

ST. DOMINIC AND
THE ROSARY

OR

WAS HE ITS FOUNDER?

REV. A. M. SKELLY, O. P.

PRICE FIFTEEN CENTS

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BEING

A Correspondence Carried On in the Pages of the
Catholic Sentinel, Portland, Oregon, U. S. A.,

by

REV. A. M. SKELLY, O. P.,

REV. HERBERT THURSTON, S. J.,

AND ANOTHER

Nihil Obstat,

FR. T. R. NEWELL, O. P., S. T. M.

Imprimi Potest,

FR. A. L. McMAHON, O. P., S. T. M.

Prov. Cal.

Nihil Obstat,

D. A. HANLY, Censor Librorum.

Seattle, Wash., Sept. 4, 1915.

Imprimatur,

EDW. J. O'DEA, Bishop of Seattle.

Sept. 4, 1915.

ST. DOMINGUE AND THE ROSARY

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WAS THE LIFE OF THE BROTHERS

CHAPTER

THE BROTHERS OF THE ROSARY IN ST. DOMINGUE

BY THE REV. FATHER

JOSEPH DE LA ROSA

OF THE ROSARY

THE BROTHERS OF THE ROSARY

IN ST. DOMINGUE

THE BROTHERS OF THE ROSARY

IN ST. DOMINGUE

1800



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FOREWORD

The correspondence given in the following pages arose out of a minor allusion in a sermon preached in Holy Rosary Church, Portland, Oregon, U. S. A. On Rosary Sunday it is usual in Dominican churches to commemorate the monumental victory won by the Christian arms over the Turks at Lepanto by a solemn procession in honor of the Queen of the Rosary, to whose prayers and influence with God the victory is attributed.

The sermon on the occasion was preached by me. In the course of its delivery I alluded to the institution of the Rosary devotion by St. Dominic in the following words, published in the "Catholic Sentinel" of Portland in its issue of October 10th, 1912: "A tradition going back many centuries tells us that it (the devotion of the Rosary) was first given to the world through St. Dominic by the Mother of God herself."

In the next issue, published on the 17th of the same month, I was taken to task on the accuracy of my statement by a local clergyman signing himself "K. C." He based his criticism on alleged



proofs to the contrary found in an article in the "Catholic Encyclopedia," under the title "Rosary."

To this letter I thought it a duty to give a reply, which appeared in the issue of October 31st, as given in the following pages. Thereupon Father Thurston, S. J., the writer of the article in the "Catholic Encyclopedia," sent from England a letter which was published in the "Sentinel" of the 13th of December.

My answer to this was given in four parts, published in the issues of January 16th, 23rd, 30th, and February 6th of this year.

As Father Thurston has not thought good to continue the correspondence, and as his ill-informed and misleading article in the "Catholic Encyclopedia" is a continual challenge to the truth of the tradition, and a source of disturbance to the piety of the faithful in this and other English-speaking countries, I thought it well to issue the correspondence in pamphlet form.

It should be mentioned that Father Thurston has been writing articles periodically in "The Month" and other publications since October, 1900, attacking the great papal tradition which attributes the institution of the Rosary to St. Dominic. The public will see from the correspondence here given whether



or not his impeachment is based on solid historic grounds.

We purpose, later on, to bring out a second pamphlet, where we hope to place in review his peculiar treatment of this whole question, and to examine whether his writings have been in accordance with the principles of a just and prudent criticism.

Meantime, we entrust our pamphlet to the intelligent Catholic readers of America and leave them to judge whether or not Father Thurston has given proofs in his article in the "Catholic Encyclopedia" or elsewhere sustaining his impeachment.

A. M. SKELLY, O. P.

Holy Rosary Church,
Portland, Oregon,
Corpus Christi, 1913.

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Letter of K. C., published in the Catholic Sentinel,
Portland, Oregon, 17th October, 1912:

THE ORIGIN OF THE ROSARY

To the Editor of the "Catholic Sentinel"—

In your issue of last week is published, in part, the eloquent sermon preached by Father Skelly, O. P., in Holy Rosary Church, on the occasion of the Feast of the Holy Rosary. Father Skelly, in answer to his own question, "What of the origin of the Rosary?" says: "A tradition going back many centuries tells us that it was first given to the world through St. Dominic by the Holy Mother of God herself." In the library of Knights of Columbus Club of this city is a set of the "Catholic Encyclopedia." In Volume XIII, under the heading "Rosary," this tradition, which I have always cherished, seems to be rejected and very convincing arguments advanced to show that St. Dominic had nothing to do with the establishment of the devotion of the Rosary. It would seem the Rosary is a very much older institution than of the time of St. Dominic and that the Saint had never identified himself with the pre-existing Rosary or become its apostle. Of the eight or nine early lives of St. Dominic not one makes the slightest allusion to the Rosary. The



witnesses who gave evidence in the cause of his canonization are equally reticent. In all the thousands of early manuscripts, paintings, and other monuments collected by the Fathers of the Order, there is not found any suggestion of a connection between St. Dominic and the Rosary for upwards of three hundred years after his time.

“Impressed by this conspiracy of silence,” continues the Encyclopedia, “the Bollandists on trying to trace to its source the origin of the current tradition found that all the clues converged upon one point about the years 1470-75, when one Alan de Rupe first suggested the idea that the devotion of ‘Our Lady’s Psalter’ was instituted or revived by St. Dominic.” Since the authority of the Encyclopedia stands against the current tradition of the founding of the Rosary one may fairly ask, Can the tradition be substantiated or must it be discredited? K. C.

To the foregoing Father Skelly replied in a letter published in the same journal in its issue of 31st October:

ORIGIN OF THE ROSARY

Dear Mr. Editor—

In your issue of October 17, a correspondent signing himself “K. C.,” takes me to task on the fol-



lowing statement made by me in my sermon delivered on Rosary Sunday: "A tradition going back many centuries tells us that it (the devotion of the Rosary) was first given to the world through St. Dominic by the Mother of God herself." In support of his contention he quotes from an article on the Rosary from the 13th volume of the "Catholic Encyclopedia," where, he says, "very convincing arguments are advanced to show St. Dominic had nothing to do with the establishment of the devotion of the Rosary."

What I have to say in reply is that if he looks on the arguments there put forward as very convincing he is very easily satisfied.

And, first, what is the authority of the article quoted? Your correspondent looks upon it as having at its back the authority of the Encyclopedia. Let me remind him that statements made by writers in the "Catholic Encyclopedia" receive no additional weight from the fact of their having been written in its pages, any more than do the views of writers ventilated through the medium of the "Catholic Sentinel" get the sanction of the editor of that journal, from the fact of his having given them the hospitality of its columns.

And who is the writer of the article in question? He is the Rev. Herbert Thurston, S. J.—a writer who



has done good service to the Church with his trenchant pen in the past, but a notorious iconoclast in the matter of traditions regarding Church devotions. He has assailed the tradition not only concerning the origin of the Rosary, but also the no less venerable tradition concerning the giving of the Brown Scapular, and, not to speak of others, of that one so dear to Catholic piety concerning the translation of the Holy House of Loreto, otherwise, the home of the Holy Family, from Nazareth to Loreto, in Italy.

In that article Father Thurston brought forth no proofs to discredit the tradition that were not considered and rejected nearly two hundred years ago by the Sacred Congregation of Rites. The occasion was their solemn act of adopting from the Dominican Breviary into the Roman Breviary the lessons of the Second Nocturn of the feast, in which the statement is made in so many words that St. Dominic was the founder of the devotion of the Rosary.

Cardinal Lambertini's Memorial

In the famous "Memorial" drawn up by Cardinal Prospero Lambertini, afterwards Benedict XIV, for the instruction of the Congregation, he put forward with unapproachable ability, and afterwards rebutted all the objections advanced by Father



Thurston and his co-objectors—and this to the entire satisfaction of the members of the learned congregation, whose duty it was to see that the said tradition was established on a solid basis before taking the weighty step contemplated.

Nor is this the first time that Father Thurston has assailed the tradition. I remember to have followed with interest his arguments in the series of articles written by him in the "Month," in the years 1900-1, impugning the tradition, and the replies of his able antagonist, Rev. Reginald Walsh, O. P., given in the "Irish Rosary" of the same period.

I may be prejudiced in favor of a combatant who sustained my own views on the subject in dispute, but I think it was the general verdict of impartial clerics, both in England and Ireland, at that time, who followed the arguments of the disputants, that Father Thurston neither took scalps nor won laurels in the issue, and in no way weakened the force of the tradition. Nor could it seem likely that arguments rejected as worthless by the ablest churchman of the 18th century, and the most learned of all the Popes, would avail in the hands of a twentieth century writer to weaken a tradition accepted

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by the Church and confirmed by the authority of no fewer than thirteen Sovereign Pontiffs.

Note—The Papal tradition is given expression to in two hundred and fourteen bulls, decrees, and encyclicals, the acts of no fewer than thirty-nine Popes from Alexander IV, 1261, to Leo XIII, 1886, *Rosa Aurea*, 1886. I need not speak of later documents.

What does seem to me as unfortunate is that this adverse view, rashly put forward, as some think, in opposition to the overwhelming tradition of the Church to the contrary, should be transferred from the ephemeral pages of a magazine where it could be met and its worthlessness shown up, to the columns of a permanent work of reference, such as is the "Catholic Encyclopedia."

K. C. continues: "It would seem the Rosary is a very much older institution than of the time of St. Dominic." Here, I think, the writer is a little too previous, and claims what Father Thurston does not, namely, that the Rosary, as we understand it, was in vogue before St. Dominic's time. True, strings of pebbles, or knotted cords, were used by pious worshippers to tell their prayers from the early ages of the Church, but the feature which gives character to the Rosary is not that it enables us to count the number of "Paters" and "Aves" recited, but that it joins the mental to the vocal element in the recitation.

What Father Thurston and his supporters claim

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is that the tradition of the Rosary, as we understand it, does not go back farther than the end of the fifteen century. In this position his chain of reasoning seems to me to want a link, and an essential one, to make it convincing. He says, page 186: "To sum up, we have positive evidence that both the invention of the beads as a counting apparatus, and also the practice of repeating a hundred and fifty 'Aves' cannot be due to St. Dominic, because they are notably older than his time. Furthermore, we are assured that the meditation upon the mysteries was not introduced until two hundred years after his death."

To the first member of this assertion I say "granted." To the further statement, "we are assured," etc., I decline assent; and ask, by whom? "It is difficult," he says, "to prove a negative." "Very difficult," I repeat; and, moreover, it is bootless in controversy when it is proved, unless it is further sustained by positive arguments, or unless the controversialist proves that the authors quoted were bound to break silence and give positive testimony on the matter in question, which they were not, in the case relied upon; and when the writings of contemporary authors quoted in proof to the contrary, are not longer extant. See Appendix No. 1, page 71.



The Early Lives

And this brings me to the consideration of the three following statements of K. C. "Of the eight or nine early lives of St. Dominic, not one makes the slightest allusion to the Rosary." What follows? "Therefore, St. Dominic had nothing to do with the establishment of the devotion of the Rosary." K. C. (or Father Thurston) would have a saint's life, written in the thirteenth century, composed with the same finish of detail as would be looked for in the same saint's life written by a twentieth century author. Let me tell him that there are features in St. Dominic's life as important as his alleged institution of the Rosary that are not touched upon at all in these "lives."

He would have a feature in the Saint's apostolate which may not have struck the view of those writers at all brought out with the same prominence demanded in our age of critics, and higher critics, critics gone to seed, "cacoethes criticandi," as Benedict XIV would call them; critics, moreover, who, in the case in point, have nothing to offer but the wretched stuff thrown into the wastebasket by the Sacred Congregation of Rites nearly 200 years ago. See Appendix No. 2, page 77.

If those principles were generally acted upon we would have to forego many of our most cherished

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beliefs, as Catholics. Are we to forego the belief, for instance, that St. Peter was Pope of Rome, because, forsooth, the universal tradition which sustains it will not satisfy the critics of our age who want absolute demonstration of the fact from contemporary authors? Are we to forego the belief that auricular confession was practiced in the early Church; aye, and practiced universally and intently and from the beginning, because the tradition sustaining it is not sufficiently evident to satisfy our present-day higher critics? Why, the very name is hardly mentioned either in the pages of the New Testament or in the writings of those centuries, and so of others of the Sacraments. Was their administration not a prominent feature in the life of the early Church?

Are we to forego the belief that St. Gregory the Great introduced the plain chant into the liturgy, because, forsooth, the tradition recording it was put in writing only 150 years after his death? Are we to put aside our belief in the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, because the fact is put in print only several centuries afterwards? Are we to follow Father Thurston in his disbelief in the miraculous translation of the Holy House of Loreto, because we find definite statements to this effect only a couple of centuries later, and does he think that the whole



church, bishops, legates, popes and all, were fools before the coming of the critics?

Are we to give up the belief that the Book of Genesis was written by Moses, simply because we are unable to quote chapter and verse to sustain the belief that he was its inspired author?

The Canonization Witnesses

K. C., quoting Father Thurston, continues: "The witnesses who gave evidence in the process of canonization are equally reticent."

What follows? I say again, I thought the testimony of witnesses in the process of canonization bore upon the fact that the servant of God, proposed to be raised to the Church's honors, practiced the Christian virtues in an heroic degree? If they proved that, their business was finished. Neither was it the duty of the members of the Sacred Congregation who sat to try the cause to report upon the methods employed in his apostolate, as long as they did not trench upon faith or morals. See Appendix No. 3, page 80.

K. C., quoting again Father Thurston, continues: "In all those thousands of early manuscripts, paintings and other monuments collected by the Fathers of the Order, there is not found any suggestion of a



connection between St. Dominic and the Rosary for upwards of three hundred years after his time.”

To this I reply: It is simply untrue. Not to remark that by far the greater part of those monuments have perished, there are many works of thirteenth and fourteenth century writers still extant which give the strongest testimony, short of historic proof, corroborative of the Church tradition (I use the word advisedly) that St. Dominic was the founder of the Rosary. Some of those testimonies I might be tempted to give here were it not for the fact that I must remember that I am not writing a dissertation, and that the matter of space has to be considered in my reply to your esteemed correspondent. See Appendix No. 4, page 82.

Defence of Blessed Alan de la Roche

K. C. adds: “Impressed by this conspiracy of silence,” continues the Encyclopedia, (I would, for reasons given above, substitute, “continues Father Thurston”), “the Bollandists, on trying to trace to its source the origin of the current tradition, found that all the clues converged upon one point—about the years 1470-75, when one Alan de Rupe first suggested the idea that the devotion of ‘Our Lady’s Psalter’ was instituted or revived by St. Dominic.”



To this I have two or three remarks to make. First, I don't think it is respectful to the venerable servant of God, Blessed Alan de la Roche, to allude to him as "one Alan de Rupe." He was a most learned and holy man, the chief reviver of the devotion of the Rosary throughout Christendom, when it had fallen into desuetude, chiefly through the decay of religion brought about by the most awful scourge of the "Black Death" and "the great schism of the West." Neither did he "suggest for the first time," he preached it as a venerable tradition come down from St. Dominic's time, two hundred and fifty years before. He called to witness of the fact the widespread tradition existing in the Church at the time. He cited the testimony of writers contemporary with St. Dominic; he praised Thomas a Templo and John de Monte, companions of St. Dominic, because they composed books in commendation of the Rosary; books which, unhappily, cannot now be found. He appealed to the command of the Blessed Mother herself, calling on him to *revive*, not to *establish* the devotion. He said nothing of its being "*revived*" by St. Dominic in the accepted meaning of the word, but *instituted* by him. Nor is he alone in his statements regarding the origin of the Rosary. Here is one made by Alexander, Bishop of Friuli, the papal legate a la-

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tere, in Germany, 1476—that is to say, the year after Blessed Alan's death:

“The Confraternity of the Rosary of the Blessed Virgin has recently been most salutarily established by the Dominicans in Cologne; rather, restored and renewed; *since, in various histories it is read* that it was preached by Blessed Dominic, but had fallen into disuse and almost into oblivion, by neglect,” etc.

Note—Blessed Alan had nothing whatever to do with the establishment of the confraternty in Cologne. It was an independent revival brought about by the prior of the convent, the Very Rev. James Sprenger, who also acted on the commission of the Blessed Virgin. See Dominican Breviary, lessons of the Octave of Rosary Sunday.

But in this the legate was only repeating in other words the convictions of his master, Pope Sixtus IV. In the second of the bulls issued by the Pope in favor of the Rosary Confraternities, May 12, 1479, he has these words: “There has for some time existed a certain mode or rite of prayer which is pious and devout, which, moreover, was observed of old (*olim*) by the faithful in divers places,” etc.

Here is another, of the Papal Legate Luke, Bishop of Sebenico, writing from Brussels to the Dominicans of Lille, 1478: “Truly, as we have learned, our beloved in Christ, the prior and brothers of the convent of the Order of Preachers at Lille, in the Diocese of Tournai, before now instituted a certain



confraternity in the honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary; or, rather, they *revived* one preached long ago (quondam), as is related (ut fertur) by their father the Blessed Dominic, which is called of the 'Psalter of the Blessed Virgin'."

So, Alexander VI, in his Bull "Illius qui perfecta," etc., 1495, recites in similar fashion the petition addressed to him by the Dominican General, Turriani: "Sancti Dominici hujus confraternitatis Rosarii olim Praedicatoris eximii," etc., "of St. Dominic, the renowned preacher long ago of the confraternity of the Rosary."

In 1491, Innocent VIII reproduces the terms used in the bull of Sixtus, and applies to the devotion the name of the "Rosary"; and Alexander VI, granting fresh indulgencies to the devotion, declares that "by the merits of St. Dominic, who preached the Rosary in former years, the whole world was preserved from universal ruin." I ask, were those Sovereign Pontiffs deceived? And in the face of their testimony is it true that "all the clues converged upon one point about the years 1470-75 when 'one Alan de Rupe first suggested the idea' "? etc.

But what will the critics say, who assert that "the Bollandists in trying to trace to its source the origin of the current tradition found that all the clues converged upon one point about the years 1470-75,



when one Alan de Rupe first suggested the idea that the devotion of 'Our Lady's Psalter' was instituted or revived by St. Dominic''; what will the critics say to the following fact related in the life of Blessed Clara Gambacorta? She was born in 1362—that is to say, a hundred years before Blessed Alan's time—and her life taken from a manuscript belonging to the Convent of St. Dominic at Pisa, is to be found in the second volume of the Bollandists, April 17th. The Bollandist editors say that it was written by a Nun who was a contemporary of the Blessed Clara. Now, in that life it is said that "when she was 12 years of age . . . she frequently gathered around her bands of young girls, and after making them be seated around her would first read to them from a pious work, and then when their hearts were thus moved to piety, she would bid them, sometimes to sing the praises of God, and at other times say *the Rosary* on their knees."

Or this, from the learned promoter of the faith, otherwise Benedict XIV? "When thirty-four years had elapsed since the death of St. Dominic (i. e., A. D. 1255), an indulgence was granted by Pope Alexander IV to the confraternity of the most holy Rosary erected in the Church of the Friar Preachers in the city of Piacenza. Copies of this apostolic



letter drawn from the archives of the Dominican Convent of St. John in the said city are printed at length at the end of the second volume of the 'Historia Ecclesiastica,' compiled by Peter Campi (he was not a Dominican), in the 'Regesta Privilegiorum, No. 108, p. 406, tom. II, where the same writer on page 216 refers to the institution of the said Confraternity in the Church of the same Friars Preachers.'" ("Memorial.")

We may write here that the apostolic letters used in the proof of his view by the Promoter of the Faith are granted: "To our beloved sons the directors, and all the members of both sexes of 'the Confraternity of the Blessed Virgin' erected in the Church of the Order of Preachers at Piacenza."

That the "Fraternitas B. Mariae," et "Fraternitas B. Mariae et B. Dominici," named in these apostolic letters, refer to the confraternity of the most holy Rosary appears from the fact that the "Rosarian Sodalists" gathered together at Douai by Blessed Alan in the year 1470 had at that time no other name than that of "Sodalists of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of Blessed Dominic," as appears from the letters patent of Father Michael of Lille, dated the same year and granting the said Sodalists a share in the suffrages of the Order.



Again in his work, “de Canonizatione Sanctorum,” after reciting some of the decrees of the Roman Pontiffs, he adds: “Which question we, when filling the office of Promoter of the Faith, examined at length in a printed dissertation,” . . . and after inviting our admiration at “the striking prudence of the Congregation; for, they refer the institution of the Rosary to St. Dominic, not by any definite statement, but by a simple statement of the fact.”

Again in his “Commentary on the Feasts of Our Lord Jesus Christ and His Mother,” when treating of the feast of the Holy Rosary, he passes in review the whole controversy, and arrives at the same conclusion as before. “What seems to completely meet the difficulty,” he says, “is the perpetual tradition existing in the Order of Preachers to the effect that St. Dominic was the author of the Rosary. Writers of great weight have accepted that tradition. Roman Pontiffs have approved it, *and the weak conjectures with which it is assailed fail to destroy it.*” Wouldn’t one think that he was writing in the beginning of the twentieth century”?

What will critics say to this of Pope Sixtus V? “Remembering how great a help to our holy religion has been the institution of the most holy ‘Psalter’ called the ‘Rosary of the glorious and ever Virgin



Mary, the Mother of God,' which was devised by the founder of the Order of Preachers, Blessed Dominic, by the inspiration, as it is believed, of the Holy Ghost; remembering, too, . . . that the Brethren and Sisters (of the Confraternities of the Rosary) deservedly obtained not only confirmation and growth of these confraternities, but also indulgences and privileges from many of the Roman Pontiffs, our predecessors; from Urban IV (1265) and John XXII (1316) and also Sixtus IV," etc., and from several Nuncios of the Apostolic See with legatine power; We, following in the footsteps of our predecessors," etc., 1586. Here we are brought back in a papal document to Urban IV, who reigned 1265—i. e., forty-four years—and John XXII, who reigned 1316, less than a century after the death of the blessed founder.

But these Popes, forsooth, "lived in an uncritical age." Does it show much critical acumen in the writer of the article quoted, that he flatly puts the Bull, "Pastoris aeterni," 1520, of Leo X as "the earliest of all" papal documents referring to the Rosary; and what respect does he show for the solemn utterances of the Sovereign Pontiffs?

He says: "Leo in this bull speaks of the authorship with some reserve: 'Prout in historiis legitur'; but many of the later Popes were less guarded."



Where is the reserve? Leo called the testimony of histories to witness. Is that to speak with reserve?

So it is not to one "Alan de Rupe," "who was full of delusions," that he appeals after all; but to veritable histories, "Prout in historiis legitur." And Leo, the cultured Pope of the "Renaissance," lived in the age immediately succeeding that of Alan.

But, after all, he only repeated what was said by the papal legate a latere, Alexander, the year succeeding Alan's death, 1476: "Since in various histories it is read," etc., and what was said by the papal legate, Luke, two years later. And what Sixtus V and Innocent VIII and Alexander VI confirmed in their Bulls promulgated within ten years after it.

How in the face of those bulls, which are still extant, Father Thurston could say that the bull "pastoris aeterni" of Leo X (1520) is the earliest is more than I can understand.

As to the Bull of John XXII (1316) and Urban IV (1265), which Pope Sixtus V refers to, the former of which Blessed Alan says was in his day in Avignon, we have the testimony of a Rosary manual published in 1516, and now in the possession of the Marquis de Villoutreys, to say that not it alone, but also the Bull of Urban IV were in that day

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preserved in the Great Church of Avignon "comme il apert par les Bulles sur ce fait qui sont en la grande eglise d'Avignon." A similar statement is made by Bishop Lopez, O. P., 1521-1632, to the effect that copies of said bulls were preserved in the convent of St. Mark's, Florence.

Later Testimony

Yes, 'tis true; "many of the later Popes were less guarded." Here are some of the utterances of the later Popes: Leo XIII in his encyclical to the Catholic world, September 1, 1883, has these words: "Our merciful God, as you know, raised up against these fierce enemies (the Albigenses) a most holy man, the illustrious parent and founder of the Dominican Order. Great in the soundness of doctrine, in the example of virtue, and in his apostolic labors, he undauntedly proceeded to attack the enemies of the Catholic Church, not by force of arms, but by the devotion which he was the first to institute (*ipse primus instituit*) under the name of the 'Holy Rosary.' . . . Our predecessors by the most earnest commendations have endeavored to promote and spread its adoption. Thus, Urban IV (1265) testified that 'the Rosary obtained fresh favor for Christendom,' etc."



Hold! Most Holy Father, you are up in the moon. Does not Father Thurston, the critic, put Leo X, in his Bull, "Pastoris aeterni" (1520), "as the first Pope who speaks of Dominic's connection with the Rosary," and sure he must know; and he says, Leo does so "with some reserve." "Prout in historiis legitur"?

Again, in his decree for the Proper Office for Rosary Sunday (August 5, 1888): "Our need for Divine Help is certainly no less today than when the great Dominic preached the Rosary of Mary as ready to heal the wounds of Christendom. He, by the light of inspiration, etc. . . . With this object that great saint composed the formula of the Rosary having for its end the meditations on the mysteries of salvation combined with a recitation of a connected chain of the "Hail Mary" and with the occasional introduction of the "Our Father," etc.

Encyclical 1891, "By her suggestion and under her patronage it was introduced by the Holy Father Dominic."

Encyclical 1892, "The most Holy Rosary which the Mother of God entrusted to St. Dominic for the purpose of defense."



Encyclical 1897, "The army of prayer enrolled by St. Dominic under the banner of the Mother of God."

In the Constitutions published 1898, the Holy Father refers to "that well-tried devotion which she herself (the Blessed Virgin) made known, and the Holy Father Dominic spread abroad—the Rosary."

But perhaps Leo XIII, too, lived, in "an uncritical age"? Is it respectful to the judicious and learned Leo to represent him as thus yearly uttering solemn nonsense for twenty years of his pontificate? Does Father Thurston think that a Pope has no sense of responsibility, that no tie of honor and duty binds him to verify his quotations, and to put nothing forward except what suits his position and agrees with his sense of responsibility before the Church? I say this absurd and insulting theory is to misrepresent the Holy See, and is without excuse in one who pretends to scholarship in our day.

Nor is Leo alone among the later Popes who connect St. Dominic with the founding of the Rosary. Thus Pius IX, 1867: "When St. Dominic, acting by the inspiration of God . . . and when he went forth to preach the Rosary," etc. And again, 1869: "St. Dominic employed this prayer as a sword to destroy the monstrous heresy of the Albe-

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genses," etc. And again, writing in 1875, to the Fathers of Lourdes, he says: "As you know, dear sons, it is a celebrated fact that the Rosary was entrusted by the Holy Mother of God to St. Dominic," etc.

A Great Papal Tradition

And so we can say with Benedict XIV, in answer to the Bollandists, the critics of his day: "You ask if St. Dominic instituted the Rosary. What do you say to the testimony of Leo X, St. Pius V, Gregory XIII, Sixtus V, Clement VI, Alexander VII, Innocent XI, Clement XI, Innocent XIII, Benedict XIII, who unanimously attribute the Rosary to St. Dominic?"

So much for the testimony of the Popes as to St. Dominic's connection with the Rosary.

Shall I go on to show by very many documents the great tradition, going back even to the lifetime of the blessed founder himself? But those testimonies, you say, are disproved? Yes, if "surmises, and baseless conjectures, and serious mistakes of facts, and a strange ignorance of much of the evidence, and a still stranger confusion between the negative and positive sides of the question, and the injustice to many learned men groundlessly accused of credulity and almost of direct fraud," are allowed to stand for valid arguments.



K. C. continues: "Since the authority of the Encyclopedia stands against the current tradition of the founding of the Rosary." I must here again protest against the statement of K. C. The "Encyclopedia" gives no authority. Its editors accept articles by contributors who are supposed to be conversant with the subjects treated by them, on their personal authority, but they take upon themselves no responsibility for the accuracy of the statements there given, or the views enunciated, beyond a general supervision of the doctrines propounded.

The Summing Up

K. C. concludes: "One may fairly ask: Can the tradition be substantiated, or must it be discredited?" Undoubtedly; it is a frank question, and deserves to be answered. But for myself, to whom apparently the challenge is put; beyond the foregoing, I have nothing to say. I am getting too old and lazy to begin now to till the arid field of controversy, to which, moreover, I have never had much liking. Furthermore, I look upon the revival of the controversy at this hour of the day in the same light as we are accustomed to view the revival, from time to time, of the sensational stories from the "Revelations of Maria Monk," or the "A. P. A.'s," doubts as to the loyalty of us Catholics to

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the American flag and constitution; or of the tales narrating the "immuring of Nuns in Mexican convents," which, if I remember aright, Father Thurston himself refuted so triumphantly many years ago.

No, K. C., the time of controversy is past; the time of the summing up has come; and in the event, the puling of the critics is lost in the deep diapason of the Church's voice given utterance to in the great papal tradition going back in an unbroken series of papal documents for nigh on seven hundred years.

And as the years go on the carping criticisms that appealed to history are being brushed aside in the light of true research; even as the Columbia in flood carries in its mighty sweep and tosses to oblivion the many uncanny things that struggle in its waters, as it marches on majestically in its course to the ocean.

A. M. SKELLY, O. P.

Father Thurston's letter, published in the "Catholic Sentinel" in its issue 19th December, 1912:

THE ORIGIN OF THE ROSARY

To the Editor of the "Catholic Sentinel"—Sir:

It will be plain that it is impossible to carry on a controversy across the Atlantic Ocean, but as a copy of your journal for October 31 has been



courteously sent to me, containing Father Skelly's comments on my Rosary article in the "Catholic Encyclopedia," I venture to ask space to print a few remarks in reply.

To answer all the points of that letter would need much more time than I can now afford, but I respectfully request your readers to believe that there is not one objection raised by Father Skelly that has not long ago been fully considered, and, in my humble opinion, adequately met. As an indication that I am not speaking inconsiderately or lightly, I note this significant fact: In the course of the last five years four important Catholic works of general reference have seen the light. They are "Herders Konversations-Lexikon," published in Freiburg; the "Kirchliches Hand-Lexikon," published in Munich; the "Catholic Encyclopedia," published in New York, and the "Dictionnaire d'Archeologie et de Liturgie," published under Benedictine editorship in Paris. All these represent the views not merely of a single writer, but of a committee of competent scholars. In each case, as I must respectfully insist, the articles printed were submitted to an editorial board and censored by them before publication. Moreover, the purpose of each of these Encyclopedias was largely apologetic. It was in most cases their primary aim



to explain and defend Catholic tradition so far as could lawfully be done in accordance with the data of the Church's official teaching and of modern research. Now that the Church's official documents, e. g., many papal bulls, are committed to the tradition that St. Dominic instituted the Rosary, is disputed by no one. It may surely then be assumed that every loyal Catholic would much prefer, if historical evidence permitted it, to vindicate that tradition. We should all like to be able to show that, even outside matters for which papal infallibility can be invoked, ecclesiastical traditions may be trusted. Nevertheless in each of the four important works of reference named the verdict has been adverse to the Rosary tradition. These books do not represent any particular school or any particular religious order. We must assume also that the respective editors were not acting in ignorance when they entrusted the article "Rosary" to a particular contributor. In my own case, as your correspondent's letter shows, my views upon the Rosary question were well known many years before I undertook the Catholic Encyclopedia article. None the less these thoroughly Catholic organizations have all committed themselves to the publication of the view that there is no evidence to prove that St. Dominic instituted the Rosary, but that on



the contrary there are strong arguments to justify the conclusion that he could not have done so.

Of points of detail, I have only time to notice three. First: Father Skelly admits that the practice of counting 150 Hail Marys can be shown to be older than St. Dominic's time. But when I go on to say: "Furthermore we are assured that the meditation upon the mysteries was not introduced until 200 years after his time," he demurs, and asks by whom are we assured? The question is answered in the article from which he quotes. The author of the statement is the distinguished Dominican Father T. Esser, long secretary of the Congregation of the Propaganda, who has investigated the subject in an extensive series of articles in the periodical "Der Katholik" of Mainz. Father Esser has no doubt embarrassed some of his Dominican brethren very much by these scholarly researches, but no one has yet refuted his conclusions.

Second: I have stated that amid the vast numbers of Dominican manuscripts still surviving which were written before the year 1450 "no single verifiable passage has yet been produced which speaks of the Rosary as instituted by St. Dominic, or which even make much of the devotion as one specially dear to his children." To this Father Skelly re-

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plies bluntly: "It is simply untrue." Very good; I can only say that after many years of search I have never heard of the existence of any such verifiable passage. If there is such, it will be easy to confute me. Let Father Skelly have it photographed with exact indications of the manuscript, the page and the place where the original may be inspected, and let him publish the facsimile in your columns. There will be more persons than myself who will be interested in being confronted with such a piece of evidence.

Third: I am accused of treating Alan de Rupe disrespectfully. To this I reply that, though Father Skelly calls him "Blessed," he has never been beatified by the Church and that none have spoken more frankly about Alan's wild imaginings than the Dominicans themselves. See the great bibliography of Quetif and Echard, or even the article Alanus, written by a Dominican Father in the Catholic Encyclopedia.

With apologies for the length of this letter, believe me, your obedient servant,

HERBERT THURSTON, S. J.

31 Farm Street, Berkeley Square, London, W.



**FATHER SKELLY'S REJOINDER, CATHOLIC
SENTINEL, 16th JANUARY, 1913.**

First Part

Dear Editor—

I feel highly complimented at the fact that my article in defense of the Rosary tradition has drawn the originator of all this dispute into the arena of controversy. It is a sign that my arguments have told, and that there is a flutter in the dovecots of the critics.

It is not, however, to apologize to your readers for the egregious blunder I have detected him in in his article in the "Catholic Encyclopedia"; if, indeed, a blunder it may be called, and not, rather, a deliberate and daring attempt to hoodwink the whole English-speaking world by representing the bull "Pastoris Aeterni" of Leo X as the first papal document connecting St. Dominic with the foundation of the Rosary devotion. Why, in the very work from which he draws so largely, the "Acta Sanctae Sedis," etc., the bull of Leo is preceded immediately by no less than seven others having reference to the same great tradition.



Instead, he comes to give his patronizing assurance to your readers that, forsooth, the Holy See was wrong all the time; that "ecclesiastical tradition is not to be trusted"; that the Sacred Congregation of Rites made a big blunder in their solemn act of adopting the tradition into the liturgy of the Church, and that the Popes for the last 650 years and more were under a cloud of misconception, in representing in their bulls and encyclicals that Saint Dominic was the founder of the Rosary devotion; for, that, he, and other "competent scholars," had given the subject their serious consideration, and that now, "in his humble opinion," the question is set at rest! What proofs does Father Thurston bring forward that were not considered and rejected by the Sacred Congregation of Rites, as the verdict of their solemn sessions held in the year 1725? It shows how beggared the critics are, that after 187 years of "research" they are not able to bring forward a single argument that was not considered and negatived by the learned Congregation. And if they are not, how dare they pit their authority against that great organ of the Church's teaching? Are they specialists in ecclesiastical subjects with a knowledge and research superior to the body of consultors whose duty it is to inform and assist that great tribunal?



Father Thurston says: "Father Skelly's objections have been duly considered, and, in his humble opinion, adequately met."

I make objection to nothing except to an attempt of the writer to put me in a wrong position, which he does, as I shall presently show by simply stating the question at issue.

Statement of the Question

The question is: Is Saint Dominic to be recognized as the founder of the Rosary devotion, or is he not? And if not, who is?

The Church, through her Sovereign Pontiffs, asserts he is; and this they do without a single discordant word throughout a space of 650 years, i. e., back to a period reaching to within 40 years of the death of the blessed founder. This grand Papal tradition is given utterance to in no less than 214 bulls, decrees, and encyclicals, the acts of no fewer than 39 Popes, from Alexander IV, in 1261, to Leo XIII, in 1886; not to speak of the many Papal utterances on the subject since then.

I assent to this great Church tradition; as is shown in my sermon on Rosary Sunday, and in my defense published in the columns of your issue of the 31st of October.



Father Thurston says: "No, they are all wrong. It is to Dominic of Prussia, the Carthusian Monk who lived in the fifteenth century, that is to be accorded the honor of being its founder." Who, then, is the objector?

Proofs Negating Traditions Are Demanded

Now, it is a principle of law that when a man or an institution is in possession of a long-standing right, or of a title to ownership, and when a claimant presents himself, in order to dispute that right or that ownership, the obvious duty of such a one is to disprove the title to possession.

Saint Dominic, as I have shown, has been, from time immemorial, the undisputed possessor of the title of founder of the Rosary. To this honor he has, furthermore, been acclaimed, after a most careful and searching examination of tradition by the most competent tribunal on earth, the Sacred Congregation of Rites. This acclamation has been adopted by the Sovereign Pontiff and ordered to be recorded in the liturgy of the Church, in the lessons of the office of Rosary Sunday, to be recited by all clerics in communion with Rome.

Father Thurston comes to traverse that solemn judgment and to reverse that long standing tradi-



tion, and this with the most daring and perseverant obstinacy.

What new proofs does he advance to upset that judgment and to reverse that tradition? Not one! But, instead, he gives us the bland assurance that he, forsooth, and other "competent scholars," have given the subject their earnest consideration, and "in his humble opinion" settled it.

Father Thurston would have us believe that the conclusions arrived at in his article in the "Catholic Encyclopedia" "represent the views," not merely of himself, but, moreover, of the board of editors of that great work of reference.

Does Father Thurston mean by this that the views of the board of editors are to be held as a set-off as against the views of the Sacred Congregation of Rites? And if so, will he kindly tell us how many sessions they held to discuss the question before giving their solemn judgment? Or, does he mean that the board of editors is supposed to see eye to eye with the 1,600 contributors to the Encyclopedia, in the 30,000 articles contributed, containing, as we are told, 25,000,000 words? Or, perhaps, they gave special consideration to his article alone?

He continues: "It was in most cases the primary aim of the Catholic Encyclopedia (and other such works of reference published in modern times)

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to explain and defend Catholic tradition, as far as it could lawfully be done, in accordance with the data of the Church's official teaching, and of modern research.''

What we complain of is that he has not told us on what point of this particular subject modern research has added to the fund of knowledge possessed by the members of the Sacred Congregation 187 years ago, when they gave their solemn decision.

He says that, as "a loyal Catholic, he would much prefer, *if historic evidence permitted it*, to vindicate the Church's tradition, and that he would like to be able to show that, even outside matters for which Papal infallibility can be invoked, ecclesiastical tradition may be trusted.'" We are to remember that here, in addition to ecclesiastical tradition, given utterance to in weighty Papal documents, that tradition is strengthened by a solemn decision of the Holy See.

"As far as it could lawfully be done in accordance with the data of the Church's official teaching, and of modern research.'"

We shall remember those words when we set ourselves to examine the rival claims put forward by the aspirant to the honor of being founder of the Rosary, bye-and-bye.



But before doing so, let us examine one statement more by the same gifted writer. He says, "None the less this thoroughly Catholic organization had committed itself to the publication of the view that there is no evidence to prove that Saint Dominic instituted the Rosary; but that, on the contrary, there are strong arguments to justify the conclusion that he could not have done so."

Does Father Thurston want us to come to the conclusion that, because the board of editors "committed themselves to the publication of his views on the Rosary tradition," they thereby committed themselves as favorers and promoters of those views? Will the writer favor us with an endorsement of that statement by the board of editors? If not, I say it is a dishonest piece of sophistry which as a controversialist he should not have made use of.

A. M. SKELLY, O. P.

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**FATHER SKELLY'S REJOINDER, CATHOLIC
SENTINEL, 23rd JANUARY, 1913.**

Second Part

Critics Completely Ignored in Papal Documents

Father Thurston would have us accept the fact that the writers of articles on the subject in four recent Catholic works of reference give an adverse verdict on the Rosary tradition as a conclusive argument to show that tradition has been disproved. I would remind him that this is no new question. It has been before the learned world for fully 200 years. During that period research has added absolutely nothing to the fund of knowledge on the matter then possessed. The writers of the articles in those works have brought forward no proofs that were not known to the members of the Sacred Congregation of Rites 187 years ago.

I would remind him further that the criticisms of the Bollandists and their friends during all that time have been completely ignored in Papal documents and in the writings of the most competent scholars. Outside of their own body they find no



acceptance. "Their criticisms," says Father Wilfred Lescher, O. P., "may be compared to a lonely caravan passing through silence and solitude, with no voice to acclaim it; no fresh welcome to give it a spirit for fresh progress. The party, indeed, show considerable perserverance and courage; but can it be seriously said that they are nearer success than when they first started? They have had plenty of time. Their objections have attained a venerable age. It is true, however, to say that the Church generally, even now, is unconscious of their existence. The series of encyclicals issued by Leo XIII is a standard and measure of the repulsion their view has excited. So completely indeed was this done that the criticism was forgotten."

Monuments Testifying to Tradition Not Surrendered

Again, Father Thurston is quite at fault in thinking that the defenders of the Rosary tradition have "gradually surrendered almost every notable piece of evidence that has at one time or another been relied upon to vindicate the supposed claims of Saint Dominic." (Cath. Ency. Art.)

Quite the contrary. Almost all those "pieces of evidence"—writings, paintings, sculptures, etc.—have come out of the ordeal of critical examination with enhanced value; and Father Thurston only de-

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ceives himself and leads his readers astray in thinking otherwise.

That many of these pieces of evidence have disappeared in recent times "through the injury of time and the violence of persecution" by no means depreciates their value as witnesses, as he would have us believe. They were examined when in existence by critics as keen as he, and found genuine. I may be tempted some time later on to show the value of those collateral testimonies as witnesses to the genuineness of the tradition. As to the Papal documents concerning which I am particularly interested at present, I again call the attention of your readers to their reliability. Blessed Alan was not deceived, we may believe, when he testified that he saw a transcript of the original bull of John XXII (1316), and that the original was preserved in the convent of the Friars Preachers at Avignon. "Bullae transumptum vidi: autographum Avenione in conventu nostro asservatur, ut audivi." (Apolo-
gia, Cap. XIII.)

Neither, we may believe, was Bishop Lopez, O. P. (1521-1632), when he testified that copies of it and of that of Urban IV (1261) were in his day preserved in the convent of St. Mark's, Florence. Neither are we to disbelieve, without proof to the contrary, the Rosary Manual published in 1516 and



now in the possession of the Marquis of Villou-treys, which says that both bulls were in that day preserved in the great Church of Avignon. "Comme il apert par les Bulles sur ce fait qui sont en la grande eglise d'Avignon."

As to the other Papal documents testifying to the antiquity of the tradition we have them still; and it will be my duty, later on, to ask Father Thurston again what he thinks of them.

Misunderstands Nature of Devotion

I need not delay to point out how much the writer of the article in the "Catholic Encyclopedia" errs when he says: "To the initiated, the words of the Angelical Salutation form only a sort of half-conscious accompaniment" to the meditation on the mysteries. In his article in "The Month," October, 1900, he assumes the same thing, viz., that the Rosary is chiefly and formally a meditation. Why, any illiterate old woman who tells her beads could have informed him that the Rosary is first and before all a vocal prayer.

"No doubt," as is remarked by Father Lescher, O. P., in his beautiful book, "Saint Dominic and the Rosary," "meditation enters into the Rosary, and is of its essence; but in its outward and visible form, in its necessary structure and use, the Rosary



is first of all a vocal prayer. Saint Dominic was the apostle of vocal prayer. He practiced it himself, and he preached it. Of meditation in its modern sense, he knew nothing and said nothing. It is evident, therefore, that to put the Rosary straight off into the category of meditation is quietly to remove it from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century; to make Saint Dominic a kind of pre-Jesuit; and the Rosary a spiritual exercise.” (Page 25.)

The Rival Claimant Testifies

But in every dispute as to possession there must be a rival claimant. Who is the claimant put forward by Father Thurston to the honor of founder of the Rosary? He is none other than Dominic of Prussia, a Carthusian Monk of the fifteenth century. In his reply to my question in the “Sentinel” as to who was the founder of the Rosary, if Saint Dominic was not, he says that the founder of the Rosary is pointed out in his article in the “Catholic Encyclopedia.” Turning to the article in question, I find these words: “Father T. Esser has shown that the introduction of meditation during the recitation of the Aves” (in which the essence of the Rosary consists) “was rightly attributed to a certain Carthusian, Dominic the Prussian.”



Going back from this to his article in "The Month," an English periodical conducted by the Jesuits, November, 1900, I find again these words:

"It is this good Monk who states, not in one passage merely, but on two or three different occasions, and in the most explicit terms, that he introduced the practice of meditating upon the life of our Blessed Lord, while saying the Hail Mary of the Rosary." Well, we shall see if he does.

And what are the proofs that compel him, after much consideration and research, to confer the fatherhood of the Rosary on this good Carthusian, and to reject the long-standing tradition of the Church and the solemn decree of the Congregation of Rites? The claim only is put forward in the "Catholic Encyclopedia" article; but the proofs are given *ex professo* in his article in "The Month."

They consist in a short extract from Dominic of Prussia himself in which he simply says that he added something to the Rosary. "*Ad Rosarium Beatae Mariae, ipse primus addidit.*" "Those words imply," says Father Wilfred Lescher, O. P., from whose book, "Saint Dominic and the Rosary," I quote, "that the Rosary existed before his time. What did he add? He added a particular kind of meditation. '*Secundum quod hic supra est assig-*

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nata.' And what kind of meditation was it? It was that kind, well known and practiced among German-speaking peoples, which we see the German communities in this country practice still in modified form (though not properly speaking belonging to the Rosary), of adding a short clause expressing the mystery to the holy name of Jesus, as is shown clearly on page 30 of Father Lescher's book, already noted. "Hail Mary blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus Christ, Whom, at the angel's word thou didst conceive of the Holy Ghost," etc. Again, "Jesus Christ, Whom thou didst wrap in swaddling clothes," etc. The monk, Dominic, claims to have done this. I think his claim rests on a slender basis. But he did no more than this, and never says he did more. Let us further consider the word "*addidit.*" This word is not only consistent with the idea that the Rosary already existed, but seems to require it; and this is further confirmed by the words "*unde et Rosarium istud multum est decoratum.*" A better word could not be chosen—he decorated the Rosary. "Rosarium istud," pointing out a known object. There is nothing, therefore, in all this to show that Dominic of Prussia invented the mediations, or that he made any such claim. Father Thurston, in saying he did, is simply throwing dust in the eyes of his readers.



Nevertheless, it is said that, whether he claimed it or not, this method of his is, in fact, the first sign of meditation attached to the Rosary. I cannot for a moment admit any such proposition. There is a clear case to the contrary about one hundred and fifty years before Dominic of Prussia was born. In the life of Blessed Jordan, the second general of the Dominican Order, we find that he was accustomed to pray in this manner: "Take, O most sweet Virgin Mary, this word which was sent thee by the Lord through the angel's ministry," then he said the "Hail Mary" (*Vitae Fratrum Pars III*). Here was a prayer which bears a closer resemblance to our modern Rosary than the mode assigned to Dominic of Prussia. Blessed Jordan was accustomed to pray in this manner, and he taught the same to others (*ibid*). So far as it goes, indeed, this prayer is the first Joyful Mystery of the Rosary, the Annunciation. This is by no means the only instance of the kind. The recitation of the "Hail Mary" with meditation is found plentifully sprinkled in the lives and treatises of Dominicans in the middle ages."

But Father Thurston has not told us that the Rosary to which Dominic the Prussian added the *clausulae* was not really the Rosary properly so called at all. The prayer to which Dominic the



Prussian added the clausulae consisted simply of fifty "Hail Marys" without "Our Fathers" or "Glorias," and without being distributed into decades; and although he called them meditations they may be more truly called an inverted litaney.

For the sake of brevity, and in consideration for the patience of your readers, I here pass over an attempt of the writer of the same article in "The Month" to pass off, in a Latin extract quoted, the initial "D" in the passage D. Dominicus, as Dom Dominic, instead of its natural and wonted translation, Saint Dominic; an attempt, however, for which he afterwards apologizes, on reflection at the invidious position in which he landed himself.

The Verdict

This, then, is the wretched little mouse brought forth by the laboring mountain of "modern research," after much heavings and travail during the space of 187 years. This is the "overwhelming evidence" which renders it "practically certain" that the Church has been all along wrong in her tradition and in her solemn decisions; and which, therefore, shows that "outside matters for which Papal infallibility can be invoked, ecclesiastical tradition cannot be trusted"; and on this account Father Thurston "respectfully requests your read-



ers, Mr. Editor, to believe that not one objection (sic) raised by me that has not long ago been fully considered, and, in his humble opinion, adequately met.”

A. M. SKELLY, O. P.



**FATHER SKELLY'S REJOINDER, CATHOLIC
SENTINEL, 29th JANUARY, 1913.**

Third Part

Details

And now, Mr. Editor, as to the points of detail. Father Thurston very well says, "Father Skelly admits that the practice of counting 150 Hail Marys can be shown to be older than Saint Dominic's time." This is true. Father Thurston has shown one instance of this prayer and only one—St. Aybert (†1140). See Appendix No. 1. I would, however, remind your readers that the recitation of 150 "Hail Marys" does not constitute the matter or "vocal element," as it is called, of the Rosary, nor does the practice of one man, however eminent, constitute a Church custom, as we have seen.

When he adds, "Furthermore we are assured that the meditation upon the mysteries was not introduced until 200 years after his time," I demur, and ask again, "by whom are we assured?" He replies: "The question is answered in the article from which I quote, i. e., by Father Esser." Father Esser assures nobody but Father Thurston himself. His views, we are led to believe, coincide with Father



not pit my judgment as against his well-known ability, is it not better to settle accounts as to the value to be attached to documents at hand? What value does Father Thurston attach to those words of Pope Sixtus V in his bull: "*Dum ineffabilia,*" 30th January, 1586?

“Remembering, therefore, how fruitfully to our religion was instituted by the Blessed Dominic, founder of the Order of Friars Preachers, inspired by the Holy Ghost, as it is believed, the devotion of the most holy ‘Psalter’ called ‘of the Rosary of the glorious and ever Virgin Mary,’ the tender Mother of God; and what gifts were conferred, and are daily more and more conferred on the world by it; and remembering, besides, that confraternities of the faithful of both sexes under the invocation of the Rosary of the same Blessed Virgin Mary were canonically instituted in the churches, chapels and altars of the whole world; and that the brothers and sisters of the same confraternities merited to obtain not only confirmation and increase, but also indulgences and privileges, and indults from very many Roman Pontiffs, our Predecessors, and several Nuncios of the Holy See with legatine powers, *de-latere*; and in particular from Urban IV, John XXII and also Sixtus IV; also from Innocent VIII, and Alexander VI, and Julius II, and

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Leo X, and Adrian VI, and Clement VII, and Paul III, and also Julius III and Pius V, and, lastly, Gregory XIII; We, following in the footsteps of our aforesaid predecessors," etc., or those of Benedict XIII in his bull "*Pretiosus*," 20th of May, 1727. "Moreover, we confirm, renew, and, as far as is necessary, once again grant indulgences by whomsoever and in what manner soever granted, to the Society of the most Holy Rosary, instituted by the founder himself of the Order of Preachers, our holy Father Saint Dominic, with extraordinary fruit to souls, and in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and nominally, by the aforesaid Saint Pius V. '*Inter desiderabilia*,' 28th of June, 1509, and by Sixtus V, '*Dum ineffabilia*,' 30th of January, 1586; by Urban IV, by John, called XXII, Sixtus IV, Innocent VIII, Alexander VI, Julius II, and Leo X," etc.

In those bulls of Sixtus V and Benedict XIII the acts of very many Popes are recorded as granting indulgences to the Rosary confraternities and attributing the institution of the Rosary to Saint Dominic—"the Blessed Dominic, founder of the Order of Friars Preachers," and "inspired by the Holy Ghost as is believed."

I note, moreover, in those bulls, the names of Urban IV, who died 1264, and John XXII, whose bull is dated 1316, and Sixtus IV, who died in 1484,



representing a tradition continued through the 13th, 14th and 15 centuries.

Leo XIII, moreover, in his constitution, "*Supremi*," September 1st, 1883, quotes the same Urban IV as testifying that "gifts are conferred on the Christian people daily through the instrumentality of the Rosary," and in the face of those Papal testimonies bringing the tradition back to within forty years of the death of Saint Dominic, Father Thurston has the hardihood to assert that the bull "*Pastoris Aeterni*," of Leo X, 1520, is "the earliest Papal document" connecting Saint Dominic with the Rosary; and that, on the contrary, Dominic of Prussia, who did not come into the world until the 15th century, was its founder.

Will Father Thurston tell us what is the historic value to be placed on these? Or this of Benedict XIV: "When thirty-four years had elapsed since the death of Saint Dominic, i. e., 1254, an indulgence was granted by Pope Alexander IV to the confraternity of the Most Holy Rosary erected in the Church of the Friars Preachers in the City of Piacenza. Copies of this apostolic letter drawn from the archives of the Dominican Convent of St. John, in the said city, are printed at length at the end of the second volume of the '*Historia Ecclesiastica*' compiled by Peter Campi in the '*Regesta*'



Privilegiarum' No. 108, page 406, tom. II, where the same writer, on page 216, refers to the institution of the said confraternity in the church of the same Friars Preachers." (Memorial.)

The originals of these early bulls together with many others relating to the same subject, are now lost "through the injury of time, and the ravages of the heretics of the 16th century." (Acta Sanctae Sedis, page 1, note.)

But as we cannot have the original thirteenth century manuscripts "photographed and with facsimile printed in the columns of the 'Catholic Sentinel,' with indications of the page and the place where the original may be inspected," Father Thurston assumes they were all forgeries. This is a sample indicating the mental attitude of a 20th century critic.

I have already asked in my defense published in your issue of October 31st, what Father Thurston says to the statement of the Papal Legate, Alexander, in his concession of indulgence to the confraternity of the Rosary in Cologne, 1476: "The confraternity of the Rosary of the Blessed Virgin has recently been most salutarily . . . restored

Note—Of the 60,000 letters (bulls, rescripts, etc.) sent forth from Avignon by Pope John XXII., 54,000 are now lost; and so of the papal documents of this and earlier periods. (Kirchen-lexikon VI., pp. 1494-1495.)



and renewed by the Dominicans; since in various histories it is read that it was preached by the Blessed Dominic; but had fallen into disuse and almost into oblivion by neglect, etc. Or to the bull of Pope Sixtus IV, May 12th, 1479, which has these words: "There has existed for some time a certain mode or rite of prayer which . . . was observed long ago (olim) by the faithful in divers places," etc. Or to that of Alexander VI, 1495, which speaks "of Saint Dominic, the renowned preacher of the confraternity of the Rosary *long ago.*" (Olim.)

I need not ask him what is his opinion of the statement of Blessed Alan in his letter to the Bishop of Tournai, where he says that the Rosary was preached "in olden times" (antiquis temporibus) by Saint Dominic, the founder of the Friars Preachers; since he has, all along, and most unjustly, charged him with imbelicity and delusion, if not with direct fraud.

Dominic of Prussia, we must remember, was dead not more than fifteen years when those statements were made. Could his memory have been so utterly forgotten in that short period that the Dominicans, through Blessed Alan de la Roche, the man who was "full of delusions," could usurp his



fame, impose on Bishops, Legates, and Popes, and deceive the whole Church? "He it undoubtedly was who first suggested the idea that the devotion of Our Lady's Psalter was instituted or revived by Saint Dominic" (Cath Ency. Art). Blessed Alan did all this in five years, 1470-75!

And the Carthusians themselves, instead of reclaiming against the imposition which robbed their brother of the glory of being entitled "the founder of the Rosary," were the first to fall in with it!!

And all this occurred in that "uncritical age" known as the culmination of the "Renaissance Period"!!! Are not those "wild imaginings" and isn't somebody "full of delusions"?

Father Thurston wants me to get him 13th or 14th century manuscripts "photographed," etc., in order to satisfy him that they are genuine.

Won't he accept the principles of criticism enunciated by one of his own confreres, Rev. Henry Woods, S. J., and published in last week's issue of "America"—principles, "as I must respectfully insist, that were submitted to an editorial board and censored by them before publication?"

Here they are: "An exaggeration of modern historical criticism is to value inordinately the document to the detriment of tradition. Both are

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mere human testimony, and each is liable to fall into error in its own way. Nevertheless, tradition has its value, and human documents are neither necessarily adequate, so as to include all their authors should have recorded, or even had the will to record; nor are they infallible, so that their record is necessarily free from error. The sane historian combines the two to reach a conclusion that rarely is more than probable in all its extension. If he has to moderate tradition by documents, he has also to supplement, or correct documents by tradition. In history, that exaggeration is a blunder.” (America, 18th of January, 1913, p. 343.)

If he won't accept them, perhaps he might accept the testimony of the Bollandists? Now, we read in the life of Blessed Clara Gambacorta, who was born in 1362, that when she was 12 years of age, i. e., as early as 1374, she with her little companions were in the habit of “saying the Rosary on their knees.” This statement, which the Bollandist editors say was taken from a manuscript written by a Nun who was a contemporary of hers, and belonging to the Convent of Saint Dominic at Pisa, is to be found in the second volume of the Bollandists, April 17.



Blessed Alan de la Roche was not born until 54 years after this, and even Dominic of Prussia had not yet seen the light. Now, I ask Father Thurston what he has to say to those various statements, and I pause for a reply.

A. M. SKELLY, O. P.

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**FATHER SKELLY'S REJOINDER, CATHOLIC
SENTINEL, 6th FEBRUARY, 1913.**

Fourth Part

Blessed Alan's Reputation Assailed

Father Thurston says I accuse him of treating Alan de Rupe disrespectfully; and that, though I have called him Blessed, he has never been beatified by the Church. We have examples of the attack made by the writer on the reputation of Blessed Alan in this very reply, where he speaks of his "wild imaginings," and again in his article in the "Catholic Encyclopedia," where he speaks of him as being "full of delusions." In his article in the "Month," December, 1900, he impeaches Alan's veracity on the ground that he had issued and made public "a preposterous Indulgence," though that Indulgence granted by Innocent VIII was genuine, and continued in the Church to our own time, till suppressed by Pope Leo XIII, in 1898. And, to pass over other attacks on the reputation of Alan, we find in his article in the "Month," March, 1901 (p. 295), this shameful passage: "I am led then to fall back upon the conjecture that some designing person, taking advantage of the extreme im-



pressionability and credulity of Alanus
fabricated a book filled with the most extravagant
Rosary miracles, and then, under the name of the
'Mariale' of John de Monte and Thomas de Templo,
palmed them off upon Alanus. He will not, of
course, have consented to part with this priceless
treasure without the payment of a good round sum
in hard cash." The sordid touch given by the
writer to his conjecture that the venerable servant
of God could not be made possessor of "his price-
less treasure" "without the payment of a good
round sum in hard cash" is a revelation as to the
elevated character of the writer himself.

He says: "None have spoken more frankly of
Alan's wild imaginings than the Dominicans them-
selves," and as examples of this he specifies Quetif
and Echard's great bibliography and the article on
"Alanus" in the "Catholic Encyclopedia," written
by a Dominican.

Blessed Alan's Character Vindicated

Now here is the testimony of Echard, the con-
tinuator of the bibliography commenced by Quetif
concerning Alan: "Apud omnes, pietatis ac sancti-
tatis fama inclaruit"—"the fame of his piety and
sanctity made him famous with all." And the
writer of the article "Alanus" in the "Catholic

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Encyclopedia," to whom he refers us, has this to say of him, as may be seen by all: "Early in life he (Alanus) entered the Dominican Order, and while pursuing his studies at St. Jacques, Paris, he distinguished himself in philosophy and theology. From 1459 to 1475 he taught almost uninterruptedly at Paris, Lille, Donai, Ghent and Rostock, in Germany, where, in 1473, he was made master in sacred theology. During his sixteen years of teaching he became a most renowned preacher. He was indefatigable in what he regarded as his special mission, the preaching and re-establishment of the Rosary, which he did with success throughout Northern France, Flanders and the Netherlands. His vision of the restoration of the devotion of the Rosary is assigned to the year 1460."

True, the writer of the article subjoins: "His relations of the visions and sermons of Saint Dominic, supposed to have been revealed to Alan, are not to be regarded as historical." And why? First, because things revealed in vision are to be regarded as outside the domain of historic narrative, which deals with facts known by means of the ordinary and natural channels of information. And, secondly, because, as is well known, his works were tampered with after his death by injudicious and unenlightened editors.



For the extravagances in those corrupt treatises, and for the few errors they contain, the writings of Blessed Alan have been criticised, and were criticised by Dominicans from the beginning, though the Bollandists, unscrupulous critics that they were, mention not a word about this. And Father Thurston, though he knows as well as I do the facts about the editing of the writings of Blessed Alan, writings which, on the whole, are most beautiful and edifying, and worthy of a most learned and holy man, says not a word to save his reputation from opprobrium.

The writer in his reply concludes by saying what is quite true, that "Alan has never been beatified by the Church."

But I would have him remember that there are hundreds of venerable servants of God who have been acclaimed "blessed" by the veneration of the faithful towards their memory, and by the writers of all time, who have not yet been beatified by the Church. I could recount a dozen Dominicans who, although they bore the title of "blessed" for centuries have had their claims to heroic sanctity recognized solemnly by the Church only within recent years. Surely, their reputation for eminent sanctity which has been recognized for centuries should save them from being held up for ridicule



by responsible Catholic writers. In the treatise we have so often alluded to, the "Memorial" of Pope Benedict XIV, the learned promotor of the Faith, gives him that title at least half a dozen times. And though he takes views adverse to those put forth in the corrupt writings published over his name, yet in all we find nothing attributed to the venerable servant of God in any way derogatory to his reputation for exalted sanctity.

But the reputation of Blessed Alan de la Roche for sanctity and for sanity of statement is far above the reach of his modern traducers. For, as we read in the lessons of the octave of the Feast of the Most Holy Rosary in the Dominican Breviary, revised and corrected by the Sacred Congregation of Rites: "When the Blessed Dominic, being dead, and received into Heaven, the famous custom of the Rosary, whether through the neglect of men, or through the artifice of the devil, began by degrees to die out, so that it would seem to be almost entirely extinct; the most Holy Virgin, surrounded with immense light, appeared to Brother Alan of Britany and exhorted him to try and restore with all their power, both himself and his companion preachers, the fallen away devotion of the Holy Rosary. The Queen of Heaven told the same Brother Alan that this simple and easy form of



prayer was most pleasing to Herself and most efficacious to obtain the Divine mercy, salutary for the people, and a present aid against every evil.”

Conclusion

And now, Mr. Editor, let me recall to your, perhaps, overtaxed readers that all those are only details bearing on the great question at issue, which alone we must keep before us. I said in my defense that Father Thurston brought forth no proofs to discredit the great tradition, that were not considered and rejected in the year 1725 by the Sacred Congregation of Rites. I add to that statement, now, that neither does Father Esser, neither do the writers in any one of the Catholic works of reference that Father Thurston adduces to sustain his views.

This being so, I ask, is it not time for him to desist from disturbing the piety of the faithful on this and other subjects of devotion, and from his mischievous and unavailing attempts to discredit our Holy Mother, the Church, in her assertion of some of the great traditions of her luminous and glorious history?

A. M. SKELLY, O. P.



Appendix No. 1

(See Page 15)

In my original reply I said “granted,” to signify that though the custom of reciting 150 “Aves” might prevail in the Church before St. Dominic’s time, this would not tell against the claim of his being founder of the Rosary.

In point of fact, there was no such custom, either among the clergy or the laity, with Monks, or lay-brothers. The solitary example Father Thurston can adduce is Saint Aybert (†1140). True, he cites another example, that of one Eulalia. But as to this Eulalia, there is nothing in the manuscripts to indicate who she was, where she lived, or to what Order or century she belonged. Nor is there any statement in the life of St. Aybert to show that he propagated the recital of 150 Aves among the people.

How, then, can he have the hardihood to state (Ency. Art. p. 185): “In any case it is certain that in the course of the 12th century, and before the birth of St. Dominic the practice of reciting 50 or 150 ‘Ave Marias’ had become generally familiar.



The most conclusive evidence of this is furnished by the 'Mary Legends' or stories of Our Lady, which obtained wide circulation at this epoch. The story of Eulalia in particular," etc.

He does not tell us that the "Mary Legends" belong to the thirteenth century, when devotion to Our Lady obtained an immense development, chiefly through the preaching and influence of the Dominicans.

In the same article he says: "It was only in the middle of the 12th century that the 'Hail Mary' came at all generally into use as a formula of devotion."

Here again he draws on his imagination. The "Hail Mary" was absolutely unknown as a popular prayer till preached by the Dominicans in the thirteenth century. Though the "Ave Maria" was inserted in two places in the liturgy from earlier times, it was only in 1198 (i. e., in St. Dominic's time) that it was for the first time in the Church recommended as a prayer for the people, and this, in a synodal order by Eude de Sully, Bishop of Paris. Thirty years after St. Dominic's death (1221) we have indications to prove that the custom of reciting the "Hail Mary" 50, 100, 150, 200 and 1,000 times, i. e., multiples of the third part of the Rosary, daily, was

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widespread, especially with the Dominican Fathers, Brothers and Sisters.

In Page 186, in the same article, he says: "Not less remarkable is the account of a similar devotional exercise (i. e., of 50 'Hail Marys,' divided into sets of ten), according to the 'Corpus Christi' ms. of the '*Ancren Riule*.' This text can, in any case, be *hardly* later than 1200," and he goes on to say: "When we find such an exercise recommended to a little group of anchoritesses in a corner of England twenty years before any Dominican foundation was made in this country, it seems difficult to resist the conclusion that the custom of reciting 50 or 150 'Aves' had grown familiar independently of, and earlier than, the preaching of St. Dominic."

This is a typical example of Father Thurston's style of argument, "the text can, in any case, be hardly later than 1200," "when we find," etc., "twenty years before any foundation," etc., "it seems difficult to resist the conclusion," etc.

No, Father Thurston, this is one of your numerous pretty conjectures concerning dates, etc., and we can *hardly* follow you.

In his article (Cath. Ency. p. 185) he says: "Even more important is the fact that such strings of beads were known throughout the middle ages—and in some continental tongues are known to this day as

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paternosters. The evidence for this is *overwhelming* and comes from every part of Europe. Now, the *obvious inference* is that an appliance which was persistently called a *paternoster* had, at least, originally been designed for counting 'Our Fathers.' This inference becomes a *practical certainty* when we remember that it was only in the middle of the 12th century that the 'Hail Mary' came at all generally into use as a formula of devotion. 'Such strings of beads were known throughout the middle ages as *paternosters*.'

Why cannot learned critics in our days be definite in their statements? What does the writer mean by the phrase "*throughout the middle ages*"? concerning which the evidence of the use of *paternosters* is overwhelming.

Why doesn't he admit ingenuously, as he does in his article in "The Month," 1900, p. 414: "I am not aware that I can produce an instance of the name *paternoster* as applied to beads earlier than St. Dominic's time." This is the same writer who, in his article in the *Dictionnaire d'Archeologie de Cabral*, 1911, could assure his readers that *paternosters* were in common use in the 10th and 11th centuries!

As to the "string of precious stones left by the Lady Godiva of Coventry, 1075, to be hung before



the statue of Our Lady," it proves nothing one way or the other. It is simply "filling stuff," as is the greater part of the C. E. article, yet he concludes with this precious inference: "It is *morally impossible* that the Lady Godiva's circle of jewels could have been intended to count 'Ave Marias.' Hence there can be *no doubt* that the strings of precious beads were called *paternosters*, because for a long time they were principally employed to number repetitions of the Lord's Prayer"—a characteristic example of 20th century scholarship. Who has told him that the Lady Godiva's "strings of precious stones" were prayer beads at all?

As to the beads found in the tomb of St. Rosalia (†1160), it is simply a phantom of the writer's. See Act. SS. tom. II, Sept. Venice, 1756, pages 13-27.

The fact is the counting apparatus known as the *paternoster* was *absolutely unknown* in the 12th century. By the year 1268 we find three corporations of workmen in Paris alone for the making of these objects. And so of other cities—Rome, Lubec, Dantzic, Bremen, Cologne, etc. Why this *vogue* in the use of *paternosters* in the half century succeeding the death of St. Dominic? We read of Blessed Romeo of Levia (†1261), Bl. Venturin of Pergamus (†1314), the Dauphin Humbert (†1355), Bl. Clara



(†1378), St. Agnes (†1317), St. Catherine of Siena (†1380), St. Vincent Ferrer (†1419), etc., all Dominicans having *paternosters*. The provincial chapter of the Roman province of the Dominican Order held in Orvieto, 1261, forbids lay-brothers to have *paternosters* in amber or coral. What was the *paternoster*? Nothing else than the Rosary beads composed of 150 small beads, divided into decades by 15 larger ones; or of 50 small beads divided into decades by five larger ones, as is shown by St. Vincent Ferrer's *paternoster* gifted by him at his death, 1419, to the Duchess of Brittany, and still to be seen preserved with veneration by the Carmelite Sisters of Nantes.



Appendix No. 2

(See page 16)

In this whole matter concerning the negative argument, Father Thurston appears to me to exhibit great ignorance.

And, first, there are not eight or nine, but fifteen, early "lives" of St. Dominic. Then, they, one and all, are not lives of the Saint in the ordinary sense of the word at all, but reminiscences or examples taken from his life.

The writers of these "lives" had no intention of telling all the facts of his life, and we know that they knowingly and willingly omitted many important things that they knew of him.

Thus, Blessed Jordan of Saxony passes over in silence the vision of Innocent III, who saw the Church of the Lattern menaced with ruin, and St. Dominic sustaining it on his shoulders, etc.—a vision which led to the confirmation of the Order. He passes over in silence the raising from the dead of the young Napoleon, nephew of Cardinal Stephen; the Mission of the Angels, who carried bread to the refectory, etc. Blessed Jordan knew all these facts.

Another "biographer," Bartolomew of Trent, lets



fall from his pen in regard to miracles a word which reveals in what spirit the writers of the 13th century wrote what we decorate with the name of "Lives." "Christ Jesus," says he, "worked by His servant many other signs and miracles which it would be too long to relate. Those which we have given will suffice for the edification of the faithful and for the eulogy of the Saint," and so of the others. It was only in the 14th century that Bernard Gui put in record for the first time the fact of the Saint's presence at the battle of Muret.

The Saint passed ten years of his life battling against the Albigenses in Languedoc. All that his "biographers" tell of this important period of his labors is the matter solely of two or three anecdotes.

And what do those "lives" tell us of his foundations of the Order; of the houses instituted by him; of the interior organization of the religious life in the convents? Almost nothing.

More remarkable still, not one of those "lives" tells us anything about the institution of the confraternities of the Blessed Virgin, more than twenty of which, we know from official documents, existed in the 13th century. Who founded them? Who took the initiative in their institution? What were their exercises, etc.?



Not one of the fifteen "lives" says a single word concerning the Third Order. Was, then, St. Dominic its founder? It is only 160 years after his death that Blessed Raymond of Capua, in his life of St. Catherine of Siena, lets us know for the first time that St. Dominic was its founder.

In the fifteen "Lives" there is not a word about the Saint's writings, particularly his commentaries on St. Mathew and St. Paul, which St. Antoninus (†1459) reports that men worthy of faith declare to have seen. The spirit that animated those early Dominicans is well expressed by Bl. Jordan of Saxony, the Saint's successor as General of the Order and his first biographer. "It was sufficient for their Father to be known by God; and it was of little importance to make him known to men." In this view they did not even receive the recitals of the miracles worked at his tomb, lest it should be thought that they were seeking fame under the appearance of piety, and when the faithful left their ex-voto offerings of thanksgiving for favors received through him they caused them to be removed or burned.

This treatment of their founder went so far that even Pope Gregory IX blamed them severely for it. Their conduct towards that galaxy of holy men who surrounded St. Dominic was the same. Hence we know very little about them.



Appendix No. 3

(See page 18)

“The witnesses who gave evidence in the *process* of canonization are equally reticent.” (Father Thurston, Ency. Art. p. 186.)

The witnesses who gave evidence in the *process* of St. Dominic's canonization numbered 300. What evidence they gave or did not give, we do not know, as their depositions were not written; and this Father Thurston, if he read that *process*, should know. They do things in legal fashion in Rome.

What took place, then, was this: Four witnesses gave brief evidence of facts testifying to the man's sanctity. Those facts were put in *brief* form, by the *avvocati*, and subscribed to by the rest. Why should the institution of the Rosary be spoken of in a legal *process*? There is not even the slightest allusion in the same *process* to his institution of the Third Order. Must we conclude from this that he had nothing to do with its institution?

What is more remarkable still is this: The Saint spent ten or eleven years in the apostolate of the Albigenses in the South of France. We know that he worked many miracles there and converted many



thousands of heretics. Twenty-six witnesses from the country of Toulouse testified at this *process*, and yet not one of them spoke a word about the Albigenses, or of the *role* of St. Dominic among them. Not one of the witnesses at the *process* spoke a word of his devotion to the Blessed Virgin; not a word about the Office of the Blessed Virgin, which, we know, all the Fathers said daily, and in an important modification in the recitation of which he blazed the way for the other Orders; not a word about his extraordinary gifts, such as those of prophesy, or the knowledge of hearts. This being so, why should the Rosary, which was not even an official prayer in the Order for nearly 700 years afterwards, be spoken of?



Appendix No. 4

(See Cath. Ency. Art.)

Father Thurston wonders why the Rosary is not spoken of in the early Constitutions of the Order, etc. My reply is that it does not belong to us to regulate the past according to our ideas; and it is better to accept it as we find it. Things just as remarkable occur continually. Thus in the Constitutions published in 1228, there is not a word about the "Salve" procession after Complin, which is such a feature in Dominican choral life, and which had been instituted only two years previously.

The Rev. P. Richert, O. P., the recent editor of the Dominican General Chapters, confesses that he could not lay his hands on a single original manuscript of the 13th century. What is more remarkable still is that Bernard Gui, who made a *precis* of them in 1305, complains that he could find even then only a few. "From 1220 to 1246 I have transcribed the little that I could find." We can get an idea of it from the fact that the acts of the first fourteen Chapters are contained in three pages. Even of the General Chapters of 1220 and 1221, at which St. Dominic himself presided, all is lost!



That the Rosary is not spoken of in the early Constitutions of the Order, or in the Acts of the early Chapters, we should not wonder when we remember the following fact:

The Rosary was never in greater vogue than after the time of Blessed Alan de La Roche (†1475). Yet, in the thirty-two General Chapters held in the century after his death, from 1470 to 1570, only once does the mention of the Rosary occur; and that, to call attention to an indulgence granted by Sixtus IV, to "those who recited the Psalter."

Mention of it does not occur even once in that period in the letters of the Masters General, and meantime the Holy See published twenty bulls granting indulgences to the Rosary.

Father Thurston looks for representations of the Rosary beads in the art of the 13th century, and especially in the pictures of Fra. Angelico. Why should he? The beads were not worn publicly until the fourteenth century.

He looks for reference in the lives of the Dominican Saints telling of their practice of the Rosary. Again, why should he? They all practiced it. What everybody does doesn't attract attention. We are not told that they said the Divine Office or the Office of the Blessed Virgin daily. But when they did unusual things, such as the say-



ing of 200 or 300 or 1,000 "Aves" daily; these things their biographers record, as I have already related.

I have now gone to some pains to explain matters in connection with the Rosary tradition that my readers might desire to be satisfied about. I could say much more were it not that want of space forbids me.

If I have succeeded in satisfying them, I beg them to say an occasional Hail Mary for me, the writer.

Laus Deo Semper.

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