



OPFAM

Dominican Family Matters

A Newsletter for the Dominican Family in Australia,
New Zealand, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea

Woe to us if we do not preach the Gospel!

Motto for the years leading up to 800th celebration in 2016;

1st November 2011

**“We hear them speaking in our own tongues of the marvelous acts of God” (Acts 2:11):
Preaching and Culture / Community Preaching**

Dominican Thought for the Week

The spirit of Dominic was a relational spirit, a spirit of friendship, of brotherhood and sisterhood. What does it mean to be a brother to my brothers, a sister to my sisters, a brother to my sisters and a sister to my brothers? These are questions at the heart of Dominican spirituality. Granted characters, differences, idiosyncracies, there are the bonds, love and affection. Dominican spirituality is communal; the project a common one. Community is at the core of who we are; the common life essential. When Anton de Montesinos delivered the first preaching of the friars in what to them was a new world, it was a communal preaching, to which the prior Pedro de Cordoba gave testimony when it was challenged. It was not Montesinos' sermon although he had been chosen by the community to deliver it.

This sense of friendship, fraternity, sisterhood, relationship, community undergirds the Dominican form of governance, what is often thought of as Dominic's genius. It was capitular in a new way, democratic, leadership elected with terms of office and not for life, a practice of dispensations that acknowledged and respected individuality while not focused upon it. We govern ourselves and in doing so place a great act of trust in one another. The conventual chapter, the provincial chapter, the general chapter were constitutive of a relational way of being religious in the world that was both traditional and innovative. In some ways the spirit of fraternity or familiarity was a natural outgrowth from the integrative character of Dominican life. *Don Goergen OP*

Celebrating some Dominican 'saints'

Each year at this time the Dominican Sisters of Eastern Australia, and other Dominican Congregations, visit the cemeteries to pray to, for and with the 271 Sisters of our Congregation who have died – our friends, our sisters, or co-workers... We remember too, other members of our great Dominican Family in Australia, and look on with admiration at the way so many have made a difference to the lives of those among whom they preached the Gospel.

One group of Dominicans not often remembered are the first Dominican Friars who came to the colony in its early times:

Fr Cornelius Coghlan OP

Tombstone reads

“Pray for the soul of Rev. C. D. Coghlan OP. Missionary priest of this diocese of Dapto died 2 June 1872 aged 74 years, and in the 50th year of his priesthood. RIP. Amen”

Irish, Father had been in the colony for 30 years. He owned and lived on an island near Woy Woy, known for many years as Coghlan's Island, now known as Kinnane's Island.

Sr M. Catherine Coghlan OP (EA) was a niece.

Fr James Vincent Corcoran OP who came out with Archbishop Polding.. He died on 4th August 1837. First resident priest of Newcastle, he later moved to the Windsor district.

Writing to his confrere and cousin, Rev Thomas Heptonstall, O.S.B., Bishop Polding speaks of the religious revolution effected by Fr Corcoran in Windsor. One hundred and forty had attended their Easter duty, only half a dozen of whom had been to Confession for many years”

There was still much to be done, as the 1836 census showed over 800 Catholics in the Windsor area. Fr Corcoran had seen the foundation stone of St Matthew's laid, but he did not see the church completed: while driving to Sydney on 4th August, 1837, he was thrown from his gig and killed. There is a long newspaper article written at the time of his death and burial –“in the Catholic Burial Ground in a vault newly erected for the occasion”.

Sisters M. Catherine and Mechtilde Corcoran (EA) were his nieces.

Fr Bartholomew Hyacinth Power OP arrived in Melbourne in 1857. He served in Melbourne at St Francis Church then went to Sydney to become editor of the Freeman's Journal. In 1862 he became the Parish Priest in Tamworth NSW, then moved to Ballarat to serve as parish priest. He died in 1865, aged 42 years He is buried in Geelong.

Fr Daniel Gonsalvo Kavanagh OP was born in Dublin in 1857 and arrived in Australia in 1887. He preached and lectured mainly around Sydney. He returned to England in 1889, but came back in November, 1889 and died on board ship, two hours out of Adelaide and was buried at sea.

Fr Dominic (Adolph) Curran OP travelling from Ireland to Australia to become Master of Novices and Professor of Theology at St Dominic's Camberwell. The ship was lost by enemy action somewhere off the coast of Africa. (Maitland Annals) 2nd July 1943: (*Holy Name Monthly*).

The first Dominican to arrive on our shores, Fr Christopher Vincent Dowling OP, arrived in Sydney on September 17, 1831.

Christopher Vincent Dowling OP was born on September 24, 1789, in Dublin and went at an early age to the famous Dominican College of Corpo Santo in Lisbon, Portugal, where he joined the Dominican Order. Back in Dublin in 1814 he was ordained. During 11 years in Dublin he was guardian of the Dominican Charity School in 1821 and subprior of the Dublin Priory. In 1825, because of ill health, he was sent to France and became pastor of Salignac in the Bordeaux diocese. Next year he was elected prior of the Dublin priory but the election was disputed and he did not return to Ireland.

In 1829 the Vicar Apostolic of London, Dr Bramston, appointed him to Newport in the Isle of Wight. After 10 months he went to London, and, at a request from the Colonial Office, Dr Bramston nominated him to go to NSW to replace the only official Catholic chaplain in the colony, Fr Daniel Power, who died on March 30, 1830.

Accepted by the British Colonial Office, granted a salary of £150 a year and passage money, Fr Dowling arrived in Sydney September 17, 1831, in the “Mary Ann” accompanied by his sister, Mary.

In April 1831, the Birmingham Catholic Magazine reported: “The Rev Vincent Dowling, a respectable Irish priest of the Order of St Dominic, knowing the great need the Catholics of NSW have of pastors to attend to their spiritual concerns, has, with the true apostolic zeal, volunteered the services of his sacred ministry to that important mission. His proposal has been gladly accepted by the Government, who has provided for the expenses of his voyage, and has made him a suitable appointment on his arrival at Sydney. Mr Dowling is about 30 years of age [in fact he was 42 on arrival], strong and healthy, [actually he was in poor health and remained so for the rest of his life] experienced in missionary duty, which he has exercised with applause in the Isle of Wight and in London and has the reputation of being an eloquent preacher. His missionary service at Sydney, where there is only at present one priest, will be valuable.”

In his *History of the Catholic Church in Australasia*, Cardinal Moran wrote: “Fr Dowling was a man of great simplicity... Newcastle was allotted to Fr Dowling's spiritual charge, and for many years he continued to labour in that district. ... and many are still living who remember the venerable figure of the white-haired aged priest, who, bent with years, offered the Holy Sacrifice”.

In March or April of 1832, Fr Dowling visited Newcastle for the first time to attend two executions and minister to the Catholic soldiers posted there. He returned to Windsor, and a few months later Governor Bourke appointed him as Chaplain at the Hawkesbury. ...

On September 18, 1832, Bourke wrote to Colonial Secretary Viscount Goderich: “The Reverend Dowling is, I believe, an excellent clergyman, but his health is indifferent and he has neither animal spirits nor address sufficient to withstand the impetuosity of Mr [Fr] Therry with whom he had many differences originating, as I believe, in the latter having kept possession of part of the Chapel House at Sydney to the inconvenience of Mr Dowling.

"I have placed Mr [Fr] McEncroe at Sydney and left Mr Dowling at Windsor whither he had removed for the benefit of his health." Fr Dowling established a school in Windsor and won the friendship of John Macarthur who gave the ground and money for a Catholic chapel at Camden.

After his arrival in Sydney in September 1835, as the first Catholic bishop in Australia, Bishop Polding appointed Fr Dowling to East Maitland in September or October 1835.

In August 1836 Fr Dowling took up the post in East Maitland and was the only resident priest north of Sydney, covering the whole Hunter River district and extending north indefinitely, into what is now Queensland.

He met with obstruction by the commandant at Harper's Hill in Maitland who would not allow soldiers to attend weekday Masses which Fr Dowling celebrated there because he was in East Maitland on Sundays.

But Dowling maintained good relations with officials in Sydney and when King William IV died in 1837 Dowling signed appropriate letters to Queen Adelaide and Queen Victoria. On February 27, 1838, he attended the Government House levee in Sydney after Governor Gipps was sworn in.

In March 1838 Polding informed Governor Gipps that, as Dowling wished to have "a less arduous situation", he, Polding, hoped that the priest would take up the Catholic chaplaincy on Norfolk Island. Instead, in September 1838 Dowling moved to Newcastle as its first resident priest. He lived in a cottage on the sand hills; but for seven years said Mass and ran a school in Croasdil's Long Room above four houses in Newcomen St. Catholic soldiers paid the rent and furnished the Long Room for him. When the room was vacated in 1845, Dowling continued to celebrate Mass in his house which had been the first hospital in Newcastle and was close to the old jail. He regularly attended executions to console the condemned.

His Newcastle parish extended from Lake Macquarie to Myall Lakes, including Raymond Terrace, Clarence Town and Port Stephens. Owing no means of transport, he travelled either by boat or walked. Later he lost the use of his legs and was carried by parishioners to call on sick or dying Catholics.

In 1849 he began celebrating Mass in a government store room in Watt St, Newcastle, and in 1852 he built the first Catholic church in Newcastle – St Mary's – as a temporary structure in Church St.

It was the only church Dowling built at a time when priests were great builders of churches.

Fr Dowling's health continued to fail and although he then had assistant priests, he finally gave up active ministry in 1863 and retired to his sand hills cottage. Revered and frequently visited by Catholics and others, he became a living legend in the district.

When he died on December 14, 1873, aged 84, people of all persuasions mourned him. Crowds attended the lying-in-state in St Mary's Church. All ships in Newcastle Harbour flew flags at half-mast and many shops closed during the funeral. At his express wish he was buried in St Joseph's Churchyard in East Maitland, alongside his long-time friend Fr Mahony. When in 1933 the new church was built, the remains of the two priests were reburied in the vault under the church.

When he died, the local newspaper printed this tribute: "Another link between the past and the present of NSW has passed away in the person of the Rev C V Dowling, who died at Newcastle, on Sunday the 14th ultimo, at the venerable age of 84 years. Though the venerable gentleman's demise was not unexpected, he having been an invalid for many years, the intelligence created a profound sorrow in this community, shared by men of every shade of opinion. "His long laborious life, his gentle, unassuming manner, his kind words of encouragement to those who needed solace, were the theme on every tongue. "During Sunday evening and up to 2 p.m. "On Monday, crowds went to take a last look at all that remained of that once sturdy veteran of the Cross. "He had often expressed a wish to be interred at East Maitland, beside his late lamented friend and fellow labourer, the Rev Father Mahony of sacred memory. "His wish was carried out."

Christopher Vincent Dowling OP was one of the first 10 Catholic priests to come to Australia, the fourth official Catholic chaplain to the colony of NSW and the first member of a religious order to minister in Australia. Adapted from Dr Joe Morley's account

In Fr Dowling's will he left to his Dominican Sisters, recently arrived in Maitland, his armchair, and a red night cap, said to be a great remedy for toothache – we still have the chair, but the nightcap seems to have disappeared!

May they all rest in peace!

Dominican Centre for Research and Inter-Faith Dialogue, Indonesia

Between 12-14 November Fr Johanes Robini Maranto OP, from the Dominican Centre for Research and Inter-Faith Dialogue (CRID) in Pontianak, Indonesia, will be visiting Sydney. There will be an opportunity to learn more about the interfaith situation in Indonesia and Asia generally, and also the work of Dominicans at CRID, on Saturday 12 November at Rosary Lodge, Strathfield, between 2pm and 4pm. If you would like to join us, please advise on domadmin@opeast.org.au

Dominican Calendar

Some very significant feasts occur around this time:

Nov-1 ALL SAINTS DAY

Nov-2 ALL SOULS DAY

Nov-3 ST MARTIN DE PORRES (1579-1639) [F] Peruvian, first a Lay Dominican then a Cooperator Brother; infirmarian, barber, worker among the poor, remarkable wonder-worker, Church appointed patron of social justice, cooperator brothers, and hair dressers, canonized 1962.

Nov-5 Bl. Simon Ballacchi (+1319) Italian, cooperator brother, catechist, gardener, blind.

Nov-6 Ss. Francis de Capillas, priest; Alphonsus Navarrete, priest; and Companions, martyrs. [M] These Dominican martyrs of Japan and China (1617 to 1748) of Spanish and native nationalities are celebrated together. St. Francis de Capillas was declared the Protomartyr of China by the Holy See,

Nov-7 ALL SAINTS OF THE ORDER OF PREACHERS [F] Priests, Nuns, Cooperator Brothers, Dominican Laity, Sisters

Nov-8 ANNIVERSARY OF ALL DECEASED DOMINICAN BROTHERS AND SISTERS [M] Priests, Nuns, Cooperator Brothers, Dominican Laity, Sisters

Nov-14 Bl. John Licio (1426-1511) Italian, priest, preacher, administrator.

Bl. Lucy of Narnia (1476-1544) Italian, married, virgin, cloistered sister, mystic, stigmatist; lived in obscurity, but made known by miracles at her tomb.

Nov-15 ST ALBERT THE GREAT (1206-1280) [F] German, Bishop of Ratisbon, now known as Regensburg, in S. Germany, theologian of renown, philosopher, scientist, diplomat, teacher, inventor, teacher of St. Thomas Aquinas, called great already in his lifetime, criss-crossed his diocese on foot and so nicknamed "Doctor Boots" by his contemporaries, "Universal Doctor" of the Church, Church appointed patron of scientists, medical technicians, proclaimed Doctor.

Please send contributions – short paragraphs – about Dominican Life in your area to archives@opeast.org.au – OFTEN!