

# Lay Dominican Formation Program Province of Saint Joseph

## Novitiate-Session I HISTORY AND PERSONALITY OF ST. DOMINIC

### SESSION I: HISTORY AND PERSONALITY OF ST. DOMINIC

- I. Early Life
  - A. Parents - Felix Guzman & Jane of Aza
  - B. Example of faith and charity first witnessed at home
  - C. Schooling started with his uncle a priest in a town near Calaruega
    - 1. Emphasis on Reading & Grammar, Latin, the Psalms & Hymns & Canticles
    - 2. Worship in common and liturgical chant were also an important part of the life of these students
    - 3. The knowledge gained here was wholly ordained to the worship of God in Church.

#### References:

Jarrett pp. 13 - 18

Lehnert pp. 5 - 10

Vicaire, PP- 4 - 25

#### II. Life as a Student at Palencia

- A. Studies included Grammar, Rhetoric, Logic and also Arithmetic, Geometry, Music & Astronomy
- B. Spent four years in sacred studies (Theology). At the time the Scriptures (Old & New Testament) formed the basis for this study, and the handwritten manuscripts with notes were very important to the students.
- C. While he didn't participate in the games and amusements of other young- men of his age, he did not entirely shut himself away from others. In solitude and prayer he thought of others.
- D. His only extravagance was books, which he annotated. Yet even these he sold, so that he might have money to live in charity saying, "I could not bear to prize dead skins when living skins were starving and in want."

#### References:

Jarrett, pp. 18,- 21

Lehnerg pp. 10 - 12

Vicaire, pp. 25 - 30

#### III. Dominic's Call to be a Canon at Osma

- A. What is a canon? A canon was a cleric (priest) who lived a life of prayer and contemplation and chanting of the Divine Office in the Cathedral. They were gathered into Chapters around a Cathedral. They followed a set rule, often the Rule of St. Augustine.
- B. Dominic when he began his theological studies, was appointed to a canonry at Osma by

- Bishop Martin de Bazant so he would have sufficient funds to carry on his theological study.
- C. After finishing his studies Dominic returned to Osma to as assume the duties of a canon. He was ordained a priest in 1195-
  - D. Jordan of Saxony states of Dominic that 11... day and night he frequented the Church ceaselessly devoted to prayer, scarcely venturing beyond the cloister walls the more to find leisure for his lone thoughts with God.... 11
  - E. Elected sub-Prior. Now he was called upon to at times govern souls.

References:

Jarrett, pp. 21 - 24

Lehner, pp. 12 - 13

Vicaire, pp. 30 - 45

Jordan of Saxony pp. 1 - 3

IV. The Call to Leave the Cloister of Osma

- A. Diego the Bishop of Osma chose Dominic to be his traveling companion on the journey to the Marches, an important mission for King Alfonse IX of Castile.
- B. This was Dominic's first meeting with the Albigensian heresy in Toulouse. He spent the entire night discussing the faith with the innkeeper and when dawn broke he was reconciled to the teaching of the Church.
- C. Their first trip to the Marches ended successfully, but their return trip was not successful, because the noble who was to wed the king's son Ferdinand had died.
- D. Diego sent a message back to the king and he and his retinue proceeded on to Rome.
- E. In Rome Dominic and Diego met with the Pope and Diego tried to resign his see, but Pope Innocent III wouldn't let him.
- F. Pope Innocent sent Diego and Dominic to preach against the heretics in the region around Toulouse. rather than to the barbarians.

References:

Jarrett, pp. 25- 38

Lehner, pp. 13- 18

Jordan of Saxony PP- 4-8

V. Preaching Against the Heretics in Languedoc

- A. Beginnings
  - 1. Right of preaching belonged to local bishops
  - 2. Cistercian legates given Papal Mandate to preach
  - 3. Diego and Dominic join this group of preachers
  - 4. All of them send their retinues home and they go off two by two to preach in the manner of the apostles
- B. Successes
  - 1. Few in number
  - 2. Nine women converts - established in a convent at Prouille
    - a. Follow primitive rule
    - b. Job was to pray for the success of those who were preaching
- C. Apparent Failure

1. Diego returns to Castile - and Dies there
  2. Cistercian legates return to their monasteries
  3. Dominic and a few companions continue to preaching  
spite of all the turmoil around them

References:

Jarrett Pp. 3953

Lehner, pp. 1828

Jordan of Saxony, pp. 9 - 10

VI. The Beginnings of the Order

- A. 1206 - Convent of Nuns at Prouille
- B. William and Raymond Claret offer their property and their persons for the work that was beginning
  1. William remained Dominic's companion and his second in the administration of the convent at Prouille
- C. The Brothers at Toulouse- 1215
  1. Peter Selia and Thomas joined Dominic, and Peter Selia gave over to Dominic and his companions some houses he owned in Toulouse. This was where the brothers first began to live together as religious.
  2. Foulques, Bishop of Toulouse granted to Dominic and his companions one sixth of all the tithes of his diocese for books and food.
  3. Dominic went with Bishop Foulques to Rome to the Lateran Council.

References:

Jarrett, pp. 54 - 71

Lehner, PP- 39 - 42 and pp. 28 31

Jordan of Saxony, pp. 11 12

VII. Approval of the Order

- A, From Foulques, Bishop of Toulouse in April 1215, as an Order of Preachers within the Diocese of Toulouse
- B. From Pope Honorius III
  1. December 22, 1216 - "Religious Life" - Confirmation of Order as Order of Canons Regular and regulated matters of a clerical nature.
  2. January 21, 1217 - "To the Giver of All Good Gifts" brings out the special character of the Order -- An Order founded for Preaching. Dominic and companions addressed as "Friars Preachers" and entrusted with the Preaching Mission.
  3. February 11, 1218 "If You Take Care to Love and Honor Religious Persons" and defines more exactly the Order's name and its preaching office.

References: .

Jarrett, pp. 72 - 87

Lehner PP- 42 - 44, and 195 - 208

Jordan of Saxony) P. 12

VII. Preaching - Mission of the Order

- A. New idea - up til now only bishops preached or those specifically appointed by them
- B. For Members of the Order - Preaching was to be the right of the members of the Order, stemming from their profession
- C. Friars were well trained in Theology and were sent to the major educational centers of the time.
  - 1. The foundation stones of the Order are Prayer, Study, ,Apostolate (Preaching) and Community-life. All are vital to the life of the Order.
  - 2. On August 15, 1217 Dominic dispersed the brethren to the major educational centers, Spain, Paris, Rome and a few remained in Toulouse and Prouille.
  - 3. In 1218 Other friars were sent to England and Bologna to open houses there.
  - 4. The friars at these various educational centers taught and preached there and also studied, because they would not be effective as preachers if they had not studied first.

References:

Jarrett, pp. 69 - 76

Lehnerg PP- 44 - 49

Jordan of Saxony, pp. 13 - 14

Wendell & Ryan, pp. 19 - 33

IX. Government

- A, The Rule of St. Augustine was chosen, because it was the Rule which Dominic had lived under as a Canon, and because it was flexible. Then Constitutions were added to give the Order its special character.
- B, The form of government was democratic - which was not the norm in the 13th century. There was room for adaptation and change if the need arose.
- C. The superior (Prior) was a first among equals, elected from among the members of the house, or province.
- D. The Constitutions provided for dispensations if needed for the sake of the preaching apostolate - a thing unknown at that time.

References:

Jarrett, pp. 101 112

Jordan of Saxony, pp. 22 - 23

X. Growth of the Order - 1216 - 1221

- A. He drew the young to him and sent them out in twos and threes to preach, under the protection of Our Lady
- B. Very little is known about the first group of followers of Dominic, other than there names
- C. Reginald of Orleans met Dominic in Rome in 1218. He was given the Scapular by Our Lady and it was then made a part of the habit of the Order.
- D. Jordan of Saxony met Dominic in Paris, but did not enter the Order until Reginald went to Paris. Jordan was very much like Dominic in temperament and thinking and he was elected to succeed Dominic as Master of the Order.

References:

Jarrett, pp. 73 - 87; Pp. 113 - 123

## XI. St. Dominic's Death

- A. August 6 1221 - in Bologna
- B. Last Testament: "These are, beloved ones, the inheritances I leave you as my sons, have charity among you; hold to humility; possess voluntary poverty."
- C. He died in another man's bed because he had none of his own and in another man's tunic because he did not have another to replace the one he had been wearing for so long.

### References:

Jarrett, pp. 138 - 152

Jordan of Saxony, pp. 24 27

## XII. Personality of St. Dominic

### A. Physical Description

- 1. From Sr, Cecelia Caesarini: "The Blessed Dominic was of medium height and of slight build. His countenance was beautiful, of fair complexion, with light auburn hair and beard and luminous eyes. A kind of radiance shown from his brow, inspiring love and reverence in all. Full of joy, he seemed ever ready to smile, unless moved to pity by the affliction of his neighbor. His hands were long and shapely; his voice strong, noble and sonorous. He never was bald, and his corona was complete, sprinkled with a few white hairs."
- 2. From the Dialogue of St. Catherine of Siena: "Dominic" said God the Father, "Has taken on him the office of the Words of My only begotten Son ... He was a light which I gave the world through the Intervention of Mary."

### B. Personality Traits - can be seen in some of the stories told about Dominic

- 1. Charity and mercy - as a student at Palencia he was moved by the sufferings of others and generously sold his books and all he had to alleviate the hunger of others. He even tried to sell himself to ransom a man who was captured by the Moslems.
  - 2. He was a person of deep contemplative prayer. it was said of him that he only spoke of God or to God.
  - 3. He worked and prayed for the salvation of men. "Lord, what will become of sinners?" was his constant prayer
  - 4. He had an abiding love of Scripture and always carried with him the Gospel of Matthew and the Epistles of St. Paul.
  - 5. He had an appreciation of learning and understood well the value of study and so allowed for dispensations from the Rule for Study or Preaching.
  - 6. He was Joyful. All the accounts of his life express joy as a central mark of his life, unless he was moved to pity by the suffering of others.
  - 7. innovative and forward looking and creative - as can be seen by the Order he founded, both in its mission and its form of government and the fact that the Order continues to exist today and can change to meet the demands and conditions of the times.
  - 8. Dominic always wanted to go further - to do more - to give himself more and more - to be more and more like Christ who gave His life for the salvation of men.
- C. The personality of Dominic lives on in the Order that he founded, and in the men and women who make up that Order today, just as surely as it did in the 13th century.

## References:

Wendell, pp. 62 - 67

de Couesnongle, pp. 3 - 21; 163 - 167

## SOME DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do St. Dominic's ideas find expression in our Lay Dominican Rule? How specifically is it democratic? Broad and liberal?
2. What is the Lay Dominican's obligation to study? How is this being carried out in your life?
3. What is the difference between possessing the Truth and being possessed by it?
4. What was St. Dominic's attitude toward the apostolate?
5. How were his times like and unlike ours?

## SUMMARY

As we look back on the life of St. Dominic, we see a man who was so imbued with the love of God that he was impelled and compelled to share this love with others. For Dominic this meant working for the salvation of souls by preaching the faith to the heretics of Languedoc. For each of us it may be different. Whatever we are called to do, as Dominicans we must study and pray and seek new and more effective ways to preach the Gospel in our corner of the world. The Word of God must be the center of our life studied, contemplated, celebrated and proclaimed.

## REFERENCES

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## CHRONOLOGY

1170. Born
1177. Leaves home for Gumiel d'lzan.
1184. Goes to Palencia University.
- 1189-1193. Third Crusade. Richard I
1190. Finishes arts course and receives canonry as a theological bourse.
1194. Canon regular of Osma.
1199. Subprior.
1201. Prior.
- 1202-1204. Fourth Crusade. Baldwin and Dandolo.
1203. Visits the Marches on embassy with Bishop Diego of Osma.
1204. Rome.  
Citeaux, Languedoc with Bishop Diego.
1205. Montpellier, Servian, Beziers, Carcassonne, Verfeuil, Fanjeaux.
1206. Montreal, Fanleaux.  
July 22. Miracle of Signadou.  
November 22. Assembly of Sisters of Prouille.  
December 27. Monastic life begun.
1207. Pamiers; Bishop Diego leaves, Dominic alone.
1208. January 15. Murder of Castelnau and Crusade.
1209. July 22. Sack of Beziers.  
September 1. De Montfort at Fanjeaux.
- 1209-1211. Documents in Cartulaire(vol i). Lives at Fanjeaux as parish priest and canon.
1211. Siege of Lavaur; Dominic and Simon.
1212. Capture of la Penne d'Ajen (July).
1213. End of February becomes Vicar General of Carcassonne; as Bishop goes to France for support for Simon.  
April 22 to May 27. Prouille.  
May. Reinforcements come to Fanjeaux.  
June 24. Amaury de Montfort knighted at Castelnaudary in presence of Dominic.  
September 12. Muret.
1214. Marriage by Dominic of Amaury de Montfort at Carcassonne in Cathedral of St Nazaire.
1215. April. Toulouse.  
October. Rome.
1216. April. Leaves Rome.  
July 18. Innocent III dies in Perugia.  
August 28. Toulouse.  
September. Leaves for Rome.  
December 22. Bull of approval.  
December 23. Bull of confirmation of Order.
1217. January 21. Bull about Preaching Order.  
February 7. Bull placing Order under Master.  
May. St Romain of Toulouse.  
August 13. Prouille.  
August 15. Disperses the brethren.

- October. Recrudescence of heresy.  
December. Milan and Bologna.
1218. January. Rome, St Sisto.  
February 11 . Bill recommending the Order.  
June 25. Death of Simon de Montfort.  
October. Bologna; Reginald sent to Bologna.  
December. Prouille.  
Christmas. Burgos, Segovia.
1219. February. Segovia, Madrid, Saragossa, Barcelona.  
March. Toulouse and Prouille (last visit).  
After Easter. Rocaniadour, Orleans.
1219. June. Paris-leaves about Pentecost. Honorius  
driven from Rome to Viterbo.  
July. Milan, Bologna.  
November. Florence, Viterbo.  
Christmas. Rome.
1220. February. Foundation of Nuns at St Sisto; proceeds  
to Viterbo; several times during this visit goes to  
Rome.  
April. Sends St Hyacinth, etc., to North Europe.  
Viterbo, Siena, Florence.  
May 16. Bologna.  
May 17. First General Chapter, Whit-Sunday.  
May 24. Lombardy, Modena, Reggio, Parma, Piacenza, Lodi.  
June 11. Milan, Bergamo, Brescia, Verona, Legnano,  
San Severino, Reggio, Padua.  
July 22. Ronzano, Viterbo.  
August 15. Bologna.  
November. Imola, Faenza, Forli.  
December. Rome.
1221. May. Bologna (Second General Chapter), Viterbo,  
Bolsena, Orvieto, Siena, Florence, Pisa.  
June. Venice.  
July. Bologna.  
August 6. Death at Bologna.
1233. May, Discovery of relics, second tomb. Process of  
Canonization at Rome, Bologna, and Toulouse.
1234. July. Canonization by Gregory IX at Rieti.
1265. Third tomb begun.
1605. April 25- Placed in present chapel.