

The Southern Star

ISSUE #33

Newsletter for the Dominican Sisters of Wanganui

IN THIS ISSUE:

Letter from

Mother Prioress

Page 2

Article: The Importance of Being a Failure

Page 4

Retreat & Ceremony

Page 8

News from St Dominic's Convent

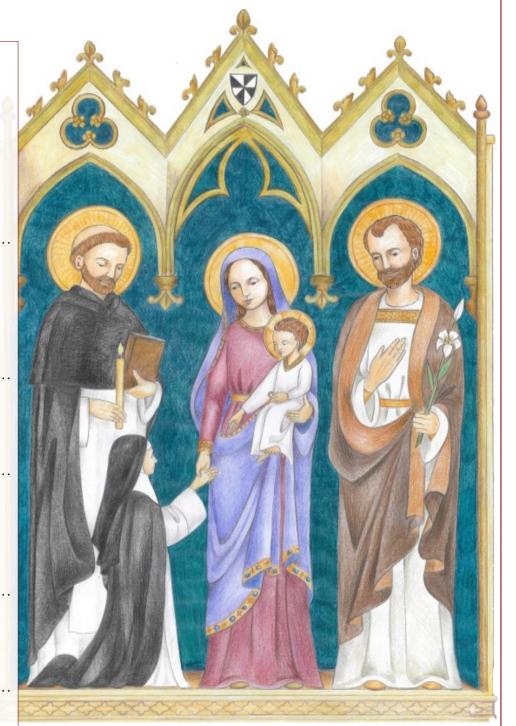
Page 10

O.P. Corner

Page 12

Photo Chronicle

Page 18



"The soul unites herself with God by the affection of love."
- St Catherine of Siena

{Drawing of a Dominican sister's espousals, with the Christ Child offering the ring to her, in the presence of the Holy Family, and with her holy Father Saint Dominic bearing her profession candle.}

LETTER FROM MOTHER PRIORESS

n a sermon of St Bernard during the time of Advent we read, "Feed on goodness, and your soul will delight in its richness. Remember to eat your bread, or your heart will wither away. Fill your soul with richness and strength." As we begin a new liturgical year, St Bernard reminds us that we must have the right nutrition and correct diet, not only for our bodily nourishment but also in the spiritual realm.

Over the past few months, in what did our convent diet consist? Firstly, we ended our academic year with our prize-giving and our principal giving a speech on "failure". You might be wondering why she would end the year with such a surprising topic for the occasion, but if you read further, you will discover the nourishing truth she meant to provide for the girls and their families. The sisters then commenced preparations for our annual guild dinner, given for our benefactors in gratitude for all they do to help sustain us in our apostolate. Meanwhile, two sisters journeyed to Australia to attend the District Schools Meeting at Goulburn, where, together with fellow principals and staff from the Australian schools, they discussed upcoming events for the 2024 academic year, including the introduction of retreats for the secondary school pupils and a Catholic Teachers' Training Program. In February, the sisters and other teachers attended several conferences by SSPX priests assigned to help with educational formation throughout the district. Thus, through training and retreats, the minds and hearts of both teachers and pupils will be fed with the treasury of Catholic principles necessary for their respective vocations.

Before Christmas the sisters spent some days outdoors experiencing the beauties of the New Zealand bush to give some much needed rest and refreshment to the body and soul in preparation for Christmas. A few days after Christmas, our retreat, preached by our District Superior, Father Themann, nourished our souls with the theme of being serious about our spiritual progress. The sisters have taken this very much to heart and are focusing on praying seriously well this year and avoiding the "junk food" that can easily creep into one's spiritual life if we take ourselves too seriously. Retreat was followed by our ceremony, with two novices receiving the holy habit and three sisters making perpetual profession. Family and friends travelled from afar to be with us for this special occasion.

As you may be aware, three Sisters continue their studies in Primary School education. One of them was awarded a scholarship for emerging leaders, applicable to her studies in 2024. Three more sisters have joined the study group, but they are working towards the Graduate Diploma in Secondary Education. God willing, by the end of 2025, we will have three more registered teachers, perhaps two more at the end of 2027 and an additional three by July 2028. This growth in our qualified teaching staff is needed to keep pace with the growth of our school intake: this year we have 59 girls in the secondary school. Eleven of these are boarders from Australia, Japan and other parts of New Zealand, and all are yearning to be fed the bread of Truth.

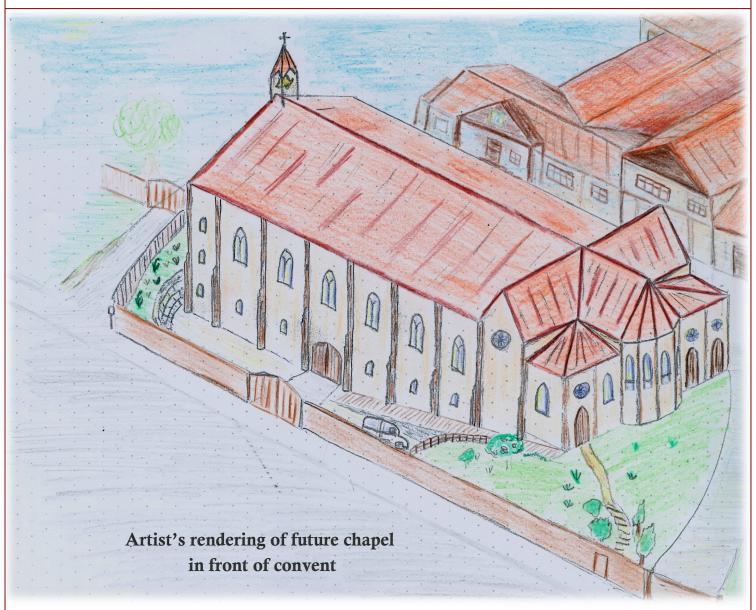
In another Advent sermon, St Bernard returns to the theme of bread by reminding us that 'Bethlehem' means 'house of bread', and that it is

The Dominican Sisters of Wanganui

12B York Street, Wanganui, 4501, New Zealand Tel: 00-64-6-344-2265 Email: motherprioress@opsisters.org.nz

www.opsisters.org.nz

THE SOUTHERN STAR SUMMER 2023-2024



there we must go to receive Our Lord, the living Bread Who came down from heaven. Over the past year we have been preparing for the building of our chapel, our own Bethlehem where the simple majesty of our surroundings will remind us of the presence of God and encourage us to pray with due reverence and devotion. Over the next year, God willing, we will be able to move on to the construction phase. The plan includes a choir with plenty of room for growth and suited to carrying out the full ceremonial of the Dominican liturgy. There will be space underneath the chapel for a larger chapter room, the place where the sisters meet to check our fidelity to the Rule and say our weekly prayers for our benefactors, and also room for storage. We have also begun the construction of a guest quarters under our novitiate house. There are two rooms, a bathroom and kitchenette, and

extra storage space. This accommodation will be available to receive potential vocations should they wish to visit our congregation for a couple of weeks and experience our way of life.

As the year continues, we hope to maintain a steady diet and nourish our bodies and souls with the highest quality food there is available: as Father Themann said in our retreat, "We want to be serious in what is good; only the good is worth taking seriously." If we are nourished with the true and the good, we can enrich each other, our pupils and our benefactors in the bearing of good fruit for the future. "Feed on goodness and remember to eat your bread." May you all be enriched with the goodness of the Bread of Life, born in Bethlehem to nourish our souls unto eternal life!



The Importance of Being a

This article has been adapted from a 2023 end-of-year prize-giving speech.

"You failed your Science test?"

Only the sound of cutlery scraping against plates could be heard for a few awkward moments.

"Well, Mr Penrhyn said I passed – it's a D."

"D's as good as an F. You only got 54% – it's a fail."

"I don't what happened...I'm just really bad at Science."

"What you need to do is pull your socks up and try harder. Why don't you listen in class? Are you still sitting next to that chatterbox Lucy? And are you keeping up with your homework? – Dylan, pass the salt. – What are you doing in your room down there after five?"

"She sings to herself, Mum. Badly. I hear her." Dylan's news report was delivered along with the salt-shaker.

"I am doing my homework; it takes me ages, though."

"Look, when the going gets tough, the tough get going. They don't wallow in self-pity. You know, there's no excuse for failure. Where there's a will, there's a way." "I am trying, Mum – I just don't get Science."

Tim sighed loudly. "Yeah, we can't *all* be brainiacs like me. But, I'm resigned to the incommunicability of genius." He shrugged.

"Even a genius needs manners – get your elbows off the table. Anyway," (turning to the disappointment opposite her) "you just need to make yourself some goals, and then reach them."

"Goals?!" chimed the news-reporter, wriggling in his seat. "I'm good at making goals, Mum!"

At that juncture the dinner conversation passed to the latest victories on the soccer field.

Try harder... Not everyone is smart... so failure comes from laziness and sparsity of brain cells.

Fortunately, it isn't every teenage girl who has to bear with the unsympathetic attitude of a success-driven parent. This scenario merely serves as a clichéd example of just one way in which erroneous ideas about failure can enter an adolescent's mind. Even without external criticism, an under-achiever in school may conclude that failure is the result of sloth, academic ineptitude or an innate inability to meet life's demands. While it may be rare to find a parent ignorant of the meaning of "constructive criticism" and the value of encouragement, it is common enough to find students who carry out the role of a merciless critic towards themselves as they struggle to make sense of the problem of failure.

The Enigma of Failure

Although it features in the life of every human, failure is generally considered a puzzling, uncomfortable experience to be avoided at all possible costs. Into the life of the student it intrudes almost immediately. It is at school that real endeavour begins, especially in the mental arena, and since school life is composed of *constant*

endeavour, and endeavour holds the prospect of failure, the latter occurs frequently. On the many happy occasions of "success" in assessment, no instruction is required to teach the student how to respond; each expresses in his or her own way how welcome to human nature is success.

On the other hand, when assessment demonstrates that a goal has not been achieved, the result is considered "failure", and the reaction is often very different. Many students do not know how to cope with failure; to accept it meekly seems weakness; to rejoice in it, madness. Try as they might to avoid it, it is encountered almost everywhere: friends, teachers, parents and the very circumstances of life in one way or another "fail" the student. Above all, there is that non-conformist, "self", ever at one's side, preventing the attainment of the ideal.

Dealing with Failure

What is the student supposed to do when confronted by this strange phenomenon called failure? The world tries to assist us in our let-downs by offering feel-good notions about the benefits of failure. Calendars with photos of picturesque landscapes tell us that "Every failure is a stepping stone to success". Famous inventors, sportsmen or entrepreneurs are referenced as examples of victory despite the odds, to pep-talk us into perseverance.

In the field of education a variety of tactics are recommended, such as teaching "positive self-talk". Parents and teachers are advised to give reassurance, to build a resilient, success-driven mentality in the child, and, above all, to "empower" students by helping them acquire skills to avoid failure.

The theories of developmental psychology coupled with such preventative and remedial methods have a natural efficacy and an important place in education, yet even these fail to solve the enigma of failure.

The Pedagogue of Palestine

Centuries before child psychologists began theorising about proper educational methods for helping children and adolescents to cope with failure, Our Lord Jesus Christ offered to the world the answer to the conundrum. Surpassing all the insight offered to us by experts, His theory of failure and its place in education was taught by His very life, and especially by His death.

To review the life of Our Lord is to realise that, humanly speaking, He was the greatest failure that the world has ever seen. Isaias makes this startlingly clear, prophesying that He would be "despised, and the most abject of men". We grieve over our own failings, but if we spare a thought for Him, we have to admit that, as Father Edward Leen states, "There was no failure like Christ's". Speaking of the magnitude of Christ's sufferings, St Thomas explains that He endured every kind, and that "as He was uplifted above others in gifts of graces, so was He lowered beneath others by the ignominy of His sufferings". Since there never had been nor ever can be a human person greater than Jesus Christ, so there can be no failure comparable.

Our Lord, then, knew failure in the extreme. This thought alone should give solace to the adolescent in her own small-scale failures. However, her consideration of the sympathy Christ showed for her by subjecting Himself to the experience of failure for her sake should lead her, by God's grace, to the higher reflection that His "failure" had an inconceivably grand purpose: it was the world's salvation. It was in fact a momentous victory: the defeat of the powers of hell, bringing about the reparation of the gulf between God and man. That apparent failure was the means by which God's justice was satisfied and by which He received and will continue to receive the most perfect homage possible. It was the source of man's participation in the life of the Holy Trinity, the cause of his eternal

happiness. Christ's unprecedented failure therefore brought about the highest good imaginable. With such a reflection, can the student really believe that failure has no meaning beyond her ineptitude?

For the adolescent who is willing to learn, Our Lord teaches that failure is not intended to cast down, nor merely to build natural virtue. God *allows* us to fail in order to draw from the event a higher good. Through the inability to "measure up" in the various aspects of school life, and even the thwarting of her good intentions, He has the student realise, very painfully sometimes, her impotence and the small place she occupies in the universe.

At times the student may feel crushed by her inabilities. However, just as good proceeded from Our Lord's bitter experiences, "so too from the bruised and crushed human soul God can draw an immense flood of spiritual energy for the regeneration of mankind". We must not suppose that Father Leen here speaks only of souls weighed down with the burdens of adult life. His words equally apply to the adolescent struggling with her own duty of state, for Our Lord does not intend that the work of her sanctification be postponed until graduation, when "real life" begins. Rather, He desires it to develop even in the relatively comfortable environment of school. Failure facilitates this work.

The Importance of Being a Failure

By the efficacy given to it by Christ, failure, then, has a glorious purpose. It is not simply the result of our human limitations such as lack of intelligence or virtue, but proceeds ultimately from the providence of God, Who has allowed it for the advancement of supernatural life. When she encounters failure in herself or around her, the adolescent girl should be helped to recognise it for what it is essentially: the adorable will of God, an

THE SOUTHERN STAR SUMMER 2023-2024

invitation to union with Him, and an offer to participate in His work of Redemption. There can be nothing more sublime than this; it is the definition of true human success. What an immense, liberating joy it can be for the teenage girl to understand that her little failures, if they are lovingly accepted in union with Our Lord's sacred Passion, can produce more than the personal gratification success might have given her, contributing instead to a *divine work* – the glory of God and His life in souls.

As Christian educators, parents and teachers are called upon to gently imprint upon children's souls this supreme lesson of life, making their hearts, peacefully resigned to God's will in daily disappointments, sing the "Vexilla Regis" in honour of the mystery of the Cross. Whilst it is impossible (and even culpable) to *aim* for failure in our duties of state, it is wise to accept its presence in the light of supernatural truth, and endeavour to teach our children, especially our adolescents who are beginning to face the hard realities of life, the

Christian resignation that must accompany even the most laudable ambitions of the classroom. The young scholar who experiences occasional set-backs, as well as those who feel their life to be one extended failure, will never fully comprehend the mystery of the Cross, yet they can love it, and allow it to be applied to their own lives, which will thereby be transformed, becoming a source of life for others.

Equipped with the light of faith, it is perfectly possible for our young girls to fail a test in natural science, and simultaneously pass, with the "flying colours" of gold-vermillion that emanate from the Cross, in the Science of the Saints. To fail in *this* science is the only real failure that has existed since the Redemption of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

- 1— Isaias 53:3
- ^{2—} Leen, Progress through Mental Prayer, p.118
- ³– *ST* III, q. 46, a. 5
- ^{4—} Leen, *Progress through Mental Prayer*, p.118



Retreat and Epiphany Ceremonies

"A serious person..." These words became a familiar phrase to the sisters on their 2023-24 retreat. Father Daniel Themann, the SSPX District Superior of Australia and New Zealand, used them to open many a retreat conference, with titles such as "A Serious Person Does Not Take Herself Seriously" and "A Serious Person Strives to Guard Her Peace of Soul." Father was quick to clarify, however, that this "seriousness" has no connotations of dourness or unpleasant severity. Rather, if something is serious, it is true, good, valuable, and therefore worth taking... well, seriously!

Father led the sisters on a "serious" tour of the spiritual life founded on confidence and humility. The serious soul takes God and the truth seriously, not self. Thus such a soul recognises that she is weak and little. She has nothing to fear, however, because she knows that God loves and cares for her, and wants her to become the saint she was destined to be more than she does. With these consoling thoughts in mind the sisters were well prepared for the ceremony on January 6 and for the year ahead.

This year's Feast of the Epiphany, our congregation's traditional day for ceremonies, was the happy occasion of a double ceremony: reception of the habit and perpetual vows. A church full of guests from Canada, Samoa, Australia and the States, along with many of our own parishioners, joined the Sisters for the ceremonies and Solemn High Mass celebrated by Father Themann, assisted by Father Elias OSB and Father Chrissement.

Before Mass began, the postulants knelt in the sanctuary to hear Father's question: "Do you wish to receive the holy habit... of the Holy Order of Preachers?" and in joyful unison replied, "Yes, Father, I want and desire this, by the grace of God!" The celebrant's first blessing of the candidates asks God to "remove the old man with his actions and put on you the new man created... in justice and holiness of truth". The Veni Creator invoked the Holy Ghost's blessing upon the future Sisters; and then the postulants' hair was cut and they were escorted from the church to don their new habits. On returning, black postulant garb exchanged for bridal white, each received a Crucifix – "a standard against the wiles of the enemy"; the Rosary, every Dominican's "weapon of choice"; and then, offered a crown of roses or one of thorns, each

















chose the latter in honour of her future Spouse. As Father crowned them he reminded them that "it is not fitting that those members be delicate which are under the thorn-crowned Head." At last came the final moment of manifestly "putting off the old man", receiving the new religious names whereby they would henceforth be known in the Order.

After the Credo, the three Sisters making perpetual vows had their turn to kneel before Mother Prioress, to "make profession and promise obedience to God and to Blessed Mary, and to Blessed Dominic, and to thee, Mother... that I will be obedient to thee and to my other Prioresses until death." As Bl Hyacinthe-Marie Cormier, OP wrote, "The vow of obedience contains the other vows, while it is itself not contained in any other...In our Order, (as) in that of St Benedict... when making profession, no other vow is expressly named except obedience... **Promitto obedientiam**. By one word, all is said." The Veni, Sponsa Christi was chanted with Psalm 44 - "the King shall greatly desire thy beauty!" - and Father sang the Solemn Blessing, asking that "God the Father bless... the Son of God heal... the Holy Ghost enlighten" them. Their veils were blessed, and then followed the reception of the blessed rings - "sign of bridal fidelity to God in the Name of the Most Holy Trinity, that wearing it, (they) may be armed with the strength that cometh from divine protection". While the newly finally professed sisters prostrated themselves, with arms outstretched as a cross, the choir chanted the beautiful responsory: "I love Christ, into whose bride-chamber I shall enter... Whom when I love I remain chaste, when I touch I am pure... with His ring He hath wedded me", and one final blessing begged God's protection, that they "keep unsullied the purpose of holy continence that they have formed under Thy inspiration."

A triumphant Dominican-chant *Te Deum* was sung at the end of mass to close the ceremonies—the Church rejoicing on the nuptial day of these three new Spouses of welcoming Christ—and also the novices, as they received the Kiss of Peace from each of their senior Sisters. May they each continually rejoice in the blessings of the religious life where, as St Bernard wrote, one "lives more purely and in a more holy manner than in the world; he falls more rarely into sin; he rises more promptly from his falls; he walks with greater attentiveness on the road to salvation; he receives more Heavenly graces and consolations; he rests in God with greater security; he dies with greater trust; in Purgatory, he is purged more quickly of his faults, and he receives a more abundant reward in Heaven."

Fiat, Fiat!

Summer: News from St Dominic's Convent

2023 Guild Dinner

The 2023 Guild Dinner, which took place on the Eve of Gaudete Sunday, was colour-themed pink and gold. It would be an overstatement to say that the colour pink dominated the evening – there were many other diversions, such as enchanting music performed by the Sisters, engaging games, an excellent

buffet dinner, and an enlightening speech by Mother Mary Madeleine, in which meditations on the O Antiphons coloured a 'diary collage' of pictures of the Sisters' activities during 2023. Nevertheless, it may be objected that it was not fitting to decorate with pink at the Guild Dinner, since pink is a feminine colour; and though the Sisters invited many ladies to the Dinner, they also invited many gentlemen. Therefore, it seems

that pink ought to have been discarded in favour of a more masculine colour.

We respond: it is common knowledge that sunsets are pink and gold. Now many of our poets call the sunset a 'window into eternity.' Gilbert Keith Chesterton, meditating on this while contemplating the sunset on his 21st birthday, said 'Eternity is pink and gold.' Since the testimony of the poets (and above all the authority of Gilbert Keith Chesterton, one of the most manly among poets) is unanimous in affirming that eternity is pink and gold; and since on Gaudete Sunday we look forward to the coming of Christ, Who in His adorable Humanity gives us a window into eternity, it was fitting that the Dinner be themed with pink ... and gold, with all due respect to the esteemed gentlemen who were present among us.







On choosing a theme for the new School Year

Whenever we sing the hymn "Hail St Dominic" we repeat the words "...keep thy children ever faithful to their motto, Veritas". This indeed is the prayer of every teaching sister, for herself and all the pupils that pour into her classroom. At times this task seems daunting, especially since the true notion of truth has for so long been challenged, weakened and we almost venture to say lost. In our times the unreal, false, and fake world of digital society, with its superficial means of communication, seems to work without rest to strengthen its grip on souls. It is sad to see that there are so few who are strong enough to resist its allurement or escape its influence, even amongst our own.

In the hope to safeguard our pupils from this ever threatening and encroaching danger, we chose as our theme for the year, simply our motto, "Veritas". With the help of the Angelic Doctor, especially fitting since we are celebrating the 750th anniversary of his death this year, we aim to instil in our pupils a greater understanding and appreciation of what being faithful to their motto may look like in their daily living. We hope to explore among other things the objective nature of truth, its ability to be known with certainty, its relationship with reality, its immutability, and the dispositions and graces we need to acquire and live it. Most importantly, we aim to help our pupils examine their habits and daily living to see, if unbeknownst to themselves, they have assimilated some of the world's false maxims and customs.

By aiming to help our pupils understand and love their motto a little better this year, we hope to encourage and support them to break with at least one bad habit that prevents them from living it and to attain stronger motivations not to relax their guard in the fight against its enemies. May our Holy Father St Dominic and all the Dominican saints help us to achieve this goal and keep them ever faithful to their motto, Veritas.





The Man of Your Choice

For those of our Old Pupils "with a Mind for Marriage" - we would like to conclude the treasure of Father Daniel A. Lord's out-of-print, yet still relevant, pamphlet —hoping that it will provide useful counsel for them:

Younger Brothers and Sisters

Children do not suddenly become wonderful and glamorous and a joy and comfort simply when they turn out to be our own. Children are children still, with the bad manners of a baby, the selfishness of a child, the noise and clumsiness of teen-agers, and the general demands and expensiveness of all young humans. So it is that many a husband is a poor father because he was a poor older brother. He never really liked his younger brothers and sisters; and though he has a natural affection for his own sons and daughters, he can find them a nuisance, a bore, an obstacle, and a burden.

You will be wise, my lass, if you take a good look and even better if you listen. How does the young man talk about his family?

Is he constantly griping about the younger children?

Does he use the word "brats" easily?

Is he annoyed by children, in his own family or elsewhere?

While you are at it, listen carefully when you get him to talk about his family. Proud of them? Happy in them? Does he like his home? Does he brag about the way he puts it over on Dad and how he gets away with murder on "the old folks"? Is he in a rage when the younger ones borrow his things or even ask to borrow his things? Or is he generous with them?

The grass on your lawn won't be easier to cut than the lawn of his parents. Chores around the house are always chores; and if he hates them and manages to dodge out of them now, he will continue this when you are living with him. The garbage from your kitchen will be no more attractive than that under his mother's sink, which he has skilfully avoided emptying. If he never takes his turn washing the dishes (at least drying them), beating the rugs, helping with the screens, emptying the vacuum, taking his small share of domestic duties, he will not suddenly turn out to be housebroken when he moves into your apartment.

Love can do a lot; but love does not make dirty dishes and cluttered ashtrays and an unwaxed hall sudden vistas of delight.

You might even take, if you get a chance, a look at his private room. Some day he'll keep his bedroom and his closet and bureau drawers and clothes about the way he is keeping them now.

How Does He Look?

A very pretty young woman once begged me to meet her future husband. "He's not one bit handsome," she said. "In fact, he has funny ears and a long under lip. But he's wonderful and I think he's so good to look at." Rightly, she distinguished between handsome and good to look at; and the distance between the two is miles apart – and right next door. A really handsome man has a handicap. His "beauty" may get in his way. People take it for granted, sadly enough, that a really handsome man is not very bright. A fine façade, they figure, has not much back of it in the apartments. He gets too many admiring looks, and no man can be immune to that flattery. Older women make a fuss over him and spoil him. He has too many feminine hearts aimed straight at him.

The truth is that many a handsome man is mentally superior. But he often neglects his mental abilities, getting by on his looks. And while vanity in a woman is pardonable, vanity in a man is a little sickening. It makes a person ill. We disdain "pretty boys". I know one fine lad who spent a large part of his life knocking the blocks off other lads who discovered that as a baby he had won a beauty prize. He lived it down, but with bruises and much batterings.

Good looks are something else. They are the outward expression of inward health. And you're lucky if the young man you are interested in has a moderate measure of health. No Mr Americas, of course. No muscle-bound swains who pose on the beach like fluid Grecian statues and whose muscles, once they have been flexed, seem to have lost all further purpose of existence. Indeed, professional athletes, like professional actors and musicians, can be a moderately unsafe risk. Many of them too early are too much in the limelight; the calm lights of the small honeymoon apartment lose their attraction. They may find their wife and children a dull and unappreciative audience after the cheers of the thousands. There are good professional athletes who are good husbands and fathers. Usually their wives are very happy when they retire to less tempting, demanding, and distracted

But health you should expect, moderate health.

A healthy boy is likely to be a wholesome boy.

And wholesomeness means good looks.

Let Him Be Neat

Years ago in a national questionnaire, we asked some ten thousand girls what qualities they liked in a young man. I was surprised then, but no longer am, that they invariably asked the young man to be neat.

Neatness was not something I had suspected as important, yet in my own case, I knew it was. For a wise Master of Novices begged us always to be neat and never, bachelors as we priests were bound to be, to drop into slovenly ways.

So you have a right to look at your young man critically.

He should be clean. In these days of magnificent plumbing and the constant flow of hot water, a daily bath is not too much to expect.

The daily shave is important too. A young man should be expected early to adopt the custom of a shave a day. And his hair should be trimmed. Extreme haircuts in men are the sign either of absurd vanity or a slavish devotion to the fashion of the minute. No sensible young man should want his hair to look like the underside of a Fuller clothes brush, or the damp wing of a goose.

Clean shirts, a decent respect for a pair of pressed trousers, ties when ties should be expected, and a coat when a coat is required are all signs of a smart young man. Too much interest in clothes is the mark of a dude, a fop, whatever the age calls him. Sloppiness in clothes is a sign of contempt for the feelings of others and a failure in proper respect for oneself and the occasion. You may slightly distrust the boy who is too concerned about clothes. You can feel that you are not complimented by the boy who comes to call for you looking as if dressed for a Hard Times Party.

The Value of a Laugh

Humour is, of course, one of the last things that develops in the human personality. As youngsters we love slapstick. A little later, we are amused at the tossed custard pie and the chair pulled from under the unexpecting guest. Then humour grows, and finally with full maturity, wit.

Yet in your young man you may nicely expect a preliminary gleam of humour. He smiles often and easily. When things happen that are funny, he recognises them and laughs. He is not, please Heaven, a professional comedian; the wife of a noted comedian must be one of the most self-sacrificing women in the world. Either she spends her life with the glum man who is the professional humourist off duty; or else she has to listen and furnish an audience as he endlessly

tries his routines on her.

But it is terrible to live with a man who doesn't think anything is funny, who never really laughs, and who smiles with an effort that makes you groan with him.

Lucky the woman who finds the man who laughs when things go wrong. The car gets a punctured tire; and before he repairs it, he laughs at it. Lucky the girl who loves a man who can laugh at himself. He sees his own limitations and is amused by them. When he makes a

mistake, he greets it with a grin. He misses much of life's embarrassment simply by covering a slip-up with a quizzical smile. His kidding is mild; better still, he never kids, unless he is absolutely sure that what he says will hurt no one. On the other hand, when he is kidded, he has the good grace and good humour to laugh.

He doesn't make big problems out of little ones. He doesn't through some sense of selfimportance blow small slights into mighty insults. He is not offended at his own trips and falls. He enjoys life and finds much of it funny. And out of the daily experiences that are his, he gathers a large assortment

experiences and tells them, mostly at his own expense.

Look for that sense of humour. It is a precious thing.

Interests in Common

of amusing

Not long since, an unknown young lady wrote to me: "I am engaged to marry a man whose one consuming interest is sports. He drags me to bowl, which I cannot

do; and to watch games that I hate. He likes none of the things I enjoy and thinks me stupid for wanting to go to them. What shall I do?"

My answer was abrupt and final: "Break the engagement."

One of the truest signs of character and disposition is, of course, what a man does during his leisure. What is he interested in when he is not on the job? What does he

like in the way of entertainment? What amuses him? What kind of books, music, plays, movies, shows?

You had better find that out.

If you cannot mesh your interests with his, life will be difficult for you. If vou cannot meet him halfway, sharing your interests with him and taking a share of his interests as your own, you will be in for a continuous tug-ofwar. You will try to pull him your way. He will resist and try to pull you his. In the end, you will both be weary with the struggle, each go your own lonesome way, or settle down to apathy and a lack of interest in anything.

Be sure you know his interests, and you can judge him

by them.

George Cochran Lambdin - The Consecration [1861]

You'll know a lot about a young man if you study what he does to have fun and to fill his free time: Is it refined, crude, all outdoors, never outdoors, varied, limited, something that takes energy, something that is relaxing? What does he read? What are his companions like? When he tells a story, what kind of story is it? Do you enjoy him when he is not making love to you? And does

he enjoy you when you are the pleasant companion sharing your interests with him or taking his interests as your own?

How Trustworthy?

That young man you are considering is going to be very important if you decide to take him on as a husband.

You will depend upon him for your income and the finances of your future.

Your pride will be measured by his achievements.

When you are out with him, you will either glow as you say, "This is my husband", or you will be embarrassed when you have to introduce him to your friends.

You might put the young man to the test of one word: Trustworthiness. And that is a quality not hard to discover.

When he is given a job, any kind of job, does he carry it through as well as he can?

Is he trustworthy around money?

Is he trustworthy with the truth? Or does he lie easily?

Do you think that in the past he has been trustworthy with women? Or is he a little proud of the number of women who have swallowed his polished line?

Can he, in other words, be counted on to stick to a job, make a success of a job, merit the respect of the men who work with him, and the trust of the girls with whom he is thrown into contact? The future is already measured by the past. How does the future look to you?

His Friends

Another easy measure of the man is his friends. You ought to be sure to meet them, and be sure that he wants you to meet them. You may decide after you meet them that since you don't like them, very shortly after marriage, you'll wean him away from them and get him a new set. Will you? If he happens to like this kind of friends now, will his taste change so much after marriage? You may take these particular friends away from him, but it's a fair bet he'll get another set which matches these very closely.

While you are at it, you ought to watch how his friends feel toward him.

If you like his men friends and his men friends like him, that is a fine test and he has passed it.

If you like the women in his life (those who have

been close friends or have touched it lightly) and they speak of him pleasantly and with affectionate respect, that too is worth noting.

Don't eavesdrop; but don't shut your ears to what you are told or happen accidentally to hear. Many a girl has been grateful for what she learned from his friends about a man. Their opinions are the unbiased judgments of men and women who have seen him unblended by her own present love or fascination. They are worth looking at, listening to, and using as one standard of judgment.

The Great Tests

All the time, I have been approaching some of the really great tests. It is essential that you look coolly, objectively, and with the same honest appraisal you'd reserve for a dinner dress, a new auto, an apartment, or a job, at the moral side of the man with whom you are to spend your life.

He is not, this young man whom you recently have met, going to make you a manifestation of his conscience. You are a possible future wife and not a Mother Confessor. So you have to watch for signs.

Let me state what is the observation of a long priestly life: I have instructed many young couples for marriage, and never have I known the case of a virgin man who married a virgin girl without the marriage's being a success. Even the hard-boiled statisticians of sex agree that virginity is a real predisposition to success in marriage.

So take a good look at the young man.

How does he talk? Is the smutty story casual with him? Is the off-colour suggestion a commonplace? That's a state of contaminated mind.

What about his attitudes toward you? Did he try to see how far he could get with you, and did he seem surprised when you repulsed him? Oh, so that's the sort of girl he has been going with. And that is the routine acceptance of his "passes" that he takes for granted.

When you were together, did you have to fight for your virtue? Or was he quick to regard himself as the "stronger sex", the guardian who had to set the standard of virtue for both?

Does he like shoddy entertainment and want to take you there with him? Was he surprised when you said "No"?

Is he bored when the entertainment has dignity and some cultural claims? There are just a few of the tests. Marry a virgin. Stay virgin yourself. It is the surest possible guarantee of success in marriage.

THE SOUTHERN STAR

And This Above All

And marry one of your own faith.

For a moment, I turn straight to my Catholic readers. You have a right to ask that your future partner of a lifetime, the father of your children, the protector of a Christian home, share you faith, your devotional life, accept the law of Christ as you understand it, and live up to the essentials of Catholic teaching.

He ought to be a Catholic.

More than that, he ought to be a Good Catholic.

A Good Catholic is a man:

Who knows enough about his faith to practise it intelligently and with relish; Who would never think of missing Sunday Mass; Who is regular at confession and Holy Communion; Who has a deep inner respect for the value of virtue and the important of the Ten Commandments;

Who regards the Church as the representative of Christ, speaking and acting with divinely conferred authority;

Who wants to share his faith and the Catholic life with

his wife, his home, and his children;

Who lives like a Catholic during his professional, working and recreational hours;

Who is a lay apostle, spreading good in his sphere of influence.

It is not hard to put such a man to the test.

If he passes, you are lucky. If you accept him after making these demands, you are both lucky.

The trouble with the modern girls is that they set their standards low and get a low-grade partner in marriage. The girl who sets her standards high has a fair chance of reaching her mark.

You are not looking for a finished product perfect in all details. But you are quite justified in asking for the material out of which you can make for yourself a happy and inspiring husband and for your children a father of whom they can be proud and for whom they can throughout life be grateful.



Photo Nook

...a place for past-pupils to share notable events in your lives...

11th January 2024

Sister Immaculata Teresita of Jesus (formerly Nicola Bjerga) pronounced her solemn perpetual vows &

23 January 2024

Feast of the Espousals of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Received the Veil

at the Carmel of the Holy Trinity in Spokane, Washington, USA.

Deo Gratias!

"A Carmelite makes her profession in the Chapter Room, in the hands of her Prioress...with no witnesses except those members of the community who are already professed. It is an intimate family -feast, this betrothal, in which only the members of the religious family circle participate...(At the end of the ceremony, the sister) prostrates herself on the flower-decked carpet prepared for her, while the Church's great hymn of thanksgiving is sung: Te Deum... The final act by which one becomes a fully-fledged member of the community is the official reception of the black veil. This, being a public ceremony, is usually separated from the profession by some days at least. In this ceremony, the black veil, symbol of sacrifice and complete dedication, is placed on the sister's head by the officiating priest (through the opening in the grille), in the presence of her friends and relatives in the (outer) chapel. Once again she prostrates during the Te Deum, blessings and prayers..." - excerpt from God is Love, Life of St Teresa Margaret, by Margaret Rowe.

Sister Immaculata Teresita of Jesus had the privilege of Reverend Bishop Fellay officiating at the ceremony of her reception of the black veil. The painting on her holy card made for this event is that of the "Childhood of Christ," by Gerrit van Honthurst, c. 1620. Sister chose this painting after listening to a priest's conference on the symbolism contained in the painting—it being an ideal subject of meditation. For instance, a few points to ponder: the light is emanating *from the Christ Child*—more than from the candle He holds; the candle reminds us of the paschal candle—Christ *is our light*; the Christ Child is looking at St Joseph, but is really seeing God the Father; the darkness may be seen as the solitude of quiet and calm, in order to focus; and the scene could be considered as being viewed through Our Lady's eyes.







As a regular section of the *O.P. Corner*, we invite you to share with us and your fellow alumni, in the *Photo Nook*, notable events in *your lives* that have taken place recently. Please send photos with captions (eg. date, event, etc.) to o.p.corner@opsisters.org.nz

Photo Chronicle—Summer

Life in St Dominic's Convent and the Girls' College







{By row, left to right}

2023 End-of-Year Prizegiving Night; 2023 graduates with the Sisters; December 'holiday' to re-create in nature; Items for ceremony on the feast of the Epiphany bridal rings for the perpetual professions on the red cushion at left, with silver tray to the right holding the 'tempting' crown of roses to be offered with the crown of thorns below, and the envelopes underneathholding the yet-tobe announced new religious names of the future novices; One of the beautiful cakes made for the ceremony; Progress on the guest quarters

being built under our novitiate house.













THE SOUTHERN STAR SUMMER 2023-2024















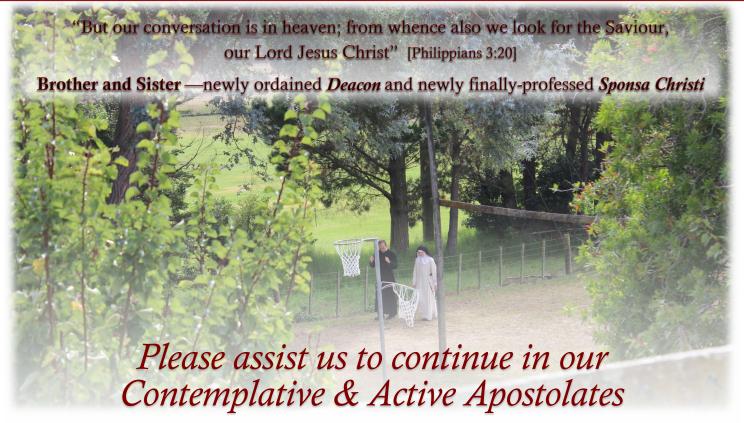






{By row, left to right} Father Stafki giving educational conference to the Sisters and teachers; Father Pepping meeting the pupils of St Dominic's while he was here also to give educational conferences to the teaching staff; Special visit of Reverend Hovens, a newly ordained deacon from the seminary at La Reja, especially to see his two sisters; Father Stephens giving the school recollection day at the start of the year for the Form 1&2 pupils; The annual Medieval Gala Fundraiser—with our pupils helping to run stalls, including that of shield painting and everyone's favourite ice-cream floats; Our new chalice, being used during the sacrifice of the Mass on a firstclass feast, donated by a generous benefactor; The novices on a walk with their Mistress; During one of the study 'intensive' weeks—one of the sisters at a visit to the Marae, speaking with the "Whaea" of the Marae. Whaea is the title that means "lady" or "woman" as a respectful term, as when Our Lord called His mother, 'Woman'; The professors and students of the 2024 entrance into the Graduate Diploma of Teaching (Secondary) programme. {photo credit- Kyle Keogh,

photographer for BTI}



Please consider helping us out—whether with gifts of cash or regular monthly donations. The stipend we receive is minimal, so we are truly grateful for every little effort and sacrifice that helps us to continue living our traditional Dominican way of life.

Thank you to those who have already pledged regular donations—these gifts, no matter how small, do make a difference!

May Our Lady of the Rosary reward your generosity and kindness to the Spouses of Her Divine Son. The Sisters pray specially for you during our weekly Chapter.

Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, pray for us!

AUSTRALIA

Westpac Account Name: Dominican Sisters of Wanganui Westpac Account BSB Number: 033-636 Account Number: 334285

NEW ZEALAND

Westpac Account Name: Dominican Sisters of Wanganui
Westpac Account Number: 03-0791-0728558-00

Please note that the banks in NZ no longer accept cheques. Apologies for the inconvenience.

All donations now qualify for a 33% TAX REBATE from the IRD.

Please quote our NZ Charities Services Number: CC37884

UNITED STATES

Account Name: Dominican Sisters of Wanganui Wells Fargo Bank, A/C # 2 015 569 425, Routing # 1210 42882 Cheques can be made out to "The Dominican Sisters of Wanganui" and sent to: Dominican Sisters, Attn: Loren Vaccarezza, 2240 Paragon Drive, San Jose, CA 95131 All donations to our U.S. account now qualify for a tax deductible receipt!

OR VIA PAYPAL

Visit our website at https://www.opsisters.org.nz/fundraising