



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;

8th November 2011

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

Dominican Thought for the Week

It is characteristic of the Dominicans that we have never sought to define ourselves and our *modus vivendi* with anything like the exhaustiveness sought, for example, by the medieval Cistercians. People are often struck by the extraordinary diversity there is within the order; and if we all feel that nevertheless it does mean something for us all to be Dominicans, in spite of the fact that we are all so different from one another, that "meaning" must probably be located in some kind of Wittgensteinian "family resemblance," rather than in any set of common characteristics that all Dominicans share and that distinguish us from everybody else.

I doubt very much whether there is any single quality in the order which can serve to identify "the Dominican charism." Whether by *charism* we mean specifically some *gratia gratis data* or, more generally, any kind of gift, we must surely say that different Dominicans have different charisms and always have had. *Simon Tugwell OP in Jeremy Miller / Simon Tugwell: What Is the Dominican Charism? An Exchange of Views*

A Dominican whose life deserves more study!

Albertus Magnus was born in Swabia (in Germany) in 1206. He studied at the University of Padua, and then, against his family's wishes, joined the newly founded Order of Preachers. He became a famous teacher, with headquarters at Cologne from 1248 on. His pupils included Thomas Aquinas, and probably Meister Eckhart.

In 1260 Pope Alexander IV made him Bishop of Regensburg, an office from which he resigned after three years. During the exercise of his duties he enhanced his reputation for humility by refusing to ride a horse—in accord with the dictates of the Dominican order—instead walking back and forth across his huge diocese. This earned him the affectionate sobriquet, "boots the bishop," from his parishioners. After his stint as bishop, he spent the remainder of his life partly in retirement in the various houses of his order, yet often preaching throughout southern Germany. Among the last of his labours was the defense of the orthodoxy of his former pupil, Thomas Aquinas, whose death in 1274 grieved Albertus. After suffering a collapse of health in 1278, he died on November 15, 1280, in Cologne, Germany. His tomb is in the crypt of the Dominican church of St. Andreas in Cologne.

Albert is frequently mentioned by Dante, who made his doctrine of free will the basis of his ethical system. In his *Divine Comedy*, Dante places Albertus with his pupil Thomas Aquinas among the great lovers of wisdom. Albertus is also mentioned, along with Agrippa and Paracelsus, in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, where his writings serve as an influence to a young Victor Frankenstein.

His writings are considerable both in bulk and in scope. Albertus' writings collected in 1899 went to thirty-eight volumes! They are concerned not only with biblical and theological studies, but also with logic, metaphysics, ethics, physics, astronomy, chemistry, biology, human and animal physiology, geography, geology, and botany. He says that in some areas, such as questions about the nature of God, we cannot draw sound conclusions by themselves because we lack the necessary data. But he is an enthusiastic supporter of the autonomy of human reason, working on empirical data, in areas of knowledge where those data are relevant. Given an longstanding belief in his day that eagles

incubate only one egg and rear only one offspring per season, he had himself lowered over a cliff edge and down to an eagle's nest, so that he might check for himself.

Albertus was beatified in 1622. He was canonized and proclaimed a Doctor of the Church in 1931 by Pope Pius XI. St Albert's feast day is celebrated on November 15. He has been proclaimed **patron saint of scientists**.

Thought for the Day: St. Albert the Great was convinced that all creation spoke of God and that the tiniest piece of scientific knowledge told us something about God. Besides the Bible, God has given us the book of creation.. In creation, Albert saw the hand of God.

From "La Española" to Oran...

"I am the voice crying out in the desert of this island (...). **With what right** and by which justice do you hold these Indians in such horrible servitude? With what authority do you carry out such detestable wars against the people of these lands – people so meek and peaceful? How can you hold these peoples so oppressed and fatigued? You kill them in order to acquire your precious gold everyday".

Fr. Antonio de Montesinos addressed this challenging question in 1511 from his pulpit "to the good Christians" of the island of La Española. Five centuries later, another voice crying in the desert – that of Pierre Claverie – responds to that exhortation.

"Maybe because I did not know the 'other' or because I denied his existence, one day, the other jumped at me in my face. He blew up my closed world that broke in violence (but could it be otherwise?). And he claimed his existence. The rise of the 'other', the acknowledgment of others, to tune into the other, became haunting thoughts to me. And this is probably the source of my religious vocation."

The Chapter of Rome (§ 179) calls the friars of the Order, in all the churches depending on the Order, on the fourth Sunday of Advent, 2011, to read or preach on the sermon delivered by Antonio de Montesinos in the island of La Española, on the fourth Sunday of Advent, 1511, to make a collective memory of this event in which the defense of human dignity was proclaimed once again on behalf of the Church. Of course this is not just about making a work of history, but a work of memory, to take up our commitment to serve the untiring fight for justice and peace.

Dominican Journal, gone but not forgotten!

Spirituality Today, a quarterly journal of spirituality in the Dominican tradition was published by the Province of St Albert the Great USA from 1949-1992, first as Cross and Crown. Copies of the best of these volumes can be found on www.spiritualitytoday.org.

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

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

Nov-14 Bl. John Liccio (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, crisscrossed 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!