

Saint Dominic
Founder of the Order of Preachers
1170 – 1221



Sculpture in Santiago de Compostela, Spain

Dominic founded the Order of Preachers (the "Dominicans") initially to preach against Albigensianism in Southern France and Italy. From there the order spread widely, especially in Spain, where it emphasized preaching to Muslims in the newly conquered territories. From Spain it also spread to the Americas, again emphasizing preaching and conversion.

Because of the wide reach of the order, images of St. Dominic are very common in Latin countries. Usually you will be able to identify them easily by these attributes:

Dog with Torch

According to the Golden Legend Dominic's mother while pregnant dreamed that she would give birth to a dog who would hold a torch in its mouth and would "burn the world." It has been suggested that the dog represents a pun on Dominicanus, the word for a Dominican friar, and domini canis, "dog of the Lord." At any rate, a dog is often shown at the saint's feet holding a torch in its mouth, as at left.

Star on Forehead

The Legend also relates that the baby Dominic's godmother saw a star on his forehead during the baptism, so another common attribute is a star either on the forehead or above the head (example).

Rosary

In the above example Dominic also carries a rosary, which a legend starting in the 15th century claimed had been given him by the Virgin Mary.

Lilies

Yet another attribute is a lily or stalk of lilies, referring to his notable chastity.

Book and Staff

Finally, we often see St. Dominic with a book and a staff (example), a reference to a vision recounted in the Golden Legend in which Peter and Paul give him these items and urge him to take them into the world and preach. (In the sculpture at left, the position of the outstretched right hand seems to suggest that originally it held a staff.)

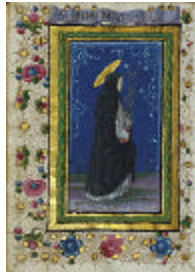
A given image may use any combination of these six attributes, in addition to the saint's tonsure and black-and-white Dominican habit. Sometimes, when the context has established who the figure is, the habit and tonsure may be the only attributes.



St. Dominic was also renowned as a contemplative. One image emphasizing this aspect of his life is Fra Angelico's painting of Dominic embracing the cross in a manner suggestive of Mary Magdalene's.



14th-century altarpiece



Crivelli painting, 15th century

Feast day: August 4 or 8

HERE FOLLOWETH OF ST. DOMINIC

Dominic is said as a keeper of our Lord, or else as kept of God. Or it is said of dominicus as to the etymology of this name, that is dominus. It is said keeper of our Lord in three manners, that is to wit, keeper of the honour of our Lord, as touching to God, keeper of the vineyard or the flock of our Lord, unto his neighbour, keeper of the will of our Lord, or of his commandments as touching himself. Secondly, he is said dominicus, as kept of our Lord. Our Lord kept him in his threefold state. Of whom the first is that he was a layman. In the second he was a canon regular, and the third as apostle. For in the first state he kept himself in making himself to begin laudably and well, in the second to perform well, and in the third to accomplish well. In the third he may be said Dominic by the etymology of this name Dominus.

Dominus is said as giving menaces, giving a gift or giving less. So St. Dominic was giving, that is to understand, giving threatening by relieving of injuries, giving gifts by largess of franchise. For he gave not only to poor men, but he would oft sell himself for to relieve and buy poor men, and in giving less, that was by making his body lean, for he gave alway less to his body than it desired or appetited.

Dominic was duke of the order of the friars preachers, and a noble father of the parts of Spain, of a town called Calaroga, of the diocese of Osma, and his father was named Felix and his mother Joanna, of whom he came as of the flesh.

The Dream of the Dog

And his mother, tofore that he was born, saw in her sleep that she bare a little whelp in her belly which bare a burning brand in his mouth, and, when he was issued out of her womb, he burnt all the world.

The Star on His Forehead

And also it seemed to a woman that was godmother to him at the font and held him, that the child Dominic had a star right clear in his forehead, which enlumined all the world.

Childhood Piety

And as he was yet a child and in the keeping of his nourice, he was oft found leaving his bed and lying on the bare ground. And after, when he was sent to Palentia for to learn, he tasted ne drank never wine in ten years. And when he saw that great

famine was there, he sold his books, and all his substance, and gave the price of them to poor people.

St. Dominic's Service in Osma

And when his good renown grew, he was made canon regular, of the bishop of Osma, in his church. And after, he was mirror of life unto the people and was ordained sub-prior of the canons. And day and night he entended to reading and in praying to God continually that he would give him grace that he might extend to the health of his neighbours.

In the book of collations of fathers he read curiously, and took the thirteenth great perfection.

A Conversion in Toulouse

He went with the said bishop to Toulouse, and there he reprehended his host of heresy, and converted him to the faith of Jesu Christ, and presented him to our Lord as an handful of the first fruit of the tocoming harvest.

Heretics Unable to Burn His Message

It is read in the gests of the Earl of Montfort, that one day as St. Dominic preached against the heresies, that he put in writing the authorities that he purposed, and delivered the schedule to a heretic for to argue against his objections. And that night the heretics assembled at the fire, and he showed to them that schedule, and they bade him to cast it in the fire, and if the schedule burned, their faith was not but treachery, and if it burned not, then he preached the very faith of the church of Rome.

And then was the schedule cast in the fire, and when it had been in the fire a while, it sprang out all safe. And then one of them that was more hard than the others said: Cast it in again, and ye shall prove better and more plainly the truth.

Then it was thrown in again, and it issued out again without burning. Then said he: Let it be cast in the third time, and then shall we know without doubt the issue of this thing.

And it was cast in again, and it came out the third time without lesion or hurt. And yet the heretics, abiding in their hardness, sware among them firmly that none of them should publish this thing.

His Books Unburnable

Nevertheless, a knight that was there, which was somewhat according to our faith, disclosed this miracle, and it is said a semblable thing happed at the Mount Victorial in the temple Jupiter. That a disputation was ordained against the heretics, like as the malady of the heresy grew in the parties of Albigenses, that disputation solemn was at the temple of Jupiter, and were ordained judges on both parties. To whom the affirmation of the faith that every each should enseign, should be written in a book. And the book of St. Dominic was chosen and presented among the others, upon the which the judges strove against them, howbeit, it was ordained that the books of one part and that other should be cast into the fire. And they that burned not should be holden without doubt for the very faith. And so the books were thrown into a great fire burning, and anon the book of the heresies was burnt, and the book of St. Dominic was saved and not burnt, but sprang out of the fire without hurting, and it was cast in the second time, and it leapt out without burning.

St. Dominic Rises Above the Scorn of Heretics

And after this, the other Christian men went home again to their proper places, and the bishop of Osma died, and St. Dominic abode there alone with a few Christian men and catholic, against the heretics, and denounced and preached the word of God firmly. And the adversaries of truth mocked him, and spit at him, and threw at him filth of the streets, and other right foul things, and bound behind him wisps of straw in great despite. And when they threatened and menaced him, he answered, without fear or dread: I am not worthy to be martyred, ne I have not yet deserved that death by glory.

And therefore he passed hardily by the way where they despised him, and sang, and went joyously. And they marvelled and said to him: Hast thou no dread of death? What wouldst thou have done if we had taken thee?

I had prayed you, said he, that ye should not have slain me suddenly, but little and little ye should have hewn member from member, one after another, and then that ye had showed tofore mine eyes my members so detrenched, and then that ye had left my body so lying, and fouled in my blood, without to have slain me at your will.

He Sells Himself to Save a Man from Heresy

He found a man that for the great poverty that he suffered was joined to the heretics, and St. Dominic, seeing this, ordained himself to be sold, and that the price of him should be given to the poor man to bring him out of his poverty. And this did he for to bring him of the foul error he was in. And so he would have been sold if the divine mercy had not otherwise purveyed.

He Tries to Redeem a Captive of the Saracens

Another time a woman came to complain to him that her brother was in the hands of the Saracens in great captivity, and that she knew no way how to deliver him. And he was moved of pity in his heart, and offered himself to be sold for the redemption of that other. But God, that knew him more necessary for the redemption spiritual of many captives, suffered it not, and yet he intended to be his pledge and to lie for him, his charity was so great.

His Example of Fasting Saves Certain Ladies from Heresy

In a time he was lodged with certain ladies which, by occasion of religion, they had to be deceived of the heretics, and then he fasted and his fellow with him, all the Lent, with bread and water, so that by the shadow of religion he took from them that error, and in the night he woke, save when necessity was, he lay down under a table without other thing. And thus these women were brought to the knowledge of truth.

THE ORDER OF PREACHERS IS ESTABLISHED

And then began he to think of the establishment of his order, and of what office it might be for to go and preach through the world, and for to enhaunce the Christian faith against the heretics. And when he had dwelled ten years in the parts of Toulouse, after the death of the bishop of Osma, unto the time that the council should be solemnised at Lateran, then he went to Rome with Fulco, bishop of Toulouse, to the council general, for to get of Innocent the pope, that the order, which is said the order of the preachers, might be confirmed to him and to his successors, and the pope would not lightly accord to this thing.

Pope Innocent's Vision

And then it happened on a night that the pope saw in a vision that the church of Lateran was suddenly menaced for to fall and overthrow, and as he beheld it, all afeard, he saw on that side St. Dominic running against it, and sustained and bare it up, and kept it from falling. And then awoke the pope, and understood the vision, and received joyously the petition of the man of God, and bade that he and his brethren should seek some rule approved, and he would confirm it at his will.

And then St. Dominic came to his brethren, and showed to them what the pope had said, and they were of number about sixteen or seventeen friars, which anon called counsel of the Holy Ghost, and chose the rule of St. Austin, preacher and holy doctor, and would of one will be in deed and name preachers. And established therewith some customs more straiter in their living, which they took above and promised to keep them truly.

Pope Honorius Confirms the Order of Preachers

In this time Innocent the pope died, and Honorius was made pope and sovereign bishop of the church. And he gat of the same Honorius the confirmation of his order, in the year of our Lord one thousand two hundred and sixteen.

St. Dominic's Vision of Peter and Paul

And on a time as he prayed at Rome in the church of St. Peter for the increasing of his order, he saw coming to him the glorious princes of the apostles, Peter and Paul, and him seemed that Peter gave to him the staff first, and St. Paul delivered to him the book, and they said to him: Go and preach, for thou art chosen of God to do that occupation and ministry, and in a little moment him seemed that he saw his sons spread throughout the world, two and two, preaching to the people the word of God. For which cause he came again to Toulouse, and departed his brethren, some to Paris, some into Spain, and others to Bologna, and he returned again to Rome.

A Monk's Vision: St. Mary Pleading with her Son

There was a monk, before the establishment of this order, which was ravished in spirit and saw the Blessed Virgin our Lady St. Mary kneeling, with her hands joined, praying her son for the human lineage. And he oft withstood her request, and at the last he said to her that so busily required him: Mother, what may I do more for them? I have sent to them patriarchs and prophets, and little have they amended them. After, I came to them myself, and after that I have sent to them apostles, and they have slain them. I sent to them also martyrs, confessors, and doctors, and they accorded not to them, ne to their doctrine, but because it appertaineth not to me to withsay thy request, I shall give to them my preachers, by whom they may be enlumined and made clean, or else I shall come against them myself if they will not amend them.

A Similar Vision: The Merciful Christ Will Send Preachers to Mankind

And another saw a like vision that same time when the twelve abbots of the order of Citeaux were sent to Toulouse against the heretics. For when the son had answered to his mother as is above said, the mother said to him: Fair son, thou oughtest not to do to them after their malice, but after thy mercy.

To whom the son, vanquished by her prayers, said: I shall yet do to them mercy at thy request, for I shall send to them my preachers that shall warn and inform them. And if then they correct them not, I shall spare them no more.

A Franciscan Has a Similar Vision

A friar minor, that long time had been fellow with St. Francis, recounted to many of the friars of the order of the preachers that when St. Dominic was at Rome for the confirmation of his order of the pope, he saw on a night Jesu Christ in the air, holding three spears in his hand, and brandishing them against the world, and his mother ran hastily against him, and demanded him what he would do.

And he said to her: All the world is full of vices, of pride, of luxury, and of avarice, and therefore I will destroy them with these three spears.

Then the Blessed Virgin fell down at his feet and said: Dear son, have pity, and tarry thy justice by thy mercy.

And Jesus Christ said to her: Seest thou not how many wrongs and injuries they do to me?

And she answered: Son, attemper thy wrath and tarry a little, I have a true servant and a noble fighter against the vices, which shall run over all and vanquish the world, and subdue them under thy signory, and I shall give to them another servant into his help that shall fight as he doth.

And our Lord, her son, said: I am appeased and receive thy prayer, but I would see whom thou wouldst send in so great an office.

And then she presented to him St. Dominic, and Jesu Christ said: Truly this is a good and noble fighter, and shall do diligently that thou hast said.

And then she showed to him and offered to him St. Francis, and he praised him as he did the first.

And St. Dominic considered diligently his fellow in that vision, for he had never seen him before, and he found him on the morn in the church, and knew him by that he had seen him in the vision without other shower, and began to kiss him, and said: Thou art my fellow, thou shalt run with me, and we shall be together, and none adversary shall surmount us.

And then he recounted to him all by order the said vision, and from then forthon they were one heart and one soul in our Lord, and commanded that this love should be kept to them that should come after perdurably.

STORIES FROM THE MINISTRY OF ST. DOMINIC

The Novice Who Wanted to Return to the World

And when on a time St. Dominic had received a novice into the order, some that had been his fellows perverted him in such wise that he would return to the world, and demanded after his gown; and when St. Dominic heard that, he went to prayer, and as the young man had despoiled him of his religious clothing, and they had done on him his shirt, he began to cry with a high voice and say: "I chauffe, I burn, certainly I am all burnt! Do off, do off this cursed shirt which burneth all my body" and might not endure in no wise till he was despoiled of this shirt and clothed again with his religious clothes, and brought again into the cloister of the religious.

The Friar Who Went Drinking

And when St. Dominic was at Bologna, what time the friars were gone to sleep, a friar converse began to be tormented of the devil, and when friar Rainer of Lausanne knew it he said it to St. Dominic, and St. Dominic commanded that he should be brought into the church tofore the altar of our Lady, and ten friars might unnethe bring him.

And then said St. Dominic: I conjure thee, wicked spirit, that thou tell to me wherefore thou vexest thus the creature of God, and wherefore and how thou enteredst here?

And he answered: I vex him for he hath deserved it. He drank yesterday in the city without licence of the prior, and made not the sign of the cross thereon, and I entered then in sign of a bubble, to the end that he should drink me with the wine the sooner.

Then it was founden that he had drunk in the town. And in the meanwhile he made the sign of the cross, and they rung to matins, and when the devil heard that he said: I may no longer abide here, sith they with the great hoods arise. And thus he was constrained by the prayer of St. Dominic to issue and go his way, and the friar was delivered and whole, and was well ware ever after to do against the will of the prior.

St. Dominic's Books Fall in the River

And as St. Dominic on a time came to a river toward the parts of Toulouse, his books, which had no custody, fell in the water, and he could not find them, but must leave them behind him. And the third day after a fisher cast his hook into the water, and supposed to have taken up some great fish, and drew up the books of St. Dominic without any wetting, like as they had been kept diligently in an almary.

He Enters Through Closed Doors

And on a time when he came to a monastery, and all the brethren were at rest, and he would not distrouble ne awake them, he put him to prayer, and entered in with his fellow, the gates being shut and closed; also in like wise in the conflict of the heretics, as he was with a converse of the Cistercians of an eventide, and came to a certain church, and found it shut and closed, he made his prayers and suddenly they were in the church, and abode there all that night in prayer. And when he had prayed, he had always a custom to stanch his thirst at some well or fountain, lest he should have any desire to drink in the house of his host.

His Chaste Flesh

There was a scholar in the house of the friars at Bologna for to hear mass, and it happed that St. Dominic sang the mass, and when it came to the offering, the scholar went and kissed the hand of St. Dominic with great devotion, and when he had kissed it, he felt come out of his hand so great sweetness, and so sweet an odour as he ever had felt tofore in his life; and from then forthon the ardour and burning of lechery began to wax cold in him, so that he which tofore had been vain and lecherous, was after so continent that his flesh shone all of clearness and chastity, and the flesh of St. Dominic shone much of great chastity and purity, of whom the odour cured the filths of the thought.

The Acts of the Apostles Induces A Priest to Join the Order

There was a priest which saw St. Dominic so ardently in his predication with his fellows, and he concluded in himself that he would join him to them if he might have a book of the New Testament necessary to him for to preach, and as he thought of this there came a young man bearing a book of the New Testament to sell under his vestment; and anon the priest bought it with great joy, but as he doubted yet a little he made his prayer to Almighty God and made the cross upon the book without forth, and sith opened the book and looked within forthwith, and the first chapter that he found was in the Acts of the Apostles, that which is said to Peter when he came first to his sight, which was this: Arise up, descend and go with them nothing doubting, for I have sent them. Then he went and joined him to them.

The Theologian's Vision of the Seven Stars

On a time when a noble master in science and in fame was regent in Toulouse in theology, on a morning, tofore the day, while he purveyed his lessons, he was surprised with sleep, and inclined him on his chair a little, and him seemed that seven stars stood tofore him; and as he marvelled of the novelty of this, the said stars grew suddenly into so great light that they enlumined all the world; and when he awoke he was strongly amarvelled, and when he entered into the schools, and as he read, St. Dominic with six friars of the same habit entered and came amiably to him, and showed their purpose, and said that they coveted to haunt his schools. Then this master remembered his vision and doubted not but these were the seven stars that he had seen.

Our Lady Gives the Dominican Habit to Reynold of St. Amian

When St. Dominic was on a time at Rome, master Reynold of St. Amian, dean of Orleans, which was wise in the law canon, and had been five years doctor, was come with the bishop of Orleans to the sea for to pass to Rome, and had been long in purpose for to have left the world, and to entend to preaching, but he was not avised how he might accomplish it. And when he had heard the institution of the order of the preachers, of a cardinal to whom he had told his will, he called St. Dominic and exposed to him his purpose. And then he had counsel to enter in to the order. But without tarrying, he was taken with so grievous sickness that he was in despair of his health. And then St. Dominic prayed heartily to our Blessed Lady the Virgin, to whom he had committed all the order, that she would give to that dean health for a little time. And suddenly the queen of mercy came with three maidens, and Reynold waking, and abiding the death, saw her come to him, and our Lady said to him: Be of good cheer, require of me what thou wilt and I shall give it to thee. And as he thought what he should require, one of the maidens said to him softly that he should require nothing but to commit him all to her will. And when he had so done, then she put forth her virginal hand and touched his ears, his nostrils, mouth, hands, feet, and reins, and anointed them with the ointment of health, which she had brought with her, in saying properly the form of the words which appertain to the members. And she said to the reins: These reins be restrained with the girdle of chastity. And then she turned to the feet and said: I anoint these feet in preparation of the evangel of peace. And she said: I shall send to thee an ampul for to reestablish thee to full health. And then she showed to him the habit of the order, and said to him: This is the habit of thine order.

And St. Dominic, being in prayer, saw all this vision. And on the morn St. Dominic came to him and found him all whole, and heard of him all the ordinance of the vision. And he took the habit that the virgin showed to him, for tofore the friars used surplices.

And the third day the mother of God was there, and anointed the body of Reynold, that she took not only away the heat of fevers, but also extincted and quenched the ardour of luxury, like as he confessed after, that one only moving of luxury was not after in him.

And this vision saw again a religious man of the hospital with his own eyes, being present St. Dominic, and was astonished thereof: And this vision St. Dominic published to many brethren after his death. Then was Reynold sent to Bologna and entended much ardently to preaching, and increased the number of the friars. And after that, he was sent to Paris, and a while after he died in our Lord.

The Young Man Cured After a Fall

There was a young man [Napoleone Orsini], nephew of the cardinal Stephen [of Fossa Nova], fell with his horse into a ditch, and was drawn out thereof all dead, and offered to St. Dominic, and he made his prayers, and the young man reestablished to life.

A Mason Brought Back to Life

In the church of St. Sixtus a mason had been hired of the friars for to repair the broken walls, and a piece of the wall fell upon the man and slew him, but St. Dominic commanded that the body should be brought to him, and anon, by the help of his prayers, he was reestablished to life and to health.

The Miracle of the Bread

In the same church at Rome one time there were forty friars, and they had but little bread. Then St. Dominic commanded to divide the bread in as many parts as there were friars, and as soon as each of them had broken a morsel of bread with joy, there came two young men of the same habit and form, which entered into the refectory or fraitour, and the laps of their mantles, that hung on their necks, were full of bread; and when they had given it all stilly to St. Dominic, they departed so suddenly that none of them wist whence they came, ne whither they went; and then St. Dominic gave forth with his hand here and there to the friars, and said: Now eat, my brethren.

Untroubled by Rain

When St. Dominic on a time was in his journey grievously troubled with great floods of rain, he made the sign of the cross and chased away the rain from him and from his fellow like as he had a pavilion upon him, and the ground was all wet about him, and no drop came nigh him the space of three cubits.

A Penny from Heaven

On a time as he passed by ship towards the parts of Toulouse, the shipman demanded of him a penny for his passage, and the holy man of God promised to him the kingdom of heaven for his labour, saying that he was the disciple of Jesu Christ

and that he bare neither gold, ne silver, ne money, and he drew him forcibly by the cope and said: Thou shalt leave here thy cope or thou shalt pay me a penny. The good man of God lift up his eyes to heaven and prayed a little, and as he had a little thought he looked upon the ground and saw a penny, which without doubt was procured by the will of God. Then said he: Lo! my brother, take it there and let me go in peace.

Conversation Without Words

It happened on a time that when this holy man St. Dominic was in his voyage, a religious man, which was of good conversation and holy, accompanied with him, but he was of a strange language, and they were sorry that they could not understand each other for to comfort each other. And they prayed and gat grace of our Lord that in three days that they went together, what by signs and what by words, each of them understood what the other meant.

St. Dominic Casts Out Devils

There was a man which was vexed with many devils and was offered and brought to him. And he took a stole and put it about his own neck, and after bound it about the neck of the demoniac, and commanded them that were in him that from thence forthon they should torment no more that man. And anon they were tormented within him, and began to cry: Let us go! wherefore constrainest thou for to be so tormented?

And he said: I shall not let ye go till ye have given to me pledge that ye shall not return again.

And they said: What pledge may we give to you?

And he said: The holy martyrs that rest in yonder church.

And they said: We may not, for our merits require it not.

And he said: Ye must needs give them, or I shall not suffer you to go quit.

And they answered that they would do their pains. And a little while after they said: How be it that we be not worthy, we have gotten that the holy martyrs shall be our pledges.

And he required them to have a sign and token of this thing. And they said: Go to the shrine where the heads of the martyrs be, and ye shall find them reversed and turned. And then he went and found like as they had said.

The Ladies and the Cat

And as he preached on a time, some ladies that had been deceived of heretics, kneeled at his feet and said to him: Servant of God, help us if it be true that thou preacheest; the spirit of error hath blinded our minds.

And he said: Be ye firm and tarry a little, and ye shall see what Lord ye have served.

And anon they saw spring out of the middle of them a cat right horrible, which was more than a great dog, and had great eyes and flaming, her tongue long, broad and bloody, and long unto the navel. He had the tail short and raised up on high, and showed the after end which way he turned him, out of which there issued a terrible stench. And when he had turned hither and thither among the ladies long, at the last he mounted up by the bell rope into the steeple, and vanished away, leaving a great stench after him. And the ladies thanked God and were converted to the faith catholic.

Friar Raymond

When he had overcome some heretics in the parts of Toulouse, and they were condemned to be burnt, he saw one among them which was named Raymond. And he said to the ministers: Keep ye this man that he be not burnt in no manner with the others. And then he said to him, speaking sweetly to him: I know well, son, that thou shalt yet be a good man. And he was left, and abode twenty years in his evil heresy, and in the end he was converted and was a friar preacher in that order, and finished his life well and laudably.

St. Dominic's Vision of the Dragon

And as he was on a time in Spain accompanied with some friars, he saw in a vision a right great dragon which swallowed in to him the brethren that were with him. And when he understood this vision, he warned his brethren to resist strongly the fiend their enemy. And a little while after, all those friars except friar Adam and two converts departed from him. And he demanded one of them if he would go also. And he said: Nay, father, I shall not leave the head for to follow the feet. And anon he gave himself to prayer and converted almost all by his prayer.

The Four Deaths

He was at St. Sixtus, on a time, at Rome, and suddenly the Holy Ghost lighted on him. And he called his brethren into the chapter, and said apertly tofore them all, that four of his brethren should die shortly, two in body and twain in soul. And anon two friars died in our Lord, and twain departed out of the order.

Master Conrad

He was on a time at Bologna and a friar, an Almaine born, named Conrad with him, whom the friars desired much to have into the order. And as St. Dominic spake to the Prior of Cassamary of the Cistercians in the vigil of the assumption of our Lady, of certain matter, and he said to him by amiable affiance: I tell to thee, Prior, a thing which I never yet said to no man, ne thou shalt never tell it as long as I shall live, and that is this: I never yet required thing of God in this life, but that I had my desire.

And the said Prior said to him that peradventure he should die before. And St. Dominic by the spirit of prophecy said to him that he should live long after him. And the prior said to him: Father, require master Conrad that he give himself into the order, for the friars desire him much.

And he said: Brother, thou requirest a much hard thing. Then when compline was said, the other friars went to rest, and he abode in the church, and did as he had been accustomed all the night to be, in orison and prayer. And when the friars assembled at prime, and the chanter began Jam lucis orto, Master Conrad came suddenly, which desired to be stirred with new light, and fell down at the feet of St. Dominic and required the habit of the order, and received it perseverantly.

And he was right religious, and a gracious lector oft in the order, which, as he lay in dying and had closed his eyes, the friars weened that he had been dead, and he opened his eyes, and looking about said: Dominus vobiscum, which is to say, "Our Lord be with you."

And they answered: Thy spirit be with God.

And then said he: All Christian souls by the mercy of God may rest in peace. And forthwith he died, and rested in our Lord.

His Piety and Humility

St. Dominic was of much steadfast equality of thought, but if he had been moved by pity and by mercy, for he had a joyous heart, a peacable visage of a man within forth, the compunction appeared outward, and that showed debonairty. In the daytime there was none more common to his fellows and brethren in all honesty, and at hours in the night and in his prayers there was none more steadfast. The day he departed to his neighbours, and the night to God. His eyes were like a well of tears, and oft when our Lord's body was lifted up at the mass, he was so ravished in his mind, as he had seen Jesu Christ in his flesh, for which cause he would not much hear mass with the other.

He had a custom, right common, for to wake all the night in the church, in such wise that seldom he rested in his bed for to sleep; and when he was weary and necessity of sleep constrained him, he rested him tofore an altar inclined, or had a stone under his head. He received with his proper hand, three times in the night, discipline with a chain of iron, that one for himself, that other for the sinners that be in the world, and the third for them that be tormented in purgatory.

He was on a time chosen to be bishop in Cotoranense, but he refused utterly, affirming to leave rather the earth than to consent to the election that was made to him.

It was asked of him on a time wherefore he dwelled not more gladly in the diocese of Toulouse than in the diocese of Carcassonne, and he said that in the diocese of Toulouse I find much people which honour me, and in Carcassonne it is all the contrary, for there all men assail me.

It was demanded of him by a man in what book he most studied, and he answered: In the book of charity.

The Devil Shows St. Dominic How He Operates in the Priory

On a time the holy man Dominic woke in the church of Bologna, and the devil appeared to him in the form of a friar, and St. Dominic supposed that he had been a friar, and made him a sign that he should go to rest with the other friars. And he made to him signs again in mocking him. Then St. Dominic would know what he was that so despised his commandment, and lighted a candle at the lamp, and beheld him in his face. And he confessed that he was the devil, and when he had blamed him strongly, anon the devil enjoyed him that he had made him break his silence, and St. Dominic said that he might well speak, as prior and master of the friars, and constrained him to say whereof he tempted the friars in the quire.

He said: I make them to come late, and to go out early. Then he brought him into the dortour, and asked him whereof he tempted the friars there, and he said: I make them sleep long and arise late, and thus I keep them from divine service, and in the meanwhile to have unclean thoughts.

And after he led him in the refectory or fraiture, and demanded him whereof he tempted them there. And then the devil sprang upon the tables and said oftentimes: Now more, now less.

And when the saint asked him what he meant thereby, he said: I tempt some friars to take much meat by which they be let to do God's service, and some that they take less than they should do, for to make them over feeble to keep the observances of their order.

After, he brought him into the parlour or locutory, and demanded him whereof he tempted the brethren there. Then he put out his tongue oft, and made a marvellous sound of confusion. And the saint demanded him what he meant thereby. And he

said: This place is all mine, for when the friars be assembled to speak, I tempt them that they speak confusedly, and that they meddle words without profit, and that one tarry ne abide not till the other have spoken.

And at the last he brought him to the chapter. But when he was tofore the door of the chapter he would in no wise enter in, and said: I shall not come in there, never, for this is a cursed house and is hell to me, for whatsoever I win in other places I lose all here, for when I have made any friar to sin by any negligence he purgeth him anon of that negligence in this place of malediction, and accuseth him tofore all the brethren, for they be here warned, confessed, accused, beaten and assoiled, and I here lose all, whereof I sorrow for losing of that I joyed to have won in other places.

And when he had said all this he vanished away.

THE DEATH OF ST. DOMINIC

And in the end when the term of his pilgrimage approached, he was at Bologna, and began to languish by grievous infirmity of his body. And the dissolution of his body was shown to him by a vision, for he saw a right fair youngling which called him and said thus: Come my friend, come to joys, come.

And then he assembled twelve friars of the convent of Bologna, and to the end that he would not leave them both disherited and orphans, he made his testament and said: These be the things that I leave to you, possessing by rightful heritage, as to my sons. First, to have charity, to keep humility, to possess voluntary poverty.

And [he] exhorted as much as he might straightly that there should be none temporal possessions in his order. And that he that should presume to touch and foul the order of friar-preachers with earthly riches, he prayed fearfully that he should have the malediction and curse of God Almighty and of him.

And the friars made much sorrow of his departing. And he in recomforting them sweetly said: My brethren, let not my departing trouble you, and doubt ye nothing, for ye shall have me more profitable dead than living.

And he came to his last hour in the year of our Lord one thousand two hundred and twenty-one and so slept in our Lord Jesu Christ, whose departing out of this world was showed the same day and the same hour to the friar general, then prior of the preachers of Brescia, and afterward to the bishop of the same city in this manner.

The Friar General's Vision of Dominic in Heaven

For as he slept a light sleep, the head inclined to a wall, he saw the heaven open, and put down to the earth two white ladders, of which Jesu Christ and his mother held the end on high, and the angels descended and ascended by the ladders, singing. In the midst of the ladders there was a seat set, and upon the seat sat St. Dominic with his head covered like a friar. And Jesu Christ and his mother drew up the ladders into heaven so high, that he that sat was lifted up into heaven, and then the opening of heaven was shut and closed. And then the same friar came to Bologna, and found that the same day and the same hour St. Dominic died.

Another Friar's Vision of the Same

There was a friar named Raoul, which was that time that he died at Tybur, and went to the altar to sing mass, and when he came to the canon, in which is remembered the living men, he thought to pray the health of St. Dominic, and suddenly he was ravished in his mind, and saw the holy man St. Dominic crowned with a crown of gold laureate, and going out of Bologna by the way royal. And then he marked the day and hour, and found that St. Dominic was then dead.

The Sweet Odor of St. Dominic's Corpse

And when the body of him had lain long under earth, and miracles showed without ceasing, and that his holiness might not be hid, there issued and came out the place where he lay a right great odour, the same time when his tomb was opened, which was bounden with iron bonds and instruments and cement, and the stone taken away and the body translated to an higher place.

And the odour surmounted all aromatics, ne there was none odour like to that. And that was not only in the bones of the holy body, but in the powder and chest, and in all the earth about was like savour. In such wise as the earth was borne into far regions and retained long the same odour. And this odour also abode in the hands of the friars that had touched some things of the holy relics, that how well that they were washen and frotten yet retained they long and many days the sweet odour, and bare witness of the sweet flavour and air.

MIRACLES OF ST. DOMINIC

A Child Restored to Life

In the province of Hungary a nobleman, his wife and his son, went to visit in a church the relics of St. Dominic. And the son was sick and came to his last end and died, and the father laid the corpse of the child tofore the altar of St. Dominic and began to weep and say: Blessed Dominic, I came to thee all glad and joyful, but alas I go home sorrowfully, I came with my son but I return without him, yield to me again my son, give to me again the gladness of my heart.

And about midnight the child revived and went about in the church.

The Drowned Serf is Revived

There was a young man which was serf and bond to a young lady, and went to fish in a water, and he fell therein, and was drowned, and he was a long while in the water and was drawn out all dead. And the lady prayed St. Dominic for the raising of him, and promised that she should go barefoot unto his relics, and if he were raised she would make him a friar and quit him his bondage, and he arose up tofore them all, and she accomplished her avow.

The Father's Son Restored to Life

In that same province of Hungary there was a man that wept because that his son was dead, and prayed St. Dominic for his raising to life, and about the cock-crowing the dead body arose and opened his eyes, saying to his father: Wherefore, father, have ye your face so wet? And he said: Son, they be the tears of thy father for thou wert dead, and I remained alone and sorrowful. And he said: Father, ye wept much, but St. Dominic had pity of your weeping and gat by his merits to render me to you all whole.

Sight Restored to a Blind Man

A sick man there was which had been eighteen years blind, and desired to visit the relics of St. Dominic. As proving and assaying, he arose out of his bed and anon he felt so great virtue in himself that he began hastily to go, and the more he went, the

more he was stronger to go and the more clearer he saw, and when he came he received perfect health.

Three Candles

In that province a lady ordained to do sing a mass in the honour of St. Dominic, and she found not the priest at the hour due. And she wrapped three candles, that she had made ready, in a towel, and laid them in a vessel, and then she turned her a little, and after came again and found her candles enlumined and burning apertly, and each body ran for to see this great marvel, and abode there so long till the candles were burnt without impairing of the towel.

The Scholar at Bologna

There was a scholar at Bologna which was named Nicholas, which suffered great pain in his reins and in his knees, so that he had none hope of hearth, and avowed to St. Dominic, and took a thread to make a candle of his length, and measured him in length and breadth, and when the thread attained to his knees he called at every measure the name of Jesu Christ and of St. Dominic, anon he felt allegiance and said: I am delivered: and anon he stood up and wept for joy and came to the church, without any aid, where the body of St. Dominic rested. And God showed for him miracles without number in that city.

The Maiden Cured of the Stone

In Augusta, the city of Sicily, was a maid which was sick of the stone and should have been cut, and for this peril her mother commended her to St. Dominic, and the night following, St. Dominic came to the maid sleeping, and laid in her hand the stone with which she had been tormented. And then she awoke and found herself delivered of the pain, and delivered to her mother the stone and told her vision by order. And the mother bare the stone to the friars, and they hung it tofore the image in mind and remembrance of this fair miracle that St. Dominic had done.

The Mother's Son Cured of Scrofula

In Palatium in Sicily, there was a poor woman that had a son that was greatly tormented with scrofula, which children be wont to have in their neck, and could find no remedy. She avowed to God and to St. Dominic that, if he might be delivered she would make him to labour in the works of the church of friars for no hire, but gladly for naught, and the night following a man appeared to her in the habit of a friar and said: Woman, knowest thou these things? and named to her four things, that was: araign, vert, pelletre, lapacium and the juice of porret. And she said she knew them well, and he said: Go and take these things and confite them with the juice of porret, and lay them on the sore of the neck of thy son and he shall be all whole. Then she awoke and did so, and he was all whole, and the mother accomplished her vow.

The Swollen Man of Piedmont

There was a man of Piedmont, swollen like a monster, avowed him to St. Dominic and he appeared to him in his sleep, and opened his belly without pain, and took out all the ordures, and anointed him with his holy hand and healed him perfectly.

In Augusta, a Doubter

In the city of Augusta, when in the feast of the translation of St. Dominic certain women were at the solemnities of the masses, and when they returned homeward to their houses, they saw without, a woman that spinned in the feast of so great a saint, and they took and reproved her charitably why she span at the feast of one so great a saint, and she was angry and answered: Ye that be women of the friars, keep ye their feasts.

And anon the eyes of that woman swelled and there came out rotten matter, and there issued worms, so that one of the neighbours took eighteen worms out of her eyes. And then she repented her and came to the church of the friars, and confessed her sins and avowed that from that forthon she would never missay to the servant of God, Dominic, but should devoutly hold his feast, and anon she was made whole.

The Nun Smitten in the Thigh

There was a nun named Mary which was sick at Tripolin, in the monastery of Mary Magdalene, and was smitten in the thigh so grievously that five months during they doubted that she would have died, and then she bethought her and prayed thus in herself: Lord God, I am not worthy to pray to thee ne to be heard of thee, but I pray my lord, St. Dominic, that he be mediator between thee and me, that he may get to me the benefit of health.

And when she had long prayed in tears she slept, and saw St. Dominic with two friars, that opened the curtain that hung afore her bed, and entered and said to her: Wherefore desirest thou so sore to be healed?

And she said: Sir, that I might more devoutly serve God.

And then he drew out his ointment, which was of sweet odour, from under his cope and anointed her thigh, and she was anon all whole and said: This ointment is much precious, sweet and light.

And when she demanded how it was made, he said to her: This ointment is the ointment of love, and is so precious that it may not be bought for no price. For in the gifts of God is none better than love, for there is nothing more precious than charity, but it is soon lost if it be not well kept.

Then he appeared to her sister that night, that slept in the dortour, saying, "I have healed thy sister," which anon arose and ran thither and found her whole. And when she felt her anointed with sensible unction she wiped it with great reverence with a bundle of silk.

And when she had told all this to the abbess, to her sister, and to her confessor, and had showed the unction and bundle, they were smitten with the novelty of the savour, so sweet-smelling that it might not be compared to none other aromatic, and they kept that unction with great reverence.

How agreeable the place is unto God where the body of St. Dominic resteth, howbeit that many miracles be showed there. Yet one shall I say to you here and that shall suffice.

The Scholar's Vision of the Four Daughters of God

Master Alexander, bishop of Vendome, rehearseth in his postils upon this word: Mercy and truth have met together, that a scholar dwelling at Bologna which was all given to wicked vanities of the world saw a vision. That him seemed he was in a great field, and that a great tempest of thunder and lightning descended from heaven upon him. And then he fled the tempest, and came tofore an house and found it shut, and knocked at the door for to enter in, and the hostess answered: I

am Righteousness that am inhabited here, and this house is mine and thou art not righteous, therefore thou mayst not inhabit here.

And then he wept bitterly for these words, and went to another house that he saw beyond that, and knocked at the door for to come in, but the hostess which was within answered: I am Truth, and thou art not true, therefore I may not receive thee.

And from thence he went to the third house beyond that, and required that he might come in for the tempest, and he that was within said: I am Peace that dwell here, and peace is not with felons but only with men of goodwill. And because I think the thoughts of peace, I shall give to thee good counsel. My sister dwelleth above me which always helpeth caitiffs; go to her and do that she shall counsel thee.

And then he went to that house, and she that was within said: I am Mercy that dwell here, if thou wilt be saved from this tempest, go to the house of the friars preachers at Bologna and there thou shalt find the stable of doctrine, the rack of scripture, the ass of simpleness, the ox of discretion, and Mary illumining, Joseph profiting, and the child Jesu saving.

And when this scholar awoke he came to the house of friars, and recounted his vision by order, and required to have the habit, and he received it and abode in the order.

CONCLUSION

St. Dominic, tofore the institution of the order, saw Jesu Christ holding three darts in his hand, and menaced the world. Then I, friar John of Vigny, translator of this book, will no more rehearse this vision, for in this present chapter it is rehearsed tofore, and was showed also to a monk, wherefore I here make an end. Then let us consider the holy life, the holy conversation, and the holy miracles, that God hath showed for this blessed man St. Dominic, and let us pray him to be mediator between God and us, that we may deserve to be anointed with the ointment of charity and of mercy, that after this short life we may come to everlasting life in heaven. Amen.

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