

## DOMINIC OF JESUS MARY (1559-1630)

Venerable, priest (D)

Born at Calatayud (Aragon) on May 16, 1559, Dominic joined the Carmelites of the Ancient Observance at Saragossa in 1574 and there made his profession of vows on Dec. 8, 1578. In 1589 he went over to the Teresian Reform, to which he bound himself by religious vows taken at Pastrana on Nov. 22, 1590. From the beginning, first as prior at Toledo (1598), then as superior in Madrid (1600), he began to distinguish himself by his noteworthy virtue, charismatic gifts and miracles. Called to Rome (1604), he became a member of the Italian Congregation of the Discalced Carmelites, of which he was repeatedly definitor general (1608, 1611, 1620, 1623, 1626, 1629), procurator general (1614), and provost general (1617-20). An example of prayer, penance and the regular life, he worked zealously for the monastic observance in the nascent Italian Congregation, which he propagated in admirable fashion.

He established the first hermitage, or desert, on the mountains of Varazze (1618); he visited the various Italian houses, and everywhere aroused the enthusiasm of the people and the interest of the bishops and of the authorities by the fame of his prodigies. Rome saw him in the confessional and in the pulpit as a tireless apostle of grace. In 1612, he opened a house of penance in the *Via della Lungara* for women who had strayed and repented, while he also cooperated with other beneficent institutions of the city. He played a very considerable role in the foundation of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith for the Missions. Pope Gregory XV, with a *Motu proprio* of March 1, 1622, named him «collector of alms» for the said Congregation; and with a bull of June 22, 1622, the pope numbered him among the prelates who were members of the Propaganda. The Acts of the Propagation office give testimony of his zeal and activity in favor of the missions.

He was much esteemed by the Emperor Ferdinand II and by Duke Maximilian of Bavaria, whose troops he guided against Frederic V, usurper of the crown of Bohemia, in the celebrated victory of Prague (Nov. 8, 1620). Dominic attributed the victory to the image of Our Lady which he carried on his breast and which, after it had been brought to Rome in triumph, was placed in the church later called St. Mary of Victory.

Even in the midst of so much activity Dominic maintained ever uninterrupted his communion with God, his ardor for the highest perfection. A friend of many of the saints of his time, he was a counselor to the Bl. Nicholas Factor, and to Saints Camillus de Lellis, Robert Bellarmine and especially Joseph Calesanctius, whose spirit and work he defended. He was a theologian and distinguished master of the spirit, as proved by his great work *Sententiariorum spirituale. Documenti et practiche affettive nelle tre vie della Perfectione Christiana, purgativa, illuminativa et unitiva* /Spiritual declarations. Documents and affective practices in the three ways, purgative, illuminative and unitive, of Christian Perfection/, published in Rome in 1623 (2nd edit., 1676) and translated into Latin, French, German and Dutch. He had reached the highest peaks of contemplation even in his youthful years. By order of his confessor, the Ven. John of Jesus Mary, he described The most noteworthy things of his life in regard to

revelations and acts of the virtues until the time of his coming to Rome. The original of this precious document, composed for the exclusive use of his confessor «to provide him with light so that he would not err» (Arch. Gen. O. C. D., 318, 1), reveals the humility and the extraordinary sincerity of the venerable and at the same time is one of the most valid testimonies of how much the grace of God can do when a soul is completely abandoned to its action.

The work was published in an Italian version in Rome in 1724 and in 1736; but it was mutilated and corrected, something that certainly did not favor the cause of his beatification. Had it been entrusted to competent hands

and published as it was written by its author, it would have made people reflect once again on the ways of the Lord, Who does not have fixed plans for any saint. Dominic's outstanding communication with God, his friendship with the saints and the angels, his thaumaturgic power, his grace of miracles, and other things which sometimes might smack of the unreal, should be considered not only in the light of various trustworthy and contemporary witnesses, but also in view of the theological charity and of the humility of the venerable. For these were the foundations of his authentic holiness and of all the charismatic power that God granted him.

Among his writings are found: *Argumenta Psalmorum* /The subject-matter of the Psalms/, written to help in the devout recitation of the Psalter (Rome, 1623), and Spiritual concert or communication ... under the protection of the Blessed Virgin (Rome, 1623), while to prove his monastic zeal there are three Pastoral Letters directed to the Order during his generalate (1617, 1619).

Though of weak health and frequently sick, Dominic, by order of the popes, was almost always traveling. He visited France, Germany, Austria, Bohemia, and several times traveled through Italy from Genoa to Sicily, preaching everywhere, working prodigies, striving for peace. At the end of 1629 Pope Urban VIII sent him to Vienna, where Ferdinand II was awaiting him, to negotiate for peace in Italy. He arrived ailing, yet the emperor wished to have him at court, where Dominic did his best to conclude to something positive, although he felt himself very close to death. In fact, after he had commended the Italian situation to the emperor once again, he died, on Feb. 16, 1630, praising the Lord and the Virgin. Because of the multiplication of miracles attributed to his intercession, and thanks to the petitions of the reigning houses of Austria and Bavaria, the cause of his beatification was begun immediately and was introduced at Rome on Jan. 29, 1676. Taken up again at the beginning of our century, it still awaits a conclusion.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: The most important biographical source is the *Positio super virtutibus* /Deposition on the virtues/, Rome, 1843 (2nd edit, in four vols.. Rome, 1926-32, where many important documents are gathered together). Among the manuscript sources first place goes to Dominic's Life written by his secretary and confessor, Father Peter of the Mother of God, who day by day, as he accompanied Dominic, went on noting whatever Dominic did in a kind of diary. (Ms. orig. Arch. Gen. O.C.D., 319a) Among the

innumerable published works (See the *Elenchus scriptorum qui de vita ac gestis ven. P. Dominici... scripserunt...* Arch Gen. O.C.D., 318a) are to be mentioned: *Histoire admirable de la vie, moeurs, voyages et actions du... P. Dominique...*, Paris 1621 (printed on the occasion of the travels of the Ven. in France, and therefore a testimony to the fame of his holiness even while alive); J. Caramuel, *Dominicus, hoc est ven. P. Dominici... virtutes, labores, prodigia, ecstases et revelationes*, Vienna 1655; Filippo della Trinita, *Vita ven. P. Dominici* Lyon 1659; Stanislao di S. Teresa, *Il ven. Domenico di G.M.*, Ceprano 1925; Knoll-Winter-Zessner-Spitzenberg, *Dominicus a Jesu Maria: seine Personlichkeit und sem Werk*, Vienna 1930.

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