

**June, 2016**

**Month of the Sacred Heart**

**Avrillé**

**Letter to the Tertiaries of Penance of Saint Dominic**

*(for private distribution to tertiaries only)*

**Letter n° 91**

 Dear Brothers and Sisters in Saint Dominic,

 This letter will be very brief, as I would like to get it out before the month of the Sacred Heart finishes. You will be happy to discover (if you didn’t already know) that the devotion to the Sacred Heart is a very old tradition in the Dominican Order. God bless!

IN MARIA,

Fr. Angelico O.P.

**Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the Order of Saint Dominic**

Early in the year 1872, the most reverend Father Jandel, Master of the Dominican Order, preached a retreat to a group of nuns. One morning, he called upon a sister whom he had been guiding for a long time, and told her: « My daughter, how has your retreat been going? For me, these days have not been going well; I have not yet been able to know God’s will about a certain matter regarding the Order. Continue to pray. »

The following day, with an air of complete contentment, and asking once again to see the sister, he admitted to her that at the elevation of the Mass, he received an interior revelation from Our Lord that the moment had come to consecrate the Dominican Order to the His Sacred Heart.

On March 7th of the same year, Father Jandel sent a letter from Rome to the entire Order announcing his intention, exhorting the priors of all the monasteries to unite themselves and their religious with him for this consecration.

Later, one of Father Jandel’s successors, Father Früwirth, would renew this consecration of the entire Order during a pilgrimage to Paray-le-Monial.

One must not regard this consecration as an isolated act in Dominican history. It was in fact a crowning, an official confirmation of a reality lived since the beginning of the Order of Preachers.

**Devotion to the Sacred Heart in our History**

***— The Sacred Heart and Saint Dominic***

It is in fact Our Lady who has guided « her Order » to the Sacred Heart of her Son.

Did she not plant the seed of this devotion in the heart of Saint Dominic by the very fact of revealing to him the Rosary, and making it the primary object of Dominican preaching?

\* What is the Rosary, ever since the origin of our Order, if not the proclamation of the mysteries of the Word Incarnate, that is to say the manifestation of divine love to men, with the sorrowful mysteries at its summit?

\* And what is devotion to the Sacred Heart, if not, principally, through the intermediary of the Heart of Christ’s flesh, the worship of the divine love which is manifested to men through the Incarnation, the Redemption by the Cross, and ultimately the gift of the Holy Eucharist?[[1]](#footnote-1)

Moreover, it is well known that Saint Dominic had a great devotion for the Passion of Our Lord,[[2]](#footnote-2) for Our Lord on the crucifix, and for the Holy Mass which he celebrated while weeping.

***— Devotion to the Sacred Heart among the Dominican Mystics***

Following in the footsteps of our Blessed Father Dominic, the mystics of our Order continued this contemplation of Our Lord Crucified. Very quickly, their gaze focused on the wound in His side, seeing it as the great revelation of His love and the highest point of the Passion. Thereafter, inflamed with love for the Heart of Jesus pierced by the soldier’s lance, it would seem that their sole desire was to penetrate into His open Heart.

**Henri Suso**

Henri Suso, who had engraved the name of Jesus on his own heart with a dagger, heard these words from the Eternal Wisdom, Our Lord Jesus Christ:

You ought to enter, through my open side, into my Heart wounded by love, and try to reside and live in it always. Then I will unite Myself to you and will be with you eternally.[[3]](#footnote-3)

For Henri Suso, whose apostolate met with so many contradictions, the Heart of Jesus was the sole refuge where he was able to regain peace, strength and consolation in such trials.

**The Dominican Sisters**

Our contemplative Sisters were no strangers to this devotion.

Brother Ventura and Brother Rodolph wrote to blessed Dianna d’Andalo and to her sisters of the convent of Saint Agnes at Bologna:

Our Lord, who loves you particularly, will make you enter into His side pierced by the cruel blade of the lance. As prophesied by Isaiah, you will enter into this “fissure of the rock”, and there you will await in safety, until the heavenly Spouse comes and brings you into His wedding hall and His love.

We are still at the very beginning of the Order of Preachers: this letter was written in 1223, two years after the death of Saint Dominic, to whom Blessed Dianna personally owed her vocation.

Our Lord responded magnificently to the love of His handmaids: almost every single one of our canonized contemplative Sisters received the stigmata. By means of these stigmata, they united themselves to the sufferings of Our Lord, in order to render the apostolate of the priests more fruitful. They practiced *the devotion to the Sacred Heart in its aspect of reparation* well before the revelations of Paray-le-Monial.[[4]](#footnote-4)

**Saint Catherine of Sienna**

Saint Catherine of Sienna did not belong to a community of cloistered nuns. She was a tertiary, and by this right, patroness of the Third Order. Nevertheless, she may be assimilated to them in consideration of her early years of hidden life in the little hermitage located in the basement of her father’s home.[[5]](#footnote-5)

In the Church, she is one of the greatest mystics of the Sacred Heart.

In the *Dialogue*, dictated by the saint in ecstasy, God compares Our Lord to a Bridge which connects Heaven and earth. For us to elevate ourselves from earth to Heaven, we must ascend the three tiers of this Bridge, which are the “three ways of the interior life”:

-First, we must hoist ourselves to the feet of Christ through the *purgative life*, which already separates us from earth.

-From there we will arrive at the open Heart of Our Lord. This is the *illuminative life*, where the soul fills itself with love and virtue.

-From there we climb up to the mouth, which symbolizes the *unitive life* where the soul finds peace.[[6]](#footnote-6)

Saint Catherine of Sienna was invited numerous times by Our Lord to drink from the wound of His side. She received invisible stigmata, and Our Lord exchanged His Heart with hers; an episode which doubtlessly must not be interpreted to the letter, as a physical exchange of a heart – there is no theologian who affirms this[[7]](#footnote-7) - but as a mystical experience of profound meaning: this exchange is the image of the consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. To consecrate oneself to the Heart of Jesus is to give oneself to Him in such a way that our heart cannot be but one with His. At that moment, one can say that our heart has become the Heart of Jesus: the same judgements, the same will.

**Our Lay Brothers**

Over the course of centuries, the hidden life of our lay brothers has been fertile ground for the message of Our Lord’s Divine Love.

For example, one day, Saint Martin of Porres (who has since become their celestial patron), was found raptured in ecstasy, elevated several feet into the air, his mouth pressed against the pierced side of Our Lord on a large crucifix.

***— Dominican Tertiaries and the Sacred Heart***

We spoke of Saint Catherine of Sienna. A more recent and more accessible example is that of the Dominican tertiaries in France in the 19th century, who were the driving force behind the construction of the Basilica of the Sacred Heart located on the summit of Montmartre (in Paris), thus accomplishing one of the demands of the Sacred Heart of Jesus to the king of France.

The thought of a national vow to elevate a building in honor of the Sacred Heart in order to atone for the sins of France, first emerged in 1870, during the meetings of the Dominican Third Order in Poitiers. Among the tertiaries were Mr. Rohault de Fleury and his son-in-law, Mr. Legentil. The project was submitted to Cardinal Pie, who received it with benevolence. But as it was a rather daring undertaking, he advised them to obtain the blessing of the Holy See. Mr. Rohault de Fleury went through the Master of the Order, Rev. Father Jandel (a close friend of the Pope), and the blessing was immediately granted by Pius IX. The following year, preaching from the pulpit of Notre-Dame during his Lenten conferences, Father Monsabré O.P. showed himself to be a most ardent promoter of the project.

However, in order to build such an imposing edifice in such a prominent location of the city of Paris, it was necessary to obtain the authorization of the National Assembly. Another tertiary, Mr. Émile Keller, deputy of Belfort, volunteered to defend the project at the Assembly, in the name of the French people.[[8]](#footnote-8) It was accepted. From that moment, the alms came pouring in from all of France and even from abroad. The construction was completed on the 5th of June, 1891, and the consecration of the basilica took place on the 17th of October, 1919.

It was a Dominican contemplative sister, Mother Saint-Dominique, foundress of the monastery of Mirecourt in the Vosges, who had the inspiration of establishing there the perpetual adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

**Bibliography :** *La Dévotion au Cœur de Jésus dans l’Ordre de Saint Dominique,* Bar-le-Duc, Printing house of Saint Paul, 1929.

**Third Order News**

Reception of the scapular on January 31st, 2016 at Saint Mary’s:

 -Mrs. Lesley Bigari (Sr. Margaret of Castello)

 -Mrs. Louise Staszak (Sr. Agnes of Montepluciano)

—Available from Sister Mary-Hyacinth at <rosarysecretary@gmail.com>:

—*Dominican Life* by Fr. Joret, O.P. $25.00 (311 pages, soft cover 1937)

—*Dominican Little Office* 400 pages/spiral bound $18.00 (Contains Office of the Dead and more)

—*Dominican Tertiary scapulars* $5.00 each

 —*Dominican Tertiary pins* $10.00 each

1. — This is expressed in the devotion to the « Eucharistic Heart of Jesus ». [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. — Fra Angelico immortalizes it through his frescos. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. — Henri Suso, *Eternal Wisdom*, chapters IV and XVIII. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. — It is important to note that this aspect of reparation is *intrinsically* bound to the devotion to the Sacred Heart, by the fact that the Heart of Jesus is a heart pierced in reparation for the sins of men. At Paray, Our Lord insists upon a particular point of this devotion, a new point owed to the new historical circumstances: the compensation of love to offer Him in reparation for the indifferences and ingratitude toward Him, these indifferences and ingratitude having reached an alarming point already in the 17th century, following the Renaissance and the pseudo-reform of the protestants. We know that the refusal of King Louis XIV and of his successors to take into consideration the demands of the Sacred Heart led inevitably to the French Revolution. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. — An extremely narrow room which one may still visit at Sienna. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. — Saint Catherine of Sienna, *Dialogue*, Book 1, chapter X. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. — See the *Dictionary of Catholic Theology*, article « Sacred Heart of Jesus », columns 1046 and following. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. — Those interested in learning more about this remarkable tertiary may consult three articles by Br. Vincent Girard T.O.P. in *Le Sel de la terre*: Le député du Syllabus (*Le Sel de la Terre* 77); Le député du Sacré-Cœur (*Le Sel de la Terre* 79); Le drame du ralliement (*Le Sel de la Terre* 81). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)