

Doce me Veritatem “Teach me the Truth”

Office of Mission Integration



1206-2006

800th Anniversary of St. Dominic's founding of the first
convent for religious women at Prouille, France

***OFFICE OF
MISSION INTEGRATION***



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*Depiction of Saint Dominic in window of Founders Chapel
in Guzman Hall, Mount Saint Mary College*

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Who were the founders of Mount Saint Mary College?

The founders of Mount Saint Mary College were the Dominican Sisters of the Congregation of the Most Holy Rosary of Newburgh, New York.

The Newburgh Dominicans trace their roots to the thirteenth century and the founding of Holy Cross Convent in Regensburg, Germany in 1233. During the wave of immigration to America, four sisters from the Regensburg Convent established the Holy Cross Convent in Brooklyn in 1853. In 1859 these sisters opened the first mission in Saint Nicholas Parish in New York City. This foundation became independent in 1869. Father Michael Phelan, pastor of St. Mary Parish, Newburgh, thinking he could use the help of religious educators, told the sisters of a large estate for sale located across the street from his Newburgh parish. The sisters bought this land in 1883 and established Holy Rosary Academy. In 1898- 1899 the motherhouse in New York City moved to Newburgh and this land became known as Mount Saint Mary.

In 1928 Mount Saint Mary Normal and Training school was opened. By 1954, this became a three year liberal arts college and in 1960 developed to the present four-year Mount Saint Mary College.



The scene above is taken from the foyer window outside Founders Chapel, Guzman Hall, after its renovation in 2005. It depicts the sisters from New York City after coming up the Hudson River to Newburgh on the paddleboat, the Mary Powell. The seal below was embedded in the floor in Guzman Hall during the original construction of the building in 1963.



Who was Saint Dominic?

Dominic de Guzman (1170-1221) was born in Caleruega, Spain. Having been sent to the University of Palencia at the age of 14, he was at home in the university setting. Around the age of twenty-five, Dominic was ordained to the priesthood. Although monks at this time usually remained in the monastery, Dominic was called by a local bishop to a special mission. As he traveled, he realized that the clergy were poorly prepared to evangelize the people of the thriving cities and villages. In response to this need, Dominic established his Order, which combined monastic life with parish life. To prepare them for evangelizing, he sent his followers to universities which was revolutionary for the time. Dominic insisted that they be well-trained in Scripture and Theology, and in order for them to have time for study, abandoned the monastic custom of manual labor.

Even before the Dominican Order of Priests was established, Dominic built a convent for women in 1206 in Prouille, France. It was founded as a center of prayer and support for Dominic and his companions. In approving the Order in 1216, Pope Honorius III challenged Dominic's followers to "be champions of the faith and true lights of the world."

In response to this challenge Dominic sent out friars two by two to the cities and universities all over Europe. It seemed a foolish move as they were a young community. Yet, Dominic insisted that good seeds are not meant to be hoarded and so he sent them forth.

What was Saint Dominic's Passion?



Dominic was a man of the Gospel in word and deed. He had only one passion: to know and to experience the word of God in Truth and from this experience to announce the compassion of God to men and women.

Dominic believed that prayer, study, and the common life give the confidence, support, and direction necessary to be sent forth in mission. He strongly believed that no one is given God's presence for himself or herself alone.

This bas relief of Saint Dominic is displayed at the main entrance to Guzman Hall

What is the Dominican motto?

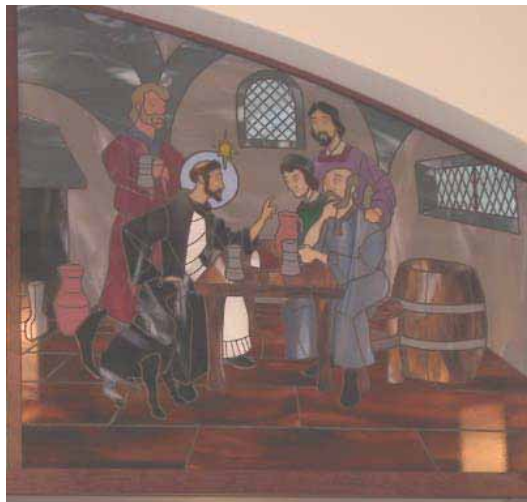
The Dominican motto is *Veritas* or Truth, which proclaims a Dominican dedication to a common search for Truth. From their foundation, Dominicans have believed that God is revealed in every realm of the cosmos.



One of the early stories of St Dominic is that of an all night discussion he had with an innkeeper in Toulouse. Like many people in his region, the innkeeper had become estranged from the Church because of the abuses of the time. Through Dominic's compassion and respectful listening, the truth emerged for both men. From this experience, the Dominican openness to *Disputatio* was born.

Disputatio or honest dialogue is listening for the spark of Truth even in opposing arguments so that the fullness of Truth might be revealed. Dominicans practiced this method in studying scripture and theology, for God's loving presence revealed through Jesus Christ is the deepest Truth. Yet it led saints like Thomas Aquinas, Albert the Great, Catherine of Siena, and other Dominicans throughout the ages to study all of life and all of the cosmos. Today, Dominicans, and those trained in Dominican tradition, including Mount Saint Mary College students, continue the search for Truth in mutual respect, honesty, and *disputatio*.

This search brings us to work for mutuality and solidarity with the poor and marginalized of the world and in the struggle, the preaching continues.



A picture of Saint Dominic in Toulouse with the innkeeper. This has been captured, along with the picture on the front cover in part of the Tympanum in Founders Chapel .

What is the Dominican Charism?

A charism is a gift of God's Spirit given to some for the sake of others. Dominic's gift of God's Spirit can be found in his works of prayer, study, community, and mission. At the heart of Dominican life is prayer. While we are called "to share the fruits of contemplation," private prayer has traditionally found its counterpart in common prayer, especially the Liturgy of the Hours and Eucharist.

Dominic's preaching was rooted in prayer – the very source of his activity. Dominic gave his brethren, in the tradition of the spiritual masters, this one single ideal: to follow Christ, "Speaking only of God or with God."

Dominic said, "Study always!" The one thing that is never looked upon as a luxury are the books of a Dominican. Dominic envisioned the birth of his Order within the great movement of the founding of universities. In the West, this movement continued to meet the immense demand for knowledge evidenced in the founding of schools in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. From the earliest days, a love of learning characterized the spirit of the Dominican intellectual tradition. The quest for Truth is never final or complete. Again and again, it leads into the mystery of life.

Living in community challenges us with interdependence and diversity. The common life or community opens us up to others and calls us to grapple with differences. Dominican life is not about uniformity. Rather, it is a celebration of unity in diversity. It raises the question – what is the common good?

Dominic's desire was to help people hear God's word within the context of their own reality, and his devotion to prayer and study as the necessary preparation for preaching ensured that the words he spoke would reflect the Truth of the Word.

“Central to any true study is the deep humility which exposes one to people who are different. It is initiation into a conversation that began before and will continue after we are dead.”

Timothy Radcliffe, O.P.



“Dominican community provides companions for teaching and being taught.”

Saint Albert the Great, O.P. (1207—1280)

What are Dominicans called to do?

Dominicans are called to praise (Laudare), to bless (Benedicere), and to preach (Praedicare). This call reminds us that there is more to life and mission than work. We are called to serve each other. These words remind us to pay attention to the mystery of our relationship with God and in God through others and all creation. Attending to relationships is what makes our preaching authentic. It is how we become living Words of God.



“Let God speak in you so that you can speak God for others; be silent and wait for God’s word.”

Meister Eckhart, O.P. (1260-1327)

“The injustices of our day compel us to place the charism of preaching at the service of the poor and powerless. The Dominican prophetic message, rooted in experience, study and prayer, will move both preachers and hearers of the word to act for the transformation of oppressive structures.”

Kay Ashe, O.P.

(Sinsinawa Dominican)

“We need to be students if we are to be preachers. As Dominicans, we are to be students of the Book: the Book of Scripture, the Book of Creation and the Book of Life. We need to be able to penetrate and plumb the depths of all that is being written and done in our world today and see how it relates to, amplifies or contradicts the Word of God. We need to be able to put aside distractions and distortions, and concentrate on where God is manifest, especially in the most unlikely places.”

Margaret Ormond, O.P.

(Columbus, Ohio Dominican)

What is the College's Mission?

As reflected in its motto "*Doce me Veritatem*" (Teach me the Truth), Mount Saint Mary College, founded by the Dominican Sisters of Newburgh, is an independent, coeducational institution committed to providing students with a liberal arts education to prepare them for lives of leadership and service. Through a variety of majors and professional programs, students are also prepared for career entry or graduate and professional studies.



Consistent with Judeo-Christian values and the Dominican tradition of education that cherishes the inherent worth of the individual, the mission of Mount Saint Mary College is to create an environment which fosters close student-faculty interaction enabling students to reach their full potential as lifelong learners. Mount Saint Mary College strives to provide a stimulating environment that promotes the intellectual and personal growth of undergraduate, graduate and continuing education students.

Therefore, Mount Saint Mary College endeavors to graduate students who:

- † are inquisitive and value the free exchange of ideas
- † are analytical in their approach to problem solving
- † are motivated toward self-improvement
- † have developed an aesthetic sense
- † have developed effective communication skills
- † have developed personal and professional ethical positions
- † have embraced civic responsibility.

“If you are what you should be, you will set the whole world on fire.”

Saint Catherine of Siena, T.O.P



Saint Catherine of Siena
(1347—1380)



Saint Thomas Aquinas
(1225—1274)

These windows appear in Founders Chapel, Guzman Hall. Saint Catherine was chosen because she is the patroness of our chapter and St. Thomas because of his patronage of educators and the namesake to the college's first academic building

What is the Office of Mission Integration?

The Office of Mission Integration fosters an awareness of and appreciation for the college's mission and the Dominican charism of our founding congregation.

In the 1997 Middle States Report, the team recommended that Mount Saint Mary College reflect on its roots in the Dominican tradition. The team further recommended that we work to fulfill the college's mission of developing in students a commitment to values and a value system.

To assist people in integrating the mission into their daily activities, the Office of Mission Integration develops mission enhancement activities throughout the year to raise faculty and staff understanding of mission in light of our religious identity and heritage.

The Office of Mission Integration promotes the actualization of strong ethical values, spiritual growth, mutual respect, as well as open and caring interpersonal relations so the campus community will grow and unify.

What are the Dominican Symbols?

Saint Dominic's mother, Blessed Jane of Aza, had a repeated dream prior to Dominic's birth. She saw a dog circling the world with a torch. Her son Dominic truly had a gift for 'friendship' and brought the Light of Truth around the world through the preaching and teaching of his sons and daughters.

At Saint Dominic's baptism, his grandmother reported seeing a star on Dominic's forehead. Throughout his life he brought 'light' to all he met. Saint Dominic is the Patron of Astronomers and he truly was a stellar man who was a joyful friar traveling to preach the Gospel with love.



Dominic's last words were a prayer for his brethren in words inspired by St. John's Gospel:

“Holy Father, you know that I have longed to do your will with my whole heart, and I have kept those whom You have given me. I now confide them to You: keep them and guard them.” (John17:12)

This booklet was written for the Mount Saint Mary College community to help us reflect upon the college's roots in the Dominican tradition. Readers are asked to use the booklet as a reflection on the meaning of the Dominican tradition in fulfilling the college's mission. Additional information on the Dominican tradition may be found on the home page of Mount Saint Mary College under the heading of administration.