

SUMMER 2015



The Southern Star

ISSUE #1

Newsletter for the Dominican Sisters of Wanganui

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“If you are what you should be, you will set the whole world on fire.”

St Catherine of Siena

LETTER FROM MOTHER Prioress GENERAL

Mother Mary Micaela O.P.

Dear Friends, Benefactors, Tertiaries, Ex-pupils, and Parents of the children in our schools.

I have a little personal anniversary coming up on Easter Monday when I will be forty years Professed. The time seems to have passed in a flash, and being a Dominican has certainly been a very happy life for me. However, during these forty years I have also had a ringside seat at the auto-demolition of the Church. Where the Catholic Church was once universally respected in Australia and New Zealand, now we see just remnants. Our own SSPX Parishes are widely scattered and, though well-attended, are not considered main-stream by the hierarchy or even by conservative Catholics.

Michael Gilchrist, who was the conservative editor of the monthly journal of religious opinion, "AD2000" believes that the Church in Australia will be reduced to tiny pockets of practice within a generation. He makes this claim in his 2006 book "Lost" which assesses the state of the Church in Australia by looking at key indicators such as level of practice and fidelity to the Church's Doctrine. I think he is right about the Faith and that we have to be quite assertive in re-establishing the Faith in Australia and New Zealand.

Looking back to the Middle Ages when the Barbarian invasions smashed the Church **WE CAN SEE THAT THE MEANS OF RE-ESTABLISHING THE CHURCH WAS THE RELIGIOUS ORDERS.** Monastery by Monastery the Benedictines reconquered Europe assisted by Celtic Monks who had been more distant from the Invasions. I seriously suggest that we have to reclaim our countries for the faith by Monastic life – in our case the life of the

Dominicans and by the Society of St Pius X and the Orders associated with it. I don't think there is much hope of reforming the Novus Ordo Religious, Priests and the Laity who work for the Church. For them the syndrome operates, "How do you keep them down on the farm after they've seen Paris?"

No, it has to be new, Traditional Religious, new schools, Traditional Priests. All of these need to attract more than the average number of vocations. **THERE HAS TO BE A GREAT SURGE OF VOCATIONS TO TURN THE CHURCH AROUND** before 2030, when we can reckon that most of the people who know the Tradition from before Vatican Council II will have gone to their reward.

The years we are living in are vital. Here in Tynong we have a new Convent planned. At the moment by our own savings, the generosity of the SSPX District and a huge contribution from St Thomas Aquinas College, we can build two thirds of half of the Convent (a fraction I am not able to reduce). It will mean having eighteen cells only, and we already have eighteen Sisters at the Novitiate House with at least two more postulants coming in June plus more wanting to come in January. We will have no laundry – and we wear white habits! We will also lack a study-room/library and our Sisters have to study and prepare their school-work. We will also lack parlours and rooms for the Bursar and Superiors to receive callers, even a front door!

We know you have many calls upon your generosity but if you could spare a contribution for our new Convent we would be prayerfully appreciative. It's the only way we can rebuild the Church, the school system, Catholicism itself, in Australia, New Zealand and if God's wills it, further abroad.

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astarinthesouth@gmail.com

If wish to subscribe by post please send your request to:
 The Southern Star, P.O Box 50, Tynong, VIC. Melbourne, Australia

ROSARY CONVENT

Tynong; Melbourne; AUSTRALIA

Trip to Holy Cross Seminary

In December of 2014, our community made a 12-hour trip from Melbourne to Goulburn to attend the Diaconate Ordinations of two Tynong vocations at Holy Cross Seminary. The delight of the Sisters knew no bounds as the Rector Reverend Fr Griego received us with gracious hospitality, giving us a whole wing to ourselves and inviting us to the Banquet Hall for a grand feast with the Priests and Sisters of the SSPX and the family of the newly ordained Deacons. For many of the young Sisters, attending the ceremonies was a delightfully new experience which included meeting His Excellency Bishop de Galaretta.

Young Postulants arrive

On January 18th, 18 year old Alexandra Reis from Canada, entered as our first Postulant for the year and was soon followed by Miss Monica Gleason from Wisconsin, U.S.A. We are currently praying for visas for two more young ladies from Canada and U.S.A, and are expecting the entrance of one young candidate from Australia in June.

Retreat with Two Dominican Fathers

In January, our entire congregation had the pleasure of assisting at an annual retreat given by two english-speaking Dominican Priests from Belgium (Fathers Albert and Thomas O.P.). The theme chosen for the Retreat was the Spiritual Life and included conferences on Dominican Life and Dominican Spirituality, the essence of which is to "*contemplari et contemplata aliis tradere*".

More Sisters for St Thomas Aquinas

This year we have been able to assign more Sisters to help St Thomas Aquinas College in its mission to form in each youth, the true and perfect Catholic. Sister Anthony has this year taken the role of Dean of the Girls' School; Sisters Thomas and Anna have been able to take the role of Class Mistresses as well as part-time teaching duties; Sister Marie Therese is the new Nurse, Receptionist and Relief Teacher; Srs Columba, Amata, Francis and Imelda teach Catechism and Mother Rose has one class of French. Postulant Miss Reis has also been helping out with music and learning support.





Ceremonies of Habit and Profession January 18th, 2015

Our community was truly blessed by Almighty God this New Year, when after our annual retreat we were witness to a grand religious ceremony.

Mass on this day began with the beautiful Reception of the Habit Ceremony. Five postulants donned the habit of the Dominican Order, had their hair cut, received the crown of thorns and received a new religious name. Miss Katherine Corr formerly of San Jose, U.S.A became Sister Mary Peter Verona, Miss Elizabeth Smith formerly of Wanganui, NZ became Sister Mary Augustina, Miss Genevieve Erbacher formerly of Brisbane, AUS became Sister Mary Diana, Miss Mary Williams formerly of St Mary's, U.S.A became Sister Mary Vincent Ferrer and Sister Maria Compassiva, of Tynong, AUS became Sister Mary of Compassion.

Making First Profession in the hands of Mother Prioress General were Sisters Anna, Columba and Jordan, now O.P. Renewing vows for an additional two years before Final Profession were Sisters Lucia, Jacinta and Anthony.

Following the ceremonies, a beautiful Solemn High Mass in the Dominican Rite was celebrated by Fathers Albert and Thomas O.P., and our own Father Jordie Stephens who managed to play the part of a Deacon very well. The choir sang beautifully for the occasion and after the long ceremonies, which were greatly supported by the Tynong Parish and friends and family from far and wide, all enjoyed a grand banquet organised by the Sacred Heart Sodality.



St Dominic's Convent

Wanganui; NEW ZEALAND

Consecration of Altar & Blessing of Church

On December 20th the Sisters attended the blessing of the Church in Auckland (interiorly designed and decorated by a former student of St Dominic's) and the consecration of its altar. Bishop de Galaretta began the ceremonies by blessing the relic chest the evening before and the next morning the Sisters enjoyed a front row view as a beautiful building became the House of God.



On Top of the World

Two of our pupils achieved outstanding success in recent Cambridge Examinations. Miss Laura Palmer received a High Achiever award for **Top of New Zealand in AS Art History** and Miss Annabella Stephens was placed **Top of the World for AS Classical Studies**. May this serve as an encouragement to all our students and invite them to a laudable imitation.

Convent & School Garden in Bloom

Before departing for Australia for our annual retreat - where one weeds and fertilizes the soil of one's soul in order to bring forth spiritual fruits - we harvested an abundance of delicious peaches, plums and apricots from our much-loved fruit trees.



Hike at Mount Taranaki/Egmont

On the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, the Sisters took the opportunity to visit Mt Taranaki as a farewell hike and picnic both for our American postulant (now Sr Peter Verona) and Miss Gleason (now a postulant). They were off to join the Sisters at the Motherhouse and the mountain supplied brilliant majestic beauty for them to store away in their memories of St Dominic's in NZ.



Summer Snippets from New Zealand St Dominic's Convent, College & Signadou

The balanced Dominican life affects not only the right ordering of contemplation and action in the Sisters' own life, but also the formation given to our pupils. Our work at St Dominic's enables us to give an all-round and balanced education providing for the spiritual, physical and intellectual welfare of the girls under our care.

Our summer began with a camp that not only provided a much-needed relaxation from the school year, with physical activities ranging from canoeing, to hiking, to outdoor games, but also inspired the girls by the example of the life of our camp patroness, Mother Mary Aubert, foundress of the Daughters of Our Lady of Compassion, whose cause is under consideration and may soon become New Zealand's first saint.

The camp was held at Jerusalem, where Mother Aubert worked among the Maoris, and it also contributed to the girls' intellectual formation by immersing them in the French language and culture. After the Christmas holidays spent in rejuvenating and re-energising ourselves, we happily received four new boarders from Malaysia and three new helpers to the boarding house, each from different parts of the world: New Zealand, Australia and France. We are a very multicultural group numbering twenty-two in total and there is not a spare room to be found.

The week leading up to the Feast of St Thomas Aquinas on March 7th had the girls productively preparing intellectual debates and speeches for our annual inter-house competition. On the day itself we were able to witness the seniors' creativity and ability to present convincing and logical arguments. From the juniors' speeches we were given advice on the topic, "how to become a Saint". May they put it into practice!

The Children of Mary Sodality continues to thrive over here with its 10th anniversary looming up in July. Eight new aspirants were received on the Feast of the Annunciation and the girls continue to help in the parish with the decorating of the St Joseph shrine each year on his feast day, March 19th, cleaning the church, arranging the church flowers and their favourite event of the year: the setting up of the altar of repose, just to name a few.

From our side of the Tasman the Sisters here at St. Dominic's continue to enkindle the flame of Our Holy Father in the hearts and souls of our pupils in the hope that it will illuminate all of the corners of the world.

Mother Mary Madeleine O.P.

Prioress of St Dominic's Convent

OP MOTHERHOUSE BUILDING PROJECT

AN URGENT NECESSITY



Since arriving in Australia we have been working, praying and fundraising - trying very hard to raise the needed funds to build a permanent Motherhouse next door to St Thomas Aquinas College in Tynong. After much anxious waiting and praying, approval for the building project came on the Feast of St. Thomas Aquinas and the actual building planning permit on the Feast of St. Joseph. To date, due to a lack of funds, all we can afford to build is one-third of the new convent which will give us 18 cells. However, we already number 18 and are expecting many more vocations very soon.

We are praying therefore that, with your help and prayers, we will be able to acquire what we need to complete the entire building. And it truly is a most great and urgent necessity. At present we have 11 Sisters living outside in cabins, the 6-bedroom home we currently live in houses 18 of us and we really do need a proper Convent in which to form all the vocations that come our way, so that with God's grace we can foster good and holy Religious. For this we rely solely on the providence of God and your generosity.

Our deepest thanks and prayers to all those who have helped us in any shape or form so far. We ask you to continue to pray that we will be able to obtain our goal.

ESTIMATED TOTAL COST OF PROJECT

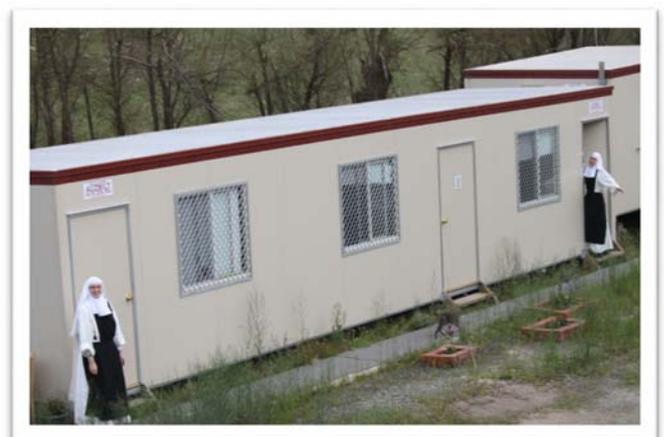
AUD \$4-\$5 million

THE MONEY WE HAVE

AUD \$1.5 million

THE AMOUNT WE NEED

AUD \$2.5-\$3.5 million



Canonical Novices, Sisters Augustina and Vincent showing their current accommodation outside

HERE'S HOW YOU CAN HELP US

✓
DONATIONS

✓
**INTEREST FREE
LOANS**

✓
**SMALL REGULAR
PAYMENTS**

✓
FUNDRAISERS



✓
**PROPERTY
AND/OR ASSETS**

✓
**LARGE REGULAR
PAYMENTS**

HOW TO MAKE A DONATION

AUSTRALIA

Our account details in Australia are: Dominican Sisters of Wanganui,
Westpac Account, BSB: 033-636, A/C #334 277

Cheques can be made out to "The Dominican Sisters of Wanganui" and sent to:
OP Motherhouse Project, P.O. Box 50, Tynong. VIC. 3813, Melbourne, Australia.

NB: Funds for the Motherhouse will be placed in an account with tax deductibility status

NEW ZEALAND

Our account details in New Zealand are: Dominican Sisters of Wanganui
Westpac Account, Victoria Ave, Wanganui BSB: 030-791, A/C #0728558

Cheques can be made out to "The Dominican Sisters of Wanganui" and sent to:
OP Motherhouse Project, 12b York Street, Wanganui, 4501, New Zealand.

SINGAPORE

Our account details in Singapore are: Friends of the International Priestly Society of St. Pius X
United Overseas Bank (UOB), A/C # 143-300-495-2, Changi Airport Branch

Airport Boulevard #B16-17 Passenger Terminal 2 Building Singapore Changi Airport
Singapore 819643, Institution Code: 7375; Branch Code: 068; SWIFT: UOVBSGSG

Cheques can be made out to "Friends of the International Priestly Society of St. Pius X" and sent to:
OP Motherhouse Project, SSPX, 286 Upper Thomson Road, Singapore 574402.

UNITED STATES

Our account details in the United States are: Dominican Sisters of Wanganui,
Wells Fargo Bank, A/C # 2 015 569 425, Routing # 1210 42882

Cheques can be made out to "The Dominican Sisters of Wanganui" and sent to:
OP Motherhouse Project, 800 Charcot Ave., Suite 104, San Jose, CA 95131