought in the year of our Lord 1844 by the Sister Pauline Pedrau of the Sacred Heart Sisters.

Each sunlit morn commenced with the holy Mass, followed by a discourse from Father Stephens upon one of these esteemed virtues. During the initial two days, the fair maidens crafted catapults, fashioned leather adornments, sculpted candles, grasped the art of etiquette, pursued the noble stag and swift rabbit, engaged in axe-throwing contests, partook in the merry game of stoolball, and rehearsed their lively dances and plays for the competitions appertaining to Thursday. On the midweek’s day, they journeyed to Bushy Park for a grand contest of jousting, a hearty hike, and a noble game of capture.

Thursday bore witness to their wits in an escape chamber, followed by an evening feast wherein their performed revelries were duly judged. Yet the night held further mirth as they vied in nocturnal contests and slumbered beneath the stars in their canvas abodes. Upon the morn of Friday, 61 weary maidens received their tokens of triumph, and the camp concluded with a sung Mass.



THE O.P. CORNER

Dominican Old Pupils' Corner

*For all of
our readers, too!*



The Commemoration of St Dominic in Soriano

September 25: The event commemorated in this festival is the appearance in the Dominican Convent of Soriano, in the extreme south of Italy, of a miraculous picture of Saint Dominic, which is still preserved, and is held in the utmost veneration even in our own day. A certain Father Vincent of Catanzara in Calabria, in the year 1510, was thrice commanded by Saint Dominic in vision to found a Convent of the Order at Soriano, a work which he accomplished in spite of considerable obstacles which were not overcome without miraculous intervention. It had been decided that the Convent should be built on the plain, but the cross which had been planted to mark the destined site was found to have been mysteriously removed in the night to the

hill on which the building was eventually erected, and where it still stands.

Several years later, on September 15, A.D. 1530, just as the religious were assembling to chant Matins at midnight, the Sacristan suddenly beheld three ladies of majestic aspect enter the church, which he knew he had left locked before retiring to rest. One of them addressed him, asking to whom the church was dedicated and whether it contained a picture of its patron. The Friar replied that the church was dedicated to Saint Dominic, but that, owing to the great poverty of the Community, only a badly painted fresco of the Saint was to be found upon its walls. Then the unknown lady put into his hands a roll of canvas, which till then she had carried in her

hand, and bade him take it to his Superior, who bore the title of Vicar, the little Convent not having yet been erected into a Priory. The Vicar, astonished at the sight of the picture, which proved to be a portrait of Saint Dominic, hastened to the church to thank the giver, but all three mysterious visitors had disappeared, though the outer doors still remained locked. The following night Saint Catharine of Alexandria appeared to one of the Fathers, who had a great devotion to her, and told him, in answer to his prayers, that the donor of the picture was no other than the Blessed Virgin, and that the two who had accompanied her were the patronesses of the Order, Saint Mary Magdalen and herself.

In obedience to the express command given by Our Lady to the Sacristan when bestowing the picture, it was placed over the High Altar; but, as the wall against which it hung was extremely damp, the Fathers afterwards decided on removing it to another altar, near the door of the church. The following morning, however, the picture was again found hanging over the High Altar. The Vicar, believing that it had been removed thither by the Sacristan from a desire to execute to the letter the orders given him by the Mother of God, severely reproved him, and had the picture carried back to the altar agreed upon. The next day, it once more appeared over the High Altar. Again the Sacristan was charged with obstinacy and disobedience. In vain he protested that he had never touched the picture. The Vicar ordered it to be replaced near the door, and on the following night locked the church himself and kept the keys in his own possession. Nevertheless on the third morning it was again discovered over the High Altar. Convinced at length that its removal was the work of no human hand, the Vicar allowed it to remain in the spot which Our Lady had chosen for it, and where it has ever since remained, miraculously preserved from being injured by the damp.

When the picture was exposed to public veneration,

a multitude of prodigies took place, the account of which fills volumes. No less than sixteen hundred of these miracles, juridically attested, took place within the space of seventy-eight years.

Pope Innocent XII, in the year 1644, granted a festival in commemoration of this event and of the vast number of miracles vouchsafed before the holy picture.

On September 15, A.D. 1870, just five days before the sacrilegious occupation of Rome by the troops of Victor Emmanuel, a new prodigy took place at Soriano. A wooden statue of our holy Father, Saint Dominic, of life-size, had been exposed in the sanctuary on occasion of the festival, and was to be carried in procession in the evening. This statue was suddenly seen to move like a preacher in the pulpit; it advanced and drew back; the right arm rose and fell; the countenance became animated, sometimes assuming a severe and threatening aspect, at other times appearing sad, or again full of sweetness and reverence as it turned towards the picture of our Lady of the Rosary. This extraordinary spectacle lasted for an hour and a half, and was witnessed by about two thousand persons. Some of the bystanders, to satisfy themselves that there was no trickery in the matter, removed all the surroundings of the statue and completely stripped the table on which it was standing. These measures only served to place the miraculous nature of the occurrence beyond the possibility of a doubt. A juridical inquiry was held by order of the Bishop of Mileto, in whose diocese Soriano is situated, and the extraordinary event was announced to the Order in a circular letter by the Most Reverend Father Alexander Vincent Jandel, who was then General. In a private letter written by his Paternity shortly afterwards he says: "I think our holy Father, Saint Dominic, meant to warn us of the impending scourges, and to summon us to do penance; but this warning is in itself an act of mercy on the part of Him who strikes only to heal."

Source: Short Lives of the Dominican Saints, 1901, p256-259.

Photo Nook

...a place for past-pupils to share notable events in your lives...

23rd August 2024

In her final year of study for her teaching qualification, Laura Lei Agcaoili was blessed to be able to go to Taiwan for a teacher assistantship program in a children's English Language winter camp.

Her university's annual torch ceremony, "Pagdiriwang ng Sulo," held before graduation, symbolizes the passing of duties and responsibilities by the graduating fourth-year students to the third-year students who accept the task of continuing the pursuit of truth, excellence, and service. In this year's torch ceremony, she had the honour to represent the university, giving a speech in Tagalog, and lighting the first torch.

Laura Lei graduated on 23rd August, with the achievement of *Magna Cum Laude*, 1st rank in the English Education faculty, and 8th among all the graduates of the year 2024.

Deo Gratias!



5th September 2024

Laura, née Palmer, and Kieran McBrydie welcomed their second child, Aurelia Maxima Rose, into the world on 5th September & into the Catholic Church on 14th September.

Deo Gratias!



As a regular section of the *O.P. Corner*, we invite you to share with us and your fellow alumni, in the *Photo Nook*, notable events in *your lives* that have taken place recently. Please send photos with captions (eg. date, event, etc.) to o.p.corner@opsisters.org.nz

Photo Chronicle—Spring

Life in St Dominic's Convent and the Girls' College



{Clockwise from the top right}

At the end of September, Father M Stafki gave a talk to mothers of school girls; The Crusaders held their annual ceremony before the feast of Christ the King—pictured are those who were promoted; At the end of October, the school held an interhouse Poi Competition. The girls performed well and it was a difficult decision for the judges, but in the end, Bologna (pictured above) carried away the honours of 1st, with Prouille coming 2nd and a shared 3rd place for Calaroga and Galway; On November 27th, we held our first annual Graduates' Formal Dinner—hosted by the Sisters and the Form 6 Girls (and served by these same generous girls)—and attended by the graduates, their parents, the Chaplain and the teachers. The graduates were treated to a 'photo yearbook' which they found at their place at table, to inspiring speeches by one of the graduates and by the principal, who eloquently commented on the symbolism of the graduates' choice of St Joan of Arc as the image for their graduation card, and were treated as well to songs from the Form 6 girls; The official graduation photo of teachers and graduates.



Would you please help us to prepare the ground for the growth of our future chapel?

Groundbreaking to begin January 2025

Please consider helping us out—whether with gifts of cash or regular monthly donations. The stipend we receive is minimal, so we are truly grateful for every little effort and sacrifice that helps us to continue living our traditional Dominican way of life.

Thank you to 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.

Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, pray for us!

AUSTRALIA

Westpac Account Name: Dominican Sisters of Wanganui
Westpac Account BSB Number: 033-636
Account Number: 334285

NEW ZEALAND

Westpac Account Name: Dominican Sisters of Wanganui
Westpac Account Number: 03-0791-0728558-00

Please note that the banks in NZ no longer accept cheques. Apologies for the inconvenience.

All donations now qualify for a 33% TAX REBATE from the IRD.

Please quote our NZ Charities Services Number: CC37884

UNITED STATES

Account Name: 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:
Dominican Sisters, Attn: Loren Vaccarezza, 2240 Paragon Drive, San Jose, CA 95131

All donations to our U.S. account now qualify for a tax deductible receipt!

OR VIA PAYPAL

Visit our website at <https://www.opsisters.org.nz/fundraising>