

Saint Dominic and the Dominicans

800 years of spiritual adventure!



Sent to preach the gospel!



1170 - 1203

1

Dominic of Caleruega

Dominic was born around 1170 in Caleruega, Castile. His parents, Jane and Felix, are important figures who placed him under the patronage of abbot Saint Dominic of Silos. His mother and brother Mannes are venerated as blessed.



Intending to become a priest, young Dominic is sent to the University of Palencia. He attends the faculty of arts before studying theology. Being a well off student, he has his own books, which he sells in 1196, to help victims of a local famine.

Dominic attracts the attention of Martin, the bishop of Osma, and Diego, Prior of the chapter of the cathedral. Guided by them, Dominic becomes a canon of Osma. He devotes himself to prayer and study. In 1201, he becomes subprior of the chapter.



*Can one preach
with studying*

1

Finding God through study

“Faith and reason are like two wings which allow the human spirit to rise towards the contemplation of truth”
(John-Paul II)

The thirteenth century sees the birth of universities. Dominic appreciates the challenge in such places of education and research. He sends his brothers there.



As their Father Dominic, preachers meet God in the Old and New Testaments. They are permeated by the fire of this word and communicate it to those they encounter.



1203-1206

2

The Call of the Mission

In 1201, Diego becomes bishop of Osma. In 1203, he leaves with Dominic to negotiate the marriage of the son of king Alphonse III with a young Scandinavian lady. In 1205, the two men return to Denmark. On the way back, Diego goes to Rome to see Pope Innocent III to receive his blessing for his missionary desire.



Making a stop-over in Toulouse in 1203, Diego and Dominic discover the heresy of “good men”, the Albigensians also called Cathars, who seduce their listeners by the austerity of their lives.

Both trips to northern Europe upset Diego and Dominic. In Germany, they heard about the ravages of the Cumans. The two men now want to work for the conversion of these pagan barbarians.



Praying and burning with love for his neighbour

2

What will become of sinners?

Dominic prays with ardour for the conversion of sinners. He searches for and carries on his shoulders the lost sheep. He does not hesitate to live amongst the heretics and the indifferent to lead them to God.

Dominic devotes his life to God. Poor, chaste and obedient, he follows Christ and the apostles. He knows the love of the Father for his children.



Can we get closer to the truth by moving away from Christ? By following the gospel, Dominic shows us that the Church allows men to discover Christ, the way, the truth and the life.



1206-1215

3

Preaching in Languedoc



Innocent III sends Diego to his diocese and Dominic follows him. In Montpellier, in the Spring of 1206, the two men meet some Cistercian legates discouraged by their struggle against heresy. Diego proposes they abandon their equipment and luggage to walk and humbly preach the Catholic faith, praying, studying and discussing.



In 1207, Diego becomes leader of the group that preaches to the Cathars. Dominic helps him and provokes public debates. A disputatio is organised in Montreal near Fanjeaux. After this meeting a miracle confirms the words of Dominic: three times his arguments, thrown into the fire, spring intact from it.

In January 1208, the pontifical mission is threatened: Diego dies and the legate of the Pope, Pierre de Castelnau, is murdered with the complicity of the Earl of Toulouse. Languedoc is invaded by Simon de Montfort's army: it is the Albigensian crusade. Dominic continues the mission of itinerant preaching alone.

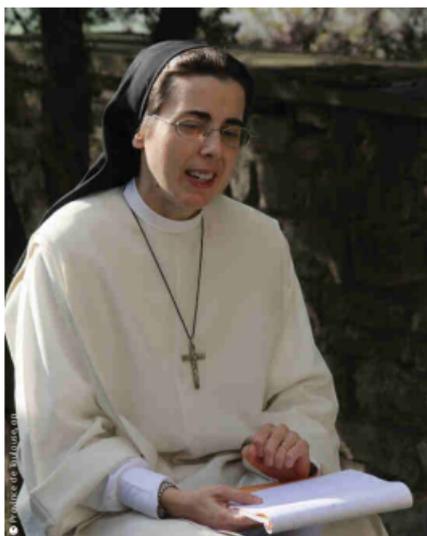


Saint Peter and Saint Paul conforts Dominic in his mission

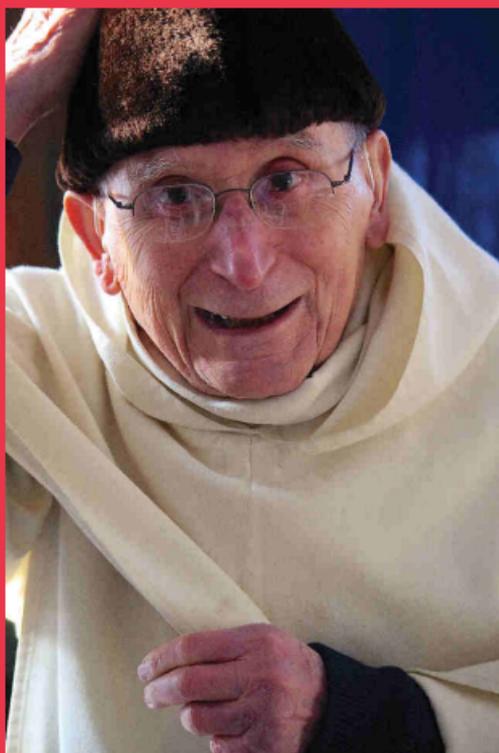
3

« Go and Preach! »

Dominic preaches by word and by example. Fasting and prayer are at the service of preaching the gospel. As a result brothers and sisters adopt his radical way for the service of the poor and disadvantaged.



Dominic recommends to his brothers “*have charity, keep humility and practise voluntary poverty*”.



He passes on to his Order the appetite for dialogue with all people of good will. Thomas Aquinas studies the Greek, Jewish and Arabic philosophers and introduces their discoveries in his explanation of faith. Preachers trust the power of truth.



1206-1207

4

In the heart of the mission: Prouilhe



Dominic prays, fasts and does penance, which makes his word credible. At Fanjeaux, he educates nine Cathar women in the Catholic faith. One day, while he prays for them, a monstrous cat appears, representing the demon that possesses them.



Cathar women return to the Church. They want to continue to lead a life dedicated to prayer and penance in chastity. Dominic wishes to settle them in a community. At the end of 1206, the bishop of Toulouse, Foulques, gives Dominic the church of Notre-Dame in Prouilhe. A true monastery is gradually established.

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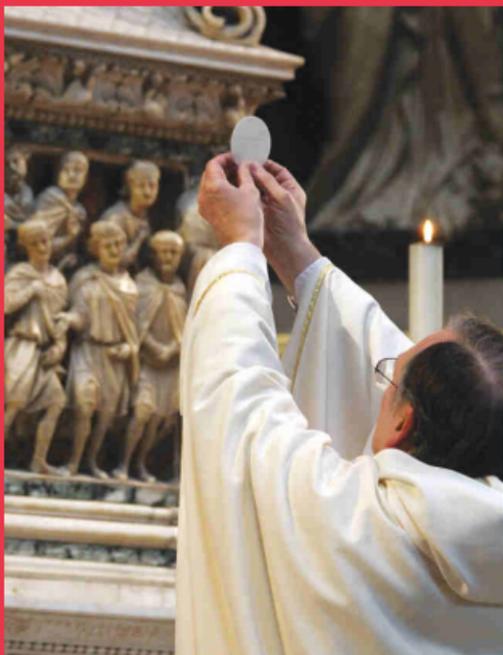


**Contemplate
and transmit the fruit
of contemplation**

4

**Speak with God
to speak about God**

Brothers and sisters praise God together: matins, lauds, vespers and compline structure and enliven their days. Prayer culminates in the Eucharist, celebrated for the entire world.



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Dominic spends his nights in prayer. His whole body participates in this intimate conversation with God: he stretches out his arms to the sky, sheds abundant tears, begs aloud.

Each day ends with a prayer to the Virgin Mary, the *Salve Regina*. The Dominicans pray especially to the Mother of the Lord by meditating upon the mysteries of the Rosary.



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1215-1217

5

The Preaching of Toulouse

In January 1215, Pierre Seilhan joins Dominic for the mission and gives him his house in Toulouse. In Spring, Dominic moves in with a small group of brothers. They take some theology lessons.



In Autumn 1215, Dominic accompanies Foulques to the Lateran Council. Pope Innocent III places Prouilhe under his protection. He asks Dominic and his brothers to choose a rule for religious life approved by the Church. The Rule of Saint Augustine is chosen.

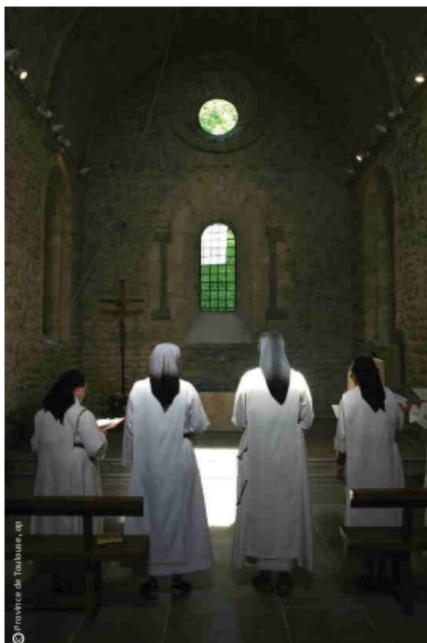
In July 1216, Honorius III is elected Pope. He confirms the community at Toulouse before expanding the mission. In Summer 1217, Dominic sends some brothers to Paris to study and establish a convent. Others leave for Spain and Bologna.



**“Why
are you united if not
to live together
in unanimity?”
Saint Augustine**

5

Live in the sweetness of brotherhood



The model of all apostolic life is the Christian community born at Pentecost in Jerusalem. Its members had “one heart and one soul”, holding everything in common.

The Rule of Saint Augustine assumes the double evangelical commandment of the love of God and neighbour. Together the Dominicans witness the love of Christ spread in the world.



In convents and monasteries, each has his place under the authority of an elected superior. Dominican priors are at the service of the unity and charity of the community.



1218-1221

6

Son of the Church, father of preachers



Dominic travels to Spain, France and Italy to promote the growth of the Order. He also receives the Popes's mission to assemble the Roman nuns at San Sisto and then calls the sisters of Prouilhe, accompanied by a few brothers.



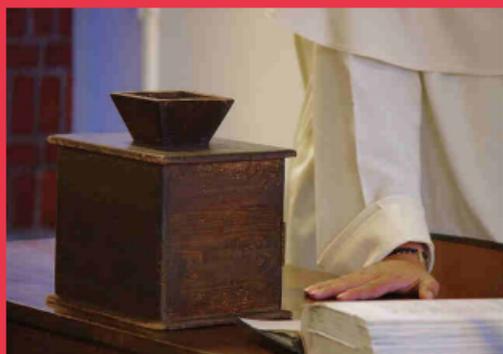
The first general chapter, celebrated in Bologna in 1220, confirms Dominic in his position as Master of the Order. Constitutions are developed, affirming the mendicant dimension of the Order. Brothers are set to Sweden, England, Hungary, Denmark, Poland and possibly to Greece.

In July 1221, Dominic travels to the north of Italy. Exhausted, he returns to Bologna and falls ill. He assures the brothers that he will be more useful to them dead than alive and dies on 6th August 1221. Miracles occur at his grave.



Une Orden para la predicación

Los frailes y las hermanas se reúnen regularmente en capítulo para promover la fidelidad a su vocación. De este modo participan en la vida de la comunidad y en sus orientaciones apostólicas. Allí también eligen a sus superiores.



Las monjas dominicas llevan una vida contemplativa de oración, trabajo y estudio de la Palabra de Dios. Su vida sostiene la predicación de toda la Orden.

Los laicos organizados en fraternidades dominicanas participan junto a los frailes y las monjas de la misión de la Orden.

La familia dominicana reúne también a todos aquellos que adoptan la espiritualidad dominicana : hermanas apostólicas que ejercen una actividad en el mundo, vírgenes consagradas, miembros de institutos seculares o sacerdotes seculares.



1221-1234

7

Dominic's Grace



From the thirteenth century, lay people gather around the convents. In 1285, the Master of the Order, Muño de Zamora, gives a rule of Dominican life for these groups.

From the sixteenth century, the Dominican religious congregations will find in it the basis for their religious life.

The successors of Dominic continue his work and ensure the development of the Order.

In 1228, ten years after the sending of the brothers, the order is established in all countries of Christian Europe. The peripheral provinces are bases for missionary action in countries that are pagan, Muslim or separated from Rome.



In 1233, brothers collect evidence of miracles that they send to Pope Gregory IX. During the solemn translation of Dominic's body, a perfume emanates from the tomb.

An official inquiry into the holiness and miracles of Dominic leads to his canonization on the 3rd of July 1234.



***Embody holiness
in following Dominic***

7

Dominican sanctity

Dominic was ready for martyrdom. For eight centuries, members of the Order offer the witness of a life given until death for these groups.

The mission of the Order of Preachers is the service of truth. The Dominicans transmit the fruit of their contemplation through their apostolate and their teaching.



Since the Middle Ages, brothers and sisters combine audacity and charity to implement the gospel of the Beatitudes.

In the silence of their cloisters, brothers and sisters seek to live in intimacy with God.

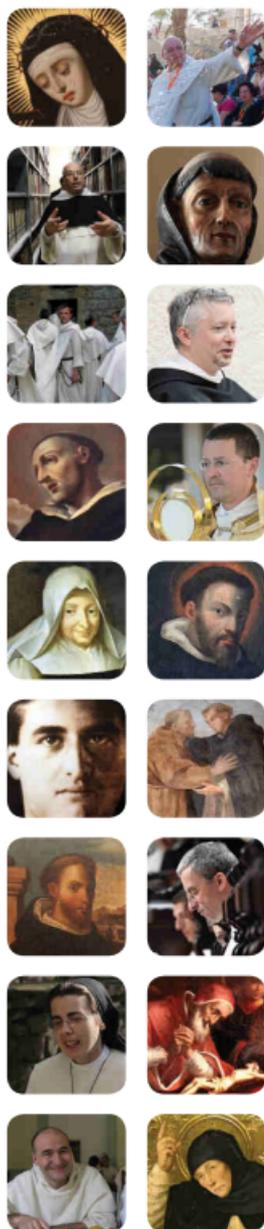




Want to learn more ?
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800 YEARS



- 8th centenary of the foundation of the Order of Preachers
- Association pour l'Histoire de l'Ordre de Saint-Dominique en Europe (AHODE)
- Province of Toulouse – MMXV



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