

THE
THIRD ORDER



OF
SAINT DOMINIC



Dedicated
to
St. Dominic Guzman, Gentle Athlete of Christ
and
St. Catherine of Siena, Tertiary, Doctor of the Church

and
Sponsored
by
the
Dominican Laity of Providence College

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Distributors:
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Washington, D.C. 20017

Forward

This booklet is addressed primarily, but not exclusively, to our beloved brothers and sisters in the Third Order of St. Dominic, now known as DOMINICAN LAITY, or Lay Dominicans. The booklet is not an official or complete compendium of the Rule or history of the Third Order, but it is, hopefully, an aid to its appreciation, a stimulus to arouse greater apostolic zeal in its present membership, and an endeavor to attract new vocations. A vocation comes directly from God, like a ray of light penetrating the most intimate and deepest recesses of one's conscience (Paul VI). The tertiary vocation is a reassuring sign of predestination, a proof of special love for Mary, the Mother of God, and of Mary's special love for the tertiary. It is a bilateral contract of love between the Church and the tertiary which should not be entered upon without sufficient reflection, counsel and prayer.

The Christian vocation in general is by its nature a call to the apostolate, for faith without works is dead. The duty of the apostolate derives from Christian baptism and confirmation. For the fruitful exercise of this apostolate, the Holy Spirit gives special gifts called charisms. Indeed the tertiary vocation is itself a charism whose basic norm is the following of Christ but whose special objective is striving for the perfection of gospel-life under the guidance of the Dominican Rule and Constitutions as exemplified by St. Dominic and the Seraphic Doctor, St. Catherine of Siena.

The Dominican Laity has its origin in one of the twelfth century penitential movements which centered around St. Dominic Guzman, "gentle athlete fast-knit to Christ," Father and Founder of the Order of Preachers, symbolized by the initials O.P. During regular meetings of the local chapters, newcomers are afforded ample opportunity to study the life of this holy Founder and to imbibe his spirit. The tertiary manner of life is modest, cheerful, outgoing. Lay Dominicans make a commitment, or profession, to seek the kingdom of God as Dominic and Catherine did, by prayer and an apostolate adapted to the changed conditions and realities of society. "Welcome all these realities" said Pope John Paul II "because the Church is called to become a new humanity in Christ." While sharing the charism of their Founder, the Dominican Laity strive to embrace the objec-

tives which the Church considers most important today. Although times have changed notably, basic values still retain their primacy. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all these things will be added unto you." (Lk.12.21) The salvation of souls is the first and perennial goal of the Dominican Order. The Order's motto is TRUTH, and its spirit is CHARITY. The mind and heart of Dominic, and of Catherine, were ablaze with the truth and charity of Jesus, as God revealed to the seraphic virgin of Siena:

"Beloved daughter, I have begotten two sons, one by nature, the other by a sweet and tender adoption. From his birth until the last moment of his life, Dominic, my son by adoption, followed my will in all things. I tell you that Dominic, in nearly all his words, is like my natural Son, even his body resembled the sacred body of my only-begotten Son. My only-begotten Son devoted his whole life to the salvation of souls. Dominic, my adopted son, directed all his mind and efforts to saving souls from the snares of error and vice. That was the chief object which led him to found and train his Order. Therefore I tell you that in all his acts he may be compared to my begotten Son."

The Tertiary vocation is superior to membership in a sodality or confraternity because it includes canonical status in a major religious Order and embraces a more universal objective. However, tertiaries are not priests or nuns, they are lay men and women, single or married, whose goal is the practice of penance and the apostolate in the world, not in the cloister. They are a "sign in the midst of the world." The qualities expected of them are not excessive; simply that they be practical Catholics, devout, reasonable, prayerful, lovers of the liturgy, loyal to the pope, conscious of the immense value of their vocation and resolved to persevere in it during their lifetime. Naturally this requires a profound commitment to the gospel, high moral standards, avoidance of worldliness, a spirit of self-sacrifice and zeal for the eternal and temporal welfare of the neighbor.

The Dominican Laity is an international family, a worldwide movement of apostolic cooperation within the whole Dominican family. It is a lay proclamation of the gospel. Its history spans almost eight centuries and numbers in its family thousands of saintly lay men and women from every corner of the world. The "emerging layman" received special acclamation during Vatican Council II. "The layman's apostolate is

so necessary that the Church can never be without it. The laity have important roles to play if they are to be fellow-workers for the truth. In exemplifying truth in the modern world, the lay apostolate and the pastoral ministry complement each other.” (Laity 2) Moulded on the traditions and examples of myriad Dominicans who now stand before the throne of God, they are one with them in the bonds of a loving brotherhood that begins on earth and is consummated in the bliss of heaven.

Conversion of Heart through the Spirit and Practice of Evangelical Penance.

Fundamental Rule 1.6.6

Conversion of heart involves the rooting out of vices and the planting of virtues through regulated self-discipline. The Rule makes little mention of corporal penances such as were practiced by saints of the Order. Nevertheless Pope Paul VI warned that “you must guard against softening of discipline, which is not dictated by real necessity, but by a spirit of presumption, and intolerance of obedience or by love of the world.” True reformers like Dominic and Catherine reformed themselves first of all. Their disciples, the Dominican Laity, must strive habitually to renew themselves by an ongoing conversion of heart. This requires avoidance of habitual sin, a reasonable asceticism. Seeking perfection by means of corporal austerity should be guided by competent spiritual direction.

What is the evangelical penance, or conversion of heart, recommended by the Rule? It is essentially the self-denial required for growth in the love of God and neighbor, the deepening of the interior life of grace, fidelity to the duties of one’s state in life, avoidance of deliberate sin, mortification of one’s predominant passion. It is principally interior and invisible. It is awareness and acceptance of the will of God in all circumstances whether agreeable or disagreeable. The world expects a tertiary to live an unselfish life, void of scandal and marked by patience, helpfulness, detachment from worldly ambition and craving for wealth. “I want a loving heart rather than sacrifice, knowledge of my ways rather than holocausts.” (Hos.6) Knowledge of God’s ways implies a loving knowledge, or contemplation, of God’s will as revealed in the gospels and spelled out in the tertiary Rule of life. A lov-



Catherine cuts off her hair to discourage parental insistence on her marriage.

ing heart is one that is modelled after the compassionate Heart of Jesus, Victim for sin.

Among the reasonable and practical penances suitable for tertiaries of any age or state in life, the following are praiseworthy:

1. Avoidance of luxury in dress, food and general lifestyle. St. Dominic was abstemious at table, fasted perpetually. His habit was poor and patched.
2. Generosity in almsgiving, the biblical practice of tithing. Dominic was "generous and hospitable and gladly gave all he had to the poor even offering to sell himself to ransom the captive son of a poor widow." St. Thomas considers almsgiving the most meritorious work of mercy.
3. Cheerful acceptance of failures, humiliations, loneliness, inclement weather and all other forms of suffering in a spirit of reparation for sin and for the conversion of sinners.
4. Faithful attendance at all meetings of the Chapter and cheerful cooperation in its projects.
5. Voluntary abstinence from meat on Fridays and fasting on April 29, August 7, and October 6, vigils respectively of the feasts of St. Catherine, St. Dominic and Our Lady of the Rosary. (Statute 5.E)
6. Since the Dominican Laity belong to an Order of Penance "they should devote themselves to works of penance and mortification more than the rest of the faithful," (Eccl.Sanct.22) but individual tertiaries are free to perform whatever works of penance facilitate growth in virtue. Penitential exercises are means to an end. The end is charity. "Love is the fulfilling of the Law." (Rom.13.8)

Every tertiary, as every Christian, must have a personal apostolate flowing from his personal spiritual life. Where advisable, chapters may have a chapter apostolate.

(Statute 6)

The deteriorating moral condition of modern society demands that the apostolate of the laity be broadened and intensified. There are innumerable opportunities open to the Dominican Laity for this purpose. New problems are arising and very serious errors are circulating which tend to undermine the moral order. Charitable activity can and should reach out to all persons and needs. Wherever there are people in need of food and drink, clothing, housing, medicine, employment, education; wherever men suffer illness, exile or imprisonment, there Christian charity should seek them out, find and console them. (Laity II.8)

Deserving of special honor in the Church are those lay people, single or married, who devote themselves with professional skill, either permanently or temporarily, to the service of associations and their activities. (Laity IV.22) Group and individual apostolates for Lay Dominicans exist in the home, the parish, in the diocese and society at large. The sanctification of the home should be the primary apostolate of married tertiaries to ensure high spiritual standards, regular family prayer, especially the rosary, and to create an atmosphere of domestic happiness in which Christian character and vocations to the religious life germinate. Such was the Guzman household in which the saintly mother, Blessed Joan, reared St. Dominic, and the Benincasa family where a devoted father protected the extraordinary vocation of his daughter St. Catherine.

Individual apostolates will vary according to the intellectual, social and financial condition of each tertiary. Those qualified may use their talents to sponsor study clubs, bible classes, conferences with popular guest speakers or in writing letters of praise or protest to the news media. The letters of St. Catherine, burning with love for Christ and the Church, moulded the opinions and consciences of many in contemporary society. Tertiaries may adopt foreign and domestic missions and lend support to various Catholic charities and other worthy forms of philanthropy. Visiting the sick at home

or in hospitals, participating in the parish liturgy, leadership in parish organizations, promoting prayer groups, eucharistic vigils and pilgrimages, distributing religious literature— these are all commendable and practical apostolates broadly based on the gospel. The apostolate in the social milieu, that is, the effort to infuse a Christian spirit into the mentality, customs, laws and structures of the community in which one lives, is so much the responsibility of the laity that it can never be performed properly by others. (Laity III.13)



Christ disguised as a pauper appears to Catherine begging for clothing.

Fifteen minutes of thoughtful reading of Sacred Scripture may be substituted for praying any form of the Office.

(Statute 5.B.3)

Lay Dominicans should cultivate a special affection for Sacred Scripture, read it daily and memorize favorite passages for ready quotation in conversation or in prayer. Our primitive Constitutions decreed that one of the three books possessed by every friar was to be a copy of Scripture. Jesus himself prayed scripturally, and quoted it with irresistible power. He rebuked the Sadducees because "you know not the Scriptures!" And when the disciples on the way to Emmaus were losing faith in the Resurrection promise, Jesus "opened up the Scriptures to them," and "wasn't it like a fire burning in us..!" In the Garden of Gethsemani, Jesus calmly submitted to the crowd with swords and clubs because "the Scriptures say it must happen this way." (Mk.14.49)

The Mother of Jesus knew the Scriptures well. Some of the most charming passages are hers. She undoubtedly told scripture stories to the Child Jesus and prayed together with him and Joseph in the language of the psalms. She contributed to the New Testament her prophetic Magnificat which is an essential part of the Church's evensong. From her motherly heart and pure lips came also the revelation of the beautiful Infancy narrative.

St. Dominic deeply loved the Scriptures, especially the New Testament and St. Paul. His ready knowledge of the sacred texts roused the admiration of his enemies and gave authority, originality and conviction to his doctrinal preaching. After refreshing his body with food, we read that the holy man would retire to a solitary spot where, book in hand, he would read and make gestures as if in conversation with an unseen companion. He did likewise when travelling for he always carried a copy of the Scriptures in his knapsack. Fra Angelico has immortalized Dominic's passion for Scripture by portraying him, bible in hand, sitting and meditating at the foot of the Cross.

Since Catholic theology rests on the written word of God as on a primary foundation, Dominican liturgy and private tertiary devotion should also rest on that foundation. Sacred Scripture, tradition and the magisterium of the Church are

the sole infallible rule of the faith for the Dominican Laity. At fixed periods of the day or night, tertiaries "should have recourse to the holy Scriptures that they may learn the surpassing worth of knowing Jesus Christ." (Renewal 6) "Let them remember that prayer should accompany the reading of Sacred Scripture, so that God and man may talk together; for we speak to him when we pray, we hear him when we read the divine sayings." (Rev.25) St. Jerome declared that one who knows not the Scriptures knows not Christ. The admonition of St. Paul to his convert Timothy is sound advice for the Dominican Laity: "All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching the truth, rebuking error, correcting faults, and giving instruction for right living, so that the man who serves God may be fully qualified and equipped to do every kind of good work." (Tim.2.3)



Peter and Paul appear to Dominic in St. Peter's. Paul gives him a book, Peter a pilgrim's staff, saying "Go and preach. God has chosen you for this work."

(Bas-relief by Nicholas Pisano on the saint's tomb)

The Dominican Laity should develop special devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, our special Protectress, to our Holy Father St. Dominic, and to Catherine of Siena, Patroness of the Third Order.

(Statute 5.B.6)

Mary

Dominican Laity should love Mary as Jesus did. He chose her for his mother. Devotion to Mary is a biblical devotion as evidenced by the Holy Spirit who overshadowed her, by St. Joseph who accepted her as virgin and wife, by Gabriel who foretold her vital role in the Incarnation, by St. Elizabeth who proclaimed her blessed among women. The veneration of Mary is basic to the Christian religion, as Vatican II declared by honoring her more than did all preceding Councils of the Church and declaring her to be the Mother of the Church. As children of the rosary, Dominicans should have a special love for her who was a God-bearer, and a principal participant in the Joyful, Sorrowful and Glorious mysteries of the rosary. Since she is the Mediatrix of Graces for the people of God, we are all in her debt.

St. Dominic is our model of devotion to Mary. The Queen of Heaven appeared to him on various occasions and guided him in the foundation of the Order. She called the brethren "her friars" and was seen blessing them in our primitive convents. On one occasion, Jesus himself revealed his mother's preferential love for our Order in a remarkable vision: "I have entrusted your Order to my Mother", whereupon Our Lady opened wide her heavenly mantle under which the Patriarch beheld a vast assembly of his children in glory.

Mary has intervened in the history of the Order on many occasions. She cured Blessed Reginald of a fatal illness and gave to him the distinctive habit of the Order. During an invasion of the barbarian Tartars, Mary assisted St. Hyacinth, "the Polish St. Dominic", in carrying her statue and the Blessed Sacrament across the Dneiper River dry-shod. "Hyacinth, my son, rejoice" she once said "for your prayers are pleasing to my Son, the Savior of the world, and whatever you ask of him in my name, you will obtain through my intercession." Our Lady obtained for St. Albert the gift of perseverance in the Order and rare charisms of science and



Mary presents Catherine to her Son in the mystical espousals in the presence of John the Evangelist, St. Paul, St. Dominic and the prophet David.

wisdom. Among the greatest apostles of Marian devotion was the tertiary St. Louis de Montfort whose volume on true devotion is a classic in the field.

Dominican tertiaries are clothed in the white habit of Our Lady upon reception into the Order and on the day of their profession explicitly place their lives in her motherly hands. The rosary devotion is an official apostolate of the Order of Preachers who are its greatest and traditional propagators. The Little Office of Our Lady was a part of the midnight Office of the early friars and the Salve Regina has been sung at the deathbed of all Dominicans as a final tribute of affection for their heavenly Protectress.

St. Dominic

The Dominican Laity nourish a tender affection for their Father in Christ, St. Dominic. With Blessed Jordan of Saxony, second Master General of the Order, they might say "He is the father of my soul!" Pope Pius XI wrote: "We exhort Religious to take as their model their own Founder, their heavenly lawgiver, if they wish to have a sure and certain

share in the graces which flow from their vocation.” Dominic is designated the Doctor of Truth and Preacher of Grace. On one occasion Sts. Peter and Paul appeared to him, handed him a pilgrim staff and book, saying: “Go and preach, because you have been chosen by God for this work.” Besides the many thousands of souls he won for Christ in Europe, he planned to evangelize among the pagan Tartars and suffer martyrdom for their salvation. To ensure the doctrinal content of Dominican preaching, he made study and learning obligatory for his friars. He sent them to the great university centers of Europe, for which reason he was considered by Pierre Larousse, and others, to be the first European Minister of Public Education. He was the model and inspiration of Doctors of the Church like Thomas Aquinas, Albert the Great and Catherine of Siena.

Contrary to the misrepresentations of many post-Reformation historians, our Father and Founder was gifted with a rare winsomeness and charm which God himself praised in a revelation to the Seraph of Siena when referring to Dominic as “begotten by a sweet and tender adoption.” Illustrative of the irresistible charm of Dominic’s personality, we quote brief testimonials from personal acquaintances:

“He was always radiant and joyous. None was ever more joyous than he, and none a better companion.”

“He was always good to talk to when you were in trouble.”

“He was always affectionate and quickly made you feel at home.”

“Everyone who went to him came away consoled.”

“Along the road he had a word to say to everyone, even speaking to a group of German pilgrims in their own language by the miraculous gift of tongues.”

“I have never seen a man so humble or one who despised himself so greatly.”

“He accepted insults, curses and abuse with patience, even with joy.”

“I never heard him speak an idle or harmful word.”

“He was pleasant to rich and poor, to Gentiles and Jews of whom there were many in Spain.”

“Sometimes he would walk barefoot among stones and sharp pebbles and exclaim in joy: ‘This is part of our penance.’ ”

“He passed whole nights without sleep, sighing and weeping for the sins of others.”

“I have never known him to have any other bed than the church, but if there was no church, he lay on a bench or under the open sky.”

“He fasted rigorously and was often so tired he slept sitting at meals.”

“He always appeared joyous and smiling except when moved to compassion by the afflictions of others.” Empathy was the occasion of his miracles — healing the sick, multiplying bread for his penniless friars, raising the dead to life. At his prayer a band of English pilgrims was saved from a watery grave when their overloaded boat capsized in the river Garone. A particularly edifying confession made by the saint to a close friend is worthy of mention: “I am going to tell you something I have never told anyone else. Up to now I have never in my life asked anything of God that I have not obtained as he promised.” Among the last words recorded as he lay on his deathbed were: “Thanks be to God whose mercy has preserved me in perfect virginity until this day.” “I shall be more useful to you where I am now going than I have ever been in this life.” “Have charity in your hearts, practice humility after the example of Jesus Christ; make voluntary poverty your riches.” “Look well to it that I am buried nowhere but under the feet of my brethren.”

St. Catherine of Siena

Dominican tertiaries love St. Catherine as a child loves its mother. This virgin and Doctor, the twenty-third of twenty-four children, was so loved by Jesus Christ that he exchanged hearts with her and espoused her with the words: “I, your Creator and Redeemer, espouse you in faith, and you shall preserve it pure until we celebrate in heaven the eternal nuptials of the Lamb.” Her short life of thirty-three years was filled with amazing gifts of the Holy Spirit — prophecy, healing, conversions, raising the dead, heroic service for the poor, for the sick and the dying. Prophetic counsellor, and cherished friend of popes, cardinals, royalty, sinners and the oppressed, she is beyond doubt one of the world’s greatest women “liberated” in the loftiest sense of that term. It is not astonishing then that the Church has honored her with the ti-

tle and dignity of Doctor so that we may understand by her example her devotion to his Church, her love of sacrifice, her simplicity and frugality in food, her constant prayer in the midst of trials, the sweetness of her character, her humility and unfailing kindness, the depth and beauty of her doctrine.

St. Dominic loved his devoted daughter. When the Sienese tertiaries refused to accept her in the local Chapter, because of her youth, Dominic appeared to her bearing a radiant habit of the Order and said: "Sweet daughter, be of good cheer. Fear no obstacle, for most certainly you will wear this habit which you desire." Jesus called Catherine his "sister by conformity of nature, friend by charity, dove by purity of soul and body." When marked with the stigmata of Our Lord, she cried: "Lord, grant at least that the wounds may not be visible!" Her mystical treatise the "Dialogue" and some 400 letters addressed to persons in every station of society are literary and theological gems. Her evangelical zeal make her a model of the tertiary vocation. Pius IX declared Catherine patroness of Rome with Sts. Peter and Paul, and with St. Francis of Assisi she is patroness of Italy, and of the Dominican Laity.

Tertiaries should spend a quarter of an hour in mental prayer every day.

(Statute 5.C)

Mental prayer, or meditation, should present no problem to a faithful tertiary. Mental prayer is simply focusing the attention and the affections on God or on some divine reality. It is talking, or listening to God, with or without a fixed method. Observance of the tertiary rule is naturally conducive to mental prayer because it occurs during participation in the Mass, in listening to the readings, in thanksgiving after communion, in singing hymns, praying the rosary or the Office reflectively. Mental prayer is private prayer. In meditation as such, reasoning predominates; in mental prayer, pious affections predominate. Hence the value of reading the scriptures attentively, gazing quietly at Jesus in the tabernacle, uttering

short, fervent ejaculations during the busy hours of the day to experience the presence of God. Raising the mind and heart to God is mental prayer.

Essential and helpful to mental prayer for the tertiary are mortification of the exterior senses, interior silence, freedom from deliberate faults and inordinate affections. Since the degrees of prayer correspond to the degrees of charity, a lively friendship with Jesus will advance the soul from the vocal prayer of beginners to the higher levels of prayer characteristic of advanced souls. Mental prayer is essential for progress in the spiritual life. To mental prayer, St. Augustine attributed his conversion: "Those sounds (of the psalmody) rang in my ears and through them the truth entered into my heart and tears flowed from my eyes . . ."

Tertiaries should be familiar with St. Dominic's nine methods of prayer. His conscious love for Jesus was a perpetual prayer. A companion testified: "I saw Dominic say Mass many times and there was not a single time when he did not shed tears." Other witnesses stated that he would prostrate on the floor of the chapel and cry out: "O God, be merciful to me a sinner!" He would spend a long time gazing at the crucifix standing and genuflecting alternately. He loved to pray with arms outstretched in the form of a cross as he did when he raised to life the boy Napoleon. He was often seen to reach toward heaven as if gazing with longing at the throne of God while repeating verses from the psalms. Habitually he would pass from reading to mental prayer and from mental prayer to contemplation. He employed all his faculties, even the deepest emotion, during converse with God. When travelling he would speak to God or of God or withdraw from his companions and pray with frequent signs of the cross and gestures as if in the presence of Jesus. Much of the night he spent in church passing from one altar to another praying with groans and sighs not realizing that he was being observed. He advised the novices: "If you have no sins of your own to weep for, weep for sinners in the world." He would be the first at midnight Office, and preferred to sing rather than recite the liturgy. His sermons moved listeners deeply because they were his contemplations verbalized. All prayer is good and pleasing to God, especially the Our Father, slowly recited, and short fervent ejaculations from the heart. If mental prayer presents a problem, recall the spontaneous cry of the apostles: "Lord, teach us to pray!"

When necessary or desirable, the entire Rosary of 15 decades may be substituted for the obligation of daily prayer.

(Statute 5.B)

The great veneration which the Friars Preachers had for Our Lady in the Middle Ages caused the people to call them the "Friars of the Virgin." In more recent times, Leo XIII, author of weighty encyclicals and letters on Mary's favorite prayer, the Rosary, said: "This devotion is the rightful property of the Dominican family and to the Friars Preachers is entrusted the commission to teach it to the Catholic world." Pope John Paul II following the example of John XXIII and Paul VI has referred to the rosary as his "favorite prayer." The Rosary is dear to the Dominicans because it is dear to the Mother of God who has recommended it so often and earnestly. The Rosary is a biblical Prayer which unfolds in fifteen beautiful scenes the life of Christ in his Incarnation, Redemption and Resurrection. Our Lady lived the Rosary, she contemplated Jesus in his joyful, sorrowful and glorious mysteries. As a form of devotion, the Rosary is so simple and practical that it can be prayed at any time, in any place, all at one time or by dividing the mysteries. It expiates sin, releases souls from purgatory, obtains graces and prepares souls for a happy death. Because of its vocal, mental and contemplative aspects, the Rosary is a perfect and universal form of prayer. St. Francis de Sales, Doctor of the Church, said that the Rosary is the best method of prayer if it is said well.

To prevent distractions during the recitation of the beads, a brief meditation may be made before or after each mystery; or the name of the mystery may be repeated in the middle of the Hail Mary after the name of Jesus. At Fatima, Our Lady of the Rosary requested that this brief prayer be recited after each mystery:

O my Jesus, forgive us our sins,
Save us from the fire of hell;
Lead all souls to heaven,
Especially those in greatest need.

The Sacred Apostolic Penitentiary granted permission for the inclusion of this beautiful prayer in the public and private recitation of the Rosary.

Love for the Rosary is the hallmark of the Dominican Laity who are required by Rule to pray at least five decades every day. Propagating the devotion is an effective form of evangelization because it is a proclamation of basic Christian doctrine. In the past, the Rosary has saved the faith of nations in crisis — France, northern Italy, Portugal, Ireland, Spain, Brazil and Austria. It is the ideal prayer to obtain God's blessing on families and nations. A plenary indulgence is granted for praying the Rosary in presence of the Blessed Sacrament, or in special prayer groups; a partial indulgence otherwise. Blessed Alan, O.P. declared that the well being and progress of the Order of Preachers is in proportion to its zeal in propagating this devotion so dear to the Mother of God, and committed to it by the Holy See. Despite a temporary decline in the wake of Vatican Council II, the Rosary devotion is now regaining its former place of honor in the Church. Besides those Dominican monasteries where the Rosary is recited perpetually, numerous contemporary Rosary crusades and prayer groups are flourishing in various parts of the world. Among Marian devotees "Special mention should be made of the sons of St. Dominic, by tradition the guardians and promoters of this very salutary practice." (Marial.Cultus) The Rosary Confraternity, entrusted to the Dominican Order by the Holy See more than five hundred years ago is a world-wide family of prayer which brings down many blessings on the people of God.

Evangelization

Evangelization is not mentioned explicitly in the Rule but it is implied and strongly recommended by the Church in our time. On August 27, 1978, Pope John Paul I of happy memory, in his first message to the bishops declared: "We wish to remind the entire Church that its first duty is that of evangelization." Basically, evangelization is the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the means by which people of the world become the People of God. Since Vatican Council II there is a notable trend toward greater participation of the laity in the secular business of the world and the ecclesial ministrations of the Church.

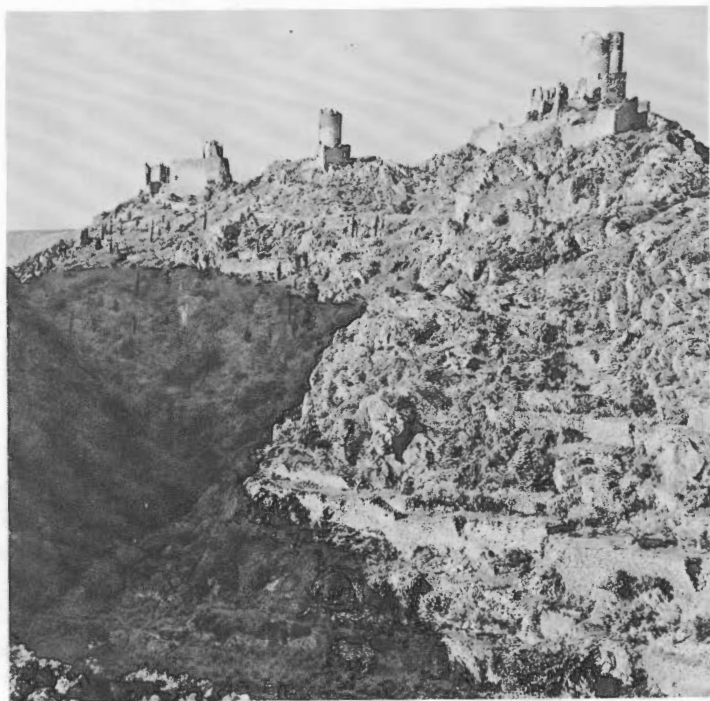
To share the gospel with the unchurched by means of television, radio and the press is to share the ministry of Christ. It is the communication of truth, the Dominican ideal. "What is truth," asked Pontius Pilate? And the reply in person, "I am the truth, the way, the life." In a remarkable vision, St. Peter and St. Paul once appeared to St. Dominic in the basilica of St. Peter in Rome and presenting him with a



"Dominic would remain with his gaze fixed on the Crucified One. He genuflected frequently. He would continue sometimes from after Compline until midnight now rising, now kneeling again....."

staff and a book commanded him "Go and preach the gospel, for to this you have been called." Dominic's zeal was not confined to Europe, he repeatedly petitioned the Holy See for permission to evangelize the Cuman Tartars and win the martyr's crown. He dispersed his first friars to farthest corners of the continent.

Pope John Paul II has urged the laity to engage in politics, a social milieu in which Catholics are pitifully nonvocal. What woman was a greater evangelist than Catherine the ir-repressible dyer's daughter, who plunged fearlessly into the world of politics pleading for social justice, for cessation of hostilities, and reconciliation with the papacy and with one another through the divine mercy and "the blood of thy Son sweet Christ Jesus!" It was at the request of St. Raymond of Penafort that St. Thomas composed his "Summa against the Gentiles" for the evangelization of the Moors in Spain, and St. Vincent Ferrer made many thousands of converts thanks to his charismatic gift of tongues and expertise in the Arabic and Hebrew languages.



The four towers of an Albigensian stronghold. They fell to de Montfort's crusaders in March 1211.

Suffrage Prayers for Deceased Dominicans

(Statute 5.F)

After a brief illness in the Dominican convent at Bologna, St. Dominic bade farewell to his weeping brethren and expired on the sixth of August, 1221. "He died in Friar Moneta's bed because he had none of his own. And he died in Friar Moneta's tunic because he had not another with which to replace the one he had long been wearing." Such was the death of the holy Founder as described by Bernard Guidonis. At the moment of his death Friar Guala, prior of Brescia, saw Dominic in vision being received into heaven by Our Lord and Our Lady. Equally impressive was the death of St. Catherine. This model and greatest of lay Dominicans spent her last days in the Eternal City counselling her "sweet Christ on earth," Urban VI, and offering the intense suffering caused by her stigmata to her Divine Spouse. "If I die, be assured the sole cause of my death will be the zeal which consumes me for Holy Church."

The hour of death is of paramount importance in the life of every Christian. No one is certain of heaven without a special revelation. Even the prospect of purgatory is frightening. St. Louis Bertrand prayed eight years for his deceased father before he finally had the joy of beholding him enter heaven. For these reasons the united prayers of all Dominicans throughout the world are a precious blessing for all deceased tertiaries. Suffrages for all deceased Dominicans, their parents, friends and benefactors are part of the daily life of the Order.

After death, a tertiary may be clothed and buried in the full habit of the Dominican Order, or the scapular, if such be desirable. The habit then becomes a last mute public profession of love and loyalty to the Church and to the Order. It is Our Lady's garment, a symbol of trust and affection for this sweetest of mothers. Chapter members are enjoined to participate as a group at the wake and to attend the funeral if possible. At the wake the prayers of the Dominican Funeral Liturgy may be said, or the Rosary, or any prayers suitable for the occasion. The Office of the Dead is recommended for recitation in Chapter, substituting for the Office of the day. These suffrages should be completed within eight days of notification by the secretary of the Chapter.

Every day all tertiaries should say an Our Father, Hail Mary and Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace! for all deceased Dominicans. Once a year they should have offered, or participate in, three Masses for the same intention. The Office for the Dead should be prayed also on:

- 1 — All Souls Day
- 2 — February 7 — for deceased fathers and mothers of all Dominicans
- 3 — September 5 — for deceased friends and benefactors of the Order
- 4 — November 8 — for all deceased Dominicans

It is a great consolation to realize that years after you and your dear ones have left this life, many thousands of Dominicans in our holy Family will be praying for your eternal happiness and theirs. It is a family remembrance which guarantees that you and they will never be forgotten. You and your loved ones will rest securely in the minds and hearts of Saint Dominic and his myriad children on earth and in heaven. The Church grants a plenary indulgence to the Dominican Laity who die wearing the scapular of the Order, or having it on their bed. A holy death is the well earned reward of a devoted life in the Third Order of St. Dominic.



“He would remain in genuflection for a long time, rapt in spiritHe reflected an intense joy as he wiped away the flowing tears....” It appeared from his face that he had penetrated heaven....

A Chapter ordinarily meets once a month at least to develop the Dominican spirit of its members and to receive instructions and inspiration from the Director and each other.

Statute 7.B)

Pope Benedict XV, a Dominican tertiary, once stated: "We know from history, that when he was forming his first disciples to Christian perfection, St. Dominic thought of gathering a holy militia of pious layfolk to defend the rights of the Church, and to offer a strong resistance to heresies. That was the origin of the Third Order of Dominicans which, by popularizing the way of perfection among people living in the world, was to bring great glory and assistance to our holy Mother Church." These lay men and women, clustering around St. Dominic and his friars throughout Europe, were given a tertiary rule of life in 1285 by the Dominican Master General, Munio Zamora, who took them under his jurisdiction and granted them the benefits of the Order. Pope Innocent VII formally approved the Rule of the Brothers and Sisters of Penance of St. Dominic in 1405. The nucleus of the Dominican Laity is the local Chapter.

A Chapter of the Dominican Laity is an authentic Dominican community drawn together by love of St. Dominic and the penitential life. Basically, divine charity is the golden bond of unity between all Dominicans on earth, in purgatory and in heaven. It is the communion of saints in operation. When a Chapter meets a family meets. The closer the family ties, the more progress each member makes in the spiritual combat against personal failings, isolation and discouragement. In the mutual sharing of aspirations and apostolates, the unity of the brethren is firmly welded.

When a beginner is received into a Chapter he or she is vested with a white scapular and given the title of novice. If a novice is faithful to the Rule and attendance at meetings for a full year of formation, he or she is admitted to profession, which is a solemn promise to live in conformity to the Rule for three years. This promise, or commitment, may be renewed for three more years or for life, which allows ample time for a final decision and growth in Dominicanism. Attendance at meetings is expected. The absence of a member is like the absence of someone from the family dinner table. It is

felt by all. Absence from a meeting without reason is a fault against the Rule. Repeated absences without reason is usually a sign of the loss of vocation. It is far better not to join the Order than to succumb to disedifying lukewarmness. Before committing oneself to a local Chapter, it would be advisable to attend several meetings to decide if they measure up to spiritual expectations.

Chapter meetings are presided over by the President (Prior or Prioress) and the Spiritual Director, usually a Dominican priest, who imparts instruction on the Rule, on scripture, doctrine, the various apostolates and kindred subjects to strengthen the tertiary vocation and to develop the interior life. He also gives absolution from faults against the Rule (which never binds under sin). The meetings may last an hour or more and may include religious exercises such as hymns, recitation or chanting of the Liturgy of the Hours or the Little Office of Our Lady, praying a meditated rosary, a spiritual conference by the Director, Mass or benediction as circumstances permit, with an occasional business or recreational meeting.

When there is sufficient reason, a candidate may be received privately into the Third Order without being enrolled in any Chapter. The reception of a private tertiary by a Dominican or other duly authorized priest, and subsequent professions, are recorded in a provincial register. A year of preparation is required before profession during which the Rule is studied and growth in the spirit of St. Dominic is evidenced. (Statute 3)

Spiritual perfection is not a matter of rules and laws. A lively vertical and horizontal union with God and neighbor in charity is basic to any religion. St. Dominic insisted on a cheerful, reasonable observance of the Rule since, human nature being what it is, "renewal for the majority lies more in the faithful observance of the Rule and Constitutions than in many new laws." (Perf. Caritatis) St. Dominic's legislative insight was affirmed by God himself to St. Catherine of Siena: "That is how your Father organized his ship. He has given it a royal discipline. It is I myself, the true Light, that thus enlightened him. My providence made provision for the weakness of the less perfect. Dominic thus associated himself with my Truth in not desiring the death of a sinner but rather that he be converted and live. Therefore his Order is broad, joyous and fragrant, a garden of delights."

The aim and spirit of the Dominican Laity is summarized clearly and succinctly in Statute No. 5 of the Book of Rules:

“The purpose of the Third Order is the sanctification of its members and others. The spiritual life of tertiaries is guided by norms willingly accepted as means to that end, tried and proven to be effective by more than seven centuries of experience. These obligations offer several variations. None of them bind under sin. They are followed freely by joyful hearts, never to be regarded as rigid routines that threaten conscience or peace of mind. They are the spiritual bonds of unity with fellow tertiaries and their Dominican forbears — the Pilgrim Church and the Church Triumphant.”

Government of the Dominican Laity

The supreme head of the Order of Preachers is the Master General whose headquarters are in the historic convent of Santa Sabina on the Aventine Hill overlooking the Vatican in Rome. He is the elected head of the entire Dominican family. Under the Master General, and subject to him, is a Promoter General of the Dominican Laity whose jurisdiction extends to all tertiaries in the world.

The Dominican Order is divided into provinces, and a particular nation may have one or several Dominican provinces. In the United States there are three provinces with the possibility of a fourth to be created. The provinces are governed by a Provincial who appoints a Provincial Promoter of the Third Order with jurisdiction over the various tertiary Chapters in the province. In a province there are usually many local Chapters governed by a President (Prior or Prioress) and other officers. A Chapter Council of three or more members is elected by the professed members of the Chapter as their representatives. The government of the entire Order is based on the principle of democratic representation and election. Superiors are executives, not legislators.

Schematically, the hierarchy of tertiary officers and Councils is:

- 1 - Master General
- 2 - General Promoter of the entire Third Order
- 3 - Provincial
- 4 - Provincial Promoter for a province
- 5 - President (Prior, Prioress) for a Chapter

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 - International Council | 3 - Provincial Council |
| 2 - National Council | 4 - Chapter Council |

Benefits During Life

1. You become a full member of the Dominican Family as a lay member of a major Religious Order.
2. You enjoy a privileged place in the Church.
3. You have St. Dominic for your Father and all the Dominican saints for your brothers and sisters.
4. You share the prayers, penances and good works of Dominicans throughout the world.
5. You gain plenary and partial indulgences, under the usual conditions, as listed in Appendix II of the Rule Book.
3. You benefit from spiritual conferences on the interior life.
4. You enjoy the society of fervent layfolk.
5. In sickness and sorrow you have the support of special Chapter prayers.
6. Due to the influence of the liturgy, the sacraments, and adherence to the Rule, you avoid the occasions of sin and rise promptly when you fall.
7. The above spiritual benefits are perpetual within the Order.

Consolation at Death

1. Your daily rosaries are an efficacious preparation for death.
2. On the day you die, if you wear the scapular, or spread it on your bed, you gain a plenary indulgence under the usual conditions.
3. You may, if you desire, be buried in the full Dominican habit. (This permission is not granted during lifetime without permission of the local Ordinary.)
4. The Chapter will assist at the obsequies.
5. Your soul benefits from the Masses, prayers and penances of all Dominicans long after your relatives and friends have forgotten you.
6. In heaven, you will enjoy your special relationship with all the Dominican saints and elect in glory.

Principle Obligations

To fulfill the obligation of daily prayer, a tertiary should pray a liturgical Office and 5 decades of the rosary.

Daily

1. The recitation of the Divine Office (new version highly recommended), or a short version of it; or the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin; or any other little Office; or 15 decades of the rosary; or 5 decades of the rosary if one is impeded from doing more.
2. One Our Father, Hail Mary, and Eternal rest, etc. for all Dominicans living and deceased.
3. 15 minutes of mental prayer, or reading of the Sacred Scriptures which may replace the recitation of the Office.
4. Mass and Communion daily, if possible, is recommended.

Monthly

1. Confession at least once.
2. Participation at the meetings of the Chapter.

Yearly

1. To assist at, or have celebrated, 3 Masses for all Dominicans living and deceased.
2. Fasting on the vigil of the feasts of St. Dominic, St. Catherine of Siena, and the Holy Rosary, insofar as this may be possible.

Practices Recommended

1. Annual retreat of 3 days, or single days of recollection.
2. Abstinence on all Fridays of the year, or some special penance.
3. Modesty in dress, recreation, and avoidance of worldliness.
4. Personal apostolate of good works, prayer, or suffering.
5. Involvement in the objectives of Vatican II.

What is the Tertiary Ideal?

The Dominican Laity are committed to strive for perfection, the perfection of the gospel. The call to this perfection is supernatural, universal. "Be ye therefore perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." Matt.5.48. If God summons the tertiary to perfection, he gives sufficient grace to achieve it. Jesus does not mock us, he has faith in our human nature. He knows our weakness but he has said "With God everything is possible." Matt.5.26. Tertiaries do not seek perfection on their own strength. Since they are called, they are helped; helped by "stirring up the grace" within them and guided by the Rule which the Holy Spirit has given them. The perfection of the gospel is the perfection of charity. "God is charity, and he that abides in charity abides in God, and God in him." IJn.4.16. Filled with this charity, the Dominican Laity must "take up the renewal of the temporal order as their own special obligation cooperating with other citizens and seeking the justice of God's kingdom. Their every action can become vivid expressions of charity." (Laity 2) This summons to perfect charity creates a trinitarian dimension, a golden chain which binds God, the tertiary and the neighbor in an eschatological oneness. The charity of the tertiary is the fulfillment of God's law and the tertiary Rule. Self-sanctification is perfected in giving to others the fruits of personal contemplation. Goodness, like evil, is self-diffusive.

Comparing the Order of St. Francis with that of St. Dominic, Our Lord told St. Catherine: "Each Order excels in a particular virtue. Poverty belonged especially to my poor man Francis who placed the principle foundation of his Order in love for this virtue. Your Father, Dominic, my son, wished that his sons would apply themselves only to my honor and the salvation of souls by the light of science, which light he laid as his principle foundation in order to extirpate the errors which had arisen in his time, thus taking upon him the office of my only-begotten Son, the Word. He was a light which I gave to the world through Mary. At what table does he feed his sons with the light of science? At the table of the cross." (Dialogue of St. Cath.)

"It serves the best interests of the Church for communities to have their own special character and purpose. Therefore loyal recognition and safe-keeping should be accorded to the spirit of the Founders, as also to all the particular goals and

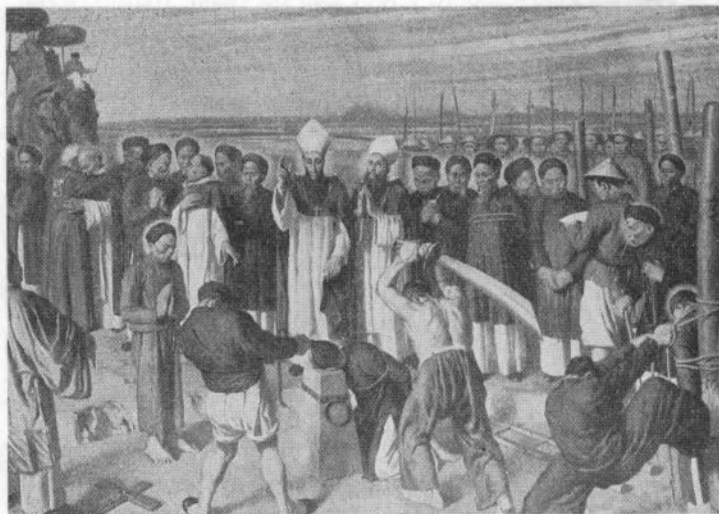
wholesome traditions which constitute the heritage of each community.” (Rel.Life,2.C)

All tertiaries are not equally capable of effective apostleship or lofty contemplation. Their apostolates naturally differ in kind and degree and the Holy Spirit leads them gently to himself without detriment to their freedom or personhood. The degree of grace and glory may differ in the measure of their conformity to the spirit of the Rule which is the exterior expression of God’s will for them. “Hold to thy Rule; keep it, for it is thy life.” Prov.4.13

Lay Dominicans must build on the foundations of the heroes and heroines of the Order of Preachers “till we become one in faith and knowledge of God’s Son.” Ephes.4.11. On the twin wings of charity and divine science Rose of Lima became the spouse of Christ and the first canonized tertiary of the New World. Blessed Sybillina, blind tertiary, spent sixty-four years praising God in a tiny hermitage adjoining a church of the friars. Blessed Albert of Bergamo, a widower, kept the spirit of the Rule inviolate as he wandered in pilgrimage from shrine to shrine in Europe and the Holy Land. Blessed Mary Bartholomew, tertiary invalid, achieved perfection on a bed of pain during an entire lifetime. Blessed Margaret of Costello, deformed, blind, lame, rejected by her parents, groped her solitary way to God through endless humiliations motivated by charity and a spirit of forgiveness. Blessed Dominic An-Kham, wealthy Vietnamese tertiary and father of a son martyred during the persecutions of the past century, made his home a refuge for Christian martyrs and was beheaded at the age of eighty rather than trample on a crucifix. Following is a remarkable letter smuggled by five young Vietnamese tertiary novices imprisoned in a tiger cage before being sentenced to death in defence of their faith. We cannot but admire their loyalty to their Dominican ideal.

“We are, all five, novices of the Third Order, and we can observe the fasts prescribed by our Rule on most days, but not always. We therefore beg Father (their novice master) to extend some indulgence, and pardon his children. Moreover, we ask to be allowed to make our profession according to the said Rule of the Third Order, and request Father to admit and receive our profession, here written, as if we made it in his hands. Therefore to the honor of Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, we, Francis Xavier, Dominic, Thomas,

Augustin and Stephen, in your presence Reverend Father John, in place of the most Reverend Master General of the Order of Friars Preachers, and of the Third Order of Penance of St. Dominic, make profession, and promise to live according to the Rule and Constitutions of the Third Order of St. Dominic, even until death." All were strangled to death on December 19, 1839. Their novitiate was perfected in the glory of heaven.



Dominican bishops, friars, and lay tertiaries martyred for the faith in Vietnam in 1838 and beatified by Pope Leo XIII in 1900.

Suggested Readings:

Rule, Official Declarations and Statutes of the Dominican Laity
Life of St. Dominic by Bede Jarrett, O.P.

Dominican Spirituality by William Hinnebusch, O.P.

Renewal in the Spirit of St. Dominic by William Hinnebusch, O.P.

Life of St. Catherine of Siena

Dialogue of St. Catherine of Siena

Our Lady places the Divine Infant in the arms of St. Catherine.

