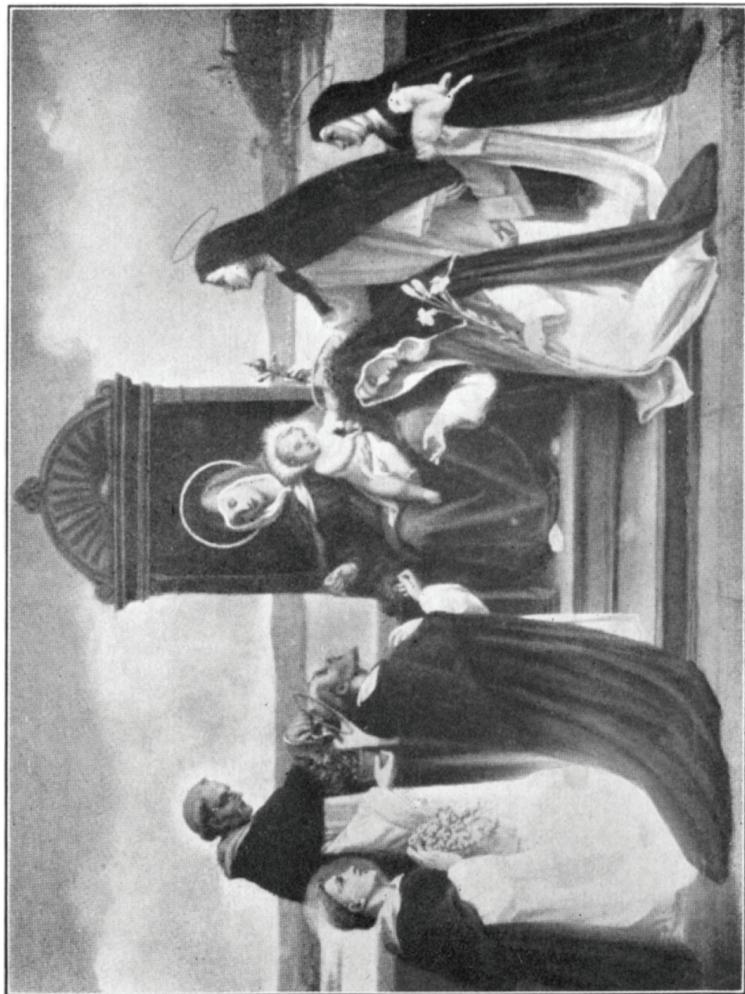


DOMINICAN SAINTS



ROSARY GROUP

DOMINICAN SAINTS

BY

THE NOVICES

OF THE

DOMINICAN HOUSE OF STUDIES
WASHINGTON, D. C.



WITH AN

INTRODUCTION

BY THE

RT. REV. THOMAS J. SHAHAN, D. D.
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*To our Holy Father, Saint
Dominic, on the occasion of the
Seventh Centenary of his birth in
the "Celestial Hierarchy," these pages
are affectionately dedicated by the*

NOVICES.

Nihil Obstat

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✠ JACOBUS HARTLEY,

Episcopus Columbensis.

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Introduction

 EVEN HUNDRED years have run on since the great Dominic de Guzman walked this earth, shedding about him the luster of his sanctity and his wisdom. And today many thousands of his spiritual children, the world over, rise up to call him blessed, while hundreds of thousands of ardent admirers pay homage to his Order, which has battled so long and so well for the glory of God and the exaltation of His Holy Name.

Among the many exponents of the ideals of the Order of Saint Dominic, the fourteen canonized saints stand out pre-eminently. It is the purpose of this book to outline briefly the lives of these fourteen saints, and to indicate where further information regarding them may be obtained. The writers have drawn their material from scattered but authentic sources in the hope of showing how the spirit of Saint Dominic was, humanly speaking, the mainspring of the activities of these exponents, the guiding principle in the development of their characters, and the lodestar of their lives.

A cursory glance over the lives of Dominican saints would give the impression that they had no common bond, other than that of charity proper to all Christians, so varied are their methods of advancing toward perfection. Each one stands alone, letting his life flow forth in a reckless torrent, and is apparently controlled only by the passion of love for God and love for neighbor. There is a daring, a freedom, an intensity of life, that is amazing. Each utilizes with a master hand the instruments which time and circumstances have given him, for the promotion of the glory of God and the good of

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humanity. The casual observer is surprised to find such marked variety and individualism in so many saints of the same Order; but deeper investigation reveals the fact that, notwithstanding all this freedom and individualism, the lives of these saints did not develop haphazardly. They were not merely the result of individual souls trying, each in its own original way, to draw near to God. On the contrary, they had a common, fixed rule of life which bound them together, and upon which their various religious characters were based, developed, and brought to perfection. For this great boon they were all indebted to Saint Dominic, who by the force of his genius had wrought out a system whereby, under God, they were enabled to transcend to such lofty heights. It would be difficult to overestimate the value of this rule of life. It is a model of organization that during seven hundred years has called for but little in the way of reform. It may be said still to represent the rude and vigorous municipal freedom of that age in which it arose and took on the shape in which it has come down to us, a monument of efficiency and fairness in the difficult art of directing men along the higher lines of the spiritual life.

Through a merciful dispensation of the Almighty, there has been vouchsafed to man the supreme gift of Revelation, in the light of and by the aid of which alone is he able to solve the mystery of life. Indeed, how precious little has man by unaided reason been able to understand concerning the purpose of his existence, his destiny, his relation toward his fellow-man and toward his Creator; and when neglecting the aid, or spurning the light of Revelation, how sadly deficient he has been in applying the remedies to the social evils which have vexed the human race down through the ages. By means of Revelation, however, he is able to see and to understand his proper place in the divine plan of creation. Through it he is given a clearer idea of God and His sublime perfections; he is made to appreciate the greatness and high spiritual dignity of his nature, the supernatural end to which he is ordained, and to

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understand clearly his relations toward his God and his fellow-man. This Revelation throws light upon the questions which reason sees only dimly and in shadow, and admits him into secrets which are far beyond the capacity of his unassisted human intellect. In the transmission of this great inheritance from generation to generation for the past seven centuries, the children of Saint Dominic have held a commanding place; for it has been the special mission of the Dominican Order, since its very inception, to labor for the preservation, in all its purity, of the "Deposit of Faith," and to teach and preach its revealed truths to succeeding generations. As to what great things they have accomplished in this regard, history bears witness.

Who can calculate how much the modern world owes to Saint Pius V, whose courageous resistance to the poisonous falsehoods of heresy, and whose valiant defense of European civilization against Turkish invasion and fanaticism has earned for him the title of "Father of Nations"; or to a Saint Thomas Aquinas, the Angel of the Schools, whose synthesis of the dogmas of revealed truth has been the wonder of all succeeding ages; to a Saint Vincent Ferrer, that undaunted preacher of the Divine Word, and perhaps the greatest thaumaturgus since the days of the Apostles; to a Saint Catherine of Siena, whose incomparable correspondence with Popes, Kings, and republics is at once the pride of Italian letters, the honor of the Papacy, the crown of social endeavor amid hopeless confusion, and is treasured among the purest intellectual glories of her sex; or here, at home, to a Saint Rose of Lima, our New World's first flower of sanctity and mightiest exemplar and guide in the stern but lovely life of the Christian spirit.

To the Dominican Order, ecclesiastical studies and liturgy, as well as the social sciences and the fine arts, are very deeply indebted; for it has been an efficient instrument in garnering the wisdom of the ages and bringing it to the defense of truth; in organizing philosophy and rendering it subservient to theology, thus making the

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knowledge of Revelation queen of the sciences; in elevating the fine arts and putting them into the service of Christ; in a word, by its preaching and teaching it has exercised upon the earth a civilizing and spiritualizing influence, for which the world will ever be its debtor.

For the devout reader of these short lives there is much in store that is delightful as well as profitable. Perhaps there is no human influence that gives so great a stimulus toward the better things of life than do the saints of God. And here it may truly be said that we have no better example than Saint Dominic. By his peculiar sanctity and by his courage to dare and to do, he has been the inspiration, not only of these eminent canonized saints, but also of a host of martyrs, confessors, virgins, and holy men and women distinguished for learning and for sanctity in almost every branch of human activity—from the lowest and humblest state of domestic servitude to the highest position possible to man, that of Vicar of Christ on earth.

These lives are necessarily short, since all have to be compressed within the compass of a single octavo volume. Their very brevity, however, may add to their charm and induce many to read them; and, having read them, be led to read other and more exhaustive biographies of the same saints. In this way they will experience the rare pleasure of coming into contact with the indescribable charm of these great men and women, and through the irresistible eloquence of their example be moved to a greater appreciation of the good things which God reserves to those who love and serve Him faithfully.

✠ THOMAS J. SHAHAN.

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Feast of Saint Hyacinth, 1921.