

Life

Saint Dominic was born in Spain in 1170. His father was the lord of the manor in the village. He was studious and compassionate. When there was a famine, he sold everything including clothes and even precious manuscripts on animal skins to help the poor. He was ordained as priest after studying theology at the University of Palencia. At that time, the Albigensian heresy was flourishing, Dominic felt pity for these people who had gone astray. In addition to holding several debates with them, he also preached, prayed, fasted, and performed good deeds to convince the heretics. The church appointed him as a bishop three times but he declined humbly. He was committed to cultivating some clergymen who were both talented and virtuous, who must be well educated, able to preach and edify the faithful with their good deeds. In 1216, Dominic obtained the approval of the Holy See to form a new order, called the Order of Preachers (commonly known as the Dominicans). In addition to self-denial and prayer, the members also devoted themselves to the study of theology and preaching. Dominic died peacefully in 1221. He insisted on poverty in spirit and had to borrow another friar's clothes to wear when he died because his clothing was too worn out due to wear and tear and he did not have any other. Today, the religious order founded by Dominic has developed all over the world, and most of the nuns who have served our parish over the years are from the Dominican order.

Reflection

We can meditate on the saint's deeds and learn from him by looking at Claudio Coello's portrait of Saint Dominic painted in 1685:

- Stars above the head: Dominic's life and teachings are full of wisdom and holiness, radiating the light of truth and leading people to Christ.
- Lily and book: Lily symbolizes chastity. That book can represent his love for the Bible, and it can also symbolize his encouragement to his followers of academic research, because he believes that all kinds of truth will make people better understand God and thus get closer to God.
- Black and white cross and habit: black symbolizes death in the secular world; white symbolizes living in Christ. Also, it has the



meaning of chastity and atonement, death and resurrection. The black and white cross also symbolizes the mission of the order to protect the Church and the truth.

- Rosary: Legend has it that the Virgin Mary personally passed the rosary to Dominic as a weapon for preaching, converting heretics, and spreading the gospel.
- Dog carrying a torch: It is said that before Dominic was born, his mother dreamt that a dog leapt from her womb carrying a flaming torch in its mouth, as if Dominic established his order, and let the true light of the gospel lit up the world.
- Model Church: Dominic encountered many difficulties when applying to found a religious order. Legend has it that when the Pope was about to refuse the application, he had a dream that night that the Lateran Basilica (the cathedral in Rome) was crumbling. Dominic stepped forward to support it and saved the day, so the Pope approved the application. In fact, Dominic defended the church throughout his life and spared no effort in resisting heresy.

Prayer

After the fifteenth century, the Dominicans tried their best to spread the devotion of the Rosary. Blessed Cardinal Schuster said of the origin of the Rosary: "From historical evidence, we cannot attribute the origin of the Rosary to St. Dominic... However, the Rosary can achieve great things and spread rapidly, and great deeds of Christians with a universal zeal are credited to the Dominicans."

Regardless of whether Our Lady has appeared to St. Dominic or not, by reciting the Rosary together with meditating on its twenty mysteries, we are devoutly praying a series of prayers like a rosette. When we humbly present them to God and Our Lady, we will surely gain their acceptance.

May we learn from the example of Saint Dominic and through the pursuit of truth, better understand and be drawn closer to God,

We pray for the sister(s) who have served or is serving our parish.

Saint Dominic, pray for us.