

## Selections

from the Supplement to the Liturgy of the Hours for the Order of Preachers  
A Draft Translation of the Proprium Officiorum Ordinis Praedicatorum (1982) for Study and  
Consultation: Dominican Liturgical Commission, U.S.A. Chicago, 1991

DIFFERENT ELEMENTS IN THE OFFICES: Historical Notes

25. In accord with the General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours a short biographical note has been placed at the beginning of the proper Office of each Saint or Blessed.

As is the case for some Propers of certain religious families and dioceses, these short biographical notices were written in a fuller manner and edited according to contemporary historico-critical findings by the office of the Postulator General of the Order."

Thus, the desire of many has been satisfied, namely, the desire for spiritual nourishment, not only from the second readings of the Office of Readings, but also from the biographical note which describes the unique characteristics of the spiritual life, the teaching, or the pastoral activity of the Saint or Blessed. These notes can serve as an initial introduction to the Saint or Blessed or as a homiletic aid, as well as a source for personal meditation.

General Introduction, p. xxxiv.

### Liturgical Calendar of the Order of Preachers

#### January

- |    |                                                                                                              |          |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| 3  | <i>Bl. Stephana Quinzani, sister and virgin</i>                                                              |          |
| 4  | <i>Bl. Zedislava Berkiana, lay Dominican and wife</i>                                                        |          |
| 7  | St. Raymond of Penyafort, friar, priest and Master of the Order                                              | Memorial |
| 10 | <i>Bl. Gonsalvo of Amarante, friar and priest</i><br><i>Bl. Ann of the Angels Monteagudo, nun and virgin</i> |          |
| 11 | <i>Bl. Bernard Scammacca, friar and priest</i>                                                               |          |
| 18 | St. Margaret of Hungary, nun and virgin                                                                      | Memorial |
| 19 | <i>Bl. Andrew of Peschiera, friar and priest</i>                                                             |          |
| 22 | <i>Bl. Anthony della Chiesa, friar and priest</i>                                                            |          |
| 23 | <i>Bl. Henry Suso, friar and priest</i>                                                                      |          |
| 27 | <i>Bl. Marcolino of Forli, friar and priest</i>                                                              |          |
| 28 | St. Thomas Aquinas, Friar, Priest and Doctor of the Church                                                   | Feast    |
| 29 | <i>Bl. Villana de' Botti, lay Dominican and wife</i>                                                         |          |

#### February

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|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 3  | <i>Bl. Peter of Rufa, friar, priest and martyr</i><br><i>Bl. Anthony Pavonio, friar, priest and martyr</i><br><i>Bl. Bartholomew of Cerverio, friar priest and martyr</i> |                   |
| 4  | St. Catherine de' Ricci, sister and virgin                                                                                                                                | Memorial          |
| 7  | Anniversary of Deceased Parents                                                                                                                                           |                   |
| 12 | Bl. Reginald of Orleans, friar and priest                                                                                                                                 | Optional Memorial |
| 13 | Bl. Jordan of Saxony, friar, priest and Master of the Order                                                                                                               | Memorial          |
| 16 | <i>Bl. Nicholas of Paglia, friar and priest</i>                                                                                                                           |                   |
| 18 | Bl. John of Fiesole (Fra Angelico), friar and priest                                                                                                                      | Optional Memorial |
| 19 | <i>Bl. Alvarez of Cordoba, friar and priest</i>                                                                                                                           |                   |
| 20 | <i>Bl. Christopher of Milan, friar and priest</i>                                                                                                                         |                   |
| 24 | <i>Bl. Constantius of Fabriano, friar and priest</i>                                                                                                                      |                   |

#### March

- |    |                                         |           |
|----|-----------------------------------------|-----------|
| 24 | [Vigil of the Annunciation of the Lord] |           |
| 25 | Annunciation of the Lord                | Solemnity |

April

5	St. Vincent Ferrer, friar and priest	Memorial
10	<i>Bl. Anthony Neyrot, friar, priest and martyr</i>	
13	<i>Bl. Margaret of Castello, lay Dominican and virgin</i>	
14	<i>Bl. Peter Gonzalez, friar and priest</i>	
17	<i>Bl. Clara Gambacorta, nun and widow</i> <i>Bl. Maria Mancini, nun and widow</i>	
19	<i>Bl. Isnard of Chiampo, friar and priest</i> <i>Bl. Sibyllina Biscossi, lay Dominican and virgin</i>	
20	St. Agnes of Montepulciano, nun and virgin	Memorial
27	<i>Bl. Osanna of Kotor, lay Dominican and virgin</i>	
29	St. Catherine of Siena, Lay Dominican, Virgin and Doctor of the Church	Feast
30	St. Pius V, friar and pope	Memorial

May

4	<i>Bl. Emily Bicchieri, nun and virgin</i>	
7	<i>Bl. Albert of Bergamo, lay Dominican and husband</i>	
8	Patronage of the Blessed Virgin Mary	
10	St. Antoninus of Florence, friar and bishop	Memorial
12	<i>Bl. Jane of Portugal, nun and virgin</i>	
13	<i>Bl. Imelda Lambertini, nun and virgin</i>	
15	<i>Bl. Giles of Portugal, friar and priest</i> <i>Bl. Andrew Abellon, friar and priest</i>	
19	<i>Bl. Francis Coll Guitart, friar and priest</i>	
21	<i>Bl. Columba of Rieti, sister and virgin</i>	
24	Translation of Our Holy Father Dominic	Memorial
27	<i>Bl. Andrew Franchi, friar and bishop</i>	
28	<i>Bl. Mary-Bartholomew Bagnesi, lay Dominican and virgin</i>	
29	<i>Bl. William Arnould, friar and priest, and Companions, martyrs</i>	
30	<i>Bl. James Salomonio, friar and priest</i>	

June

2	<i>Bl. Sadoc, friar and priest, and Companions, martyrs</i>	
4	St. Peter of Verona, friar, priest and martyr	Memorial
8	Bl. Diana and Bl. Cecilia, nuns and virgins	Optional Memorial
10	Bl. John Dominic, friar and bishop	Optional Memorial
12	<i>Bl. Stephen Bandelli, friar and priest</i>	
18	<i>Bl. Osanna of Mantua, lay Dominican and virgin</i>	
20	<i>Bl. Margaret Ebner, nun and virgin</i>	
23	<i>Bl. Innocent V, friar and pope</i>	

July

7	<i>Bl. Benedict XI, friar and pope</i>	
8	<i>Bl. Adrian Fortescue, lay Dominican, husband and martyr</i>	
9	St. John of Cologne, friar and priest, and Companions, martyrs	Memorial
13	<i>Bl. James of Varazze, friar and bishop</i>	
17	Bl. Ceslaus of Poland, friar and priest	Optional Memorial
22	[St. Mary Magdalene, Patroness of the Order	Memorial]
24	<i>Bl. Jane of Orvieto, lay Dominican and virgin</i>	
25	<i>Bl. Augustine of Biella, friar and priest</i>	

August

2	Bl. Jane of Aza, Mother of St. Dominic and Bl. Mannes	Optional Memorial
3	<i>Bl. Augustine Kazotic, friar and bishop</i>	
8	Our Holy Father Dominic, Priest	Solemnity
9	<i>Bl. John of Salerno, friar and priest</i>	
14	<i>Bl. Aimo Taparelli, friar and priest</i>	
15	[Assumption Solemnity]	
17	St. Hyacinth of Poland, friar and priest	Memorial
18	Bl. Marines, friar, priest and brother of St. Dominic	Optional Memorial
19	<i>Bl. Jordan of Pisa, friar and priest</i>	
23	St. Rose of Lima, lay Dominican and virgin	Memorial
26	<i>Bl. James of Bevagna, friar and priest</i>	
28	Augustine, Bishop and Doctor of the Church	Feast

September

2	<i>Bl. Guala of Bergamo, friar and bishop</i>	
4	<i>Bl. Catherine Racconigi, lay Dominican and virgin</i>	
5	Anniversary of Deceased Friends and Benefactors	
6	<i>Bl. Bertrand of Garrigue, friar and priest</i>	
18	St. Juan Macias, friar and religious	Memorial
20	<i>Bl. Mark of Modena, friar and priest</i>	
	<i>Bl. Francis Posadas, friar and priest</i>	
24	<i>Bl. Dalmatius Moner, friar and priest</i>	
26	<i>Bl. Lawrence of Ripafratta, friar and priest</i>	
28	St. Dominic Ibanez de Erquicia and St. James Kyushei Tomonaga, friar and priests, St. Lawrence Ruiz, lay Dominican and husband, and Companions, martyrs	Memorial

October

3	<i>Bl. Dominic Spadafora, friar and priest</i>	
4	Our Holy Father Francis of Assisi, Deacon	Feast
5	Bl. Raymond of Capua, friar, priest and Master of the Order	Optional Memorial
6	<i>Bl. Bartolomeo Longo, lay Dominican</i>	
7	Our Lady of the Rosary	Feast
8	<i>Bl. Ambrose Sansedone, friar and priest</i>	
	<i>Bl. Matthew Carreri, friar and priest</i>	
9	St. Louis Bertrand, friar and priest	Memorial
11	<i>Bl. James of Ulm, friar and religious</i>	
13	<i>Bl. Magdalen Panatieri, lay Dominican and virgin</i>	
21	<i>Bl. Peter of Citta di Castello, friar and priest</i>	
22	Anniversary of the Dedication of a Church	Solemnity
25	<i>Bl. Peter Geremia, friar and priest</i>	
26	<i>Bl. Damian of Finale, friar and priest</i>	
27	<i>Bl. Bartholomew of Vicenza, friar and priest</i>	
30	<i>Bl. Benvenuta Bojani, lay Dominican and virgin</i>	

November

1	[All Saints Solemnity]	
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3	St. Martin De Porres, Friar and Religious	Feast
5	<i>Bl. Simon Ballachi, friar and religious</i>	
6	Bl. Francis de Capillas and Alfonsus Navarette, friars and priests, and Companions, martyrs	Memorial
7	All Saints of the Order of Preachers	Feast
8	Anniversary of Deceased Brothers and Sisters of the Order of Preachers	
14	<i>Bl. John Liccio, friar and priest</i> <i>Bl. Lucy of Narni, sister and virgin</i>	
15	St. Albert the Great, Friar, Bishop and Doctor of the Church	Feast
19	<i>Bl. James Benefatti, friar and bishop</i>	
24	St. Ignatius Delgado, friar and bishop, St. Vincent Liem, friar and priest, St. Dominic An-Kham, lay Dominican and husband, and Companions, martyrs	Memorial
25	<i>Bl. Margaret of Savoy, nun and religious</i>	

#### December

1	<i>Bl. John of Vercelli, friar and priest</i>
8	[Immaculate Conception Solemnity]
16	<i>Bl. Sebastian Maggi, friar and priest</i>
22	Anniversary of the Approval of the Order
24	[Vigil of Christmas]
25	[CHRISTMAS Solemnity]

## JANUARY

### JANUARY 3

Blessed Stephana Quinzani  
Sister and Virgin

Blessed Stephana was born in 1457 near Brescia, Italy. She was particularly devoted to the Passion of our Lord and bore the marks of his stigmata. At the same time she experienced spiritual aridity as well as doubts and temptations. She founded a convent at Socino where she and her sisters led a regular life. Well-known for her service to the poor, she died at Socino on January 2, 1530.

### JANUARY 4

Blessed Zedislava Berkiana  
Lay Dominican and Wife

Blessed Zedislava was born in Moravia around the year 1220. As a wife and mother she provided well for her own family and was also known as a loving mother of the poor. She received the Dominican habit and together with her husband helped to build up the Order in Bohemia. Renowned for her service to the poor, she died in 1252.

### JANUARY 7

Saint Raymond of Penyafort  
Friar, Priest and Master of the Order                      Memorial

Born at Penyafort in Catalonia around the year 1175, Saint Raymond was a priest of the church of Barcelona. He became a distinguished theologian and professor of canon law at the University of Bologna and while there joined the Order in 1222. During his own

lifetime he was known for his **Summa** which he composed as an aid for confessors. Upon the order of Gregory IX he compiled the **Decretals** which remained in use until the present century. Elected third Master of the Order (1238-1240) Raymond served his brothers faithfully. He encouraged the friars to engage in dialogue with Moslems and Jews, established a school for the study of Arabic languages and the Koran and aided the friars of Our Lady of Mercy in their work in northern Africa. He died in Barcelona on January 6, 1275.

#### Alternative Second Reading

From the collection **Mare historiarum** of our brother, John Colonna, a contemporary of Saint Raymond.

*"He was a man of the greatest perfection, exceedingly zealous for the religious life".*

During the pontificate of Gregory IX brother Raymond of Penyafort, a Catalan by birth and the third Master of the Order of Preachers, was well known. Before he entered the Order, he was a distinguished doctor of canon law at the university of Bologna.

After Raymond had received the habit, his prudence, knowledge and holiness led to his appointment as socius to John of Abbeville, cardinal legate to Spain. Upon his return to the papal court, he became a close friend and personal counselor of Pope Gregory IX, and also served as his chaplain, his penitentiary, and the person who dealt with the petitions of the poor. Later upon the order of the pope he collected the Decretals, which had previously been scattered in four volumes, into a single volume, a work which is still in use today.

Being a holy and religious man, Raymond conducted himself in a holy and prudent manner at the curia, observing a humility and complete integrity in all matters pertaining to the Order. There was hardly anyone who had business with that curia who did not speak well of him and considered him to be a very saintly man, as indeed he was.

Because of his sanctity the Supreme Pontiff wanted to name him an archbishop, but he resisted this so resolutely and with such conscientiousness, that the Pope was obliged to stop putting pressure on him, seeing that he did not wish to accept such a position.

With difficulty Raymond obtained permission from the Pope to retire from the Roman curia. While living in the priory of Barcelona in a manner which might be described as "angelic," he was elected Master of the Order, a position which he could hardly be induced to accept. He was a man of the greatest perfection and zealous for the religious life, desiring that the rigor of the Order be observed even in the slightest matter. Raymond compiled the **Summa de casibus** which provided counsel to be given for the salvation of souls, a work which was most beneficial for the whole Church. Thanks to his diligence our Constitutions, which had been in considerable disorder, were edited in a proper form, with precise distinctions and titles, such as they are today.

After governing the Order for two years, he realized that his strength was no longer equal to the work involved for the remainder of his term, and at his earnest request the diffinitors at Bologna accepted his resignation. Upon returning to his own province, Raymond lived at the priory of Barcelona for the remainder of his life, renowned for miracles both in life and in death.

#### JANUARY 10

Blessed Gonsalvo of Amarante

Friar and Priest

Born around 1187 in the diocese of Braga, Portugal, Blessed Gonsalvo became a parish priest. After spending fourteen years traveling about the Holy Land and the sanctuaries of Rome, he took up the eremitical life. Eventually he was inspired to enter the Dominican Order. After his introduction to religious life he obtained permission to return with a companion to Amarante, the scene of his earlier solitude, and there took up the life of a hermit once again. He spent his time in contemplation, ascetical practices and in catechizing the people of the area. He died at Amarante in 1259.

#### JANUARY 10

Blessed Ann of the Angels Monteagudo

Nun and Virgin

Blessed Ann was born in Arequipa, Peru, in the year 1602 and in 1619 professed solemn vows in the monastery of St. Catherine of Siena. There she fulfilled the offices of sacristan, mistress of novices and prioress. She was completely taken up in prayer with God, yet did not neglect the needs of her neighbors. She died in Arequipa on January 10, 1686.

#### JANUARY 11

Blessed Bernard Scammacca

Friar and Priest

Blessed Bernard was born in Sicily in the year 1430. As a young man he suffered a serious leg wound which became the means of his conversion from a life of dissipation. He entered the Order in 1452 and strove to conform himself to Christ crucified through works of charity, acts of penance and contemplation of the Passion. Bernard was especially known for his care of the sick and the poor and he established a hospital to serve them. He promoted the regular life in the Order and was a gifted preacher. He died on January 11, 1487.

#### JANUARY 18

Saint Margaret of Hungary

Nun and Virgin Memorial

Margaret was born in 1242, the daughter of Bela IV, King of Hungary, and Maria Lascaris, daughter of the emperor of Constantinople. Before her birth her parents had vowed to dedicate their child to God if Hungary would be victorious over the invading Tartars. Their prayers were answered and so when almost four years old Margaret was placed in the Dominican monastery of Veszprim. At the age of twelve she moved to a new monastery built by her father near Buda and there made profession into the hands of Humbert of Romans. Margaret lived a life totally dedicated to Christ crucified and inspired her sisters by her asceticism, her works of mercy, her pursuit of peace, and her humble service. She had a special love for the Eucharist and the Passion of Christ and showed a special devotion to the Holy Spirit and Our Lady. She died on January 18, 1270.

## Second Reading

From the letter of canonization by Pope Pius XII.

*"Strive to become like this woman, consecrated to the Spouse of virgins, the very King of martyrs."*

[ Margaret of Hungary was born of a royal family in the thirteenth century. Four other women renowned for holiness in the Church came from that one family – Saint Elizabeth, her cousin, Blessed Agnes of Prague, and Blessed Cunegunda and Blessed Jolenta, the daughters of King Bela IV. The Holy See approved veneration of these four.

Margaret was born of devout parents, Bela IV and Maria Lascaris, the king and queen of Hungary. Before her birth her parents had vowed that, if a daughter were born, she would be dedicated to God to obtain the freedom and welfare of the kingdom. God heard their prayers and vows. When Margaret was not yet four years old, the queen, mindful of her promise and the blessings received from God, brought her to the monastery of the Dominican nuns at Veszprim to learn regular observance at a tender age so as to serve God more fittingly.]

Margaret was deeply moved by her schooling in the cross. She at once forgot her royal home and developed a docile and obedient spirit, winning from the nuns their tender affection. She was led at this early age to an angelic love of Christ and the Virgin Mother of God.

In his desire to gain divine help more surely and effectively for himself and his kingdom, her father, the king, built a monastery in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary on an island in the Danube. There he supported a community of consecrated virgins, including his daughter Margaret, "the one among his children whom he loved most tenderly, for he saw in her definite signs of a life holy and pleasing to God."

Margaret refused marriage with a prince of Poland and at the age of twelve took solemn vows before Humbert, the Master of the Order. Later the King of Bohemia eagerly sought her in marriage, despite her desire to keep her pledge to her Divine Spouse. To forestall this and any other occasion of unwanted requests for marriage, Margaret wished to show openly that she was espoused to Christ: she asked to receive the veil and her request was joyfully granted by the Archbishop of Strigonia.

After her consecration to the Spouse of virgins, Margaret desired most fervently to become like the King of martyrs in her contempt of self and the world and in mortifying her body. Her clothes were always of the poorest quality; she wished to perform the lowliest tasks; and she took delight sweeping the house, doing menial work, preparing meals and carrying heavy loads. When others feared to incur infection from diseases of her sick sisters or the servants, she showed such love and desire for the lowliest tasks that she single-handedly assumed the heavy and difficult duties of those who were ill.

Margaret's thoughts were on the mysteries of the Passion: she sighed and burned with the desire to be a martyr. In the presence of Christ, veiled in the Eucharist or imaged on the cross, she freely poured out her heart; she prayed everywhere and unceasingly, frequently adding to the prescribed office the entire psalter, as well as prayers to God the Father or to the Holy Spirit the Paraclete, or salutations to the Virgin Mother of God whom she loved dearly.

In order to placate the wrath of God and win mercy for her people she "wept copiously and disciplined her body with fasts; she wore a hair shirt, as if grieving for the sins of all who did evil before God. She bemoaned deeds of oppression and in her prayers she begged God that the Lord Jesus Christ by the power of his hand would defend innocent people and those members of the Church who were brought together by the Lord's most precious blood."

But Margaret did not limit herself to fervent prayers and harsh penance; she was also fired with the zeal of an apostle and strengthened by heroic fortitude. As a result she did not hesitate to openly rebuke a man who was perpetrating an injustice, even though he had great authority and a high position.

For a third time Margaret spurned an offer of marriage, saying that she freely wished to keep her virginity for Christ the Lord. Then her Divine Spouse, always faithful and more than generous, made a sweet dwelling place in the heart of his handmaid, and heaped it with gifts from heaven, making her the companion of his passion and the sharer of his consolation and power, both in her own lifetime and after her death.

#### Alternative Second Reading

From a sermon of our brother John Tauler, **On the Ascension of the Lord.**

*"True peace in the midst of agitation."*

All those who desire to imitate God the Redeemer, our Lord Jesus Christ, must humbly, without murmuring, take upon their shoulders the cross of suffering, whether that suffering be interior or exterior, merited or unmerited. Thus laden with such sufferings, they will go on their way joyfully, following their Lord. This is the only means by which we may one day arrive where Christ has preceded us.

Certainly there are many people who desire to be witnesses of the Savior in times of peace, that is to say, provided that all goes well in pursuing their desires. They willingly wish to become saints, but without toil, without weariness, without difficulties, without cost to themselves. They have the ambition to know God, to taste and feel God, as long as there is no unpleasantness. But if they must labor, if they experience any bitterness, any desolation, any darkness or strong temptations, or if God seems hidden and they experience no consolation either interiorly or exteriorly, their good resolutions vanish. These are not the true witnesses whom the Savior seeks.

Who does not seek peace? Who does not wish to enjoy peace everywhere and in everything they do? Striving for this kind of peace cannot be simply put off. For it is not by modest efforts that we can have peace at all times and hold fast to it even in the midst of misfortune. It is from striving that a true, durable and sure peace comes. In fact all that we look for and love outside of this is an illusion. If, on the other hand, we apply ourselves with all our strength to maintaining joy in the midst of sadness, peace in the midst of agitation, simplicity in the midst of multiplicity, and cheerfulness in the midst of vexation, then we will be true witnesses of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It was to such disciples that Christ himself offered peace, both before his death and after his resurrection. But they will never find an exterior peace in this life; rather they will be given an essential peace, that is, true peace in the midst of troubles, happiness in the midst of insults, life in the midst of death. They will rejoice and be glad when others

hate them, when they are handed over for judgment, and when they are condemned to death. These are the true witnesses of God.

#### JANUARY 19

Blessed Andrew of Peschiera  
Friar and Priest

Blessed Andrew was born at Peschiera, Italy in 1400 and entered the Order in a reformed priory of the Congregation of Lombardy. Itinerant preaching was his life's ministry, especially in the Valtelline region of the Italian Alps where he labored for forty-five years. Traveling on foot and living with the poor, he reconciled many to Christ. He died at the priory of Morbegno on January 18, 1485.

#### JANUARY 22

Blessed Anthony Della Chiesa  
Friar and Priest

A member of the noble Della Chiesa family, Blessed Anthony was born at San Germano, Italy, in 1394 and received the Dominican habit at Vercelli in 1417. He served as prior in several convents of the Order and labored to restore the regular life. He was known for his gentle, yet firm treatment of human frailty. He died on January 22, 1459.

#### JANUARY 23

Blessed Henry Suso  
Friar and Priest

Blessed Henry Suso was born in Constance-Swabia, Germany, towards the end of the thirteenth century and is associated with Meister Eckhart and John Tauler in the school of Dominican spirituality known as the "Rhineland Mystics." He pursued Divine Wisdom and manifested a great love for the Passion of the Lord. In his writings he taught detachment from all sensible reality and union with God through the contemplation of the perfections and sufferings of Christ. He died in Ulm on January 25, 1366.

#### Office of Readings

##### Second Reading

From a letter of Blessed Henry Suso.

*"The testament or rule of love."*

May the name of God be hallowed in you that you may joyfully drink from the wounds of Christ! May divine love, true peace, deep humility flowing from the faithful heart of Jesus, and joyful forgetfulness of self in the company of the most dear Son of God and of the Virgin Mary be yours. This is my "Lord's Prayer" for bidding you farewell in Christ Jesus.

My little ones, may you experience such a spirit in your good works and be such a work before God. Although your works may be many, may you be one in heart. Grace is given now and glory in eternity in greater abundance for the soul which is entrusted to the hands of God than for the soul which is outwardly perfect, however great and holy it may appear.

Cultivate all the virtues you can, yet do not place your confidence in them, but in Christ alone.

Turn your hearts to Christ in your heavenly homeland and, through burning desire rather than through your senses, consider this earth as a kind of sweet exile where you await the will of God with eagerness for God's honor. Receive everything from the hands of God – joy, labor, hardships, prosperity, honor, happiness, disgrace, and calumny. Above all, lie prostrate before his feet, casting yourselves so completely and perfectly to the ground that no one can bring you lower. Rejoice in honoring our Lord, sigh for him, love him, seeking no delight for yourselves. Trust in him and never cease proclaiming your love for him.

My dearest ones, receive this message from God for your good through me, a poor sinner, who is in every way your friend. What? Don't you want to confess your sins? "Yes, gladly, dear brother." Do not confess the sins of others. Do not judge one whom you do not wish to imitate. Rather, through understanding of your own lowliness discover judgment for others.

Do you not wish to experience God's presence? Then learn to know yourself. Do you not wish to receive a new illumination and grace from God? Then learn to recognize God's gifts and give thanks for every grace you receive from God.

Do you not wish to live in God and to have God live in you both now and in eternity? Then learn to die to self for the lofty life of the soul is hidden in the dying and death of natural desires. In both joy and sorrow this death, which we have chosen in every instance in which we can seize either joy or sorrow, makes it possible for us to follow the naked and despoiled Christ, being naked and despoiled ourselves.

This will serve as a short guide. Diligently set yourself apart from everything which lasts but a short time. Wisely purify yourself of everything which has the guise of creatures. Confidently be lifted heavenward with Christ. Firmly rule your natural self with prudence. Humbly show yourself to be agreeable and you will be able to know the truth. That is all for now. Farewell!

#### JANUARY 27

Blessed Marcolino of Forli  
Friar and Priest

Blessed Marcolino was born in Forli, Italy, in 1317 and entered the Dominican Order as a youth. He loved silence and solitude and was noted for his devotion to the Virgin Mother of God. He supported the reform efforts of Raymond of Capua, faithfully carried out his priestly ministry and performed works of charity. He was a counselor for many, especially of the sick. He died on January 24, 1397.

#### JANUARY 28

Saint Thomas Aquinas  
Friar, Priest and Doctor of the Church      Feast

Saint Thomas, a member of the noble family of Aquino, was born in the castle of Rocca Sicca in 1225 and spent his early years at the Abbey of Monte Cassino. Against his family's wishes he entered the Order of Preachers at Naples (1244) and was sent to Cologne to complete his studies under the direction of Saint Albert the Great. He devoted

all his energy to the service of truth, eagerly searching it out, lovingly contemplating it, and imparting it to others through his writing, his teaching and his preaching. His life was marked by devotion to the Passion of the Lord, to the mystery of the Eucharist, and to the Virgin Mary, Mother of God. Because of his fidelity to regular life, his love of truth, and his piety, the Order recognizes him as a model for its own pursuit of truth. He died at Fossanova on March 7, 1274, while on his way to the Council of Lyons. He was declared Patron of all Universities and Catholic Schools by Leo XIII. This date recalls the translation of his remains to Toulouse.

## Second Reading

From a conference by St. Thomas Aquinas.

*"The law of divine love is the standard for all human actions."*

It is evident that not all are able to labor at learning and for that reason Christ has given a short law. Everyone can know this law and no one may be excused from observing it because of ignorance. This is the law of divine love. As scripture says, *The Lord will quickly execute sentence upon the earth.*

This law should be the standard for all human actions. In the case of products of human manufacture, each product is considered right and good when it conforms to a standard. So also each human act is considered right and virtuous when it conforms to the standard of divine love. But when a human act does not conform to the standard of love, then it is not right, nor good, nor perfect.

This law of divine love accomplishes in a person four things that are much to be desired. First, it is the cause of one's spiritual life. For it is evident that by the very nature of the action what is loved is in the one who loves. Therefore whoever loves God possesses God in himself; for scripture says, *Whoever remains in love remains in God and God in him.* It is the nature of love to transform the lover into the object loved. And so if we love God, we ourselves become divinized; for again, *Whoever is joined to God becomes one spirit with him.* Augustine adds, "As the soul is the life of the body, so God is the life of the soul." Thus the soul acts virtuously and perfectly when she acts through charity, and through charity God lives in her; indeed, without charity she cannot act; for scripture says, *Whoever does not love, remains in death.* If a person possesses all the gifts of the Holy Spirit, but lacks charity, that person has no life. For it matters not whether one has the grace of tongues, or the gift of faith, or any other gift such as prophecy; these do not bring life without charity. Even if a dead body should be adorned with gold and precious jewels, it nevertheless remains dead.

The second point about charity is that it leads to the observance of the divine commandments. Gregory the Great says that charity is not idle. For charity is present if one is occupied about great things; but if one is not so occupied, charity is not present. We see a lover do great and difficult things because of the one loved, and that is why the Lord says, *Whoever loves me will keep my word.* Whoever keeps this command and the law of divine love fulfills the whole law.

A third point about charity is that it provides protection against adversity. For misfortune cannot harm one who has charity; rather it becomes useful to that person; as scripture says, *All things work for good for those who love God.* Furthermore, misfortune and difficulties seem pleasant to the lover, and our own experience verifies this.

A fourth point about charity is that it truly leads to happiness, since eternal blessedness is promised only to those who have charity. For all other things are insufficient without charity. You must note that it is only the different degrees of charity, and not those of any other virtues, which constitute the different degrees of blessedness. Many of the saints were more abstemious than the apostles, but the apostles excel all the other saints in blessedness because of their higher degree of charity.

[Thus, from what we have said it is evident that charity accomplishes four things. First, it effects the remission of sins. And this is evident from our own experience. For if anyone should offend another and then should conceive a strong love for the one offended, the offense is forgiven the offender because of the love. This is most evident in the case of Magdalene of whom the Lord said, *Her many sins have been forgiven*. But why? He added, *Because she has shown great love*. Perhaps someone may say, therefore charity is sufficient for having sins forgiven and penitence is not necessary. But, it must be understood that no one truly loves who is not truly penitent.

Again, charity illumines the heart. For as Job said, *we are all enveloped in darkness*. Often we do not know what we should do or what we should desire, but charity teaches us everything necessary for salvation; as scripture notes, *his anointing teaches you about everything*. This is because where charity is, there is the Holy Spirit who knows all things and who leads us *in the right way*. Again, charity effects perfect joy in a person. Likewise, charity effects perfect peace and gives a person great dignity. For charity transforms a slave into a free person and a friend. Not only does charity transform us into free people but it also makes us children, that we may be called and may be children of God, *for the Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ*. While it is true that all gifts are from the Father of lights, nevertheless this gift of charity far excels all other gifts. For we can possess all the other gifts while lacking charity and the Holy Spirit, but when we possess charity we also necessarily possess the Holy Spirit.]

#### Alternative Second Reading

From the theological works of Saint Thomas Aquinas.

*"The foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom."*

Christ chose to have parents who were poor but perfect in virtue, lest anyone should glory in his noble lineage and the riches of his parents. He lived a life of poverty to teach others to spurn riches. He lived an ordinary life having no high position to recall others from an inordinate greed for honors. He endured labor, hunger, thirst and bodily scourging, lest those who are intent on bodily pleasures and delights draw back from the good of virtue because of the rigors of such a life.

In the end Christ endured death, that others might not abandon the truth for fear of death. And lest anyone should fear to undergo a shameful death for the sake of the truth, he himself chose the most shameful kind of death, namely, death on a cross. Thus it was fitting for the Son of God to take on human flesh and to suffer death, that by his example he might encourage us to pursue virtue. Peter attested to the truth of this, saying, *Christ suffered for us, leaving you an example that you should follow in his footsteps*.

If Christ had lived in the world in wealth and power and with a high position, it might have been thought that the purpose of his teaching and miracles was to curry human favor and power. Therefore, to make it clear that he was performing a work of divine power, Christ chose all that was low and weak in the world: a lowly mother, a life without riches, and uncultured disciples and messengers. Christ himself was to be rejected and condemned to death by the great ones of the world, to make it perfectly clear that the undertaking of his miracles and his teaching was not of human but of divine power.

Another point must be considered: in the disposition of providence the Son of God-become-human desired to suffer weakness and wanted his disciples, whom he established as the ministers of human salvation, to be despised in the world. This is the reason he did not choose educated and noble men, but unlettered and common men, namely, poor fishermen. When he sent them to work for the salvation of the world, Christ commanded them to observe poverty, to endure persecution and reproaches and even to undergo death for the sake of the truth, lest their preaching seem to be directed toward some earthly advantage. Thus the salvation of the world would be attributed only to the divine and not to any human wisdom or power. Accordingly, the divine power for accomplishing marvelous deeds was not lacking in these men, who appeared to be of no account in the eyes of the world.

All this was necessary for human redemption that we might learn not to rely proudly on ourselves, but rather on God. For the perfection of human justice requires that we totally subject ourselves to God. It is also from God that we hope to obtain all the good things for which we must strive and which have already been obtained for us.

#### JANUARY 29

Blessed Villana de' Botti  
Lay Dominican and Wife

Blessed Villana, the daughter of a rich merchant, was born at Florence in 1332. She married the wealthy Pietro Benitendo and together with her husband lived a worldly life which their wealth sustained. Realizing the emptiness of her life, Villana went to the friars of Santa Maria Novella to confess her sins and ask for the habit of the sisters of Penance of St. Dominic. She took up the study of scripture and the contemplation of Christ crucified and drew other women to follow her example. She died on January 29, 1361.

### FEBRUARY

#### FEBRUARY 3

Blessed Peter of Ruffia  
Friar, Priest and Martyr

Blessed Peter was born at Ruffia, Italy, around 1320. He entered the Order at an early age and was known for his personal austerity, his sound doctrine and his spirit of self-denial. He was appointed Inquisitor-General of Piedmont in 1351 to deal with the Waldensians. He was martyred by some of this sect at Susa on February 2, 1365.

#### FEBRUARY 3

Blessed Anthony of Pavonio

Friar, Priest and Martyr

Blessed Anthony was born at Savigliano, Italy, about 1326 and entered the Order at an early age. Upon the martyrdom of Blessed Peter of Ruffia, Anthony was appointed to succeed him as Inquisitor General by Urban V. His prayer and practice of virtue sustained him in this ministry. He was himself martyred for the faith on April 9, 1374.

FEBRUARY 3

Blessed Bartholomew of Cerverio

Friar, Priest and Martyr

Blessed Bartholomew was born at Savigliano, Italy, about 1420. He pursued theological studies and became a Master of Theology in the faculty of Turin. His theological expertise and his apostolic zeal led to his appointment as Inquisitor-General in Piedmont. Blessed Bartholomew worked untiringly to defend the true faith and for his efforts received the crown of martyrdom on April 21, 1466.

FEBRUARY 4

Saint Catherine de' Ricci

Sister and Virgin Memorial

Alessandra de' Ricci was born of a noble family near Florence in 1522. At the age of twelve she entered the Dominican convent of St. Vincent at Prato and took the religious name Catherine. Inspired by Girolamo Savonarola she worked constantly to promote the regular life. She was favored with extraordinary mystical experiences and at the age of twenty began to experience the sacred stigmata and weekly ecstasies of the Passion. These phenomena continued for twenty years. Despite her intense mystical life of prayer and her penance, Catherine served as prioress of the convent for thirty-six years. She was noted as a kind and considerate superior, particularly gentle with the sick. She died on February 2, 1590.

Second Reading

From a letter written by Saint Catherine de' Ricci on Palm Sunday, April 18, 1554, to Bonaccorso Bonaccorsi of Florence.

*"We have won the red and ruddy prize of victory, which is the crucified Jesus."*

Competition should be considered extremely important. Such competition is not the same as envy which leads a person to wish to prevent a neighbor from attaining some good lest the neighbor get ahead. Rather, the race should be run with a holy rivalry and with a thirst for the heavenly fountain, not in such a way as to create obstacles for someone else. Oh, if only this competition existed in Christian hearts, how many would obtain the palm which they desire and which now so few attain! Therefore, my beloved child, let us prepare ourselves to run swiftly and win. In this contest you shall not be considered careless, just as that unhappy – but ah! so happy – thief who was crucified with Jesus was not judged careless. Does it not seem to you that he competed better than that great crowd of holy patriarchs who had already been in limbo for ages, awaiting their redemption? He ran so quickly in an instant that he overtook everyone else and merited to be the first to receive the palm. Nevertheless, he did not take it away from those who were called to it.

Now, my child, we are celebrating a season when running and enduring are more necessary than we are accustomed to. For when we consider the depth of the mystery of redemption presented to us during these days, how much more should we not endure and persevere!

First of all we see the mercy that conquered justice and that, acting as an intercessor with the eternal Father, induced God to send the only-begotten Son and clothe him in human flesh for our salvation. All the while we were unaware of this blessing. It drew God down from the heights to the earth, enclosing in a virgin's womb him "whom the heavens cannot contain." The omnipotent God became an infant susceptible to all human miseries: the immortal and immutable one became both mortal and mutable; the divine one became human; the most wise one became, so to speak, foolish before others; the Lord whom angels serve became a slave of human beings.

Who then, being aware of this mercy, would not marvel at the knowledge that all these things took place so that human nature might pay the debt owed to the divine Essence? And since our nature was not able to pay the debt or to open the gate of heaven that disobedience had shut, behold, the Savior came. Behold one rich in treasure, ready and eager to pay the debt for us and to restore us as the heirs to our heavenly homeland. Indeed, this consideration should restrain us from doing anything that is earthly and empty.

Being profoundly moved by the example of the depths of charity shown by the Son of God to his insignificant creation, it behooves us to run this race. One in nature with us, Christ himself ran the race so quickly as to embrace very great suffering.

My child, we must run this same race and without restraint throw ourselves into this great sea that we may be washed and cleansed, for all this was accomplished for us. Let us mark our foreheads with that sacred blood, that by this sign we may approach the eternal Father and say that his only-begotten Son has paid our debts and that we have competed and won the red and ruddy prized of victory, which is the crucified Jesus, spattered with blood and lifeless for the sake of love.

#### Alternative Second Reading

From a letter of an anonymous writer and contemporary of Saint Catherine de' Ricci.  
*"Catherine, you are a true spouse of Christ."*

I speak of Catherine, a Florentine, who belongs to the Dominican monastery of St. Vincent at Prato. I speak of one who is a true spouse of Jesus living in our midst. I understand you want me to provide some information about her.

This blessed virgin is the source of immense happiness for the good and upright hearts that know her and of great joy in the Lord. In infinite majesty and goodness our God wished to show through her a God who is faithful from all eternity, all-powerful and prodigal in giving gifts. We do not know why God has given such treasures to Catherine, rather than to this or that person. But we recall the words of Jesus: *I give praise to you, Father of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to the childlike. Yes, Father, such has been your gracious will.*

In September, 1540, it was learned that Catherine was suffering in her own person the passion of the Son of God. She is caught up in a state of ecstasy from Thursday around

the time of vespers, throughout the entire night and all of the next day, until almost the last night watch on Friday, depending on the will of her Spouse. Even now she experiences this ecstasy weekly and we know about it because she has revealed it under obedience.

She is present at the farewells of Jesus and his Mother and follows him to Bethany and to the Cenacle which is prepared for the Supper. There she sees Jesus washing the feet of his disciples and instituting the Eucharist. She is present at the prayer in the garden of Gethsemane and she sees the betrayal by Judas and the arrest of Jesus. She witnesses the interrogation of the Lord and sees him submit to insults, to the scourging, to the crowning with thorns, to the carrying of the cross and to the crucifixion. She sees Jesus raised on the cross and his three hours of suffering. Finally, she is there when Jesus is taken down from the cross.

Catherine witnesses all these events; she not only sees them, but suffers along with our Lord. And what he suffered once on Good Friday she herself suffers every Thursday and Friday in a remarkable manner.

These sufferings are so painful that Catherine wishes to refuse them in the sensible part of her being. During the ecstasy she has been heard to ask Jesus to lighten her cross a little, but immediately, in the rational part of her being, she catches herself and thanks God profusely for the immense love shown toward one who is so unworthy. She adds that she cannot express the smallest part of what our Lord has suffered for us.

On April 14, 1541, during the octave of Easter, the wounds of the Lord were imprinted on her body and remained. Catherine has said many times that the wound of the heart was so painful that she often felt she was at the point of death, although she knew that she would not die from this wound. She still sees the wounds of the feet and the hands imprinted and clearly distinguishable. Those who have seen them cannot help but say: "It looks as if she has just been taken down from the cross ..."

## FEBRUARY 7

### Anniversary of Deceased Parents

In this celebration we remember our parents who have preceded us with the sign of faith and rest in peace. The Dominican Family joins together to honor our deceased parents with the same affection we showed them in life, for in Christ they gave us birth and from the crib they showed us what it means to be followers of Christ.

### Office of Readings

#### Second Reading

From a letter of Saint Catherine of Siena to her mother.

*"I have desired to consider you my true mother."*

In the name of Jesus Christ crucified and sweet Mary.

My dearest mother in Christ, sweet Jesus! Your unworthy and abject daughter Catherine consoles you in the precious blood of the Son of God. I have greatly desired to consider you the true mother, not only of my body but also of my soul. For you know that, if you have loved my soul more than my body, all untoward love in you will die and my bodily absence will be no burden for you. Rather it will be a joy and you will wish to bear all difficulties for the honor of God, with the intention that God may be honored.

The honor of God is the increase of grace and virtue in my soul. Thus you, my sweetest mother, who love my soul more than my body, may be filled with joy and not be left desolate.

I wish that you may learn from sweet mother Mary, who for the honor of God and the salvation of us all, gave us her Son who died on the wood of the most holy cross. Only Mary remained behind with the holy disciples after Christ's ascension into heaven. Don't you think that to have lived together would have brought great consolation to Mary and the disciples, while their departure brought grief? Nevertheless, for the praise and glory of her Son and for the salvation of all, she permits and wills that they should leave her. She chooses rather the burden of their departure than the consolation of their presence, so moved is she by the love of God's honor and of the salvation of our souls.

It is from her, dearest mother, that I want you to learn.

You know that it is my duty to pursue God's will, and I know that it is your wish that I pursue it. It was God's will that I should depart and my departure was not without mystery nor without great benefit. It was God's will that I should remain here, and not the will of any human being. If anyone says the contrary, it is false and untrue. It is good that I go, then, following in the footsteps of Christ as it shall please his inestimable goodness.

But you, my dear and sweet mother, ought to be joyful and not sad; you ought to bear every burden for the honor of God and for your salvation and mine. Lift, lift your heart and your thoughts a little to that sweet and most holy cross, in the face of which every burden is as nothing. Desire to endure a little temporal pain to be spared the eternal pain that we deserve for our sins. Be comforted by the love of Christ crucified.

Abide in the holy and sweet love of God. Sweet Jesus, Jesus love!

## FEBRUARY 12

Blessed Reginald of Orleans

Friar and Priest    Optional Memorial

Blessed Reginald was born near Orleans about the year 1180. He became a doctor of law and taught at Paris. On his way to visit the Holy Land he stopped at Rome where he was captivated by Saint Dominic and the ideal of his Order. While there he fell dangerously ill, but was healed through the intervention of the Blessed Virgin Mary then received the habit from Saint Dominic, the very habit which Our Lady had shown him. His example and eloquent preaching attracted many young men to the Order, first at Bologna and then at Paris. He died at Paris in 1220 and was buried at Notre Dame des Champs.

Office of Readings

Second Reading

From the Libellus **On the Beginnings of the Order of Preachers** by Blessed Jordan of Saxony.

*"A new Elijah seemed to have arisen."*

While Master Dominic was in Rome in 1218, Master Reginald, the dean of St. Aignan in Orleans, arrived there, intending to go overseas. He was very highly thought of, a most learned man and a prominent public figure. He had taught canon law in Paris for five years.

On his arrival in Rome, he fell seriously ill, and Master Dominic went to visit him several times, urging him to follow the poverty of Christ and to join his Order. He prevailed upon him to agree, fully and freely, to enter the Order, so much so that he bound himself to it by vow.

So he was rescued from the serious, well-nigh desperate peril of his illness, not without a miracle of divine power. While he was feverish, with a high temperature, the queen of heaven and mother of mercy, the virgin Mary, came to him visibly and anointed his eyes, ears, nose, mouth, navel, hands and feet with a healing balm which she had brought with her, saying as she did so things like, "I anoint your feet with holy oil to make them ready to spread the gospel of peace." She also showed him the complete habit of the Order.

He was cured immediately, and his whole body was restored to perfect health. It happened so suddenly that the doctors, who had more or less given up hope of his recovery, were astonished to see him looking so well. This remarkable miracle was made known afterwards by Master Dominic to many people who are still with us today. I was present myself on one occasion when he told the story publicly during a conference he was giving in Paris.

His health restored, Master Reginald fulfilled his desire to go overseas, although he was already bound to the Order by profession. On his return, he went to Bologna, which he reached on December 21, and at once he threw himself utterly into preaching. His fervent eloquence fired the hearts of all who heard it as if it had been a blazing torch; hardly anyone was rock-like enough to be proof against its heat. The whole of Bologna was in ferment; a new Elijah seemed to have arisen among them.

During this period he received many people into the Order in Bologna, and the number of the disciples began to grow, as more and more were added to them.

Brother Reginald, of holy memory, came to Paris and preached Christ Jesus and him crucified. But God soon took him from the earth. Finishing his course in a short time, he had accomplished a full life's work.

Brother Matthew, who had known him when he was living in honor and luxury in the world, several times asked him, in some amazement, "Do you ever feel depressed, Master, that you put on the habit?" With his eyes lowered, he replied, "I very much doubt if there is any merit in it for me, because I have always found so much pleasure in the Order."

## FEBRUARY 13

Blessed Jordan of Saxony

Friar, Priest and Master of the Order                      Memorial

Blessed Jordan was born at Burgberg, Westphalia, around the year 1185. While studying in Paris he was attracted to the Order by Blessed Reginald and received the habit from him in 1220. On the death of Saint Dominic the friars elected him Master of the Order. For fifteen years he ministered to his brothers and sisters by his preaching, his letters, his edition of the Constitutions, his frequent visitations and the example of his life. More than one thousand novices were attracted to the Order during the tenure of his office. He directed Blessed Diana and her community in the way of perfection and governed all his subjects with gentleness and kindness. His love for Mary, the Mother of

God, expressed itself by his decree that the *Salve Regina* was to be sung after compline. Blessed Jordan was shipwrecked and drowned on February 13, 1237.

#### Office of Readings

From the Libellus **On the Beginnings of the Order of Preachers** by Blessed Jordan of Saxony.

*"Put off the old man and put on the new."*

Brother Reginald, of happy memory, came to Paris and began his energetic preaching. I was moved by divine grace to conceive within myself a desire to join his Order, and I made a promise to this effect in my mind, thinking that I had found precisely the safe way to salvation which I had often thought about, even before I got to know the friars.

Once my own mind was made up, I began with all eagerness to try to entice my friend and companion to join me in my purpose, seeing that both his natural gifts and his gifts of grace would make him a very useful preacher. He resisted, but, far from giving up, I redoubled my efforts to persuade him.

When the day came on which the imposition of ashes reminds the faithful of their creation from the dust and their return to the dust, we decided that it was a suitable occasion for us to begin our life of penance, and to fulfill what we had promised to the Lord.

Our fellow-students who lived in the same hostel were unaware of what we were planning, so, when brother Henry was leaving the building, one of them asked him, "Where are you going, Henry?" He answered, "I am going to Bethany." The student did not immediately understand what he meant by this, but the facts later made it clear to him, when he saw brother Henry entering Bethany, that is, "the house of obedience."

The three of us went to St. Jacques, and we arrived unexpectedly but appropriately, while the brethren were already singing "Let us change our garments." Without delay we put off the old man and put on the new, so that what they were singing was actually realized in what we did.

In 1220 the first General Chapter of the Order was held in Bologna. I was present there myself. I and three others had been sent from Paris, because Master Dominic had instructed us by letter to send four friars from the house in Paris to that in Bologna. I had not yet completed two months in the Order at this time.

At the Chapter it was decreed, with the approval of all the brethren, that the General Chapter should be held one year in Bologna and one year in Paris, except that the following Chapter, in 1221, was to be held in Bologna.

In 1221, at the General Chapter in Bologna, they saw fit to make me the first provincial of Lombardy, although I had only been in the Order one year and had not struck root as deeply as I ought to have done. I was to be placed over others as their superior, before I had learned to govern my own imperfection. I was not present at this Chapter myself.

[ After the death of Master Dominic there was a brother in Bologna called Bernard, who was plagued by a most savage demon, to such an extent that he was driven day and night by horrible seizures of madness, which caused no end of disturbance to the brethren. No doubt God's merciful providence had sent them this trial to exercise his servants' patience.

Brother Bernard's fierce tribulation was the occasion which prompted us to decide for the first time to sing the Salve Regina after Compline at Bologna, and this practice spread from there to the rest of the province of Lombardy, and finally the same devout and beneficial practice was adopted throughout the whole Order. A dependable religious once told me that he had often seen in spirit, while the brethren were singing "Turn then, most gracious advocate, " the mother of the Lord prostrating herself in the presence of her Son and praying for the safety of the whole Order. The memory of this ought to be preserved, so that when the brethren read of it, they will be inspired to even greater devotion in their praises of the Virgin.]

#### FEBRUARY 16

Blessed Nicholas of Paglia  
Friar and Priest

Blessed Nicholas was born at Giovinazzo, near Bari, Italy, in 1197. While pursuing studies at Bologna, he was drawn to the Order by a sermon of Saint Dominic who personally gave him the habit and made him one of his traveling companions. He was well-known for his preaching throughout the Roman Province and compiled a concordance of sacred scripture. He died at Perugia in 1256.

#### FEBRUARY 18

Blessed John of Fiesole (Fra Angelico)  
Friar and Priest          Optional Memorial

Guido of Vicchio was born in the region of Tuscany in 1386 or 1387 and studied art in Florence while still a young man. Feeling drawn to religious life he entered the Order at the convent of San Domenico in Fiesole. This convent had recently been established as a house of regular observance by Blessed John Dominic whose name he took when he entered. He served as superior of San Domenico, promoted regular observance and handed on the fruits of his contemplation through his paintings for the altars at Fiesole and for the convent of San Marco in Florence. He was called to Rome by Pope Eugene IV to decorate two chapels, one in the Basilica of St. Peter and one in the Vatican. Pope Nicholas V also commissioned him to decorate his private chapel at the Vatican. His work is also found in the convent of San Domenico in Cortona and the cathedral at Orvieto. Pope Eugene IV wished to appoint him archbishop of Florence, but he declined in favor of Saint Antoninus. On February 18, 1455, he died in Rome at Santa Maria sopra Minerva and was buried there. The special quality of his painting earned him the title "Fra Angelico."

Office of Readings

Second Reading

From the Apostolic Letter of Pope John Paul II issued "motu proprio" (October 3, 1982).  
*"A holy life and a creative power flourished within him."*

"Whoever does the work of Christ should always remain with Christ." Brother John of Fiesole often repeated these words. Because of his virtuous life and the almost divine beauty of the pictures which he painted, especially those of the Blessed Virgin Mary, he was given the surname "Blessed Angelico."

While still a young man he was drawn to religious life and asked to be admitted to the Friars Preachers of the stricter observance who resided at Fiesole in the priory of San Domenico. He was most conscientious in discharging the duties assigned him by his brothers and his superiors. The renown of his artistic ability in the area of painting spread abroad. As a result commissions for his works began to come thick and fast.

Pope Eugene IV summoned Brother John to Rome where he was engaged in painting at both the church of Saint Peter and the Vatican. During this he manifested not only the remarkable ability of a skilled artist, but above all a religious piety, a fidelity to the Rule, and a humble and unselfish spirit in the face of great accomplishments.

Pope Nicholas V, who encouraged and honored Brother John for his virtuous life and excellent moral character, held him in high esteem and commissioned him to decorate his own private chapel with frescoes. Brother John was faithful to his artistic spirit and produced a work which may truly be considered pure prayer in painting.

He died at Rome in the priory of Santa Maria sopra Minerva after a life graced by his outstanding art and made even more honorable by his religious and human virtues. In the estimation of his peers he was "a man of complete modesty and religious life." Moreover, "he was esteemed for possessing a combination of virtues: meek by natural temperament, upright in religion." Vasarius, who in the city of Florence collected many facts concerning his spotless life, was convinced that the grace and heavenly quality which characterized his sacred figures - for he produced no other kind - was the fruit of that highest harmony which flowed from the combination of a holy life and a creative power.

For this reason it is evident that Brother John, because of his rare gifts placed at the service of his art, has been of immense spiritual and pastoral usefulness to the people of God. And he continues to be so, for even today his art makes the way to God more accessible for us. And this is the purpose of sacred art, as we read in the **Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy** of Vatican Council II: "The fine arts are rightly classed among the noblest activities of human genius; this is especially true of religious art and of its higher: manifestation, sacred art. By their nature the arts are directed toward expressing in some way the infinite beauty of God in works made by human hands. The dedication to the increase of the praise and glory of God is more complete, the more exclusively they are devoted to turning human minds devoutly toward God."

And so Brother John, a man altogether outstanding in the spiritual life and in art, is very appealing to us. And therefore we believe the time has arrived to place him in his proper light in Church of God, to which he still continues to speak through his heavenly art.

#### Alternative Second Reading

From an address of Pope Pius XII at the opening of an exhibition of paintings of Fra Angelico at the Vatican (April 20, 1955).

*"Whoever does the work of Christ should always remain with Christ."*

Today after five centuries we gladly honor this holy friar and consummate artist, giving further import to his well-deserved tribute. The humble and pious Blessed John of Fiesole came to this Apostolic Palace at the peak of his artistic maturity at the request of our predecessors, first of Eugene IV, and later of the great patron of the arts Nicholas V. Here on these walls Fra Angelico immortalized some of the most vivid creations of his artistic

imagination, an honor and adornment of the Apostolic residence and a perennial witness of the perfect accord between religion and art.

Freed from the popular and pious legend which depicted the fervent friar painting his saints while absorbed in unconscious ecstasy, his brush guided by supra-terrestrial beings, his individuality has now been set in its true light. This does not mean, however, that his profound religious sense, his serene and austere asceticism nourished by solid virtue, contemplation and prayer, did not exercise a determining influence on his artistic expression. Rather it provided the power and immediacy with which his art spoke to the minds of others and, as has frequently been noted, transformed it into prayer. For he « as in habit of repeating "whoever does the work of Christ should always remain Christ."

The genuine piety of Fra Angelico is rightly considered an essential basis for his success as a painter. Still another basis can be discovered in his cultural formation, that is, in the universal doctrine he learned in the school of the "perennial philosophy" and to which he adhered with clear and tranquil certitude. Many critics have rightly pointed out how Thomistic doctrine is reflected not only in the content of his paintings but also in his style and technique.

Certainly Fra Angelico's painting is always religious, both in subject matter and in style and method of treatment. Accustomed to the tranquility of monastic discipline and striving always for perfection in intention, in word, and in action, it is natural he should seek to attain it also in the techniques of his art, which as a result is always cleanly bright and serene. In his life, as in his paintings, there are no moments of exterior drama, but inner struggles, fought in complete resignation to the divine will and with calm confidence in the victory of good. The very light which pours over his figures and through his backgrounds is measurable not so much by its intensity as by its purity; it is, in so far as possible, a celestial light.

His themes are simple and linear, patterned as it were on the style of the evangelists. His figures always reveal an intense interior life. Their countenances, their gestures, and their movements are all transfigured by it. As he narrates or expounds the divine mysteries to his audience, Fra Angelico is ever the skillful "preacher," seeking to elicit an immediate response with descriptive and decorative elements in order to speak more quietly to the inmost soul.

On one hand his purpose is to teach the truths of faith, convincing human minds by the very force of their beauty. On the other he aims to lead the faithful to the practice of Christian virtues by setting before them beautiful and attractive examples. This second purpose renders his work a perennial message of living Christianity and, in a certain sense, a sublimely human message based on the principle of the transhumanizing force of religion. It is by the power of religion that everyone who comes in direct contact with God and the divine mysteries becomes like God in holiness, in beauty and in blessedness. They become, that is, creatures fashioned according to the original design of their Creator. Fra Angelico's brush, therefore, gives life to a kind of model human being, not unlike the angels, in whom all is balanced, serene, perfect: a model Christian, rarely found perhaps in the circumstances of earthly life, but still to be offered for imitation by the people.

Alternative Second Reading

Especially for prayer with a group of artists.

From an address of Pope Pius XII at the opening of an exhibition of paintings of Fra Angelico at the Vatican (April 20, 1955).

*"A message for the world of art."*

In Fra Angelico's world, which is the world of truth, the human person is naturally neither good nor holy. But a person can and must become so, for holiness is easy and beautiful, since Christ whose ultimate sacrifice he painted so often died for this very purpose. His most holy Mother is the supreme example of it, the saints rejoice because they have attained holiness and the angels take delight in conversing with the saints.

To encourage souls to pursue the virtues he sets before them, Fra Angelico highlights not so much the effort of achieving virtue, as the bliss that comes from possessing virtue and the nobility of those adorned by virtue.

The world of Fra Angelico's paintings is indeed the ideal world, radiant with the aura of peace, holiness, harmony and joy. Its reality lies in the future when ultimate justice will triumph over a new earth and new heavens. Yet this gentle and blessed world can even now come to life in the recesses of human souls, and it is to them he offers it, inviting them to enter in. It is this invitation which seems to us to be the message Fra Angelico entrusts to his art, confident that it will thus be effectively spread.

It is true that an explicit religious or ethical function is not demanded of art as art. If, as the aesthetic expression of the human spirit, art reflects that spirit in total truthfulness or at least does not positively distort it, art is then in itself sacred and religious, that is, in so far as it is the interpreter of a work of God. But if its content and aim are such as Fra Angelico gave his painting, then art rises to the dignity almost of a minister of God, reflecting a greater number of perfections. We should like to point out to artists, who are ever dear to us, this sublime possibility of art.

In honoring the greatness of this artist and by inviting artists to accept, almost as if disposed by Providence, the religious and human message of Blessed John of Fiesole, we ardently hope that the breath of Christian goodness, serenity and divine harmony that emanates from the works of Fra Angelico may pervade the hearts of all.

FEBRUARY 19

Blessed Alvarez of Cordoba

Friar and Priest

Born at Zamora, Spain, towards the middle of the fourteenth century, Blessed Alvarez entered the Order in 1368. He preached throughout Spain and Italy and established the priory of Scala Caeli at Cordova where he promoted the regular life. By his preaching and contemplation of the Lord's Passion he spread the practice of the Way of the Cross throughout the West. He died on February 19, about the year 1430.

FEBRUARY 20

Blessed Christopher of Milan

Friar and Priest

Blessed Christopher was born at Milan around 1410. He dedicated his whole life to itinerant preaching after the example of Saint Vincent Ferrer. The austerity of his life and his zeal for souls led an ancient chronicler to say of him: "He was truly a Christ-bearer,

for he carried Christ not only in name, but in his heart and on his lips." While master of novices he wrote a treatise **On the Service of God** for them. He died at Taggia in March, 1484.

#### FEBRUARY 24

Blessed Constantius of Fabriano

Friar and Priest

Born at Fabriano at the beginning of the fifteenth century, Blessed Constantius received the Dominican habit at the age of fifteen. He was noted for his austere and prayerful life, as well as his efforts in promoting peace. As prior at Fabriano, at Perugia, and at Ascoli he labored to restore regular life. He died at Ascoli on February 24, 1481.

### MARCH

#### MARCH 25

Annunciation of the Lord

Solemnity

Office of Readings

Alternative Second Reading

From the prayers of Saint Catherine of Siena.

*"God is knocking at the door of Mary's will."*

You, O Mary, have been made a book in which our rule is written today. In you today is written the eternal Father's wisdom; in you today our human strength and freedom are revealed.

If I consider your own great counsel, eternal Trinity, I see that in your light you saw the dignity and nobility of the human race. So, just as love compelled you to draw us out of yourself, so that same love compelled you to buy us back when we were lost. In fact, you showed that you loved us before we existed, when you chose to draw us out of yourself only for love. But you have shown us greater love still by giving us yourself, shutting yourself up today in the pouch of our humanity. And what more could you have given us than to give us your very self? So you can truly ask us, "What should I or could I have done for you that I have not done?"

I see, then, that whatever your wisdom saw, in that great eternal council of yours, as best for our salvation, is what your mercy willed, and what your power has today accomplished.

So what did you do? What way did your eternal unfathomable wisdom find to fulfill your truth and be merciful, and to satisfy your justice as well? What remedy did you give us? Oh, see what a fitting remedy! You arranged to give us the Word, your only-begotten Son. He would take on the clay of our flesh which had offended you so that when he suffered in that humanity your justice would be satisfied – not by humanity's power, but by the power of the divinity united with that humanity. And so your truth was fulfilled, and both justice and mercy were satisfied.

O Mary, I see this Word given to you, living in you yet not separated from the Father – just as the word one has in one's mind does not leave one's heart or become separated from it even though that word is externalized and communicated to others. In these things our human dignity is revealed – that God should have done such and so great things for us.

And even more in you, O Mary, our human strength and freedom are today revealed, for after the deliberation of such and so great a council, the angel was sent to you to announce to you the mystery of the divine counsel and to seek to know your will, and God's Son did not come down into your womb until you had given your will's consent. He waited at the door of your will for you to open to him; for he wanted to come into you, but he would never have entered unless you had opened to him, saying, "Here I am, God's servant; let it be done to me as you have said."

The eternal Godhead, O Mary, was knocking at your door, but unless you had opened that door of your will God would not have taken flesh in you.

Blush, my soul, when you see that today God has become your relative in Mary. Today you have been shown that even though you were made without your help, you will not be saved without your help.

O Mary, my tenderest love! In you is written the Word from whom we have the teaching of life. You are the tablet that sets this teaching before us. [POP 111-113]

#### Alternative Second Reading

From the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*, of the Second Vatican Council.

*"In the work of salvation the Virgin Mary is joined with her Son."*

Adorned from the first instant of her conception with the splendor of an entirely unique holiness, by the command of God the virgin of Nazareth is greeted by the heralding angel as *full of grace*. To the heavenly messenger she replies: *Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to your word*. Thus Mary, the daughter of Adam, by consenting to the divine word became the mother of Jesus. Embracing the salvific will of God wholeheartedly and unimpeded by any sin, she devoted herself totally to the person and work of her Son as a handmaid of the Lord. By the grace of almighty God she served the mystery of redemption in subordination to Christ and together with him. Rightly, therefore, the Fathers see Mary not merely as passively engaged by God, but as freely cooperating in the work of human salvation through faith and obedience. For, as St. Irenaeus says, "through obedience she became the cause of salvation for herself and for the whole human race."

This union of the Mother with the Son in the work of salvation is made manifest from the time of Christ's virginal conception until his death. First of all, this union is shown when Mary, arising in haste to visit Elizabeth, is greeted by her as blessed because of her belief in the promise of salvation and the precursor leaped with joy in the womb of his mother. It is shown also at the birth of Our Lord, who did not diminish his mother's virginal integrity but sanctified it, when the Mother of God joyfully showed her firstborn son to the shepherds and Magi. Again, when she presented him to the Lord in the temple and made the offering of the poor, she heard Simeon foretelling at the same time that her Son would be a sign of contradiction and that a sword would pierce her maternal soul that

the thoughts of many hearts might be revealed. It is shown when the child Jesus was lost and his parents had sought him sorrowing. They found him in the temple, engaged in the work of his Father, and they did not understand the reply of their Son. His mother, however, kept all these things to be pondered in her heart.

In the public life of Jesus Mary appears prominently. At the very beginning when at the marriage feast of Cana, moved with pity, she brought about by her intercession the beginning of the miracles by Jesus the Messiah. During her Son's preaching she heard his words when, in extolling a kingdom beyond the concerns and ties of flesh and blood, he declared blessed those who heard and kept the word of God as she herself was faithfully doing. Thus the Blessed Virgin advanced in her pilgrimage of faith, and faithfully persevered in her union with her Son until the cross. There she stood in keeping with the divine plan, endured with her only begotten Son the intensity of his suffering, associated herself with his sacrifice in her maternal heart, and lovingly consented to the immolation of this victim whom she had born. Finally, as the same Christ Jesus was dying on the cross, he gave her as a mother to his disciple, with these words: *Woman, behold your son.*

Since it had pleased God not to manifest solemnly the mystery of human salvation until God poured forth the Spirit promised by Christ, we see the apostles before the day of Pentecost *persevering with one accord in prayer with the women, and Mary the Mother of Jesus, and his brethren.* We also see Mary prayerfully imploring the gift of the Spirit, who had already overshadowed her in the Annunciation. Finally the Immaculate Virgin, preserved free from all stain of original sin, was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory when her earthly life was over. She was exalted by the Lord as Queen over all, that she might be the more fully conformed to her Son, the Lord of lords, and conqueror of sin and death.

## APRIL

### APRIL 5

Saint Vincent Ferrer

Friar and Priest            Memorial

Saint Vincent was born at Valencia, Spain, in 1350 and entered the Order at the age of seventeen. He embraced a strict spiritual life and was later to write of it in his treatise *On the Spiritual Life*. For a time he assisted Peter de Luna, the cardinal legate, and John I, king of Aragon, in reconciling both civil and ecclesiastical disputes. All the while he preached, first at Avignon and then in France and Italy. In 1399 he gave himself totally to itinerant preaching. During the great Western Schism he worked tirelessly for the peace and unity of the Church. At first he supported an antipope, Benedict XIII, but later tried in vain to obtain his abdication. He was a charismatic preacher who traveled throughout western Europe carrying out his preaching mission. He died at Vannes, France, on April 5, 1419.

Second Reading (During Lent)

From the sermons of Saint Vincent Ferrer.

"On the threefold glory of the cross."

*May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.* This is taken verbatim from the sixth chapter of Galatians, and it is the subject of our sermon. Concerning the first words of this passage, it is Christ himself, suffering on the cross, who says: *May I never...* It is clear in Sacred Scripture that Christ was often in danger of death among the Jews and that he could have died by various means. But no way of dying suited him except the cross, and he avoided other means of death either by flight or some other means. He was first of all in danger of dying as soon as he was born. For then the foreigner Herod, who had obtained kingship over the Jews thanks to the Roman emperor, was ruling. On hearing of the birth of the King of the Jews from the Eastern kings and of his place of birth from the Jewish rabbis, Herod wished to kill him. For this purpose he sent armed men to kill all the male children in the town of Bethlehem and its environs. And so it happened. But an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph and told him to flee into Egypt with the child and his mother. Thus it was that Christ escaped and the prophecy of Job was fulfilled: "They slew the children with the sword, and I alone have escaped."

A second time Christ was in danger of dying by being thrown from a height, as Luke tells us. For Christ was born in the town of Bethlehem and was brought up in the town of Nazareth; hence he is called Jesus of Nazareth. He began to preach and to perform miracles in the town of Capernaum. Then the Jews said: *Do here in your own country the things that we have heard you did in Capernaum.* Christ responded that they were unworthy because they did not believe in him and because they despised him when they said: *Is this not the son of the carpenter and of the woman Mary?* At this they were filled with anger and rose up and dragged him out of the town. They led him to the brow of the hill on which the town had been built to hurl him down headlong. But he made himself invisible to them when they looked for him: *He passed through the midst of them and went away.* Why did he not wish to die in this manner? If he had wished to do so, he would have saved the whole world by such a death. The reason he did not wish to die in such a manner was that he wished to instruct us.

A third time Christ was in danger of dying by being stoned, as John the Evangelist narrates. When Christ was preaching to the Jews about their own city, he said: "Amen, amen I say to you, whoever keeps my word will never see death."

Finally he was in danger of dying on the cross by being crucified. This manner of dying suited him and he accepted it. Because they were unable to kill Jesus by casting him from a high place, by stoning or by poisoning him, the Jews said: "Let him die by crucifixion, by being put on a cross," and they prepared a cross. When Christ was preaching in the province of Galilee, knowing that the Jews had already prepared a cross, he said to his disciples: *Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death.* Thus he did not come to death on the cross unwillingly, but by grace. When the sentence was handed down by Pilate he did not make an appeal or defend himself, but as John says, carrying the cross himself, he went out to the place that is called Calvary.

Why was this manner of dying more suitable to him than others? I reply, as you already know, by saying that every woe, whether it be of soul, such as the sin of ignorance or evil inclinations, or whether it be of body, such as sickness, sorrows, burdens and finally death, comes entirely from the sin of Adam and Eve; for there was sin in taking that forbidden fruit. Christ therefore came to set aright all the woes of both soul and body. He

is that fruit concerning which it was said to the Virgin Mary: *Blessed is the fruit of your womb*. The fruit was returned to the tree, and as the ancient Greek histories say, the tree of the cross was that very wood from which Adam took the fruit. Therefore when Christ was on the tree of the cross, the fruit was restored to the tree, and he set aright all the woes that followed from the sin of Adam, observing the proper order, for it was the woes of the soul that came first and then the woes of the body. Christ first of all set aright the woes of the soul by bestowing the remedy of baptism by which all sins are forgiven, and he set aright knowledge by proclaiming to us the glory of paradise. But when he returns soon, very soon, for the general judgment, then he will set aright the woes of the body, for then we shall rise impassible and immortal. This is the reason he wished to die on the cross.

Second Reading (During the Easter Season)

From a letter of Saint Vincent Ferrer to John of Puinoix, Master of the Order of Preachers.

*"The apostolic life of a Friar Preacher."*

Most reverend Master and Father:

On account of the important work in which I am engaged I have been unable to write to Your Reverence as was fitting. To tell the truth, from the time I left Rome until now I have been obliged to preach at least daily to the people who crowd around me, very frequently twice a day, and occasionally three times a day, as well as to sing High Mass. All this hardly leaves me any time to travel, eat, sleep or attend to other necessities. Indeed, I have to prepare my sermons while on the road. Still, lest my not writing be attributed to neglect or contempt, over the course of the days, weeks and months I have wrested away a little time every day in the midst of all my work to write something to you about the progress that I am making.

Your Most Reverend Paternity knows that after I left Rome, when you last sent me off, I stayed in the Dauphine for three months, making the rounds and preaching the Word of God through the towns, castles and villages where I had not yet been. I made a special point of visiting those three famous valleys of heretics in the diocese of Embrun: Lucerne, L'Argentiere and Valpure. In fact I had visited them two or three times before and by the grace of God they had accepted the teaching of Catholic truth with devotion and great reverence, but I wanted to visit them again to strengthen and console them. When this was done, I went over to Lombardy in response to many requests and pleas, both oral and written. I preached continually for a year and a month throughout the towns, villages and castles of your obedience and beyond, namely in the territory of the Marquis of Monferrato, because of the many requests and pleas I received from him and from those for whom he is responsible. In those regions on the other side of the mountains I found many valleys of both Waldensians and the perverse Gazarites, especially in the diocese of I visited all of them, preaching in each of them the faith and doctrine Catholic truth, along with the proof of their errors. By the mercy of God the." ardently accepted the truth of the faith with reverence and great sentiments of devotion. The Lord indeed aided and confirmed my preaching.

I discovered that a principle reason for heresies and errors in these places was a lack of preaching. As I correctly perceived from the inhabitants there, thirty years had elapsed

during which no one had preached to them but the Waldensian heretics, who would come to them twice a year from Apuleia. Imagine, Reverend Master, what great blame is laid upon prelates of the Church and others who, by reason of their office or their profession, are responsible for preaching to such persons, but instead take their ease, enjoying themselves in their pretty rooms in the large towns and villages. In the meantime souls, for whose salvation Christ died, are perishing from lack of spiritual nourishment, since there is no one to break bread for these little ones. The harvest indeed is great, but the laborers are few. Hence I pray the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into his harvest.

For the moment I shall not speak about a certain heretical bishop whom I came across in the valley of Luforio, how he wished to speak with me in private, and how he was converted; nor about the schools of the Waldensians that I discovered in the Val d'Angrogne, and their destruction; nor about the Gazarites in the Val di Pont and how they were converted from their abominations; nor about the heretics of the Val di Lanzo, known as the Valley of the Quinni, amongst whom the murderers of Blessed Peter of Ruffia had once sought refuge, and how they behaved toward me; nor about the cessation of hostilities between Guelphs and Ghibellines; nor about the general alliance in those parts; nor about the innumerable other matters which by divine grace were accomplished for the glory of God and the benefit of souls. But may God be blessed in all things.

After thirteen continuous months in Lombardy, I went to Savoy, where I have been for five months. Prelates and several rulers of the area have asked for me and it is with great emotion that I have already visited four dioceses here, namely, Sion, Aosta, Tarantaise, Maurienne and Grenoble, all of which are important centers in Savoy. I am going around preaching in the towns, villages and castles to the extent that seems best. At the moment I am in the diocese of Geneva.

Among other aberrations, I have found one very widespread error that has infected these parts: every year on the day after Corpus Christi, confraternities gather in solemn assembly under the title of "the holy rising sun." My confreres, the Friars Minor, other religious and even the parish priests have told me that they did not dare to preach or to say anything against this error out of fear, for they would be threatened with death and their offerings and alms would be taken away. I now address this error in particular by preaching daily, the Lord aiding and confirming what I say, and it has been effectively uprooted. These people, who now come to me, are overcome with sorrow when they learn how far they have wandered from the faith. When by the grace of God this error has been completely uprooted, I plan to go to the diocese of Lausanne, where they publicly worship the sun as a god – especially the country folk – by offering the sun their morning prayers and by reverencing it. The bishop of Lausanne himself made a journey of two or three days to see me and humbly beg that I would visit his diocese, where there are many valleys of heretics within Allemania and Savoy. This I promised to do. I have heard that the heretics of those valleys are very daring and bold, but I am confident in the accustomed mercy of God and I intend to go there and preach during the coming Lent. However, let it happen according to the heavenly plan.

My socius Anthony, and I with him, commend ourselves humbly to your Most Reverend Paternity. May the Son of the Virgin preserve you always as a model and guardian of the holy regular observance. Amen.

[ I have finally signed this in the town of Geneva, December 17, 1403, by my own hand.

The worthless servant of Christ and your humble son, Brother Vincent, preacher.]

From a sermon of Saint Vincent Ferrer.

*"In his resurrection Christ appeared first to the Virgin Mary."*

Christ came forth from the tomb without opening it, just as he was born of the Virgin without harm to her virginity. Standing upon the sepulcher, Christ showed his glorious body with its wounds and scourgings to all the holy patriarchs, who adored him on bended knee and said: "Glory to you, Lord, risen from the dead, and to the Father and the Holy Spirit." This is the first point concerning the blessed resurrection of Jesus Christ which was accomplished on this day. The second is that it was manifested graciously and in a special manner to the Virgin Mary. It is the conclusion of numerous theologians that Christ in his resurrection appeared first to the Virgin Mary, his Mother. Ambrose says this expressly in his book *On Virgins*: "Mary saw the resurrection of Christ and was the first to see it." The evangelists, however, make no effort here to present indisputable witnesses, because the testimony of a mother on behalf of her Son might not be given credence. But we are compelled to believe that he appeared first to Mary for three reasons.

First, on account of a divine command. Because in the passion of her Son Mary was to suffer distress more than all others, Christ promised his mother as a special privilege that she would give birth without pain and in a manner contrary to the general course of nature. Likewise he promised that in her death she would not experience the suffering which exceeds all the other sufferings of this life. As Bishop Albert says: "Death is the culmination of as things terrible, for all at once the soul is completely uprooted, like a tree." But all the sufferings of childbirth and death came upon her at the passion of her Son. Since Scripture said honor your father and do not disregard your mother' groans and since Christ observed perfectly the law about honoring one's parents, it follows that he appeared first to his mother who suffered distress more than all others.

Second, on account of her meritorious faith. It is held as certain and demonstrated clearly enough in the text that at the time of Christ's passion all the apostles and disciples completely lost the Christian faith. Some doubted whether he was the true God and Messiah, although all considered him to be a very holy prophet. Only the Virgin Mary believed without wavering on that holy Saturday, and so it was granted that an office in her honor should be celebrated on Saturdays in the Church of God. Since Scripture says the Lord appears to those who have faith in him, it seems that the reward for her faith was that he should appear to her first.

Third, on account of her great love. It is certain that never has a mother so loved her son as the Virgin Mary loved Christ. What Christ himself has said shall take place: Whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and reveal myself to him.

For these three reasons it is obvious that Christ first appeared to the Virgin Mother, although the holy evangelists do not mention this explicitly.

APRIL 10

Blessed Anthony Neyrot  
Friar, Priest and Martyr

Blessed Anthony was born at Rivoli in Piedmont, Italy, in 1425 and entered the Order at San Marco in Florence where he lived under the direction of Saint Antoninus. Desiring to visit Sicily he set sail for there and was captured en route by pirates who took him to Tunis. There he apostasized and married. The news of the death of Saint Antoninus brought him to his senses and, touched by the grace of God, he resumed the religious habit, proclaimed his faith and suffered death by stoning. He died on Holy Thursday in the year 1460.

APRIL 13

Blessed Margaret of Castello  
Lay Dominican and Virgin

Blessed Margaret was born at Citta de Castello, Italy, in 1287. Blind from birth and abandoned by her parents at an early age, she faithfully placed her trust in God and lived under the Rule of Penance of the Order of Saint Dominic. She had great compassion for the poor and especially cherished the mystery of the Incarnation. She died at the age of thirty-one on April 13, 1320.

APRIL 14

Blessed Peter Gonzalez  
Friar and Priest

Blessed Peter was born at Palencia, Spain, towards the end of the twelfth century. He pursued an ecclesiastical career and became dear to the Church of Palencia. Moved by the grace of God, he asked for the habit of the Order and became as renowned for his humility as he had previously been renowned for his greed for glory. He was notable for his life of prayer and for his service to his neighbor, especially those who were in peril on the sea. Sailors have invoked his intercession under the name "Saint Elmo." He died at Tuy, Spain, on April 14, 1246.

APRIL 17

Blessed Clara Gambacorta  
Nun and Widow

Blessed Clara was born in Pisa in 1362, married at the age of twelve and widowed at the age of fifteen. She longed to join a religious order, but her family objected. When at last they relented, upon the advice of Saint Catherine of Siena she received the Dominican habit at the Monastery of the Holy Cross in Pisa. In 1385 along with Blessed Maria Mancini she founded the Monastery of Saint Dominic in Pisa where regular observance was strictly maintained. She was noted for her great prudence and charity, especially in pardoning the assassin of her father and brothers. She prized study and urged her sisters to do likewise. She died on April 17, 1419.

APRIL 17

Blessed Maria Mancini  
Nun and Widow

Catharine Mancini was born at Pisa around the middle of the fourteenth century. By the time she was twenty-five she had been widowed twice and left bereft of all her children. At the urging of Saint Catherine of Siena she became a Sister of Penance and later entered the monastery founded by Blessed Clara Gambacorta where she took the name Maria. There she devoted herself to contemplation and penance, and upon the death of Blessed Clara, became prioress. She died there on January 22, 1431.

#### APRIL 19

Blessed Isnard of Chiampo  
Friar and Priest

Blessed Isnard was born at Chiampo, near Vicenza, Italy, toward the end of the twelfth century and entered the Order at Bologna around 1218. He was known as "a fervent religious, a grace-filled preacher, and a virgin in body and mind," as well as a worker of miracles. He founded the priory of Pavia which he wisely governed until his death on March 19, 1244.

#### APRIL 19

Blessed Sibyllina Biscossi  
Lay Dominican and Virgin

Blessed Sibyllina, born at Pavia, Italy, about 1287, was left an orphan when quite young and at the age of twelve was afflicted with total blindness. The Sisters of Penance befriended her and clothed her in the habit of the Order. She had a special devotion to Christ crucified and to the Holy Spirit. She lived as a recluse at the church of the Preachers where many people sought her out, asking for her prayers. She died on March 19, 1367.

#### APRIL 20

Saint Agnes of Montepulciano  
Nun and Virgin Memorial

Saint Agnes was born at Gracciano, Italy, in 1268 and entered a monastery at Montepulciano at the age of nine. At the age of fifteen by indult of the Holy See she was appointed superior of a monastery of nuns at Viterbo. In response to the entreaties of the people of Montepulciano she returned there in 1306 to take charge of a newly founded monastery which followed the Rule of Saint Augustine. A few years later she placed this monastery under the direction of the Order of Preachers and sought evangelical perfection according to the way of Saint Dominic. Agnes was devoted to the infant Jesus and the Virgin Mary, manifested the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and was a model of prayer and charity. She worked for civil peace and unity. Saint Catherine of Siena regarded her as her "glorious mother." She died on April 20, 1317.

#### Second Reading

From a letter of Saint Catherine of Siena to Sister Christopher, prioress of the monastery of Saint Agnes of Montepulciano.

*"She had an uncreated charity that burned and consumed her heart."*

In the name of Jesus Christ, the crucified, and of the sweet Virgin Mary.

My dearest daughter in Christ, the sweet Jesus! I, Catherine, minister and servant of the servants of Jesus Christ, write you in his precious blood. I desire to see you and your sisters follow in the footsteps of our mother, Saint Agnes.

I implore you and I wish you to follow her teaching and her example. You know that she always gave you the teaching and the example of true humility. This was her chief virtue. I am not astonished by this, for she had what a bride must have who wishes to follow the humility of her bridegroom. She had an uncreated charity that continually burned and consumed her heart. She had a taste and a hunger for souls. She was always assiduous at keeping vigil in prayer. There is no other way of acquiring the virtue of humility, because there is no humility without charity; the one nourishes the other.

Do you know what made her arrive at a perfect and authentic virtue? She did not wish to possess anything, but freely and willingly placed no value either on herself or on the goods of the world. This glorious virgin realized that the possession of temporal goods leads a person to pride. In such a state one loses the modest virtue of true humility, falls into self-love, loses the warmth of charity and abandons the habit of watching and praying. A heart and senses that are full of this world and of self-love cannot be filled with Christ crucified and cannot taste true and sweet prayer. Understanding this, the sweet Agnes, stripped herself of herself and put on Christ crucified. She did this not only for herself, but for us as well. Her example obliges you to follow it steadfastly.

You know very well, consecrated brides of Christ, that it is not from your own father that you are to guard and possess, but rather what comes from your eternal Spouse. What you have acquired from your own father is desire which we ought to abandon, since the moment will come when you must follow your Spouse and possess his treasure. What was the treasure of Christ crucified? The cross, opprobrium, pain, torment, tortures, mockery and reproaches, voluntary poverty, hunger for the Father's honor and for our salvation.

If you possess this treasure with the power of an understanding animated by the fire of charity, you will attain those virtues of which we have spoken. You will be true daughters of your mother and eager and watchful brides. You will merit to be received by Christ crucified; by his grace Christ will open to you the door to a life that does not end. I say no more. Wash yourselves in the blood of Christ crucified. Be attentive to the higher things with true zeal and unanimity. If you are united and not divided, no demon, no creature will be able to harm you or provide a hindrance to your perfection.

Abide in the holy and sweet love of God. Sweet Jesus, Jesus who is love!

#### Alternative Second Reading

From the letter **On Regular Observance** of Blessed Humbert of Romans.

*"By the vow of religion you have committed yourselves to great deeds."*

[My dearest brothers,] with single-mindedness strive to excel in those virtues which pertain to regular observance. Since you have committed yourselves to what is important by the vow of religion, may you also display what is important in your deeds.

Make progress each day in some practice of virtue and endeavor to work eagerly toward what is good. A ship steered against the current falls back unless it is constantly and with great effort made to surmount the waves.

Always accomplish the better deeds that are in keeping with the condition in which God has placed you. If you hear general reproof, apply it not to others but to yourselves. Avoid extremes in all your actions; always hold to the middle ground. Be quick to serve one another and do not burden others with your bodily needs.

[Brothers,] be humble without pretence, mature without undue self-importance, prompt without superficiality, fearful without despair, hopeful without presumption, obedient without retort, happy without loss of control, patient without complaining. Be disposed, I say, toward self-discipline, be devoted to mercy, unmoved in your resolve, devout in prayer, and keep a careful watch over yourselves. Although the presence of others should not be an incentive to your observance, nor their absence be an excuse for laxity, still, be more observant of the rule in circumstances in which neglect may scandalize someone or observance may provide a model for imitation.

Give the night to silence and prayer, the day to good deeds and toil. Give the day to your neighbor, the night to God. Reflect on the reason for your efforts, rather than labor for the sake of labor. Be steadfast in doing good, refrain from doing evil. In all that you must do keep such order toward one and all that prelates may display attentiveness, that subjects may be obedient, that all may live in peace and harmony, that devotion and good order may reign in choir, and that you show propriety and reverence at the altar.

Let the old be faithful, the young industrious. Live in a praiseworthy manner, but do not seek the praise of others. Do not boast about the many days you have lived in religion, but rather the few on which you have kept its due order. Flee hypocrisy and walk in truth before God. It is of very little account upon entering religion to change only one's garments, but praiseworthy to change one's conduct and life. As you proceed, therefore, on the way of simplicity, never take the path of cunning or deceit.

Flee like a plague whatever does not serve the common good or singles you out. Never forsake righteousness through shame or fear. Avoid idleness and do not keep to your cells without cause. Do not foolishly go after what should not be done, nor on account of sloth tire of what should be done.

Take care most diligently that you do not lose patience at work, or a readiness in obeying a command, or become negligent in performing works of charity. Always live in a state and with a conscience that is certain; never presume to live in a state in which you would be afraid to die.

Swearing by Christ who redeemed us by his revered blood and opened for us the gateway to life by his holy death, I beg and admonish you with all my strength, [dearest brothers,] to be mindful of your profession and your vow of obedience. Remember the ancient paths on which our predecessors hastened to run with vigorous spirit. They now reign with Christ, comforted by everlasting rest. When we have arrived there with the help of divine grace, our souls will know the first truth, will love the supreme good, and will enjoy the divine majesty.

May God, who is beginning without beginning and the end of all without end, deign to give us these blessings. Amen.

APRIL 27

Blessed Osanna of Kotor  
Lay Dominican and Virgin

Catherine Koscic was born of Orthodox parents in the country of Montenegro (Yugoslavia) in 1493. As a young girl she was a shepherdess, but wishing to follow Christ more closely she embraced the solitary life, assumed the habit of a Dominican Tertiary and took the name Osanna. She spent her life in contemplation and prayer for the salvation of the world and became a counselor for many people. She died on April 27, 1565. Blessed Osanna is invoked especially for church unity.

APRIL 29

Saint Catherine of Siena

Lay Dominican, Virgin and Doctor of the Church      Feast

Catherine Benincasa was born at Siena, Italy, in 1347, the youngest of twenty-five children. Inspired by divine grace she vowed her virginity to God while still a small girl and after overcoming the objections of her family pursued a life of prayer and penance as a Sister of Penance of Saint Dominic. She continued in this way of life until 1370 when in a vision God asked her to undertake an active apostolate and become involved in the affairs of her age. Several times she was able to bring about peace among the Italian city-states and, while representing the Florentines at Avignon, was instrumental in persuading Pope Gregory XI to return to Rome.

On April 1, 1375, by divine favor she received the Stigmata. **The Dialogue** (1378), which she left for her large family of disciples, is a masterpiece of spiritual and theological doctrine and has become a source of riches for the entire Dominican Family. She died in Rome on April 29, 1380, and was buried in the basilica of Santa Maria sopra Minerva. In 1970 Pope Paul VI declared her a Doctor of the Church.

Second Reading

From a letter of Saint Catherine of Siena to the novices of the Order at Santa Maria de Monte Oliveto.

*"You shall find the source of charity in the side of the crucified Christ."*

My dearest children in Christ, the sweet Jesus! I Catherine, the minister and servant of the servants of Jesus Christ, write you in his precious blood. I desire to see you as sons who are obedient unto death, learning from the immaculate Lamb who was obedient to the Father even to an ignominious death on the cross.

Pay close attention for he is the way and the rule that you and all creatures ought to follow. I wish you to place him before your mind's eye. Look at how obedient that Word is! He himself does not refuse to carry the burden which he received from the Father, but on the contrary runs to it with the greatest desire. He made this clear at the Last Supper when he said: *I have greatly desired to eat this Passover with you before I die.* To eat the Passover means to fulfill at the same time the will of the Father and the desire of the Son. Seeing that he had hardly any time left and that at his life's end he was to be offered as a sacrifice to the Father on our behalf, he rejoices and exults and says with joy: *I have greatly desired.*

And this was the Passover of which he spoke, namely, to give himself as food and to immolate the sacrifice of his body in obedience to the Father. Jesus had already eaten the Passover with his disciples before, but never as he did now. Oh inestimably sweet and burning charity! You think nothing of being crucified, nothing of your death, so full of

opprobrium. The Word sees that he has been chosen by the Father and accepts humanity as his spouse. He was commanded to give us his blood that the will of God might be fulfilled in us and that we might be sanctified by that very blood.

Therefore I beseech you, my sweet children in Christ, the sweet Jesus. because of your confidence in the blood of the crucified Christ, never fear anything whatsoever. Do not separate yourselves from him by temptations and errors. You cannot persevere out of fear, nor can you endure obedience and the Order out of dread.

I desire, then, that you never fear. May all servile fear be removed from you. Along with the sweet and loving Paul say: "Be strong today, my soul. Through the crucified Christ I can do everything, for he who comforts me dwells in me by desire and love." Love, love, love! Whoever is in the world sails by the strength of his own arms, but whoever is in holy religion sails by the strength of another, namely, by the strength of his own Order.

Have confidence! You shall find the source of charity in the side of the crucified Christ. I wish you to establish yourselves there and make a dwelling there for yourselves. Rise up then with great and burning desire. Approach, enter and remain in this sweet dwelling. No demon or any other creature can take this grace from you or hinder you from reaching your end, namely, that you should come to see and taste God. I say no more. Abide in the holy and sweet love of God. Love, love one another.

#### Alternative Second Reading

From the **Libellus de Supplemento** of Tommaso Antonio Caffarini, a disciple of Saint Catherine of Siena.

*"The death of Saint Catherine of Siena."*

On the third Sunday of Lent the holy virgin began to succumb completely to the innumerable pains that were daily making themselves felt in her body. She continued to be troubled both interiorly and exteriorly because of the immense mental anguish she suffered on account of the offenses against God which she saw were being perpetrated daily by Christians. She suffered as well because of the dangers which she saw were springing up every day in his holy Church, for whose sake she had so expended herself.

And so she came to the Sunday which that year preceded the Lord's Ascension, April 29, 1380. For about two hours before daybreak the holy virgin took a severe turn for the worse and it was decided that she should be anointed. And so it was done.

Once she had received the anointing, the virgin continued as if she felt nothing, but after a brief period of time her condition began to change completely. She gestured with her arms and contorted her face as if she were disturbed by a great number of demons, as was in fact the case. The virgin endured this cruel conflict for more than an hour and a half.

After this her face was suddenly and totally transformed to the degree that her dark and troubled countenance now became angelic and joyful. Then we offered her an icon covered with many relics of the saints and other lovely pictures. She at once fixed her attention on the image of the Crucified and, while gazing upon the Crucified with bodily eyes, began to pray intently, speaking loftily of the goodness of God.

In the course of her prayers she began to confess her sins in the sight of God, even though others were listening, and referred in a general way to the guilt of all her sins,

while adding some particulars. As she did this she said: "It is my fault, eternal Trinity, for I have offended wretchedly through considerable negligence, ignorance, ingratitude and disobedience, as well as through numerous other defects. Woe is me in my wretchedness..." And so that most pure dove acknowledged her guilt regarding these and many other defects. Perhaps as the plan of the Most High would have it, she did this to provide an example to those standing around, rather than to confess because of her own personal need.

[ When she had kept up this prayer for some time, the virgin turned to us and spoke of the way of perfection in a few words, telling each one what he or she would be responsible for after her death. She also humbly asked forgiveness and pardon for the little concern she felt she had shown for our salvation. Oh, if one might have seen with what reverence and humility the holy virgin then received the repeated blessings from her own afflicted mother, who stood by in tears with the others!

None of this, however, interrupted the virgin's prayer and when she neared the end she said a single longed-for prayer for the holy Church, affirming that she was offering her bodily life on its behalf. Then she prayed for Urban VI, whom she also acknowledged to be the true Supreme Pontiff, confirming for her sons as well to what degree they ought to lay down their lives for this truth if it should be necessary.]

After this, she prayed with great fervor for all her sons and daughters in the Lord, especially for her sons. She used many of the same words that the Savior used when he prayed to his Father for his disciples shortly before he was to return to him. And when the prayer was finished she blessed us all by making the sign of the cross.

Thus approaching the end which she had desired so intensely and for so long a time and still persevering in prayer, she spoke as well to the Lord himself, her Spouse: "Lord, you are calling me and I am coming to you. Behold, I am coming to you not with my own merits but only by reason of your mercy which, I beg you, may be mine through the power of your blood." Finally, crying out several times in a loud voice: "Blood! blood!" she said at last in the manner of our Savior: "Father, into your hands I commend my soul and my spirit." And thus sweetly and with a completely angelic countenance, she inclined her head and gave up her spirit.

APRIL 30

Saint Pius V

Friar and Pope Memorial

Antonio Chisliere was born in 1504 at Bosco, in Piedmont, Italy. At the age of fourteen he entered the Dominican Order and took the name Michael. He taught theology and held several positions of responsibility, first as prior of several communities, then as Commissary General of the Roman Inquisition. In 1556 he was named bishop of Nipi and Sutri and was created cardinal in 1557. In 1566 he was elected pope and took the name Pius. He implemented the decrees of the Council of Trent; published the revised Breviary (1568) and Missal (1570); reformed the Roman Curia; issued the **Roman Catechism** (1566); and defended Catholic doctrine against the reformers. His love and devotion to the Virgin Mary was manifest when he entreated her through the rosary to spare the

Christian forces in the Battle of Lepanto. Moved by this victory he instituted the feast of Our Lady of Victory. He died May 1, 1572.

### Second Reading

From the **Commentary on the Gospel of John** by Saint Thomas Aquinas.

*"The duty of a good pastor is charity."*

Jesus said, *I am the good shepherd*. It is clearly fitting that Christ should be a shepherd. For just as the flock is guided and led to pasture by the shepherd, so the faithful are refreshed by Christ with spiritual food, and even by his body and blood.

But to differentiate himself from the bad shepherd and the thief Jesus added the word *good*. Good, I say, because he fulfilled the duties of a shepherd, just as a soldier is called good who fulfills the duties of a soldier. When in the above text Christ states that the shepherd enters through the gate and again that he himself is the gate, he here declares that he is a shepherd. For it is fitting that he should enter through himself. And truly he does enter through himself, because he reveals himself, and through himself he knows the Father. We, however, enter through him because we receive beatitude through him.

Note that no other is the gate but Christ, because no other is the true light but only receives a share in his light. *He*, namely John the Baptizer, *was not the light, but came to testify to the light*. But of Christ it is said, he was the true light which enlightens everyone. Therefore no one can claim to be the gate, because Christ properly reserves this for himself. However, he conferred the duties of a shepherd upon others and gave them to his members. For Peter was a shepherd, the other apostles were shepherds, and all good bishops are shepherds. *I will give you shepherds according to my heart*.

As Augustine says, it is fitting that the leaders of the Church, who are sons, should all be shepherds. Nevertheless Christ says it in the singular, *I am the good shepherd*, to establish the virtue of charity. For no shepherd is good unless that shepherd is joined as one with Christ by charity and becomes a member of the true shepherd.

The duty of the good shepherd is charity. And so Christ says, *good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep*. You must realize the difference between a good shepherd and a bad shepherd. A good shepherd seeks the welfare of the flock, while a bad shepherd seeks his own advantage. The prophet touches on this difference, saying, *woe to shepherds who feed themselves. Should not shepherds feed the sheep?* Therefore, those who use the flock only to feed themselves are not good shepherds. Truly a good shepherd, even in his body, endures many hardships for his flock whose good he seeks. As Jacob said, *heat ravaged me by day and the frost by night*.

Because the spiritual salvation of the flock takes precedence over the bodily life of the shepherd, every spiritual shepherd should expend his bodily life for the salvation of the flock. And this is what the Lord meant when he said, *the good shepherd lays down his life*, that is, his bodily life, *for his sheep*, that is, by authority and by charity. For each of these is demanded of the shepherd, that he be responsible for the flock and that he love them. The first does not suffice without the second. Indeed, Christ furnished us an example of this teaching: if Christ *laid down his life for us, so we ought to lay down our lives for one another*.

### Alternative Second Reading

From the **Life of Saint Pius V** by Giovanni Antonio Gabutio.

*"He was a striking model of Christian humility and piety "*

Pius used to say that the popes should build a commonwealth by their virtues rather than with stones.

He rightly understood that nothing is more effective for governing human beings in peace and tranquility than being loved, and nothing more ineffective than being feared. Furthermore he understood that human beings can only attain to God by the salvation which is bestowed upon them. Thus he wished to begin his papal duties by showing charity to the poor and generosity and clemency to others. Pius used to say that the special duty of the Roman Pontiff was to strive with all his power to preserve divine worship, ecclesiastical discipline, and the upright morals of all who lived in Rome. Therefore he took great care to restore the liturgy to its original splendor in those places where it had been neglected and to restore the life and morals of all ranks of persons to the way of true piety.

Since Pius clearly saw that nothing was more odious to God or to the human race than the depravity of heresy, he believed that no effort should be spared in completely uprooting this contagion from the earth. In the first place this was to be done in every aspect of his own life and pontificate, by prudent counsel, pious exhortations and kindly warnings, sparing no labor or expense.

Pius excelled in the praise of God. His thoughts were so occupied with God that in all things he preferred the honor and glory of God and desired nothing more, than that he should conform himself closely to God's most holy will. He reflected devoutly and almost without ceasing on the most bitter things that Christ the Lord suffered on our behalf, and to this end he was accustomed to keep an image of the crucified Savior before himself.

Moreover, Pius always turned to prayer when faced with serious matters and never neglected anything that pertained to his office. For he considered it the pontiff's special duty to intercede before God for the sins and the needs of his people. For this reason he considered it necessary to be familiar with and acceptable to the One before whom he had been appointed as an intercessor. Therefore he repeatedly left off the affairs of his office to engage in conversation with God. In this way he learned from God within what he should teach the people without; and as one who had been snatched up to God in interior contemplation while bearing the burdens of human beings exteriorly, he might act on behalf of their salvation. In the grave necessities of the Church and in times of public distress he also undertook a stricter abstinence to make propitiation to God for the people.

He was so devoted to the Most Blessed Virgin, the Mother of God, that he prayed the rosary every day, even though as pontiff he was occupied with many concerns. Three things seem clearly providential: first that after his death the memory and the bones of this pontiff were preserved nowhere else in the world but in Rome – and there, most specifically, in the Basilica of Saint Mary Major; second, that from Rome the example of this pope's virtue should instruct the minds of those who came after him in the practice of virtue; and finally that he who had been an outstanding devotee of the Most Blessed Virgin, the Mother of God, should rest nowhere else than in this most noble building consecrated to her.

[His story is of great benefit not just to a single group of people but, indeed, to all.

Have you perhaps made religious profession? See, you have here a marvelous example of obedience, chastity and poverty both to admire and to imitate and a striking model of Christian humility and piety in one who was at the height of power.

Is it a matter of someone involved in worldly affairs, whether at home or in the marketplace, who looks after public or private property? To such a one as well Pius provides many examples of piety and prudence which may help to regulate all things wisely, once a person has been instructed and made cognizant of one's own salvation and that of others.

What about those who pursue military affairs and who delight in waging war or reading about it? They also will find very useful guides which they may read through with pleasure. These are not examples of foolish or profane wars, but of serious and holy ones, and among the most celebrated victories which have been snatched from the enemies of Christianity.

Finally, the chief benefit is that pontiffs and bishops may find in his life examples which pertain to everything ecclesiastical, whether it be of government or of building up the Church, and they may be more and more encouraged to cling to the worship of the true religion.]

## MAY

MAY 4

Blessed Emily Bicchieri  
Nun and Virgin

Blessed Emily was born at Vercelli, Italy, in 1238. At the age of nineteen she made profession in the monastery built by her father and several times served as prioress there. She joyfully performed the most unpleasant tasks of the monastery and was especially devoted to the Passion of our Savior. She died on May 3, 1314.

MAY 7

Blessed Albert of Bergamo  
Lay Dominican and Husband

Blessed Albert was born in Valle d'Ogna near Bergamo in 1214. As a married man he was known for his generosity to the poor, a virtue for which his wife reproached him. Upon the death of his wife, being childless, he left his father's farm and went to Cremona where he lived in poverty. His poverty was a witness to a group of heretics there who boasted of their own poverty. Attracted by the life of Saint Dominic he joined the Brothers of Penance, which later became the Order of Penance of Saint Dominic, and lived at the Dominican priory. He died on May 7, 1279.

MAY 8

Patronage of the Blessed Virgin Mary over the entire Order of Preachers

It has been customary for the Church to invoke the Blessed Virgin Mary under titles such as Mediatrix, thereby indicating the continuing saving role of her maternity in the order of grace, for "by her many acts of intercession she continues to gain for us gifts of eternal salvation." (**Lumen gentium**, 62)

Blessed Humbert of Romans declares that "the Blessed Virgin was of great help in beginning the Order ... and it is to be hoped that she will bring it to a good end." (**Opera** II, 70-71) From its foundation the Order has not hesitated to acknowledge the Patronage of the Blessed Virgin, to continuously experience it and to commend it to the hearts of the brothers and sisters, so that encouraged by this maternal help they might adhere more closely to their Mediator and Redeemer as they labor to carry out their mission of salvation in the world. (See **Lumen gentium**, 62)

Until the recent restoration of the liturgical calendar, the Order celebrated the Patronage of the Blessed Virgin Mary on December 22, the anniversary of the approval of the Order by Pope Honorius III (December 22, 1216). Keeping in mind the special character of the weekdays of Advent which take precedence over all other memorials, it is suggested that the commemoration of this Patronage be celebrated on May 8 - during the month which is specially dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary and on the day when she is honored under similar titles in other proper liturgical calendars.

### Second Reading

From the **Commentary on the Constitutions of the Order of Preachers** of Blessed Humbert of Romans.

*"The Blessed Virgin is a special patroness of our Order."*

From the events surrounding the beginning of our Order many reasons can be adduced why the Blessed Virgin Mary herself may be considered the special patroness of our Order. From what I have heard with my own ears and from the many accounts in the **Lives of the Brethren**, it seems that she is our special Mother, bringing forth, advancing and defending the Order whose purpose is to praise, to bless and to preach her Son.

As we read in the **Nova legenda**, in his prayers Blessed Dominic commended the Order to her as to a special patroness. So it is that each day we commend ourselves to her as to a Mother by our procession, as we commend ourselves to Dominic by our commemoration.

There are many reasons for commending her patronage.

The support of those who have power in a court is more helpful. She is such a person, for certainly she possesses such power since she is Queen of Heaven. Thus regarding her person it is said: *In Jerusalem is my power*. Likewise, the more familiar one is with the Lord from whom we seek a favor, the better is that patronage. What greater familiarity can there be than that of a mother with her Son? How close, indeed, how intimate! So it is said: *The queen stands on your right*, that is, as one familiar with you beyond all others in the court.

Again, the more one is feared by adversaries, the better is that patronage. To the enemy she is *as awe-inspiring as bannered troops*. Therefore, it is greatly to be hoped that her patronage may be easily available to us.

The Blessed Virgin is not unsympathetic or unyielding to those who approach her, but rather shows herself to be most attractive, full of kindness and grace, full of gentleness and mercy. Thus it is said: *You are lovely*. Likewise, more is expected from the assistance of one who is more indebted to the person in need. She is greatly indebted to sinners, for it is on account of their fall that she has her preeminence. And she is called *shoot* sprung from the *stump of Jesse*, which means "fire." For because of the fire of the great love

which God had for the world, God came to her. And so the world itself was the cause of this.

She was given as a protector for the poor, as their advocate, just as b: . God's design Esther became queen and the advocate of the Jewish people. So we should come with confidence to the Blessed Virgin since her duty is to care for our concerns. Likewise, more is expected from the intervention of one whose loving assistance has been proven in so many instances. That she is such a person is attested by countless examples. Who has run to her and not found help? Her compassionate love and the results of her assistance, shows that comes to the aid of all. Thus it is said: She is *like the olive in a field*, rather than those in a garden, for all can share in her fruit. She assists everyone for in her abounding love she has pity on the needs of all. She intervenes everywhere. She intervenes always. So it is said: *Through all ages I shall not cease to be*, that is, to come to the aid of all.

Thus, it is clear how much we can hope for from her assistance, if she is called upon in faith, for she is lovely and supports those who approach her. For this reason Paul says: *Let us approach confidently the throne of grace*, for she is the throne of God's grace, since from her came countless graces to the human race. Just as she is called throne of judgment, that is, where judgment originates, so she is rightly called throne of grace, that is, where grace originates. Because her patronage is so powerful, because it is so easily attained, her patronage is to be preferred to that of all others. For this reason each day we have a procession in her honor, so as to always have her as patroness in heaven.[POP 186-188]

#### Alternative Second Reading

From **The Miracles of Saint Dominic** narrated by Sister Cecilia.

*"The Blessed Virgin appeared to Saint Dominic while he was praying and told him that she watched over the Order."*

One night after prolonging his prayers until midnight, Blessed Dominic left the church, entered the dormitory, and took a place at one end of the dormitory, where he continued to pray.

As he stood praying, he glanced at the other end of the dormitory and saw three beautiful women enter. He noticed that the one in the middle was a venerable lady of greater beauty and dignity than the other two. One of the two was carrying a beautiful, shining vessel and the other an aspersorium which she handed to the lady in the center. This lady sprinkled the brethren and blessed them. She said to Blessed Dominic: "I am the one you call upon each evening. When you say, 'Turn then most gracious advocate,' I prostrate myself before my Son and ask him to preserve this Order."

After this she continued to sprinkle and bless all the others one by one and then disappeared. When she was gone Blessed Dominic returned to pray in the place he had stood before. Suddenly he was caught up in spirit before God and saw the Lord and the Blessed Virgin sitting at his right. It seemed to Blessed Dominic that Our Lady was wearing a cloak the color of sapphire.

As Blessed Dominic looked around, he could see religious of all the orders but his own before the throne of God. He began to weep bitterly and stood apart, not daring to

approach the Lord and his Mother. Then Our Lady motioned for him to come near. But he would not dare, until the Lord himself also called him.

Blessed Dominic cast himself down before them weeping bitterly. The Lord told him to rise, and when he did, asked him, "Why are you weeping so?" "I am weeping because I see all the other orders here but no sign of my own." The Lord said to him, "Do you want to see your Order?" and he answered, "Yes, Lord." Then the Blessed Virgin opened the cloak she was wearing and spread it out before Blessed Dominic, to whom it seemed vast enough to cover the entire heaven, and under it he saw a large multitude of the brethren.

Then prostrating himself, Blessed Dominic gave thanks to God and to Blessed Mary his Mother. After that the vision disappeared and he came to himself just as the bell rang for Matins. When Matins were over, he called the brethren to chapter and gave them a long a beautiful talk, exhorting them to love and pay reverence to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Among other things he related this vision to them.

[This vision Blessed Dominic narrated to Sister Cecilia and the other sisters of San Sisto as though it had happened to someone else, but the brethren who were with him and heard it from his own lips intimated to the sisters that it was he.

All the above statements about Blessed Dominic were made by Sister Cecilia, who testified so firmly to their truth that, if it were necessary to repeat them under oath, she would do so. But because she is such a holy and religious person and it is so easy to believe her simple words, this account which she gave from her own lips has been put in writing by Sister Angelica of the same convent of St. Agnes for the honor and praise of our Lord Jesus Christ, our Blessed Father Dominic and for the consolation of the brethren. Pardon the style of the compiler, for she is woefully ignorant of grammar.]

#### Alternative Second Reading

From the encyclical **Redemptor hominis** of Pope John Paul II.

*"The eternal love of the Father which is manifested by the Son is offered to us through his Mother."*

Mary is Mother of the Church because, due to the ineffable choice of the eternal Father and the special action of the Spirit of Love, she gave human life to the Son of God, *for whom and through whom all things exist*, and from whom the whole of the people of God receives the grace and dignity of election. Her very own Son wished to extend his Mother's maternity since, when he was on the cross, he designated his beloved disciple as her son.

After our Lord's ascension, the Holy Spirit inspired her to remain in the upper room, recollected in prayer and expectation together with the apostles, until the day of Pentecost when the Church was to be born in visible form, coming forth from darkness. Later, all the generations of disciples, and those who confess and love Christ like the apostle John, spiritually took this Mother to their own homes. Thus she was included in the history of salvation and in the Church's mission from the very beginning, that is, from the moment of the Annunciation.

Accordingly, we who form today's generation of disciples of Christ all wish to unite ourselves with her in a special way. We do so at the urging of the deep need of faith, hope and charity. For if we feel a special need to turn to Christ, we believe that nobody

else can bring us as Mary can into the divine dimension of the mystery of Redemption. Nobody has been brought into it by God as Mary has. It is in this that the exceptional character of the grace of the divine motherhood consists. Not only is the dignity of this motherhood unique and unrepeatable in the history of the human race, but because of this maternity Mary's participation in God's plan for human salvation through the mystery of the Redemption is also unique in its profundity and range of action.

We can say that the mystery of the Redemption took shape beneath the heart of the Virgin of Nazareth when she pronounced her "fiat." From then on, under the special influence of the Holy Spirit, this heart, the heart of both a virgin and a mother, has always followed the work of her Son and has gone out to all those whom Christ has embraced and continues to embrace with inexhaustible love. For that reason Mary's heart must also have the inexhaustible love of a mother.

The special characteristic of the maternal love that the Mother of God brings to the mystery of Redemption and the life of the Church finds expression in its exceptional closeness to human life and all of its activity. It is in this that the mystery of the Mother consists. The Father's eternal love, which has been manifested in human history through the Son whom the Father gave, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life, is offered to us through this Mother and thus takes on tokens that are easier to understand and more accessible to each person.

Consequently, Mary must be present on all the pathways of the daily life of the Church. Through her maternal presence the Church acquires certainty that she is truly living the life of her Master and Lord and that she is living the mystery of Redemption in all its life-giving fullness.

Above all I implore Mary, the heavenly Mother of the Church, to graciously devote herself to this prayer of humanity's new advent, together with us who make up the Church, that is, the Mystical Body of her only Son. I hope that through this prayer we may receive the Holy Spirit coming upon us and thus become Christ's witnesses to the end of the earth, like those who went forth from the upper room in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost.

MAY 10

Saint Antoninus of Florence  
Friar and Bishop Memorial

Antonino Fierozzi was born in Florence in 1389 and in 1405 was received into the Order "for the future priory of Fiesole" by Blessed John Dominic, who at that time was reforming the Dominican priories of the area according to the wishes of Blessed Raymond of Capua. He served the friars in various priories in Italy, often as local superior, and became a distinguished master of canon law. In 1436 he founded the famous priory of San Marco in Florence and under his leadership Fra Angelico decorated the priory and an outstanding library was collected. His wisdom and pastoral zeal made him a natural choice for Archbishop of Florence in 1446. He was noted for his service to the poor and established a society under the patronage of Saint Martin to assist him in this work. Among his writings the best known is his *Summa moralis*.

His whole life was mirrored in his last words, "to serve God is to reign." He died on May 2, 1459.

## Second Reading

From the sermons of Saint Antoninus.

"The tree of life is Christ crucified, bearing fruit unto salvation. "

In the Apocalypse of John we read: The Lord showed me *on either side of the river... the tree of life that produces fruit*. The tree of life is Christ crucified, who is said to be on either side of the river because the fathers of the Old and the New Testaments were saved by him. We may consider this a figure, for on the cross our God produces all kinds of fruit, fruit coming from the wood of the cross for the salvation of humanity. Four of these fruits may be applied to the human race.

The first fruit is the price of our redemption. As Ambrose says, so great was our sin that we could not be redeemed, unless the only-begotten Son of God were to die for us debtors. The reason for this is that the guilt of the human race was infinite with regard to the offending party, to the good of which we were deprived, and to the nature that was damaged. Therefore it was necessary that this guilt should be cleansed by the Lord's suffering. And this is what Peter says: *You were ransomed from your futile conduct, ... not with perishable things like silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ as of a spotless unblemished lamb*.

The second fruit is the privilege of divine love. For gifts ordinarily stimulate people to love, and the greater the gift, the greater the love. Thus it is said, The one for whom more is forgiven loves more. But the greater gift is to be loved more. Among all the things that can be loved, but of lesser importance than that which is loved first of all, life is particularly lovable. Therefore, whoever gives his or her life for a friend has bestowed the greatest gift. As Bernard says, above all the things that make me love you, O good Jesus, is the chalice that you drank, the work of our redemption.

The third fruit is the shield of our defense. Before Christ's passion many fell into idolatry and were unable to resist the devil. But since Christ's passion, the enemy has been weakened to the degree that no one can be conquered or succumb unless that person wishes it. As Gregory says, weak is the enemy that cannot conquer except by another's will. We have attained this through Christ's death, and so it is said: *They conquered him by the blood of the Lamb*. This blood, indeed, is recognized in faith by the eyes of the faithful, and through it they are stirred up to fight, as we read: *Consider how he endured such opposition from sinners, in order that you may not grow weary and lose heart*.

The fourth fruit is the summit of our exaltation. Great indeed would be the exaltation of any city, if one of its citizens were elected emperor to rule the whole world or chosen supreme pontiff to preside over the whole Church. And so it is that human nature has great dignity, for by the death that he sustained in his human nature, Christ received the name above every other name. As we read: *Because of this God highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name*. In this nature in which Christ suffered he is to judge all of creation, for it is written: *He is the one appointed by God as judge of the living and the dead. To him all the prophets bear witness, that everyone who believes in him will receive forgiveness of sins through his name*.

## Alternative Second Reading

From the Prologue of the **Summa moralis** of Saint Antoninus.

*"The world teaches us wisdom, not only about divine matters, but also about what we are to do."*

*How great are your works, O Lord! In wisdom you have made them all. The earth is full of your creatures.* In the joy of his heart the prophet contemplates the divine majesty and is overcome by the extent of divine goodness manifested in the works of God. And so he exclaims: *How great are your works!* He seems to show the mystery of the most holy Trinity, that Trinity to whom we should always appeal and whose help we should always await. In this way our good works which spring from the Trinity may be brought to their fulfillment. As Plato says, without this greatest of beings no nature would subsist, there would be no understanding, and no action would come to its term. And should one forget this being, nothing could be truly undertaken.

Consequently, in the first phrase of this passage the prophet suggests that remarkable power which is attributed to the Father: *How great are your works, O Lord!* In the second phrase he speaks of the extraordinary wisdom that is attributed to the Son: *In wisdom you have made them all.* Finally he mentions the immeasurable kindness that is attributed to the Spirit: *The earth is full of your creatures.*

In addressing God Mordechai speaks of that remarkable power which is shown forth in creation: *O Lord, almighty king, all things are in your power... You have made heaven and earth and every wonderful thing under the heavens.* Here he shows that by this greatest of all powers, which is attributed to the Father, all things were made from nothing, unlike the things made by an artisan which require some kind of material.

As far as wisdom is concerned, Sirach says: *The source of wisdom is the Word of God in heaven. All things came to be through him.* The Word, the Son of God, is as it were the skill of the almighty Father in whom and by whom all things have been made very good. *In wisdom you have made them all.* And since it pertains to the wise to put things in order, it is because of him that everything is harmoniously arranged; it is because of him that the universe is beautiful and that divine providence governs the world. *In wisdom you have made them all.*

The world is a book, written both within and without, which instructs us about wisdom. It instructs us about the wisdom of the divine mystery, as the letter to the Romans says: *Since the creation of the world the invisible attributes of eternal power can be perceived in what God has made.* It also instructs us about wisdom in action, as we can read in the book of Job: *Ask the beasts to teach you, and the birds of the air to tell you; or the reptiles on earth to instruct you, and the fish of the sea to inform you.* For everyone can perceive how God provides for creation. God never abandons it, continues to communicate with it, makes the earth and trees fruitful, is never idle, and offers countless testimonies to us concerning the qualities necessary for living well. And so in wisdom you have made them all to give us wisdom.

Concerning the immeasurable kindness of God, Saint Augustine tells us That this is clearly evident from all that God does for us, all done with great power and wisdom. And so the prophet adds: *The earth is full of your creatures.* We are the earth, we come from the earth, we return to the earth, we cultivate the earth, and we live from the earth. And this earth is filled with God's creatures.

God possesses all that is of earth, all that is of heaven and all that is divine. With all of this God *fills the earth*, that is, the human race. For God gives us the things of earth for our use: *You have put all things under our feet*. God gives us the things of heaven, that is, the angels, as servants: *Are they not all ministering spirits sent to serve?* What greater possession does God have than the Son! We were filled up with God, when *the Word became flesh*. God *so loved the world*, that is, "us," *that he gave his only Son*. And so one can clearly say: The earth is full of your creatures.

#### Alternative Second Reading

From the **Life of Saint Antoninus** by Francesco Castiglione.

*"Concerning the pastoral practice of Saint Antoninus."*

Antoninus served as bishop for thirteen years and was admired by all. First of all, he only wanted a very small household which would just be sufficient to take care of his needs, rather than a large one. Ridding himself and his staff of everything pretentious and luxurious both in food and in clothing, he had no furniture, no trappings, no gold or silver vases, no dogs or horses, such as many clerics had. He kept only one small mule at home for use in extreme necessity and even this had been given him as a gift. He used to say that it was not fitting for a prelate to consume the property of the poor for feeding animals or for some other superfluous luxury.

He left the task of collecting income and produce as well as the administration of his entire household to a single treasurer, and reserved pastoral affairs for himself. He ordered his whole household, whom he often encouraged to live in the fear of God, to be fed with the best food, while always avoiding excess.

Antoninus himself ate ordinary food and in fact paid scant attention to food at all. He always rose in the night with the intention of anticipating the Matins bell of the cathedral. When, with great attention and elevation of mind, he had finished the rest of the divine office with his clerics, he would devote the remaining time until nine o'clock in the morning, to spiritual reading or to writing books.

At nine o'clock he would celebrate Mass, which he never omitted except for some very serious reason. Once Mass had been celebrated, he spent the remainder of the day, until late into the night, at his pastoral duties, except for the time that he had to concede to the needs of the body.

Every case of importance in the city was brought to him and the laity as well as clerics had recourse to him, since by common consensus he was considered to be the best and the fairest of judges. Each day his house was crowded with a great number of pious folk, some of whom received alms, for he was accustomed to distribute all his property to the poor, and some of whom received sound and true judgments from him on doubtful matters.

So great was his acquaintance with the sacred writings, so great was his knowledge, and so extensive his experience in giving advice, that not only the townspeople, but even numerous foreigners, princes and prelates, would seek his counsel in important matters. For this reason at an early date he had begun to be called "Brother Antoninus, counselor;" this was his usual nickname before he became a bishop.

MAY 12

Blessed Jane of Portugal  
Nun and Virgin

Blessed Jane, the only daughter of Alphonso V of Portugal, was born in Lisbon in 1452. For a time she served as regent of Portugal during her father's absence, but had little taste for the life of the royal court. She desired to embrace religious life and despite the violent opposition of her brother and father, she entered the Dominican monastery of Aveiro in 1472. Dedicated to prayer and penance she lived for the conversion of sinners and the liberation of the Christian captives in Africa. She lived a life of humility and simplicity and died at the monastery on May 12, 1490.

MAY 13

Blessed Imelda Lambertini  
Nun and Virgin

Blessed Imelda, a member of the noble Lambertini family, was born at Bologna about 1321. At the age of nine she was placed in the Dominican monastery at Val di Pietra, near Bologna. Her status there is uncertain, although she wore the habit of the nuns. She had a special devotion to the eucharistic presence of our Lord, but because of her age was not allowed to actually receive communion. She was consumed with so great a longing to be united with Jesus in the Eucharist that she merited to communicate miraculously. According to tradition she died in an ecstasy of love on the feast of the Ascension, May 13, 1333. Pope Pius X named her patron of first communicants.

MAY 15

Blessed Giles of Portugal  
Friar and Priest

Blessed Giles was born at Vouzella, near Coimbra, Portugal, about the year 1184. Although destined for a church career by his father, Giles was more attracted by medicine which he studied and taught at Paris. According to tradition he was converted from a dissolute life through the intervention of the Blessed Virgin. He entered the newly-founded Order of Preachers at Valencia around 1224 and became a celebrated preacher and an able superior. Noted for his humble service to his brethren, he died at Santarem on May 14, 1265.

MAY 15

Blessed Andrew Abellon  
Friar and Priest

Blessed Andrew was born in 1375 at Saint Maximin, France, and received the habit at the priory of St. Mary Magdalene there. He was outstanding for his teaching, for his preaching throughout Provence, and for his zeal in restoring regular observance. In addition he exercised his talents as an artist in many of the Dominican churches of southern France. He died at Aix-en-Provence on May 15, 1450.

MAY 19

Blessed Francis Coll Guitart  
Friar and Priest

Blessed Francis Coll was born at Gombreny in the Catalan Pyrenees in 1812 and, after studying at the diocesan seminary at Vich, entered the Order at the priory of Gerona in 1830. In 1835 the anticlerical government closed the house of studies at Gerona and dispersed the Dominican students. From that day until his death he maintained a heroic fidelity to his Dominican vocation without the support offered by Dominican community life. Eventually he was ordained at the diocesan seminary at Vich in 1836. After several years of parish ministry he pursued itinerant preaching along with his friend Saint Anthony Claret. He founded the Dominican Sisters of the Annunciation to teach the children of the poor in the villages where he preached. In December, 1869, Blessed Francis suffered a stroke which left him completely blind. He died at Vich on April 2, 1875.

MAY 21

Blessed Columba of Rieti  
Sister and Virgin

Blessed Columba was born in Rieti, Italy, in 1467. She was clothed with the habit of the Sisters of Penance at Rieti. Following in the footsteps of Saint Catherine of Siena, she showed an admirable charity towards the poor, the sick and the dying. In Perugia she founded a convent of sisters where she made profession and became prioress in 1490. There she was noted for her work of reconciliation for which she received the name "Dove of Peace." She died there on the feast of the Ascension, May 20, 1501.

MAY 24

Translation of Our Holy Father Dominic  
Memorial

This memorial celebrates the first translation of the remains of Saint Dominic, who had been buried in the church of Saint Nicholas of the Vineyards at Bologna. Many people were healed at his tomb, yet his brethren were reluctant to acknowledge these miracles. Finally at the urging of Pope Gregory IX, Dominic's remains were moved to a marble sepulcher. This translation took place on Pentecost Tuesday, May 24, 1233, and marked the beginning of the canonization process; upon its completion Gregory IX canonized Dominic on July 3, 1234. In 1267 Dominic's remains were moved to his present tomb.

Second Reading

From the letters of Blessed Jordan of Saxony.

*"The translation of our Holy Father Dominic, May 24, 1233."*

[To all the brothers of the Order of Preachers whom he loves in the beloved Son of God, Brother Jordan, humble Master and Servant of the same Order, wishes health and eternal joy.]

In its unsearchable wisdom the divine goodness is often accustomed to delay the manifestation of virtue, not that it might slip into oblivion, but rather that after having been hidden, it may be revealed more abundantly at an opportune moment. Whether God wished to so provide greater benefits for the Church or whether for some other reason, certain brothers whose simplicity outweighed their prudence decided that it would be quite sufficient if the glory of Saint Dominic, the servant of the Most High and the

founder of the Order of Preachers, were known to God alone. They decided it was not worth the effort to bring that glory to the attention of others.

However, some thought otherwise, but offered no opposition since they were fainthearted. So it was that for nearly twelve years the glory of our blessed Father Dominic remained hidden, with little regard for his holiness. The treasure was hidden and of no use to anyone. Dominic's virtue had been demonstrated many times, but it had been covered over by the negligence of his sons.

But then the wonderful day dawned to celebrate the transfer of the remains of this illustrious doctor. The venerable archbishop of Ravenna and a large number of bishops and prelates were present, as well as a vast multitude of people from different regions who were giving remarkable witness by their devotion. Present also was the militia of Bologna, who would not allow this most holy body to be removed from their care. The anxious brothers stood about; the timid grew pale and prayed and, although they had nothing to fear, they were seized with misgivings. They feared that the body of Saint Dominic, which had laid in a mean tomb exposed to the elements, would be found eaten by worms and giving off a foul odor, a circumstance that would diminish the devotion of such important persons. The bishops approached devoutly, the workers applied their tools, and the stone that had been firmly cemented to the sepulcher was removed. Inside the tomb was the wooden coffin, just as it had been placed there by the venerable Pope Gregory when he was bishop of Ostia. A small opening was visible in the coffin.

As soon as the stone was taken away a wonderful odor poured out from the opening and its fragrance caused astonishment among those present. They were amazed and overcome with wonder at this strange event. Everyone shed tears and feelings of joy, of fear and of hope rose in all hearts. These extraordinary occurrences moved all who smelt the sweetness of this wonderful scent. We ourselves have also smelt the sweetness of this perfume and we bear witness to what we have seen and smelt. Although we eagerly remained for a long time near the body of Dominic, we were unable to sate ourselves with such a great sweetness. If one's hand, or a belt, or some other object touched the body, the scent emanated from it for some time.

The body was carried to the marble sepulcher where it was to rest and the perfume encompassed it. This marvelous aroma, which the holy body breathed forth, was evidence to everyone how much the saint had truly been *the aroma of Christ*.

The archbishop celebrated the solemn Mass. It was Pentecost Tuesday, and the choir intoned the introit of the day: "Receive the joy of your glory, giving thanks to God who has called you to the heavenly kingdom." The brethren joyfully regarded these words as a witness from heaven. The trumpets reverberated, the faithful lit countless candles, the procession went forward solemnly, and on all sides the acclamation sounded: "Blessed be Jesus Christ! "

[ All this was done in the city of Bologna, on the 24th day of May, in the year 1233, while Gregory IX occupied the Roman See and Frederick II was emperor. May it redound to the honor of our Lord Jesus Christ and of blessed Dominic his most faithful servant.]

MAY 27

Blessed Andrew Franchi  
Friar and Bishop

Blessed Andrew, a member of the noble Franchi Boccagni family, was born in Pistoia, Italy, in 1335 and at the age of fourteen entered the Order in Florence. He worked to restore regular observance after the plague of the Black Death. As bishop of Pistoia he was an active promoter of peace among the people and was known for his personal austerity and his preaching. He had a special devotion to the Infant Jesus and his Mother. He resigned his office in 1400 and retired to the priory of Pistoia where he died on May 26, 1401.

MAY 28

Blessed Mary Bartholomew Bagnesi  
Lay Dominican and Virgin

Blessed Mary Batholomew Bagnesi was born in Florence on August 15, 1514, and there received the habit of a Sister of Penance in 1547. For forty-five years she was confined to her bed and with great courage bore the pains she suffered. By her spirit of faith and acceptance of God's will, she was able to encourage and console many who came to her. She died on May 28, 1577, and was buried at the Carmelite monastery in Florence.

MAY 29

Blessed William Arnaud  
Friar and Priest and Companions, Martyrs

Among the eleven martyrs commemorated this day, three were Dominicans. They were part of a band of preachers whose success at Avignonet, to the southwest of Toulouse, induced a number of Albigensian heretics to ambush the group and treacherously murder them on May 29, 1242. As they died they gave witness to the faith by singing the *Te Deum*. The Dominicans in this group were: Blessed William Arnaud, one of the first Dominicans to be appointed an inquisitor in the diocese of Toulouse; Blessed Bernard of Rochefort, a Dominican priest; and Blessed Garcia d'Aure of Orense, a cooperator brother.

MAY 30

Blessed James Salomonio  
Friar and Priest

Born in Venice of the noble Salomonio family in 1231, James gave his patrimony to the poor and entered the Order of Preachers at the age of fourteen. He lived most of his Dominican life at Forli where he was known for his austere and virtuous life. Because of his charity to the poor he was called "Father of the Poor." He died on May 31, 1314.

## JUNE

JUNE 2

Blessed Sadoc,

Friar and Priest, and Companions, Martyrs

According to tradition Blessed Sadoc received the habit from Saint Dominic himself and at the General Chapter of Bologna in 1221 was chosen to accompany Master Paul of Hungary, who had been commissioned to establish a province in Hungary. Later Blessed Sadoc moved on to Poland where he preached the gospel for nearly forty years. In 1260 he and the forty-eight members of the Dominican community at Sandomierz were martyred by the Tartars as they were singing the *Salve Regina* at Compline. The custom of singing the *Salve Regina* at the deathbed of Dominicans stems from this incident.

JUNE 4

Saint Peter of Verona

Friar, Priest and Martyr          Memorial

Saint Peter was born at Verona, Italy, around 1205 of Manichean parents. While a student at Bologna, he entered the Order of Preachers, receiving the habit from the hands of Saint Dominic. Full of zeal for the purity of the faith he preached the word of God and brought many people back to the true faith. His concern for the growth of the faith among the laity led him to establish the Confraternity in Praise of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Association of the Faith. He earnestly promoted community life and served the brethren as prior. Towards the end of his life he received the office of inquisitor, a ministry which he carried out to great effect. On April 6, 1252, while returning from Como to Milan he was set upon by a group of heretics and was fatally stabbed. As he lay dying on the roadway, he wrote on the ground with his own blood his final testament to the Catholic doctrine which he had so staunchly defended in life: *Credo in unum Deum*.

Second Reading

From the bull of canonization of Saint Peter of Verona.

*"Peter mounts the Rock who is Christ to receive a well-deserved crown."*

A cry is heard – the voice of blood poured out. Like a trumpet heralding this illustrious martyr it blares forth. The earth, as though bathed in a blood-like sweat, cannot keep silent. Here are the signs of the true faith that the heavens rejoice and the earth exults because of the great joy that overcomes them. Mother Church is swept along by great rejoicing. And what reason she has for her gladness!

She is right to sing a new song to the Lord, a hymn of endless praise to her God. The catholic people are justified in clapping their hands and lifting them up to the Most High, shouting and rejoicing with full voice. The Christian assembly can sing to its Lord. From the garden of faith a ripe fruit has been plucked and brought to the table of the King of the ages. From the vine of the Church a new wine has poured into the royal cup. The fertile vine-branch, cut off by the soldier's hand, has borne fruit in abundance because it was closely united to the true vine.

A red rose has sprung up in the garden of the Order of Preachers. In the workshop of the Church a stone has been selected, polished and placed in the walls of the Jerusalem on high. There is great joy in heaven and all the saints rejoice in celebrating so great a feast.

The reason for this festival is blessed Peter of the Order of Preachers. He chose the more sure path of life and gave himself to the service of God. He strove to live in accord

with the gospel; this was the aim of everything that he did. He chose the direct and light-filled path, the firm Rule of his Order, to be conducted, directed, led and introduced to that repose which follows upon exertion. With this Rule, preceded by faith and with charity as a companion, for nearly thirty years he went forth to defend the faith which burned in his heart. And so, firmly established on the rock of faith and finally dashed upon the rock suffering, Peter mounts the Rock who is Christ to receive his crown.

He wished to die for the faith and with persistence he would often ask the Lord that he not be permitted to leave this life without having drunk from the cup of suffering. -He was struck down by a sacrilegious act while carrying out the ministry of Christ and he did not cry out, but bore everything with patience. He commended his spirit to God saying: *Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.* Then he began to recite the Creed, preaching it without ceasing, even as he lay dying.

Thus the grain of wheat fell to the earth, was pressed down by the hands of infidels, died and brought forth a fruitful ear. Thus the grape, placed in the winepress, produced wine abundantly. Thus the grain was winnowed and brought into the granaries of the Lord. Thus the aromatic herbs, when broken, spread their perfume. Thus the kingdom of heaven is seized by the violent. Thus the saints obtain the sublime kingdom through faith.

#### Alternative Second Reading

From a letter of a certain brother Romaeus (or Roderick) of Atencia to Saint Raymond of Penyafort.

*"He offered his praise and his life to the paschal victim."*

When for the sake of the faith Brother Peter had to go from Corno to Milan on the Sunday after Easter, he began his journey the preceding Saturday. After receiving the blessing, he wished to start out early in the morning, but suddenly the thought came to him that he should celebrate the Mass of the Resurrection before he set out. So he cast himself at the feet of one of the brothers who was to accompany him, something he frequently did when making his confession, and confessed at greater length and in greater detail than usual. The aforesaid brother has recounted this in his own words. When Mass had been devoutly celebrated, he set out together with three of the brethren and, as the brethren said afterwards, throughout the journey he did nothing but recount with devotion the severe sufferings of certain martyrs. When he had finished his long account, he began, much unlike himself, to sing the *Victimae paschali laudes* in a loud voice. Immediately Brother Dominic, who was soon to join him in suffering, joined in. When another brother named Conrad tried to harmonize at the fifth in the same chant, Brother Peter turned kindly to the brother and said: "Please let me and Brother Dominic sing alone, because you are singing discordantly." So the two sang the whole sequence in a loud voice while the other brother kept still.

When they had finished, it was mealtime and they entered a certain fortified village called Meda in the diocese of Milan and there they separated to eat, so as not to burden their hosts. Two of them went to one place, while Brother Peter and Brother Dominic went off to a certain monastery where, finding a meal prepared, they ate quickly. Then,

after sending word to the other two brothers that they had finished and that they should follow them when the two had finished their meal, Brother Peter set out, hastening to his crown.

When they reached a hill about two miles from the village, two mercenaries – who were really ministers of Satan – were lying in wait. Seeing the brethren from a distance, they discussed killing them. But one of them, struck by remorse and horrified at the thought of consenting to such a crime, left the other and ran back quickly to the aforesaid village. There he met the other two brothers on the road and tearfully disclosed the whole wicked scheme. Then the brothers started running to save Brother Peter, but by the time they arrived, the other minister of Satan had already cruelly slain him with five blows of a billhook.

As his companion who survived for six days testified, when Brother Peter was being struck, he followed the example of the Savior and did not murmur or defend himself or flee. Rather he endured steadfastly, graciously forgave the assassin's crime, prayed for him and with hands outstretched to heaven said in a clear voice: *Into your hands, Lord, I commend my spirit*. It was at the hour of None, at midday, that he gave up his unblemished spirit to the crucified and risen Christ.

#### Alternative Second Reading

From a letter of Saint Peter Martyr to the prioress of Saint Peter's in Campo Santo, Milan  
*"While he desired the wings of contemplation, he spent his entire life for others."*

Your welcome letter made me very happy. From the tenor of it I gather that you progress daily from strength to strength and so have won the prize of your monastic combat. You have climbed up the mountain of sacrifice, while I still dwell in the valley of care, and have spent most of my life for others. You soar above all this on the wings of contemplation, but the glue of concern for others so holds me fast that I cannot fly. Woe is me, for my exile is prolonged. Who will give me the wings of a dove to fly away and find rest? In everything I sought a resting place, in everything I have found distress and sorrow. The only rest is in the inheritance of the saints, of which it is written, This is my resting place forever. But I cannot see the freedom of the children of God which I desire and long for, nor can I breathe that air of freedom.

My dearest sister, help me with your prayers. As Job says, My days are passing. There is no returning from the way I am going. I am not far from that limit which has been set for all flesh. My gray hairs already proclaim my final hour. Therefore, dearest sister, please pray for me; in your most intimate tears, make a remembrance of me and offer it in the sight of the Son of God. I know that the persistent prayer of the just is very powerful, and that the intercession of another achieves what our own prayers do not.

My dearest sister, Christ chose you to be his servant, to serve him in your ministry of prayer and to make your sisters pleasing to the Lord, followers who perform good works. Form them by your words and your example of prayer. Put aside all that is vain and strive to fulfill your ministry by your way of life. Clothe yourself in holiness, so as to render devoted service to him who is the Holy of Holies. I beg you, be beyond reproach in managing your funds, modest in your speech, discerning in what you command, quick to help others, sound in the advice you give, circumspect in responding to others, and inclined towards patience. Be considerate of the older sisters and gentle to the younger

ones. Be kind to your equals, firm with the proud, kind to the humble, merciful to the penitent, unyielding to the obstinate. The greater the title you bear because of your position, the more glorious it will be for you if you can surpass others in holiness.

My dearest sister, I have offered you this bit of advice, not because you need any encouragement from me, but to help you run more earnestly towards the prize and reward, and hasten to enter the house of God and the house of Saint Peter, with all your and my dearest sisters. Thus, when I visit you after the Chapter, I will be fully content to see your habit and your religious life. I intended to visit you, but certain recent events have prevented me from doing so. I am on my way to the Chapter with brother Ulrich, and I commend you all to God until I come. And I will come soon.

Brother Ulrich greets you in the Lord and commends himself to your prayers.

JUNE 8

Blessed Diana and Blessed Cecilia

Nuns and Virgins Optional Memorial

Blessed Diana, a member of the powerful d'Andalo family, was born at Bologna at the beginning of the thirteenth century. Attracted to the Order by the preaching of Blessed Reginald, Diana overcame the strong objections of her family and in 1222 with the help of Blessed Jordan of Saxony founded the Monastery of Saint Agnes where she lived until her death in 1236. There letters which Blessed Jordan wrote to her are a splendid testament to the spirituality of the Dominican family and to the association of brothers and sisters within the Dominican family.

Blessed Cecilia was born at Rome around 1200 of the noble Caesarini family. In 1220 Pope Honorius III asked Saint Dominic to reform several Roman monasteries, among them Santa Maria in Tempulo of which Blessed Cecilia was a member. According to tradition she was the first to express enthusiasm for the project and the first to receive the habit from the hands of Saint Dominic at the new Monastery of Saint Sixtus. In late 1223 or early 1224 she and three other nuns were sent to the Monastery of Saint Agnes in Bologna to help with the new foundation. To her we are indebted for our only description of the physical appearance of Saint Dominic. She died around 1290.

Second Reading

From a letter of Blessed Jordan of Saxony.

*"Apply yourself to piety."*

[ Brother Jordan, useless servant of the Order of Preachers, to Diana his beloved sister in Christ. May she rejoice without end in the joy and bliss of paradise.]

Beloved, you see how with the help of God's grace, and accompanied and followed everywhere by your prayers and those of my other daughters, I have arrived in Paris after a pleasant journey, safe and in good health. Now I hasten to write to you that you may at least have the consolation of a greeting, by letter, since for the time being I cannot console you by being with you and talking with you.

But you, my daughter, and all the other sisters who are your daughters and mine in the Lord, should apply yourselves with every effort, not so much to bodily penances, in which the measure of wisdom and prudence can easily be exceeded, but rather to a life of virtue. Apply yourselves to the work of piety which in the words of the apostle is

valuable in every respect. Let your hearts always be filled with a burning desire for the blessed city of the saints in heaven, that glorious storeroom of perfect joy and gladness, that abode refulgent with the radiance of utter beauty, far exceeding human understanding: a realm truly divine, worthy to be the dwelling place of those created in the image and likeness of God.

May the loving thought of the Bridegroom be constantly in your minds. Do all you can to make your beauty perfect before him, ridding yourselves of any stain or blemish, however small, that might offend his gaze. May your hearts be pure and your lives innocent. In all that you do be of one mind and heart, in peace and concord, in unshakable love, and in that loving humility which is the guardian of all good things. Thus, while your soul finds deep and listing delight in the life of holiness, it may itself be a source of delight to the Son of God who is blessed for ever and ever, amen. Farewell.

Pray for me. Greet the sisters, my beloved daughters in the Lord, and ask them to pray for the students of Paris, begging the Lord to open their hearts and prepare them for a swift conversion. Pray that those who have already amid good resolutions may faithfully carry them out and so persevere to everlasting life. Farewell.

Brother Archangel and Brother John greet you. Greet also the *conversae* of Saint Agnes, the *familiares*, and those ladies who have become its friends. Farewell.

#### Alternative Second Reading

From the Chronicle of the foundation of the Monastery of Saint Agnes at Bologna by a contemporary writer.

*"Diana began to love blessed Dominic with all her affection."*

In the year of the Lord 1218, Friars Preachers were sent by Saint Dominic from Rome to Bologna. On their arrival they asked Brother Rudolph for the Church of Saint Nicholas, known as Saint Nicholas of the Vines because of its location. The brother in question was at that time the priest of that church. This, however, was the property of the Lord d'Andalo, the father of that most illustrious woman, the Lady Diana. The said Lord d'Andalo did not wish to give the aforementioned place to the friars, but at the request of the Lady Diana, who was later to found the Monastery of Saint Agnes, he gave his assent and handed it over to them. There the friars built a house and a cloister, and by the grace of Christ they began to grow in numbers.

Meanwhile, since Master Reginald had come to Bologna and was preaching the word of God with great fervor, this Lady Diana, moved by the Holy Spirit, began to disdain the pomp and vanity of the world and to frequent the company of and speak with the Friars Preachers. As a result, when blessed Dominic came to Bologna, she began to love him with all her affection and to speak with him about the salvation of her soul. Finally, a short time later she made profession in his hands.

Encouraged by her example, many noble women and illustrious matrons of the city of Bologna, began to visit the Friars Preachers and converse with them about the salvation of their souls. As a result, the devotion of noble knights and their women relatives was awakened and they began to assist and revere the brethren.

In the meantime Diana, mindful of her vow, began to speak with blessed Dominic about how she could fulfill it. And so on a certain day, blessed Dominic called his brethren together and asked their consent to build a convent for women that would belong

to the Order in name and in fact. When the brethren had given their opinions, the blessed man himself turned to prayer, as was his custom. Some days later after the chapter prayer, he said: "Brothers, it is entirely fitting that a convent for women be built, even if the building of our own house must be put off."

When blessed Dominic was about to leave Bologna he entrusted four brothers with this task, namely Master Paul of Hungary, Guala, who later became bishop of Brescia, Ventura of Verona, who later became prior provincial, and Brother Rudolph of Faenza.

The Lady Diana resided at the home of her father in body, but not in spirit. When fear of her parents prevented her from fulfilling what she desired and had promised blessed Dominic, namely to build a monastery for women that would belong to the Order in name and in fact, on a certain day she said she wished to visit the monastery of Ronzanum. Accordingly she set out for the monastery with much show and pomp and upon arrival immediately asked for the habit and received it. When the group of women who had come with her realized this, they quickly sent a message to the city. At once a large crowd of people gathered, went to the monastery and removed her with such force that they broke one of her ribs. In this weakened condition she stayed at her father's house for nearly a year.

Holy Father Dominic was in Bologna at the time and, when he heard how injured she was, he was filled with compassion and sent her letters secretly, for her parents would not permit her to speak with anyone unless one of her relatives was present. In the midst of all this blessed Dominic died and entered eternal happiness. When Sister Diana had recovered a little, she escaped and went to the aforesaid monastery. Thereupon her desperate parents let her go. She remained in that monastery from the feast of All Saints until the week within the octave of the Ascension. While she was there, Master Jordan of happy memory, who had been provincial of Lombardy at the time, together with the brethren to whom blessed Dominic had entrusted this task, faithfully helped her to carry out her long desired plan.

Once a small house had been built, the brethren came for her and brought her and four other women of Bologna to it. This happened in the year of the Lord 1223, within the octave of the Sunday after Ascension. On the feast of the apostles Peter and Paul, they received the habit of the Order from the aforesaid father, Master Jordan.

Master Jordan of happy memory wanted four sisters to be brought from Saint Sixtus with the permission of the Supreme Pontiff to teach them the way of religious life. Thus four sisters who had made profession in the hands of the blessed Dominic and had received the habit from him came to the Monastery of Saint Agnes. They stayed with them until they died, helping them by the great vigor of their holiness. Sister Cecilia, who was one of those sisters, is still alive today.

JUNE 10

Blessed John Dominic

Friar and Bishop Optional Memorial

Blessed John was born at Florence around 1357 and received the habit at the priory of Santa Maria Novella at the age of seventeen. He assisted Blessed Raymond of Capua with the reform of the Order and became known as the "principal restorer of regular observance in Italy." Concerned about questions of faith and morality which the

humanism of his day posed for the faith, he wrote a treatise on Christian education, the *Lucula noctis*. During the Western Schism he assisted Pope Gregory XII as a counselor and then as archbishop of Ragusa and cardinal of Saint Sixtus. He played a significant role at the Council of Constance. Pope Martin V sent him on a mission to Bohemia and Hungary to deal with the Hussite heresy and while there he died at Buda on June 10, 1419.

## Second Reading

From the treatise *On the Love of Charity* of Blessed John Dominic.

"But the greatest of these is charity."

Faith and hope are at work only in the human person, but charity is at work in God. Faith can move mountains; charity creates the mountains, the heavens and the earth. Faith urges a creature, as one who is capable of loving, to make every effort to attain paradise. Charity entreats God, who is aflame with love, to descend to earth to enable humankind to reach heaven by means of God's own charity.

[ Faith says to humanity: Serve God as is fitting. Charity says: O God, take on human flesh and serve humanity, which is in your debt beyond what it possesses. Faith says to humanity: Strike the heavens and open them for yourself. Charity says: O God, break the heavens so that humanity may find them open. Faith teaches us to die for love of God; charity invites God to die for us and invites us to die for our God. Faith reveals God from a distance; charity brings humanity to God, for charity made God take on human flesh and makes humanity take on divinity. ]

Faith may be compared to a noble lady who only reigns here where we have no abiding city, but who looks for one in the future; charity is empress of heaven and earth. Faith is an inhabitant of the country; charity is a city dweller. Faith rules over a multitude of lowly creatures; charity commands the angels. Faith is above its servants; charity is above its beloved children and the saints.

Give this some thought. If a world such as ours were located in the sun, how would this world be lighted, warmed, gladdened and governed? It certainly would not be by the sun's rays, but only by its essence, since the sun would include the entire world in its essence. But the sun does not light, warm, gladden or govern our world by itself, since it cannot come to us of itself, but by means of its rays which it sends us. The reason why the sun produces such effects by its rays is that it cannot come to us directly.

Consider how much more this is true of God. The Father, like the sun, produces his ray. This is the Word, eternal and essential. The Father and the Word, like the sun and its ray, produce the essential warmth, who is the Holy Spirit. Hence this divine sun is power, light and fire; Father, Son and Holy Spirit; power, truth and charity; one God and three persons. And this divine sun is all-powerful, all-enlightening and all-burning – not three powers, but one power; not three lights, but one light; not three fires, but one fire.

Nevertheless, a doubt may arise here. Since we said that we are all in (god and that God is charity, from this it would appear that we are all in charity, and so are all in truth and in that true power. This is false because few are in charity, while many are in error and falsehood and a rather large number are weak and frail.

Let me respond first of all by giving some examples. There are many fish in the sunlight, but, since they are covered by water, they receive no warmth. There are many

blind persons who walk in light, but do not see. There are many vessels which contain food, but they do not eat. Hence it is not enough simply to be in a place to share in the inherent power of that place; a proper receptivity is necessary. A sick person may eat without deriving benefit from the food; a dead person may be placed in a fire, but does not feel its warmth. A person standing in the sunlight who is continually showered with cold water will not get warm and will always be shivering.

And so, although we may be in the divine fire, which does not warm the body but the soul, we do not benefit from this divine fire, if we continue to pour the hail of the flesh, the ice of the world, and the wind of temptation on our souls. From what has been said it is necessary to keep the soul apart from these things, lest anyone remain hidden from its warmth, as the psalmist says.

#### Alternative Second Reading

From the treatise of Blessed John Dominic **On the Binding Force of the Constitutions of the Order of Preachers.**

*"By the profession formula we make our promises to God, to Blessed Mary and to Saint Dominic who are given as a pledge of our faithfulness."*

To the question "Whether the Constitutions of the Friars Preachers bind those making profession" we must undoubtedly say "yes." This is evident from the text itself which gives ordinations and commands and enjoins and prohibits certain things, but we also know this from reason.

Indeed, in the prologue to the Constitutions we read: "We do not wish these constitutions to bind under sin, but only under the penalty, except in cases of a formal precept or of contempt." In general a person is bound to what concerns one's own well-being and fair treatment, rather than that of one's neighbor.

My question is: "What is implied by profession, first of all, when the formula reads: "I promise obedience to God?" It will not mean, will it, "I promise obedience to God and the other saints who are mentioned, according to the Rule and Constitutions," or simply "I am obligated anew to obey God?" In the first interpretation one places a limiting law on God, that is, it implies that God cannot demand anything except what is written in the Constitutions. In the second interpretation a person is bound by vow to keep the Rule and Constitutions. The first is nonsense; the second is frightening and too heavy an obligation.

Whatever may be thought of the obedience promised to God by profession, what shall we say of making profession to the glorious Virgin, when we say "and to blessed Mary?" If this phrase refers to past or future commands of hers, it is impossible to know to what it pertains.

Finally, the formula adds: "and to Saint Dominic." Would that we might believe that we are professing to follow the wishes of our Blessed Father Dominic as expressed in his life and words! Then the far-flung Order of Dominic would flower with roses and lilies, with violets and crocuses. Then would the Order give off a sweet fragrance like that of cinnamon and balsam, continually sending up from the desert a column of smoke from the crushed trains of myrrh and incense, that is, the lives of its members.

Therefore, let us say that by the profession formula these three persons are offered as surety for the promise and given as added witnesses or guarantors to the one receiving the

profession, as was the practice in spiritual contracts in the Old and New Testaments. It is a violation and negation of profession if, after calling these three to witness, one does not keep what was promised; rather it calls down their judgment upon such a person.

See how significant it is that one about to make profession of the three vows with friends close at hand, only calls upon these three – God, the Blessed Mary and Saint Dominic, and not Saint Augustine, according to whose Rule one makes profession in the first place. As regards poverty, we know that Saint Augustine was not without possessions; as far as chastity is concerned, he was not chaste before his baptism for he had a son Adeodatus by a concubine; and as regards obedience, he was not a subordinate, but a prelate in charge of others.

[ The three to whom the promises are made were remarkable in keeping the three vows.

This is evident from the fact that, as far as poverty is concerned, the Man-God had nowhere to lay his head; as regards chastity, he was a virgin, born of a virgin; as regards obedience, he came not to do his own will but the will of his Father.

Regarding the second witness, Mary, the following should be noted. As a young child and in her youth she submitted to the teaching of the high priest, an evidence of her obedience; she did not know man, but was always free of man's bed, a testimony to her chastity; and she loved poverty so much that she did not have the means to purchase a lamb as an offering for her Son, although she had a short time before been given gifts by the Magi.

The third witness, Blessed Dominic, is a shining example of profound poverty. He preserved his virginity into old age. Such was his progress in obedience and his fervent love for it that, although filled with wisdom and the Holy Spirit, he was unwilling to write a rule. Instead he chose one already written in order to obey before he was obeyed. He was always renouncing the leadership of the Order for he was eager to be subject to his brethren through the saving good of obedience. ]

JUNE 12

Blessed Stephen Bandelli

Friar and Priest

Blessed Stephen was born at Castelnuovo in Scrivia, Italy, in 1369 and received the habit at Piacenza. He taught philosophy and theology at the University of Pavia, but was especially known for his preaching and his ability as a confessor. So fiery was his preaching that people acclaimed him another Saint Paul. He died at Saluzzo on June 11, 1450.

JUNE 18

Blessed Osanna of Mantua

Lay Dominican and Virgin

Blessed Osanna Andreassi was born at Mantua in 1449 and received the habit of the Sisters of Penance of Saint Dominic as a young girl. With great wisdom she blended the practice of good works and the pursuit of secular occupations with a life of contemplation. She enjoyed many extraordinary mystical graces during her life and many came to her for advice and consolation. She died on June 18, 1505.

JUNE 20

Blessed Margaret Ebner  
Nun and Virgin

Blessed Margaret Ebner was born in 1291 at Donauworth in Bavaria and made her profession at the Dominican Monastery of Maria Medingen in 1306. By her own account her true conversion to God began in 1311 when she was twenty years old. Soon after she became, seriously ill and was bedridden for nearly thirteen years. These years of suffering and prayer brought her to the heights of contemplative union with God. She became one of the more prominent of the Rhineland mystics, known to both John Tauler and Henry Suso. She left an account of her mystical experiences in her **Spiritual Journal** (Revelationes) and wrote a treatise on the Lord's Prayer. She died on June 20, 1351.

JUNE 23

Blessed Innocent V  
Friar and Pope

Peter of Tarentaise was born in Savoy around 1224 and as a young man entered the Order at Lyons. He was sent to study at Paris where he took the master's degree and was given a chair at the university. Together with Saint Thomas Aquinas, Saint Albert the Great, and two other Dominicans he was commissioned by the General Chapter of 1259 to draw up the first plan of studies for the Order. In 1272 he was named archbishop of Lyons and created Cardinal Bishop of Ostia. He was one of the outstanding figures at the Council of Lyons where he labored for the restoration of unity between the churches of East and West. In 1276 Peter was elected Pope and took the name Innocent. He died within five months of his election on June 22, 1276.

## JULY

JULY 7

Blessed Benedict XI  
Friar and Pope

Nicholas Boccasini was born at Treviso, Italy, in 1240 and entered the Order as a young man. He was renowned for both his great compassion and his love for the common life. He served as provincial of Lombardy and was elected the ninth Master of the Order in 1296. His administrative skills were noted by Pope Boniface VIII who appointed him a cardinal. Nicholas stood by the pope when he was ill-treated by Nogaret, the ambassador of the French King, Philip the Fair. In 1303 Nicholas himself was elected pope and took the name Benedict. In the nine months of his pontificate he made a great effort to bring peace to England and Germany and to reconcile France with the Papacy. He died suddenly at Perugia on July 7, 1304.

JULY 8

Blessed Adrian Fortescue  
Lay Dominican, Husband and Martyr

Sir Adrian Fortescue was born in 1476 in Devonshire, England, of a family closely related to Anne Boleyn. He was a husband and father of outstanding virtue, a justice of the peace for the county of Oxford and a professed member of the Lay Fraternity of Saint Dominic at Oxford. He led an ascetic life and tried to follow God's will in all things, daily seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit. After King Henry VIII broke with Rome, Sir Adrian observed the obligations of his religion and served the king as faithfully as he could. Although arrested in 1534, no charge was made, nor was any reason given for his subsequent release. In 1539 he was again arrested and placed in the Tower. The sentence of death was passed upon him and he was beheaded on July 8 or 9, 1539.

## JULY 9

Saint John of Cologne,

Friar and Priest and Companions, Martyrs Memorial

John Heer was born in Cologne, Germany, at the beginning of the sixteenth century and entered the Order in his native city. He was sent to Holland where he served as parish priest at Hoornaer. In 1572 the Calvinist forces took the city of Gorcum and imprisoned its Catholic clergy. Saint John learned of their plight and went to minister to them, but was himself captured. For several days their captors treated the prisoners with incredible cruelty. They were then taken to Briel, Holland, where they were offered their freedom if they would deny the primacy of the pope and abandon the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist. This they refused to do. Saint John and his companions were hanged on the night of July 8-9, 1572.

## Second Reading

From the letter of Blessed Humbert of Romans **On Regular Observance.**

*"On patience."*

Arm yourselves with that patience which performs so many wonders in the saints. Even before the battle has begun victory is assured, for patience lives on the world's bitterness and takes delight in hardships. *The apostles rejoiced that they had been found worthy to suffer dishonor for the name of Christ.*

If we think about it, we will see that *the sufferings of this present time are as nothing compared* with the greatness of Christ's sufferings, with the seriousness of our sins, with the horror of everlasting torment and with the rewards of heaven.

Our early brethren, too, *rejoiced over the days of humiliation and the years of trial* that the Lord gave them. The example of Saint Dominic is particularly striking: he would travel through places where he knew that assassins were lying in wait singing joyfully all the while, and he preferred preaching in Carcassonne rather than Toulouse because he was honored in Toulouse and insulted in Carcassonne.

Does not Job give us an example of patience as well? *For me there is no calm, no peace, no rest.* To be sure, he kept his reserve to the extent that he gave no sign of impatience; he kept silent for fear of letting slip some harsh or immoderate word; he mastered the thoughts of his heart so as to maintain his soul in interior peace.

Patience is a diamond: by it the soul resists every adversity. It is a remedy: it heals every wound. It is a shield: it protects against every attack. No one will ever be able to hurt us if we have begun to take up combat against ourselves interiorly.

How well he knew the fruit of trial – our Father Dominic who gave a reward to the people who used to insult him!

Holy Scripture helps us to see the fruit of patience when it shows us the three young men in the furnace; the fire devoured their bonds but was unable to touch them.

Building skill teaches us the same lesson, for the stone that is destined for a place of honor is cut, sculpted and set in place. And so it is with us. We are put to the test in this world that we may be set in place in the heavenly temple, where the sound of the chisel will no longer be heard. For joy comes after the sadness which we now bear for the payment of past debts, for the perfecting of grace and for the increase of our eternal glory. O labor! O sorrow! O blessed tears that the hands of the Almighty will wipe away from the eyes of the afflicted.

Jesus has said that the kingdom of heaven belongs to those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness. since there are two aspects of persecution – the crime and the punishment, it is better to be the victim than a persecutor, for the persecutor can only hold title to his crime while the victim receives eternal glory.

#### Alternative Second Reading

From the **Exhortation to Martyrdom** of Origen.

*"They shared in the sufferings of Christ; they will also share in his consolation."*

If we have *passed from death to life* in passing from unbelief to faith, let us not be surprised *if the world hates us*. No one who has not *passed from death to life*, but still remains in death, can love them that have passed from the gloomy dwelling of death, so to speak, to the dwellings *built of living stones* and flooded with *the light of life*.

Jesus *laid down his life for us*, therefore, let us *lay down our lives*: I shall not say for him, but for ourselves, and I should think for all who will be edified by our martyrdom.

The time has come for us Christians to glory in ourselves, for it is written: *We even boast of our afflictions, knowing that affliction produces endurance, and endurance proven character, and proven character hope. And hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit.*

*As Christ's sufferings overflow to us, so through Christ does our encouragement overflow.* Let us eagerly welcome the sufferings Christ incurred for us; and let them overflow in us, if we truly strive for the overflowing encouragement with which all who weep shall be consoled, though not perhaps in equal measure. For if encouragement were given in equal measure to all, it would not be written: *As you share in the sufferings of Christ, you also share in the encouragement.*

They who *share in the sufferings* will be sharers *in the encouragement also*, according to the measure of the sufferings which they share with Christ. This you also learn from him who says with entire confidence: *we know that as you share in the sufferings, you also share in the encouragement.*

Furthermore, God says by the Prophet: *In an acceptable time I heard you, and on the day of salvation I helped you.* What time could be more acceptable than when, because of our piety towards God in Christ, we make our solemn entry in this world surrounded by a guard and, when we are led out, more like triumphant conquerors than conquered? For martyrs in Christ despoil with him *the principalities and the powers* and triumph with him, by sharing in his sufferings and the great deeds accomplished in his sufferings. What

other day could be for us such a day of salvation as the day of so glorious a departure from here below?

I beg you: *Cause no one to stumble in anything, in order that no fault may be found with our ministry; on the contrary, in everything we commend ourselves as ministers of God, through much endurance, saying, for what am I to hope? Is it not for the Lord?*

JULY 13

Blessed James of Varazze

Friar and Bishop

Blessed James was born at Varazze, near Genoa, Italy, about the year 1226 and entered the Order in Genoa. He taught theology and scripture in various houses of the Order and held several positions of responsibility, including that of provincial of Lombardy. He is best known for his collection of the lives of the saints, entitled **The Golden Legend**, a work which had a significant influence on Western spirituality. After refusing to accept his election as Archbishop of Genoa in 1288, Pope Nicholas IV made him accept it in 1292 when he was again elected to the same position. He died on July 13, 1298.

JULY 17

Blessed Ceslaus of Poland

Friar and Priest Optional Memorial

Blessed Ceslaus was born in upper Silesia (Poland) about the year 1180. Ordained a priest in Krakow, he became the dean of the canons at Sandomierz. In 1221 while accompanying his bishop to Rome, he met Saint Dominic who received him into the Order along with Saint Hyacinth. The General Chapter of 1221 sent him and several other friars to evangelize Eastern Europe. He was instrumental in establishing the Province of Poland and particularly the priory at Wroclaw (Breslau). He died there on July 15, 1242

Second Reading

From the **Life of Blessed Ceslaus, Patron of Poland.**

*"By word and example he taught the knowledge of salvation."*

By God's favor Silesia was specially blessed with the renowned confessor Ceslaus. This country could have been offered no gift more pleasing, more useful, more God-like. As the sun is said to rise from the ocean, so did Ceslaus rise up from Poland to shed his light not only on Wroclaw (Breslau), but on all of Silesia. He emerged like a brilliant heavenly light. By his untarnished and God-like life he drew those considered hopeless to noble and upright conduct; by his exhortation he encouraged good and temperate persons; by his prayers he greatly assisted Wroclaw (Breslau).

Any virtue, any proven good work, any heavenly grace ever seen in a religious person – every one of them appeared in Ceslaus, a man truly worthy of honor. Daily Almighty God continues to single him out more and more by wondrous signs.

Ceslaus, a remarkable model of all virtues, came to Wroclaw (Breslau) and by his own nobility of life and holy preaching he won back from base conduct and wickedness many criminals and some very corrupt individuals. He converted many to the love of Christ and the desire of living virtuously bringing numbers of them to the Order.

He was persuasive in his manner of speaking, remarkably successful in encouraging virtuous life, and earned renown and praise for his learning and eloquence. With these gifts he successfully achieved by word and example his own salvation and that of many others. It is not surprising that he was a herald of salvation, a witness of Christ, and one who gave his allegiance to Truth, the second name of Christ. All this will be to his praise.

Around the year of the Lord 1241, when Poland and Silesia were ravaged by the fury of the Tartars, he took up his station in the famous city of Wroclaw (Breslau) and with other faithful followers of Christ powerfully defended the city from the enemy's madness by his prayers. While he was at prayer a globe of fire appeared over his head, whereupon the terrified legions of the Tartars took to flight and left the city.

As he neared death Ceslaus said to his brothers: "Do not be anxious for me, my sons. I hope God, who was once the sharp observer of my cares and is now the just and merciful judge, will be kind to me. If I have finished the course of my mortal life in praise of God, as I believe, and if I have proven myself an unbeaten wrestler in this arena, God will be near to bestow the rewards and crowns. But I am concerned about you from whom I depart in body, though not in spirit. From now on I can no longer live with you day by day; I make you heirs to my entire estate and riches. These are the goods which I bring to the heavenly treasury; the night will not rob me of them, the day will add to their store."

Even today at his venerable tomb those who are suffering various illnesses are graciously delivered by his merits when they call upon his name.

#### Alternative Second Reading

From the **Primitive Constitutions of the Order of Preachers.**

*"Our Order was instituted especially for preaching and the salvation of souls."*

Our Rule commands us to have one heart and one soul in the Lord, so it is right that we who live under a single Rule and by a single profession should be found uniform in the observance of our canonical religion, so that the unity we are to maintain inwardly in our hearts will be fostered and expressed by the uniformity of our behavior. And we shall be able to observe this more adequately and fully, and retain it in our memories, if what we have to do is stated in writing, if we all have the evidence of the written text to tell us how we ought to live, and if no one has the right to change anything or to add or remove anything at his own pleasure, to prevent us from gradually going astray by being careless about even the smallest details.

However, the superior is to have the right to dispense the brethren in his own community whenever it seems useful to him, particularly in things which seem likely to obstruct study or preaching or the good of souls, since our Order is known to have been founded initially precisely for the sake of preaching and the salvation of souls, and all our concern should be primarily and passionately directed to this all-important goal, that we should be able to be useful to the souls of our neighbors.

When those who are suitable for it are to go out to preach, they shall be given a socius by the prior, selected in view of what will, in his judgment, be most beneficial for their manners and good name. After receiving a blessing they are to go out, behaving everywhere like upright, religious men, who desire to win their own salvation and that of others, like men of the gospel, following in the footsteps of their Savior, talking either to

God or about God, within themselves or with others; they shall avoid being intimate with dubious companions.

When they set off on a journey to exercise the job of preaching, or when they are going anywhere else, they are neither to accept nor to carry gold, silver, money or gifts of any kind, except for food, clothing, necessary equipment and books.

Those who are appointed to preach or to study are to have no concern or responsibility for temporal affairs, so that they will be free to fulfill their spiritual ministry better, unless there is no one else to provide for the needs of the brethren, because it is sometimes necessary to give time to the particular needs of the day.

JULY 22

Saint Mary Magdalene

Patroness of the Order Memorial

Mary Magdalene, who was healed by the Lord Jesus, followed him with great love and ministered to him (Lk 8:3). Later when the disciples fled, Mary Magdalene stood at the cross with the Mother of the Lord, John and some of the women (Jn 19:25). On Easter morning Jesus appeared to her and sent her to announce the news of his resurrection to the disciples (Mk 16:9; Jn 20:11-18).

Her cult spread throughout the western Church, especially in the eleventh century, and flourished in the Order of Preachers. As Humbert of Romans attests: "After Magdalene was converted to penitence the Lord bestowed such great grace upon her that after the Blessed Virgin no woman could be found to whom greater reverence should be shown in this world and greater glory in heaven."

The Order of Preachers numbers her among its patrons. Its brothers and sisters of every age have honored her as the "Apostle to the Apostles" – for thus is she celebrated in the Byzantine liturgy – and have compared the mission of Magdalene in announcing the resurrection to their own mission.

Office of Readings

Second Reading

From the **Life of Saint Mary Magdalene** by Rabanus Maurus.

*"She was the evangelist of the resurrection and the apostle of the ascension."*

Mary believed in Christ, drawing her faith in him from hearing the longed-for voice of her Lord and seeing his beloved countenance. The *mustard seed*, that Jesus the good gardener had *planted in the garden* of her heart, had taken root there and *became a large bush* of steadfast faith. Undoubtedly she believed that the Christ she had seen was the Son of God, the true God, the one she had loved while he lived. He had truly risen from the dead, the one she had seen dying; he was truly equal to God the Father, the one she had sought as he lay in the tomb.

The Savior was won over by the gentle demand of the long-standing love which never ceased to burn in the heart of his dear and special friend. In the heart of this woman of faith, who had come to anoint him, he already knew for certain, since there was no secret between them, that he was soon to ascend to his Father. He made her the "apostle" to the Apostles of his ascension; he repaid this "standard bearer" with a worthy reward of grace and, first and foremost, a privilege of glory and honor in return for the many deeds of

kindness which she had bestowed on him. A short while before he had made her the "evangelist" of his resurrection, saying: *Go to my brothers and tell them: The Lord says: I am going to my Father through nature, and your Father through grace; to my God, for as a human being I am under God, and your God, since I am mediator between you and God. He said this and then vanished from before her eyes.*

This woman, who was given such a great and special dignity of honor and grace by the very Son of God, the Lord and Savior, hastened to fulfill her ministry as an apostle, her duty of honor. She went with headlong haste to the Apostles and said: "Rejoice with me, all you who love the Lord," for the one I sought appeared to me, and while I wept at the tomb I saw my Lord. He said to me: *Go to my brothers and tell them: The Lord says: I am going to my Father, who begot me before all ages, and to your Father, who adopted you as his children, to my God, for I came down from God, and to your God, for you have been lifted up.*

Mary announced to her co-apostles the good news of the resurrection of the Messiah: *I have seen the Lord*, and she prophesied the ascension: And he said to me: *I am going to my Father and to your Father.*

#### Alternative Second Reading

From the book **The Gospel of Jesus Christ**, written by our brother Marie Joseph Lagrange.

*"Mary Magdalen was consecrated to the office of Apostle to the Apostles."*

Mary Magdalen must have preceded the other women, since it was still dark when she discovered that the stone had been taken away, that is, rolled back so that the tomb was open. The guards had disappeared, but she was not surprised at that, for she did not know they had been posted there. Glancing, within she saw that the body had disappeared, but she saw no angel, for Jesus intended to tell her himself. In her extreme anxiety, fearing that the adorable body of Jesus had been profaned, she ran back and went straight to Simon Peter and the disciple whom Jesus loved. Quite beside herself she declared: *They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they laid him.* She says we, ascribing the conviction also to the women who had started out with her, but who only at that moment were arriving at the tomb.

Peter and John had returned home, as John himself informs us; but Mary Magdalen did not go back. She had been the last to leave the cross and the burial; she was the first to come back to the tomb which she had found empty. Now she could not tear herself away from it, but stayed outside and wept. After a while she determined to look again and, entering the ante-chamber of the tomb, she stooped and peered into the burial chamber as though she might have gathered some information from this fresh glance. It was then that she saw two angels clothed in white, seated one at the head and the other at the foot of the rock shelf on which the body of Jesus had been laid. They said to her: *Woman, why are you weeping?* She failed to recognize that they were angels, for would not angels have known why she was weeping? She replied: *They have taken my Lord, and I don't know where they laid him.* She does not catch sight of the burial garments, nor does she feel alarm at seeing these strangers; at present, all is emptiness and nothingness for her.

She stoops again, this time to leave the tomb and go elsewhere to seek Jesus. Then she sees him, but does not recognize him, nor does she even pay attention to him, for she is

thinking only of that beloved body which she desires to anoint with precious oil and which she fears is now in profane hands. Jesus says to her: *Woman, why are you weeping? Whom do you seek?* Under the impression that he is the gardener, someone she does not know, perhaps one who does not believe in Jesus, and that he must know what had happened to the body of her Lord and consequently ought to understand her distress, she says to him: *If you have carried him away, tell me where you laid him, and I will take him away.* It is hardly surprising that she set out to come to the tomb without giving a thought to the stone which closed it, for all her thoughts and desires are concentrated on Jesus and on him alone. Then she hears the voice that goes straight to her heart and removes the veil from her eyes, addressing her by her familiar name in her own mother tongue: *Miriam!* Straightway she returns the cry: *Rabbouni!* My Master! and Magdalen is at the feet of Jesus, still weeping, but now for very joy.

Now she is in the place where she desires to remain that she may continue to pour out her love. But this was not the time for the sinner to shed tears on the Savior's feet. Jesus now belonged to the world above, and although he had not yet ascended to his Father, that would take place before long and it was necessary that he should warn his disciples of the fact. Such appears to be the meaning of the words: *Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father. But go to my brothers and tell them: I am going to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.*

At that moment Mary Magdalen was consecrated to the office of "Apostle to the Apostles." She obeys, like those who tear themselves from conversation with their Master to announce the good news: I have seen the Lord.

JULY 24

Blessed Jane of Orvieto  
Lay Dominican and Virgin

Blessed Jane was born at Carnaiola, near Orvieto, Italy, about the year 1264 and was orphaned at an early age. She joined the sisters of the Fraternity of St. Dominic and was known for her life of prayer. She received many extraordinary spiritual favors, including the grace of experiencing physically the passion of Christ. She died on July 23, 1306.

JULY 24

Blessed Augustine of Biella  
Friar and Priest

Augustine Fangi was born at Biella in Piedmont, Italy, in 1430 and received the habit in his native city. As prior of several houses he was concerned about restoring and maintaining regular observance. He was noted for his life of prayer, his preaching, his patient endurance of suffering, and his ministry as a confessor. He died at Venice on July 22, 1493.

## AUGUST

AUGUST 2

Blessed Jane of Aza

Mother of St. Dominic and Bl. Mannes

Optional Memorial

Blessed Jane was born of the prominent d'Aza family and married Felix de Guzman. Three of their children spent their lives in the service of the Church - Anthony, Marines and Dominic. An early source describes her as "virtuous, chaste, prudent, and full of compassion for the poor and the afflicted; among all the women of the region she was outstanding for her good reputation." She died at Caleruega, Spain, at the beginning of the thirteenth century.

Office of Readings

Second Reading

From the **Chronicle of the Saints** of Rodrigo of Serrato.

*"She was full of compassion."*

Blessed Dominic, head and illustrious father of the Preachers, who shone like a new star at the end of the twelfth century, was a native of Spain, of the kingdom of Castille, from the town of Calaruega in the diocese of Osma. It was fitting that at the close of the century, when the light of this world was sinking, it was from the farthest reaches of the earth that God brought forth in the West a light that would illuminate with its beams the whole world, a world wrapped in darkness.

So God, who knows the future and desired to show the Church what the quality and grandeur of this blessed man would be, decided to manifest Dominic's future by several revelations. Before conceiving him his mother saw herself in a dream bearing in her womb a young dog; it was holding a burning torch in its mouth and, once it had emerged from her womb, it seemed to set the whole world on fire. This was the announcement that she would give birth to an eminent preacher who, with his flaming torch of eloquence, would rekindle that fire of charity which was being extinguished in the world. This proved to be true by the subsequent course of events. Dominic was able to reprove wickedness admirably, to fight against heresy and to exhort the faithful with great zeal.

His father was a venerable man, rich in worldly goods. His mother showed herself to be virtuous, chaste, prudent, full of compassion for the poor and the afflicted. Among all the women of the region she was outstanding for her good reputation.

In fact his mother was most compassionate. More or less in the period that I have mentioned, she saw the sufferings of the afflicted and, having already given extensively of her property, she exhausted it by distributing to the poor the contents of a cask full of wine, a cask which was well known to the neighborhood. As her husband was returning and approached Calaruega his neighbors came up to him and some of them told him about wine which had been given to the poor.

When he arrived at home, in the presence of these neighbors Felix asked his wife to pour him some wine from the cask in question. She with no little sense of embarrassment went down into the cellar where the cask was and falling on her knees prayed to God in these words: "Lord Jesus Christ, even if I am not worthy to be heard by reason of my merits, hear me for the sake of your servant, my son, whom I have placed at your service." For this mother knew the holiness of her son. Then rising up full of faith, she immediately went to the cask and found it full of the best wine. Giving thanks to the giver of every grace, she poured some of this wine for her husband and for the others, and it flowed in great abundance. Everyone was amazed.

### Alternative Second Reading

From the book **Mystical Questions** of our brother John Arintero.

*"God calls all to the fullness of sanctity."*

Far from desiring to skip over or exclude anyone, as some are wrongfully accustomed to assert, the Divine Wisdom bestows herself on all and, excluding no one, invites all. Indeed, she calls the great and the small, the learned and the unlearned, religious and laity, the just and sinners, as long as they give themselves to her wholeheartedly and, led by her most delightful spirit, follow her and submit themselves to her with diligence and obedience.

Indeed, in the face of such liberality we all may trust fully in the divine goodness and mercy if, truly renouncing ourselves, we trust in her with all our heart and faithfully remain with her. When any soul, mistrusting herself, her own knowledge, her ability and prudence, keeps her eyes constantly fixed on God, places herself in God's hands and expects everything from God, she is not sent away by God, nor is she deprived of full possession of God. Rather, God assumes the task of directing and governing that soul and providing for her in all things.

The Divine Wisdom herself makes us, who love her, more certain that she herself loves, and sooner or later reveals herself to all who desire her and seek her with all their heart. She is always prepared so to fill them with glory and spiritual riches as well as with justice and happiness that, leaving behind their spiritual infancy, they may enter upon the ways of mystical prudence. The Divine Wisdom herself bestows life, infuses strength, receives kindly, grants consolation, directs and fills with blessings all who truly seek her and show themselves ready to obey her.

Yet no one, no matter how lowly, despised or hateful, unlearned or boorish, or poor that person may be, may truly assert that he or she is not invited to those intimate divine communications. For God does not look at things in such a way. Rather, God calls everyone without exception to a true and full sanctity, indeed, to a sanctity as children of God who ought to be Godlike in all things. God desires to communicate intimately and wholeheartedly with all and would certainly do so, if they would consent and not erect barriers. God takes delight in everyone and would bestow a taste for those delights on all, unless they themselves set up some obstacle by resisting or by neglecting that sanctity.

Indeed it is true: all are called to taste God's consolations by ascending to God's holy mountain and by rejoicing in God's mystical house of prayer. If they truly desire it, without a doubt all can approach and refresh themselves there at God's breast and be filled to overflowing with divine gifts and soothed with embraces. Likewise, all are lovingly invited to enter into the house of learning that they may quench their thirst for truth and justice and there be taught by God. For as many as are faithful to the grace of God are taught all things by the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

[ Likewise for all the faithful, and not only for some of them, the Apostle begged the *spirit of wisdom and revelation that with the eyes of their hearts enlightened* they might recognize God *and know what is the hope of their calling, and what are the riches of the glory of God's inheritance in the saints.*

Truly, to possess lovingly this very Spirit and to be possessed in turn by this Spirit constitutes the mystical life or true supernatural contemplation. Those in fact

attain this contemplation who thirst for justice and who do not rest until they drink at that secret *river of life-giving water flowing eternally from the throne of God the and Lamb*.

Nevertheless, if this gift which is more precious than all others is sometimes not attained, it is because we do not plead for it with that same fervor and urgency with which the Apostle used to plead for it. But if we do not beg for it in such a way, it is only because of this, namely, that we do not rightly know, nor correctly appreciated it. For these are the mystical and most secret gifts of God which no one knows except the one who receives and the one who desires. One can only desire if the fire of the Holy Spirit sets that person ablaze. *If you knew the gift of God..., you would have asked him and he would have given you living water... welling up to eternal life.* To all it is fittingly said, *taste and see how good the Lord is.* ]

### AUGUST 3

Blessed Augustine Kazotic  
Friar and Bishop

Blessed Augustine was born at Trogir in Dalmatia (Yugoslavia) about 1260 and entered the Dominican Order at an early age. He completed his studies at the University of Paris and returned to his own country where he was regarded as an excellent preacher. In 1303 Blessed Benedict XI appointed him Bishop of Zagreb where he successfully restored order in the aftermath of the Tartars. In 1317 he was transferred to the See of Lucera, where he labored to restore peace after the Moslem withdrawal and completely reformed the diocese. He died there on August 3, 1323.

### AUGUST 8

Our Holy Father Dominic Priest Solemnity

Dominic de Guzman was born at Caleruega, Spain, around 1172-1173. After completing his studies at Palencia, he was ordained a priest and became a Canon Regular in the Cathedral Chapter of Osma. While on a diplomatic mission with his bishop, Diego d'Azevedo, he experienced first hand the Albigensian heresy which was at that time widespread in southern France. From that time on he determined to dedicate his life to the ministry of preaching and to live a life of simplicity. Eventually he was supported in his work by a monastery of nuns at Prouille which he had directed from its foundation in 1206.

Convinced of the need for a group of trained preachers who would spread the truth of the gospel by their preaching and teaching and would live in apostolic poverty, in 1215 at Toulouse Dominic organized his fellow preachers into a new religious Order which was formally approved by Pope Honorius III on December 22, 1216. His own love of prayer and study, his zeal for the salvation of souls, and his belief in apostolic poverty became the foundation stones of his Order. On August 15, 1217, he dispersed this small band throughout Europe and from such beginnings the Order grew.

It was said of Saint Dominic that "he either spoke with God or about God." He died at Bologna on August 6, 1221.

Second Reading

From the Libellus: **On the Beginnings of the Order of Preachers** of Blessed Jordan of Saxony.

*"Concerning the habits of Master Dominic."*

Far more impressive and splendid than all Dominic's miracles were the exceptional integrity of his character and the extraordinary energy of divine zeal which carried him along; these proved beyond all doubt that he was a vessel of honor and grace, adorned with every kind of "precious stone." His mind was always steady and calm, except when he was stirred by a feeling of compassion and mercy; and, since a happy heart makes for a cheerful face, the tranquil composure of the inner man was revealed outwardly by the kindness and cheerfulness of his expression. He never allowed himself to become angry. In every reasonable purpose which his mind conceived, in accordance with God's will, he maintained such constancy that he hardly ever, if ever, consented to change any plan which he had formulated with due deliberation. And though, as has been said, his face was always radiant with a cheerfulness which revealed the good conscience he bore within him, "the light of his face never fell to the ground." By his cheerfulness he easily won the love of everybody. Without difficulty he found his way into people's hearts as soon as they saw him.

Wherever he went, whether he was on the road with his companions or in some house, with his host and the rest of the household, or among important people and rulers and prelates, he always overflowed with inspiring words. He had an abundant supply of edifying stories, with which he directed people's minds to the love of Christ and to contempt for the world. Everywhere, in word and in deed, he showed himself to be a man of the gospel.

During the daytime nobody was more sociable and happy with his brethren and companions, but at night nobody was more thoroughly dedicated to keeping vigil and to prayer. "Tears waited for him at night, but joy in the morning." The day he gave to his neighbors, the night he gave to God, knowing that "by day the Lord sends his mercy, and by night he gives songs of praise."

He used to weep plenteously and frequently, and "his tears were his bread by day and night," by day especially when he celebrated his daily Mass, and by night especially when he kept watch in his uniquely unwearying vigils.

It was his very frequent habit to spend the whole night in church, so that he hardly ever seemed to have any fixed bed of his own to sleep in. He used to pray and keep vigil at night to the very limit of what he could force his frail body to endure. When at last weariness overtook him and his spirit succumbed, so that he had to sleep for a while, he rested briefly before the altar or absolutely anywhere, sometimes even leaning his head against a stone, like the patriarch Jacob. But then he would soon be awake again, rallying his spirit to resume his fervent prayer.

Everybody was enfolded in the wide embrace of his charity, and since he loved everyone, everyone loved him. He made it his own business to rejoice with those who were rejoicing and to weep with those who wept. He was full of affection and gave himself utterly to caring for his neighbors and to showing sympathy for the unfortunate.

Another thing which made him so attractive to everybody was his straightforwardness; there was never a hint of guile or duplicity in anything he said or did.

He was a true lover of poverty, and he always wore cheap clothes. He confined himself to a very modest allowance of food and drink, avoiding all luxuries. He was quite content with very simple food, so firm was his bodily self-control, and he drank wine so austere diluted that, though it satisfied his bodily needs, it never blunted his fine sensitive spirit.

[ Who could ever hope to imitate the virtues of this man? We can however admire them, and weigh up the slackness of our own generation against his example. To be able to do what he did requires more than human strength, it presupposes a particular grace, which he alone had, unless perhaps God in his merciful kindness deigns to bring anyone else to a similar peak of holiness. But who is there who would be ready for such a gift? But still, brethren, let us follow in our father's footsteps to the best of our ability, and let us also give thanks to our Redeemer, who has granted to his servants such a remarkable man to lead us along the path we are walking, giving us new birth through him into the clear light of this way of life. And let us entreat the Father of mercies that we may be directed by the Spirit who leads God's children, so that, following the path marked out by our fathers, we may attain to that same goal of eternal happiness and everlasting bliss to which he has already happily come, and that we may never turn aside from the right way.]

#### Alternative Second Reading

From **The Nine Ways of Prayer** of Saint Dominic

*"Concerning the prayer of our Holy Father Dominic"*

The first way of prayer is bowing humbly before the altar as if Christ, whom the altar signifies, were really and personally present and not just symbolically. As it says, "The prayer of the man who humbles himself pierces the clouds." He used sometimes to say to the brethren the text from Judith, "The prayer of the humble and meek has always been pleasing to you." It was by humility that the Canaanite woman obtained what she wanted, and so did the prodigal son. Also, "I am not worthy to have you come under my roof." "Lord, humble my spirit deeply because, Lord, I am utterly humbled before you." So the holy father, standing with his body erect, would bow his head and his heart humbly before Christ his Head, considering his own servile condition and the outstanding nobility of Christ, and giving himself up entirely to venerating Him.

He taught the brethren to do this whenever they passed before a crucifix showing the humiliation of Christ, so that Christ, who was so greatly humbled for us, should see us humbled before his greatness. Similarly he told the brethren to humble themselves like this before the whole Trinity whenever the "Glory be to the Father" was recited solemnly.

After this, St. Dominic, standing before the altar or in the Chapter Room, would fix his gaze on the Crucifix, looking intently at Christ on the cross and kneeling down over and over again, a hundred times perhaps; sometimes he would even spend the whole time from after Compline till midnight getting up and kneeling down again, like the apostle James, and like the leper in the gospel who knelt down and said, "Lord, if you will, you can make me clean," and like Stephen who knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." And a great confidence would grow in our holy father Dominic, confidence in God's mercy for himself and for all sinners, and for the protection of the novices whom he used to send out all over the place to preach to souls. And sometimes he could not contain his voice, but the brethren would hear him saying,

"To you, Lord, I will cry, do not turn away from me in silence, lest in your silence I become like those who go down into the pit," and other such words from sacred scripture.

At other times, however, he spoke in his heart and his voice was not heard at all, and he would remain quietly on his knees, his mind caught up in wonder, and this sometimes lasted a long time. Sometimes it seemed from the very way he looked that he had penetrated heaven in his mind, and then he would suddenly appear radiant with joy, wiping away the abundant tears running down his face. At such times he would come to be in an intensity of desire, like a thirsty man coming to a spring of water, or a traveler at last approaching his homeland. Then he would grow more forceful and insistent, and his movements would display great composure and agility as he stood up and kneeled down.

He was so accustomed to genuflecting that, when he was on a journey, both in a hostel, after the toils of the road, and on the road itself, while the others were sleeping or resting, he would return to his genuflexions as to his own special art and his own personal service. This way of prayer he taught more by the example of his practice than by what he said.

#### Alternative Second Reading

From a sermon of our brother Girolamo Savonarola for the feast of Saint Dominic.

*"He became total charity and wisdom."*

Behold a great priest! During his lifetime he repaired the house of God and in his days he reinforced the temple. This text refers to Blessed Dominic whose feast we celebrate today and who together with Blessed Francis renewed the Church that was falling into ruin.

Behold a great priest. [Brothers,] note the words and mark the mysteries. There are many priests yet few priests. Alas, though some priests are good, not all are great. A priest ought to enlighten the people, for a priest's task is to preach. Therefore, how can there be a priest who does not know how to enlighten? And what of him who is not enlightened? What of him who is evil!

Blessed Dominic was holy and learned in doctrine. But someone may say: "I learn thoroughly that I may preach in a holy manner." Today, because the office of preaching is an office held in great honor, our priests all desire to preach and they study sermon books and other subjects to edify all the people by their speaking. I may accomplish some good in the Church. But what follows? *During his lifetime he repaired the house of God*, that is, during the temporal course of his life. The life of a sinner is not a life but a death. Say therefore, "during his holy life," that is, through his life and good example.

Beseech, beseech the Lord to send good and holy priests who will repair the house, that is, the whole Church which is on the verge of a great fall.

*And in his days he reinforced the temple and he made the foundation of the temple firm.*

The foundation of this temple is the state of perfection of some who are in the clerical state, that is, religious. Now a bishop ought to be perfect because he is in a perfect state of life. However, religious are in the state of perfection insofar as they take vows and oblige themselves to those things which lead to the perfection of life. We of the Order of Preachers are also numbered among the religious. How perfect the preachers should be you may learn from these words of scripture: *The walls of the temple are lofty*. I [Brothers,] should we not in any art consider the name of the art and be ashamed, if the

one who practices that art not live up to its name; for example, if a soldier be timid, if he should flee the battle. Therefore take heed of the name you bear.

*He attained glory in his dealings with the people.* It is said of Blessed Dominic that in his relations with others he always showed a joyful and gracious spirit, hence all loved him with great affection. He desired to place his religious houses in the cities and to have contact with people so that he might be of profit to all. Hence he spent the day with his neighbor and the night he gave to God. He preached that love which enlarges the heart and makes all things easy. *Broad indeed is your command; I run in the way of your commands, for you have given me freedom of heart.* When someone asked him where one might find such beautiful expositions of doctrine he replied, "In the book of charity."

And you, [O brothers,] you desire to learn the scriptures, you desire to preach. Hold to charity and she will teach you. Hold to charity and you will understand charity. Since Blessed Dominic was totally given to charity toward his neighbor that by prayer, preaching and example he might draw his neighbor to eternal life, to this end he offered himself as an oblation to God in an odor of sweetness. Therefore the text continues: *like fire and incense in the censer*, that is, of the Holy Spirit and of charity toward neighbor and of tribulations, all of which ascended in the presence of God as a most sweet odor. And finally he became total charity and wisdom, and totally equipped with all virtues.

#### AUGUST 9

Blessed John of Salerno

Friar and Priest

Blessed John was born in Salerno, Italy, around 1190 and was ordained a priest. While pursuing studies at the University of Bologna he was attracted to the Order by the preaching of Blessed Reginald. Saint Dominic himself received him and then sent him to Florence to establish the priory of Santa Maria Novella. He also established a monastery of Dominican nuns at the nearby city of Ripoli. He was an eloquent preacher and Pope Gregory IX commissioned him to deal with the heretical sect known as the Patarines. He died at Florence in 1242.

#### AUGUST 14

Blessed Aimo Taparelli

Friar and Priest

Blessed Aimo of the noble Taparelli family was born at Savigliano in Piedmont, Italy, in 1395. He had been married before entering the Order and upon his reception was sent to study at the University of Turin where he later taught. Much of his life was devoted to preaching and in 1466 he was appointed inquisitor for Liguria and Lombardy, replacing Blessed Bartholomew Cerverio who had been martyred. For more than thirty years he carried out this difficult task with courage and skill. He died at Savigliano on August 15, 1495, in his one-hundredth year.

#### AUGUST 15

Assumption Solemnity

Office of Readings    Second Reading

From a homily of Saint John Damascene.

*"You have prepared a robe of immortality for us."*

Long ago God drove the first mortal ancestors of our race out of the paradise of Eden, for they had plunged themselves into unrestrained disobedience. With the eye of their mind closed by the intoxication of their transgression, they were so overcome by the drunkenness of sin that, after stifling the faculties of their soul, they were held fast in a death-dealing sleep. Should paradise not now welcome this woman who has conquered the attack of every vice, who has produced the fruit of obedience to our God and Father, and who has begun life again for the whole human race? Truly, how could death ever swallow up this most blessed woman, who by the power of God joined the complete person of the Word of God with herself? How could the lower world receive her as a citizen? For since Christ, who is the way and the truth, said, *where I am, there also my servant will be*, why is it not all the more true to say that his own mother should have a dwelling-place with him? Precious indeed is the death of the saints of the Lord God of hosts; but more precious still is the departure of the Mother of God from this life.

Then truly Adam and Eve, the authors of our human race, loudly exclaimed with exultant lips, "Blessed are you, daughter, who endured for us the penalties of the broken commandment. After receiving a mortal body from us, you prepared a robe of immortality for us. While you accepted your origin from us, you ransomed us to restore all things for us. By your return to heaven you have called us back to our ancient home. We closed the doors of paradise, but you opened the way to it again by the wood of life. Through us joy was turned to sadness; but through you a greater joy returned from this sadness. How, O Immaculate One, did you inflict punishment on death? You are the bridge of life and the stairway to heaven; death will now be the bridge to immortality."

And that she might not veer from the truth, she herself affirmed, "Into your hands, O Son, I commend my spirit. Therefore accept this soul so dear to you which you kept free from sin. To you and not to the earth I commit my body. Take me to yourself that where you are, offspring of my womb, there also I may have my dwelling-place with you. I hasten to you, who often came to me while we remained on this earth."

After she had said this, she in turn heard these words, "Come to my rest, blessed Mother mine. Rise, come my beloved one, most beautiful of women. For behold, the winter is past. You are all beautiful, my beloved, and there is no stain in you. The fragrance of your ointments is better than all perfumes."

AUGUST 17

Saint Hyacinth of Poland

Friar and Priest            Memorial

Saint Hyacinth (Jacek) was born near Wroclaw (Breslau) in Upper Silesia, Poland, around 1185. He was ordained and became a canon of the cathedral of Krakow. On a journey to Rome in 1220 he was attracted to the Order by the holiness and preaching of Saint Dominic. In 1221 he was sent with Henry of Moravia to establish the Order in Poland. The priory of Krakow was established in 1222 and the Province of Poland in 1225. St. Hyacinth labored many years in this region and established priories at Gdarisk

and at Kiel. Like so many saints of the Order he was devoted to Mary, the Mother of God. He died in Krakow on August 15, 1257.

### Second Reading

From the Life of Saint Hyacinth

*"A new light has arisen for Poland"*

*The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.* In the beginning the maker of the universe created heaven and earth and left darkness on the face of the deep. To illuminate the darkness God said: *Let there be light, and there was light.* With light God illumined the cosmos. Just as God brought light into the darkness of the world, so through Blessed Jacek, who was like a shining ray of sun in Poland, God routed the darkness of sinners and with the light of faith illumined the hearts of the Polish people. Now has been accomplished what Isaiah prophesied long ago: *The people*, that is those on the borders of Poland, *have seen a great light*, that is, Saint Jacek, preacher of the doctrine of light.

When the light of day dawns, illness is alleviated, people stir from sleep, birds begin to chirp, beasts leave their lairs; likewise when Saint Jacek was sent to Poland by Blessed Dominic, the Polish people were freed from their vices, aroused from their negligence, encouraged to consider things of heaven, and set free from the power of demons. A new light seemed to arise for the Polish people, bringing joy, honor and festivity for all.

I, Brother Stanislaus, youngest lector of the Friars Preachers in Krakow, know about this light, that is, Saint Jacek. When I myself heard stories from our forebears, stories worthy of belief from those who knew Saint Jacek and lived with him, I carefully wrote down what they said in a brief and simple style for the honor of God both Three and One, who established all the saints and adorned them with inexpressible light.

May Christ himself, the King of glory, who is the splendor of the Father and figure of his substance, through the protection of Saint Jacek, prosper my work, for with the Father and the Holy Spirit he lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

Jacek is the common form for the name "Hyacinth". Literally understood, "Hyacinth" is said to derive from the hyacinth flower or hyacinth stone and thus its meaning has two interpretations.

In the first place he is called "Hyacinth", because the flower has a stalk with a crimson blossom: this suits Blessed Jacek well for he was a simple stalk in his docility of heart, a flower in his chastity, a crimson blossom in his vow of poverty and lack of material goods.

Secondly, he is called "Hyacinth" from the hyacinth stone, for he shines brilliantly in the way he handed on the teaching of the gospel, was resplendent in his holy way of life, and most steadfast in spreading the catholic faith. For these reasons his name has spread abroad.

### Alternative Second Reading

From an encyclical letter of Blessed Humbert of Romans, Master of the Order, sent to the Order from the General Chapter.

*"Woe to us if we wander from the footsteps of the apostles."*

I make known to your charity that, among the numerous desires raised up in my heart by the charge that I have received, there is one that is of special urgency: it is that by the ministry of our Order schismatic Christians may be called back to the unity of the Church and that the name of our Lord Jesus may be carried to the Jews, the Saracens, the pagans, the barbarians and all the nations, so that we may be witnesses of Christ and the cause of salvation for all *even to the ends of the earth*.

But there are two obstacles that would hinder this.

The first is a failure to know foreign languages. Hardly any brother agrees to give himself to their study, and many prefer to probe into all sorts of curiosities rather than learn something of real use.

The second is love of one's homeland. The sweetness of this love has embraced many whose nature has not yet been transformed by grace, to the extent that they do not wish to leave *their country or their family* nor to forget their nation. Instead, they want to live and die in the midst of their relatives and friends, and they are not at all concerned that among the unbaptized the Savior has not been found even by his own mother.

Wake up, brothers called by God, and see whether there are examples from the Apostles of such a thing. Were they not all Galileans? And who of them stayed in Galilee? Did not one go off to India, another to Ethiopia, others to Asia and Achaia? And did not all of them, scattered about in distant lands, produce the fruit that we still see in our world? What if someone says, "These are great things, but we are too weak to be able to imitate them?" Woe to us, if we want to be preachers and do not follow in the footsteps of such preachers! Furthermore, did our earliest brethren speak in those terms, the men whom our holy father the blessed Dominic sent throughout the world, novices as well as others? Let not such a base thought dwell in our hearts, we who are chosen by God! But, attentive to the call of our profession and to the glorious reward of a prompt obedience, let us lay ourselves open to whatever assists the salvation of souls and the spread of the glory of the Savior!

If a brother, under the inspiration of God's grace and according to the will of his superior, fords his heart ready to learn Arabic, Hebrew, Greek or any other language from which some good may result in apostolic labor at an opportune moment; or if a brother finds himself disposed to leave the boundaries of his own country to enter the Province of the Holy Land or that of Greece, or one of the others that border on the lands of the infidel, and which need brothers who would be ready to endure a great deal for the Order, for the faith, for the salvation of souls and for the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, I beg and exhort him not to fail to write to me and tell me what he thinks about this.

I confide each one of you to the kindness of the Savior and his most glorious Mother, our advocate, whose protection has most certainly helped our Order particularly in these days and been of great use to it.

Given at Milan, at the General Chapter in the year 1255.

AUGUST 18

Blessed Mannes

Friar, Priest and Brother of St. Dominic      Optional Memorial

Blessed Mannes, an older brother of Saint Dominic, was born at Caleruega, Spain, about 1170. He was among his younger brother's first followers and later assisted in

establishing the priory of Saint-Jacques at Paris in 1217. In 1219 he was entrusted with the care of the Dominican nuns at Madrid. According to an early source he was "a contemplative and holy man, meek and humble, joyful and kind, and a zealous preacher." He died at the Cistercian monastery of San Pedro at Garniel d'Izan near Caleruega about the year 1235.

#### Office of Readings

##### Second Reading

From a letter of our Holy Father Dominic to the nuns of Madrid.

*"Mannes has worked so hard to bring you to this holy state of life."*

Brother Dominic, Master of the Preachers, to the dear prioress of Madrid and all the nuns in the community, greetings. May you progress every day!

I am delighted at the fervor with which you follow your holy way of life, and thank God for it. God has indeed freed you from the squalor of this world.

Fight the good fight, my daughters, against our ancient foe, fight him insistently with fasting, because no one will win the crown of victory without engaging in the contest in the proper way. Until now you had no place where you could practice your religious life, but now you can no longer offer that excuse. By the grace of God, you have buildings that are quite suitable enough for religious observance.

From now on I want you to keep the silence in the prescribed places, namely, the refectory, the dormitory and the oratory, and to observe your Rule fully in everything else too. Let none of the sisters go outside the gate, and let nobody come in, except for the bishop or any other ecclesiastical superior, who comes to preach to you or to visitate. Be obedient to your prioress. Do not chatter with each other, or waste your time gossiping.

Because we can offer you no help in temporal affairs, we do not want to burden you by allowing any of the brethren any authority to receive women or make them members of your community; only the prioress shall have such authority, on the advice of the community.

Furthermore, I instruct my dear brother Mannes, who has worked so hard to bring you to this holy state of life, to organize you and make whatever arrangements he considers useful, to enable you to conduct yourselves in the most religious and holy way. I also give him power to visitate you and correct you, and, if necessary, to remove the prioress from office, provided that a majority of the nuns agree. I also authorize him to grant you any dispensations he thinks appropriate. Farewell in Christ.

##### Alternative Second Reading

From the letter of Blessed Humbert of Romans **On Regular Observance.**

*"Peace is preserved by silence and the mind raised up by contemplation."*

A brother should never pass over in silence what needs to be said, nor say what should not be spoken. When a brother intends to speak, Let him first consider his words in his heart that he may express honorably, moderately, truthfully and kindly what it is he wishes to say. For the tongue is deceitful, puffed up, inflamed with duplicity, and hateful to God and humankind.

Dearly beloved, consider carefully what you say, to whom, when or where, how or how much, and certainly why you say it. Otherwise, if the proper circumstances are lacking,

your speech may give rise to a bad conscience in your own heart or to scandal in the heart of your hearer. You should aim for three things in your speech - gesture, voice, and meaning. Let your gestures be controlled, your voice well-modulated, your meaning always true.

Do not do battle with words, nor worry about gaining victory in disputes. Always avoid words which are damaging to the speaker or to the listener. One should keep away from speech which is not a credit to the one who speaks, or to the one who listens, or to the one about whom a person speaks.

Consider also the time for speaking, because at times one should keep silent and at other times something should be said. There is never a time when evil should be uttered; sometimes even good things should not be mentioned. When another has begun to speak, we should be silent, lest we appear to interrupt what the person has to say. When we sense that our audience is not prepared for what we have to say, we should refrain from speech. At times we should keep silence to avoid loquaciousness or because we have not yet formulated in a suitable manner what we wish to say.

Let the elderly speak of the wisdom of reflection, the young of a readiness for work, the wise of the mystery of the Scriptures, the simple of examples of good works, those concerned with business of the needs of the active life, those living quietly of the sweetness of the contemplative life, prelates of the management of temporal and spiritual goods, subjects of obeying commands.

When we wish to speak for our own edification, let us speak of those whose teaching can lead us to virtue. When we speak for the edification of others, let us turn to those whom we hope can be converted by our exhortation. Furthermore, let our teaching tend toward this goal: to urge the timid to constancy, the proud to fear, the bold to reflection, the lukewarm to fervor, the boisterous to silence, the speechless to a word of exhortation, the impatient to gentleness, the careless to vigilance, the cruel to forbearance, the hasty and demanding to restraint.

In addition take care that when a brother speaks, he not move about inappropriately, nor destroy the charm of his speech by glancing about or making faces.

May you avoid every word that is bitter, proud, disparaging, flattering, vicious, sworn by oaths, superfluous, or careless. As you ought not speak ill of those who are absent, so you should not laugh at those who are present. Do not jest with those who are senseless, nor envy the learned.

Keep silent about trivialities; speak about what will bear fruit. In your conversation do not keep your heart on your tongue, but rather check your tongue with your heart. Surely when you come to speak, you can offer a few words that are intelligible. Love quiet reflection; flee the business of the world. Through silence the heart is quieted, pain is avoided, peace is maintained, and the mind is raised more quickly to contemplation. The more you withdraw from the noise of business, the closer will God be to you.

AUGUST 19

Blessed Jordan of Pisa

Friar and Priest

Blessed Jordan was born near Pisa around 1260 and entered the Order there. He served as lector in several houses of the Order and was known for his eloquent preaching

throughout the region of Pisa and Florence. His preaching ministry was all the more remarkable in that he used the Tuscan dialect rather than the customary Latin. While he was on his way from Pisa to Paris, he fell ill at Piacenza and died August 19, 1311.

## AUGUST 23

Saint Rose of Lima

Lay Dominican and Virgin Memorial

Isabella Flores, commonly known as Rose, was born in Lima, Peru, in 1586, and became the first canonized saint of the Western Hemisphere. She made a vow of virginity at an early age and only with great difficulty overcame the objections and misunderstanding of her family to her way of life. At the age of twenty she became a Dominican Tertiary and lived in a hermitage which she had set up in her family's garden. She practiced severe penances for the salvation of sinners and for the missionary efforts of the Church in the Indies. Her great love for Christ manifested itself by her care of and concern for the poor and sick. She had a special devotion to Christ in the Eucharist and to Mary, the Mother of God. Her desire to teach others the secret of prayer made her a zealous promoter of the Rosary. She died at Lima on August 24, 1617.

### Second Reading

From the process of canonization of Saint Rose of Lima.

*"Saint Rose was a true disciple of our Holy Father Dominic."*

In all things Rose of Saint Mary found an occasion to praise the Creator. In her every thought she found a way to lift her mind to God and she also wished to teach others the secret of prayer. By reading good spiritual authors she fed her own soul and made their spiritual writings known to others, encouraging priests to attract their penitents and listeners to a love of prayer, whatever their tasks might be. Truly remarkable was her devotion to Mary's Rosary which blends mental and vocal prayer; she thought Christians should pray the Rosary aloud while keeping it also deeply fixed in their hearts.

The anguish she experienced at the thought of evil and sin was overcome by the sweetness which the love of God caused her to experience in prayer. She was deeply disturbed by those who made charges against the Church. At such times her zeal was enkindled and she did not spare her words, although she knew how to temper her reproof with kinds and persuasive pleas. Many were amazed that the young girl said nothing to those who made charges against her personally, but quickly resisted the slightest offense against God.

The love of Jesus in the sacrament of the Eucharist was of utmost importance in her life; on days when she solemnly adored the Blessed Sacrament, she remained motionless in prayer for many hours.

Rose was saddened at the thought of souls not enjoying the gift of faith, especially those in many parts of the Americas who were caught up in the worship of false idols. Overcome with compassion, she constantly thought of them and wanted to overturn all obstacles and fly, as it were, with the wings of the soul to enlighten and bring them to salvation. She would have liked to make of herself a rock and a barrier to keep the door to hell closed.

When she spoke with religious under vows, especially the Friars Preachers, she forcefully exhorted them with earnest words pouring forth from the love in her heart to work with all their mind and all their strength for the conversion of souls. It distressed her that they spent many hours in speculative study; she said she preferred that the toil, the sleepless hours, the labor and the difficulties needed for acquiring such learning be given to stirring up the will to love of God.

She grieved that, as a woman, she was not allowed to devote herself, as she greatly longed to do, to the apostolic work of preaching the gospel to infidels. To enable her confessor to take up this holy work she offered to forego half of his services so as to have a share in the fruits of his apostolate. She even thought about taking in and rearing an abandoned little boy and she would have done this had death not prevented it. She had hoped to support this child with her own means and the alms of others that by God's grace he might receive sacred orders and dedicate himself to the spread of the faith among the infidels.

#### Alternative Second Reading

From the letter of Blessed Humbert of Romans **On Regular Observance.**

*"Arrange your entire life for the glory of God."*

In every struggle, [my brothers,] show yourselves worthy of praise, honorable before God by your purity, distinguished before human eyes by a suitable way of life. Always show yourself respectful and obedient in such service. Search out eagerly the things that are pleasing to God; eagerly desire and accomplish them.

Strive to do all things in charity and out of charity that you may wear the garment of charity as a result both of God's goodness and of your striving which is its expression. If either one is lacking in your actions, nothing you do will be meritorious before God. Therefore devoutly direct whatever shall be of use to you to God and cling untiringly to it in love for its own sake.

May you have a way to God which sustains joys as well as sorrows; thus you will be humble in good times with thanksgiving and be patient in hardships and reversals. Take delight only in the service of Christ; grieve only over what can distance you from God's grace. Seek to please God alone and fear only what displeases God. May only those things please you which unite you to God and only those be bitter which are contrary to God. Arrange your entire life for the glory of God, always giving thanks for God's gifts, and deem utterly lost whatever does not give praise to God.

May God be your joy in honor, your solace in grief, your defense in times of trouble, your food while fasting, your abundance in impoverishment, healthful medicine in weakness, the way by which you walk, the font which bathes you, the key which opens your heart to God and closes it to the world. And if bodily strength fails, may your desires always enkindle within you a submission to the good will of your Creator.

Love what God loves and hate only what God hates. In so far as you can, always desire to have a mind that knows God and a heart that loves God. Show diligence in seeking God and wisdom in finding God. Live a life that pleases God and with perseverance faithfully await God.

Frequently direct your heart to God that you may enter into the friendship of divine intimacy. Although you may attain such friendship in a short time, to remove slothfulness

gradually accustom yourselves to spiritual pursuits. Pray and learn to express your prayer, not out of habit, but out of the delight of devotion. Pray in secret. Gladly use those prayers which seem to stir your heart the more to fervor. See to it that, when your body is in choir, your soul is not then in the marketplace.

In your reading be eager to inform both the intellect and the will. Carry out that good which you perceive should sometimes be done out of love, without neglecting the good which should be done out of obedience or the duty to which you are bound. That you may be intimately joined to the one who is the greatest good, free yourselves from all the din of worldly business, turn away from the vanities of those whose lives are focused on the present, remove from yourselves all fruitless thoughts, and be crucified by the charms and enticements of the world.

In everything, [dear brothers,] be eager to gain merit for yourselves and be an example for your neighbors. Be joyful, willing and ready to serve one another and do not be burdensome to anyone for your own personal needs. When you have received a favor, pass it on willingly. What you lack, ask for humbly from those who have it. Show compassion rather than irritation at one another's faults. Prefer the love of one another to any passing thing.

[Love is due to others according to their merits, but respect in accord with their position and age. Therefore, you ought to honor superiors more, but love more those who are better than you. Show obedience to superiors, a harmonious spirit to your equals, and kindness to inferiors. Strive to be subject to your elders out of reverence, to be obedient to your equals out of charity, and to be on an equal footing with the young through humility.]

#### AUGUST 26

Blessed James of Bevagna

Friar and Priest

Blessed James was born at Bevagna, Italy, in 1220 and entered the Order in Spoleto. In time he returned to Bevagna to establish a priory there. He was sent to preach against the Nicolaitan heretics who at that time were playing havoc with the faith in Umbria. He was successful in converting one of its leaders who made a public repudiation of his heresy at Orte. Once during a period of spiritual dryness and doubt blood spurted from the crucifix before which Blessed James was praying and he heard Christ saying: "This blood is the sign of your salvation." He died at Bevagna on August 22, 1301.

#### AUGUST 28

Saint Augustine

Bishop and Doctor of the Church      Feast

Saint Augustine was born at Tagaste in what is now Algeria around the year 354. He was not only the bishop of Hippo and a theologian who profoundly influenced the Western world, but the author of a rule and the master of our communitarian way of life. His *Regula ad servos Dei*, originally composed for a community of women was adopted by the canons regular in the twelfth century. When Innocent III invited Saint Dominic to choose a rule for his followers from already existing and approved rules, they chose the Rule of Saint Augustine. As Humbert of Romans has shown in his commentary on the

Rule, the apostolic life which forms the basis for the Rule of St. Augustine was well-suited to the purpose of the Order of Preachers. The Rule along with the Constitutions remains today the foundation of Dominican profession.

## Second Reading

From the **Rule of Saint Augustine**.

*"The first precept is charity."*

Above all things you ought to love God and the to us. neighbor, foe those are the principal commands which have been g observances we prescribe for those who live in community.

The first purpose for which you have been formed into one community is to dwell peacefully in the house and to be of one heart and mind d. Speak of nothing as your own, but consider all things as community property. Your superior shall distribute food and clothing according to the needs of each, not in equal measure to all, for all do not have the same physical strength. For you read in the Acts of the Apostles: "Everything was held in common and distribution was made to everyone according to his need." Since you are the temples of God, live together in peace and harmony, and recognize the presence of God in one another.

Be faithful to the prayers appointed for the hours of the day and the seasons of the year. Use the oratory, or place of prayer, only for what it was intended; then if some are at leisure and wish to pray outside of the regular hours they will not be distracted by those engaged in other activities. As you pray to God in psalms and hymns, meditate in your heart on what you say with your lips.

Exercise self-control by fasting and abstinence as far as your health permits. One who is not able to fast, however, shall not take food outside mealtime unless he is weak. Singularity of dress should not make you conspicuous for you should strive to please by your manner, not by your garb.

You should have no quarrels of any kind; but if they do begin, end them as quickly as possible, so that anger may not grow into hatred and make the soul guilty of murder by letting a speck become a plank. For the passage in scripture says: "One who hates his brother is a murderer."

The superior's happiness shall be in serving you with charity, not in ruling you with authority. He should be held in honor by you in the presence of all, but in the sight of God he should humble himself before you. He should show himself an example of good works to you all, admonishing the unruly, cheering the fainthearted, supporting the weak, being patient with all. He should cheerfully maintain the discipline of the house, and yet be cautious in demanding it of the brethren. Although both love and fear are necessary, the superior should desire much more to be loved than feared by you, and he should always remember that he will render an account to God concerning you. By your obedience be a source of mercy not only to yourselves but to him, because by his position among you he is in much greater danger.

May God grant that you observe all these points with care, as lovers of spiritual beauty, and as souls fragrant with the aroma of Christ in the goodness of your lives; for you are not slaves under the law, but freemen under grace.

### Alternative Second Reading

From the **Commentary on the Rule of Saint Augustine** of Blessed Humbert of Romans. *"The Rule of Saint Augustine contains everything necessary to live as a religious, and is especially suitable for preachers."*

Among the many and varied rules under which various religious serve the Church there are some written by authors who are not numbered among the saints; others were written by saintly authors who were not renowned for their wisdom; still others were handed down by authors who were both holy and wise, yet were not persons of great authority. However, it is certain that at times holiness more surely produces a balanced judgment than does wisdom; at other times holy simplicity, if not directed by wisdom, produces less praiseworthy judgments. And indeed a judgment stemming from holiness and wisdom which lacks authority is less acceptable. But how great and worthy of acceptance is that rule which is known to be written by a holy and wise man of eminent authority, namely, Saint Augustine the bishop!

Saint Augustine shaped his rule on the model of the apostolic life, as is clear from what we sing and read, namely, that he began to live according to the rule laid down by the holy apostles. In one of his sermons he says: "We wish to live the apostolic life." Who doubts that the apostolic life is to be preferred to any other kind of life? With what splendor is that rule to be extolled which is modeled on such an example!

Moreover, there are many rules which impose a multitude of physical observances; but the Rule of Saint Augustine is built more on spiritual deeds, such as the love of God and neighbor, the unity of hearts, the harmony of customs, and other such things. Who does not know that spiritual deeds are of more importance than physical exercises? The more a rule deals with spiritual matters rather than physical ones, the more worthy it is of greater praise. Likewise the Rule of Saint Augustine observes such moderation that it avoids the dangerous extremes of too many or too few regulations. It takes the middle path where all virtue lies.

Still, it must be noted that in his rule Augustine first lays down the commands; but since it avails nothing for them to be handed down unless they are observed, in second place he states what factors make for observance. In setting forth his commands, he puts the commandments of God in first place, then his own. In transmitting his own he sets down first the manner of each command and then explains it. What, I ask, is more necessary to hand down in a rule than the commandments of God and the human aids which help in their observance? Augustine's Rule contains all these, and thus contains all that is necessary for religious life.

The Rule of Saint Augustine, moreover, is more suitable for preachers than for others. It is evident that preachers should be well-read. How fortunate it is that, for those who are well-read and so wish to be his eager pupils, this Rule is solicitous that no day pass without them taking out their books and pursuing those subjects which they are eager to learn or to teach. Likewise, since the Rule of Saint Augustine is derived, as it were, from the model of apostolic life, how completely should all preachers imitate it, since this rule applies more to preachers than do other rules.

Also, there are certain rules which impose many observances on their adherents, who thus vary considerably from ordinary human life. Such observances pertain to clothing, the Office, and certain other matters. Differences of this sort are a hindrance to the good

of the soul, while on the contrary conformity bears fruit. On this account Paul became all things to all, conforming himself to them so as to gain all. Since the Rule of Saint Augustine does not impose extras of this sort, it is more suited to the preacher. Likewise, in setting up a new Order of Preachers, Saint Dominic had to establish some new statutes regarding study and poverty, and things of this sort in addition to their rules. For this reason he had to choose a rule which did not have observances contrary to what was to be set up. The Rule of Saint Augustine is such that all regulations suited to the state of preachers can be easily applied to it.

Since under this Rule Saint Dominic, father of the Friars Preachers, acquired perfection in every good and bore fruit as far as the salvation of souls is concerned, how fitting it is that his sons imitate him in this and so come to a similar perfection.

## SEPTEMBER

### SEPTEMBER 2

Blessed Guala of Bergamo  
Priest and Bishop

Born in Bergamo, Italy, about 1180, Guala Romanoni was already a canon of that city when Saint Dominic received him into the Order in 1219. Blessed Guala was then sent to establish a priory at Brescia which he governed with prudence and zeal. In 1229 Pope Gregory IX appointed him Bishop of Brescia and Apostolic Legate to Lombardy. He labored to reconcile Emperor Frederick II and the Pope and to establish peace among the cities of northern Italy. As Bishop of Brescia his concern for the poor and unfortunate earned him the title, "Father of the poor and advocate of widows and orphans." He died on September 3, 1244.

### SEPTEMBER 4

Blessed Catherine of Racconigi  
Lay Dominican and Virgin

Blessed Catherine was born at Racconigi, a village in Piedmont, in 1486 of very poor parents and she continued to suffer hardship and poverty throughout her entire life. She showed an affinity for prayer at an early age and was finally received into the Order of Penance. Because the friars of the Order were suspicious of her mystical gifts, she became the object of detraction and persecution which continued until the end of her life. In the midst of such difficulties she would pray, "Jesus alone is my hope." She worked untiringly to bring peace to her region and died at Carmagnola on September 4, 1547.

### SEPTEMBER 5

Anniversary of Deceased Friends and Benefactors

Gospel poverty, which our Holy Father Dominic wished to be the foundation for preaching in our Order, has drawn many friends and benefactors to help us in fulfilling this evangelical mission, either by actually associating themselves with us or through material gifts. Today in one common celebration we remember our deceased friends and benefactors who have been connected with the work of our Order in so many ways.

## SEPTEMBER 6

Blessed Bertrand of Garrigue

Friar and Priest

One of Saint Dominic's original sixteen companions, Blessed Bertrand was born at Garrigue near Nîmes in southern France. He associated himself with Saint Dominic in preaching against the Albigensians and made profession into his hands in 1216. In 1217 he was sent to Paris to assist in establishing the Priory of Saint Jacques. Blessed Bertrand was a frequent traveling companion of Saint Dominic and gave precious testimony to his virtues and miracles during the process of canonization. He died at Le Bouchet (Drôme), the monastery of the Cistercian nuns near Orange, during the month of April, 1230.

## SEPTEMBER 18

Saint Juan Macias

Friar and Religious Memorial

Juan Macias was born at Ribera in Estramadura, Spain, in 1595 of a noble but impoverished family. Orphaned in early childhood, Juan worked as a shepherd for his relatives, an occupation which provided him time for prayer. Inspired by a vision he left his native country and set sail for the Americas, arriving finally in Lima, Peru, where for a time he tended the sheep of a wealthy Spaniard. In 1623 he decided to enter the Order at the priory of Saint Mary Magdalene in Lima, where he served as porter for twenty-two years. Like his friend Saint Martin de Porres, he was known for his love and care for the poor and for his special devotion to the Rosary. He died on September 16, 1645.

### Second Reading

From the homily of Pope Paul VI for the canonization of Saint Juan Macias.

*"He was an admirable and eloquent witness to evangelical poverty."*

Juan Macias is an admirable and eloquent witness to evangelical poverty. As a young orphan he used his own shepherd's wages to help other poor shepherds, "his co-workers," and also shared his faith with them. Inspired by his patron, Saint John the Baptist, he emigrated, but he did not go for the sake of riches, as did so many others. He went to carry out God's will. Both as porter and shepherd he quietly lavished his love on the needy, while at the same time he taught them to pray. As a religious he made his vows an eminent form of love for God and neighbor, for he "wanted only God for himself." In his porter's lodge he combined an intense life of prayer and penance with direct help to others and the distribution of food to veritable crowds of poor people. He even set aside a good portion of his own food so that he might give it to the hungry in whom faith enabled him to see the special presence of Jesus Christ. In short, was not the whole life of this "father of the poor, the orphan, the needy" a palpable demonstration of the fruitfulness of evangelical poverty when this is lived in full?

When we say that Juan Macias was poor, we do not mean the kind of poverty that can never be sought or blessed by God: the poverty which is culpable or due to passive inertia with regard to earning a legitimate sufficiency. We refer rather to that dignified poverty which seeks a modest livelihood through work.

How carefully and effectively Juan Macias devoted himself to his duties, before and after entering religious life! His employers and superiors gave clear evidence on this point. He always worked to win a livelihood for himself and his sister and for the many on whom he bestowed his charity. The bread thus earned is the fruit of socially creative toil and is an example to others. It brings human nature to perfection, redeems it, and conforms it to Christ. It also fosters in the soul a child-like confidence that the Father, who feeds the birds of the air and clothes the lilies of the field, will not fail to give his children what they need: Seek first the kingdom of God and the righteousness of God, and all these things will be given you besides.

Yet, the arduous labor of Juan Macias did not distract him from the Bread of Heaven. From childhood he had been familiar with the interior world of God's presence and he became a contemplative in the midst of his activity.

His intimacy with God did not cause him to withdraw from others, rather it drew him to them and their needs with renewed zeal and energy so that he might help them and bring them to a life ever more worthy and noble, human and Christian.

In this he was but following the teaching and wishes of the Church, for, despite her predilection for the poor and her love of evangelical poverty, the Church never wants to leave the poor in their present condition but seeks rather to help them to reach increasingly higher standards of living which are more in keeping with their dignity as human beings and as children of God.

Even in this incomplete sketch of the man, we can see what a marvelously attractive person our saint was. He is a person for our time, and a brilliant example for us and our society.

In his lifetime Juan Macias was able to honor poverty in two ways: by the confident search for daily bread for the poor and by the constant quest of the Bread of the poor, Christ, who strengthens everyone and leads them to his transcendent goal. What a lesson for us and our materialistic world which is so often disfigured by unrestrained consumption and self-centeredness in society! What an eloquent example of the interior unity which the Christian must achieve by fulfilling his earthly tasks in faith and love!

#### Alternative Second Reading

From the address of our brother Vincent de Cousenongle, Master of the Order, upon the canonization of Saint Juan Macias.

*"The message of Juan Macias."*

Juan Macias neither preached nor wrote. This humble brother, now honored before the entire Church, would have been greatly disturbed had anyone said that his humble life would bring a message to the world and, what is more, a social message. His humble life is a witness for us. His life is a message.

While still a young man Juan Macias set out for the Americas. He became an exile from his fatherland. He knew what an emigrant experiences – the harsh wrenching from one's own native soil, from peaceful ways of life. He knew uncertainty, the ups and downs of hope and fear, the difficulty of going to a new land and trying to fit into a new situation. He was one of countless men and women through the ages who were tossed from one place to another, not for the joy or love of fortune but out of necessity.

Undoubtedly he may have been able to lead a life of holiness, giving himself to the poor, wherever and in whatever age he lived. But he became a saint among those exiles, among the poorest of the poor. This poses questions for us.

The world has gone through many phases since the time of Juan Macias. Not only have the conditions of the world changed completely, but because of a more open reading of the gospel and – what we should not forget – because of concern for earthly happenings, the Christian people have opened themselves to accepting greater and wider demands of charity. We have learned that charity cannot be reduced to some sort of kindness and intention of the mind, or even to heroic sacrifices for the salvation of others, although one of these must always be present. We have learned that charity must pervade our soul and transform the entire life of humankind and human society.

Fraternal charity is by no means a luxury for those who have the time, the money, and good intentions. Nor can fraternal charity be a substitute for working for a change in the social order which often tries to oppress the poor.

Undoubtedly charity will always need to achieve a change in society, but charity is really justice for all. These are the words of our predecessor, our Brother Gillet: "Today's charity must become the justice of the future." To love our brothers and sisters is to wish that in the first place they be admitted into this world, into our society, as members with full rights. It is to wish, happily and definitely, that they see themselves supported, received, and lifted up as human dignity is given them.

As far as we can and are obliged, true charity strives to have us struggle for a just society and render it more human.

Without doubt even the most just world, a world conducted by perfect laws in which one's rights were not violated, could be cold as though lacking a soul, could be without hope, because it lacks love. Justice alone could be inhuman; nor could any law of society bring love to birth.

The follower of the gospel ought especially to perceive this. Christians were called to build up a just world where the bond among persons, among peoples, among various human communities, is the bond of love. This is the Gospel message. This is the message of Juan Macias.

He is more than a messenger, for his is another kind of legacy or posthumous declaration. He is the flash of a new vision for the world; he strikes the heart of each one; he is yeast; he is a fountain springing up for the ages.

So the message of Juan Macias is not only a social one; it is principally a theological one. Having his good deeds before our eyes, the Church shows in a clear light the name and countenance of God, invites all Christians to glorify their Father in heaven. For Juan Macias by his charity to the poor showed in his time the true name of God to the needy of the Americas who did not know that God is Love.

SEPTEMBER 20

Blessed Mark of Modena

Friar and Priest

Blessed Mark was born in Modena, Italy, shortly after the beginning of the fifteenth century. He entered the Order in his native city and made rapid progress in holiness and

learning. He became a renowned preacher throughout northern Italy and for many years served as prior at Pesaro where he died on September 21, 1498.

#### SEPTEMBER 20

Blessed Francis de Posadas  
Friar and Priest

Blessed Francis was born at Cordoba, Spain, in 1644 of very poor parents. In 1663 he fulfilled the desire of his early youth and entered the Order at the priory of Scala Caeli in Cordoba. His zealous preaching and hearing of confessions were such that he was considered to be another Saint Vincent Ferrer. He was noted for his profound compassion for the poor and the imprisoned; often he would give his own clothing to relieve their needs. He died at Cordoba on September 20, 1713.

#### SEPTEMBER 24

Blessed Dalmatius Moner  
Friar and Priest

Born at San Coloma de Farnes in Catalonia in 1291, Blessed Dalmatius was sent to the University of Montpellier and in 1314 after completing his studies entered the Order at the priory of Gerona (Spain). For many years he taught at the studium generale at Gerona and became the master of novices. Because of his austere life and his love of solitude and prayer his reputation for holiness became widespread. His desire to live as a hermit was fulfilled when the community allowed him to hollow out a cave on the priory property where he spent the last years of his life, leaving it only to celebrate Mass and go to choir. He died in his beloved cave on September 24, 1341.

#### SEPTEMBER 26

Blessed Lawrence of Ripafratta  
Friar and Priest

Blessed Lawrence was born at Ripafratta, near Pisa, in 1373. When already a deacon he entered the Order at Pisa with the encouragement of Blessed John Dominic. After some years of preaching he was appointed master of novices at Cortona where he trained such friars as Saint Antoninus and Fra Angelico. He served as prior and lector at Fiesole and in 1425 moved to Pistoia where he was appointed vicar general of the reformed priories. He remained there until his death on September 27, 1456.

#### SEPTEMBER 28

Saint Dominic Ibanez de Erquicia and Saint James Kyushei Tomonaga, Priests, Saint Lawrence Ruiz, Lay Dominican and Husband and Companions, Martyrs Memorial

On this day the Order commemorates sixteen martyrs who labored to establish the Church in Nagasaki, Japan, and who were martyred at various times during the years 1633, 1634 and 1637. After enduring horrible tortures, they were executed by the method known as the "gallows and pit," their bodies were burned, and their ashes scattered.

Of this group nine were from Japan, four from Spain, one from France, one from Italy, and one from the Philippines. Father Dominic Ibanez de Erquicia was the first to die on August 14, 1633. Lawrence Ruiz, the father of a family and the protomartyr of the

Philippines, died on September 29, 1637. Thirteen of these martyrs were members of the Dominican Family and three were associated with it.

### Second Reading

From a letter of Saint Dominic Ibanez de Erquicia to his father written on October 18, 1630.

Dearest father, I hope my letter will be some consolation to you, since I am unable to comfort you in any other way. For I cannot show you my filial devotion, nor be of any help to you except before God. Indeed, I keep you before God in my poor prayers and at the sacrifice of the Mass, whether we live or die. Likewise, I pray for all my relatives and for the whole world that they may receive every good.

Eight years ago I left the Philippines and went to Japan. For twenty years the Christian community here has been persecuted and during this time there have been many martyrs, both religious and laity. Today this persecution increases more and more and for the past two years it has been unspeakably severe. Last year at the end of July a cruel governor arrived in the city where I now reside. He has sealed off every means of departure by land or sea, lest any Christian escape, and has begun to afflict them with so many savage tortures that he has induced many Christians to recant and so abandon their faith in Christ.

When the fury of the persecution had subsided a little, the authorities tried to seize religious and so as a result we have put on disguises and hidden ourselves in one place or another, for they offer rewards to those who will point out religious. On November 20th they seized a religious of the Augustinian Order on a mountain and three days later in this very city they caught a Jesuit priest who had been born in this area. Indeed, he was captured very near to the place where I was hiding and so, committing myself to God, at six in the morning I fled from the house with the help of a disguise.

Last May they captured a lay member of the Franciscan Order. So far five religious have been taken together with a large number of the faithful – the number of martyrs was almost forty. Last month many were burned alive and about thirty were cut to pieces with a saw made of reeds. They employ many cruel tortures in an attempt to compel these poor people to abandon the faith: some they scald slowly with boiling water which is poured upon their heads along with sulphur, resin, oil and other materials which increase their suffering; others they crucify or submerge in water until they die from the cold; still others they bury up to their waists and with a saw made of reeds gradually cut them to pieces in such a way that their suffering is drawn out for seven or eight days. Up to this point they have treated religious no differently, except that they are burned alive by placing the wood around the victims in such a way that they die gradually, but not from the flames themselves.

I have now come to the point of greatest danger for me in this persecution and already have a feeling that this is the last letter which I will be able to write. Therefore, my beloved father, let us so act that we may see one another in heaven for all eternity, fearing no separation here. Let us have no concern for this world, for it is our exile and separates us from God who is our total good. I say to my dearest sister, do not forget to commend me to God. To all my relatives and friends I send greetings. May the Lord keep you until you reach our heavenly homeland.

## OCTOBER

### OCTOBER 3

Blessed Dominic Spadafora  
Friar and Priest

Born at Randazzo in Sicily about the year 1450, Dominic Spadafora received the habit at the priory of St. Zita at Palermo and became a zealous preacher of the Word in Sicily and throughout Italy. He had a special devotion to the passion of our Lord and by his charity and humility converted many to the Lord, even attracting some to the Order. He founded the priory of Our Lady of Grace in Monte Cerignone, Sicily, where he remained as superior until his death on December 21, 1521. This commemoration recalls the date of the translation of his remains in 1677.

### OCTOBER 4

Our Holy Father Francis of Assisi  
Deacon Feast

Giovanni Francesco Bernadone was born at Assisi in 1182. After a carefree youth with little meaning and purpose he was converted to the Lord, left all his material possessions behind, and strove to conform his life to the poor Christ by simplicity of life and to the crucified Christ by his charity. Francis attracted many followers to his way of life and in 1210 his first rule was approved. In 1221 in the house of Cardinal Ugolino in Rome he met Saint Dominic, the only meeting of the two founders that is sufficiently attested by historical data. In 1223 his revised rule was formally confirmed and a year later he received the special grace of the stigmata. He finally embraced "sister death" on October 3, 1226.

The special celebration of his feast in the liturgy of the Order expresses the bond which exists between the Friars Minor and the Friars Preachers based upon that bond which existed between their founders. Saint Catherine of Siena said of them: "Truly Dominic and Francis were two pillars of holy Church: Francis with the poverty that was his hallmark and Dominic by his learning."

### Second Reading

From the encyclical letters of Blessed Humbert of Romans sent to the Order from the General Chapters.

*"The Savior of the world raise up the Friars Minor and the Friars Preachers for the ministry of salvation."*

To the Friars Minor and Friars Preachers, most dear and beloved in Jesus Christ, spread throughout the whole world, Brother John, Minister General of the same Friars Minor, and Brother Humbert, useless servant of the same Friars Preachers, greetings. May you walk becomingly and worthily in your holy calling.

After the first fall of the human race the Savior of the world, who loves souls and wishes none to be lost, continually applied many remedies for its restoration through various ministers in each generation. Without doubt in these last days at the end of the ages the Savior has raised up our two Orders for the ministry of salvation, calling to them

not a few followers and enriching them with heavenly gifts so they can work effectively, not only for their own salvation by word and example, but also for the salvation of others.

Acknowledging the glory of God rather than our own these Orders are the two great lights which brighten and illumine with heavenly radiance those everywhere on earth who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.

These are the two silver trumpets of the true Moses, Christ our Lord and God, whose ministry has called a great throng of many nations to the service of Christ.

These are the two Cherubim filled with wisdom, who gaze at one another with minds in full agreement and who extend their wings to the mercy seat while ready to sow saving knowledge over all nations in a flight of obedience.

These are the two breasts of the Bride from which the little ones of Christ suck milk, obtain nourishment, and are given the means for growth towards salvation.

These are the two sons of the oil of splendor who stay at the side of the Lord of all the earth, ready to fulfill his commands and carry out whatever missions his will dictates.

These are the two witnesses of Christ, who are clothed in sackcloth and already preach and give testimony to the truth.

These are the two bright stars which according to the prophecy of the Sibyll have the appearance of the four living creatures of the last days, and cry out the name of the Lamb summoning all to humility and voluntary poverty.

Think, my beloved, think how much sincere love should abound among you, whom Mother Church begot at the same time. Eternal Charity directed you to the same work, namely, working together for the salvation of souls. Although your profession differs slightly, you are so similar that we mutually love you as identical creatures.

Finally, how shall we be known as true disciples of Christ, unless our love for one another is manifest?

How shall we sow in the hearts of others that mutual charity which because of our preaching is cherished above all things by everyone, if our love for one another is wounded or becomes fragile?

How shall we stand against so many threatening persecutions, if we are divided by some disturbance?

How great an example of mutual charity and peace did our holy Fathers, Saint Francis and Saint Dominic, leave us. Consider our other early brethren who loved to so live in this life as to sincerely show one another signs of charity by seeing themselves as angels of God, by accepting one another as Christ, by anticipating one another in honor, by rejoicing in one another's progress, by praising one another's preaching, by promoting what was of mutual advantage, by shunning scandals and other causes of distress to one another – doing all this with the greatest care and wisdom.

#### Alternative Second Reading

From the **Dialogue** of Saint Catherine of Siena.

*"Dominic and Francis were two pillars of holy Church"*

The Holy Spirit made the religious life and set it like a ship ready to receive souls who want to race on to perfection and to bring them to the port of salvation. The captain of this ship is the Holy Spirit, who lacks nothing. His religious subjects who violate his orders can hurt only themselves, never this ship. Yet the captain may let it run into the

waves through the fault of those who are at the helm, the miserable wicked shepherds he had appointed to be superiors and pilots of the ship. In herself this ship is so delightful that your tongue could never describe her.

Here is found a wealth of holy ordinances established in great order and light by those who have been made temples of the Holy Spirit.

Consider the great order with which Benedict governed his ship.

Consider Francis. With what fragrantly perfect poverty and what pearls of virtue he governed his order's ship! He steered it along the way of high perfection – and he was the first to practice it – giving it true holy poverty as a bride. He himself had espoused her by embracing lowliness. Uninterested in doing his own pleasure, he had no desire to please anyone else against my will. Indeed, he wanted the world to revile him. He disciplined his body, slew his selfish will, and clothed himself in shameful sufferings and disgrace for love of the humble Lamb, with whom he was nailed to the cross in love. In fact, by a singular grace, the wounds of my Truth appeared in his body to show in the vessel of his body what was in his soul's affection. Thus did he make a path for the others.

But you will say to me, "and are not all the other orders founded on the same thing?" Yes, but it is not the principal aspect of all of them. True, all are founded on this, but it happens as it does with the virtues. All the virtues have their life from charity; nonetheless, this virtue is peculiar to one, that to another, though all are grounded in charity. So it is with these people. True poverty was peculiar to the poor Francis, and in love he made this poverty the rule of his ship, with many strict ordinances, for perfect people, not ordinary, for good ones and few. I say "few" because there are not many who choose this perfection. But because of their sins the members multiplied but their virtue grew less. There was nothing wrong with the ship, but its subjects were disobedient and its pilots wicked.

[Seek] honor and the salvation of souls with the light of learning. He wished to build his foundation on this light, while not for all that giving up true and voluntary poverty. He had that as well, and as a sign that he had it and that its opposite displeased him, he left as a bequest to his sons his curse and mine if they should have or keep any property individually or collectively. It was a token that he had chosen Queen Poverty as his bride.

But for his more proper object he took the light of learning in order to stamp out the errors that were rising up at that time. He took up the task of the Word, my only-begotten Son. Clearly he appeared as an apostle in the world, with such truth and light did he sow my word, dispelling the darkness and giving light. He was a light that I offered the world through Mary and sent into the mystic body of holy Church as an uprooter of heresies.

What workers the father sent into his vineyard to uproot the thorns of vice and to plant the virtues! Truly Dominic and Francis were two pillars of holy Church: Francis with the poverty that was his hallmark and Dominic with learning.

## OCTOBER 5

Blessed Raymond of Capua

Friar, Priest and Master of the Order

Optional Memorial

Raymond delle Vigne was born at Capua, Italy, about 1330 and while studying at the University of Bologna entered the Order there in 1350. After holding various administrative and teaching positions in the Roman Province he was assigned to be

spiritual director for Saint Catherine of Siena, whose friend, confidant, biographer, guide and disciple he became. In May, 1380, Raymond was elected Master of that portion of the Order which had remained faithful to the Roman Pontiff, Urban VI. He vigorously promoted reform within the Order while at the same time working to restore unity to the Church, rent asunder as it was by the Western Schism. He died at Nuremberg on October 5, 1399 while visiting the German priories.

#### Office of Readings

##### Second Reading

From the letters of Blessed Raymond of Capua.

*"You will be good seed, the special people of Blessed Dominic."*

Most dear and beloved [brothers] in the Lord Jesus, heartfelt blessings in Christ and greetings.

I thank God who breathed upon you the Holy Spirit by which you were drawn to a holy and regular observance and to the imitation of our holy forebears who have gone before us. They proceeded along a straight path as followers of Saint Dominic. If you remain in the grace of God, you will be the good seed, a chosen nation, a special people of Saint Dominic. You will become light for others and salt for the earth.

I beg you, [my brothers,] in the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, not to be frightened by those who oppose and threaten you, nor allow unsound advice to interrupt your holy work and the holy way of life you have begun.

Furthermore, [my brothers,] I do not want you to be proud on this account nor look down on others who are living in another way. God is also able to give them the Holy Spirit. Perhaps they are more pleasing to God than you. We know that while physical training is of some value, devotion is valuable in every way. If others abound more in devotion, while enjoying meat and wine, surely in God's sight they are better than you, for the kingdom of God does not consist in food and drink but in love of God and of neighbor.

I do not want you to think you are better than others, but rather lower than all; esteem yourselves as weak and sickly, in that you have need of the help which others do not need. For if with meat and wine I love my God and my neighbor with an upright and generous heart, but you without these foods spurn your neighbor, your abstinence is no match for my feasting in the sight of God.

Remember the teaching of the Apostle. *If those who are nothing think they are something, they deceive themselves.* [My brothers,] keep away from the beast of boasting and concern for one's reputation, for these destroy and weaken every good work. To be perfectly open with you, I fear nothing for you so much as that plague, that wild beast. I do not want you to be deprived of any good work in such a way. You too should have this same fear and ask God to give you a spirit of humility. I, your weak and defenseless servant in the battle of life, beg for myself God's gift of the Holy Spirit by whom alone I live and in whose name I am able to overcome all enemies.

##### Alternative Second Reading

From a letter of Saint Catherine of Siena to Blessed Raymond.

*"Be a true spouse of the Truth."*

Most beloved father in our dear Christ Jesus. I Catherine, a minister and servant of the servants of Jesus Christ write you in his precious blood. I desire that you become a true spouse of the Truth himself, that you follow him and love him.

I see no way of tasting the truth and of living with it without self-knowledge. It is this knowledge that really makes us understand that we are not, and that our being came from God in whose image and likeness we were created. Through this knowledge we come to know that God created us a second time by giving us again the life of grace through the blood of the only Son, blood that had manifested to us the truth of God the Father. This is the divine truth: we were created for the glory and praise of God's name and to participate in the eternal beauty of God and so be sanctified in God. And what is the proof that this is true? It is the blood of the spotless Lamb.

How do we come to know this blood? By self-knowledge. We were that earth where the standard of the cross was planted. We were the vessel that received the blood of the Lamb flowing from the cross. Why were we this earth? Because the earth itself did not suffice to keep the cross standing erect; it would have refused such a great injustice. The nails would not have been enough to hold him fixed and nailed if his ineffable love of our salvation had not held him.

It was the flaming love for the glory of his Father and of our salvation that kept him on the cross. We are, then, that earth which supported the cross and the vessel that received his blood.

The one who has the knowledge of this Truth and who becomes its spouse will find in the blood all the richness and life of grace. The nakedness of such a person will be covered by the bridal gown and will be clothed by the fire of charity, for the blood and the fire meld and penetrate one another and it was love that united the blood to the divinity and that poured it out.

In the blood we are nourished and fed by mercy; in the blood we can dispel the darkness and enjoy light; for in the blood we can destroy the fog of self-love and overcome a servile fear of the One who punishes. Whoever does not love truth will not find truth in self-knowledge and the blood.

For this reason it is necessary for you to be the spouse of Truth, if you are to know Truth. Where will you do this? In the house of self-knowledge where you know that everything you have comes from God through a gratuitous grace; where you experience that re-creation which Truth bestows. This is what it means to be re-created in grace by the blood of the Lamb, to wash oneself, to submerge and kill the will. By any other way you will be an unfaithful spouse of the Truth, rather than a faithful spouse. I said that I wanted to see you a true spouse of the Truth, because I desire this.

Persevere in the holy and delightful love of God. Sweet Jesus! Jesus, love.

OCTOBER 6

Blessed Bartolo Longo

Lay Dominican

Bartolo Longo was born in Naples in 1841 and obtained his degree in civil law at the University there. Faith was weak in the intellectual circles of the time and Bartolo had wavered in his own faith, even to the point of dabbling in spiritualism. He was converted through the work of Father Alberto Radente, O.P., and in 1872 became a Tertiary with

the name Rosario. Called to promote the Rosary by divine intervention he was responsible for building the Sanctuary of our Lady of Pompeii (1876) as well as the founding of a congregation of sisters, the Sisters of the Holy Rosary of Pompeii (1877). He was zealous not only in promoting devotion of our Lady, but also in works of social justice. He died at Pompeii on October 6, 1926.

## OCTOBER 7

### Our Lady of the Rosary

#### Feast

From its beginning the Order of Preachers has shown special honor and devotion to Mary, Mother of God. The Rosary, which places before us the chief mysteries of the life, passion and resurrection of our Savior, has been one of the chief ways in which the Order has expressed this devotion. Our brother, Alan de La Roche (1428-1478) helped to define the structure of the Rosary and zealously promoted its recitation. At Douai in 1470 he established the first Rosary Confraternity. In 1476 our brother Jacob Sprenger established at Cologne the first such Confraternity which had papal approval. Pope Saint Pius V gave the Rosary definitive form in his bull *Consueverunt Romani Pontificis* (September 17, 1569).

Today's feast commemorates the great naval victory won by Christian forces over the Turks at Lepanto on Sunday, October 7, 1571. Pope Saint Pius V decreed that a feast in honor of Our Lady of Victories be celebrated each year on that day. His successor, Gregory XIII, transferred the feast to the first Sunday of October under the new title of the Most Holy Rosary, since it was precisely through the invocation of Our Lady of the Rosary that the victory was thought to have been gained. In the reform of the liturgy the feast was returned to its original day.

#### Second Reading

From the Apostolic Exhortation **Marialis Cultus** of Pope Paul VI.

*"The Rosary is a Gospel prayer."*

The Rosary has been called "the compendium of the entire Gospel," for it draws from the Gospel the presentation of the mysteries and its main formulas. As it moves from the Angel's joyful greeting and the Virgin's pious assent, Rosary takes its inspiration from the Gospel to suggest the attitude with which the faithful should recite it. In the harmonious succession of Hail Mary's the Rosary puts before us once more a fundamental mystery of the Gospel – the Incarnation of the Word, contemplated at the decisive moment of the Annunciation to Mary.

It has also been more easily seen how the orderly and gradual unfolding of the Rosary reflects the very way in which the Word of God, mercifully entering into human affairs, brought about the Redemption. The Rosary considers in harmonious succession the principal salvific events accomplished in Christ, from his virginal conception and the mysteries of his childhood to the culminating moments of the Passover – the blessed Passion and the glorious Resurrection – and to the effects of this on the infant Church on the day of Pentecost, and on the Virgin Mary when at the end of her earthly life she was assumed body and soul into her heavenly home.

It has also been observed that the division of the mysteries of the Rosary into three parts not only adheres strictly to the chronological order of the facts but above all reflects the plan of the original proclamation of the faith and sets forth once more the mystery of Christ in the very way in which it is seen by Saint Paul in the celebrated "hymn" of the Letter to the Philippians – kenosis, death and exaltation.

As a Gospel prayer, centered on the mystery of the redemptive Incarnation, the Rosary is therefore a prayer with a clearly Christological orientation. Its most characteristic element, in fact, the litany-like succession of Hail Mary's, becomes in itself an unceasing praise of Christ, who is the ultimate object both of the Angel's announcement and of the greeting of the Mother of John the Baptist: Blessed is the fruit of your womb. We would go further and say that the succession of Hail Mary's constitutes the warp on which is woven the contemplation of the mysteries.

The Jesus that each Hail Mary recalls is the same Jesus whom the succession of the mysteries proposes to us – now as the Son of God, now as the son of the Virgin – at his birth in a stable at Bethlehem, at his presentation by his Mother in the Temple, as a youth full of zeal for his Father's affairs, as the Redeemer in agony in the garden, scourged and crowned with thorns, carrying the Cross and dying on Calvary; risen from the dead and ascended to the glory of the Father to send forth the gift of the Spirit. As is well known, at one time there was a custom, still preserved in certain places, of adding to the name of Jesus in each Hail Mary a reference to the mystery being contemplated. And this was done precisely in order to help contemplation and to make the mind and the voice act in unison.

There has also been felt with greater urgency the need to point out once more the importance of a further essential element in the Rosary, in addition to the value of the elements of praise and petition, namely the element of contemplation. Without this the Rosary is a body without a soul and its recitation is in danger of becoming a mechanical repetition of formulas and of going counter to the warning of Christ: *And in praying do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard for their many words.* By its nature the recitation of the Rosary calls for a quiet rhythm and a lingering pace, helping the individual to meditate on the mysteries of the Lord's life as seen through the eyes of her who was closest to the Lord. In this way the unfathomable riches of these mysteries are unfolded.

#### Alternative Second Reading

From the **Exposition on the Greeting of the Angel** by Saint Thomas Aquinas.

*"Mary was full of grace; this grace was poured out upon the human race."*

*Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.* This salutation has three parts. The angel gave one part, namely: *Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you, blessed are you among women.* The other part was given by Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, namely: *Blessed is the fruit of your womb.* The Church adds the third part, that is, *Mary*, because the angel did not say, *Hail, Mary*, but *Hail, full of grace*. But, as we shall see, this name, "Mary," according to its meaning agrees with the words of the angel.

Concerning the first part of this prayer we must now consider that in ancient times it was no small event when angels appeared to human beings; and that they should show them reverence was especially praiseworthy. Thus, it is written to the praise of Abraham

that he received the angels with all courtesy and showed them reverence. But that an angel should show reverence to a human being was never heard of until the angel reverently greeted the Blessed Virgin saying: Hail.

Mary was full of grace which overflowed from her soul into her flesh. For it is a great thing among the saints that an abundance of grace sanctified their souls, yet the soul of the Blessed Virgin was so filled with grace that from her soul grace poured into her flesh. Because of this grace she conceived the Son of God. Hugh of St. Victor says of this: "Because the love of the Holy Spirit so inflamed her soul, the Spirit worked a wonder in her flesh, in that from it was born God made Man." *Therefore the child to be born of you will be called the Son of God.*

The fullness of grace in Mary was such that its effects overflow upon the human race. It is a great thing for a saint to possess the grace sufficient for his or her salvation; it is a greater thing for one to possess the grace sufficient for the salvation of many; but the greatest thing is to possess the grace sufficient for the salvation of the entire human race. This latter case is true of Christ and of the Blessed Virgin. For in every danger you may obtain salvation through the glorious Virgin herself. Thus it is said, *on it hang a thousand bucklers*, that is, remedies against dangers. Likewise, in every work of virtue you may have her as a helper. For she herself says: *In me is all hope of life and virtue*. Therefore, Mary is full of grace, exceeding the angels in this fullness and very fittingly is she called "Mary" which means "enlightened in herself:" *The Lord will fill your soul with brightness*. She will illumine others throughout the world, and so she is compared to the sun and to the moon.

*The Lord is with you* are the most noble words that the angel could have uttered. Hence, the angel deservedly revered the Blessed Virgin because she is the Mother of the Lord and therefore Our Lady. Accordingly she is very well named "Mary," which in the Syrian tongue means "Lady."

The Blessed Virgin exceeds the angels in purity. She is not only pure, but she obtains purity for others. Indeed, she is purity itself, totally free of the guilt of sin, for she never incurred original, mortal or venial sin. Likewise, she was free from the penalty of sin. Because she was immune from these punishments, she is *blessed among women*. Moreover, she alone escaped the curse of sin, brought forth the Source of blessing, and opened the gate of heaven. It is surely fitting that her name is "Mary," which is interpreted as "Star of the Sea," for just as sailors are directed to port by the star of the sea, so Christians are guided by Mary to glory.

#### Alternative Second Reading

From the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, **Lumen gentium** of the Second Vatican Council.

*"As the Church contemplates Mary it enters more intimately into the supreme mystery of the Incarnation."*

[ While in the most blessed Virgin the Church has already attained the perfection by which it exists without stain or wrinkle (see Eph 5:27), the faithful continue to strive to grow in holiness by conquer ring sin. Therefore they raise their eyes to Mary who shines forth to the whole community of the elect as the model of virtues. When it thinks of her piously and contemplates her in the light of the Word made

man, the Church with reverence enters more deeply into the inmost mystery of the incarnation and becomes more and more like its Spouse.

For Mary, who figures profoundly in the history of salvation, in a certain way unites within herself the greatest truths of the faith and echoes them. When she is being preached and honored she calls believers to her Son, to his sacrifice and to the love of the Father. The Church in giving glory to Christ becomes like its exalted model, making continuous progress in faith, hope and love and seeking and obeying the divine will in all things.

Therefore, even in its apostolic work the Church rightly looks to her who brought forth Christ, so conceived by the Holy Spirit and horn of the Virgin, that through the Church he may also be horn and grow in the hearts of the faithful. For this Virgin in her life was the model of that maternal love which should inspire all who work together in the Church's apostolic mission for the regeneration of humanity.]

Mary was exalted by the grace of God, after the Son, above all angels and human beings and, because she is the most holy mother of God who took part in the mysteries of Christ, is rightly honored by the Church with a special cult. Clearly from the most ancient times the blessed Virgin has been honored with the title of "God-bearer," to whose protection the faithful run in all their dangers and needs. Especially after the Council of Ephesus the cult of the people of God for Mary has grown wonderfully in veneration and love, in invocation and in imitation, in accordance with her own prophetic words: *All generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me.*" (Lk 1:48-49) This cult, as it has always existed in the Church, although it is a very special cult, differs essentially from the cult of adoration which is offered to the incarnate Word and equally to the Father and the Holy Spirit. Yet, veneration of Mary very greatly fosters this cult of adoration.

The Church has approved various forms of devotion to the mother of God within the limits of sound and orthodox doctrine and according to circumstances of time and place and the temperament and character of the faithful. These devotions are such that, while the mother is honored, the Son for whom all things exist (see Col 1:15-16), and in whom it was the eternal Father's *good pleasure to let all fullness dwell* (Col 1:19), should be duly known, loved and glorified and his commandments observed.

The holy synod expressly teaches this catholic doctrine and at the same time exhorts all the members of the Church generously to foster the cult, especially the liturgical cult, of the blessed Virgin, and to hold in high esteem those pious practices recommended in the course of the centuries by the magisterium.

Let the faithful also bear in mind that true devotion consists neither in sterile and passing emotion nor in an empty credulity. Rather it arises out of that true faith by which we are brought to acknowledge the excellence of the mother of God and are urged on towards filial love for our mother and imitation of her virtues.

Meanwhile, already glorified in body and soul in heaven the mother of Jesus continues here on earth as the image and the beginning of the Church which will receive fulfillment in the world to come. Likewise, until the day of the Lord arrives (see 2 Pt 3:10), Mary shines forth as a sign of sure hope and comfort for the pilgrim people of God.

Let all Christians pour forth insistent prayers to the mother of God and mother of the human race that she, who aided the primitive Church with her prayers, may now exalted

as she is in heaven above all the saints and angels, intercede with her Son in communion with all the saints. May she continue to intercede until all the families of peoples, both those that are honored by the name Christian and those who do not yet know their Savior, are happily gathered together in peace and harmony into one people of God to the glory of the most holy and undivided Trinity.

#### OCTOBER 8

Blessed Ambrose Sansedone  
Friar and Priest

Blessed Ambrose was born at Siena, Italy, in 1220 and entered the Order there in 1237. Together with Thomas Aquinas and Peter of Tarentaise (Pope Innocent V) he studied at Paris and Cologne under Saint Albert the Great and he and Thomas began to teach at Cologne under Albert's guidance. In addition to teaching and preaching he was often involved in diplomatic missions for both popes and monarchs. In the midst of this activity he was able to maintain a contemplative prayer life. He died at Siena on March 20, 1287. His commemoration falls on the anniversary of the confirmation of his cult by Gregory XV on October 8, 1622.

#### OCTOBER 8

Blessed Matthew Carreri  
Friar and Priest

Blessed Matthew was born at Mantua, Italy, around 1420 and entered the Order there in 1440. His life was marked by assiduous prayer, severe penance and an exact fidelity to regular observance, all of which prepared him for a life of apostolic preaching. So great was his charity that he once offered to deliver himself into slavery in order to rescue a mother and her daughter captured by pirates. Throughout his life Blessed Matthew labored to promote regular observance in the Order. He died at Vigevano on October 5, 1470.

#### OCTOBER 9

Saint Louis Bertrand  
Friar and Priest          Memorial

Saint Louis was born in Valencia, Spain, on January 1, 1526, and in 1544 entered the Order against the wishes of his parents. He came to so exemplify the ideals of Dominican life that he was appointed master of novices. Combining an austere life with zeal for spreading the gospel, he asked to be sent to the farthest parts of the Americas and in 1562 was sent to what is now Colombia. He was given the gift of communicating with the Indians in their own tongues and with the encouragement of Bartolomeo de Las Casas defended their rights against the Spanish conquerors. He returned to Spain in 1569 and again assumed the position of master of novices. He died at Valencia on October 9, 1591. Saint Louis is the patron of novitiates and formation personnel.

#### Second Reading

From a treatise of Saint Louis Bertrand **On the Dignity of the Apostles and of Apostolic Preachers.**

*"My commandment is that you love one another."*

This passage from the Gospel is part of the divine discourse that the Redeemer addressed to his disciples after the Last Supper as he was leaving them to face death. Among the consolations that Divine Wisdom offered to lighten their sorrow in his absence was this one: to love one another, for love is a great consolation for the afflicted when they love and protect one another. He instituted the sacrament that would comfort them; he promised to send the Holy Spirit and to pray to his Father on their behalf. He also gave them this remedy, namely, to love one another and to do good to one another. In truth this love which he demands is of no small importance, for it is the weight that moves all of Christianity. And he demands it for several reasons.

First of all, it is a duty to be loving. Love is only paid back by love. And since I have loved you to the point of giving my life for you, it is necessary that my love be measured against a love that only your mutual love will bring about. He proves that he has loved us for other reasons. First: *No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends.* Then there is the fact that he has chosen us for the highest task: *I chosen you out of the world... to go and bear fruit.* Thirdly, there is his promise: *The Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.* And so that your attitude may serve as a gauge he concludes just as he had begun: I command you to love one another. In return for what I have done for you I only want you to love one another.

There is no other passage in the gospel where Christ invites us to love to the extent that he does in this one. For Christ desires nothing so much as that we love one another, and this he demands as his due, because we owe it injustice. For injustice you must love your neighbor, because Christ has acquired this love for you and has given nothing less for it than his own love.

Finally, in the Gospel Christ has pointed out three kinds of friendship. The first is the love of Christ himself for us. He demonstrates that this friendship is true and lacks nothing for he has given his life, he has revealed his secrets, and he will do what we ask of him like a faithful friend who can refuse nothing. He demonstrates that he is a faithful friend particularly to the apostles, for he gave them such an exalted task – saving souls, the fruit of which endures forever.

The second kind of friendship is mutual affection between human beings. Christ demands this affection and friendship in justice and as something owed, for he has loved us that we might love one another with a true love and a sincere friendship.

The third kind is the friendship of human beings with God. This friendship is demonstrated by the determination to obey God and to accomplish what God has commanded us: *You are my friends if you do what I command you.* For a good understanding of this, we must take note and recognize that there is a friendship of superior for inferior, of equal for equal and of inferior for superior. Since friendship is the communication of goods, these three kinds of friendship carry out this communication in different ways. Friendship of superior for inferior consists in giving a share in one's goods, as Christ says: *The Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.* And I have given you my life, my blood and the most excellent task of converting souls.

Friendship between equals consists in dividing goods between one another in mutual love and assistance. This is Christ means when he says: *Love one another as I have loved you.*

Friendship of inferior for superior consists in obedience and service. This phrase describes it: *You are my friends* if you do what I command you.

#### Alternative Second Reading

From a sermon of Saint Louis Bertrand.

*"From the desert you should go forth as a good preacher."*

The Holy Spirit kept John in the desert, lest he see or come to know Christ, because of the importance of the testimony that he would give later concerning him. John testified that he had never seen Christ until the moment that he saw the dove descending upon his head in the Jordan River. *I did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, "On whomever you see the Spirit come down and remain, he is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit."*

That was the place where the *voice of the Father was heard* speaking about the Son. There the Holy Spirit adorned him with such great virtues – humility, meekness, and all the rest – that he came forth from the desert changed into that salt which would save the human race from corruption, changed into that light which would illumine the blind, changed into a fortified city where the holy and virtuous would find refuge.

This is the high office of a preacher, and from this it is clear that it demands such a preparation. Why should you wonder, [brother,] that your teaching does not bring forth fruit, when you come to preach not from the desert but from the confused tumult of your own soul, not from the vicinity of virtue but of pride? From the desert you should go forth as a good preacher. If Christ our Lord spent the whole night in prayer to send out his disciples to preach and to have their preaching bear fruit, what can a preacher accomplish without devotion? If you do not come from the desert, your preaching will not bear fruit. And because you have the voice of Jacob but the hands of Esau, concern yourselves with being effective preachers. Truly seek prayer, a place of retreat and solitude, otherwise you can never attain the reward of good preachers.

God called John to be a preacher and this was a great penance for him, for every state of life demands a certain amount of penance, if it is received from the hand of God. It is for God to place you upon that cross on which you ought to serve God. Truly it is not up to you to choose that cross, because although you may choose a heavier cross, you might not be saved by it since God has not placed you upon it. The Lord himself did not accept that young man who offered to follow the majesty of Christ when he said: Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go. Christ rejected his offer because this was not to be the young man's calling, even though he offered himself so readily to follow the Lord in all things

The angels in heaven and the demons in hell feared the penance of John, that is, they feared to see a man who was sanctified before he was born, a man who had never committed a mortal sin, be afflicted with such great penances. For what sins? I have no idea! From John's situation we gain some insight into the justice and the rigor of God that a person experiences who, although free of the guilt of sin, assumes such penance. We learn also something of his attitude toward this life and its comforts.

From the fact that John left these things behind in such a manner, we may gather that he had one ear fixed upon the gate of hell, where he heard those inconsolable groanings, and the other ear fixed upon the blessedness of heaven, where he listened to those angelic

songs. And so, in order not to suffer the former and lose the latter, John undertook such great penances. How deeply should that thought of judgment that must be undergone in God's presence pierce the heart of a holy person.

Consider what Saint Paul said of himself: *I am not aware of any sin, but I am not justified in this. It is the Lord who judges me.*

Because of this Jeremiah says *Set up road markers for yourself, put till guideposts; turn your attention to the highway by which you walked.* Sinner, listen to the Holy Spirit. Stand firm with the road marker of contemplation, surrounded with the guideposts of penance. In the thought of your heart descend into hell, and through that thought ascend into heaven. Strengthened by this thought, *turn your attention to the highway* and concern yourselves with entering upon a safe road strive zealously lest you fall [or] lose your way.

#### OCTOBER 11

Blessed James of Ulm  
Friar and Religious

Blessed James was born at Ulm, Germany, in 1407 and spent his early years as a mercenary soldier. Once when passing through Bologna he stopped to pray at the tomb of Saint Dominic. He experienced a conversion and asked to be admitted to the Order as a co-operator brother. He pursued the art of stained-glass making and his work can still be seen the in the chapel of the Bentivoglio palace and in the cathedral of Saint Petronius in Bologna. He is remembered for his humble obedience and his contemplation on the passion of the Savior. He died on October 11, 1491, at Bologna.

#### OCTOBER 13

Blessed Magdalen Panatieri  
Lay Dominican and Virgin

Blessed Magdalen was born at Turino, Italy, in 1443 and while still quite young was received as a tertiary by the Sisters of Penance of Saint Dominic. She received many spiritual graces, including the stigmata, but was best known for her ministry to the children of the town, whom she cared for and catechized. Her prayer was always that she be in the world, but not of the world. Much revered by the people of the city, she died October 13, 1503.

#### OCTOBER 21

Blessed Peter of Città di Castello  
Friar and Priest

Blessed Peter was born in Città di Castello in 1390 and at the age of fifteen received the habit in the reformed priory of Cortona where he was to spend his entire Dominican life. Sustained by a life of contemplation and penance he became a zealous and effective preacher. In his preaching he often urged his listeners to meditate upon their own mortal death so as to avoid eternal death. He died at Cortona on October 21, 1445.

#### OCTOBER 22

Anniversary of the Dedication of A Church

## Solemnity

When the actual date of the dedication of a church is unknown, our liturgical custom provides for the celebration of its anniversary on October 22, the day on which the Dominican church at Toulouse (Les Jacobins) was dedicated in 1385. This church which was one of the most famous of the Dominican churches in the early days of the Order was designated by Pope Urban V in 1328 as the resting place for the remains of Saint Thomas Aquinas.

## Office of Readings

### Second Reading

From a sermon of our brother John Tauler.

*"It is fitting that I stay in your house."*

All the rites and external ceremonies with which the holy Church observes today's festivities draw us into our inner selves and focus a person upon that part of us where true dedication and constant renewal ought to be found. Besides this, they invite us and urge us to truly prepare ourselves for Almighty God to perfectly celebrate a banquet, that is, our nuptials, in our house.

On this feast of the Dedication of a Church we read about Zacchaeus who greatly desired to see the Lord but was unable to do so because he was *short in stature*. So he climbed a *sycamore tree*. Similarly someone may desire to view more closely the one who has stirred up these inner wonders and powerful feelings, but because of short stature is unable to do so. What, therefore, should be done? Surely that person should climb a *sycamore tree*, that is, put into practice all those things of which we spoke previously, for example, the mortification of the senses and our human nature. Thus, one lives in that interior self with whom God walks, as you have heard. Among the wise of this world such conduct is reputed to be the greatest foolishness that they have ever heard. But consider it certain, most dear ones, that this is the foolishness that God prefers. Listen to the Lord who says: I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to children.

But to Zacchaeus already lodged in the tree let us see what the Lord will say. He says, *Zacchaeus, hurry down*. So now, by all means, you should come down here, that is, from all these things do not keep even a tiny bit for yourself, but come down to your barest nothingness, possess nothing, and consider nothing as your own. Christ adds: *Today I must stay at your house*, for that is the one thing necessary for me. If perchance someone has already climbed into the tree and perceived a certain glimmer of truth, but has not possessed it or properly grasped it, it may be that such a person may yet have a natural inclination toward or an adhesion to that same truth. Both nature and grace together might yet operate within that person, even though a true spirit of resignation has not been attained.

Truly, whatever operates by nature always has a certain stain and is not perfectly pure. For this reason God bids Zacchaeus to come down, that is, to deny, lose, to leave behind and to mortify his nature in all those ways by which he might cling to a spirit of ownership. Christ said: *Today I must stay at your house*. This "today" means eternity. Thus, he later adds: *Today salvation has come to this house*, a salvation bestowed on all of us by the kindness and mercy of our Creator, who is blessed for all ages. Amen.

## Alternative Second Reading

From a sermon of our brother John Tauler.

*"My house shall be called a house of prayer."*

Our Lord and Redeemer himself ordained and taught what must be done to succeed in making our inner selves houses of prayer. For the apostle Paul says: *The temple of God is holy, and you are that temple.*

The Lord says: *My house shall be called a house of prayer.* For prayer we need devotion. And what is devotion? Devotion is a certain consecrating of oneself to God and binding oneself interiorly with the intention of and desire for eternity. Therefore, insofar as you so bind and oblige yourself to God, you have devotion wherever you may be or whatever good works you may do, and of whatever kind they may be. It is not necessary for devotion that you always be l or experience great delight. Indeed, these are peripheral things. But the substance or essence of devotion consists in this interior offering of oneself or uniting oneself or binding oneself to God. This devotion has great power and efficacy. Devotion acts as a battering ram to the wall of our resistance and so opens a path for us to enter that *kingdom of God which is within us*. In the presence of devotion the walls of resistance collapse.

Saint Hilary tells us of three conditions which afford us a short-cut for arriving at this kingdom: the first is true faith, the second is an intellectual or rational understanding of God, the third is prayer. And what is faith? It is evident that not all Christians are faithful. Rather, just as in a cemetery many lie buried, so within the holy Church there are very many who appear to be alive but in fact are dead. Therefore I' ask, what is a living faith? Nothing else than a certain living fervor flowing from our inner selves toward God and toward divine things.

The second is an intellectual or rational understanding of God. This understanding itself is found in this kingdom. It is not that by which you reach out to other things, nor need you make an exhaustive search for it. Understanding is there for the finding, and reveals and discloses itself. Here the light itself shines. Here one enters that kingdom not through the main entrance, but through the narrow gate and the direct way. It may be said most truly of those who reach this goal, *the kingdom of God is within you*. They themselves discover that truth, unknown to all those who do not reside with them in the house, and known only to all who do reside there.

The third condition that this holy man here mentions is prayer. But what is prayer? First of all, as others have truly down to us; it is the raising of the mind to God. But in a more spiritual or a more exact sense, prayer is a resolute turning inward, prompted by the eternal Godhead, by which the created spirit is united to the uncreated spirit of God.

Those who pray in this manner are *true worshipers, worshiping the Father in spirit and truth*. As the Lord said, the Father seeks such people who worship thus. Whatever such people ask for they obtain, and they find whatever they seek. In this kind of prayer both something is gained and something is given up. You may ask, "What is given up?" The temple and the spirit and all those things about which we spoke above. To what end have these things been given up? Certainly that they may flow forth into God, and with God become one spirit. As the Apostle says: *Whoever clings to God is one spirit with God*. What that may be and the way in which it is done may be more easily felt than expressed

in words. And whatever is spoken of here expresses less of the truth of the matter than the eye of a single needle compared to the vastness of the heavens. May God help us to experience this more and more. And may it make us worthy to stand before the sublime and adorable Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

#### OCTOBER 25

Blessed Peter of Geremia  
Friar and Priest

Blessed Peter was born at Palermo in 1399 and attended the University of Bologna to pursue the study of law. However, he gave up a promising legal career and entered the Order, making his profession in 1423 at Fiesole in the priory of San Domenico where Saint Antoninus was prior. He himself served as prior in several houses and was a zealous promoter of regular observance, the life of study and the ministry of preaching. Pope Eugene IV summoned him to serve at the Council of Constance in 1439. He returned to Sicily where he continued to foster the reform of the Order and died there on March 3, 1452.

#### OCTOBER 26

Blessed Damian of Finale  
Friar and Priest

Damian Furcheri was born towards the beginning of the fifteenth century at Perti, a city near Finario (now Finale Borgo), near Genoa. He is remembered for his preaching, especially his insistence upon repentance and the renewal of regular life. He died at Reggio Emilia near Modena in 1484.

#### OCTOBER 27

Blessed Bartholomew of Vicenza  
Friar and Bishop

Blessed Bartholomew Breganza was born at Vicenza around 1200 and received the habit from Saint Dominic at Bologna. For several years he preached throughout Lombardy and Emilia and labored to restore peace and public order. In 1253 he was named bishop of Limassol, Cyprus, and in 1255 was transferred to Vicenza, where again he worked to reconcile warring factions. He was present at the second translation of the remains of Saint Dominic in 1267 and preached the sermon on that occasion. He died at Vicenza in 1270. His friend King Louis IX of France gave a portion of the crown of thorns of our Lord which he housed in a church built for this purpose.

#### OCTOBER 30

Blessed Benvenuta Bojani  
Lay Dominican and Virgin

Blessed Benvenuta was born on May 4, 1255, at Cividale del Friuli. She became a member of the Sisters of Penance and devoted herself to a life of penance for the conversion of sinners. Through the intercession of Saint Dominic she was healed of a serious illness and devoted the remainder of her life to prayer and even greater penance. She died on October 30, 1292.

## NOVEMBER

NOVEMBER 1

All Saints

Solemnity

Second Reading

From the writings of our brother, Louis of Granada.

*"The knowledge of God comes through creation and through grace."*

All agree that the knowledge of God is the fountain and foundation of all our joy and happiness. This is the true knowledge and the genuine theology of Christians, being the queen and mistress of all the sciences. For if, as Aristotle says, the greatest science is that which treats of most noble matters, what is more noble or lofty than God. Indeed, God praises this knowledge through Jeremiah saying: Do not let the wise boast of their wisdom, nor the mighty boast of their strength, nor the rich boast of their wealth, but let whoever boasts, boast of their learning and knowledge of me. This knowledge is the most lofty, the most divine, the most useful, the most delightful and the most needed of all the sciences which the human mind can grasp.

The blessed in heaven have this knowledge for they see the divine essence clearly. Since such knowledge is not possible in this life, we need to consider the works of God which were accomplished out of God's goodness and wisdom and offer us some notion of their source and cause.

Some of the works of God are accomplished according to nature, others according to grace. Those accomplished according to nature are the works of creation and pertain to the nourishment of our bodies; but those accomplished according to grace pertain to our sanctification. Although these works are many, the source and font from which they spring is the work of our redemption.

Thus, it is clear that these two most eminent works of God are like two great books which we can read throughout our entire life and so be drawn by them to the knowledge of God and of the greatness and beauty of the perfections of God which shine forth in these works as in a clear mirror. When we shall attain union with God, we will have the most delightful contemplation which is the true food and health of our souls.

NOVEMBER 3

Saint Martin de Porres

Friar and Religious Feast

Martin de Porres was born in Lima, Peru, in 1579 of John, a Spanish nobleman, and Anna Velasquez, a freed slave. As a boy he studied medicine which later, as a member of the Order, he put to good use in helping the poor. Martin was received as a servant at the priory of the Holy Rosary in Lima where he was finally admitted to profession as a co-operator brother in 1603. In his life of prayer life Martin was especially devoted to the Blessed Sacrament and to the passion of our Lord. He was noted for his care of the poor and the sick. He died at Lima on November 3, 1639.

## Second Reading

From the Dialogue of Saint Catherine of Siena.

*"Concerning the variety of gifts in the Church."*

The soul in love with my truth never ceases doing service for all the world, universally and in particular, in proportion to her own burning desire and to the disposition of those who receive. Her loving charity benefits herself first of all, as I have told you, when she conceives that virtue from which she draws the life of grace. Blessed with this unitive love she reaches out in loving charity to the whole world's need for salvation. But beyond a general love for all people she sets her eye on the specific needs of her neighbors and comes to the aid of those nearest her according to the graces I have given her for ministry: Some she teaches by word, giving sincere and impartial counsel; others she teaches by her example – as everyone ought to – edifying her neighbors by her good, holy, honorable life.

These are the virtues, with innumerable others, that are brought to birth in love of neighbor. But why have I established such differences? Why do I give this person one virtue and that person another, rather than giving them all to one person? It is true that all the virtues are bound together, and it is impossible to have one without having them all. But I give them in different ways so that one virtue might be, as it were, the source of all the others. So to one person I give charity as the primary virtue, to another justice, to another humility, to another a lively faith or prudence or temperance or patience, and to still another courage.

The same is true of many of my gifts and graces, virtues and other spiritual gifts, and those things necessary for the body and human life. I have distributed them all in such a way that no one has all of them. Thus have I given you reason – necessity, in fact – to practice mutual charity. For I could well have supplied each of you with all your needs, both spiritual and material. But I wanted to make you dependent on one another so that each of you would be my minister, dispensing the graces and gifts you have received from me. So whether you will it or not, you cannot escape the exercise of charity! Yet, unless you do it for love of me, it is worth nothing to you in the realm of grace.

## Alternative Second Reading

From the letter of Blessed Humbert of Romans **On Regular Observance**.

*"Carefully consider to what you have come in leaving the world."*

To more perfectly reach the end you desire, [dear brothers,] consider carefully to what you have come in leaving the world.

Break your wills and realize that you are dead to the world.

Cast from your hearts idle thoughts, unworthy affections, bad intentions, violent actions, useless sadness, self-centered love and individual feelings. Before the eyes of God be fearful of such thoughts, which you would blush to carry into action before human eyes.

Each of you should strive to have a heart that is like a garden abloom with trees of virtues, like a storeroom filled with the perfumes of holy affections, like a flower giving off a heavenly dew, like a box enclosing within it a marvelous treasure, like a fountain always flowing with streams of devotion, like a mirror depicting the image of God. O

happy heart which shows itself to be a throne on which God may sit, a chamber in which God may rest, a seal on which the likeness of God is impressed, a cellar filled with God's own vintage, a book in which God's memories are written, gold which God molds to any form.

Each of you should strive again and again to have a heart dedicated to God, discerning in its thoughts, wary in temptation, free of anger, separated from judgments, pining with longing for eternity, wounded with love, shining in intellect, careful in works, raised up by contemplation, concerned about the good, cut to pieces by sorrow for sin, holy in its manner of life, guarded by fear, adorned with grace.

Finally, [brothers,] let us strive most eagerly to turn away from sin with our whole heart by avoiding faults; let us turn to the Lord with our whole heart by doing penance. Let us seek the Lord with our whole heart by begging pardon; let us cling to the Lord with our whole heart loving God above all things; let us serve the Lord with our whole heart with our praise; with our whole heart let us follow the path of the Lord by our pursuit. We really owe all this to the Lord who gives our heart countless gifts.

The Lord illumines our hearts with wisdom, governs them with goodness, feeds them with delights, draws them with beauty, changes them with power, makes them one with love, allures them with promises, teaches them with harsh blows, shakes them with threats, and softens them with blessings.

Our most delightful God looks into our hearts by proving them, speaks by informing them, touches by stirring them, visits in consoling them, gives life by justifying them, and opens them by shedding light on them.

For all these gifts it behooves us to thank God tirelessly.

#### Alternative Second Reading

From the writings of our brother, Luis of Granada.

*"God is generous and does great things."*

*Happy the just for it will be well with them.* This is the message which God sent to all the just through the prophet Isaiah – few words, but great in the rewards promised. While we tend to be generous in promises and parsimonious in deeds, God is so generous and does such noble deeds that however great the promises, they remain less than what God accomplishes.

What could be said more briefly than *happy the just for it will be with them*. How much is hidden in the word *well*! I believe that was said without any explanation or nuance that we might know this cannot be explained as it truly is. Nor is it necessary to distinguish these goods and those goods, since that word well includes everything. Here is hidden the timeless and boundless.

Therefore when Moses inquired about the name of God, the answer was *I am who am*. Nothing more was added showing that this name was not finite but universal, that it contained every kind of being and every perfection which could apply to that name without implying imperfection. Indeed, here we find that very brief word well with no additional explanation, to indicate that in this good is the sum of all goods which the human heart can seek. God promises that good to the just as a reward for virtue.

Two things are necessary for the human heart to be endowed with virtue first, one must truly try to be virtuous; secondly, one must know how to be virtuous. I began to treat

these matters because I have seen many, who while praising virtue, pursue vice. It seems to me one reason for this is that the genus and nature of virtue is not understood, since it is considered to be something difficult, fruitless, and joyless. Whoever strives to honor this mistress and places her on a royal throne is well deserving of all goods, for she is queen and mistress of all that is.

#### NOVEMBER 5

Blessed Simon Ballachi  
Friar and Religious

Blessed Simon was born at Santarcangelo (di Romagna) near Rimini, Italy, about 1240 and entered the Order as a cooperator brother at Rimini. In imitation of his Holy Father Dominic Simon practiced severe penances for the conversion of sinners. He was noted for his simplicity of life and his compassion for others, especially for little children whom he taught the fundamental truths of the Christian life. He died at Rimini on November 3, 1319.

#### NOVEMBER 6

Blessed Francis de Capillas and Alfonsus Navarrete, Friars and Priests, and Companions,  
Martyrs of the Far East      Memorial

Today in one celebration the Order commemorates several of its martyrs of the Far East. They shed their blood for the sake of the Gospel in Japan and China at various times during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

1. Japan: Alfonsus Navarrete, a Spanish Dominican, was beheaded at Omura on June 1, 1617. In 1622 nine Spanish Dominicans were burned to death at Nagasaki. During the years 1614-1632 more than a hundred Spanish and native Japanese Dominicans – novices, cooperator brothers and tertiaries and confraternity members – were martyred.
2. China: Francis de Capillas, a Spanish Dominican, labored for a number of years in the Philippines before going to China in 1642. During a persecution he was beheaded at Fogan on January 15, 1648. In the following century several Spanish Dominicans were martyred at Foochow: Bishop Peter Sanz on May 26, 1747; and on October 28, 1748, Bishop Francis Serrano along with the priests Joachim Royo, John Alcober and Francisco Diaz.

The martyrs of Vietnam, formerly commemorated on this day, are now commemorated on November 24.

#### Office of Readings

##### Second Reading

From the encyclical letter of Antoninus Bremond, Master of the Order, to the entire Order of Preachers on the occasion of the martyrdom of Blessed Peter Sanz and his companions.

*"Let us be their followers."*

You understand, [brothers,] the debt of thanks we owe because of God's goodness to us. Among the Dominicans of our generation God has raised up and chosen those rich in virtue, *mighty among the powerful*, proclaiming the message among the prophets, courageous in combat, despising life, triumphant in death. These are the ones who, after

experiencing insults and blows, chains and prisons, *have been unable to be separated from God – not by tribulation or anguish or hunger or nakedness or persecution or the sword. Instead, they have overcome everything for the sake of him who has loved us.*

Surely if we congratulate them, if we congratulate ourselves, it is because *their names, now written in heaven*, have brought a new and eternal honor to our annals and have given us a new encouragement to virtue. For who would not be so stirred by these magnificent triumphs that they would not feel themselves incited, as by a sting, to set out on the apostolic way that our brothers have pointed out to us by coloring it with their blood? Are not our hearts inflamed within us when we hear these things. Do we not burn with zeal for the faith *to go ourselves and die with them?*

Here, [dear brothers,] are the desires of apostolic hearts, *here is their boundless reward*, here the glory of the institute wherein we labor, a glory acquired by our forebears, increased by our contemporaries and now proposed for our emulation.

*Do not grow lazy, then, but imitate those who, by faith and endurance, have received the heritage of the promises.* Let us hasten to the combat that lies before us, *taking the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit, girding our loins with the truth, clothed with the breastplate of justice and having shod our feet with the equipment of the gospel of peace.*

If we cannot follow these courageous athletes of Christ in chains and in death, let us at least be their disciples in faith and charity, in knowledge and longsuffering, "preserving innocence in simplicity, concord in charity, reserve in humility, constancy in the defense of the truth, rigor in obedience. May we never stray from the path of exemplary conduct, but *let our light shine before all and glorify our Father who is in heaven.*"

These are the footprints that they have left behind as they returned to their homeland so that, walking in their path, we might also share in their joy. They invite us there most affectionately, they wait for us there most ardently, "already certain of their immortality but still we see them and embrace them! *Then let us strengthen our weary hands and our weakened knees*; let the hope of such a great reward give us courage to face with ardor *the insignificant tribulation of the moment that will prepare us for an eternal weight of glory. If we suffer with them we will reign with them*, for the reward has not been prepared solely for those who have perished for the name of the Lord by the cruelty of the impious; for the whole body of God's servants, just as it has been crucified in Christ, will be crowned in Christ.

Farewell! Remember us and our assistants in your sacrifices and prayers.

Given at Rome, in our convent of the Minerva, September 20, 1748.

#### Alternative Second Reading

From a letter of Saint Valentine de Berrio-Ochoa, vicar apostolic of Central Tonkin.

*"They venerated the sign of our redemption."*

The magistrates of Tonkin, [part of present day Vietnam,] scattered crosses and images of Christ crucified on the public roads and stationed guards to observe the movement and gestures of the passers-by as they passed the places where the crosses were lying on the roads. Whoever in taking notice of the sign of our redemption stopped, or retraced their steps, or took another way, gave testimony to the faith they professed. And so the guards

had no doubt that such persons considered the Lord Jesus, whose image they had venerated, to be God.

Therefore, the guards arrested these faithful ones, brought them before the magistrate, and unleashed every kind of furious attack upon these gentle disciples of the cross by subjecting them to the most severe punishments. As a result, many Christians who needed to procure food in other towns remained shut up in their own villages, suffering the pangs of hunger and misery rather than betraying their faith or facing the danger of denying the Lord Jesus in human sight.

The gate of the principal city, Nam Dinh, was made unapproachable to Christians. For at that place there was not only one cross but many crosses at each gate. At these gates, which faced the east, the west, and the north, the crosses were placed in such a manner that any traveler who passed through would necessarily trample on one cross or another.

Moreover, they not only prepared a trap for faithful Christians at the gates, but even in prison positioned three women guards, one keeping watch at each cross. Yet with the aid of the Divine assistance the prefect of the guard, who was the supreme ruler of the city as well, was disposed with a friendly spirit. As a result when any Christians would bring food to those bound in chains, the cross was removed and they could walk in freely.

But this did not curb the hatred of those magistrates towards Christ crucified. They thought up other ways of despising the Divine Savior. They hung crosses upside down in the prow, at the helm, and on the masts of the fishing boats, whether those who fished were Christians or pagans. As a result when the highest magistrate was carried in his litter along the watercourses of the city, he gazed upon the image of him *in whose name every knee should bend in heaven, on earth, and under the earth*. Thus everywhere there was great vilification, mockery and defamation.

*O great and bitter day of the Lord!* How is it that you make such misfortunes fall upon us! O God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! *When will you place all the enemies of your Son as a footstool for his feet?*

While we cry out *to the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation*, from the very depth of our anguished spirit we make supplication *that in your every prayer and offering with thanksgiving* you be mindful of us and of all those whose belief strengthens our own faith. We pray that our Lord and God may look upon us with mercy and break the yoke of our slavery. But if that is not possible, m\_ God enliven our faith, increase our hope, inflame our charity and make our hearts steadfast to fight vigorously and triumph over our enemies by dying for the glory of God's holy Name.

For our part let us never forget to raise our hands to heaven and plead with God, to pour forth torrents of grace upon you and upon those who by their alms sustain both ourselves and many of our neophytes.

May the final perfection of charity be the reward of such great charity. Amen.

NOVEMBER 7

All Saints of the Order of Preachers Feast

Today we faithfully remember "those who have gone before us the family of Saint Dominic and who offer us the example of their way of life, their company in the communion of saints, and the help of their intercession. By this celebration may we be moved to imitate them and be strengthened in the spirit of our vocation."

## Second Reading

From an encyclical letter of Blessed Jordan of Saxony, Master of the Order.

*"Do not forget your profession."*

To all my beloved sons in Christ Jesus, the brothers in the Province of Lombardy, salvation and a fervent spirit!

Since I cannot come to you in person, as I should like to, my love for you prompts me and my concern to be useful to you urges me not to neglect this opportunity to pay you a kind of visit in writing. So long as we are still in this place of pilgrimage, so long as human hearts are crooked and prone to sin, lazy and feeble in virtue, we need to be encouraged and roused, so that brother may be helped by brother, and the eagerness of heavenly love rekindle the flame in our spirit which our everyday carelessness and tepidity tend to extinguish.

This is why, my dearest sons, I beg you, with all the force I have, not to forget your holy purpose and your profession. By the precious Blood which redeemed you, by that loving death which restored you to life, I urge you to think of those "ancient paths" by which our predecessors hastened to their rest with all the intensity of their spirit, and now reign with the Lord, for ever comforted in bliss and repose; all the days of pain with which God humbled them have now been turned to joy. When they lived on earth, it was for spiritual gifts that they were jealous; they thought little of themselves and scorned the world. It was the kingdom they longed for, and so they were strong to endure hardship, enthusiastic for poverty, on fire with love.

Surely our father Dominic, of holy memory, was one of these. When he was living with us in the flesh, he walked by the Spirit, not only not fulfilling the desires of the flesh, but actually quenching them at the source. He displayed a true spirit of poverty in his clothing, his food and his behavior. He prayed constantly, was outstandingly compassionate, used to intercede for his sons with abundant tears because of the fervor of his zeal for souls. Difficulties did not daunt him, obstacles did not worry him.

We could see from the works he accomplished, from his virtues and miracles, what a great man he was on earth. Now that he is with God, his greatness has been made known to us in these last days, when we were moving his holy body from its previous burial place to a more noble tomb.

Praise to our Redeemer! Praise to Jesus Christ, the Son of God, for choosing such a man as this to be his servant and for setting such a man over us as our father, to form us by his religious training and inspire us by the example of his resplendent holiness.

Not that I would want to deny that there are some among you, by the mercy of God, for me to rejoice over and thank God for; there are some whose aim is beauty, who do cultivate their consciences, who do seek perfection and who do work hard at their preaching, who are zealous in study, whose hearts catch fire in their prayers and meditations, who *keep the Lord always before them*, looking to him as the one who will reward and judge their souls.

[My dearest brethren,] rejoice, if you are such as these, and seek to abound still more. But if you are not yet like this, work at it, devote energy and attention to it, so that you may grow towards salvation in him who called you to this state of grace in which you find yourself, not to make you lukewarm, but to make you perfect. He it is who is our

Savior, loving and good, the Son of God, Jesus Christ, to whom be honor and dominion now and for ever and ever. Amen.

#### Alternative Second Reading

From a letter of Blessed Benedict XI to the friars of the Order gathered in General Chapter at Toulouse, March 10, 1304.

*"These branches of Christ enlighten all by their evangelical living."*

For the glory of God's name and the salvation of the faithful, from the delightful garden of the holy Church the unspeakable providence of the Creator has produced in these latter days among its lovely and fertile plants the outstanding Order of Preachers as a tree of life. Saturated with the blessing of a heavenly dew it has happily progressed from its beginnings by a praiseworthy growth and under the influence of divine grace has advanced on high. It has spread far and wide that by its height it may touch the heavens and may extend its fruitful branches to the furthest bounds of the world.

[ These are the branches remaining on the true vine, Christ, namely, the members of the Order of Saint Dominic. Purged of the superfluities of earthly existence and having rejected the burdens of riches, they deny themselves to their advantage. Having embraced poverty and professed to live a regular life, they bring the sweet flowers and rich fruits of honor and integrity to the banquet of the heavenly king.

These are the chosen ministers of Christ, outstanding for their religious spirit and most splendid in their integrity of life. It is evident the wisdom of God has given them as a light for the nations, as shining stars in the firmament of the Church, and as burning lamps in the house of God. They enlighten everyone by their example of evangelical living and by beams of spiritual light show the way of life to mortals.

These are the outstanding warriors who fight against the enemies of the soul and the foes of holy Church with the shield of faith, the sword of the spirit and the armor of justice. They hope by their endurance to effect an increase of virtue among Catholics everywhere, to open the way of salvation to sinners, and to destroy the madness of heretical perversity.]

Therefore you, who are most dear to us, should consider and ponder with vigilant attention the firmest foundations of that aforementioned Order, namely, outstanding leaders, the strong soldiers, and the unwearied fighters from whose number many have advanced to the heavenly homeland. They have been solemnly inscribed among the number of the saints, guests at the heavenly banquet and secure possessors of our eternal homeland. That you be not unworthy of such saints but heirs, you ought to be their faithful imitators and ceaselessly follow in the safe footsteps of those who left you such clear and sure examples of religious and upright living. Keep entirely free from every stain that Order which enjoys the honor of perfect beauty, is enriched by so many graces through the mercy of God and the Apostolic See, and is supported by gifts and strengthened by privileges.

Since from youth the human senses are truly prone to evil and the uncontrolled flesh easily turns to wrongdoing, you should strive with the utmost diligence to be found fervent in religion, zealous for justice, and upright in judgment. May the knowledge and skill required for rooting out vice flourish among you.

In your actions let a precious humility shine forth, a pious devotion grow, a holy obedience make you pleasing, a true patience continue. May you be one in heart in all your actions, harmonious in charity, tranquil in peace and, in those things which the integrity of regular life demands, rightly disposed before God and all. In this way you may be safe from spiritual idleness and not expose yourselves to the snares of the cunning enemy through the inactivity of leisure.

Be assiduously vigilant to the study of sacred doctrine by which we obtain much merit and honor. Be attentive to frequent preaching and the hearing of confessions, to which you are particularly deputed. Enter upon these tasks diligently and carefully. Occupy yourselves in the above-mentioned tasks and other honorable and approved duties, so that unseemly activity may not find a place in you. May you be completely anchored in the author of your salvation, your hope and your consolation. Furthermore, may you show such reverence and honor to the prelates of the Churches that you may deservedly obtain their favor and benevolence.

In this way you may come to be of advantage to yourselves by a meritorious life, and to others by your example. In this way by sowing your seed with toil, with joy you may bring back your glorious sheaves to the heavenly threshing-floor. In this way both for yourselves and for your neighbors, as befits your holiness, you will acquire the glory of everlasting light.

#### Alternative Second Reading

From the Essay on the *Re-establishment in France of the Order of Preachers* of our brother, Henri-Dominique Lacordaire.

*"Dominic was the gardener of Christ."*

In the thirteenth century the people's faith was deep. The Church still dominated the society which she had overcome. However the European world-view, which had been slowly worked upon by time and by Christianity, was approaching the crises of adolescence. The vision Pope Innocent III had seen from his bed – a Church that was tottering – Saint Dominic revealed to the whole world. When everyone believed that the Church was queen and mistress, Dominic declared that nothing less than a resurgence of the primitive apostolic preaching was required to save her. Disciples responded to Saint Dominic as they had to Peter the Hermit: many became preachers just as many had become crusaders.

All the universities of Europe contributed masters and students. Jordan of Saxony, the second Master of the Order, gave the habit to more than a thousand friars, whom he had attracted to this new kind of life. In five years, Saint Dominic who, before the bull of Honorius had only sixteen collaborators – eight Frenchmen, seven Spaniards and one Englishman – founded sixty convents filled with exceptional men and many who were quite young.

Like their Master all of them wanted to be poor at a time when the Church was rich, poor even to the extent of being beggars. All of them, like their Father, at a time when the Church was powerful, wanted to exercise only one kind of authority: the voluntary surrender of human minds to virtue. They did not say as the heretics did: "The Church must be despoiled!" But rather they despoiled the Church in themselves and by themselves. Thus they could show the people a pure Church as it was at the beginning.

They loved God, they loved God truly, they loved God above all else. They loved their neighbor as themselves and more than themselves. They had received in their hearts that wound which has made all the saints eloquent. In addition to this asset of a passionate soul, without which no orator has ever existed, the Friars Preachers showed considerable shrewdness in grasping the kind of preaching which was suited to their time.

I shall mention some of the names which oblivion will never destroy: in the thirteenth century Saint Hyacinth, apostle of the north, whose progress could he. followed by means of the convents he planted as he went; Saint Peter of Verona who was felled by the assassins' sword after a long apostolic career and with the blood that flowed from his wounds wrote the first words of the Apostles' Creed on the ground, "I believe in God." In the fourteenth century Henry Suso, that lovable young man from Swabia, preached with such success that enemies set a price on his head. During the same period, John Tattler, was acclaimed in Cologne and throughout all of Germany.

I also mention Saint Vincent Ferrer who in the fifteenth century evangelized Spain, France, Italy, Germany, England, Scotland and Ireland. Girolomo Savonarola was burned alive in the midst of an ungrateful people, but to no effect, since his virtue and his glory rose higher than the flames at the stake. Pope Paul III declared that he would regard as suspect of heresy anyone who dared to accuse Savonarola of heresy.

I also mention Saint Thomas Aquinas who quickly became the merit distinguished doctor of the Catholic Church; Fra Angelico, of whom Michelangelo said, no one could paint such figures unless he had first seen them in heaven; Bartolome de las Casas, and others.

Let us leave these revered names in the safe-keeping of those who know them and call upon them, and let us end our brief sketch of this huge Order with the words in which in the fourteenth century one of the greatest of Christian poets, that celebrated bard of the Divine Comedy, sang its praises:

"He was called Dominic, and I speak of him as the gardener chosen by Christ to help him in his garden. By his teaching as well as by his willing apostolic zeal Dominic rushed in to the garden as if he were a torrent of water falling bean the heavens. From him there flowed many small streams which watered this catholic garden."

#### Alternative Second Reading

From the **Mystical Evolution** of our brother, John Arintero.

*"Through new saints and prophets in the Spirit the holiness of the Church increases."*

Mystical progress is the only true and integral progress. It is the only one in which nature really attains the fullness of its perfections at the same time that it is enriched with divine splendors. It is a continual increase in life and energies in which, growing in all things according to the true Exemplar, we can arrive at that stature of the perfect person.

Nevertheless there are some who think that, although all the members of the Church should increase in life, or what is the same, in virtue and sanctity, the Church itself cannot increase or mystically evolve, for it was holy from the very beginning and it is not to be supposed that now it would have greater saints or more abundant charisms than it had before. But then, neither can the Church be said to grow in unity and catholicity, for it was always, at least virtually, one and catholic. The Church should grow in all things because it must always be built up more and more.

This building up is effected principally in charity and, therefore, in sanctity and justice. The Christian ideal is not a limited pro Tb achieve the true deification of the greatest possible assimilation and union with God. To achieve this we must strive to be identified in a certain manner with God's infinite sanctity, letting ourselves fully possess the Spirit of sanctification and be configured in all things with the incarnate Word.

As a greater number of the faithful is truly sanctified by realizing this sublime ideal, it is clear that the integral life and therefore the true sanctity of the whole mystical body are increased. During this development the perfection of the saints is effected more and more in the works of their ministry, and new and precious fruits of sanctification are continually appearing and ripening on this tree of life. In each new saint we can say that there appears a new form of sanctity, and in all of them together is manifested more and more clearly the treasures of virtue and life which are buried in Jesus Christ. Thus the feast of All Saints stands out in a glorious manner in as much as it manifests outwardly the hidden life of Jesus who is within. This excellence of perfection is nothing else than the overflowing of his Spirit which is poured out in them.

[ So it is that the entire organism of the Church is able to "grow up in him who is the head, even Christ." It is not true to say, then, that there will never be greater saints than the early saints, and it is not enough to say that no saint can compare with Christ, the Blessed Virgin, the apostles, and the early disciples, in order to prove that the Church does not progress in holiness nor evolve mystically. This would be to reduce the whole edifice to its most solid foundations, and the whole brilliant mystical body of the Church, adult and robust, possessing various organs and a diversity of functions, would be reduced to its simple embryonic members. ]

Jesus Christ, the founder of the Church, was and is always the head of this mystical body which he directs and governs and keeps united. He distributes to it energies and graces; he watches over its prosperity; and with his Spirit he animates it and impels it to develop and grow in all things. He is with us today as yesterday and he will remain with us always, according to his promise: *I am with you always even to the end of the world.* He gave solidity to the firm cement of the apostles, but these are not the entire tower or holy house of the Lord nor even its mitt foundation. Aiding them, upon the cornerstone, are all the new apostles and prophets in the Spirit.

[ Until this happens, the Church will ever increase and progress, strictly-speaking even more than did Jesus, in wisdom and age and grace before God day by day. He himself will direct our feet along the paths of peace, of holiness, and of perfection. In these paths we shall have no other norm, no other light, and no other power but that of the divine Master who is the way, the truth, and the life. No fixed limit will he set to our progress other than the perfection of the heavenly Father incarnate in that Exemplar who is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, whose glory we have seen, the glory of the Only-begotten, full of grace and truth and from his fullness we have all received, until the perfection of the saints is consummated in the works of their ministry and the entire body is well organized or built up in charity. ]

NOVEMBER 8

Anniversary of Deceased Brothers and Sisters of the Order

The practice of the universal Church has associated the feast of All Saints with that of All Souls, emphasizing the fundamental truth of the communion of saints. According to the custom of our Order after celebrating the feast of All Saints of the Order of Preachers we too remember our brothers and sisters who have gone before us with the sign of faith and pray that they might enjoy eternal rest with the Lord.

### Second Reading

From the treatise On Death by Saint Cyprian.

*"We should not mourn for our brothers and sisters "*

To us the least and the last how often has it been revealed, how frequently and how plainly has it been commanded for the honor of God, that I should continuously bear witness and publicly preach that we should not mourn for our brothers and sisters who have been freed from this world by the summons of the Lord. We know they are not lost but rather sent ahead to precede those remaining on earth, like those who are setting out on a journey or like those making a sea voyage. We should long to be with them, not loudly lament over them. Nor should we here put on the black clothes of mourning when there they have already donned their white robes, lest we give occasion to the pagans rightly and deservedly to censure us for affirming that our deceased brothers and sisters live with God while we mourn for them as though they were destroyed and lost, and for proclaiming by word and voice that faith which we disprove by the testimony of our heart and soul. We are false to our hope and to our faith. What we say seems to be hypocritical, make-believe, lies. It is not to our advantage to profess virtue by words and to destroy the truth by deeds.

Finally, the apostle Paul rebuked, reprimanded, and condemned those who were sad to excess when he said: *We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose, again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died.* He stated that those were excessively sad who had no hope.

Why are we who live in hope, who believe in God, who trust that Christ has suffered for us and risen again, and who remain in Christ and through him and with him rise to life again unwilling to depart from this world or loudly bewail and are sad over the departure of our dear ones as though they were lost?

Remember Christ our Lord and God has himself advised and told us: *I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live; and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.* If we believe in Christ, if we have faith in his words and promises that we will never die, then with confident joy let us come to Christ, for with him we will always gain the victory and reign.

Even though we die, by death we pass over to immortality. We cannot approach eternal life unless we first depart from this life. This is not a passing away but rather a change and a passing over to eternity after the completion of our earthly journey. Who would not hasten to choose what is better? Who would not yearn to be changed and transformed into the likeness of Christ and to arrive more quickly at the dignity of heavenly glory? Listen to Paul the apostle preaching and teaching: *Our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will transform the*

*body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to his glorious body, by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself.*

Let us welcome that day which assigns a dwelling-place to each person, which after taking us from this world and releasing us from earthly snares restores us to paradise and to the kingdom. Who, when traveling in a foreign country, would not hasten to return to their native land? Who, when sailing to rejoin their loved ones, would not long the more ardently for a favorable wind that they might swiftly embrace their dear ones?

We consider paradise to be our native land. There a great number of our loved ones await us. A large and overflowing crowd of parents, brothers, sisters, and children desire our presence, already sure of their own salvation and now solicitous for ours. Most beloved brothers and sisters, let us ardently long to soon be with them and to very soon come to Christ.

#### Alternative Second Reading

From the acts of canonization of our Holy Father Dominic.

*"From the testimony of brother Ventura of Verona concerning the death of our Holy Father Dominic."*

Towards the end of the month of July in the year 1221 the blessed brother Dominic returned from the curia of the lord Ugolino, then Cardinal of Ostia and papal legate, who was in Venice. He arrived exhausted because it was very hot weather and, although he was tired, he spent most of the night talking about the affairs of the Order with the witness, brother Ventura, who was then the new prior, and with brother Rudolph. Since the witness himself wished to sleep, he urged the blessed brother Dominic to go and rest and not rise tint Matins. But he refused and entering the church spent the night in prayer. He was present for Matins according to the report of the brothers and of brother Dominic himself.

The brothers reported that after Matins brother Dominic had a headache and from that time he began to show signs of the sickness which resulted in his going to the Lord. During his illness he refused to lie on a bed, but lay on some sacking. He had the novices brought to him and with words both moving and fervent he consoled them and urged them on towards Elicit salvation. Thus he patiently bore the sickness and all else and appeared to always be cheerful and happy.

When the sickness got worse, they carried him to Santa Maria del Monte which was considered a healthier place. Since he believed he was about to die, he called for the prior and the brothers of that community, who numbered almost twenty. When they had gathered around the place where he lay, blessed Dominic began to preach to them and gave an excellent and compelling sermon. The witness believes they then anointed him.

The witness heard from some of them that the monk who was the rector of the church had said that, if the blessed Dominic should die there, he would not allow him to be moved, but would bury him in the aforesaid church. When the witness related this to the aforesaid blessed brother Dominic, the blessed brother Dominic himself replied: "God forbid that I should be burned anywhere except under the feet of my brethren. Take me outside that I may die on the way and you may bury me in our church." And so they

carried him back to Bologna to the church of St. Nicholas, fearing all the while that he would die on the way.

An hour after they had returned he called the witness and said to him: "Prepare yourselves." When the prior and the other brethren had prepared themselves for the solemn commendation of his soul, the blessed brother Dominic said to them: "Wait a little longer." While all this was going on, the prior said to him: "Father, you know that you are leaving us desolate and sad. Remember us and pray to the Lord for us." And the blessed brother Dominic lifted his hands to heaven and said: "Holy Father, you know that I have gladly persevered in your will, and I have watched over and kept those whom you gave me. I commend them to you. Watch over them and keep them." The witness said that the brethren had told him that when they asked about themselves, Dominic replied: "I shall be more useful to you and more fruitful after my death than I was in my life."

A short time later the blessed brother Dominic said to the prior and the brethren: "Begin." They began the office for the solemn commendation of his soul and, as the witness believes, the blessed brother Dominic said the office with them because his lips were moving. The brethren firmly believe that he breathed his last while they were saying the words: "Come to his help, saints of God. Hasten to receive his soul, angels of the Lord and offer him to God the Most High."

#### Alternative Second Reading

From the Pastoral Constitution On the Church in the Modern World, **Gaudium et spes**, of the Second Vatican Council.

*"Through Christ and in Christ light is shed upon the riddle of sorrow and death."*

The enigma of the human condition is most evident when face to face with death. Humankind is tortured not just by progressive suffering and physical pain but also, or more, by the fear of perpetual extinction. Its instinctive judgment is correct in recoiling from and rejecting the total destruction and complete departure of the person. The seed of eternity which it bears cannot be reduced to mere matter and it revolts against death. All the efforts of technology, however beneficial, cannot allay human anxiety, and the prolongation of biological life cannot assuage the essential longing of the human heart for further life.

The imagination fails before death, but the Church learns from divine revelation to affirm that men and women have been created by God for a blessed destiny beyond the boundary of earthly unhappiness. And Christian faith teaches that the bodily death, from which they would have been immune had they not sinned, will be vanquished when they are restored by an all-powerful and merciful Savior to the salvation lost through their own fault.

For God has called women and men and is calling them to cleave to God with all their being in the everlasting communion of an incorruptible divine life. It was Christ who gained this victory when he freed them from death by his own death and rose again to life. Thus, to anyone who thinks about it, faith is proposed with solid arguments to provide the answer to human concern about fate, and at the same time it affords the opportunity of being in communion in Christ with beloved sisters and brothers who have

already been taken away by death, imparting the hope that they have attained to true life with God.

In fact, it is only in the mystery of the Word incarnate that light is shed on the mystery of humankind.

Christians are certainly subject to the need and the duty to struggle against evil through many tribulations and to suffer death; but they share in the paschal mystery and are configured to the death of Christ, and so are strengthened in the hope of attaining to the resurrection.

This applies not only to Christians but to all people of good will in whose hearts grace is secretly at work. Since Christ died for everyone, and since the ultimate calling of each of us comes from God and is therefore a universal one, we are obliged to hold that the Holy Spirit offers everyone the possibility of sharing in this paschal mystery in a manner known to God.

Such is the great mystery of humankind which is illuminated for believers through the Christian revelation. It is through Christ and in Christ that light is shed on the enigma of suffering and death, which would overwhelm us were it not for his gospel. Christ is risen, by his death destroying death, and has bestowed life on us so that, as children in the Son, we cry in the Spirit, "Abba, Father!"

Since the human nature which was assumed in him was not thereby destroyed, it was by that fact raised to a surpassing dignity in us also. For by his incarnation the Son of God united himself in some sense with every human being. He labored with human hands, thought with a human mind, acted with a human will, and loved with a human heart. Born of Mary the virgin he truly became one of us and, sin apart, was like us in every respect.

In freely shedding his blood as the innocent lamb, he merited life on our behalf and in him God has reconciled us together with himself and rescued us from slavery to the devil and sin, so that each one of us can say with St. Paul: the Son of God *loved me and gave himself for me*. Suffering for us, he not only set us an example to follow in his footsteps, but he also opened for us a way in which life and death are sanctified and given a fresh significance.

#### Alternative Second Reading

From the writings of our brother, Pierre André Liégé

*"To die together with Christ."*

Our faith in the sacrifice and death of Christ proclaims this event as the fountain and gate of all things which in our life take the form of sacrifice and renunciation. For does not the living God, through the cross of Jesus, reveal a God who turns death, as well as the other evils and calamities which happen in our life, into a living hope? Did not Jesus in his own sacrifice fully restore the relationships of humanity to God by accepting the ultimate spiritual agony?

To die together with Christ is to be bound over to the following of him, eagerly persisting in this very hope and in spiritual combat. Indeed, through spiritual combat we are freed together with Christ when for the love of God and of one another we expend ourselves, no matter what the cost, in opposing whatever falsehood or injustice, danger or violence, hatred or the plotting of the powerful, or fear that may stand in the way. In

hope, however, we are bound over to Christ when from the depths of our death, or of our own hopelessness or weaknesses, or of the unbelief or hopelessness of others – all those things utterly blameworthy in our life – we entrust ourselves completely to the care of the living God.

The paschal mystery shines forth in all renunciations whatsoever to which we give our consent, or in the frustrations we endure, or in the control we exercise over ourselves or in the discipline to which we subject ourselves. We are not speaking here of a certain kind of stoic wisdom or of a certain moral asceticism. Indeed, that life already renewed with Christ flows into the "dying with Christ." That life transforms our combat and our poverty; that life calls forth our sacrifice and our decision. *If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's.*

To die with Christ is to conquer the apathy of existence, to put aside greed, to abstain from fickleness, to dismiss levity of mind, to reject what is useless and what is done for appearances' sake, and to choose the gospel with sincerity and faithfully cling to it.

To die with Christ is to free oneself from riches and human glory, and to moderate one's life for the kingdom of God.

To die with Christ is to accept the risk of human love which demands the denial of self, or to accept the danger of witnessing to truth and justice before others, or to experience the difficulty of holding steadfastly to the faith one has received.

To die with Christ concerns those things which in our daily lives are austerities, or to sustain difficulties and accept change which brings about the renewal of fidelity.

To die with Christ is to accept one's own death as a sacrifice and a trusting burying of self in God, and also to accept in hope the deaths of our brothers, sisters and friends.

To die with Christ is to bear with a serene spirit the process of aging, the rejections, the losses – even in apostolic labors.

To die with Christ is to be freed from egoism and self-absorption through the various incentives to love, to share, to sympathize with and to be reconciled with others.

To die with Christ is to experience at times the darkness of faith and courageously to endure it.

So in every Christian life pursued with earnestness there are many occasions for self-denial and sacrifice even of what is necessary. Yet we must beware lest these occasions become merely routine actions. To everyone according to their own circumstances, or the time in which they live, or the vocation they have received, the Holy Spirit at the appropriate time makes a fitting appeal that each may hear. This happens more certainly in peace and joy than in external disturbances or in the excitement of the soul.

Truly the celebration of the Eucharist is by no means present where Christ, who shares his paschal sacrifice with believers who are joined together, does not assume to himself everything that in their life of sacrifice and evangelical self-denial gives that life its character. Indeed, everything must be changed into the fruit of life by the power of his resurrection. Is not this our way of celebrating the Eucharist?

NOVEMBER 14  
Blessed John Liccio  
Friar and Priest

Born around 1430 in Caccamo, Sicily, Blessed John entered the Order at the age of fifteen at the Priory of Saint Zita (Palermo) at the urging of Blessed Peter Geremia who clothed him in the habit. Known for his cheerful spirit and his charity, Blessed John promoted regular observance and devotion to Mary through the Rosary. Because of his preaching and concern for the poor he was called the "apostle of Sicily." He established a priory in his native city of Caccamo and became prior there in 1494. He died there on November 14, 1511.

#### NOVEMBER 14

Blessed Lucy of Narni  
Sister and Virgin

Blessed Lucy was born in Narni, Italy, in 1476. In 1491 she was betrothed to Pietro de Alessio, a Milanese nobleman, but he respected her virginity and allowed her to remain with her family. She received the habit in 1494 and was sent to the community of Saint Catherine of Siena in Rome. In 1496 she moved to Viterbo and while there received the holy stigmata of Christ our Lord. The Duke of Ferrara wished her to serve as his advisor and so built the monastery and church of Saint Catherine of Siena where she took up residence in 1499. At the request of her confessor she wrote an account of her reception of the stigmata and of her interior life. She died at Ferrara on November 15, 1544.

#### NOVEMBER 15

Saint Albert the Great  
Friar, Bishop and Doctor of the Church      Feast

Albert of Lauingen was born in Swabia (Germany) at the beginning of the thirteenth century. While a student at the University of Pavia he was attracted to the Order by Blessed Jordan of Saxony. From 1242 until 1248 he taught at the University of Paris where Thomas Aquinas was one of his students. Albert helped to introduce Aristotelian physics as interpreted by Jewish and Arabian philosophers into Western thought. From 1248 he taught at Cologne and served as provincial of Germany (1254-1257). Together with Saint Bonaventure he defended the right of the Mendicant Orders to teach in the universities.

He was named bishop of Ratisbon in 1260, but after two years he resigned because he considered himself unworthy. He continued his teaching at Wurzburg, Strasbourg and Cologne. In his attempts to blend the wisdom of the saints with human knowledge he was a distinguished writer and teacher, but he was even more distinguished in his life of holiness and his pastoral charity. He had a deep devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Virgin Mary who according to legend led him to the Order of Preachers. Because of his writings he is called "the Great" and the "universal doctor." He died at Cologne on November 15, 1280. In 1459 Pius II declared him a doctor of the Church; in 1931 Pius XI declared him a saint; and Pius XII named him patron of those involved in the natural sciences.

#### Second Reading

From the **Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew** of Saint Albert the Great.  
*"God stamped the image of the divine nature upon us."*

The boundary lines mark out delightful places for me; my heritage is precious indeed. The Lord said to Aaron: I am your share and your possession among the Israelites. Sara, my master's wife, bore a son to my master when she was old; and he has given him all he has.

Sara, interpreted to mean "the first" is the Church: the Son of eternal joy, the offspring and heir, is the one whom God the Father generates by grace through the Church. In the old age of these final times: the Son also give up all things as an inheritance, whatsoever he possessed, because in giving himself he gives all that is his. *God is not ashamed to be called their God. The pool is my portion, said my soul; therefore I will hope in him.*

Therefore, these are the marks of the paternal favor toward those whom the heavenly Father generates through grace.

*Freely he gave us birth by the word of truth, so that we would become a kind of first fruits of his creation.* In this way God stamped an image of the divine nature upon us and as a result a knowledge, because everything that is known is apprehended by its image and the knowledge which it imprints on the soul.

From knowledge arises faith, which opens our eyes to the Father; from that union arises charity which fixes its gaze on the Father; and from the affection which God has for us arises our hope which raises its eyes towards seeking higher things. For we who place our trust in the affection of the Father are not content with lower things. For this reason God is called "Father."

A prayer which begins with such a tender greeting cannot fail to be a loving and intimate one. Because of this, in the preceding gospel God is said to be with us and to see us in secret because God is both intimate and loving. If it were otherwise, we would not have access to God. And therefore the Only-begotten Son, by whose spirit we are adopted, is said to be in the bosom of the Father.

#### Alternative Second Reading

From the treatise **On the Manner of Praying** attributed to Saint Albert the Great.

*"On preparation for prayer."*

We should prepare ourselves for prayer. This preparation is of two kinds: remote and immediate.

Similarly remote preparation is of two kinds: interior and exterior. Interior preparation consists in three things. First, there is the purification of the conscience: *If our hearts do not reprove us, we have this confidence in God: that God hears us whenever we ask for anything.* Secondly, there is the humbling of the mind, for *the Lord hears the cry of the humble and does not spurn their petition.* Thirdly, there is the forgiveness of injuries: *Whenever you stand to pray, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father in heaven may in turn forgive you your trespasses.*

Exterior preparation likewise consists in three things. First, there is the fulfillment of the commandments of God, for as Saint Isidore said: "If we do what the Lord commands, we will without doubt obtain what we ask for." Secondly, there is reconciliation with anyone we have offended: *If you bring your gift to the altar and there recall that your brother or sister has anything against you, leave your gift before the altar and go; first he reconciled with your brother or sister and then come and offer your gift.* Thirdly, there is the practice of fasting and almsgiving which supports prayer, for Isaiah says: *Share your*

*bread with the hungry and take the poor and homeless into your house, then when you call, the Lord will hear you.*

Immediate preparation is likewise of two kinds: again, interior and exterior. Interior preparation consists in three things. First, there is personal recollection: *Whenever you pray, go into your room, close the door, and pray to your Father in private.* Entering into your room is that personal recollection of the heart and closing the door is the maintenance of a spirit of recollection. Personal recollection is accomplished by gathering within oneself the thoughts and emotions which have had free range.

Secondly, we focus our attention upon the Lord. For we pray in truth when we do not think about other matters. Thus, the soul must first be purified and thoughts about temporal concerns must be set aside so that the pure eye of the heart may be directed truly and simply to the Lord. Let every carnal or worldly thought depart, lest the soul think of anything else than that alone for which it prays. The priest in proclaiming the preface prepares our hearts by saying: "Lift up your hearts," to which we reply: "We lift them up to the Lord." Thus, the heart is closed to its adversary and opened to God alone, lest we have one thing in our hearts and another on our lips.

How can you be heard by God, you ask, when you cannot hear yourself? You want the Lord to be mindful of you when you are not mindful of yourself!

This is to offend the majesty of God by negligence in prayer. This is to watch with the eyes and sleep with the heart, while the Christian ought to be watching with the heart even while sleeping. Thirdly, there is the stirring up of devotion to God, which is brought about especially by meditating upon our miserable condition and upon the goodness and mercy of God. In meditating upon our miserable condition we learn what it is necessary to ask for, and in meditating upon the mercy of God we learn with what devotion we ought to ask.

[ Exterior preparation consists in three things, namely, place, appearance and gesture. With regard to place it is certain that one can pray while standing as well as sitting, or even while lying down. Nevertheless in public prayer we ought to observe the form established by the Church or by the majority of us. With regard to appearance keep in mind that a humble and abject demeanor is appropriate to prayer. With regard to gesture note that it includes genuflecting, lifting up one's hands, striking the breast, raising or lowering the eyes and countenance, closing the lips or silencing the voice, the shedding of tears, the emitting of groans, sighing, etc. ]

NOVEMBER 19

Blessed James Benefatti

FRIAR AND BISHOP

Blessed James was born at Mantua, Italy, in the latter half of the thirteenth century. He entered the Order there and came to the notice of Nicholas Boccassini, Master of the Order, who made him his socius. Blessed James continued as his advisor when Nicholas was created cardinal in 1298 and when Nicholas became Pope as Benedict XI he was named bishop of Mantua in 1304. There he fought against the hatred and division which plagued the city. Because of his devotion to the poor during a time of pestilence and famine he was called "Father of the Poor." He died on November 19, 1332.

NOVEMBER 24

Saint Ignatius Delgado, Friar and Bishop, Saint Vincent Liem, Friar and Priest, Saint Dominic An-Kham, Lay Dominican and Husband, and Companions, Martyrs Memorial

This group of 117 martyrs suffered for the name of Christ during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the region known today as Vietnam. Of this number 96 were Vietnamese, 11 were Spaniards, and 10 were French; 58 were associated with the Missions Étrangères of Paris and 59 were members of the Dominican Family.

The members of the Dominican Family included six bishops, sixteen priests, three members of the Priests' Fraternity of Saint Dominic, ten members of the Dominican laity, and twenty-four of the faithful from Dominican missions. They were martyred at different times and places, e.g.:

- Eighteenth century: the priests Francis Gil de Federich (1745) and Vincent Liem (1773);

- 1838-1840: the bishops Ignatius Delgado (1838) and Dominic Henares (1838), the priest Joseph Fernández (1838) and twenty-three others;

- In the year 1861: the bishops Valentine Berrio-Ochoa and Jerome Hermosilla, the priests Joseph Tuâm and Pedro Almató, and the catechist Joseph Khang;

- During the years 1857-1862: the bishops Jose Maria Diaz Sanjurjo (1857) and Melchior Garcia-Sampedro (1858); several native priests; and Dominic Pham Trong (An) Kham (1859), a member of the Dominican laity.

### Second Reading

From a letter of Saint Francis Gil de Federich to his uncle written from Tonkin (Vietnam), June 30, 1743.

*"Let all commend me to God for humanly I am very weak."*

I am writing just to let you know that I am still alive so you can pray for me to God, not because I have anything special to tell you. Actually, we are not lacking in new developments, both on the secular and on the spiritual fronts. On the secular side we have ongoing civil wars; every day we hear of new revolutions, motivated by greed and helped by certain prophecies – I doubt any of them is really coming from God – which say that the reigning dynasty is to change. The one who is to be made king is called by some Chen Nhen, that is, the True One mentioned in the prophecies; others call him Manh Nhen, which means Holy Man. This holiness comes from nothing other than stealing the throne and the kingdom. As a result, for seven years now this land has been ravaged and its towns, regions and provinces, as well as our Christian communities, are being ruined by endless killings and fires.

There are also new developments on the spiritual side. Even though the fighting does not threaten the faith, and priests are able to minister and celebrate solemnly, and feasts are well-attended, certain fears arise once in a while, as is the case now. Because of the revolution, the fathers have to be a little more cautious and avoid large crowds. There are guerrillas that are harming the Lord's vineyard, for some Mandarins do not give up persecuting the faith. Last year on Easter Sunday a Jesuit priest in one of the provinces lost everything he had and had to flee almost naked; seventeen Christians were taken prisoners and were brought to court here; nine of them died in prison and the others were given life terms in the elephants' stables. This year in the Eastern Province where there

are very few Christians and indeed very few people, five persons were imprisoned because of their faith. They were brought here to the court jails. In the Southern Province two whole villages were taken and had to make an arrangement involving quite a sum of money with the Mandarin who, took them. I myself was brought to court on March 3 on charges and appeals arising from the sacrifice that was the cause of my arrest, and I was asked if I was ready to step on the images of the saints, which I refused to do. Since I did not want to answer the questions of the one who had arrested me, I was threatened with club beatings, even though it was only in word. My response was not to answer. So here I am still in this prison until God commands otherwise, ministering to the Christians who come here, where many can attend Mass on holy days. My only suffering is from their greediness and their lack of consideration. God give me the grace to serve as I ought to.

I greet my mother, my uncle the canon and Don Antonio, Pedro, Antonio, Pona, Pepe, María, Don Alejandro, Piñol and other relatives and friends, and especially the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, Rosa and Father Losa, with their mother Candia, Jacinto, Aunt Isabel and all their families, and I ask to be commended to the Lord because humanly I feel very weak. May the Lord keep all of you safe for many years to come.

#### Alternative Second Reading

From a letter of Saint Valetine de Berrio-Ochoa to his mother written from Tonkin (Vietnam), August 1, 1860.

*"Our flesh resists many tines but the grace of Jesus is stronger than flesh and hell."*

My dearest Mother,

At the beginning of this year I received your letter. What a joy to see uiy mother's handwriting! My heart swelled when I realized what a lively old lady you are and that you are still spinning diligently. I was happy to hear that you attend Mass every day and that you pray to dear Jesus for everyone.

You ask about my lifestyle and what kind of foods I eat. Dearest Mother, I really live very well, just like a bishop, and I am not lacking anything to eat. However, there is no bread here. If you happen to have a fresh loaf of homemade bread, send it to me by way of a bird. Oh, with what relish will the bishop and missionaries eat the bread made by the hands of our mother!

Salt and freshwater fish are plentiful here. For that reason, and also because our Father Saint Dominic sets it forth in his holy Rule, I eat fish every day, and meat only once in a while.

Do not worry, we will not starve to death.

But do you think that being a bishop I ride around in a carriage? Barefoot we make our journeys across mud puddles in the dark of night. All in all, we are happy. One night I walked for about six leagues with mud underfoot and rain overhead, having fallen down full length many times, and although I am a bishop, I arrived home covered with mud and wet all over. But the Christians have great charity. When I got home, hot water was ready for me and after they gave me a bath I came out to celebrate Mass looking quite decent.

"Ah, my dear son," you may say. "What a sad way to live!" No, beloved Mother, this manner of life is not sad. The people here are healthy, joyful and active. God comforts us in our labors. As for myself, in spite of being an old boy I manage to jump with style

across mud puddles. Dear Mother, your Valentine is now very much a mountain boy whose beard and whiskers would scare the oldest devils in hell.

Pray for me to Jesus; I too remember my parents every day at holy Mass. I ask God that in this world you may have the food and clothing you need and that in the next you may have the glory of heaven.

Courage then, dear Mother, to carry patiently the burdens of this world.

Our bodies often rebel, but the grace of Jesus holds more power than the flesh and the devil; therefore we should always ask for this grace, taking as our intercessors Mary most holy, Saint Joseph the patriarch, Saint Monica, and all the holy men and women in heaven.

Farewell, beloved Mother; greetings to all my relatives. I kiss your hand.

#### Alternative Second Reading

From a letter of Saint Pedro Almató to his father written from Tonkin (Vietnam), August 3, 1859.

*"Do not cry, if you should hear that I have been caught and martyred for the faith. Rejoice for the happiness that is mine."*

My dearest Father,

I suppose you must already have mourned for me thinking I was dead; there has been reason enough for that, for I myself did not expect I could be alive this long, nor do I have much hope of surviving this great persecution. It has been almost a year since our liberators landed here; they have erected forts, built houses, and killed several hundred Indochinese. But so what? Have we achieved peace? Alas, my dear Father! Shrewd European politics has made a mockery of our hopes. We naively believed that it was religious zeal that brought Catholic armies to this kingdom in order to punish its king and, in case he did not act reasonably, to take away from him the kingdom that France had given to his great grandfather. As of now, nothing good for religion has yet happened; whatever objectives the French may have in regard to Indochina, the future will tell. I would like to discuss this at greater length, but I cannot do so in a short letter.

The evils we have suffered up to now are great; our missions, to formerly flourishing, have lost their greenery and their beauty. So many have been killed or exiled! It really makes you want to cry when you see people being executed, others being kept in dungeons for a long time, and others having their homes pillaged and torn down, they themselves being left in the street without as much as a piece of bread. Woe to us who have sinned!

I cannot tell you exactly the number of catechists and faithful who have been banished, since I do not have my lists at hand, but they are many. Not counting the two Apostolic Vicars of whom I wrote you in my previous letter, nineteen native priests and several catechists and Christians, I do not know how many exactly, have also suffered martyrdom.

All this is what is happening in our missions, where we used to have 200,000 Christians. It would be comforting to foresee the end of such trouble, but the developments in the port of Turon prevent us from venturing any predictions.

At present I am in quite good health although, because of our situation, not as well as would be desirable. Another European and I have been hiding for seven months in a

small house that has underground caves where we can hide if the Mandarins decide to pay us a visit. If you should hear that I have been caught and martyred for the faith, do not cry, rejoice instead for the happiness that is mine. I say good-bye to you, to my Mother, to my brother and sisters and to our relatives and friends, in case I cannot write again. Pray a lot for me to the Lord and to the Blessed Virgin to give me the grace I need to die for their love. Farewell, my Father.

NOVEMBER 25

Blessed Margaret of Savoy  
Nun and Widow

Blessed Margaret, a member of the noble family of the Dukes of Savoy, was born probably in 1382 and married the Marquis of Monferrat, a widower with two children. They lived a model Christian life, sharing their wealth with the poor, educating the ignorant, and caring for victims of the plague. Upon the death of her husband she vowed herself to widowhood and with the encouragement of Saint Vincent Ferrer took the habit of the Sisters of Penance and founded the monastery of Saint Mary Magdalen at Alba. In a vision our Lord offered her three arrows: "Sickness," "Slander," and "Persecution." She endured all of these and offered her sufferings for the peace of the universal Church, for the Western Schism had begun a short time before. She died on November 23, 1464.

## December

DECEMBER 1

Blessed John of Vercelli  
Friar, Priest and Master of the Order

Blessed John was born near Vercelli, Italy, at the beginning of the thirteenth century. While a professor of law at the University of Paris he was attracted to the Order by Blessed Jordan of Saxony. He was, in turn, a prior, a provincial, and the sixth Master of the Order (1264-1283). He often consulted Saint Thomas Aquinas on theological matters and defended his doctrine. He was present at the Council of Lyons, where he accepted for the Dominican Order the commission to promote reverence for the Holy Name of Jesus. He was responsible for commissioning Nicolai Pisani to sculpt a marble tomb for the remains of Saint Dominic. In his visitations he zealously promoted the life of study, poverty and evangelical preaching. He died at Montpellier on November 30, 1283. He is considered the patron of the Holy Name Society established in 1432.

DECEMBER 8

Immaculate Conception  
Solemnity

Office of Readings  
Second Reading

From a homily of Saint John Damascene.

*"The bridal chamber of the Spirit is the entire city of the living God."*

Today the ears of the whole world are listening to news of joy. The heavens above rejoice, the earth beneath exults. Nature exults: like the ewe-lamb is brought to birth from whom the Shepherd takes the form of a sheep. He will tear to pieces the garments of our old mortality.

Let us celebrate a solemn feast for the Mother of God. *Rejoice, Anna, you childless one who bears no children; burst into song and shout you who have endured no birth pangs.* Rejoice, Joachim, because from your daughter *a child has been born for us, a son given to us, and his name will be called Angel of great counsel*, salvation for all the world, mighty God.

That child is truly God. Who, therefore, would deny the childbearing of the Mother of God? "If anyone does not confess that the holy virgin is the Mother of God that person is alienated from the Godhead." This saying is not mine, though the words are mine. For I received this most divine heritage from father Gregory the Theologian.

Today the salvation of the world is begun. For to us in the holy "house of mercy" is born the Mother of God from whom the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world desired to be born.

Today the Artisan of all things, God the Word whom the Father sent forth from his heart, began a new volume, written as with a pen by the Spirit who is the tongue of God.

O worthy daughter of God, loveliness of our human nature, the one who makes amends for our first parent, Eve! O daughter always a virgin, for you no man was needed to conceive a child! For he whom you brought forth from your womb has an eternal Father. O earth-born daughter, by the life-giving embrace of God you gave birth to the Creator!

Truly you surpass in dignity all created things. For from you alone that supreme Artisan received his birth, the first-fruits of our human clay. His flesh took form from your blood. Indeed it was God who sucked milk from your breasts, and your own lips kissed the lips of God. The God of all the universe foreknew your dignity. Even more, God loved you and predestined you, the beloved one. Thus in these final times God brought her forth and made her the mother, the God-bearer, the nourisher of the Son and Word.

The whole bridal chamber of the Spirit is the entire city of the living, God which the flowing waters make joyful; truly, I say, they are the rivers of grace of the Holy Spirit. You are all-beautiful, most intimate with God, O Virgin overflowing with divine graces! I aver that you are the holy temple of God, not adorned with gold and lifeless gems but shining with the Spirit rather than with gold. Instead of precious gems you possess the most precious pearl, Christ, that jewel of the Deity.

*Holy God* and Father who in yourself and from yourself wished to bring to completion that mystery ordained before all ages. *Holy Strong One*, Son of God as well as God, the Only-begotten, who brought forth a first-born daughter from a sterile woman that he himself might be the Only-begotten from the Father and the first-born of every creature. He was the only-begotten son born from you, Virgin Mother, and the first-born of many. Likewise he became a sharer in our flesh and blood which he received from you. Holy Immortal One, the most Holy Spirit, who by the dew of his divinity preserved you lest you be consumed by the divine fire. For that bush of Moses also prefigured this event, your "Let it be done unto me!"

*Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus Christ, the Son of God. To him be glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit for eternal ages!*

DECEMBER 16

Blessed Sebastian Maggi

Friar and Priest

Blessed Sebastian, the son of a noble family, was born at Brescia, Italy, in 1414 and entered the Order in 1429. Twice he was Vicar General of the reformed Province of Lombardy and served as prior in several convents. He was severe in his personal life, but kind and patient in his dealings with others. He was one of the notable reformers of Dominican life in the fifteenth century. He died at Genoa at the monastery of Santa Maria di Castello in 1496.